

Congregational handout; outline sermon text on following pages

Sermon Notes & References

**Joy and Wrath
Isaiah 66:10-24**

July 15, 2012

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^B Proverbs 14:34, Isaiah 29:13-14, 64:6

^C Isaiah 10:21-22, Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 60:3, 19:23-24, 9:6-7

^D Isaiah 65:17-18, 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Corinthians 1:3

^E Proverbs 14:12, 4:18, John 3:16

A. Introduction

1. Isaiah Concludes

- a. today's message completes our series from the book of Isaiah
- b. we have called Isaiah, 'The Evangelical Prophet'
- c. because, more than any other OT prophet, the message he was given to declare is the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ
- d. as we went through this book, you probably noticed that there were subjects that were repeated, themes restated and expanded
- e. there are themes of joy and themes of wrath
- f. Psalm 145:20, 'The Lord keeps all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.' well summarizes Isaiah's message

2. Themes of Wrath

- a. God's wrath against sin is the exercise of His judicial power in bringing condemnation and judgement to sinners
- b. these are stated, both on a personal and a national level
- c. on a personal level you have Ahaz, a king who would rather trust in the power of Assyria than in the Lord; this was a trust that backfired on him and his nation
- d. on a national level let me just list a few these by their chapters
 - (A) 13-14 against Babylon
 - (B) 15-16 Moab
 - (C) 17 Syria
 - (D) 18 Ethiopia
 - (E) 19 Egypt
 - (F) 20 Philistia
 - (G) 21 Edom and Arabia
 - (H) 23 Tyre and Sidon, Phoenician cities

- (I) 24 The whole earth
 - (J) 28 Ephraim as the representative tribe of Israel North
 - (K) 29-30 Jerusalem as representative of Israel South, or Judah
 - (L) and the final 27 chapters of the book are written against the background of the pronouncement of judgement against Judah in the form of their exile as a nation into Babylon
 - (M) so these chapters teach the lesson that 'Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people.' (Proverbs 14:34)
- e. the last two nations mentioned here are the nominal people of God: Israel; it is in them that we learn that mere external religion does not have any bargaining power with God:
- (A) 'Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honour Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvellously with this people, wondrously marvellous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed.'" (Isaiah 29:13-14)
 - (B) 'For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.' (Isaiah 64:6)

3. Themes of Joy

- a. within Israel, the nation nominally God's, Isaiah teaches that there is a true Israel, a true remnant that will be saved: 'A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, Only a remnant within them will return; ...' (Isaiah 10:21-22)
- b. in like manner, within the nations of the world, to some there will come a blessing out of the nation of Israel in accordance with the promise to Abraham: 'And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.' (Genesis 12:3)
- c. so we find the theme throughout of the Gentiles joining the household of faith, 'Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.' (Isaiah 60:3)
- d. even the promise of specific nations spiritually uniting with true Israel, 'In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria,

and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. 24 In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth' (Isaiah 19:23-24)

e. what is the basis of all these themes of joy? it is founded in the promises of Messiah, his birth, his death, his coming kingdom, that are recorded in this book and too numerous to cover, but illustrated best in Isaiah 9:6-7: 'For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.'

4. Perhaps as we read today's text, Isaiah 66:10-24, you will recognize some of these themes; a text that speaks of Joy and Wrath «

a. Scripture reading, Isaiah 66:10-24 (NKJV) – follow in your own Bible »

B. Joy in Spiritual Jerusalem 66:10-14

1. back in the previous chapter we saw the reason why we speak of this as being spiritual Jerusalem

a. it is the Jerusalem that is part of God's new creative act: 'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing And her people for gladness.' (Isaiah 65:17-18)

b. it is not merely a physical city of stones and walls and buildings

c. but it is a spiritual city consisting of the redeemed people of God

2. Verse 10

a. is addressed to people who have two qualities

(A) one: they love Jerusalem, that is, those who are God's own people

(1) those who truly love God's people, are those truly loving God

(2) those who have repented of their own sin

(3) those who strive to obey his gracious commands

- (4) history shows no such time when this could be said of the whole nation of Israel, but only of the true remnant within it
- (B) two: they mourn over Jerusalem, over the state of God's people
 - (1) many of us sorrow with Paul at the continued rejection of Messiah, God's Son, by those who are the Israel according to the flesh and long that they might become part of God's universal, invisible and spiritual church in Jesus Christ
 - (2) and, though addressed to the remnant, these words can be equally applied as we see the inroads of unbelief, indifference and immorality in the Christian church
- b. these are encouraged by this statement in

3. verse 11

- a. Jerusalem – the true people of God – will nurse and provide for her children – those who 'like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation' (1 Peter 2:2)
 - (A) Jerusalem is described as a mother satisfying her baby's needs
 - (B) whose very presence fills her baby with delight
 - (C) and in the next verse,
 - (1) she carries them upon her hip
 - (2) and even (as NkJV has it) dandles them on her knee
 - (D) all speaking of a mother's loving care for her child

4. verse 12

- a. however begins to show that behind this true, caring people of God
- b. is the work of God Himself; it is He who brings to His people
 - (A) peace; completeness and soundness of one's being
 - (1) it comes, not like a pond that is there in the spring, but dried up and gone in the summer
 - (2) not like a spring creek or brook, but a full-fledged river that flows on and on, its source deep in the earth
 - (B) honour of the nations: this is likened not to a river, but to the wadis of the east; the closest we

come to these is during a warm spring day when there is a rapid melt and the quiet rivers fill to overflowing: in such suddenness and such abundance honour will come to the people of God

5. verse 13

- a. here it becomes abundantly clear that God is the cause for joy
- b. it is God Himself who acts as the mother of His people
- c. He promises: 'I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted...'
- d. our God is rightly called the 'God of all comfort' (2 Corinthians 1:3)

6. verse 14

- a. promises that God's people will indeed see this, their heart gladdened
- b. and their bones to sprout like grass! don't you find that a strange expression? it certainly is ... but some of us have creaky old bones, and what a joy it will be when they as grass, after a dry spell such as we are now having, spring up with fresh vigour after a rain
- c. but with the final words of this verse the theme turns from joy to ...

C. God's Wrath Against the Wicked 66:15-19

1. verses 15-16; God's Punishing Judgment to Come

- a. 'For behold, the Lord will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. For the Lord will execute judgment by fire And by His sword on all flesh, And those slain by the Lord will be many.' (Isaiah 66:15-16)
- b. in these verses three symbols are used for God's executing judgement
 - (A) the first is fire, representing use of natural & manmade disasters
 - (B) the second is the whirlwind – literally the wind that ends things, the wind of destruction – the use of natural disaster
 - (C) the third is the sword, representing the use of war
- c. none of these can be turned aside by an individual or even by a nation so that by the use of these symbols, the certainty and the severity of the judgement of God is made known

2. verse 17

- a. did you know that you can make yourself holy and cleansed and be completely abhorrent to God – as well as obnoxious to people
- b. well, that is the case if you were to pursue a religion other than that which is taught in Scripture: entrusting oneself in faith to Jesus Christ
- c. because to do so is like preparing yourself to commit religious acts that are pagan and detestable to God

3. verse 18

- a. that is what the majority of Israel were doing, and God knew it
- b. He saw into their hearts and through their actions
- c. so God is gathering a great people to Himself, and in

4. verse 19

- a. we have listed some of the countries from which they will come
- b. if I understand these names correctly, they all represent nations at the extremes of the then known world; indeed, in one case that are described as the distant coastlands or islands
- c. these come, because from the survivors of His own people, from the true Israel, the remnant, God will send messengers of God's glory
- d. what is the sign? ... certainly the most important sign was that of Jesus Christ, dying on the cross for the sin of the world, risen again on the third day, and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high
- e. and the first of those messengers, the apostles, fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ of Matthew 28:19-20

D. Joy in Worship 66:20-23

1. verse 20

- a. these will bring back a 'meal offering' to Jerusalem – converted Gentiles who become brethren to the believers within the nation of Israel, the remnant according to the election of grace
- b. so Israel is enriched by Gentiles added to the people of God

2. verse 21

- a. and with them comes a new order of worship
- b. under the old order, and especially as interpreted by Jews of Jesus' time, Gentiles could not offer a sacrifice and had very limited access to the exterior courts of the temple
- c. but now, from these who are brought from out of the Gentiles, God will give to them the privilege of serving himself: among the first were Gentile converts such as Luke and Timothy who "offered spiritual sacrifices to God by the Gospel" (Calvin^{2}.)

3. verse 22

- a. so a better, a new day is coming
- b. the joy, in which we rejoice at and with Jerusalem, the people of God
- c. is not fleeting, brief and passing
- d. but enduring, and lasting in the presence of God
- e. and the offspring – those coming to God through the witness of the people of God – and their name will likewise endure

4. verse 23

- a. worship will be continuing and continual
- b. using the figures of the OT, Isaiah prophesies there will be a faithful, regular, legitimate worship of God on the part of all flesh in the new dispensation when the new heavens and the new earth are in existence.^{3}; but over against this, the next verse describes

E. The End of the Wicked 66:24

1. verse 24 is a prophecy of everlasting judgement

- a. The prophet, by the very mode of description adopted by him, precludes the possibility of our conceiving of the thing here set forth as realized in any material form in this present state. He is speaking of the future state, but in figures drawn from the present world. The object of his prediction is no other than the new Jerusalem of the world to come, and the eternal torment of the damned; but the way in which he pictures it, forces us to translate it out of the figures draws from this life into the realities of the life

to come ...^{4}.

- b. that we might glimpse the awfulness of hell, the Scriptures describe it in terms we can picture – but when we add that this is an eternal state of the lost, we only begin to see its horror

F. Conclusion

- 1. so in the book of Isaiah we find two truths that form the gospel
 - a. there is the theme of God's wrath, rightfully executed against all those who reject God and go their own way: 'There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.' (Proverbs 14:12)
 - b. there is the theme of God's joy, given to those who in simple faith accept God's provision of salvation in Jesus Christ: 'But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.' (Proverbs 4:18)
- 2. that gospel still stands; it was not a gospel simply to the nation of Israel, but intended for the whole world, as we hear in that best known verse of all Scripture, John 3:16 – 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.' (John 3:16)
 - a. what a sad moment it is for those who reject this offer from God
 - b. what a joyful moment to those who received Jesus Christ as Saviour

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AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of my favourite commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870

EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan

Volume 6, Isaiah, by Geoffrey W. Grogan, Principal, Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, Scotland;

EJY – The Book of Isaiah by Edward J. Young; © 1965; Wm. B. Eerdmans

K&D – Commentary on the Old Testament, by Keil & Delitzsch; Volume 7, Isaiah, by Franz Delitzsch

Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site,

www.holwick.com.

2. EJY, *in loc.*

3. EJY, *in loc.*

4. K&D, *in loc.*