

(The Word for Today) Isaiah 17:1 - Part 3

by Chuck Smith

The sermon discusses the prophecies against Damascus and Syria, and how God's judgment will come upon them, leaving a remnant like grapes on an olive tree.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Isaiah 17:1, Isaiah 17:10-12, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the importance of standing up for righteousness in a fallen world. He emphasizes the need for young adults to abstain from the immorality of our culture and to boldly proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ. Pastor Chuck uses the example of Daniel from the Bible, who took a stand for righteousness even in the face of potential death. He encourages young adults to be committed to following Jesus and to be prepared for the Lord's coming. Additionally, Pastor Chuck highlights the decline of society and urges believers to be aware of the negative influences around them.

Transcript

Welcome to The Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament.

And for those of you following along in your Bibles, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 17, beginning with verse 1, as we continue with an in-depth message entitled, The Prophecies Against Damascus and Syria. One thing is needful, O my Father. One thing is needful, O my God.

That I sit at your feet and pour out my love. This thing is needful, O my God. And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck.

So this was written some thirty years earlier and he speaks of this burden of Damascus. Now this is before Damascus fell, just a few years before the Assyrians destroyed Damascus. And that was under Tiglath-Pileser and Moab was destroyed by Sargon, one of the later kings of Damascus.

of Assyria. So the burden of Damascus, behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city. He is prophesying and predicting the destruction that will come upon Damascus.

And it shall be a ruinous heap. The cities of Aurore are forsaken. So destroyed will they be that there will be flocks that will graze upon them.

The people will be gone. And these areas that were once cities will just be a grazing area for the flocks, which will lie down in the cities and there won't be anybody left to make them afraid, to frighten them, to scare the flocks. The people will have been destroyed or carried away captive.

And they were both the Assyrians. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim. And so the judgment is not only upon Damascus but coming down now into the northern kingdom of Israel upon Ephraim and on the kingdom from Damascus and the remnant of Syria.

They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the Lord of Hosts. Now they are both, Syria and Israel, to be destroyed by the Assyrians. And this did happen some two years after Isaiah prophesied it.

And in that day it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean. Destruction is going to come. The glory of Jacob is going to be wiped out.

It's going to be hard times. And it shall be as when the harvest men gathered the corn and they reaped the ears with his arm. And it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Riphim.

Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uttermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel." So he's saying that the destruction is going to be like just the little remnant after a field has been harvested. When a field was harvested there would be just a few shocks of grain still standing and the poor people would come and gather that. And the same with the olive.

When the olives were ripe they would take and shake the branches to shake the olives down. Much like they do walnuts. Walnut season they have these large poles with a hook on them and they shake the branches and the walnuts fall.

But there's always a few walnuts left in the top of the tree. And when they shake the olives there's always at the top where they can't really reach well with their sticks to beat them all there's always a few olives left at the top. And on those branches that were so loaded down with olives there's always four or five olives on each of those branches.

And so the Lord is saying there will be just a few people left. It'll be just like an olive tree that has been shaken where there's just a few at the top and on those branches that were once loaded down just four or five as the destruction will be so thorough and the nation will be so totally wiped out it'll be just a very small, small remnant that will be left. At that day shall a man look to his Maker and his eyes will have respect to the Holy One of Israel.

I've often wondered as I look at the world today and as I look at the United States today what will it take to turn our hearts back to God. I see our nation in the same path of Israel. As Jeremiah the prophet said, God said through Jeremiah, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters and they have hewn out cisterns.

But they are broken cisterns that can hold no water. They've carved out these caves but they won't hold water. And I see how we have forsaken the true and the living God, the fountain of living water.

And men are trusting in philosophies. They're trusting in broken concepts that can hold no water. They can't give you life.

They can't sustain you. And I look at the philosophy of man today and I look at the ideals and I look at the whole morass of our society and I see us as we are beginning to bear and see the fruit of having sown to the wind. We are starting to reap the whirlwind.

And we can see it in our eroding society. We ought to be absolutely up in arms over the conditions that are going on in our world today. You don't know when you get out to your car tonight if your stereo's going to be there.

They have armed guards all over the parking lots at South Coast Plaza. We're living in a violent age. And the whole moral corruption that we are seeing is just a part of the fruit of teaching that there is no God.

That man has evolved out of the protozoic ooze of the billions of years past. And that it is just one series of fortunate kind of accidental circumstances that has caused you to exist. One puzzling thing to me concerning evolution is how did the sexes ever get started? You know, how is it that in the evolution there was a woman and a man? And how is it that we sort of evolved? We're different for sure.

And yet we have seemed to evolve to the same degree, but we couldn't have come along the same line. And how in the world did they survive before there were the sexes? And how is it that when the sexes did evolve, that they sort of evolved parallel, and thus the same kind of accidents were happening on both sides of the fence. These mutant changes and accidental circumstances were happening on both sides.

Real problem for the evolutionists, not for me. Because I believe that male and female created he them. And I think when he did it, he had a, he just showed a lot of interesting genius.

And I, and I, and I love the, the way God created us different. And with the capacity, with the capacity to reproduce after our kind. That to me is such a marvel, such a miracle, such a glorious miracle.

Reproduction. I just think it's great. Then even giving us the sex drive so we would want to reproduce.

For you see, without the sex drive, Adam would have gone fishing and the story would have ended right there. But look how we've perverted the whole thing today. Men living with men, women with women.

And now the homosexuals are talking about producing laboratory children so that they can, you know, create their own race. Marriage will not be necessary. Relationships between opposite sex will not be necessary.

We've gone so far. I just, I marvel that God has been patient and has allowed us to go as far as we have. But what will it take to turn us back? When are we going to wake up? That this is a one-way street to destruction.

Now here is Israel. Man, there's only, you know, a few berries left in the top of the tree. There's only a few berries left on the, on the fruitful branches.

And, and at that point they turn to God. Is it going to take that kind of a judgment against the United States before those that are left will turn to God? What will it take? In that day a man will look to his Maker. That is, that day in which they've just about totally been wiped out.

His eyes will have respect to the Holy One of Israel. He will no longer look at the alders, the work of His hands. Neither shall He respect that which His fingers have made or the groves, which we've told you before was Ashereth, or the pornography of their days or the images.

He'll turn away from that kind of rot after this horrible destruction. And in that day shall His strong cities be as a forsaken bough, the uppermost branch which they left because of the children of Israel. And there shall be desolation.

And surely that was the case in Israel. It was completely desolate. Because, and this is the reason why it happened, because you have forgotten the God of thy salvation.

And you have not been mindful of the rock of your strength. You sought to rely upon yourself and upon your own strength and upon your own genius and upon your own politicians. And you haven't been mindful that God is our strength.

God is the strength of the nation. But oh, how they seek to deny that today. They're seeking to rewrite our history, to eliminate God from the textbook.

But America is strong because of our founding fathers having a faith in God. Our early colleges, Yale, Harvard and all, were built to train men for the ministry. And it was from these colleges where men were trained for the ministry and born again that they looked for the leadership for our government.

And our early government was filled with Christian legislators who had come from Yale and Harvard and these colleges that were built as seminaries to train students and train men to serve the Lord. And some served the Lord in the pulpits and others served Him in the halls of Congress. But there was that spiritual tenor in the early part of our nation.

And that's why we became strong and powerful. But now go back there. And I think it's just endemic of the whole tragic scene that the highest alcohol per capita consumption in the United States takes place in Washington, D.C. Our legislation, the lobbying that goes on in the bars.

Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, you have not been mindful of the rock of your strength. Therefore, you will plant pleasant plants and you will set them with strange slips. This is a reference to an interesting cult and you can read it in history.

There was this cult where the women would plant these various plants and seek to develop them with some kind of mystic and magical kind of background. And it's a cultish thing that was going on with the women of Israel. In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow and in the morning thou shalt make thy seed to flourish, but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow.

So woe to the multitude of many people which make a noise like the noise of the seas. This is the invading army that is going to come. This noise of the army, like the noise of a stormy sea.

The rushing to the rushing of nations that make a rushing like the rushing of the mighty waters. An army in battle as they come charging down. The yelling and the clanging of the shields and so forth.

And this roar that comes up from this battle. The nation shall rush like the rushing of many waters, but God shall rebuke them and they shall flee far off and shall be chased as the chaff in the mountains. God is going to deal with Assyria.

Assyria has destroyed Israel, but yet God will deal with Assyria and he'll wipe her out. It'll be like chaff in the top of the mountains where the wind just comes and blows it away. You remember in Psalm 1 where he talks about, blessed is the man who stands not in the way of the sinner in the sea of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord.

And in this law does he meditate day and night, be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. But the wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind blows away. So the, you know, the wicked are to be blown away like chaff on the mountain.

They would use the mountain where there's a good breeze, a mountain where there's a good breeze, nothing to hinder the breeze. And that's where they would sort of winnow the wheat. They would take the wheat and throw it in the air and the wind would blow the chaff, the hull and all, it'd blow it away and the grain would drop back on the rock.

And so the nation is going to be blown away like chaff is blown away from the mountaintop. And so about from the mountains before the wind and like the rolling thing before the whirlwind, that is the tumbleweeds. You ever seen tumbleweeds that are taken up in a whirlwind and all and just wiping them up? Behold, at eventide trouble and before the morning he is no longer existing.

And this is what happened. In the evening, the angel of the Lord went through the camp of the Assyrians, wiped out 185,000, blew them away like the chaff, like a tumbleweed. And in the morning they weren't there.

In the morning, the children of Israel got up and looked out at the camp of the Assyrians and they were all dead corpses. The prophecy was fulfilled. So this is the portion for those that spoil us.

This is what's going to happen to Assyria. And this will be the lot of those that have robbed us. So God's judgment upon Assyria.

Next week, as you get into the 19th chapter and God pronounces his judgment concerning Egypt, you're going to find something very, very fascinating. For there in the 19th chapter, Isaiah tells us of the building of the Aswan Dam. But more interesting than that, he tells you of all of the ecological problems that will develop from the building of that dam.

And the interesting thing is that today, those ecological problems that Isaiah predicted would follow the building of the Aswan Dam have indeed taken place. And we'll be talking about that as we look at Isaiah's fascinating prophecy 2,700 years ago concerning the building of the Aswan Dam and warning them not to do it. He says, the people who have counseled you are fools.

For he tells them the ecological problems that will come about as the result of the building of the Aswan Dam. And so we're going to get into some fascinating prophecy next week. Again, you see how amazing the word of God is because it speaks not only of past things, but it speaks of things that you can observe in the world around you today.

Things that we have seen in our life. I've seen in my lifetime. Some of you weren't around when the Aswan Dam was built, but I was.

And but you can see the ecological damage that's still happening today from the result of the building of that dam. And then it also speaks of things that haven't happened yet. They're coming in another few

months or a year or so.

You know, I mean, it's just so fascinating to have the Bible that covers such a broad range of events. Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments. But first, I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or CD.

Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or CD number C-3249. Again, that's tape or CD number C-3249. As we come to a close in today's program, we'd like to introduce a new book by Pastor Chuck Smith, written especially for today's young generation.

Do you have what it takes to abstain from the immorality of our culture? Would you stand up for Jesus Christ in a group of complete strangers? What about in a group of your closest friends? It definitely takes a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. The word for today presents Pastor Chuck Smith's new book, *Standing Up in a Fallen World*, a Bible study based on the book of Daniel, a young man who took a stand for righteousness in a time when he could have lost his life. Filled with encouragement and application, Pastor Chuck teaches a powerful message for today's young adults between the ages of 12 and 20, urging them to stand up against the compromise in the world today and get ready for the Lord's coming.

And now for the first time, the word for today is made available clothing, t-shirts, beanies and hats for a limited time only, equipping young adults to witness and revive their generation. Also available is a study guide, especially designed for students and family devotions. To order your copy of Pastor Chuck's new book, *Standing Up in a Fallen World*, the clothing apparel and study guide, you can call the word for today at 1-800-272-WORD or write to 8000 Costa Mesa, California 92628.

Once again, that number to call is 1-800-272-9673. And for those of you that would like to visit our website, you can do so at www.twft.com. Or if you'd like to email us, you can do so at info@twft.com. Well, coming up next time on Word for Today, Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the book of Isaiah. That's coming up next time on the Word for Today.

And now with a few closing comments, here's Pastor Chuck. And as God said, I know the end from the beginning. And he's told us the end, the end of the story.

We know how the story is going to end. There's really no mystery as far as the end of the story. We know exactly how it's going to end.

We know how the things are going to come together. The Lord's goal is a field goal in the last two seconds, and we win the game, you know. So again, let us give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever.

May you this week make it a point, the complaining down to a minimum, and the thanksgiving up to the maximum. Let's just really give thanks to God with grateful hearts for all of His goodness and His blessings to us, His children. And may you thus experience the blessing of the Lord, His presence, the glory of His salvation, as you walk with Him this week.

This program is sponsored by The Word For Today, the radio ministry of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California.

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