

A Very Small Remnant

The prophecy, or more accurately, 'the vision of Isaiah' is foremost amongst the prophetic writings in the Old Testament scriptures. It is clearly and openly Christ-centred and is quoted frequently by the Lord and His apostles in the New Testament. We have seen in our recent series concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ how when first it was said, the seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head, every succeeding revelation tended to unfold and confirm this leading truth of the Word of God.

Discovering Christ

The apostle Peter explains it this way, the Spirit of Christ was in the holy men of old, among whom was Isaiah, directing their minds into all truth; so the great intention of all the prophecies received and delivered was to illuminate and illustrate those two great themes of all revelation; 'the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow'. Throughout the whole of scripture; this was the premise of prophecy. Every vision, dream and revelation delivered in a spirit of prophecy, directed the Lord's elect to Jesus.

A legitimate approach

It is always our purpose to seek, and our longing to find, the Lord in these Old Testament passages. The Lord Himself ministered to the two on the road to Emmaus of these very things, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself'. It is our aim and privilege therefore to discover Christ in all the scriptures.

Introducing Isaiah

Beginning tomorrow we shall look at some chapters in Isaiah with the express purpose of discovering the Lord Jesus. Isaiah's name means, 'Salvation of the Lord' which is a good place to begin. He served the people of Israel for over sixty tumultuous years during the reigns of a succession of kings, and wrote down his prophecy around 700 years before the coming of the Saviour. He had a wife and two sons whose names had symbolical significance.

Isaiah comes highly recommended

In reading for the service I noted the following two statements. One writer said, 'Who can read the prophecy of Isaiah without the most profound admiration! It is not only unequalled in point of language, but it contains so much of Christ, that it looks more like an history than a prophecy. It is more like the writings of a person who was present at Pilate's hall, and Herod's judgment-seat, when describing the sufferings of Jesus, than of one who wrote those events, by the spirit of prediction, more than seven hundred years before the things there spoken of came to pass.'

Another wrote, 'Of all Israel's celebrated prophets, Isaiah is the king. The writings which bear his name are among the profoundest in all literature. One great theme, salvation by faith, stamps them all. Isaiah is the Paul of the Old Testament.'

Visions of Christ in Ch.1

In our service we shall pursue this purpose by thinking about what Isaiah chapter one teaches us concerning our sin and need of a Saviour. We shall note the Lord's sovereign purpose in setting apart a chosen people and retaining for Himself 'a very small remnant' to whom He lovingly and graciously shows mercy by making them fit for His presence.

Finally, as the Lord allows, we shall think about the glorious transformation effected by the blood of Jesus crucified, the purging and cleansing of hearts and souls for purity, and the powerful conversion of our natures by the righteousness of God. We shall rejoice with the man who seven hundred years before Christ came could write, 'Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness' (1:27).

Amen

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