

Recapitulation in Isaiah, 4
Last Things
By Bob Vincent

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Bible Text: Isaiah 10:5-19; 1 Corinthians 14:20-25
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Isaiah 10:5,

5 “Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! 6 I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. 7 But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations. 8 ‘Are not my commanders all kings?’ he says. 9 ‘Has not Kalno fared like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad, and Samaria like Damascus? 10 As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols, kingdoms whose images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria-- 11 shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?’”

The word of the Lord.

May we pray.

Lord, among the great dangers I face is giving too much information, giving too many details. Lord, help me because I'm not lecturing in a college or seminary classroom, help me to be simple, concise, and clear, to hit the high points but not to obscure. And above all things I pray for the anointing of the Holy Ghost for it's only as your Spirit fills me that your Spirit will bless the word as its proclaimed so that everyone of us here may be filled with the Spirit and that's our plea and prayer. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Now I want us to look at this passage we've just read because it's very striking. You'll notice that I've changed the name of the series and you'll notice in your bulletin I've changed the name to "Recapitulation in Isaiah." Recapitulation to Isaiah. What is recapitulation? Well, I don't want to get into Darwinian embryology, but the point is that that nutcase Charles Darwin, who along with that nutcase Charles Lyell, and along with that nutcase Karl Marx, came up with wild theories in the mid-19th century and their wild theories changed our world because what happened is through those three men's wild theories our whole way of thinking about the past was radically changed. Do you know that up until the time of Charles Lyell people believed that the Genesis flood explained all of the rock formations in the world? Did you know that? Do you know that today you can go into the Grand Canyon and you can see clear and compelling evidence of the Genesis flood but with Charles Lyell, you add something invented which was thousands, nay, not thousands, millions, nay, not millions, many millions of years, because if you put a monkey in front of a computer keyboard and you give him enough millions of years, he can produce the Encyclopedia Britannica, or so the theory goes. (I once had a chimpanzee jump on my back—ain't no fun!)

So, Charles Lyell gave us millions of years in the past instead of a strict reading of the book of Genesis. As I read the book of Genesis, and I'm not an uneducated man, as I read the book of Genesis, I have never found anything in it that I had to reject because of modern science. I'm simply telling you the truth. I accept the book of Genesis' account as literal and accurate and I'm not uneducated. So, Lyell gives us all of these years and then along comes Charles Darwin, and Charles Darwin came up with many wild and crazy theories.

Now let me say, I believe in micro-evolution, I don't believe in macro-evolution. What does that mean? Micro-evolution means that there are changes within species, for example, certain moths may begin to be wiped out because of their color, because the birds can see them more clearly and pick them off and others go on and get larger and larger in terms of numbers. That's micro-evolution. Macro-evolution means that from a small single-cell organism all of us sprang forth.

And I can tell you that when I traced out evolution on my final exam in college, I got 100 on it. I understand evolutionary theory. In evolutionary theory here's what we're talking about: Darwin came up with a cockamamie idea that an embryo in the womb recapitulates all of the stages of evolution. So, you look at something with a long tail, that's simply God's ordination

that that baby, that human baby, that begins at the moment of conception in his mother's womb—when does it become alive?

It never was not alive. Life was passed on from Adam to Eve and from the two of them down through their generations. So, the baby is alive in the womb and the baby is not part of his mother. The baby is a unique organism made up of half the chromosomes of his momma and half the chromosomes of his father, and therefore it is not—as when I had one of my dermatologists took a big chunk of meat out of my arm while Sandy videoed it. I looked at it. It was weird.

That chunk of meat that my dermatologist took out of my arm in Baton Rouge is part of me, it has all of the same chromosomes that I have in my body, but when Sandy became pregnant with our first daughter in 1970 after we'd been married since 1968, Lydia was not part of Sandy's body. Lydia lived in Sandy's body until she was born on February 19, 1971, in Philadelphia, PA.

So, in Darwinian theory, that human baby with its beginning of its brain and extending down its spinal cord, that part of the spinal cord develops first and so it looks like a tail. Well, poor Charles. He was a very, very, rich man and he had a lot of money to spend on foolish adventures, so he came up with a theory that in a human embryo, it recapitulates everything that happened in an evolutionary way before. Now that's an explanation of the word and it's a little far afield but my point in all of this is this: these prophecies in Isaiah recapitulate later on the earlier prophecy. Now I said last week that virtually the entire book of Isaiah centers around the invasion of Israel to the north and Judah to the south by the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The Neo-Assyrian Empire. And why is this significant and important? It explains another thing. Do you know that liberals, and by liberal I mean somebody that doesn't take seriously the supernatural, liberal Bible scholars refer to a First and a Second Isaiah. Some of them refer to First, Second, and Third Isaiah. Why do they do that? Because they don't believe in miracles. They don't believe there's such a thing as predictive prophecy. Oh, I believe in predictive prophecy, and I believe God speaks through his word today and will give you guidance through the Scriptures about the future.

So what I'm saying is that you suddenly find a note in the book of Isaiah changing from Isaiah 39 where Hezekiah, the godly king, has shown ambassadors from the city of Babylon all his treasures, and suddenly you come to chapter 40 and it's a very different note, "Comfort ye, comfort ye,

my people,” and we’ll talk about that in a few weeks because it refers to the return of the captives from Babylon and from under the Assyrian Empire.

So, what I’m saying is that Isaiah predicts in the future a king by the name of Cyrus the Great, and Cyrus is the one who issues the decree to all of the Israelites and all of the people from Judah to be able to return to their homeland, and that’s what’s in view in Isaiah 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, where God names Cyrus the Great during the time of Isaiah. But you see, if you don’t believe in miracles, and I’ve experienced so many miracles in my life through prayer, you will never convince me that God did not inspire the prophet Isaiah with the exact name of the emperor who conquered Babylon and the whole Assyrian Empire and joined with the Medes to form the Medo-Persian Empire. Of course, God can foretell the future. What kind of God do you worship if you don’t believe in that God? So, Second Isaiah is simply poppycock. It’s nonsense. It’s specious. It’s made up in order to explain away miracles.

I remember one time I was visiting a man who had visited my congregation in Alexandria, and this would have been about 1976. And my good friend who died before COVID would have been 95 this summer, he and I were visiting the man and the man says, “You know, what do you think about the miracle of the loaves and fishes?” And so, I said, “Well, this is what I believe.” And he said, “No, no, no.” He said, “What Jesus did was to convince the people to share with one another.” What?

“What Jesus did was to convince the people to share with one another.” In other words, Jesus didn’t take a little boy’s lunch, five loaves and two pieces of fish, and multiply them and feed over 5,000 males plus females and children. No, that’s not the miracle. The miracle was, “When the moon is in the seventh house, and Jupiter aligns with Mars. Then peace will guide the planets, it’s the dawning of the age of Aquarius,” that came in the form of Jesus of Nazareth who got us to sing Kumbaya and love one another.

Recapitulation in Isaiah. So, what I want us to understand is something, that this book really centers on the Assyrian Empire. Now notice what he says here in verse 5, Isaiah 10:5. That’s lengthy introduction but I think it’s really important. “Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger in whose hand is the club of my wrath! I send him against a godless nation.” Who’s the godless nation in view here? It’s Israel and Judah. Israel and Judah, the northern kingdom, the southern kingdom. “You mean that God called the children of Abraham, those who were the descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel, you mean he called them a godless nation?”

A godless nation and look what he says, he says, “I’m sending the Assyrians against a godless nation. I have raised up the Assyrian Empire.” Now let me talk about the Assyrian Empire as you turn back a couple of pages to chapter 7 and verse 20, page 1,070. I want to talk about the Assyrian Empire.

Assyria begins around 2,600 years before the Christian era, about 2,600 before the Christian era, and it became an empire, it began to be an empire and called Assyria when it founded its major city named after their ancestor. And so, notice in verse 20, Isaiah 7:20, “In that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria—to shave your head and the hair of your legs, and to take off your beards also.” Now what is that saying? That’s saying that the king of Assyria has been hired like a barber, the only trouble is he’s not only going to shave the head and the beard; he’s going to shave off all of your body hair as well and that’s what’s in view.

Who is the king of Assyria who was hired? This is a man known as Pul or Pulu who was Tiglath-Pileser III and he was hired because that godless King Ahaz who didn’t want to ask the Lord for proof that he would deliver him, Ahaz sends to this man and says, “Come, help me. I need help here.” And of course, they were very willing. Tiglath-Pileser III travels down and he conquers Israel and one of his descendants ends up, Sargon II, let’s see, no, no, it was Shalmaneser V, son of Tiglath-Pileser, conquered Samaria and his son, Sargon II, finished up the job that granddaddy had begun. And so Samaria was taken into captivity and anyhow.

So, notice the thing as we turn back to Isaiah 10 across the page and we see, what? This is the man that has been hired. Now listen, there are a bunch of kings who are in view. This is the Neo-Assyrian Empire, and it goes from 722 under Sargon II until it was destroyed in 609 by Babylon. Now let me make a comment about Babylon. Who is Prince Charles in England? What is his title? Does anyone know? He’s what?

He’s the Prince of Wales. He’s the future King of England. The Prince of Wales. Do you understand that the Assyrian Empire put the next one in command to be the king of Babylon? It was kind of like being the Prince of Wales. He’s the Prince of Babylon.

So, you understand how this is all one big group of nasty people, corresponds to modern-day Iraq. So, the Iraqis, same group of people, the Assyrian Empire replaced by the Neo-Babylonian Empire when they conquered Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire ends in 609. So, when God

speaks about the Assyrian and the Assyrian kings, that's who he's talking about.

Now we want to move from there over to Isaiah, Isaiah 36:11, page 1,113. "Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to the field commander," now this is the field commander of Sennacherib. Sennacherib, he's the one that has destroyed 46 walled cities in Judah, in Judea, 46 walled cities in Judah, and he's got Hezekiah surrounded like a bird in a cage. And so, he sends his agent there to negotiate the settlement. These guys were not nice people and so we'll tell you more of that in a minute.

So, listen to what they say to the field commander, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall."

What is that about? Well, they're speaking in tongues. When they're speaking in Aramaic, they're speaking in tongues and that's a fulfillment of a curse found in the book of Deuteronomy. So, in other words, when the soldiers on the walls of Jerusalem in 701 BC listened to these guys talk in Aramaic, they're hearing them speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues. They don't understand it. It sounds like this which I said I practiced last week, "*Tsav latsav, tsav latsav, kav lakav, kav lakav, ze'er sham, ze'er sham.*" It sounds like nonsense, they babble like a baby talk, *coochie coo*, that's what it sounds like. They're speaking in Aramaic but the Rabshakeh of Sennacherib wants to terrify the people with psychological warfare so he begins shouting out to them in Hebrew that they could understand.

Now turn with me, if you will, to 1 Corinthians 14, and we want to see how this is used by Paul. Page 1,788. 1 Corinthians 14:20. "Brothers, stop thinking like children." Do you hear that? Stop thinking like children. "*Tsav latsav, tsav latsav, kav lakav, kav lakav, ze'er sham, ze'er sham.*" Stop thinking like children.

"In regard to evil be infants," that's a good thing to be, in regard to evil—God wants us to be naive. He doesn't want us to know all about the evil of the world.

Sadly, I can say as I've listened to the stories of probably close to a thousand people, I've heard so much evil, sometimes I feel like I need to get a fire hose and stick it in one ear and wash it out. And I've not even told Sandy some of the things that people have confessed to me—they are so twisted, like the man they brought from Central State Mental Hospital for me to deal with one time. Filthy, nasty. God doesn't want people to be like me, knowing all of this evil in the world. It's very difficult to have that, to hear

that. He says, “I want you to be naive. I want you to be like little children. I want you to not know about evil.” Then he says, “but in your thinking be adults.”

Now notice he says in the very beginning of verse 21, “In the Law it is written,” and if you look down below he’s quoting from Isaiah 28:11 and 12. But “In the law,” that’s a reference to what we read of the curse in the book of Deuteronomy. God told his people that before he destroyed them, he would send armies of people speaking in tongues. Let me say it again. I’m summing up because I don’t want to go back there, we were there last week. He’s saying to his people in the book of Deuteronomy just before they invaded the land of Canaan, he said, “Look, if you don’t pay attention to me, if you refuse to listen to me, I’m going to send you armies of people who will be speaking in tongues.” That’s what he’s saying in Deuteronomy 28 and 49. Then he quotes from Isaiah 28:11, “Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” Do you get the point? Do you see what Isaiah’s saying? Isaiah is taking the theme from Deuteronomy 28 and he is applying it to his day to the armies of Assyria.

Now notice what Paul says in verse 22, “Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers.” What does he mean? He’s talking here in chapter 14 in a long theme that he’s begun in chapter 10 about worship, and specifically about the gifts of the Spirit beginning in chapter 11 going through chapter 12, going through 13, and going through 14, he’s talking in chapter 14 about the superiority of prophecy in the church as over against tongues spoken in the church unless someone interprets the tongue. Unless someone interprets the tongue.

I had an interesting experience, I didn’t, a friend of mine who was a PCA minister back when I was in the PCA, went to a church where one of the elders stood up one Sunday morning and spoke some gibberish and do you know what happened? Within less than a minute another person stood up and kept repeating the phrase, “My king. My king.” And my friend who studied Hebrew recognized that what he had heard in the gibberish of that elder was, “Mal’chee. Mal’chee, (מַלְכֵי),” and my friend was shaken up terribly by it. Well, it made him rethink everything he had studied in seminary. “You mean an elderly man who was also legally an elder in the church, stood up and spoke in some unknown words?” But the Hebrew was clear enough to say, “Mal’chee. Mal’chee, (מַלְכֵי)”? Then when another person stood up and said, “My king. My king,” it caused him to change his thinking.

Now again, “Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. So, if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say y’all are just plain crazy? Will they not say that you are out of your mind?”

And you know, what amazes me as a student of Scripture and church history? How virtually every church that practices speaking in tongues does it exactly the opposite of this, in clear-cut, absolute violation of the written word of God. No wonder people look at it and say, “This is plumb crazy!” But remember, don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Now notice what he says further, verse 24, “But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everyone is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’”

Now, you know that one of the greatest preachers in history was a Baptist preacher who preached in London by the name of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and huge crowds used to come to hear him preach because he was an amazingly eloquent man. He studied a great deal before he preached but he never preached using his notes. He studied a great deal before he preached but he never preached using his notes and one day in a sermon, he’s preaching and he said, “I don’t know how I know this, but someone here has just stolen,” and he named an amount of money, and a man in the balcony cried out, “Oh!”

He was prophesying. He was preaching God’s word, but as he preached God’s word, God spoke a word to that man. Have you ever been listening to a preacher who had an anointing on his preaching and all of a sudden you said, “How did he know that? Did he read my mail?” You see, that’s what Spurgeon did.

Now let’s go back to the point about tongues are a sign to unbelievers. Let’s think about that. You remember a couple of weeks ago, we mentioned when under Elisha the prophet, Jerusalem was surrounded by enemy armies. They were speaking in tongues and yet what happened? Instead of the city falling, God delivered the city. You remember again when Samaria fell. They’re surrounded by the armies of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and, once again, they’re hearing people speaking in tongues. It’s gibberish. It sounds like nonsense but they’re hearing it. Then in 586 BC before Jerusalem was destroyed under King Nebuchadnezzar of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, once

again the city of Jerusalem is surrounded by foreign armies and they're hearing them speak in tongues. And once again in the year 70 AD when Jerusalem was surrounded by the armies of Rome, they heard them speaking in tongues.

So, what is the sign of tongues as Paul's talking about it?

It is a sign particularly to the Jewish people who don't accept Christ. I'll say it again. What is the purpose of tongues? In Deuteronomy 28, in Isaiah 28, and throughout the history of God's external people, that history is when you hear them speaking in tongues, maybe you'd better get ready because God is about to clean your plow. And it happened throughout history. It happened throughout history. And so, what Paul is saying about tongues is that don't forbid it, he says, but cultivate the best gifts. What are the best gifts? Those that build up other people. We could speak much more on that, but we won't. I want to sum it up.

I have often wondered with the modern state of Israel, remember that Israel was founded by secularist Jewish people from Europe, not by Orthodox people, secularist people, people who really didn't take God seriously. But in 1948, leaders in the community blew up the King David Hotel and got rid of all the British civil servants by an act of terrorism, destroying the King David Hotel. And so, the modern state of Israel was founded.

Who was the first nation in the world to recognize the modern state of Israel? You're right in it, right here, the United States of America under Harry Truman. Who was the second nation to recognize the modern state of Israel? Sandy can't say. Iran. What?! Iran under the Shah of Iran.

Now I wonder because something began to happen in the beginning of the 20th century that in the middle of the 20th century began to explode into mainline denominations, and I've wondered, just scratching my head and wondering if the rise of the charismatic movement throughout the world is not a recapitulation of the curse omen of Deuteronomy 28, Isaiah 28, and a warning to the modern unbelieving state of Israel that they are about to have their plow cleaned. "Well, that's a lot to worry about, Bob." It's all right, you've got so much more to worry about with Russia and Ukraine.

What is my point? My point is that history repeats itself and Bible prophecies are recapitulated throughout history, and so the meanings, particularly in Isaiah, are initially of things in Isaiah's day, and then later on in our day, and in Jesus' day.

I'll cite one case in closing. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. The voice of one crying in the wilderness."

Who is that? Well, we know that that's John the Baptist, don't we? But John the Baptist is only a later fulfillment of the original cry in the wilderness because the original crying in the wilderness is the cry under King Cyrus the Great in 539 BC, issuing to the Jewish people, both the Israelites and the Jews, the ability to return to their homeland. So, they hear a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," and they're able to return to their homeland. But as with all Bible prophecy in Isaiah, it's recapitulated, you see, it's recapitulated. In other words, in the days of Jesus and John the Baptist, that is a recapitulation of the original fulfillment.

Have I lost you? I hope I have not lost you. I see, "Yes."

So let me sum it up then. When you shake your head no, I've got to give another summary.

The bottom line is this: Bible prophecy has been fulfilled, Bible prophecy is being fulfilled, and Bible prophecy will be fulfilled. Does that make sense?

Okay, that's the whole thing in the middle. So, one practical point: prepare to meet your God because times are very interesting, dear ones. Times are very, very, very interesting.

May we pray.

Lord, would you teach us to prepare for the future by studying the past and believing your promises and trusting you no matter what we read in the newspaper, which is all nonsense, or see on television, which is even more nonsense, and to realize here's only one reliable piece of information that we have access to in 2022, and that is the Bible, the written word of God. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. In Jesus' name. Amen.