

Series: Isaiah

Title: Everlasting Strength

Text: Isaiah 26: 4-11

Date: March 25, 2010

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Princeton, NJ

Isaiah 26: 4: Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

We trust in the LORD by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you truly desire to honor the triune God then believe on the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. Submit to the LORD forever: in every trial, in every situation, because in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.

How is our God and Savior everlasting strength to those who trust in him?

Divisions: 1. He delivers his needy children from all our enemies. 2. He weights the path of the just. 3. He teaches all his children in the heart.

I. He delivers his needy children from all our enemies.

Isaiah 26: 5: For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust. 6: The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

The Lord's elect in Judah and Israel were a proud people, surrounded by a proud people. Proud of race--we be Abraham's children. Proud of place--we dwell in the city of Jerusalem. Proud of grace--they thought themselves righteous by their sacrifices and religious ceremonies and the security of their cities.

The burdens over the past several chapters are the judgments of God. God brought down all the lofty cities--Jerusalem and all those cities around them which they depended upon. Their pride and those cities represent the pride and loftiness that is in each of the Lord's children by nature. The LORD had an elect remnant in the midst of all this--by nature they loved this pride and loftiness--and God's elect can only be saved by the LORD himself. SO THE LORD BROUGHT DOWN ALL THOSE LOFTY CITY-STATES WHICH WAS THE WHOLE STAY AND STAFF OF HIS PEOPLE, BRINGING HIS PEOPLE TO DEPEND ONLY UPON HIM.

Isaiah 26: 5: For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low;

Briefly review the burdens.

Isaiah 13-14 is the burden of Babylon. The burdens begin with the city-state which would eventually cover all over the earth in that region of the world. Each of the cities in the burdens which follow represent the various sin and falsehood of mystery Babylon, the mother harlots and all falsehood. God tells the end from the beginning--Babylon will be destroyed.

Isaiah 15-16 is the burden of Moab. Moab's pride and loftiness was that they would not pay tribute to the king and they oppressed and robbed the needy. The Word of grace to Moab was take the Lamb to the Ruler of the land and deal mercifully with your brethren. This is the effectual result of the gospel by which God conquers his elect and saves us from our enemies.

Isaiah 17 is the burden of Damascus [the capital city of Syria]—Israel took sides with Syria against God. So did Adam and all men in Adam. The Word of God in that chapter is electing grace, "There shall be gleaned grapes reserved in the uppermost bough."

Isaiah 18, 19 are the burdens of Ethiopia and Egypt. The pride and loftiness here consists of false prophets, of man-made religion represented in the reeds and flowers which they planted, the fishers praising their tackle and the fish ponds they made with their hands. The Word of the LORD by which he would bring down the lofty cities concerned "a clear heat and dew." He said: See ye and hear when my messenger blows the trumpet. He promised a pillar and an altar in the border of Egypt where his people would gather to worship him--the effectual work of the Holy Spirit through the gospel of Christ through his church, the ground and pillar of truth, whereby we gather unto Christ our Altar.

Chapter 21 are the burdens of lesser Babylon, of Dumah and of Arabia. Their pride and loftiness was that they mocked the LORD and gave false refuge to those fleeing the judgment of the LORD. The LORD would bring down the loftiness of their cities by setting up his "watchman", a type of his gospel preachers.

Chapter 22 is the burden of Jerusalem in Judah. Jerusalem trusted in her walls, her temple, all the while led by her false treasurer. The Lord brought them all down, established a new treasurer, named, "a Nail in a sure place" on which all the vessels great and small hung, a type of Christ and all God's children--his vessels of mercy--hanging all their hope on Christ.

Chapter 23 is the burden of Tyre. The burdens before each had some significance or symbolism of false religion. The pride and loftiness of this city was covetousness and worldliness. The Lord would save his people by the hand of a people despised and considered nothing, a people who "were not", typifying the gospel and the witnesses of God which worldly men consider nothing. Yet, God uses them to make Christ the Power and Wisdom of God unto his people.

In all these burdens, these various offenses represent the pride and loftiness in our hearts by nature and all our enemies. God had to bring down those lofty cities to save his people out of their grasp. Most importantly, in each of those burdens we see something of the sin which Christ bore in his own body and the judgment of God poured out on him as the Substitute in order to deliver his people.

Chapter 24 we took notice of Christ on the cross. The world being shaken, turned upside down, and the prophet mourning as did our Savior, "My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacheoursly." But chapter 24 ends with the LORD of hosts reigning in Mt. Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

Chapter 25 begins with rejoicing and the marriage feast of the Lamb. It shall be said, "This is our God." He spreads forth his hands in the midst of our enemies like a swimmer, here is the sure result of his sovereign power and grace:

Isaiah 25: 12: And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust. 26: 1: In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. 4: Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength: 5: For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust. 6: The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

II. HE WEIGHS THE PATH OF THE JUST

Isaiah 26: 7: The way of the just *is* uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

God our Savior is the MOST UPRIGHT. We who are given life and faith to trust him are the just. The way--the path of the just is uprightness because the LORD weighs our path, that is, he makes clear our

path. We just saw how he cleared the path of his elect remnant--bringing down all the proud and lofty--turning them to trust him alone. This is what he did for his people in Christ on the cross and what he does for us and in us in our day.

First, the LORD makes the way--the path--of our SALVATION upright.

You who are just have been justified in a holy, just and upright way, in Christ the Way of the Most Upright. I give you this every time I preach to you. It is the very comfort of my soul.

Romans 3: 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The offended law of God blocked out path--he made the way clear by establishing righteousness for his people. Justice blocked the path for his people, he cleared the path by drinking the cup of God's wrath dry. He DID so in the UPRIGHT WAY--OUR God is a just God and a Savior--the most upright.

Secondly, the defilement of our conscious blocked our path--but he rebirthed us making the path clear for us to behold his glory.

It must be perfect to be accepted of God. We can not even approach God until he purify his people by the sprinkling of his blood. The blood of Christ purifieth our conscious from dead works to serve the living God.

Hebrews 10: 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21: And having an high priest over the house of God; 22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Thirdly, when our God effectually turns a sinner from the sinners vain way, writing the LORD's way in our hearts then we desire God and his way.

The LORD always makes his way known to us. He removes the stumblingblocks so we can walk in his way.

Jeremiah 31:9: They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

During all these judgments the Lord was clearing the way for Isaiah and the remnant to behold him. The LORD weighed their path--made them to know his way--so that they waited on him as he cleared the path.

Isaiah 26: 8: Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

If the desire of your soul is to his name--to honor it, to glorify it--it is because he has cleared the path and the LORD will honor the desire he put in you. He will strengthen you and uphold you in the inner man, as he did Isaiah and the brethren in his day, so you can hold fast and honor his name.

Isaiah 26: 9: With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early:

If the desire of your soul is to seek him in the night, to seek him early, AT ALL TIMES--the LORD will honor the desire he put in you. He will make your path a way of rejoicing in his sure mercies toward you.

- His ordered and sure covenant of grace to you
- His righteousness which is yours
- His sovereign power to keep you separated unto himself
- His promise to keep you and bring you to himself

Psalm 37: 23: The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

Which is it? The believer delights in the LORD's way or the LORD delights in the believer's way? Both! The LORD delights in the believer's way because the LORD makes the believer to delight in the LORD's way. In the LORD is everlasting strength because HE WEIGHS--MAKES STRAIGHT--THE PATH OF THOSE HE HAS JUSTIFIED.

III. HE IS EVERLASTING STRENGTH BECAUSE ALL THE LORD'S CHILDREN SHALL BE TAUGHT OF HIM.

Isaiah said, 9: With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early:

But now notice this:

Isaiah 26: 10: Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

Though the LORD dealt with his sovereign hand in their land, though he sent his prophet Isaiah declaring "it shall be well for those who take refuge in Christ the Sanctuary": some willed not to learn righteousness, some willed to go on dealing unjustly, some willed not to behold the majesty of the LORD. But Isaiah had a desire, a willingness, an earnestness after the LORD JEHOVAH. So who made the difference and why?

Isaiah 26: 9: for [because] when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

The true inhabitants of the world are God's elect and by God's irresistible grace they shall be taught of God and they will learn righteousness. And our God shall receive all the glory.

Romans 3: 9: What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10: As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12: They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

The reason men perish is because they are not willing. This is all men by nature, even everyone God saves. It is not that the way to God is blocked by God. The way to God is blocked by man's own sin. Therefore, if not for God's grace none would be saved.

Isaiah 1: 9: Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

When any sinner learns of Christ and comes to Christ in faith, the glory is not to the sinner but to God.

John 6: 44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

In everything God did in Isaiah's day we see he was drawing his people to himself, separating them from vain religion, vain ceremony, vain refuge, teaching them in their heart. So as God works his judgments in the earth, when it appears to you dark and dim, you can rest assured that God is teaching his people in their hearts, bringing us and them to Christ and bringing glory to his great name.

What about those who go on in their rebellion?

Isaiah 26: 11:...but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

Philippians 3: 9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Perhaps tonight he will use these words of judgment to clear your path, to purge your conscience to behold he has freely given you access to the LORD Jehovah.

Application

Isaiah 26: 4: Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength: because (here are three good reasons to rest in his everlasting strength)

1. He delivers, protects his needy children.
2. He weighs, makes clear, the path of those he has justified.
3. All the Lord's children shall be taught of the LORD.