CHAPTER 27: HOPE IN GOD
Isaiah

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to Isaiah 1. I am thankful for what God is showing us during these weeks as we’re walking through the Prophets. Bart joked last week about doom and gloom at Brook Hills during the summer as we walk through Minor Prophets, and just judgment from the prophets, but what God is showing us about who He is and also showing us about ourselves, and this morning is no exception. We are going to come this morning to, what some have called, “the masterpiece of the Old Testament” in the book of Isaiah, and there are 66 chapters in this book. A bit reflective of a Bible with 66 books, and the reality that in this one book of Isaiah, you really see the sum of biblical theology, and so much about the character of God that we see all over Scripture encapsulated in this one book. It is a remarkable book.

So, what I want to do is I want to start and give you a little background to make sure that we’re all on the same page. We’ve been reading the last couple weeks some in Isaiah. We’ll be in Isaiah some more this next week, but I want to make sure we’re all on the same page with what we’ve been reading, where we are historically, because that helps us understand what’s going on in the Scriptures.

Historical Background...

Prophets in Israel (the Northern Kingdom) ...
So, you’ve got there historical background. We have read from three prophets in Israel, the Northern kingdom. If you’ll remember, after Solomon, the kingdom was divided into Northern kingdom of Israel, Southern kingdom of Judah, and in the Northern kingdom of Israel, we’ve seen three prophets. The first prophetic book we looked at was Jonah. Jonah was a prophet of the Northern kingdom. Remember, he talked about...warned the king that we need to shore up the northern border against Assyria, and then God led him, of all places, to go to the capital of Assyria, Nineveh, and preach as a prophet there. So, that was Jonah.

Then, we saw Amos and Hosea, both prophesying in the Northern kingdom of Israel, both telling the people of God in the Northern kingdom that judgment was coming because of their sin, and judgment came. In 722 BC, the Assyrians overtook Samaria, which was the capital city of Israel, and that’s when, basically, the Northern kingdom was overthrown. So, chronologically, that has happened.

Prophets in Judah (the Southern Kingdom) ...
So, we come now to the Southern kingdom...a bit of a chronological and geographical shift into the Southern kingdom. The Northern kingdom has been overthrown by Assyria. In the Southern kingdom, we’ve got Micah, who Bart showed us so well last week, who really was
prophesying in both Northern and Southern kingdoms, but probably more toward the Southern kingdom, and his contemporary is **Isaiah**, who we're looking at this morning.

You look at Isaiah 1:1, you'll notice it says, "*The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning [here is the clue here] Judah and Jerusalem.*" Judah is the Southern kingdom. So, Isaiah is bringing the Word from God to the Southern kingdom of Judah. Jerusalem is the capital of Judah; so the center of the Southern kingdom. So, the focus here in the book of Isaiah is on the Southern kingdom of Judah.

What you see in the rest of Isaiah 1 is four different kings mentioned here, "*in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.*" There are five different kings that really are there. The one I'm going to tack onto the end; that's right when Isaiah's life and ministry are ending, and I want to make sure we understand what's going on with these different kings that inform our understanding of this book. The first king you've got is **King Uzziah**. He reigned 52 years. We're going to see, in a minute, Isaiah's ministry began, basically, at the end of King Uzziah's reign. King Uzziah was a good king. He followed after God for the most part. In many ways, he restores the glory and splendor of Solomon's Kingdom, but even near the end of his life, he began to turn away from the Lord. However, Uzziah, good king for the most part for 52 years.

His son, **Jotham**, reigned 16 years. For the most part...most part, Jotham continued the programs of his father; all right king. However, then, **King Ahaz** who reigned 16 horrible years. Here is the deal, Ahaz was king when the Assyrians took over Israel, the Northern kingdom, and so he started getting scared of what they could do in the Southern kingdom. So, what he did after the Assyrians overtook Samaria, Ahaz entered into a treaty with Assyria, and basically, began to pay tribute to Assyria; enter into partnership with Assyria that didn't just have national implications, it also had spiritual implications. Ahaz led the people of God to worship Assyria's gods; led the people of God to enter into agreements with Assyria that compromise[d] their devotion to God, because he was afraid of what Assyria might do to them. So, he led the people away from God.

After him was **King Hezekiah**, reigned 29 years. Thankfully, Hezekiah was one of Judah's best kings. He reversed a lot of what Ahaz had done. He started standing up to Assyria, which Assyria, of course, did not like. So, Assyria decided to go on the assault against Hezekiah and Judah, and we're going to see this in a minute, Assyria started to overtake different cities in Jerusalem, and even got to the point where they tried to overtake Jerusalem. Assyrians tried to overtake Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah, after 701 BC. We're going to see there comes a point where close to 200,000 troops from Assyria are surrounding Jerusalem ready to plummet the city. It's actually God's Word through Isaiah to Hezekiah that helps bring deliverance in that circumstance.

So, that was Hezekiah, and then all of that led to **King Manasseh**, who reigned 55 years. I put Manasseh in here; he took over at the end of Isaiah's life and ministry, and so we don't really see him very much in this book, but tradition has it that Manasseh was a horrible king. He turned the people away from God, and as a result, the people turned away from the Word of God and Isaiah, the prophet of God. Manasseh hated Isaiah. Tradition has it he had Isaiah imprisoned and tortured and probably even...likely even...sawed in half and killed. That's what many think Hebrews 11 is referring to when it talks about heroes of faith who are sawed in two. Tradition has it that that was Isaiah dying at the hands of King Manasseh.

So, that's the historical background there. Three main sections in this book. Isaiah 1 through 35 is the first section; Isaiah 1 through 35, and it's basically prophecy that's mainly
focused on doom and gloom. A lot of judgment in Isaiah 1 through 35. Then, you get to 36 through 39, and you have this interlude where you have some history put into it, and you've got this account of what happened when the Assyrians tried to overtake Jerusalem. So, you get a break from some of the prophecy and poetry, and you see this account of what happened when the Assyrians tried to overtake Jerusalem. So, there's kind of a narrative there in 36 through 39. Then, the last part of the book, Isaiah 40 through 66 is more prophecy. Those last chapters, Isaiah 40 through 66 give us a lot of prophecy about hope and restoration and promise. So, that's the picture in the book of Isaiah.

Now, I want us to turn over to Isaiah 6. Here is the deal, I was trying to think through how can we cover Isaiah in a day, and this one passage, probably one of the most famous, well-known passages in Isaiah...it's Isaiah’s call and commission from the Lord. Isaiah 6:1-13 really sums up the main themes that we see throughout this book. So, what I want us to do...we're going to be turning all over the place, and there will be times where we don't have time to turn somewhere, and I'll just tell you to write down some different places, but this is going to be home base for us, Isaiah 6:1-13, and this is the picture that I want us to get in our minds, that helps us understand, really, the whole book of Isaiah, and it is an incredible picture.

Some of you know or are familiar with this passage, but what I want us to do is I want us to imagine this scene in Isaiah 6, just picture it. Let’s not just read through this just casually. I want you to picture this scene because this scene has astounding implications for how we understand our worship. Not just that, this scene that we're about to look at has radical implications for how we understand our lives on a day-to-day, moment-by-moment basis. So, I want you to imagine this with me. Isaiah 6:1:

In the year that King Uzziah died [this is Isaiah speaking] I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts!"

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." And he said, "Go, and say to this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land as a desolate waste, and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a
terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump.

The Hope for Israel in Isaiah...

God is majestic.
So what is the hope for Israel and Isaiah? Three truths I want you to see. Number one, God is majestic. God reigns. “In the year that King Uzziah died…” 52 years he had been the king. You and I are used to a ruler, a president for four, maybe eight years, max; 52 years. For many, if not most of the people, this is the only king they knew, and he had been a good king for the most part. He was gone, and when the king was gone, Isaiah saw the King, the real King, the one who is still seated on His throne high and lifted up. Kings come and kings go. For thousands of years, kings have come and kings have gone, lords have come and lords have gone, presidents have gone and presidents have come. One King remains.

He is the Lord and He reigns on high, and here is the picture. He is surrounded by the seraphim. Get the picture, I love this...these are angels, and their name “seraphim” literally means “burning ones.” These are angels that are, literally, ablaze with the adoration of God; that’s a good picture. Don’t you want your life to be ablaze with the adoration of God? They’re burning to praise God. We don’t know how many of them are there. We get to Revelation and the Apostle John talks about myriads upon myriads, thousands upon thousands and multitudes of angels.

Just think of it. While we sit here in this puny room in our little seats on this earth, we are joining in a chorus at this moment; while you sit in your seat, there are myriads of burning ones who are resounding to the praise of God. They’re flaming with pure, cosmic, nuclear-powered praise and singing of His glory and His might. This is happening at every moment! Like, when you lie down at night, they’re still going. When you turn on the ballgame, they’re still going. Amidst all the trivial things that we find ourselves doing on a daily basis, lift your eyes and look to the one who is reigning.

What are they singing? What is their song selection? “Holy, holy, holy.” See the terrifying holiness of God. The only attribute of God that is ever mentioned in succession like this in all of Scripture. Scripture never says God is “love, love, love” or “wrath, wrath, wrath” or “justice, justice, justice”, or God is “mercy, mercy, mercy.” The Bible above all else says God is “holy, holy, holy.” It’s like these angels are grasping at the leash of language to try to find a way to express the incomprehensible nature, incomparable nature of the one whom they surround, and so they just cry out the same word, “holy, holy...”

What does that mean for Him to be holy? It means He is without error; to be holy is to be pure and right. God has never made a wrong decision. He has never had a wrong thought. He has never done a wrong deed. Every single thing in God is right, unadulterated, pure. However, not just without error, because when you think about it, in a similar way...not the exact same way, but in a similar way...it could be said of these angels, these seraphs, that they are sinless. They are not a part of rebellious humankind. They have not fallen as other angels have, so in a sense, they’re sinless, and yet, God is in a category that is totally different than them.

For Him to be holy means He is not just without error, He is without equal. To be holy means to be unique...utterly, supremely, infinitely unique and other. This is the picture, the
portrait of God, that causes trembling here and thresholds to shake. He is without error and without equal. That’s Isaiah 40:18: “To whom will you compare me or who is my equal, says the Holy One.” One of 26 different times, God is referred to as the “Holy One” in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah 45:18, “I am the LORD, and there is no other.” “There is none beside me. I am God and there is no other.” Get the point? He is without equal. No one like God. It is futile folly to try to find someone or something that is like God.

So, see His terrifying holiness and see His total sovereignty. “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts [the Lord Almighty]; the whole earth is full of his glory.” Oh, think of it: the whole earth is a continual explosion of the glory of God. Look across the earth, and you see His glory displayed in every detail; His total sovereignty over all things. He is the Creator of the world. “Look at the sky...” Isaiah 40 says, “Look at the sky, who created all this? He who brings out the starry hosts one by one and calls them each by name because his great power and great strength, not one of them is missing.”

Look up, in our sky there are a hundred billion stars in our galaxy alone; a hundred billion stars, and our galaxy is one of millions of such galaxies that are in the scope of our best telescopes. Our measly galaxy with a hundred billion stars amidst millions of other galaxies, and our God brings out the starry hosts, one by one, and calls them by name! Joe and Samantha, Z1346 Niner 7...I don’t know what their names are, but the God we worship in this room does, and they respond to His bidding every night. There is not one speck of dust, not one grain of sand, not one drop of water on this planet that does not respond to the bidding of our God.

He is the Creator of the world and the Ruler of history. He guides and leads and directs everything that happens in all of history. Isaiah 46:8-11, "Remember this: I am God, and there is no other. I declare the end from the beginning from ancient times, things not yet done. I accomplish my purpose. I will bring it to pass what I have spoken. I have purposed and I will do it.” The Lord accomplishes everything He purposes in history because He rules history.

He is the Creator of the world, the Ruler of history. He is the King of all nations. That’s where I want you to jump with me to Isaiah 36. Remember, I mentioned to you that there is this historical portion here in the middle...section two in the book, 36 to 39. Isaiah 36 is when Assyria is on the assault, and Assyria has taken over all kinds of different cities in Judah, and they are closing in on Jerusalem, the capital city. This is to overtake Judah, and they surround the city of Jerusalem with 185,000 troops. Now, I want you to imagine, hanging out as the people of God in Jerusalem, and all around you are close to 200,000 Assyrian troops; the same Assyrian troops that have taken over the Northern kingdom, have ransacked all these other cities, and they’re about to take you down.

So, what happens is, in Isaiah 36, one of the Assyrian commanders comes out, and he starts taunting the people of God. I want you to listen to what he says. Look at Isaiah 36:18. Remember, Hezekiah was king. Hezekiah was saying trust in God. So, this guy comes out, he says,

"Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying, ‘The LORD will deliver us.’ [These are the Assyrians speaking.] Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"
Oh, you don’t say that. You don’t say, “We’re Assyria. What God is going to stop us?” You don’t say that.

So, you get to Isaiah 37, and God decides to speak up, and I want you to listen to what He says. Verse 23, this is through Isaiah to Hezekiah to Assyria. So, this is God speaking to Assyria. Look at 37:23,

"Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel! By your servants you have mocked the Lord, and you have said, With my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon, to cut down its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses, to come to its remotest height, its most fruitful forest. I dug wells and drank waters, to dry up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt. [God says,] Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins, while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown."

“I am the one who determined all of these things that you have done.”

Verse 28, "I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me. Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.” Them are fighting words.

You get down to verse 33, and you listen to what happened. “The Lord says…” This is the Lord concerning the king of Assyria,

"He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.” And the angel of the LORD went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. [Did you catch that? 185,000 soldiers struck dead like that.] Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh. And as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword.

Mental note: you don’t mess with God. He is the king of the nations.

God says, "Assyria, you are in my hands.” He says later, “Babylon, you are in my hands, and Egypt, you are in my hands, and Israel and Judah, you are in my hands. All of you kings, you’re in my hands.” This is good news, isn’t it? Isn’t it good news that Kim Jong-Il in North Korea is not king over all, and Ahmadinejad in Iran is not king over all, and neither is Benjamin Netanyahu or David Cameron or Nicolas Sarzoky or Karzai or Barack Obama? The Lord is king over all of them, and He holds all their nations and every single one of them in His hands.
He is King of the nations and Judge of all peoples. The message of Isaiah is, “Look to Him and fear Him all the earth, for judgment is coming.” Isaiah 3:13, "The LORD has taken his place in court. He rises to judge all people." The one who created it all judges it all. God is majestic.

Man is depraved.

God is majestic, and man is depraved. Isaiah’s response to this picture of God is not, “Wow.” His response is "Woe." His first words in the book, "Woe, upon me," not woe upon even you, or woe upon this people or that people or this nation or that nation; “Woe upon me, sinful man in the presence of a holy God. I am lost, a man of unclean lips.” A picture of the impurity throughout him, amidst a people of unclean lips. This is the picture we see of painstaking sin.

Now, obviously, we are...this summer as we walk through the prophets...we are seeing all kinds of pictures of sin. In Isaiah, what I want you to see is the relationship between sin and trust. I want you to see sin as a lack of trust in God. It's what we see all over the book of Isaiah. When we see the sin of the people, they trusted in foreign kings, whether it was the Assyrian king with Ahaz, or after that, temptation of trust in the Babylonian emperor, Egyptian king, trusting in all these foreign kings. Trusting in foreign gods, turning to idols and worshipping them; superstitions. Really, when it comes down to it, trusting in their things.

You look at Isaiah 2...turn there with me, Isaiah 2:6. Listen to this. We see all this in the very beginning: foreign kings, foreign gods, false gods, and the things. Listen to Isaiah 2:6. “For you...” this is God speaking to His people,

You have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners. Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots. [They need more and more.] Their land is filled with idols; and they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.

This is the indictment of man in Romans 1, that we worship and serve created things rather than the Creator, who is forever praised. That we fashion things with our own hands; we put them together, whether it’s our money or our jobs and careers or our ambitions or our children, good things, our possessions. We fill our lives, and we put our trust in and find our hope in and our satisfaction and our delight in the stuff and the things, and it’s what we give our hearts and our lives to, pursuit of more and more, and oh, isn’t it all over our culture?

Brothers and sisters, clearly, God is not enough for us. We need more stuff, nicer things, better things, more comforts, new gadgets, fill our lives with more stuff in this world. We trust in all of these things, and we see in Isaiah 1:21-23, different places, the result of that, the injustice and the treachery that flow from them; the trampling of the poor, which is the result of a pursuit of more and more and more in this world.

Trust in their leaders, which obviously, in a sense, is a good and right and holy and God-honoring thing that we are commanded to do in the New Testament, to trust in and obey leaders, but not when they do not follow God. When the king is leading you to worship other gods, don't follow the king; even if it costs you your life, you follow God.
Ultimately, they trusted in themselves. When you get to the end of this chapter we were looking at, Isaiah 2:22, and it says, "Stop regarding man..." Some translations say, "Stop trusting in man." Here is what I want you to see: the essence of sin is trust in self, and it makes sense, doesn’t it? Like, any sin, when we think of, okay, lying or cheating or adultery or lust or this or that, whatever the sins might be, that there is a core issue here that is us saying, “I know what’s best. I do what I want and what I think will bring me the most pleasure, most delight, and it’s a trust in self.”

Meanwhile, the Creator of the world, the Ruler of history, the King of the nations and the Judge of all peoples is most worthy of our trust. The picture is...I want you to turn with me here. Isaiah 43, Isaiah 43. Painstaking sin. The Lord says this at different points, and He says it here in Isaiah 43:24. The Lord talks about how the people of God burdened Him with their sins, wearied Him. Look at Isaiah 43:24, last half of verse 24. "You have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities." Painstaking sin to weary a holy God, heaping on more and more and more sin.

That was the picture that’s been building all throughout this book, and yet, just like we see so often in Scripture, it’s there that the stage is set for breathtaking grace to come in and overwhelm. It’s what happened...stay here in Isaiah 43, but think back to Isaiah 6; it’s Isaiah overwhelmed, “Woe is me,” and the Lord appoints seraphim to go and to take coal from an altar, from the place of sacrifice and to bring it, to touch his lips and to cleanse him. For the holy God of the universe to say to the sinful, miserable man in his sin before Him, “Your guilt is taken away, and your sins atoned for.”

So, we see this picture of a wearying of a holy God with sin all throughout, then, you get to a place like Isaiah 43, and at the beginning, you see some of the most breathtaking, beautiful words from God toward His people in all of Scripture, "Fear not, I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, they will not overwhelm over you...when you walk through fire you shall not be burned...For I am the LORD your God...you are precious...honored in my sight...I love you."

Then, listen to what He says after talking about being burdened with sin, wearied with iniquities. Listen to verse 25, “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake.” Is that not breathtaking? To a sinful people, God says, “Your sins will be removed, blotted out for my own sake, for my own glory. I blot out your transgressions, and I will not remember your sins anymore.” Their sins will be removed, and their sins will never be remembered. Oh, underline Isaiah 43:25; mark it in your heart. “I am the Lord who remembers your sins no more.” Is that mercy or what?

Now, think about it; it’s not that God forgets. God knows everything, He is all-knowing; He is omniscient; there is nothing that He does not know. He does not have amnesia. The beauty of what Isaiah 43:25 is saying is that the God of the universe, who knows your every sinful thought and every sinful deed and every sinful inclination in every single one of His people for His name’s sake, rises and says, “I hold none of them against you; not one of them.” That’s grace and mercy.

I told you guys a story a couple years ago about a wealthy Englishman who had purchased a Rolls Royce. Rolls Royce was the car of all cars, advertised as the car that never, ever, ever breaks down and will never, ever, ever have a problem. So, he purchases one for a hefty price, and he takes his new car to France. When he gets to France, the car breaks down, and he calls Rolls Royce, says, “Your car, the car of all cars, is broken down.” Immediately, they fly a mechanic to France to fix the car. He goes on his way after the car is fixed expecting to receive a bill from Rolls Royce. I mean it’s not every day you get a...
mechanic to fly out to you and fix the car, and he’s a wealthy man, he can pay his bill, but the bill doesn’t come. So, he finally writes Rolls Royce, and he says, “I can pay my bill. Will you just send it to me?” Rolls Royce sends him a note back that says, “I am sorry, sir, but we have no record of anything ever having gone wrong with your car.”

Think of it: by the sheer grace of God, that He would look upon you and me as His people and say, “I have no record or anything ever having gone wrong in your life.” How is that possible? How can He be holy and say that? How can He be true and right and...I know I’m a sinner, how can He be true and say I am innocent? This is the ultimate problem of the universe. How can God be holy and save sinners?

Redemption is sure.

This is the ultimate riddle of Scripture, and the answer leads us to truth number three, redemption is sure. So, here is what God does. In your mind...we don’t have time to go back there, but in your mind, go back with me to Isaiah 6. What does he do? First, He sends His prophet. “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah cleansed from sin, overwhelmed by grace, immediately says, “Here am I!”, as if to say, “Look no further, send me.” God gives him the bad news: “You will speak, and they won’t listen. They will hear, but they will never understand.” Eventually...and the picture is, “You will speak of judgment to come and judgment will come, and though it didn’t happen at the hands of the Assyrians, it would happen at the hands of Babylonians.” Jerusalem would be overtaken, and the judgment of God would send the people of God into exile. That’s the message that we see all throughout Isaiah.

However, you go back to Isaiah 6:13, which you’ll notice in the very end, God says, “I will preserve a stump; there will be a stump left for my people. My people will not be wiped out. I will be faithful to them.” So, God sends His prophet, and God preserves His people. “I will preserve a remnant.”, and that’s where we see the promise and the hope that flows in the end of this passage. However, what’s really interesting is Isaiah says, “This will not just be a remnant of God’s people who will be saved.”

The picture here is actually much, much greater, because God will preserve His people and, in the process, God will restore all peoples. This is what we see in the whole of the book of Isaiah. I want to show it to you in one passage, I think. We may go to a couple of others, but I think just one. Isaiah 11:1; Isaiah 11:1. the others we probably won’t have time to turn to, so just get ready to write, but I want you to see this, Isaiah 11:1. Now, at the end of Isaiah 6 talked about a stump that the Lord would preserve. Listen to Isaiah 11:1.

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips, he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

Skip down to verse 9. “They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” Then, listen to verse 10, “In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples - of him shall all the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.” You see what we find,
especially during these initial chapters of Isaiah, is a promise that from the stump of Jesse...that basically means from the line of David...from the people preserved from David’s line, the king, will come a king and the Spirit of the Lord will be upon Him, the fear of the Lord upon Him, righteousness upon Him. So, you see these promises of a king in the first part of Isaiah.

Last part of Isaiah, you see a bunch of promises about a servant who will come, and the Spirit will be on Him, and righteousness will clothe Him, and what you begin to discover is that the king is the servant and the servant is the king. Isaiah, all throughout this book, is pointing us to a Servant King who will come, who will bring redemption, not just for the people of God, but restoration for all the nations on the earth.

So, the question is, “Well, how do we know when He’s here? How do we know who he is? What do we look for?” Isaiah says, “Look for a spectacular sign.” Isaiah 7:13-14, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? [Therefore] the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” That’s a good sign. When you have a virgin in the family line of David that conceives when she is a virgin, and she has a son and his name means “God with us”, that’s a good sign. You get to Isaiah 9, and it says, “His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father...” The child will be called Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government, there will be none. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

So, look for a spectacular sign, but be careful; not everything is spectacular here. Look for a suffering servant. Isaiah 42 says, “He will not shout or cry out.” Isaiah 50 says, “He will offer His back to those who beat Him, His cheeks to those who pull out His beard, and He will not hide His face from mocking and spitting.” Isaiah 52 and 53, which we will look at next week, says, “He will be like a lamb that is led to a slaughter, and there will be no beauty or majesty in Him to attract Him to you. He will be crushed.” Look for a suffering servant.

He will be anointed by the Spirit though. Isaiah 42, “I will put my Spirit on Him.” Isaiah 61, “The Spirit of the Lord will anoint Him to preach good news to the poor and bind up the broken-hearted and proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for prisoners; to comfort all who mourn and provide for those who grieve; to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair, and He will be a Savior for the nations.”

“The servant,” Isaiah 49:6, “will restore tribes of Jacob and bring back the remnant and will be a light for the Gentiles, for all the nations, and there will be no more gloom.” The picture, all throughout Isaiah, is pointing us to a spectacular sign of a suffering servant anointed by the Spirit who is a Savior for the nations, the Lord Jesus Christ. Which is why, in John 12:37-41...you might write that one down, John 12:37-41. When John is talking about the people’s unbelief in Jesus, and He’s saying, “He’s right in front of them, and yet, they do not believe.” He quotes from Isaiah 6:9-13, and then He says this: John says, “Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus on that day, and he spoke of Him.”

The Hope for the Church in Christ...

The reality is that this book is given to us, not just as a book about the hope for Israel in Isaiah, but about the hope for the church in Christ. So, I would say to every single person in
this room, then, in the spirit of Isaiah, turn from sin. To every man, woman, student, child at the sound of my voice, any area of lack of trust in God, turn from your sin. See its painstaking nature before a God whose holiness is terrifying. Like, don’t just hear this and not listen. Isn’t this the danger? Every single week when we gather together at a place like this, this is nothing new, but maybe for the first time this morning, a child or a teenager or a man or a woman might realize God is holy! He’s sovereign. “He is my judge, and I’m a sinner. Woe is me!” Realize that there is nobody going to an altar of sacrifice to pick up a coal and bring it to your lips, because it’s not about a coal anymore, it’s about a cross. Jesus has gone to the cross to pay for your sin before a holy God, and He says to anyone who will trust in Him, “At this moment, your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned for.”

So turn to Him. He is our ever-present help. Go to Him and trust in Him. People of God, He is worthy of our trust, more than our stuff and our job and our families and our ambitions and our affections, or our ideas about what we want or need in this life. Trust in Him. He deserves our entire heart. He is the Creator of the world and the Ruler of history and the King of the nations and the Judge of all peoples! He’s worthy of everything we have!

As we see Him, the Lord Jesus, worthy of our hearts, then let’s tell the world. Whom shall He send into Birmingham? Whom shall He send to the nations? They will not listen at many turns, and they will turn from you. Then, you will be mocked; you will be tortured; you may be killed. It doesn’t matter because we fear the Lord alone, and our lives are His to spend, telling the world Jesus is our eternal hope. This is the only response to a vision of God: “Here we are, send us.”