

The Prophets & Kings

From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

Book 1

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

Week 40

“Getting Your Attention”

Study: Isaiah 65:1-8

Reading: Haggai 1:1-15, Psalm 119:17-24

Memory: Romans 8:21

When we were first married, my wife and I would spend many of our “date nights” shopping. For those of you who have lived in a rural community, you can probably understand this a little more than those who grew up in a city. Because we lived over 45 minutes from the nearest mall and large box stores, we would often have to make a night of it if we needed to buy some things. There were many times that we would split up in the stores or malls and then started looking for each other. If I looked for several minutes and couldn’t find my wife, I would call her name out loud. I wouldn’t yell it loud (unless I was getting very impatient), but I would raise my voice and call our her name hoping she would hear me, even if she was several aisles away.

Today, we are going to see how God is constantly calling out our names trying to get and keep our attention. He wants us to look to Him and follow His ways.

What Does the Bible Say?

The whole time that Israel was rebelling, God was ready to accept them back. He would constantly reveal Himself to them showing them in many ways that He was there waiting for them to turn to Him. The fact that the phrase “Here I am” was repeated emphasized that fact that God wanted to be found. It was like a person jumping up and down waving his arms hoping to get the attention of another. The arms of God were wide open waiting for His people to come back to Him so He could give them a hug and embrace them as His own, yet they continued to rebel against Him. Yet, the people would practice idol worship, defiantly rejecting God. Instead of going to the temple, they would sacrifice in their gardens and make altars at a variety of places. They would even worship in the tombs and mystical places. This indicated the idea of looking to the spirit world for guidance and direction. They did not care about the law and ate the pork products and other food that had been prohibited by their dietary laws (vs 1-4).

The general attitude of the people had become one of defiance. They basically told God to leave them alone and keep to Himself because they thought their practices were holy and right and they didn't want the prophets of God to defile them. God's response to this pictured the idea of a fire breathing dragon with smoke coming out of his nostrils because of the anger that was stirring up inside of Him as a result of the sin of the people and their rejection of Him (vs 5).

Though God loves His children and longed for them to come back to Him, God was also a just and righteous God and He could not keep silent. He was going to have to act and repay them for theirs in and for the continued sin of the nation. He had been patient, hoping they would repent and turn back to Him, but they wouldn't. It was as if they were building up the judgment of God, like a damn holding back water, until one day it was going to burst and spew out all over the people (vs 6-7).

Though the judgement of God was going to be strong and fierce, it would not be complete. He compared it to picking grapes off a vine and finding a cluster full of bad grapes. Instead of destroying all the grapes, the few good ones were picked off and the rest disposed of. There were still people who wanted to follow God and these are referred to elsewhere as the "remnant." They would be spared because of their choice to follow God. These would be the seeds that God would use to replant the land and keep the Israelite nation alive. These were the ones who would be taken to Babylon and return to the land to restore it (vs 8).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize when God is trying to get your attention? There have probably been times in your life where God has been jumping up and down waiving His arms (figuratively speaking) attempting to get your attention. This often happens when you become so engrossed in the things of this world and what you want to accomplish which causes you not to hear or see what God wants from you. To avoid this, you must constantly remind yourself of the importance of looking to Him. You are told many places in Scripture that if you seek Him you will find Him because He is constantly waiting for you to come to Him. Even if you are surrounded by others who do not seek after Him, God wants you to be like that good grape in the midst of rotten grapes. He will spare you much of the misery others will face and can still use you to produce wonderful wine, fulfilling the purpose that He made you for.

What was God ready for (vs 1)?

Why did God want to get the attention of His people (vs 1)?

What had Israel become (vs 1)?

Why did God spread out His hands (vs 1)?

How are the people of Israel described (vs 2)?

What did the people continually do to God (vs 3)?

How did they defy God (vs 4)?

What did they declare to God (vs 5)?

How do you think they declared this?

****Most likely this was a reference to the people telling the prophets to keep quiet and not bother them. They did not want to hear from God, but wanted to continue in their sin.*

What did God say He would not do (vs 6)?

Why is it important to realize that God is patient, but will not continue to sit back and watch His people destroy themselves and His name?

Why do you think that God declared they would pay for the sins of their fathers (vs 7)?

What do you think it means that God would "measure into their lap" (vs 7 - ESV)?

****Most likely it was a picture of a person holding out his garment like a sack and having it filled with grain.*

Why was God not going to destroy everyone (vs 8)?

What does this reveal about the character of God?

“Seek and Be Filled”

Study: Isaiah 65:9-16

Reading: Galatians 6:6-10, Psalm 1:1-6

Memory: Romans 8:21

What Does the Bible Say?

Though destruction was going to come, God was going to spare some of the Israelites like the good grapes in a bad cluster would be spared. He would take that small remnant and use them to help repossess the land. In verse 9 he described how

they would possess the mountains of the land and then in verse 10 He described how they would live in the Plain of Sharon and their dwelling place would extend to the Valley of Achor. Often, when describing the whole land of Israel in Scripture, Dan to Beerheba is mentioned. Those are the north and south points of Israel. Here the Plain of Sharon is the western point of the land along the Mediterranean sea

and the Valley of Achor is an eastern point of the land near Jericho and the Jordan River valley. The people who sought after the Lord would be able to refill the land after the sin of the nation as a whole caused the land to be conquered and the people to be dispersed (9-10).

This restoration would not take place for the ungodly. They had chosen to reject God’s law and instead feasted to the gods of this world. The gods of Fortune and Destiny may or may not have been actual gods. The names of those gods reveal the attempts of Israel to try to know the future. Much like people today who seek after psychics or involve themselves in the practice of astrology. They were seeking to know the



future, but God revealed their future. They were destined to die and face great problems because they did not listen when God spoke to them. They did not delight in the things that God delighted in, but instead went after their own desires (vs 11-12).

Those who sought after God would be able to eat and be full, while those who chose not to seek after God would be hungry and thirsty. Following God would lead to rejoicing while following selfishness would lead to shame. Gladness would fill the hearts of those who worshiped God, while pain would grip the lives of those who failed to follow His ways. The name of those who rejected God would be like a curse while those who followed God would be given a new and glorious name. These blessed followers will choose to follow God and the anger of God will be put aside and replaced with great blessings (vs 13-16).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Much of the book of Isaiah described the misery that the Israelites would face through the destruction of the Babylonians. There are many times where little is said about those who still sought after God. This passage today reveals that even though Judah would face great judgement, those who did what was right would be spared from a great deal of misery. Yes, many of them would be taken captive, forced to leave their homes and even be persecuted by the evil ones, but God would choose to bless them. God reminds us over and over again that He takes care of those who choose to follow Him. This doesn’t mean that all will be great and always go the way you want it, but you can rest assured that God is watching out for those who look to Him for help.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for choosing to reward your obedience.
- * Ask God to help you choose His way above the way of the world.
- * Praise God because He is the only One who has the power to keep His Word and reward His children.

Thought for the day

Who is going to possess the land of Israel once again (vs 9)?

Where will the flocks graze and find rest (vs 10)?

Why are those two places mentioned (vs 10)?

Who was being addressed in verse 11?

How do you see the same type of evil taking place in our society?

How do you think this can creep into the church?

What was going to happen to those who rejected God (vs 12)?

Why was this going to happen (vs 12)?

What can you learn from this?

Why do you think the rejection of God's Word comes so easily?

What was going to be the difference between those who served God and those who didn't (vs 13)?

What would be the result of those who followed God and those who didn't (vs 14)?

How have you seen this come true here on the earth?

What will be the end of those who reject God (vs 15)?

What will God do for those who choose to believe in Him (vs 15)?

What do you think the beginning of verse 16 means?

****The righteous choose to swear by God and follow what God says. They will be rewarded for this.*

What would God cause to happen (vs 16)?

“A New Earth”

Study: Isaiah 65:17-25

Reading: Revelation 20 & 21

Memory: Romans 8:21

When I first met my wife to be, one of the things that amazed me was how it seemed that she could remember almost every day of her life as a child. I know she didn't remember every single day, but to me I was amazed at how much she remembered. For me, my childhood was lumped into a few quick memories. Though I believe I had a great childhood, I had forgotten much of it even when I was in my 20's. Those memories faded even more and I can barely remember what it was like when I was a child.

Today, we are going to see how one day when we are living in eternity our memories of this world will be faint and will be so distant that we will not remember much, if any of it any more.

What Does the Bible Say?

God is planning to create a new earth along with new heavens (a reference for the sky and atmosphere). When this takes place and those who believe are dwelling with God for eternity, we won't even remember what the old earth was like. One of the great reasons for this is that the new earth will be a place without pain or suffering. There will be great rejoicing and joy forever. This new earth will also have a new Jerusalem which will be the capital of this new world and be a place filled with gladness. The city will never experience distress or the sound of weeping (vs 17-19).

Revelation 20 & 21 give us a little more information about the millennial kingdom and the new heaven and new earth and how they are separate periods. In Isaiah's prophecy these periods appear to be lumped together, much like the first and second advent of Christ were lumped together at times. Revelation reveals that on the new earth there will be no more death, but here in verse 20, it appears to be speaking of the millennial kingdom since it mentions that there will be death. Though death occurs, it won't be filled with extreme sadness because those who die will die of old age after a long fulfilled life. Infants will no longer die

after a few days and no one will die young. Even the person who is sinful and “accursed” will live to be 100 and that would be considered an early death (vs 20).

What is being described in these verses is the complete opposite of the world they were living in. They will inhabit the houses they will build for many, many years and continually reap the harvest of the food they plant. No longer will they have to live in fear of losing their home to foreign invaders and have their crops eaten by invading armies. Their lives will be like that of the trees which would last for hundreds of years. When they work, they will receive the rewards for their labor and continue to build on what they had previously built. Their children won’t have to experience great heartache or problems but they will be blessed by the Lord. Jesus will physically be on the earth with them and will answer them even before they finish calling on His name. The animal will no longer eat and devour one another. They will not be a threat to the people. Even fierce animals like lions and wolves will be like pets (v 21-25).

How Does this Apply to Me?

The last part of this reading pictures complete opposite circumstances to what the nation of Judah was experiencing when it was written. They had lived through the destruction brought about by Assyria where all but Jerusalem had been conquered. Though they would slightly rebuild in this time, in less than 100 years, it would all be destroyed once again by the Babylonians. There was a general feeling of fear that would exist among the people, not knowing what the future would hold and not knowing if any of the world they accomplished that day would be there the next for them to enjoy. Though we are not in the exact same condition today, there is often a similar fear in the world today. When will the economy collapse? Will we enter into a great recession? Will all the wars that take place lead us into World War III? Will we be destroyed by nuclear war? Though most people don’t dwell on these fears, they are constantly in the back of the minds of many people. This is why the understanding of a new heaven and new earth should be an amazing thought. As a believer, you don’t have to live in these fears mentioned above, but at the same time you do have to live through the agony that is produced in the world. You can look forward to the day when these promises are fulfilled. Choose today to trust in the salvation that God is bringing in your spirit and will some day bring to this earth.

What was God going to create (vs 17)?

What are the heavens (vs 17)?

What will not be remembered (vs 18)?

Do you think it is a good or bad thing that you won’t remember much of this earth? Explain your answer.

What will you be able to do forever (vs 18)?

Why was Jerusalem going to be so different than it was in the day Isaiah was writing (vs 18)?

How is Jerusalem going to be much different than it is today?

What will God do in Jerusalem (vs 19)?

What do you think this means?

What will not be heard in the city (v 20)?

Why is this such a great thing to look forward to?

How will life and age be much different in the millennial kingdom (vs 20)?

What idea is being expressed in verse 21-22?

What will their lives be compared to (vs 22)? Why?

What will they experience in their families (vs 23)?

What will God do for them (vs 24)?

What will live together (vs 25)?

Why is this such an amazing picture?

“A Glorious Rebirth”

Study: Isaiah 66:1-11

Reading: Matthew 5:1-12, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Memory: Romans 8:21

My wife and I had the great privilege of having four children. I remember the excitement we first felt when each of those children were being formed in the womb, but I also remembered how time seemed to drag on, especially in the last trimester. For the last few months, it became more and more difficult for my wife to do many things and she became more and more uncomfortable as the babies grew. We both reached the point near the end where we were longing for the babies to be born.

Today, we are going to see how God has the power to bring new birth in an instant. Though Israel faced great destruction, the marvelous rebirth that will take place one day will be quick and glorious.

What Does the Bible Say?

By declaring that “heaven is my home” and the “earth is my footstool” God was describing how He could not be limited to live in a house or one place. God was the One who created all the things that we see around us, but in His greatness He will not overlook the man who is humble and contrite. Those who listen to His Word and fear Him will find the grace and mercy of the Lord. This is in great contrast to many of the earthly leaders and rulers who would reject the cries of the poor and lowly (vs 1-2).

Though the Israelites still offered sacrifices to God, many of them did it with the same attitude that the pagans used in their worship. Sure, they were offering the types of animals that God wanted. They offered oxen, lambs, grain & incense, but because of their desire to sin and seek after other things God viewed these things just like He did the things that the pagans offered to their false gods. Though they would go through the motions, their hearts were far from God. Because of this, God was going to keep His promise to them and reward them with harsh treatment and cause the very things that they feared to happen to them. They did not listen to God and His many rebukes. They did not answer when He

called for repentance. They chose to delight themselves in the things that God hated (vs 3-4).

God had a message for those who feared Him and chose to live for Him. They were often hated by the others for doing what is right and wanting God to be glorified. They wanted to shame the followers of God, but God wasn't going to let that happen. Instead, it was those who rejected God that would face the vengeance of God (vs 5-6).

Verse 7 gave an interesting picture of a woman who was in labor and gave birth to a child without experiencing any pain. According to verse 8, that simply does not happen. No child is born in a day, but formed over time and is delivered after a time of great pain. Yet, God was going to do something miraculous for Israel and He was going to deliver them as a nation without a long process for rebuilding. The return of Israel to the land would be a quick birth. Though something like this partially happened when the Persians sent many Jews back to rebuild Jerusalem, a fulfillment of this will be seen when the Messiah returns (vs 7-9).

This will be a great time for the city that was once destroyed. The glory of Jerusalem will return. Those who had mourned over the city and its demolished condition and those who continued to love and hope for the city will rejoice. Their satisfaction was compared to that of a nursing child drinking from the mother's breasts. The picture was of a crying infant who found the full satisfaction in the milk of the mother (vs 10-11).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Over and over in Scripture you are reminded that God is not pleased with outward sacrifice if it is not accompanied with an inward desire. This reveals that it is a common problem for people to be outwardly religious, but inwardly corrupt. This was not just a problem in the Bible days, but it can be a problem for you today. You can go to church, give offerings, serve in a ministry and still not live a life that God desires. What God wants is a humble and contrite heart. He does not want a person who thinks they are perfect or tries to be perfect on their own. The humble and contrite person recognizes they are sinners and recognizes how much they need God. Their offerings are out of a heart of love and not duty. Their desire is obedience more than sacrifice. This should be a reminder to you once again to ask God to reveal to you any area of your life where you are sacrificing outwardly, but not out of a love for Him.

What does it mean that God's home is heaven and the earth is His footstool (vs 1)?

Why did God say any house built by them would be too small for Him (vs 1)?

What did God declare (vs 2)?

Though God is great and powerful, who does He have fellowship with (vs 2)?

Describe how you can see the three characteristics mentioned at the end of verse 2 in your life?

What did God say about the sacrifices many of the Israelites were making (vs 3)?

What was God going to do as a result of the actions of the people (vs 4)?

How were those who followed God being treated (vs 5)?

What was going to happen to those who treated the followers of God shamefully (vs 5)?

What does verse 6 picture?

What was unique about the woman in labor (vs 7)?

What is going to happen to Israel (vs 8)?

What questions were asked in verse 9? Why?

Why was there great rejoicing (vs 10)?

What picture was given to represent the people of Jerusalem when God restores the city (vs 11)?

How can you find that same type of comfort in Him today?

“The Final Victory”

Study: Isaiah 66:12-24

Reading: Revelation 19:1-21

Memory: Romans 8:21

I was once called to the hospital right after one of the men in our church was injured in a motorcycle accident where he slid on the pavement several feet – on his face. That sight was enough to never make me want to ride a motorcycle. Though it has been many years, I still remember that face and have no desire whatsoever to ride.

Today, we are going to see that the visual picture of hell and eternal judgement will be a great deterrent to keep people from choosing to reject God.

What Does the Bible Say?

Continuing the illustration of a mother and young child, God described how He will give peace to the nation of Israel. He would carry them on his hip and bounce them on his knee, like a nurturing mother. They would be comforted and cared for. The picture of the love a mother has for a newborn infant is one of the greatest pictures of love that extends to every civilization. Just as a child is thrilled to see His mother because of the bond that has been established, the nation of Israel will have a joyful heart as they experience the great love that God displays to them. The nation will flourish because the hand of the Lord will be upon them (vs 12-14).

Much of chapter 66 is pointing to a future time and future events that have not taken place yet. Here God describes how He will come to earth like a mighty army chasing after its enemies. He will come in great fury like that of a raging fire and will destroy those who fought against Him. The people will be judged by God and we are told that many people will face this judgement for their sin and for their rejection of Him. This judgement was not just for the pagan nations, but Jews who do not choose to follow the way of God will be judged (vs 15-17).

God sees and knows what everyone does and thinks. There will be a time for judgment and God will show His great glory to all people. Verse 19 declares that God will show some sign among them and will cause the remnant of believers to spread out to many places. The regions

mentioned were most likely regions that were the furthest extent of the known world at the time. Basically, God is declaring that He will send messengers to every part of the world so they can hear about the glory of God and have a chance to believe in Him and turn to Him. These will also return back with believers, most likely believing Jews, from all of the world. They will travel in all types of ways to be back to Israel. Those who return will not be secondary citizens, but will be leaders in the land by being appointed as priests and Levites (vs 18-21).

All these things are part of the end times events and once the people return and the kingdom is established, they would always be His people. No more would they face destruction, but all humanity will worship God all the time (vs 22-23).

Verse 24 points out the fact that those who choose to reject God will face eternal torment. It appears to say the believers who live in the kingdom and worship God will be able to see the eternal torment of those who chose not to believe. A description is given of a place where the worm that eats the flesh will never die. Jesus made reference to this verse in Matthew 9:47-48 describing it as “hell.” As with many other prophetic passages, we see bits and portions of what things will be like. The New Testament puts a greater definition on some of these things or events, but we still don’t see a full picture. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:12 “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” The exact specifics are not always clear, but the understanding is. Those who follow God will experience eternal joy, but those who chose to reject Him will face destruction in this life and eternal torment in the life to come (vs 24).

How Does this Apply to Me?

What are the benefits you experience for following God? Scripture is chalked full of benefits for those who chose to do as God says. There are great benefits in this life and in the life to come. So why do so many people, even believers, fail to fully follow God? Your sin nature is constantly doing battle with the Spirit that is inside of you. In Romans 7:19, Paul said, “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.” This does not mean that we are hopeless. Paul went on to describe how we have the Holy Spirit inside of us which can give us the victory over our flesh. In your battle today, look to God. Choose to do what is right. Gain the victory over your flesh today and

you will be eternally grateful for it.

What does God compare the peace and glory to that He will give to Israel (v 12)?

What picture of love and care is used at the end of verse 12?

How will God comfort His people (vs 13)? Why was this such a powerful picture of comfort?

What will happen to the hearth of God’s people (vs 14)?

What is the difference in the way God will treat His servants to the way He will treat His enemies (vs 14)?

What word pictures are used to describe the anger God would be coming with (vs 15)?

Will there be many people who face the judgment of God (vs 16)?

Who was going to come to an end (vs 17)?

Why do you think this verse talks about pig flesh and mice (vs 17)?

What did God say He knew (vs 18)? Why?

What is going to come (vs 18)? What will all nations see (vs 18)?

Who is God going to send and where will He send them (vs 19)?

Who was going to be brought to Jerusalem (vs 20)?

How were they going to come (vs 20)? What do you think it means?

What will some of the people be (vs 21)?

What was God going to make (vs 22)?

What will all people do (vs 23)?

What will they look at (vs 24)? What do you think this verse means?

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, In 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.