

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 61

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Jewish Persecution artist unknown

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah Message Sixty-One

LITTLE APOCALYPSE OF ISAIAH PART XIII

April 19, 2020

Daniel E. Woodhead

THE PUNISHERS OF ISRAEL ARE PUNISHED

Isaiah 27:7–11

⁷Hath he smitten them as he smote those that smote them? or are they slain according to the slaughter of them that were slain by them? ⁸In measure, when thou sendest them away, thou dost contend with them; he hath removed them with his rough blast in the day of the east wind. ⁹Therefore by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be forgiven, and this is all the fruit of taking away his sin: that he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, so that the Asherim and the sun-images shall rise no more. ¹⁰For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof. ¹¹When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off; the women shall come, and set them on fire; for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have compassion upon them, and he that formed them will show them no favor (ASV, 1901).

HAVE THE PUNISHERS BEEN PUNISHED?

Isaiah 27:7–8

⁷Hath he smitten them as he smote those that smote them? or are they slain according to the slaughter of them that were slain by them? ⁸In measure, when thou sendest them away, thou dost contend with them; he hath removed them with his rough blast in the day of the east wind (ASV, 1901).

Has (the Lord) smitten him (Israel) in judgment as he smote those who smote him? That is, the godless and rebellious, who are the real foes of the godly Jewish remnant. Has the Lord punished His own people as severely as He has their foes, whom He employed to chasten Israel? By no means. The trials will call forth a godly remnant from Israel, and through them He will restore the nation by contrast, Israel's enemies have been and will be utterly destroyed, to rise no more. The text moves on to ask is he (Israel) slain according to the slaughter of those (Israel's enemies) who experienced God's wrath? God's dealing with Israel as His own is basically different from the way He deals with other nations.

He judges and punishes His people in measure (in moderation). He did contend with them by driving them away from the land several times but He did not totally extinguish them, as He did with many mighty nations. His driving them away is compared to being driven by His fierce wind, specifically, the east wind (Jeremiah 4:11; Ezekiel 19:12; Hosea 13:15), which was particularly violent. Israel's

chastening is severe but they are not annihilated. The Lord punished Israel for its sins, He did not punish His people as severely as He punished the nations who He used to punish them. He could ask “*you have seen that I have destroyed your enemies, why did you not repent?*” He struck Egypt in a more severe way than they killed the Jewish babies. God limited the wrath He had against Israel, for whereas ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia etc. are now extinct. The Jewish people, thrive unlike the other nations, for whom the punishment was meted out. This concept has borne out through many persecutions beginning in Egypt and lasting until the present day.

GOD’S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Approximately 4400 years ago God made a covenant with mankind. In Genesis 12 we find God calling one man, Abram (whose name was changed later to Abraham), to relocate with his family from his home of Ur, in Mesopotamia (between the rivers; aka Babylon) and to go to a land that He would show him. In Abraham's day, Ur was a wealthy advanced city in Mesopotamia, with a complex system of government and a well-developed system of commerce. It had trade routes that joined Ur with other great towns to the north and the south. Ur is modern day Tell al-Muqayyar, which is located in southern Iraq, about 220 miles southeast of Baghdad, halfway to the Persian Gulf.

Abraham was an idol-worshipping gentile in Babylon (Joshua 24:2) when God called him to become the founder of the Jewish nation. He was called Abram (which means father is exalted) until God changed his name to Abraham (father of a great nation). He married his sister Sarai (My princess) who became Sarah (Princess). This change was in accord with God’s plan for her, namely that she would become the mother of a great nation.

One of the components of the “calling” that Abram received was a covenant that had many facets. The Bible records six occasions on which God appeared to Abraham to make, restate, or enhance the promises (Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 3:14-18; 15:4, 5, 13-18; 17:1-8; 18:17-19; 22:15-18).

The covenant that God made with Abram had a number of facets. Those that pertain to the origin of the Jews are as follows:

1. A great nation was to come out of Abraham, namely, the nation of Israel
2. Abraham was promised a land -- specifically, the Land of Canaan Abraham himself was to be greatly blessed
3. Abraham's name would be great
4. Abraham will be a blessing to others
5. Those who bless will be blessed
6. The one who curses will be cursed (12:3b) -- again and again this principle is operative in the prophets as they pronounce judgment on the nations surrounding Israel for the treatment of His chosen people.
7. In Abraham all the earth will ultimately be blessed, a promise of Gentile blessing through Jesus the Christ of Nazareth.
8. Abraham would receive a son through his wife Sarah
9. His descendants would undergo the Egyptian bondage (the first persecution)
10. Other nations as well as Israel would come forth from Abraham; the Arab states are some of these nations

God’s promises affect all peoples of the world. God vowed that all families of the earth would be blessed through Abraham’s covenanted physical line of descent. It demonstrates why they have such a

prominent role in world history. It shows clearly why they have been blessed. This, then, is the creation of the Jews. The first persecution was initially announced in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 15:13

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land [that is] not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years (KJV);

There are two principal reasons for the Egyptian persecution and slavery. The first is the refinement that God desired to accomplish in His children Israel.

Leviticus 11:44–45

For I [am] the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I [am] holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I [am] the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I [am] holy (KJV).

He wanted them to be holy as He is holy. The Bible teaches that the way to holiness is refinement through suffering.

Deuteronomy 8:5

Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, [so] the LORD thy God chasteneth thee (KJV).

Job 5:17-18

Behold, happy [is] the man whom God correcteth: therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole (KJV).

Job 36:8-12

*And if they be bound in fetters, And be taken in the cords of afflictions;
Then he showeth them their work, And their transgressions, that they have behaved themselves proudly. He openeth also their ear to instruction, And commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they hearken and serve [him], They shall spend their days in prosperity, And their years in pleasures. But if they hearken not, they shall perish by the sword, And they shall die without knowledge (KJV).*

Isaiah 48:10

Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction (KJV).

So God wanted the Jews to become holy through suffering. He put them into the cauldron of persecution in Egypt so that they would be refined. The following verse shows that God intended to refine and, or purify the Jews.

Daniel 12:10

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand (KJV).

Those whom God has chosen to understand Him, in other words, those who are wise will be purged and made holy. The methodology which God will use is stated in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 20:33-38

As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, will I be king over you: and I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. Like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah (KJV).

EGYPT

The Jews suffer persecutions on the earth from the first under Pharaoh Amenhotep II to the last under the “Antichrist.” Nothing happens by chance on this earth, it is all part of God’s master plan. The various human reasoning’s for the Jewish persecutions generally promulgated by the majority of authors are all incorrect. Just as God caused them all, He will cause the last and greatest of them under “Antichrist”, which will start “exactly” in the middle of the Great Tribulation. However, God has promised to not annihilate them.

Leviticus 26:44

And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I [am] the LORD their God (KJV).

Pharaoh Amenhotep II was the pharaoh of the Exodus (Exodus3:10). He implemented the infanticide of the Jewish infants to stop the Jews from multiplying. As a result, his first-born son was killed during the plague of the Passover. His army drowned in the Red Sea chasing after Moses and the children of Israel as they fled Egypt. One great blow to the great world empire of Egypt came in 605 B.C. The Egyptian army began fighting at Carchemish, in the fourth year of the Israeli king Jehoiakim, marking one of the definitive battles in world history. In a decisive defeat Egypt was broken as a world power (Jeremiah 46:1–13).

God caused Egypt to become a third world country due to their persecution of the Jews. The term Third World became popular during the Cold War in the 1950's when many poor nations adopted it in describing themselves as unaligned with neither N.A.T.O. nor the U.S.S.R., but instead were comprised of an unaligned "Third World." In that context, the First World denoted the U.S. and its anti-Communist allies, following that, Second World denoted the "Eastern Bloc" - the U.S.S.R. and its communist and socialist allies.

THE AMORITES

God allowed them to persecute the Jews for the Jews failure to adhere to God's command. And for that persecution He then causes the Amorites to lose a battle miserably to general Joshua (Joshua 10:10) and finally become semi-peaceful towards the Jews during Samuel's time (I Samuel 7:14). Today there is no people group known as the Amorites. God caused them to die out. Those that persecute the Jews will receive divine persecution.

THE MIDIANITES

The Lord used Midian to correct the sins of Israel. He also used them to seduce the Jews (Numbers 25:6, 16-18). They received their punishment for seducing the Jews and many of them perished along with Balaam (Numbers 31:1-12). Today there is no people group known as the Midianites.

PHILISTIA

The Philistines lost their independence to Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria by 732 B.C., and revolts in following years were all crushed. Nebuchadrezzar II of Babylon eventually conquered all of Syria and the Kingdom of Judah, and the former Philistine cities became part of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. They no longer exist. God as He promised in His covenant with Abraham would curse those who curse the Jews.

Assyria

God does judge all sin and He used the Assyrians to harm the Jews as a result of His judgment upon the Northern ten tribes for their sin. In keeping with this judgment upon sin and sinful people God then judged the Assyrians for being sinful. Both Isaiah and Nahum (Nahum 2:12; 3:1, 7) predicted the downfall of the Assyrians. The Assyrians were an overbearing and blasphemous people who were intoxicated with their own strength as so many despotic nations are. In 612 B.C. the allied forces of the Babylonians, the Medes and the Scythians captured the Assyrian capital Nineveh and it became a desolate ruin just as the biblical prophets predicted. Again in 609 B.C. the Medes and the Babylonians jointly attacked the remnants of Assyria and divided it among themselves. Nahum's prediction of their destruction is quite clear from a prophecy of eighty years or so earlier, prior to the Assyrian destruction. Today there is no country called Assyria.

BABYLONIA

The Lord used the Babylonians to evict the Jews three times in 605 B.C. 597 B.C, and 586 B.C. Today there is no country called Babylonia. Isaiah has had a lot to say about the Babylonians and we will see more in subsequent chapters of this book.

GREECE,

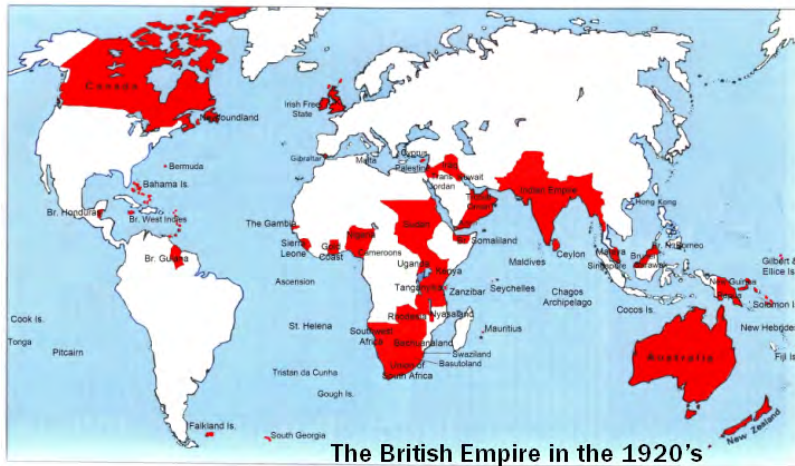
The Golden age of Greece, which some call The Classical Period lasted from approximately 500 to 300 B.C. It has given world civilization great accomplishments in the areas of, art, philosophy, architecture and literature. Some considered these to be building blocks of modern civilization. After Alexander the great died and his generals assumed control of his empire the persecution of the Jews began under Antiochus IV Epiphanies 175-164 B.C. He began a severe persecution of the Jews, which caused a revolt and a turning back to God for a short while through the Maccabeans. The Lord took his life in a painful manner according to the Books of the Maccabees. The Romans laid siege to Corinth in 146 B.C, only fifty-one years after capturing Macedonia, which resulted in the complete and total destruction of the state of Corinth. Rome now controlled all of Greece. With Greece under Rome's control, the final curse against Greece was complete. It has never risen to the level of world achievement it had attained in its Golden Age prior to the Jewish persecutions.

ROME

The fact that Rome declined as a world power and dissipated into a non-entity on world political stage is undisputed. The high point in Rome's history commonly referred to as the Golden and/or Silver Ages run from cir 30 B.C. to cir 96 A.D immediately followed the Republic Age. Succeeding the Republic Age was a series of Emperors known as Caesars. Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus (23 September 63 B.C. – 19 August A.D. 14) was the first emperor of the Roman Empire, which he ruled alone from 31 B.C. until his death in A.D. 14. Rome was instrumental in crucifying Jesus and they put down the insurrection of 66–70 AD as well as the one from 132–135 AD. Several emperors severely persecuted the Jews, such as Nero, Caligula, Titus, and Hadrian. The general economic categories summarize the decaying situation over the 443 years of decline and fall. Rome's fall encompassed moral decline, class struggle, failing trade, bureaucratic despotism, stifling taxes and consuming wars. Today Rome is no longer a sovereign nation and is replete with ruins of its once world empire status.

ENGLAND

Prior to the Mid-Seventeenth century Jews were not tolerated in England. The degree of persecution was rather low vis-a-vis other nations. As a result, God did some rather miraculous work in the hearts of the English regarding their treatment of the Jews. He did not persecute them immediately. Instead He used them to bring the Jews back to Israel under the Zionist movement. Then after the Second World War when the English once again began to mistreat the Jews He took away the British colonies. For example, The Struma was a former American pleasure boat, renamed the Exodus 1947, which attempted to deliver 4,500 Jewish refugees — including 600 children, mostly orphans — but was attacked by five British destroyers and a cruiser. The boat left France on July 11, 1947, with the intent of taking its passengers to Israel, which was controlled by the British. Most of the emigrants were Holocaust survivor refugees. When the British attempted to seize the ship, they engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle. Using machine guns and gas bombs the British killed three Jews and wounded another one hundred. Only when the six British ships began ramming the Exodus threatening to sink it did the Jews surrender. The British Royal Navy then seized the ship, and deported all its passengers back to Europe. It used to be said, “The sun never set on the British Empire.” Almost immediately after this specific persecution of the Jews, Britain began to lose her great worldwide empire. Today Britain has no colonies.



SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

History records that Spain and Portugal were at one time two of the most prominent nations on earth and one of the first global empires. Spain was in the center of European global exploration and colonial expansion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the opening of trade routes across the Atlantic Ocean between Spain and the Americas and across the Pacific Ocean between Asia-Pacific and Mexico via the Philippines. At that time Spain had a well-experienced navy and infantry. Some call this Spain's cultural golden age.



Spain's Empire in 1600

Credit: University of Texas at Austin. From Cambridge Modern History Atlas 1912.

The Spaniards and Portuguese both in the late 1400's and early 1500's conducted some severe persecutions upon the Jews by torturing and expelling them. We know these as inquisitions. Initially a tribunal would open at a location and an edict of grace would be published calling upon those who are conscious of heresy to confess. After a period of grace, the tribunal officers would start making accusations. Those accused of heresy were sentenced at an auto de fe, otherwise known as an Act of Faith. A clergyman would sit at the proceedings and deliver the punishments. Punishments included confinement to dungeons, physical abuse and torture. Those who reconciled with the church were still punished and many had their property confiscated, as well as banishment from public life. Those who would not confess to heresy were burned at the stake without strangulation. Those who did confess to heresy were strangled first before burning. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, public attendance at an auto de fe reached as high as the attendance at bullfights. In 1481 the Inquisition started in Spain and ultimately surpassed the earlier medieval Inquisition, in both scope and intensity. Conversos, those who professed Christianity but secretly remained Orthodox Jews, and New Christians were targeted because of their close relations to the Jewish community, many of whom were Jews in all but their name. Fear of Jewish influence led Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand to write a petition to the Pope asking permission to start an Inquisition in Spain. In 1483 Tomas de Torquemada became the inquisitor-general for most of Spain, and he set up tribunals in many cities. Today, Spain is a third world country and has no colonies.

REPENTANCE BRINGS FORGIVENESS

Isaiah 27:9–11

⁹Therefore by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be forgiven, and this is all the fruit of taking away his sin: that he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, so that the Asherim and the sun-images shall rise no more. ¹⁰For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof ¹¹When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off; the women shall come, and set them on fire; for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have compassion upon them, and he that formed them will show them no favor (ASV, 1901).

The afflictions are not atonements for sin, nor do they give any satisfaction to God for enacting His divine justice. They are the means of bringing the Lord's people to a realization of their sins, and to repentance and humiliation for them, as well as a confession of them, and of leading them to their Messiah, Jesus. This is the design and use of afflictions, the profit and advantage of them to the saints, that, being humbled for their sins, they leave them. Also, their guilt is taken away from their consciences, through the grace of God, after their repentance. The Jews, will finally be convinced of their idolatry by their persecutions and then, shall pull down all their idolatrous altars. Isaiah may be referring to those which Ahaz made, (II Kings 16:10, 11, 12) and remove the stones thereof, and break them to pieces, as chalk-stones for lime, which is easily done: the groves and the images shall not stand up; erect, to be worshipped; but shall be thrown down, demolished, and broke to pieces; and, by thus abandoning their idols and idolatrous practices, they will shew the sense they have of their sins, and the sincerity of their repentance; and it is to be observed.

Because of Israel's sins Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people removed. This occurred three times with the Babylonians and twice under Rome. Ultimately the national regeneration of Israel will

occur with the leader's repentance, confessing that Jesus is their Messiah which will then end the Great Tribulation. Because of Israel's covenant relationship with God, she had to be driven out of the land because of her flagrant disobedience to the Law (Deuteronomy 28:49–52, 64). Evidence of that atonement would be her pulverizing her altar stones dedicated to idolatrous gods, and removing the Asherah poles, wooden symbols of the Canaanite pagan goddess of fertility.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE PART XIV

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