

God's Refinement of the World

Isaiah 24:1-23

Halifax: 29 November 2009

Introduction

In our sermon series in Isaiah, we have been looking at God's coming judgement on Judah and upon the nations with which she had dealings.

- We have seen that the future of every one of these nations is in the hand of the sovereign Lord.
 - When a wicked nation prospers, it is He who has raised it up for His own purposes.
 - At last, He brings them either to judgement or to repentance and blessing.
 - From chapter 13 through chapter 23,
 - Isaiah has taken us from one nation to another to show us what God's plans and purposes are for that nation.

But now as we move into chapter 24, we are going to find prophecies of a more general nature about these nations of the earth.

- These prophecies refer the world at large—and speak of what the LORD is going to bring about among them as a whole.
 - Because sin is so rampant in the earth,
 - much of what we see involves judgement and the destruction of the wicked through the ages.
 - And that is certainly the case with what Isaiah presents to us here.
- In chapter 24, which we will look at today,
 - The earth is portrayed as that which is so defiled that it must undergo radical refinement.
 - Yet, in the middle of this painful purification process that brings the world's songs to silence (v. 7-13),
 - there is this song of the redeemed that breaks forth into the whole world!
 - You can see that in verse 14-16...
 - But Isaiah's joy in seeing this happy prophecy is tempered by the solemn prophecy he has also seen of the painful process of refinement that he and his people and whole earth must first undergo...
 - He speaks of these hard things from verse 16 to verse 22...
 - Nevertheless, the end result is the reign of the LORD...(verse 23)
 - a reign so glorious that the moon and the sun themselves—the glorious lightgivers of the earth...

- are said to be ashamed.
- When God has purified the earth at last,
 - His reign will be so glorious that the very sun and moon themselves will be supplanted by His brightness.

And so you see that even though this is in many ways a very dark passage about the pain of the refiner's fire,

- it is at the same time a very glorious passage about God's reign that will leave the earth completely unspotted and purified, running according to His directives...
 - with a people who themselves have been gloriously purified to dwell gloriously with their God forever and ever!
 - Indeed, the meek shall inherit the earth!
 - God will refine it and purify it and He will refine them and purify them, and then it will be theirs forever because it will be His forever—His masterpiece!
- I guess they say you ought not to go to the climax in the introduction,
 - but I want you to see the glorious outcome of God's painful purifying work so that you might keep it in view as we now turn to look at this passage in greater detail.
 - I want you to realise where all of this is headed.

TRANS> So let us begin where this passage begins... with a look at the fact that...

I. The Lord's judgement will fall upon the whole world.

- A. You can see in verses 1-3 that Isaiah describes a very devastating judgement, sent by the LORD.
 1. It is a judgement in which the order of the world is completely overthrown.
 - a. Verse 1 shows that both the people and the place of their habitation will be devastated...
 - It says that the Lord will make the earth empty—
 - Its inhabitants will be swept away much as a tsunami sweeps away all that is in its path.
 - It says that it will also be made waste, unfit for habitation with its surface distorted or mangled.
 - You must never think that the existing order is stable on its own.
 - It is only stable for as long as the Lord makes it stable.
 - He can throw everything into turmoil with more ease than a child can knock down a block tower.

- b. And verse 2 shows that the judgement will reach to all the people without exception.
- We have a tendency to think that some classes of people will not be affected.
 - They seem to be safer somehow because of their position.
 - but you see here that God, in His judgement, is no respecter of persons.
 - What happens to one happens to others...
 - Isaiah 24:2: “And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master; As with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller; As with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor.”
 - The judgements that Isaiah spoke of in the previous 11 chapters were judgements that fell especially hard upon the leaders and rulers.
 - This is often the case.
 - Those who seem to be the most secure are in fact the ones who have the most to lose.
- c. And verse 3 shows that the judgement will reach to every place.
- Isa 24:3: The land shall be entirely and utterly plundered...
 - By the land (the Hebrew word *eretz* is also translated “the earth”), Isaiah probably speaks of Israel and all the surrounding nations that he has been prophesying about.
 - Yet, as is often the case, the prophet’s language can easily be adopted to remind us of the final judgement at the end of the age.
 - The terms are very universal, and when the final judgement comes, there will be no place that is exempted.

TRANS> You must not suppose that you will possibly escape His judgement.

- God has appointed a day in which He will judge the entire world in righteousness by Jesus Christ.
 - All men everywhere are called to repent because His judgement encompasses all.
2. And you must face the fact that all of these calamities are sent by the very hand of God.
- Once again, Isaiah brings us face to face with the fact that the devastation that is here spoken of is sent and planned by the LORD.

- a. The focus of these verses is not so much on the judgement itself as it is on the LORD who sends it!
 - In verse 1, Isaiah says, “Behold, **the LORD** makes the earth desolate...”
 - We need to realise that it is not just that global warming or global warfare—or some other force does us in...
 - It is the LORD who makes the earth desolate.
 - We are in His hands.
 - In verse 3, you see that Isaiah says all this is certain to happen because the Lord has *said* it will happen.
 - Isaiah clearly believes that the words he is speaking are not his own words,
 - but the very words of God—certain of fulfillment.
 - If you do not believe the scriptures—if you think that they are only human writings,
 - you are greatly mistaken and you need to reconsider your position.
 - These writings bear the marks of divinity, and they claim to be divinely given.
 - Either these prophets are liars, or this is the very Word of God.
- b. Of course people don’t like to think that the God who made the world would ever do such a thing as destroy the earth...
 - They want to deny this—
 - They want to say that God is not like that or that He couldn’t be like that.
 - But you see, God tells us that He is like that.
 - Denying it may make you comfortable for a while, but such comfort will not last.
 - The misfortunes we have in this world are all acts of God, whether they be for our testing, our warning, our judgement, to give us an opportunity to glorify Him, or whatever.
 - You can make up your own little dream religion or your dream world,
 - but the true God is still a God who sends calamities upon the earth.

TRANS> Isaiah explains why God has purposed to send these terrible judgements upon the earth and its inhabitants in verses 4-6:

- B. He does it because of man’s wickedness (4-6)
 - 1. Look at verse 5

- It says that the earth itself has become profaned or defiled because of its inhabitants!
 - In the very first murder—of Abel, Cain was told that his brother’s blood cried out from the ground.
 - And you will remember that when God told Israel to utterly destroy the Canaanites,
 - It was not just so Israel could have the land—it was because the Canaanites had defiled the land by their idolatry
 - And you will remember that He warned Israel that if they behaved the same way, He would also cast them out.
 - And that is just what Isaiah is telling them has already begun to happen.
 - Three causes as to why the earth is profaned are set forth in verse 5:
 - Isa 24:5: Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.
 - As we have seen in our Sunday afternoon series,
 - God constituted us as moral beings, made after His image.
 - His law was written in our hearts from the very beginning so that we understood it and knew it...
 - but like fools, we transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broke the everlasting covenant.
 - God has established these things in His grace, but we have been faithless covenant breakers!
 - God’s response was to curse the very ground itself because of us.
 - The earth was made for us, to support life and to give life, but now God has charged it to take away life and destroy it at last...
 - We are sentenced to be turned to dust at last.
2. The language here seems to speak of Israel, but it also extends beyond Israel...
- a. In God’s grace, they were the ones to whom the redemption of the world was promised, and they were, in a sense, the custodians of God’s promises.
 - They were given laws and ordinances and an everlasting covenant all over again,
 - but they had transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant.
 - And by their doing this, the whole earth had done so.

- All the other nations, not redeemed can be said to have done this from the start...
 - but in Israel through whom redemption had been promised, they had done it all over again with the promised salvation!
- b. Thus, the language employed by Isaiah, while it speaks of Israel,
- also speaks of the whole world as you can see in verse 4...
 - It says:
 - Isa 23:4: The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away;
 - The word **earth** is *eretz*, as we have seen, may refer to the land of Israel or to the earth at large,
 - but the word translated **world** is *tebel* and clearly refers to the inhabited world.
 - And so you see in these verses that both Israel and (in a sense), through them, the whole world had broken God’s covenant.
 - The covenant breakers are called “the haughty of the earth” because in their extreme pride they dared to cast off the government of God and live apart from Him.
 - They attempted to establish their own order without God and end up with total chaos!
 - My friends, that is what you do when you refuse to submit to His salvation...
 - You are haughty—you act as if you are God—as if the world is to be run according to your own way!
 - The LORD will not tolerate such haughtiness!
 - No—He turns the very earth against you.
3. You see that the whole judgement is spoken of as a curse that devours the earth.
- It devours the earth so that the inhabitants of the earth are burned up and few men are left in it.
 - The LORD, by His curse, has turned the world against us because of our sin.
 - That is why there are wasting storms and diseases and famines and at last death.
 - God will not allow the world to support such haughty covenant breakers as we have become.

- We are consumed by the very ground from which we were taken.
- Going back to verse 4, you see that the earth is said to languish, and when it languishes, so do its inhabitants...
 - Their strength is exhausted.

C. God's judgment results puts an end to the earth's mirth

- You can see this in verses 7-13.

1. The earth's song is silenced and their joy is brought to an end.

- For a time, God, in His mercy, is very good to us and gives us fruitful seasons that fill our hearts with gladness.
 - He does this, for a time, despite our wickedness in order that by His goodness, He might lead us to repentance.
- But if we continue to refuse His grace,
 - His judgement eventually falls upon the earth, and all the things that make us glad are taken away, and so is our gladness...
 - Verse 7 says that even the merry-hearted person loses his cheerfulness.
 - Verse 8 shows that joyful music comes to an end.
 - Verse 9 says that they no longer drink wine with a song...
 - Strong drink becomes bitter—not mixed with laughter and jubilation.
 - You might think of this much like the contrast between the old drunkard who finds no pleasure in his drink verses those who celebrate with wine at a wedding feast.
 - The earth has become like the old man—finding no pleasure in his wine—but continuing to drink it all the same.

TRANS> And so mirth is gone...

2. All that is left is desolation and a tiny remnant.

- Verse 10 says that city of confusion (or the city of *tohu* in the original) has been broken down...
 - *Tohu* is the word used at creation when the earth was a shapeless mass, said to be without *form (tohu) and void*.
 - It showed no tendency toward a purpose—it was uninhabitable...
 - Until God acted further to prepare it for us...
 - He is the One who brings order.
 - The earth is different from all the planets because God formed it to be inhabited.

- But for His shaping of it as a place for us to live, it is *tohu*...
- But men living without submission to God themselves become a city of *tohu*.
 - A city without purpose, a city that has lost its way.
 - Don't you see, if you are building your life independently of him, you cast off the order that God has established for us to live by.
- We are told that every house will be shut up—the inhabitants will be terrified at the coming judgement and will shut themselves up inside!
 - We are told in verse 11 that they will be crying out for wine in the streets, not as those addicted do, but as those who thirst...

Once again, we are told that all joy is darkened and that the mirth of the land is gone.

 - There is nowhere to find happiness.
 - There is only one thing left to find...desolation and destruction.
 - Look at verse 12:
 - Isa 24:12: In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction.
 - That is all that remains!
- Verse 13 shows that the destruction will be so complete that only a tiny remnant will be left.
 - As we have seen before, Isaiah uses the figure of a harvest in which almost everything is taken.
 - All that is left behind are a few olives on a few branches.
 - The desolation has swept almost everything away.
 - Isaiah's words are,
 - Isa 24:13: When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.
 - Is this not often what we have seen in the earth after God's judgment has passed through?
 - Do we not even find it so today in our own nation—that where there were once many who called on the name of the LORD, there is now but a small remnant?
 - People often take comfort in numbers—they find comfort because there are so many who have rebelled...

- but there is no basis for comfort in that...
- If the mass of people are rebellious, the mass will be destroyed and only a remnant will remain.

TRANS> But this is a wonderful thing that we must not overlook!

- Yes, the judgement of God falls on the whole world...

II. Yet, God will preserve a remnant in whom He will continue His blessing

A. There is a tiny remnant left after the judgement sweeps through!

1. We must not make light of this remnant!

- It is made up of those that God has left that they may obtain His blessing!
 - It is a remnant according to the election of grace!
 - And God has great plans for them!
- You remember when Elijah complained that every knee in Israel had bowed to Baal,
 - and Lord replied that He Himself had reserved seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal!
 - It was a tiny number for all that were in Israel...
 - but what a wonderful mercy it was that God had not abandoned them all, but had reserved a people to obtain and carry His blessing on to future generations!
 - We may sorrow that there are so few who love the Lord in our day...
 - But let us never cease to rejoice that God has faithfully preserved a people for Himself!
 - They are the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done!

2. And I would suggest to you that the remnant in view here speaks of those kept by God's grace to serve Him through the judgement that came upon the nations described by Isaiah...

- In particular, it speaks of those preserved from the time of Isaiah until the appearing of Jesus Christ.
 - They are the ones who continued from generation to generation and are found rejoicing in Jesus Christ when He comes into the world!
 - Most of Israel rejected Him,
 - but there was this tiny remnant according to the election of grace that came to Him for salvation and confessed Him as Lord.

- The Apostle Paul was among this remnant according to the election of grace...
 - He tells us so in Romans 11:5-7
 - Romans 11:5-7: Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.
 - We should be so thankful that God always preserves a remnant!
 - O that each of you who hears my voice might be a part of that remnant!
 - That you might not be cast out with the city of *tohu*,
 - but might come to Jesus Christ for eternal life and be blessed in Him forever and ever.

TRANS>Look at what Isaiah says of this tiny remnant!

- He has great things planned for them!

B. This tiny remnant is going to sound forth the praises of God into all the earth! (14-15)

1. We have seen that the world's song will be silenced,

- but the song of the tiny remnant will sound loudly!
- Verse 14 says, "They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing (sing or shout loudly). They shall cry aloud from the sea."
 - The emphasis is on their making noise that will be heard!
 - They want everyone to know about the God they are praising!

2. Look at how far they are heard!

- Their sound truly goes into all the earth!
 - Verse 15 says
 - Isa 24:15: Therefore glorify the LORD in the dawning light, The name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
 - The place of the dawning light is the land of the east, where the sun comes up.
 - And the coastlands of the sea refer to the west—across the Mediterranean Sea!
 - My brothers and sisters, this tiny remnant has a message to declare to the nations!

- And I say, one of the most glorious things that ever happened in the world was the way Jesus' little tiny band of faithful followers carried the word of God all over the world in one generation!
 - They took it to England, and to Spain and to India
 - They took it east and west, north and south.
 - The message of the tiny remnant was so glorious that they could not but publish it over the earth!

TRANS> And just what is their message?

C. The remnant's message is "Glory to the righteous" (16)

- In vs 16, it says:
 - Isa 24:16: From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!"
- 1. Surely these words, "Glory to the righteous (or Glory to the Righteous One)!" refer to our dear Lord Jesus Christ!
 - To whom else might they refer?
 - He is the *righteous one* in whom we find all our glory.
 - For without Him, we are the city of tohu—the city of confusion!
 - But He was faithful to God...
 - He kept the law and He did not break the everlasting covenant!
 - He is the One in whom we glory as our righteousness!
 - In Him is the only righteousness of God's people.
 - Do you remember what Isaiah called Him back in chapter 4?
 - In Isa 4:2, he called Him "the Branch of the LORD who would be beautiful and glorious..."
 - He said that it would come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem would be called holy—because of Him!
 - And in chapter 11, Isaiah said that He was the BRANCH that would grow from Jesse's roots and be righteous and become a banner that the Gentiles (or nations) would seek!
 - He is the one Isaiah is speaking about in Isaiah 24:16 who becomes the song of the remnant that is heard in all the world.
- 2. This is still our message today if we are the faithful remnant of God's electing grace.
 - We go forth to proclaim His glory, the glory of the righteous one—of Jesus Christ!

- There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved!
 - No one else has made atonement for our sins on the cross!
 - No one else has met the demands of God's law and borne the curse for us!
 - Only Jesus the righteous one!
- And so we plead with all men everywhere to repent and turn to Him.
 - The message continues to sound forth into all the world today,
 - Join yourself to Him who died for sinners or perish forever as the city of tohu!
 - His praise continues to be heard among the nations from generation to generation!
 - It will ever be so!

TRANS> But my brothers and sisters, you must never suppose that during this glorious day of proclamation, we who know Him should have no sorrow...

- The Lord will continue to purge the earth until the last day...
 - And do not be surprised as a believer to find that...

III. The Lord's purging of the earth is a long and painful process

- There is what we might call a reality check here for Isaiah...
 - In his prophecy, he has seen the glorious days of the Messiah and the spread of the gospel...
 - but this does not change the fact that all the terrible judgements he has been pronouncing upon the nations are still going to fall...
 - Not only upon the Gentiles, but also among His own people!

A. Even in seeing the coming glory, then, Isaiah expresses his distress under the present circumstances.

- Verse 16 he says:
 - Isa 24:16: But I said, "I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."
- 1. He is pained because the people he has been so earnestly preaching to continue to deal treacherously.
 - Isaiah is a master of language and he uses a play on words that the translators have made an effort to bring out in English—
 - As in our translation, he basically uses the same root word five times to stress the fact that they keep on doing what they have been doing.
 - dealing treacherously.

- Isaiah loves the people, and he longs to see them repent!
 - As a prophet, he sees so clearly what is going to happen to them because of their hardness of heart and their refusal of God's grace...
 - and it hurts him deeply to see it.

2. Paul is much like him in this...

- While he rejoices that there is a remnant according to election,
 - his joy is dampened because the majority of his brethren are not partakers of the glorious salvation he is proclaiming.
 - He says,
 - Rom 9:2-3: I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh...
- Many of you have similar sentiments...
 - You rejoice in your salvation,
 - but there is continued sorrow in your heart for loved ones that will not repent.
 - This is perhaps one of the most difficult things about being a believer in this world that God is purging.
 - You know that your loved ones will be purged away if they do not turn to Christ, and often you see them being purged.

B. Dreadful things must occur upon the earth before the glory comes, and we will all feel the pain of these things.

1. Verses 17-18 explain that those who try to escape God's judgement will never succeed.

- They can try to get away, but at last it will overtake them.
- These verses speak of the "fear and the pit and snare" that come upon the inhabitant of the earth.
- The imagery seems to be that of an animal that is hunted...
 - The hunter digs a pit and sets a snare and then goes into the woods in pursuit of his prey.
 - If they escape him, they fall into the pit he has dug...
 - If they escape the pit, they are caught in the snare he has set.
- The wicked cannot escape because God opens the very windows of heaven to pour out His judgement on earth such that the foundations of the earth are shaken as in the day of Noah.

- Nothing can escape him when the windows are opened to release His wrath...
- His judgement will catch up to you.
- You cannot get away from it no matter what you do.

TRANS> It is must better, then, to prepare for His judgement by taking refuge in Jesus Christ rather than denying it and trying to avoid it.

2. Verse 19-20 show us that the earth as a whole will be brought to ruin...
 - a. Verse 19 is very poetic, the words are like a hammer blow... striking the earth repeatedly...
 - A very literal translation would be:
 - broken—there is broken down the earth.
 - cracked through—there is cracked through the earth
 - shaken—there is shaken the earth.
 - Blow after blow falls because there is no repentance...
 - One is remained of Isaiah’s question or distress in chapter 1:
 - Isa 1:5 Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more.
 - He sees the hammer blows coming again and again, but the people keep on in their hardness and sin!
 - Are some of you here like that?
 - Why are you?
 - Why do you hang on to your sin?
 - Why do you not let it go and repent?
 - Do you enjoy your misery?
 - b. Isaiah describes how the earth is weighed down by all the sin that is being committed by its inhabitants...
 - It is reeling like a drunkard—with all the weight of sin on it...
 - It is teetering like a rickety old hut that is about to fall under its weight.
 - c. And when it falls, it will be too late—it cannot rise again.
 - Those are terrifying words at the end of verse 20 where it says,
 - Isa 24:20: And it will fall, and not rise again!
 - There comes a day when God’s judgement is final—terribly final!
 - When there is no more opportunity to repent—never ever again!
 - It is a dreadful thought, but a thought that is designed to bring about your repentance if you have not repented...

- And a thought to burden us deeply for those we love who have not repented—even for our enemies!
 - Think of it—never to rise again!
 - Terrible finality!

TRANS> You will say, but that is only the earth—indeed it is...

- But on the day when the earth collapses under God’s judgement,
 - the wicked will then be brought before the LORD of Hosts to be punished!
- 3. The day the earth falls, the wicked will be brought to their final destiny.
 - Verse 21 describes this...
 - Isa 24:21: It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings.
 - Here you see the reprobate angels who brought temptation on the earth punished,
 - and the kings of the earth who led the rebellion on earth punished with them!
 - The Bible speaks of the rebellious of the earth being cast into the Lake of Fire that God has prepared for the Devil and his angels.
 - But in the until that day comes, the Lord will continue to purge the earth by gathering the rebellious together in prison until the appointed day.
 - Verse 22 says:
 - Isa 24:22 They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished.
 - This is the death of the wicked,
 - but that is only an imprisonment for them until the punishment that comes upon them at the last day.
 - The imprisonment of the angels is spoken of in Jude 6
 - Jude 1:6: “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;”
 - And of course we know that John 5 speaks of how Jesus will call all the dead forth from their graves at the last day to be judged.
 - For now, they are in their graves as in prisons, their souls being in torment as they anticipate the great day of judgement that is yet to come.

- So all through the period of judgement described by Isaiah there was to be this imprisonment of the wicked—purging them from the earth...
 - until the final day of judgement.
 - But you see that that judgement is said to not occur for many days!
 - That means that we, who believe, must endure the painful purging of the earth with all its convulsions and difficulties until the end.
 - We are being redeemed out of a sinful, defiled world,
 - and this cannot be done without pain.
 - Our Lord Jesus bore the everlasting curse for us and set us free from it forever,
 - but as long as we are in this world, we are called to enter into His sufferings.
 - We have need of patience that we might endure to the end.
 - We will have much tribulation before the end comes.
 - The Lord has told us that it will be so and we must not expect it to be otherwise.
 - Rather, it is for you to arm yourself for suffering.

IV. But what a glorious kingdom emerges when the Lord's purification is complete!

- See how the kingdom is described here in verse 23!
- A. The kingdom is said to be one in which the LORD of hosts reigns gloriously!
 - That will be the outcome of all this purging of the earth—
 - The glorious reign of the LORD!
 - Understand, my brothers and sisters,
 - It is not that He is in Himself lacking in glory or dominion now!
 - It is rather that His glory and rule are not revealed to us because of His patience with the wicked...
 - He is still allowing them to go on in their rebellion so that we do not yet see His authority and glory manifested upon them.
 - But the Day is coming when everything will be brought under His feet.
 - And then everything will be done in His way!
 - I hear many atheists complain about the problems in the world.
 - They use this as an excuse to deny God.

- They say, “If He is a good God, why do we have all these problems?”
 - But my friends, if only they knew!
 - God will come to solve the problems, but when He does, it will mean that the wicked will be punished and cast into the Lake of Fire with Devil whom they joined in his rebellion!
 - All of Christ’s enemies will be brought under His feet, never to rise again.
 - And then everything in the earth will be done completely in His way!
 - And then we will see the glory of His reign that we now yearn for!
 - All that offends, all that is defiled, will be cast into the Lake of Fire!
 - Then, His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven!
- B. You see how Isaiah tells us that He will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders gloriously.
1. The idea here is that God’s glorious reign will be over those who are in Jesus Christ.
 - You see, Mount Zion was where the temple was...
 - And it was there that Christ was presented to God’s people.
 - They learned about His saving work by what was revealed at Mount Zion...
 - where sacrifices representing Him were offered on the altar to atone for sin.
 - and where burnt offerings representing Him in His perfection were presented to God in our place.
 - The point is that God only reigns over those who embrace Christ who was revealed at Mount Zion in Jerusalem where God caused His name to be.
 - All the world must come to Mount Zion and to Jerusalem to be saved...
 - Not to the physical location of these places, but to Christ who was revealed there.
 - And when we believe, we become part of the Jerusalem that is above.
 - And we come under the government that God has appointed in the hands of elders who faithfully proclaim Him and oversee His church.
 - If you are in Christ, you will live in this glorious kingdom that He is going to bring to perfection.
2. Now you will say, “but what about the sin that remains in me?”
 - “How can God accept us when we are not yet perfected?”

- Well let me tell you—the difference between you and those who are yet unconverted is this...
 - You *want* to be made perfect. You want to be 100% submissive to Him... That is why you came to Jesus Christ.
 - The unregenerate person does not want to be under God’s rule.
 - God will give to each what he wants...
 - The wicked will be cast into the outer darkness...
 - But the converted person will be changed—perfected by the fullness of the Holy Spirit who will then be given as never before.

- And then we will have the inestimable privilege of seeing what God’s glorious reign is really like!
 - We will see the glory that God the Father Son and Holy Spirit have lived in from all eternity.
 - We will be able to see what it is like when everyone does His will perfectly, all the time!
 - Can you image that!
 - No more bad attitudes—none!
 - No more sinful desires!
 - No more harsh words!
 - No more laziness!
 - No more selfishness—but quite the opposite...
 - You will be so full of love that you will love the way Jesus loves!
 - It is inconceivable!

TRANS> My brothers and sisters,

C. Isaiah tells us that this reign will be so glorious that the sun and moon and will be ashamed!

1. What a beautiful picture this is!

- The moon he calls the white one...
 - And the sun he calls here the hot one...

- And these luminaries are very marvellous and very important to us in this present age.
 - The sun was given to rule the day and the moon to rule the night.
 - They are so important that many throughout history have worshipped them...

2. But Isaiah tells us that when God's glorious kingdom is established,
 - His glory will be so bright among us that the sun and moon will be supplanted.
 - They will be lost in insignificance.
 - Here is what Isaiah says in chapter 60:
 - Isa 60:19-20: The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, And the days of your mourning shall be ended.”
3. And we will all be able to identify with the moon and the sun in this regard...
 - We will say,
 - “I thought I was something—but now that I have seen the glory of God...
 - alas, I am nothing to compared with Him!”

Conclusion...

- Our great God is busy purging the earth, and it is a painful process for us...
- But what a glorious outcome it will be when He reigns so that everything is done His way!
 - Haven't you all had enough of your own way?
 - Aren't you sick of your own way?
 - Come to Him and ask Him to have mercy on you through Jesus Christ and to establish you in His way forever and ever!
 - Then you will share in His glorious reign that outshines the sun and the moon.