

Series: Isaiah Series
Title: Review After the Exam
Text: Isaiah 45:
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When you are a student you prepare for upcoming exams. You listen to the teacher. You take notes. You go home and study and think about what you have been taught. When the big test is coming up you get someone to ask you all the questions. And you answer them one after another. You feel prepared.

Then test day comes. You look at the questions and you are confused. The questions appear to be questions you never even studied before. You answer according to what seems to be the right answer to you.

Get the test results back—failed! What happened? When you were preparing you could answer all the questions? But when the test came you got them all wrong? What was the problem?

You had the answers in YOUR HEAD, but you really did not know the answers in YOUR HEART. When we have the answers in our head—we can answer as long as the question is worded exactly the way we learned it—because we recognize the letter. When we have the answer in our heart—the question can be worded in various ways and we still know the answer because we know it in our heart—we have learned it in spirit.

Let the question be worded: Is a man depraved? Yes. We can recognize the word “depraved.” Is God sovereign? Yes. We can recognize the word “sovereign.” Is salvation of the Lord? Redemption? Forgiveness? Righteousness? By Christ alone? By grace alone? Through faith alone—simply relying entirely upon God alone? Yes. Does God invincibly call his child, teach his child, correct his child, keep his child, preserve his people? Yes. We can recognize those questions in the letter?

But when God gives the exam in the form of providence, everyday life, in the form of a—an assembly of his saints with no form nor comeliness or attraction about them, in our daily affairs which we have to decide upon and work out amongst ourselves, or a false teacher who comes along mingling law and grace, works and grace—then we find often find ourselves failing miserably. We often find that we have somehow entertained a separation between church life and everyday life—but it is not so for the believer. Our Life is Christ whether in the Lord’s house or in our own house, whether in the pew or in the desk at school or work.

When we fail what does the teacher do? Review.

Proposition: The LORD teaches his child then tests us. We keep finding out we have the answers in our head but not in our heart—not like we ought or like we want. But the LORD teaches us again and tests us again. The LORD God is THE TEACHER—he will see to it his child gets the lesson in the heart.

What is the lesson? God is our Salvation. He has made himself known to us through his Son Christ Jesus. Christ is the Lord’s salvation. He has magnified his name, magnified his holy character, declared his righteousness and made his people accepted by God.

God the Father will have eyes to be on his Son. God the Holy Spirit will have all words to be glorifying to Christ our Power and Wisdom. God calls his sheep, knits us together and calls out the rest of his sheep thereby. That is the purpose for which he has assembled his people in the earth.

When the eye of God's child is taken off his Son he will turn our eye back to his Son. Behold Christ with the eye of faith we find it to be exactly as our Lord Jesus said it would be—in him we have peace. And when we look away from Christ we find it exactly as he said we would—in this world we have tribulation.

Title: Review after the Exam

Have you noticed how many questions the LORD God asks throughout the book of Isaiah? The teacher does not ask questions because the teacher does not know the answer; the teacher asks the questions so the student can learn the answer. The LORD asks questions for the same reason to teach his children. All the questions can be divided into two headings.

Divisions: Questions that deal with who are we? The answer is, grass; 2) Questions concerning who God is, who Christ our Savior is. The answer is, Salvation.

I. LET'S REVIEW A FEW QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOU AND I THE SINNER.

Isaiah 1: 5: Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

This is the case of all men—but it is the case of you and I who believe. Some in Israel and Judah God turned over and left to themselves, but some God corrected. Why does God continue to correct his children? (v9). Because his children are those his elect remnant whom he chose in Christ before the world began and whom he everlastingly loves.

Isaiah 1: 11: To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

Why do you come to this place? By coming to hear God's word are we giving something to God or is God giving something to us? When we give of our time, our money, our lives are we giving something to God or is God giving something to us? There is nothing the believer gives to God.

Our God is righteousness—he makes his child righteous by imputing Christ's Righteousness to us. Our God is holiness—he makes his child holy by giving his Spirit who creates within us a new heart. The means God uses—the church, the preaching of the gospel—these are not us giving something to God, but God giving us of his goodness.

A gift will blind us if when we think it comes from a man. We will find ourselves following man: in our ear, in our pocket book and in our mirror.

Remember, the gifts the believer receives, both spiritual or temporal, are of God. God uses means, our fellow brethren (how thankful we are for them!) but all our provision is from God. That was the problem Isaiah was facing in his day. Jerusalem got a little replenishing from the east. So they thought, "O, we can't offend the Philistines!" Better them than God! They heard the voice of men rather than the Voice of God, the riches of men rather than the riches of Christ.

I used to think the picture of "mountains" represented the great obstacles we have to climb in our daily lives. The mountains represent our haughtiness when we think we have sufficiency by what we see. We ought to be as afraid of the mountain heights of self-sufficiency as we are of the valleys of self-doubt. Why? Because it is our fleshly nature to choose crooked ways to try to overcome both, and we find ourselves in very rough places.

Proverbs 30: 8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: 9 Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, Who *is* the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God *in vain*.

That is what the Lord has done for every individual believer in the heart. That is what the Lord does when he assembles HIS CHURCH. Do you see it, brethren? We are not rich or poor—but we have all things—food convenient for us in Christ.

Isaiah 2: 22: Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

The voice said, Cry, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass (Is 40: 6-8.)—but the word of the Lord shall endure forever!

II. LET'S REVIEW A FEW QUESTIONS CONCERNING WHO GOD IS, A FEW QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRIST OUR SAVIOR.

Isaiah 40: 12: Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? 13: Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him? 14: With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?...28: Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. 30: Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

What is it to “wait” on the Lord? It does not mean we weary the Lord as did Ahaz. It does not mean we look to ourselves. When we look to ourselves a grasshopper is a foe too strong for us to conquer. “Waiting” on the Lord is to believe the Lord, to look only to the LORD. Sometimes it involves standing still; sometimes it involves moving forward.

The Lord’s children in the midst of the nation needed to be corrected. _But the Lord said to his people in Isaiah 43: 1—now the trial is coming—fire and flood—but fear not: I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine.

Christ has borne the wrath of judgment for his people—there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are called of the Spirit of God to faith in Christ. Believers are not passing through the fire and flood of wrath—but of the keeping grace, correcting grace of our faithful Father, that we perish not with this world

Remember: the biggest gulf, the largest divide, the biggest step for you and I was from total sin TO being completely righteous—who delivered us—God did in Christ by his grace. There is another huge divide: from unbelief—TO—FAITH! Who delivered us and continues to deliver us over that huge hurdle? The Spirit of God through the gospel of the finished work of Christ Jesus our salvation.

Why did the LORD keep bringing one test after another upon his people? Why did they have to be taught over and over?

Isaiah 43: 13: Yea, before the day *was I am* he; and *there is* none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

He said he brought Babylon upon them then delivered them from Babylon for three reasons

1. For your sake to remind us who God is

Isaiah 43: 15: the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

2. For your sake, to remind us the victory was won by our Lord before as yet the enemy came forth

Isaiah 43: 15...they ARE extinct

3. For your sake—to remind us all grace is of his hand

Isaiah 43: 20-21—I give waters...to my people, my chosen, they shall bring forth my praise

Isaiah 44: 7: And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. 8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it*? ye *are* even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is* no God; I know not *any*...10: Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that* is profitable for nothing?

The graven image we bow down to and put most of our confidence is probably the greenback—a dollar begins with engraving! Everything used to make it is of the earth.

Isaiah 44: 19:...shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

Isaiah 44: 21: Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou *art* my servant: I have formed thee; thou *art* my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. 22: I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Isaiah 44: 24: Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; 25: That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise *men* backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; 26: That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: 27: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: 28: That saith of Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Two hundred years before they ever went into captivity, God showed he was taking away all and would call an idolator from the east and teach him and use him to deliver them. What a picture of Christ! God used someone not even from our world to come and deliver his children out of the falsehood of Babylon.

Let's end with the last question of the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 66: 9: Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut *the womb*? saith thy God. 10: Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11: That ye may suck, and be

satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

What does all that mean?

Illustration: Christopher's Cry and Contentment

Isaiah 66: 12: For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon *her* sides, and be dandled upon *her* knees. 13: As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. 14: And when ye see *this*, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and *his* indignation toward his enemies.

Do you see yourself as having failed the last exam? I hope so. The day we regard ourselves as having passed with flying colors is the day we have completely dropped out of school!

Let us go back and review what God has taught us and come back to the test saying from the heart, "Lord, forgive my unbelief, I trust you."

Amen!