

Isaiah's Apocalypse

by Steve Gallagher

The sermon explores the apocalypse of Isaiah 24, highlighting the purpose of God's judgment, the effects on the wicked and the remnant of godly people, and the ultimate outcome of God's reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem.

Duration: 37:55

Scripture: Isaiah 24:1-2, Zephaniah 1:18, Revelation 8:13

Topics: "Apocalypse"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the prophecy in Isaiah 24, which describes the destruction and chaos that will come upon the earth. The speaker emphasizes that everyone will be affected by this devastation, regardless of their social status. The timing of events described in the chapter is mixed up, with some verses referring to the end of the world and others depicting life on earth before that. The speaker warns of the impending chaos and urges the audience to appreciate the work of Steve Gallagher, who founded Pure Life in Kentucky, as it will be a source of gratitude in the future.

Transcript

The following message is provided by Eternal Weight of Glory. For other sermons, teachings, and articles, please visit EternalWeight.com. Last week I mentioned that Isaiah chapters 13 to 23 are a series of denunciatory messages that he gave towards the neighboring nations. And this week we're going to look at Isaiah 24.

Some people call it Isaiah's apocalypse, but it's definitely the grand finale to these messages in this section that we've just kind of breezed over. And even though this chapter is focused entirely on the end of time, this is not a double reference chapter. This is focused on, as far as I'm concerned, this is focused solely upon the entire world at the end of the age.

And we're going to look at just chapter 24 today. Lucifer has had his way in mankind for 6,000 years. Wouldn't you agree it's time to bring this thing to an end? Well, that's the point of the apocalypse.

That's why God has to subject this earth to this overwhelming storm that He is going to send upon it, is because He has got to purge it of all the poison of sin and the curse and all of that. And this is really describing that. From Isaiah's perspective.

Now, of course, the book of Revelation is 22 chapters, most of which is describing what he is going to talk about in a few verses. So this is much more condensed, you know, and so on. And we're going to review this chapter.

But before we do, I want to make a couple of observations about this chapter. One thing is you'll notice that much of the language is delivered in, this is a quote from Kyle Delich, delivered in rapid, vigorous, vivid, and comprehensive clauses. And that's a very good way of putting it, and it's so true.

Rapid, vigorous, vivid, and comprehensive clauses. And you'll see that as we start going through the chapter. Another thing you'll notice, as is often the case with prophecies, the timing on events that he describes through this chapter is all mixed up.

One verse he'll be talking about the very end of the world, and then the next verse all of a sudden he steps back and gives us a picture of life on earth 10 or 20 years before the end. And that's the way it is. It's just a mumbo-jumbo of truthful statements.

God does this on purpose because he doesn't want it all laid out systematically so, you know, any old person with his logical mind can just read it and say, okay, that's that, that, you know, and have it all figured out. He doesn't want it to be all figured out like that. It's something that needs to be absorbed into the spirit by the spirit.

And so that's why the Lord presents these prophecies in such a confusing manner. Another thing that you'll notice is that some of the verses provide a general description of the cataclysmic events going on as if Isaiah was seeing them from a wide angle lens, you know, from far away, seeing it all happen at once or something. You'll notice that he'll one minute be talking about things, you know, that really take years to unfold as you find out in the book of Revelation, but he'll just encapsulate it in one sentence, you know, kind of like what I was saying before, but then all of a sudden the next verse, he's providing specific details about some aspect of life during the tribulation period.

You know, it's just interesting to look at this chapter and you go into it with that understanding. It helps you understand it a little better. Let's start here with verse one.

And this is one of those statements that I just referred to. Behold, the Lord lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. You know, that's a statement that, again, you know, he is describing what takes John multiple chapters to articulate all that goes into making that happen.

But he just encapsulates the whole thing in one sentence. In verse two, and the people will be like the priest, the servant, like his master, the maid, like her mistress, the buyer, like the seller, the lender, like the borrower, the creditor, like the debtor. In other words, what he's saying here is that everyone will be the same.

It won't matter who you are. When God's judgments start moving through the earth, it isn't going to matter if you're a king, if you're a president, if you're rich, if you're poor, none of that is going to matter. The only thing that's going to matter is whose mark you have on your forehead.

That is the only differentiation between one person and another. Are you marked by God in the forehead or do you have the mark of the beast? And that's where we're headed. It's going to be one or the other.

There won't be any more of this gray area that we've lived with. Revelation 6.15, you know, kind of says the same thing. Kings, princes, captains, rich, strong, every bondman and every free man.

You know, he's making the same basic point. All right. Verse three, the earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled for the Lord has spoken this word.

The earth mourns and withers. The world fades and withers. The exalted of the people of the earth fade away.

And again, you know, it's another one of those statements that kind of describes things from an overview. Some of the commentators believe that this refers to wars that will rage around the world. But look at the words here.

Verse four, the earth mourns and withers. And then he says the world fades and withers. So in other words, not only the physical earth, but also the world as we know it, meaning the inhabitant world, the world of people.

They both are going to be going through all that God sends. But he says in verse three that it will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled. A few years ago, the world was shocked when 200,000 people died in that tsunami in the Far East.

In Revelation 9, there are three judgments that just in these three judgments, two billion people will die. Two billion. Think about that.

A third, a third of mankind just in those three judgments. You know, can you imagine? You could go into probably certain countries and there won't be a single living soul. Imagine that.

Go down to Mexico, not a single person alive, let's say. When you're talking about a third of the population of the world, you're talking about massive portions of mankind gone. All right.

Verse five, the earth is also polluted by its inhabitants for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Let me read that in the Knox translation. It's just kind of interesting.

Poor earth, polluted by the men that dwell on it. They have broken God's law, traversed the decree he made for them, violated his eternal covenant with men. David Guzik says this.

Let me read what he said. Mankind has changed the law of God in the sense of changing the basic moral code which men have recognized and lived by for centuries. Mankind has changed the word of God by replacing it with substitutes or by fashioning it into something more suitable to his liking.

Every time a preacher soft pedals the gospel, every time a counselor wrenches the context of God's word to make it fit a crazy psychological theory, they have changed the ordinance and are ripe for judgment. That's true. That is true.

All right. Let's continue on. Verse seven, the new wine mourns, the vine decays, all the merry hearted sigh.

The gaiety of tambourines ceases, the noise of revelers stops, the gaiety of the harp ceases. They do not drink wine with song. Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

Now, here is describing, if I could put it this way, the happiness of people without God. And a lot of it, you'll notice, has to do with drinking. Well, let me read to you what this guy said.

I'm going to take it a step further even. But this man, Haley, who I quoted from someone else, so I don't know even who it is, but how much the world depends upon artificial stimuli for its joys and good times. The world depends upon alcoholic drinks, sports, revelings, sensuous music and entertainment for its pleasures.

When these are gone, it's shallow joy perishes. Yesterday in that message, when Satan's power reigns supreme, and we were going through Luke 21 and we talked about Jesus' statement, be on your guard so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life. That's really what it's describing here.

That whole frivolous, fun-loving mindset. Drunkenness is something deeper and more profound than just sitting down with a bottle of whiskey and getting drunk. It means more than that.

It represents the entire realm of escaping reality, really, through drugs or drinking or even through the distractions of entertainment and so on. This is what people live for. And when you go through Revelation 18, it is taken away.

In fact, let me read a couple of verses out of that. Verse 21, 22. This is all describing earth life.

Think of all the bands. Think of all the orchestras. Think of all the radio stations.

It's all going to be gone. People will still be alive, but it will be gone. And some of this other stuff is talking about manufacturing.

The world is going to be devastated, and yet there will still be people alive trying to find their way through without God, but with that mark on their forehead that they've sold their soul to the enemy. For what? For the temporal they think is going to be safety. All right, let's get back to Isaiah here.

Verse 10. The city of chaos is broken down. Every house is shut up so that none may enter.

The New Living Translation says, The city rise in chaos. Every home is locked to keep out intruders. Let me read verse 11 also.

There is an outcry in the streets concerning the wine. All joy turns to gloom. The gaiety of the earth is banished.

And I'm reading in the Living Translation. Mobs form in the streets crying for wine. Joy has reached its lowest ebb.

Gladness has been banished from the land. Put these two together, and what do you have a picture of there? I remember when the whole Y2K scare began, you know, and back in 98. I think it was the early part of 98 that we heard about it.

We were like, I don't know, man, this could be something. I didn't understand about the chips and all that stuff. You know, I'm not technologically savvy enough to understand that.

But what I did understand is I could see the Lord doing something like this. There was a brief period of time, a couple of months there, where Kathy and I were like definitely on the side of thinking this is actually going to happen. And when I was thinking about what would it be like, and I started thinking about Cincinnati and some of these cities.

When people don't get what they are accustomed to receiving. Man, I look at what went on in Walmart stores and different department stores just over Christmas madness. People getting in fistfights.

Some lady in California using pepper spray on other people so she could get whatever it was she wanted to buy. I don't know if it was tennis shoes or what. But people going crazy just over that kind of stuff.

What do you think it'll be like when there's no food in the stores? You know, that's what we're facing is there is going to be chaos in the cities. And you will be thanking Steve Gallagher that he founded Pure Life in Kentucky. One day you'll be thanking me for this.

I know you don't appreciate it now, but one day you will. All right, so I don't know exactly what all is going to happen. But it's going to get very chaotic and it's going to be intense.

Verse 12. Desolation is left in the city and the gate is battered to ruins. For thus it will be in the midst of the earth amongst the peoples as the shaking of an olive tree, as the gleanings when the grape harvest is over.

I'm going to read that in the New Living Translation. Throughout the earth, the story is the same. Only a remnant is left, like the stray olives left on the tree or the few grapes left on the vine after harvest.

And that is what he's saying. He's talking about a remnant of people. He's talking about life after, I guess, after most of all those judgments that you see throughout the book of Revelation, after most of those have devastated the world's population, there will be some stragglers.

And it's obvious that he's referring to godly people here because of what he's about to say. So I don't know exactly what that means, but I do believe because we know that there's going to be many martyrs. Christians will be martyred.

But when it comes to God's judgments coming in, I just don't believe that God's people are going to be subjected to those judgments. So somehow, and the Lord can do it. He can absolutely do it.

He can pick out a person in the midst of a multitude of people. He can send in a hurricane, a tornado, an earthquake, whatever, and decimate every person. And you got one person sitting there, you know, unscathed through it all.

I'll never forget the story of that guy who's sitting in his easy chair when a tornado took his whole house. And after it was all done and everything settled down, he's still just sitting there in his easy chair. You know, the Lord can do whatever he wants to do.

And I think that's the way it's going to be. All right, verse 14. This is referring now to these godly people who go through.

They raise their voices. They shout for joy. They cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the Lord.

Therefore, glorify the Lord in the east. The name of the Lord, the God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. From the ends of the earth, we hear songs, glory to the righteous one.

I'm going to stop right there. This is that remnant of godly people, you know, and you see it throughout. Actually, the rest of the Isaiah's message, this apocalyptic message, is mostly referring to this.

This is the storm that's coming across the world, sweeping around the earth. But in the midst of it are God's people being kept. And we'll talk more about that next week, I think.

You know, it's an amazing thing how God can sustain people, his people through the midst of these kind of devastations. Now, look at the second part of verse 16, though. But I say, woe to me, woe to me, alas for me.

The treacherous deal treacherously, and the treacherous deal very treacherously. You have the remnant who are full of the joy of the Lord. And as we'll see next week, the peace of the Lord is keeping them.

Even through all of this. But the wicked are becoming increasingly more desperate and hostile. That is the way it is when hard times hit.

People become very selfish. You know, just average people, the selfishness just comes out in them. I don't know if you've ever read that book by Darlene Diebler, Evidence Not Seen.

She describes in World War II when she was in a Japanese concentration camp. And just average people became so self-centered and grasping and looking out for number one. And that's what it boils down to.

I mean, we just saw that. I don't know if you saw that story. Was it yesterday or day before that cruise ship that sank or whatever it did, crashed into some rocks.

And the headline in the drudge report was every man for himself. The captain who's supposed to go down with the ship and make sure that all his passengers make it through safely. He was one of the first people to bail, to get in a boat and get out.

You know, and I mean, that's the kind of mentality you're going to see more and more. When things really start falling apart. And we are going to see it.

It could happen this year. If you read what the economists are saying. I'm not talking about right-wing conspiracy people now.

I'm talking about bona fide economists. You know, just from around the world, different sectors and so on. They are talking about the European economic system is about to completely collapse.

And what that's going to do to the American system. This bubble that we've been living in. All that maintains our economy is this delusionary bubble of optimism.

That's why they fear running the banks. Because there isn't money there. You know what I mean? It's all a shell game of moving money around and making people believe.

As long as people are buying into the whole system. Everything's okay. And it'll continue going along up to a point.

But that point is it's going to collapse. And what is earth going to be like? You know, you talk about opening the door for things to go downhill very quickly. That will do it.

Well, anyway, I'm getting kind of off track here. But let me just continue on verse 17. Really, this is the answer to the treachery that Isaiah sees in people's lives.

Terror and pit and snare confront you, O inhabitant of the earth. Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit. And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare.

For the windows above are opened and the foundations of the earth shake. So we see here the Lord's judgments beginning to rain upon mankind. And people will not be able to avoid the terrors of the Lord.

You know, you're not going to make it through on your own efforts. You're not going to go hole up in the mountains somewhere with your guns and ammunition and your food locked away and all that. There's not going to be any surviving the tribulation outside of being in the refuge of God.

That is the only way to go through. And that way is very real. But it's not going to happen outside of that.

Let's continue on here. Verse 19. The earth is broken asunder.

The earth is split through. The earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard.

And it totters like a shack for its transgression is heavy upon it. And it will fall never to rise again. Now, again, this could either be referring to just judgment on a whole, kind of like verse 1, or it could be referring to the great earthquake that Revelation 16 describes, one of the great judgments of Revelation, where it said that it was such a great earthquake, such as there had not been seen since man came to be upon the earth.

So great an earthquake was it and so mighty. So I don't know if it's referring to that or just referring to the whole devastation that's coming upon the earth. The pope of commentary said it is the crack of doom.

The language imitates the cracking and bursting with which the present world shall pass away. And, you know, that's just very vivid language. All right, let's continue.

Verse 21. So what happened in that day that the Lord will punish the host of heaven on high and the kings of the earth on earth. They will be gathered together like prisoners in the dungeon and will be confined in prison and after many days they will be punished.

Okay, this is what we were referring to last week about Lucifer and the fallen angels being thrown into the pit. Let me read it in a couple other translations. The living says they will be rounded up like prisoners and imprisoned in a dungeon until they are tried and condemned.

The Moffat says bundling them into a dungeon, penning them inside a prison till their day of doom arrives. The Jerusalem Bible, they will be herded together, shut up in a prison and after long years punished. That refers to the thousand-year millennial period when the Lord throws them into the bottomless pit.

All right, and the last verse. Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and in his glory will be before his elders. And that language is used in Joel chapter 2, Matthew 24, Revelation 6 with the breaking of the sixth seal.

We keep seeing the same kind of language about the moon and the sun and so on. And it's all referring to the same thing that's going to be happening. All right, now go back to verse 5. I want to just touch on this for a few minutes.

I want to look at verses 5 and 6 here. The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants. And it uses the term inhabitants of the earth six times in these four chapters.

And the New Testament equivalent is those who dwell upon the earth. That's used 10 times in the book of Revelation. In fact, it's used also, Jesus used it in Luke 21.

Those who dwell upon the earth. It's describing mankind without God. Those who take the mark of the beast.

Those whose lives are completely tied into the temporal realm. Those who are living for what they can get in this world system. That's who these people are.

This whole chapter is describing the overthrow of Satan's kingdom and these people who have chosen to follow him. And there's a reason for it and you see it in this term. I'm going to read this blog piece I wrote.

You can see it in the blog section of the website if you wish. You can look at it later on. Great pollution of planet earth.

Let me just read this. I think you'll get the sense of it. Al Gore couldn't be more correct and couldn't be more wrong.

He recently compared his battle to save the environment with the civil rights struggle that went on back in the 60s. According to him, all the evils that have affected mother nature can be laid right at the doorstep of mankind. Well, I couldn't agree more.

In fact, the Bible says that very thing. The prophet Isaiah exclaimed, the earth is also polluted by its inhabitants. Now, I'm no environmentalist, but if I'm honest with myself, I have to acknowledge that our planet is being systematically destroyed by the innumerable toxins released into the atmosphere, water system, and earth by man.

Do I believe we should stop offshore oil drilling and limit industrial progression to save some obscure beetle that is on the endangered species list? No, because I don't believe that's the answer. What Al Gore apparently cannot comprehend is that the contaminating agent destroying planet earth is not physically but morally based. The rest of Isaiah's statement provides the missing element.

The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men are left.

The root meaning of the Hebraic term polluted, Shanaf, Isaiah employed in this passage, means that which has fallen away. This word is always used in a moral sense in scripture. For instance, the psalmist claimed that the innocent blood of children being shed in pagan rituals, very reminiscent of our abortion mills, pollutes the land, Psalm 106.

In Numbers 35, 33, Moses pointed out that every form of murder pollutes the land. Even apostasy contributes to the world's pollution, according to Jeremiah. The real culprit of the contamination of the

earth is man's sin against each other and rebellion to his maker.

We simply cannot escape the fact that there is a very real connection between our moral actions and our physical environment. As goes one, so goes the other. Yes, Isaiah's apocalyptic statement anticipates a day of momentous implications.

Life on earth as we know it is headed for destruction. And I see no great benefit afforded in fighting to save the whales when our entire planet is doomed to extinction. But I do see a very urgent need to call on people to repent of the sins that lay at the foundation of all of mankind's troubles.

Yes, let us do our fair share to save the planet. Let's start today, now even, by contritely approaching our creator and repenting of every known sin we have committed that is affecting our environment. And I think that that is the more correct interpretation of what's happening in our world.

This contamination, of course, began in the garden. And what we've had is 60 centuries of sin, you know, and the consequences of sin. And the power of sin, the power of darkness has ebbed and flowed, risen and fallen, been stronger at some times and weaker at other times.

But the Bible is clear that the last days, the moral pollution and the curse that accompanies it, they're both going to reach a peak. You know, it's going to be a culmination of 6,000 years of man's rebellion. That's what we're going into.

I wrote out six things you can see there in the notes that kind of make up this moral pollution. Just go through them real quick. The pursuit of carnal passions will reach proportions never seen by mankind, Luke 17.

There will be more death and destruction than mankind has ever seen, Matthew 24, 6 and 7. Most of the professing church will fall away from the Lord, Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2. There will be a great persecution against true believers, Matthew 24 and Luke 21. There will be a breakdown in law and order. We see that in these verses here.

And finally, Satan will fully possess a man who will deceive the inhabitants of the world and lead them in a complete renunciation of Jehovah. And you see that in 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelations 13 and Revelation 17. All right, what is the Lord's response? There are certain verses that He expresses what's going to happen to those who dwell upon the earth.

Let me just go through them real quick. And then I'm going to wrap it up by just saying a thing or two here. Jeremiah 25, verse 29.

I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, declares the Lord of hosts. The Lord will roar from on high and utter His voice from His holy habitation against all the inhabitants of the earth. The second one is Zephaniah 118.

Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord's wrath, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth. And then the last one, the book of Revelation is the unfolding of this great judgment predicted by Isaiah. By the eighth chapter, the judgments are well underway.

In verse 13, we hear an angelic messenger proclaiming, Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound. You know, and can I just say that the next time you complain to the Lord because He's dealing with you about the lusts of your flesh or trying to purge you of them, just remember that the world and the lusts thereof are passing away, but those who do the will of God will live forever. That's what He wants for all of us.

That's what He's desiring to do is to bring us through and bring us into His everlasting kingdom. You know, there is a great storm coming. I'll never forget back in the late 90s, Kathy and I were in New England three years in a row.

We went there and went on preaching circuits in the fall months. And one of those years, I don't remember which, we were in our little trailer there. We would park it there on the beach in Cape Cod and then go out and travel on weekends and preach in different churches.

And this one particular weekend, we were going to this big church in New York and I think this was maybe Thursday night or Friday night. It was probably Friday night. And I already had a message all prepared and ready to give to this church and so on.

And one of those ocean storms came in and just battered that little trailer. I mean, that trailer is just a little 22-foot trailer sitting there, you know, right by the ocean. And man, that storm was, it was a mighty storm.

And it really had that trailer rocking back and forth. But when that was going on, the Lord spoke very clearly to my soul. And He said, tell them a storm is coming and to prepare themselves.

And He gave me a message, you know. He just gave me the basic sense of a message. And I put that message together and I took it to that church and I poured my heart out to those people.

And I told them what to expect, that this is coming. As far as I know, I don't think anyone was affected in that church by that message. But I was affected by it.

I'll never forget it because it was so vivid and real to me. Tell them that a storm is coming. And I'm telling you today, a storm is coming.

You know, it's hard to believe when we're still sitting in prosperous America, we still have our paychecks. We still have nice homes. We still have food.

Everything is still pretty good. But I'm telling you that a storm is coming. I don't know when, I just know it is.

It is coming. And you know, this Isaiah 24, really this whole section, 24 through 27, is describing that storm and how to take refuge in God through that storm. Or at least not necessarily like a how-to lesson in doing it, but more of a, it's giving you a sight of the people who will go through victoriously.

They will go through praising the Lord. Praising the Lord when everyone else is falling apart, their hearts failing them or committing suicide because of the despair, because of the hopelessness, because everything seems to be, you know, just falling out from under them. All that they have staked their life on, this temporal earth, they're going to watch it being devastated.

But God's got his people. God has his people. And those people who know what it means to walk with the Lord and to find their refuge with him in their daily life, they are going to go through.

We are going to go through. And we don't need to fear because the Lord is taking us through that and is going to plant us safely in his kingdom. Safely in his kingdom.

This is the thing about getting all wrapped up in the things of the world. The temporal life is the more you focus on those things, the more your fingers start digging into the soil, if I could put it that way. The tighter your grip is and the more fear you will have of losing.

But we will lose. But even while we lose, the Lord is going to be filling us with something of himself that we haven't had before. And I'll talk more about that next week.

All right. So that's it for this week. Next week, we'll get into Isaiah 25.

God bless you. You're dismissed.

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