

Tell Philistia that the LORD Will Preserve His Church

Isaiah 14:24-32

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Introduction:

Last week in our study of Isaiah, we looked at the incredible prophecy he gave about the coming destruction of Babylon!

- There are several reasons it was incredible!

First, it was incredible because it was so accurate even though it was given two-hundred years before it happened!

- Isaiah described very accurately the pride that would arise in Babylon when she prospered—her beauty, her confidence, and her cruelty.
 - When he gave this prophecy, she had not yet risen to such heights of pride as she would before her destruction came.
- And Isaiah was also dead on about the way in which the destruction would come.
 - He even names the people that will bring the destruction—the Medes.
 - And he describes the suddenness of the destruction.
 - Often, destruction of a great nation comes very gradually as we see it coming upon the USA today.
 - It creeps along.
 - But in Babylon, it would come when their pride was at its height from an unexpected quarter.
 - And he describes the completeness of the destruction...
 - There would be no remnant and no remains of the great city...
 - Such is exactly what happened—
 - Babylon was completely wiped out
 - It became a barren desert that was not even suitable for shepherds.
 - It was incredible to think that such a great nation, so vibrant and so strong, could so quickly be reduced to nothing!
 - The only way that Isaiah could make such an accurate prophecy was by the Spirit of God.
 - Isaiah claimed only to speak what the Lord showed him.
 - He did not have any ability in himself to see these things, but God showed it to him.
 - Let this assure you that his writings are the very word of God!
 - They are not mere human writings but divinely inspired writings!

Secondly, Isaiah's prophecies about the destruction of Babylon were incredible because they showed that the destruction of this great nation would be for Israel (or Judah's) sake.

- Right in the middle of the prophecy—at the beginning of chapter 14—there are two verses that tell of God's deliverance of His people from Babylon's grip...
 - Judah would be brought so low by Babylon that they are pictured as having to be brought back to their land because they had been cut off from it.
 - Yes, Isaiah foresaw here that Israel would be removed from the land that God had given to them and would be in bondage in Babylon—as exiles.
 - That is exactly what happened...
 - and the destruction of Babylon is presented by Isaiah as brought about for the purposes of delivering this one nation that was but one among many nations that Babylon conquered and carried away.
 - This one nation called Israel that humanly speaking was no different than any of the others was the reason that Babylon would at last be destroyed.
 - Israel was the reason that Babylon was even raised up in the first place—
 - to chasten Israel for their wickedness—
 - and it was the reason that God had purposed the destruction of Babylon—
 - so that He might deliver His people and continue His promises to them for their sake and for the sake of the world.
 - You see, the salvation of the whole world was to found in this little nation.
 - Always remember what God promised to Abraham...
 - That from his seed, the salvation of the world would come!
 - All the people of the earth have fallen into sin and so are under God's wrath and curse,
 - but God told Abraham in that in his seed, all that nations of the earth would be blessed.
 - The seed of Abraham was, of course, Jesus Christ, the Messiah who has now come into the world.
 - And now He has come and has taken the curse upon Himself for the deliverance of all who come to Him for salvation.
 - And God also told Abraham that He would curse all those who cursed Abraham and his seed and bless all those that blessed him.

- That meant that nations and persons who rejected the salvation promised and provided would be cursed and condemned.
 - God was promising that He would at length destroy them from being able to hinder His purpose of salvation for all who would have it.

- And so it is with reference to God's promise to Abraham that God makes known His purpose in Isaiah's day to raise up Babylon and then destroy Babylon.
 - His covenant promise to Israel (and to the world) will not fail!
 - He must raise up Babylon to chasten Israel and to purify them as the ones who contain the salvation of the world...
 - And then He must destroy Babylon so that Israel will not be swallowed up by Babylon, but will be restored to the land.

- But how incredible these promises of deliverance would seem to Israel when they were in the grip of Babylon.
 - From a human perspective, Babylon would seem so invincible, so formidable...
 - Anyone who learned of Israel's hope to be delivered from them and restored to their own land once again would laugh at the very idea.
 - They would call them fools for believing such notions against all the evidence.
 - It would stretch the faith of God's people to believe that God really would deliver them and bring them back to their land when they had been brought so low under the dominion of so powerful a nation.
 - It would be like the deliverance from Egypt all over again—showing that salvation is of the Lord.

- And I tell you that when the Babylonian exile came there were many in Israel who abandoned their faith...
 - They were simply absorbed into Babylon and lost interest in the promises of God.
 - But these were the ones in Israel who never had true faith to begin with...
 - God actually used the exile to purify His people by rooting out many of those who did not really believe.
 - Instead of putting their hope in the promises of God, they put their hope in the success of Babylon.
 - Isn't that the way it is today?
 - As the city of man prospers and laughs at true faith,
 - many over the generations transfer their hope from the city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God to the city of man.

- They feel that they can prosper without bothering to be reconciled to God—that they can get along fine even while ignoring Him.
- Such persons, instead of living by faith in what God says,
 - follow whatever party seems to be winning and to give them the most hope of success...
 - They will never be found bearing reproach with the people of God.
 - They live by sight and not by faith.
 - They do not understand what it means to suffer with Christ.

But their unbelief is not reasonable, because the LORD,

- knowing that it would be difficult for His people to believe that He was keeping them and still had plans for them when they were exiled to Babylon,
 - gave them a kind of pledge of His faithfulness and ability to deliver them against all odds so that they would trust in Him when they went to Babylon.
 - Of course He had shown them this all through their history...
 - but He did it once again in Isaiah's generation to prepare them for the Babylon so that their faith would not fail.
 - God often does this because He knows our weakness.
 - Unbelievers will often say that they need a sign...
 - that if only they had a sign, they would believe, and God often refuses to give them one because a lack of signs is only an excuse for them.
 - But at the same time, God graciously gives many signs to assist the weakness of those who truly seek Him.
 - You remember how it was when Jesus came...
 - He cleansed lepers, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and even raised the dead...
 - but there were persons in the midst of all this who had the audacity to demand a sign from Him before they would believe!
 - The problem was not a lack of signs, but a wicked excuse making heart that needed to be converted.
 - There are plenty of signs for those who are honest in seeking the Lord.
 - And these signs are always gladly received by them.
 - Well in Isaiah's generation,
 - The sign or pledge of God's faithfulness and ability to deliver His people against all odds would be His deliverance of them from the hand of Assyria.

- This is how God's forthcoming deliverance from Assyria is presented by Isaiah in Isaiah 14:24-32:

I. The coming destruction of Assyria is God's pledge, a testimony of His faithfulness to His people.

A. By this event, (by delivering His people from Assyria when it seemed impossible) God will affirm to His people that He is with them to bless them.

1. You see, they needed this because when the 70 year exile to Babylon came, it would be much harder for them to keep their faith...

- In the Assyrian attack, they were able to be shut up inside the walls of Jerusalem and God promised to keep them out.
 - But when Babylon came a little over a century later, the city would be destroyed and they would be carried away to Babylon.
 - The faithful would have to continue to trust that He would deliver them from Babylon for 70 years and then restore them to their land.
- Does that make sense?
 - The experience of God miraculously preventing Assyria from entering to Jerusalem according to God's promise
 - would fortify them to believe that He would also deliver them from Babylon even after they were taken captive by Babylon for 70 years.
 - It is like the cross...
 - When Jesus was put up on the cross many of His disciples doubted.
 - It appeared to them that His purposes to be the Messiah and to deliver Israel had surely failed...
 - But after He was raised from the dead and declared that He had gone to the cross to atone for their sins...
 - Then they believed and they were prepared to face fresh difficulties that would come.
 - This is what fortifies the people of God when it appears that the church is about to be destroyed...
 - We remember the cross and how real the destruction of God's purposes seemed when Satan and his forces delivered up Christ to be crucified....
 - And then our faith is renewed in the very worst of times that God has not forgotten us!
 - And of course, you are also to draw encouragement from all these accounts in the Old Testament like this one in Isaiah 14...

- You are to look at these and consider them that your faith might be fortified in your God who promises to bless you and keep you,
- even through times of great difficulty,
- and to at last bring His salvation to you.

TRANS> Well let's look at what it says about Assyria... and be strengthened!

B. God says in verse 25 that He is going to break Assyria in His land.

1. Here, I will just read verse 25:

- Isaiah 14:25: I will break the Assyrian in My land, And on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, And his burden removed from their shoulders.
- He will free His people from the burden of Assyria by breaking Assyria in His own land...
- This was quite a marvellous thing—because Assyria seems invincible!

2. When Isaiah declared this, Assyria had already shown themselves to be unstoppable!

a. By the time of Ahaz' death (which is not known with certainty),

- they had either taken Samaria or were about to do so...
 - This they did in 722 when they carried the northern kingdom off into exile.
 - They had taken many other nations as well and in 701 BC, Sennacherib had come to Palestine again and was stronger than ever.
 - they took one city after another—until they reached to Jerusalem.
- Jerusalem, humanly speaking, had no more ability to resist an Assyrian invasion than any of the other cities...
 - But the Lord had promised that they would not enter Jerusalem...
 - And here in Isa 14:25, we have a reference to that promise.
 - He promises that He will break them in His own land—the land of Israel.
- But when Assyria first approached,
 - there was no way humanly speaking that Jerusalem could hope to resist the attack.
 - He had taken every other city, so why not Jerusalem?

3. And of course we know exactly what happened because now it is history.

- The King of Assyria came with absolute confidence and tried to persuade Jerusalem to surrender to him...
 - You can read about that in Isaiah 36.
 - And when Israel refused, you know what happened...
 - Before the Assyrians even began their assault upon the city,
 - the angel of the LORD went forth and struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in the night—all in one night!
- This is how God “broke them in His own land.”
 - He did not use the Egyptians or the Babylonians...
 - He did it without human agency.
 - He did it Himself!

C. And you can see that the whole purpose of Isaiah 14:24-27 is to engender faith.

1. In verse 24, we read:

- Isaiah 14:24-25: The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand: That I will break the Assyrian in My land..."
 - This tells us that God will do
 - what He has promised (He always keeps His word)
 - what He has thought (that is, what He has planned)
 - what He has purposed.

2. In verse 26 & 27 we are reminded how impossible it is for anyone to thwart Him:

- Isa 14:26-27: This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, And this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. For the LORD of hosts has purposed, And who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, And who will turn it back?"
 - Once God is poised to act, no one can dream of stopping Him—
 - When His hand is stretched out to act, no one can turn it back.
 - He is no local deity—
 - His purposes are purposes that concern the whole earth!
 - It is He that raises up kingdoms and destroys kingdoms to accomplish His purposes in the earth.
 - Nothing happens apart from Him.
 - Whatever He promise is sure to be done...
 - What he thinks or plans will come to pass...

- What He purposes will always stand, no matter how impossible it may seem to us.
3. Do you see my brothers and sisters?
- a. This is not just about Assyria!
 - God is making what He is going to do concerning Assyria an example of the way He is always going to work with respect to His covenant and His people.
 - He is laying down unchanging principles of how He will operate concerning the whole of world history!
 - He stretches out His hand and no one can turn it back!
 - What He promises and thinks and purposes will be done!
 - b. Israel was supposed to read this in Isaiah's day and take confidence first of all about Assyria...
 - and from that, they were to draw confidence that as God had dealt with Assyria, so He would also deal with Babylon...
 - Even though the people would be brought lower by Babylon—
 - they would be prepared for it by experiencing God's deliverance from Assyria.
 - c. And now you are supposed to read this today and draw the same conclusion...
 - When people laugh at the weakness of the church, you are to take confidence that our strength is not in our numbers or our own power...
 - It is in the Lord and His promises
 - in the LORD who does whatever He pleases in heaven and earth.
 - Our Lord will allow reproach to fall on Him and His people to humble us and to chasten us...
 - but He is the God of resurrections!
 - The world laughs on Friday when our Lord is crucified, but Sunday always comes and He rises again.
 - No matter how low He may bring us, He will not forget His covenant or allow us to be destroyed.

TRANS>And now as we move on to verse 28 and following,

- Isaiah shows us that the world has no grounds for rejoicing when we are brought low as God's people.

II. Philistia's rejoicing at Israel's downfall is shown to be foolish and unwarranted.

- This is not really written for the Philistines of course,
 - but for God's people who must endure the rejoicing of Philistines when we are brought low.
 - It is written to encourage us that their rejoicing has no solid foundation.
- A. You see, the Philistines presented here as those who rejoice when God's people are humbled.
 1. They were among the nations in the land of Canaan that Israel was supposed to have destroyed when they first came into the Promised Land.
 - They lived in the south-western part of Canaan along the Mediterranean Sea.
 - And because they had iron chariots, Israel's faith failed them and they did not drive them out as God had commanded.
 - It did not seem to be worth the trouble.
 - So the LORD told them that He would thereafter use the Philistines to humble them...
 - In Numbers 33:55 God had warned Israel, saying,
 - Num 33:55: 'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.
 - And the Philistines were such a nation...
 - They were a nation that God used to humble His people as need required—always there to chasten Israel as needed.
 2. And in the year that King Ahaz died, they were rejoicing that Judah was broken.
 - a. You can see in verse 29 how Judah is referred to as a rod that had struck them that is now broken when the Lord says:
 - Isa 14:29: Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, Because the rod that struck you is broken;
 - b. For years and years—even centuries—things had gone back and forth between Judah and Philistia...
 - But when David came on the scene, the Philistines had been smitten and greatly humbled.
 - It all began when David as a shepherd boy had struck their champion, Goliath, the very representation of their strength...
 - David had driven them back very far and greatly subdued them...

- and recently even Uzziah had made great advances against them.
- The account is given in 2 Chron 26:6-8:
 - 2 Chron 26:6-8: “Now he [Uzziah] went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities *around* Ashdod and among the Philistines. God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong.”
- But whenever Israel was unfaithful, it seems that the Philistines always made headway against them...
 - And so it was that when wicked Ahaz succeeded his father Uzziah and took the throne,
 - the Philistines began to take back what they had lost to Judah.
 - In 2 Chron 28:18 we are told of this:
 - 2 Chron 28:18: “The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there.”
 - It appeared that the rod that had struck them—the house of David—had been broken.
 - And now that Ahaz had died, they expected things to go even better for them with respect to Judah!
 - Now young Hezekiah would be on the throne...
 - He was young, inexperienced, and lacking the authority with his people that his father would have had...
 - It appeared to the Philistines that their age-old trouble with Judah had come to an end!
 - And they were rejoicing!
- c. They were rejoicing despite the fact that Assyria was coming against them with great power because they had a special hatred for Judah.
 - They rejoiced because there was no one they would rather see defeated than Judah.
 - They lived right next to Judah and they hated Judah whenever Judah followed the Lord!

- It was a constant reminder to them that there was a living God who made heaven and earth who ruled over all and to whom they must answer.
 - And so there was nothing they wanted more than to see Judah go down!
 - They would sooner have the cruel Assyrians crush them than have Judah prevail!
- This special hatred of God's people has been seen in almost every age.
 - I am amazed that there are many Philistine types in our western nations today who are so offended with the church that they would rather see the Muslims prevail than Christians!
 - They would rather be brought under Sharia Law than see the true church of Jesus Christ prevail!
 - They rejoice so long as the church is weakened because the church bothers their conscience.
- History has shown us again and again that faithful Christians whose law is love are the most despised of all people...
 - not because they are cruel (for they are not), but because they continually bear witness to the true God.
 - They are the light of the world, and as Jesus said:
 - Joh 3:19: And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

B. But Isaiah tells the Philistines not to rejoice at Israel's downfall!

- And the reason is because the downfall of His people will always be temporary.
1. He tells them that Israel will come back even stronger than they were before.
 - a. Look at the rest of verse 29—here I will read the whole thing:
 - Isa 14:29: Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, Because the rod that struck you is broken; For out of the serpent's roots will come forth a viper, And its offspring will be a fiery flying serpent.
 - b. There is a progression presented here...
 - 1) First there is the serpent that struck them—
 - that is (perhaps) the house of David up until the time of Uzziah...
 - Then there is the breaking of the house of David with Ahaz whose wickedness weakened the dynasty of David and set it to come to an end.

2) But out the roots of that house there comes Hezekiah who again struck the Philistines.

- In 2 Kings 18:8 we are told:
 - 2 Ki 18:8: “He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.”
 - The one they thought to be weak would turn out to have God’s strength in the same way the shepherd boy had in years gone by.

3) And then after that, there is the one who is referred to a flying fiery serpent!

- This is a description of a dragon—the most fearful of all serpents.
- And this is what the LORD Jesus will be to His enemies on the great day of judgement that is appointed for all the earth...
 - This points to the ultimate rise of the house of David against all Philistine-like nations...
 - The ultimate rise which was only foreshadowed by rise of Hezekiah, temporary as it was.

2. But does it seem strange to call the Lord Jesus a dragon?

a. In a way it is, because this is not His nature any more than it is David’s nature to be a serpent or Hezekiah’s a viper...

- But from the perspective of the wicked, that is what the David and His sons are when they come against them in judgement.
 - The wicked will be terrified when they see Jesus come in His glory...
 - They will yearn for the mountains to fall on them to hide them!

b. It is strange to call Him a dragon in the same way that it is strange to call the gospel a “savour of death unto death”...

- It is not such in its own nature, but only as it meets up with wicked persons who refuse to receive it...
 - 2 Cor 2:16: “To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?”
- Consider that the tribe of Dan was prophesied to be a serpent that would strike at his enemies in Genesis 49:17,
 - and this was fulfilled in the raising up of Sampson from the tribe who brought death to many of the Philistines in his own death.

- In this, he is a picture of Jesus whose cross brings judgement upon His enemies.
- Does Jesus not present Himself to us in John 3 as the serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness?
 - Did He not become a curse for us on the cross so that we might not be bitten by the venomous judgement of God?
 - And is it not that very same curse that He bore for us that He Himself will bring upon His people—
 - Will He not bite them with the venom of His judgement?
 - Indeed He will—and what a mighty judgement this will be!

C. Isaiah shows us what the outcome will be—for both for God’s enemies and for His people.

- Look at verse 30:
 - Isa 14:30: The firstborn of the poor will feed, And the needy will lie down in safety; I will kill your roots with famine, And it will slay your remnant.

1. What a contrast is set forth here!

a. His people are described as the *firstborn of the poor*...

- The word *firstborn* is interesting here...
 - Some suppose it to mean “the extreme poor.”
 - Whether it means that or not, the point is that God’s people are reduced the point of need—
 - even to the point where they do not have enough to eat.
 - As we have seen, God by His chastening hand has brought them very low... and that is why Philistia is rejoicing.
- But **firstborn** is also the word that God used to refer to His own people when they were in Egypt.
 - It may be that it is used in that way here,
 - but whatever the case, they are yet dear to God and He will look after them and deliver them from the lowly estate...
 - He will raise them up again...
 - Even as He looked upon Jesus when He was crucified for our sins and raised Him up again, accepting His sacrifice and completely pardoning all our sin.

- And you see how God's blessing comes to them when they are in this condition of lowliness...
 - We are told that He will feed them and cause them to lie down in safety.
 - This is the language of what a shepherd does for His sheep...
 - He feeds and He protects the sheep so that they do not die.
 - If He does not, they will perish.
 - They live because He takes care of them.
 - Salvation is of the Lord.
 - Without His provision and grace, we would all die in our spiritual poverty.
- b. And now look at the very opposite condition of the Philistines in their poverty.
- Instead of feeding them, He says, "I will kill your roots with famine."
 - Instead of making them lie down in safety, he says, "I will slay your remnant."
 - Both of these speak of their complete destruction...
 - to be starved from the root and to have even the remnant of them destroyed.
 - They are weak as Israel is weak,
 - but the difference is that God will sustain Israel but utterly destroy Philistia.
2. Therefore, Philistia is called upon to wail and cry!
- Instead of rejoicing (as in verse 29), Philistia needs to weep.
 - Look at verse 31:
 - Wail, O gate! Cry, O city! All you of Philistia are dissolved; For smoke will come from the north, And no one will be alone in his appointed times."
 - Their end is going to come and they will not be able to stop the destructive forces of Assyria that are coming against them from the North...
 - Enemies from Mesopotamia, like Assyria, are always said to come from the north because that is the path they took to come toward Judah and Philistia.
 - So the smoke from the North is the armies of Assyria...
 - The outcome will be that Israel, though every bit as weak as Philistia, will withstand the attack as God has promised and as was fulfilled...

- And Philistia will be destroyed by the Assyrian invasion.
3. And the bigger picture is that this is what God will do with every nation that opposes His people—and with every Philistine that rejoices when Christ is brought down...
- He will come at last to utterly destroy them both...
 - He will rise up as a dragon to bring them to a dreadful end.
 - And so this is a warning to every Philistine—that is, everyone who is brought so near to God's salvation and refuses it...
 - Do not rejoice because you see the church in such a weak anaemic state today...
 - Do not rejoice because you see hypocrites and scandals and divisions and confusion and sometimes just plain silliness among the people of God.
 - Do not rejoice because the church is opposed by our politicians and because men have become bold to mock at God's law... and at the gospel of our dear Lord Jesus Christ.
 - He is going to return and when He does, He will be like a fiery dragon.
 - Do not take false comfort in the weakness of the church for the church will rise again.

III. And so people of God, we have a message to declare to the nations in every age.

- A. In verse 32, you have the picture of messengers coming from the nations to find out what has happened to their neighbours.
1. We might call them the news reporters who had to travel on foot...
 - As they go about from one city to another and from one nation to another they find out that they have all been taken by Assyria...
 - Sennacherib boasts in his journals of taking 46 cities of Judah not to mention cities in Phoenicia, Syria, and Philistia.
 2. But when the messengers come to Jerusalem, they find it still standing!
 - They can tell that the Assyrians have been there, but Jerusalem is still standing and Hezekiah is still king!
 - What could have possibly caused this to happen?
 - What are the people of Judah to tell them?
 - As it says in verse 32,

- “How shall they answer the messengers of the nation?”
 - Actually, the word nation is indefinite in the original, so it should read,
 - “How shall they answer the messengers of a nation?”
 - Whatever messengers come to them to find out what happened....
 - What answer are they to give?
- B. The marvellous answer is that “the LORD has founded Zion and the poor of His people shall take refuge in it!”
- That is why Jerusalem is standing—
 - Let’s look at this more closely...
1. It is because of who it is that has founded it...
 - It is the LORD.
 - This is His name Yahweh which speaks of Him as the self-existing one.
 - He alone is the creator of all things, and this is the city that He has founded!
 2. And it is because He has founded Zion.
 - This is the city that has foundation whose builder and maker is God...
 - Not a foundation made of stone, but the foundation of His covenant...
 - His city is not founded on stone, but on His faithful promise to be their God and have them as His people.
 - On adoption of them as His people.
 - This is the city that is founded on the Word of promise and God is going to preserve it.
 - His promise to bless those that bless His people and to curse those that curse His people has been openly fulfilled.
 3. And third, it is standing because the poor of His people take refuge in it...
 - It is not because God’s people are able to defend themselves or keep themselves alive, for they are poor...
 - But they are kept through faith—because they come to this city, founded on the promise,
 - Them come to God for refuge and God gives them refuge.
 4. But don’t miss the point here

- The days will come when Jerusalem, as far as its stones and mortar will come down because God will bring it down by the hand of the Babylonians.
- But by promising to stop the Assyrians and then by stopping them when they were from all human understanding unstoppable will demonstrate to His people that God will still keep them even when Jerusalem falls.
- When the exile to Babylon comes and Jerusalem comes down,
 - God will keep His people just as well as He did when He destroyed the Assyrians at the gates of Jerusalem...
 - He will preserve His people and they will continue to take refuge in Him and will eat and will be in safety even in Babylon.
 - And His promise to curse those that curse His people will soon be fulfilled again in the destruction of Babylon.
 - And all His servants who trust in Him will be safe and secure.
 - They will eat and they will lie down in safety just as they always have and just as they always will.

C. This, my brothers and sisters, is the everlasting gospel!

1. That God is with His people and has established a city for them, and that they take refuge in that city...
 - It was true when Assyria came and it was true when Babylon came and it was true when Jesus was on the cross and it looked like the end had come and it was true when 12 uneducated disciples went out to preach the gospel to the world and was true when persecutors tried to destroy the church in the first century and it was true when the Muslims invaded and it was true before the reformation when the church was pitiful and weak and torn asunder by heresy and hypocrisy and it is true today in Halifax, Nova Scotia when people have lost respect for the gospel and when churches are not preaching the gospel and when there is so much confusion and immorality in the church...
 - And it will be true when Jesus comes and pours out His judgement on all who have sinned against God...
 - His city—the people that He has redeemed and who have come to Him for refuge—will remain and they will be blessed.
 - They will at last be perfectly blessed and their enemies will be cursed forever.
 - The very same curse that Jesus took when He was lifted on the cross will now fall upon all His enemies—
 - all His enemies who rejoiced in His weakness and in the weakness of His people because they thought, like the Philistines,
 - that God's people were finally out of their way.

- The Philistines over the centuries have rejoiced in what they thought to be the end of the church again and again,
 - but again and again the church has arisen even as our LORD arose when He was crucified for our sins.
 - And they will yet arise and be victorious at last—
 - because the LORD has founded Zion and we, the poor of His people will take refuge in it.
 - God is our God and He is above all the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—
 - He will curse all those who curse Him and He will bless all those who bless Him.