

Isaiah 21:11-17

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[0 : 00] Now as we mentioned this morning and again earlier in the service, we'll be looking at the latter part of this Isaiah chapter 21 which contains within it these three visions.

The one which as we saw this morning, the burden of the desert of the sea is to be taken to apply to Babylon. Babylon whose rise was yet 150 years in the future in Isaiah's day and whose decline and overthrow was even further.

Ahead in the future. So there was as yet no reason looking around at the world in Isaiah's day to see how these things would come to pass.

But he prophesied that which the Lord gave him. And also we see then these latter two prophecies, verses 11 and 12, the burden of Duma and the burden upon Arabia.

We looked this morning at the burden of Babylon, the desert of the sea, both the physical Babylon and also as we saw the spiritual Babylon which is still very much applicable to our lives.

[1 : 04] And now we look at these two latter prophecies. The burden of Duma, first of all, verses 11 and 12. Although there is a city of this name marked in the northern Arabian desert in some, you know, Bibles if you've got maps in the back of them.

Most commentators agree that the burden in question affects the Edomites or the Idumeans, the descendants of Esau who dwelt to the south of the Dead Sea.

Again, if you do have maps at the back of your Bible, you can turn up and you can look and see where the Dead Sea is positioned in the south. And slightly to the east of that is Mount Seir where the Edomites had their strongholds.

Perhaps the names are connected, Duma and Idumea, but the chief reason for connecting the two is the mention of Mount Seir, which was the ancient and traditional dwelling of the Edomites.

But whether it's Arabian or Edomite, certainly we are talking of Gentiles here, non-Israelites. These are burdens, these are prophecies which concern, in this chapter, not the children of Israel, but Gentile nations.

[2 : 14] The inhabitant of Mount Seir is calling out, watchman, what of the night? That is what we read here. The burden of Duma, he calleth to me, out of Seir, watchman, what of the night?

Watchman, what of the night? Now, of course, every text has a context, an original situation to which the word is literally speaking, before we can take the wider context and the greater application.

And for the dwellers in Mount Seir, in Duma, or Duma, as we may perhaps call it, the danger prophesied is, in the first instance, a physical one, a military one, you might say.

There is the implication here that after a period of happy independence from the vast empires that conquered other lands, we might take that happy independent period to apply to the morning, the brightness of the day, the sun rising and everything filled with light, the morning cometh.

That's the time of goodness, the time of openness, the time of light, the time of the rising warmth of the sun. There are times of independence, of blessing from the different empires, Babylonians and Assyrians and Persians and so on, that would sweep over these lands.

[3 : 32] The first of these major empires would be the Assyrians. Well, I suppose you could say the Egyptians were before that. But at any rate, they have been spared the depredations of these empires up until now.

That would be taken as the morning. The Edomians or Edomites would, in due course, be overcome and destroyed. Hence, the night, the time of darkness, the time of fear, the time of destructiveness.

When they are least expecting it. And you might think, well, of course, when the darkness comes, you do expect danger, you do expect trouble. That's why at night people lock their doors.

That's why when they go down to sleep, they make sure everything is secure. Yes, but when you are during the night asleep and so on, that is when you are at your most vulnerable. When you're asleep, your mind is completely away elsewhere in dreams or lack of dreams, but certainly not switched on and conscious.

And then you're at your most vulnerable. Then you are not expecting danger. And this is the time when the Edomians are at their most vulnerable. Having been loosely allied, as they would become in due course to the Babylonians when they destroyed Jerusalem.

[4 : 45] If we were to take this as being at the same time as the destruction of Babylon, then the Edomians, it might be perhaps the possibility that the Edomites were set upon by the Medes and the Persians in due course as they destroyed Babylon.

Maybe then they destroyed Babylon's allies as well at the same time as they swept through all the former Babylonian empire, destroying those who had been allied to the Babylonians.

And the Edomites had been. They had joined in with the Babylonians in the destruction of Jerusalem. They had made themselves allies to them. So perhaps this is a time of returning retribution for all that we know when they in turn destroyed, when Babylon was in turn destroyed by the Medes and Persians.

Now perhaps they're setting on Babylon's allies. And the prophecy is the suggestion that some in Mount Seir have a trembling sense of foreboding as to what is coming.

Now in our own lives of course as well, physical suffering cannot be avoided at times. We all like to avoid physical suffering. We all like to be free of pain or anxiety or suffering or difficulty in our lives.

[6 : 05] But there's times it cannot be avoided. We don't go looking for it, but sometimes it comes and finds us. So it can't be avoided. And likewise also death in our lives.

We've all been believed at some point in our lives by somebody near or perhaps more distant. And we can't avoid that either. Whether it's by peaceful means or by sudden violent means.

You know, as those poor souls in London, this past week. We cannot avoid it. None of them could avoid it. None of us can avoid it. When it comes to us, we cannot escape it when the time comes.

Whether it be violent or whether it be peaceful. So the question is therefore not merely a literal one as to night and day and trouble looming. But it is a vital spiritual question too.

In prophecy, the watchman usually signifies the prophet who stands as it were upon the watch, waiting for a word from the Lord.

[7 : 07] Thus we have Isaiah saying, he calleth to me out of seer. Isaiah is the prophet. The burden of Duma, he calleth to me out of seer.

Watchman, what of the night? That the need is greatest when the spiritual condition of the people is darkest. I'll say that again.

The need is greatest when the spiritual condition of the people is darkest. If you think back to the beginning of 1 Samuel. Remember when the old priest Eli is there at the tabernacle in Shiloh.

And the wee boy Samuel is sort of ministering about the things of the tabernacle there. And Eli's sons are a rotten lot. They're completely corrupt and immoral. And the state of Israel is really low.

And the Lord sends a prophet to say to them that the judgment is coming on them. That all the hassles they're going to face now because they've turned their backs on the Lord. And to rebuke Eli as well.

[8 : 04] Because although he himself appears to have been a God-fearing and faithful priest. He has done nothing to discipline his sons or to bring them into line. And so the evil that is multiplying in Israel at the time.

It's the priests that are perpetuating it, propagating it as well as the ordinary people. So the prophet comes in in these times of darkness and pronounces the Lord's word.

Because the ordinary means of religion aren't cutting it. They are not conveying the truth of God's word. So the prophet comes in. And it's usually in times of decline. It's usually in times of spiritual darkness.

Like Elijah going to Ahab and saying there's not going to be any rain for three and a half years.

Except that my word. Because northern Israel was steeped in idolatry and unfaithfulness.

So the prophet is usually there speaking into a time of darkness. Speaking into a time of spiritual need. If you think about it, the watchman, if no less needful, is certainly less high profile during the day.

[9 : 11] The spiritual day we might say. The prophet is less prominent in times of religious awakening or spiritual blessing. Because the people already seek and love the Lord in those circumstances.

When you've got, you know, Josiah's reformation in Judah. When you've got Solomon building the temple and turning everyone to the worship of the Lord. You don't find a prophet coming and then saying, by the way, the Lord says this.

By the way, the Lord says that. It's when people begin to go away that the Lord needs to interject this work. You know, when even David, the man after God's own heart, has sinned with Bathsheba and caused her husband to be killed in battle.

That's when Nathan the prophet comes in and says to David, thou art the man. You're the one who's guilty. You, the beloved of the Lord. You need to turn. You need to repent. And so it is in times of darkness of testing the prophet's most high profile.

But it's sort of like the stars. You know, at night you can see them clearly in the blackness of the night. But when the day dawns and the sun rises, the stars are still there but they fade away. We don't see them so clearly.

[10 : 19] And so likewise, the prophet, yes, he's just a meeple. But he's less visible, less high profile when there is spiritual daylight. Watchman, what of the night?

If people are already seeking the Lord, then it isn't quite so dark in a land. And the first thing we notice here is the repetition. Repetition in scripture means emphasis.

It is noteworthy that at least some in Mount Seir, some in the Edomites, seek guidance and direction from God's prophets. Now if they are the descendants of Esau, then at least they have some distant connection with the God of Abraham and Isaac.

Maybe not the God of Jacob, Esau's brother. But certainly the same God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac. There is a sort of cultural, national memory there of the faithfulness of that God.

Some in Mount Seir seek guidance and direction from God's prophets. They are concerned enough to ask, to cry out, watchman, what of the night? Now, ironically, at this time when Isaiah is speaking and when he's prophesying about Idumea and about Arabia, there's an awful lot of people in Israel, the Lord's own nation, who aren't bothered at all.

[11 : 38] They're not seeking the Lord. They're not asking. But here are Gentile nations who are asking. And perhaps we can parallel this whereby, you know, in our own day and age, perhaps many of them brought up with the benefits of the Christian gospel of the Church of Jesus Christ.

They are perhaps a little bit easy-ozy, a little bit sort of complacent about their relationship with the Lord. But people who have never known the Lord and who have experienced the bitter taste and the darkness and the coldness of the world without the Lord, when they first feel the first rays of God's love and warmth, they are desperate to find out more about this God.

They want to know about this Savior Jesus. It's fresh for them. It's new for them. It's not something that they remember with a long-distant, boring memory from when they were kids and having to sit stiffly in the pews and so on.

And perhaps with our upbringing, though it would be a privilege, we have lost sight of the truth of what it conveys. Whereas those who have never known that privilege, to them it's fresh and it's new.

Maybe this is the case for some in Idumea. They are concerned enough to ask, what about this darkness? How do we get through it? Watchmen, what are the nights? What are the nights?

[12 : 55] Romans chapter 13, the Apostle Paul writes, And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light.

In other words, yes, there's been darkness. But the darkness is not going to last forever. The day is going to dawn. You've got to get ready for the day. Then it's going to be a day of the Lord.

There's going to be a day of the Lord's return. There's going to be a day when the beams of his light and his radiance are going to flood this world. You want to be ready for that.

You want to be there when that happens. You know, we could, in a sense, take a lesson from the world. If you think about, you know, people who are obsessed with the things of the world, with material possessions or whatever.

[13 : 57] And what do you find with some of these people? Even if they're comparatively well off, what will you find? That maybe when it comes to Christmas Day or whatever, or people who might normally be spending that day with their families or, you know, having a nice meal or whatever.

What will they do on that day? They will take their sleeping bag. They'll camp out on a freezing cold pavement just so that they can be right next to the door of a major department store so that when it opens on Boxing Day or even a few days later in the week between Christmas and New Year or even the New Year sales, they'll be right at the front of a big queue so that they can be there to get the bargains, which will enable them to lay hold on some material gadget or possession at a knockdown price.

And this will be considered a big success for them if they get it, regardless of how long they've spent camped out on a freezing pavement in December or January, regardless of the discomfort and of the sheer, to some people, waste of time, of that, but they are doing it for a material thing, a material possession which ultimately will not last, and for which they are going to have to pay, albeit pay, a lot less than they might otherwise have had to do.

Whereas for the believer, there is a price which is not going to fade away. There is a glory, a joy, a possession which will be theirs not only for a time but for all eternity.

And it is not a price which they have to pay, it's a price that somebody else has already paid. And for them, they think, oh well, I'm not too keen on this wee bit of discomfort, I'm not really too keen on the discipline, having to read the Bible and having to sort of go and listen to it, preach and to pray and to take up that time doing those things.

[15 : 45] And I'd rather be doing more fun things, you know. The world recognises that if it is going to lay hold upon what it considers important, these passing material possessions, there's going to have to be a bit of discomfort.

There's going to have to be a wee bit of reordering the priorities of their time. Instead of being nice and warm in their home, they'll camp out on the freezing pavement for days on end. But for the believer, if we're going to have this prize, there has to be a reordering of our priorities.

There has to be a focus upon reading the word, upon praying to the Lord, upon waiting upon him, upon making his time the priority for our time.

You see, as I've mentioned in the past, of course, nowadays we're so used to being able to just download something at the click of a button. To be able to plug something in, get the app for it, and there's all the information at our fingertips.

Now you can do that with Bible books and Bible programmes and so on, but it can't give you the knowledge of God's word, which only reading it can do.

[16 : 51] There is no quick, easy fix or way to imbibe all the truth of God's word except going to it day by day, mouthful by mouthful, bite by bite, and just taking it in, feeding upon it day by day.

There is no substitute for that. You've got to be reading it, and you've got to be reading it every day. This is the fruit of your soul. If someone wants to say, oh come on, every day?

Oh, why would I need to do that? That's just a bit much. You know, maybe once a week or whatever. It's just a fruit for your soul. What about if it's your body? If you were saying, oh I'm getting a bit peckish now. If someone would say, you're getting hungry for it, you ate yesterday. Why do you want to eat again today? You ate three days ago. Come on, that's a bit extreme. Why do you want more food than that? Now, just like the food for your body, you expect to be able to eat two, three times a day.

You should expect that your soul should be fed two, three times in a day. Morning by morning, evening by evening, there should be a portion of God's word.

[17 : 56] There should be a bit of time with the Lord. You're only going to build up that knowledge of what he is revealing as we go to him. Because the day is coming.

Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh, where the sun of righteousness is going to arise with healing in his wings.

And also the night, if you will inquire, inquire ye, return to come. But the Lord says in Romans, the night is far spent. The day is at hand.

Cast off the works of darkness. And let us put on the armor of light. Being ready for the day. When he writes to the Thessalonians, Paul says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, at verse 5, he says, You're all the children of light and the children of the day.

We are not of the night, not of darkness. That doesn't mean that you don't sometimes have to walk in the midst of darkness. We are not of the darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others.

[18 : 59] But let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night. And they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober.

Putting on the breastplate of faith and love. And for an helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath. But to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what does he say to the Thessalonians there? He's saying, look, if you're of the day, live like you're of the day. Act and behave like it's of the day that you are. Don't act and behave as though you're still living in spiritual nighttime.

Because the people who spiritually sleep their lives away. As though they're dead in transgression and sin. Then, you know, they do that in a state of darkness. They do that in the night of their soul. Those who fill up themselves with drunkenness. And they do intoxication of the world. So they can't focus on anything straight. And they just blunder through their lives. Not realizing the things of eternity.

[20 : 00] And the things that matter. It's because they're in a state of spiritual nighttime. They that sleep, sleep in the night. They that are drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day.

Put on the armor of day. The armor of daylight. Be ready. And be prepared. When Jesus talks about being ready. He talks about servants who are to be faithful.

With their loins guarded. And their lamps lit. Now why do you put lights on in your house when it gets dark outside? Because you want to create the conditions of daylight.

Even though it is still night outside. And that is how the believer should be. That even though there may be darkness around us. And darkness in the world. And spiritual night out there.

We should be as those who have the lights switched on. Those who have our lamps lit. Those who are dressed and shod. And ready to respond.

[20 : 57] To whatever the Lord may require of us. That in our dwellings. Remember how it says in Exodus. You know when the Lord sends the ten plagues of Egypt. And he talks about the plague of darkness.

Even such a darkness as may be felt. It closed it around people. And yet it says the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

That is what we ought to have. In the dwelling place of our hearts and in our homes. We ought to have our lights lit. We ought to be a people who are lit up with the Lord.

And ready to face whatever the darkness may bring. That even if it's dark outside. Even if it's dark in the world. It's not dark in here. It's not dark in your heart.

In your soul. Because you are ready. The night cometh. Yes. The morning cometh. And also the night. If you will inquire. Inquire ye. Return. Come.

[21 : 53] You see. It ought to be an Arabian. Or an Edomite. Or a man of Mount Seir. Rather than an Israelite who asks. The Lord will still answer the prayer of faith. James tells us that.

James in his book. Chapter 5. Verse 15. He talks about the prayer of faith. The Lord will respond to it. And he will answer it. The morning cometh. Psalm 30 says in verse 5.

For his anger endureth but a moment. In his favour is life. Weeping may endure for the night. But joy cometh in the morning.

We've all had night in our souls at one point. We've all had night in our lives. And sometimes even when we've known the Lord. Still the darkness may sometimes seem to close around us.

And weeping may endure for the night. But it says joy cometh in the morning. It is a morning of opportunity. A morning of grace and favour. The warmth and radiance of God's love.

[22 : 54] The son of righteousness. Arisen with healing in his wings. That's what Malachi describes him as. Chapter 4. Verse 2. It's an opportunity of forgiveness and salvation.

And then. When we've had that opportunity. When we've had that day time. Then comes the night. When no man can work. That's what Jesus says.

As long as I am in the world. I am the light of the world. John chapter 9. Verse 4. He says. But the night cometh when no man can work. God always sends a morning of opportunity.

Before he sends a night of calamity. So that believers may be found prepared. And unbelievers may be found inexcusable.

Think about Noah and this ark that he built. He was a hundred years building the ark. And during that hundred years we're told in the New Testament. That Noah was a preacher of righteousness. [23 : 52] He would have preached the need to repent and turn to the Lord. And nobody believed him. They said. Oh no. We don't need it. I feel like he's been building that boat in dry land for a hundred years. It's never going to happen.

Who does he think he's getting? We don't need to turn. We don't need to repent. We don't need to change. Eight people. Noah. His three sons and their wives. That's the only ones that were saved because of that.

Because when the rains came. And the floods came up. Nobody else was prepared to go into that ark. Nobody else was prepared to believe. That the Lord had given them a hundred years.

In which to repent. Most of us probably will not live for a hundred years. Most of us may only live perhaps into our eighties or nineties. And that's if we have a long healthy and peaceful life. We may be cut down before that.

We don't know. But the Lord has given us a daytime. The Lord has given us a morning of opportunity. None of us can say we weren't told.

[24 : 51] None of us can say we didn't have a chance. And then when the morning and afternoon has been. The shadows of the evening lengthen. And then comes the night. When no man can work.

And how you get through the night. Will be dependent on how you're prepared for it during the day. God always sends a morning of opportunity. Before he sends a night of calamity.

Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? What's going to happen when night comes? The morning cometh. The time of opportunity. When you can receive Christ.

When you can be spared and saved. And also the night. If you will inquire. Inquire ye. Return. Come. So much then the burden of Dumas.

These closing verses 13 to 17 concern the burden upon Arabia. Now, as was mentioned this morning of these three prophecies or burdens detailed in this chapter.

[25 : 50] Each of them refers to a different place and has a different stage of fulfillment. And this last section, verses 13 to 17. The burden upon Arabia. Is the one which in fact will be fulfilled first.

In contrast to the other two prophecies. Verses 1 to 10. Verses 11 and 12. We read of the burden of Arabia as. At verse 16. That it will come to pass within a year.

Within a year. Isaiah prophesying that. Now, the phrase according to the years of unhiring. Adds precision to the timing. An annual laborer would be hired on an estate.

Or a farm or whatever. In the ancient world. Then. In the agricultural society. Would be hired on a farm or an estate. To labor through all the seasons and harvests of the year.

And that wouldn't be just like there is plus one harvest time. There'd be a barley harvest. There'd be a wheat harvest. There might be a fruit harvest. And so on. And they would be involved right through the year. They'd be involved in the plowing.

[26 : 54] And the sowing. And seed time. They'd be involved in all the preparation work. They'd be involved then in one harvest. And then another. And they would work right through all the seasons of the year. And at the end of the year.

They'd get their pay. So it's not only a case of a whole year. Like a hireling would have. But also if you are the hireling. Then it means that you are yourself.

He himself would count the days. To the end of his contract. When he would receive his year's wage. The hireling will know exactly how many days he has left to serve.

The hireling will know exactly how long it is. Till he gets his annual wage. Which indicates to us. It is both a full year. Such as a hireling will work.

And it is also an exact year. Such as a hireling will have a note in his head of. He knows how many days he's served. He knows how many he's still good to go.

[27 : 52] He knows what he should be paid at the end of it. It is a full year. And it is an exact year. Now of course this isn't helpless as to the time. When Isaiah uttered this prophecy.

However given that he died during the reign of King Hezekiah. If you go back to the beginning of the prophecy of Isaiah. It says in chapter 1 verse 1. It lists all the different kings under which he served. And during which his prophecies were uttered. And the last of those is King Hezekiah. Which would indicate that either his prophetic ministry came to an end. During that reign. Or more likely he himself died.

During the days of King Hezekiah. Which means that this burden on Arabia. Must have been fulfilled. At some point during Hezekiah's reign.

If it's going to be within a year. Of Isaiah pronouncing it. It must happen within a year of Isaiah's utterance. Whenever it was given. Now since the other two prophecies.

[28 : 53] Did not come to pass. Until more than 150 years. After the reign of Hezekiah. This one. Against Arabia. Must have been fulfilled first.

So what do we know about the burden on Arabia. Well if we look at these verses. We see that Arabia then as now. Consisted of the vast desert peninsula. Stretching southeast from the Holy Land.

The modern political name. Saudi Arabia. Simply refers to the name of the current Arabian royal family. You know if we were to do it in Britain. It would be like Windsor UK.

Or something like that. It's just the name of the royal family. Added in front. In practice. The prophecy will be dealing with the far northern portion of Arabia. That which geographically lies within a deep V shape.

From Babylon. To the east. To the Sinai peninsula in the west. So if you had a map. And you're looking at Babylon. The way you're looking at it. And your front. And Babylon would be here.

[29 : 53] In the east. There'd be a big V shape. Into the top of the Sinai peninsula. And then back up to the. Into the Arabian desert. And then back up to the Sinai peninsula. So that would be the area that's being spoken about here.

If the Arabians are to be slaughtered or destroyed. Within a year of Isaiah's prophecy. Then the only logical aggressors.

Are the Assyrians. The Assyrians who were based in Nineveh. And their empire took its name from Asher. Assyria. As in Assyria. And they would then be attacking either.

Southwest from the Euphrates. Or if they then came down into Israel. Into the Holy Land. They'd be attacking southeast. Into the Arabian desert then. But at the time when this is fulfilled.

The only possible people. Referred to must be the Assyrian Empire. They were the world's superpower. At that time. Now the inhabitants of this desert area.

[30 : 51] Were largely tent dwelling. Nomadic tribesmen and herdsman. Three different sets of people are mentioned. All of them descendants of Abraham. Either through Ishmael.

Or through Abram's second wife. The wife Keturah. As we read in Genesis chapter 25. If you want to turn to Genesis 25. You can. It's up to you. It's distinguished.

As some of you may know. As the only chapter in the Bible. In which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Are all contemporaries. All alive at the same time. In that chapter. But anyway. That's on our side.

So we have then. Going through this chapter. The Didanim. The Didanim. Who are mentioned here. In verse 13. Of Isaiah 21. The Didanim. And that's not a place.

It's a plural. When you've got I am. At the end of a word. In the Old Testament. It means the plural. Of a nation. Or a people. In the Hebrew. So you've got the Didanim.

[31 : 47] Who are descendants of Abraham. Then descendants of Didanim. Chapter 25. Verse 3. Joachshan, Debat Sheba. And Didan. And the sons of Didan. Were Asherah, Rehashim.

And so on. We have the inhabitants of Tima. An Arabian city. Named after a son of Ishmael.

Genesis 25. Verse 15. And at verse 17. The children of Kedar.

Again. Descendants of Ishmael there. Genesis 25. At verse 13. Another Ishmaelite tribe. The word Kedar. In Hebrew. Also translates.

As black. So references. In scripture. To the tents. Of Kedar. You know. Song of Solomon. Chapter 1. Verse 5. I am black. But calmly. As the tents.

Of Kedar. As the curtains. Of Solomon. Also in Psalm 120. Verse 5. Woe is me. That I sojourn. In Mesheh. That I dwell. In the tents.

[32 : 41] Of Kedar. Now it might refer. To the black material. With which the tents. Of these tribes. Were constructed. Or likewise. That in turn. Can of course.

Be a double reference. To the wickedness. Of these tribes. Black tents. Places of wickedness.

Black heart. And so on. Now some people take. Verse 14.

To be actually. In the present tense. O inhabitant. Of the land of Tima. Bring water. To him that is thirsty. Bring bread. To the person. That's in need.

But either way. It would appear. That the Temanites. Helped. And suffered. The Arabian fugitives. From Assyrian slaughter. And this is. To their credit. The nomadic tribes.

Despite their apparent. Proficiency. As archers. Verse 17. Makes reference to that. Despite being a tough. Hardy people. Living a hard life. In their desert domain.

[33 : 35] They were easy prey. For the Assyrians. Their flocks. And their herds. Just carted off. As booty. Now as somebody. Has pointed out. You know. In terms of. Military strategy.

Armies. Are not. Primarily. About weapons. And warfare. The biggest. Single. Strategic. Factor. In any army. As it moves. On campaign. Is food.

If you cut off. The supply of food. The army. Withers. And dies. And perishes. Of hunger. And all the Assyrians. Would have to do. Is cart off. All the flocks. And herds. Of this nomadic people.

And they would perish. They would die. In the desert. In the early. 20th century. The German. Occupation. In. Southwest Africa. That. Had difficulties.

With the local people. There. They drove some of them. Into. Into the desert. And they. They didn't kill them. But they. They perished. Because they didn't have water. They didn't have food. And so on. And all colonial powers.

[34 : 30] To an extent. Were brutal. In their suppression. Of local populations. The British. The French. Others as well. And it wouldn't necessarily. Need violence. As such.

Just cut off. The supply. Of food. And that's what the Assyrians. Would need to do here. Just take their flocks. Their herds. And so they are no match. For this.

Overwhelming. Power. And so we read. The residue. Of the number of archers. The mighty men. Of the children. Of Kedar. Shall be diminished. The Lord God of Israel. Hath spoken it. It will be within a year.

According to the years. Of the higherling. All the glory of Kedar. Shall fail. It is a poor glory. Which so swiftly. Comes to nothing.

If it cannot last. Is it really glory at all? Glory is in the Lord. Not just Israel. But all nations. Were oppressed. By Assyrian cruelty.

[35 : 24] Not just the Arabians. Not just the Edomites. Not just the Israelites. All these nations. Were oppressed. By Assyrian cruelty. And likewise. All nations of the world. Are oppressed.

By the evil. In this fallen world. Nobody likes evil. When it happens to them. Nobody likes suffering. Nobody likes pain. And difficulty. But these are all symptoms.

Of this fallen world. They are symptoms. Of the fact. That sin is in the world. And the only remedy. Is not simply. Patching it up. You know. Hospitals provide help.

And food banks. And so on. These meet some of the symptoms. But the ultimate need. Of this world. Is for reconciliation. To God. Through his son.

Jesus Christ. Deal with the cause. Which is our separation. From God. Deal with the cause. Heal that cause. And the symptoms. Will likewise follow.

[36 : 17] You bring light. Where there was darkness. You bring healing. Where there was dis-ease. And discomfort. You bring blessing. Where there was only cursing.

So. Likewise. Nobody in this world. Gets a free ride. The spiritual darkness. Of Assyria. We might say. Oppresses all of us.

Not just the Arabians. Not just the Edomites. Not just the Israelites. Everyone is oppressed. By the Assyrian cruelty. The fallenness of this world. But for the Lord's people.

The suffering. Has a purpose. A meaning. A glory. What is the purpose. Do you imagine. Of your heavy heart. This evening. If you have such.

What is the purpose. Of the problems. You may have been afflicted by. Over the years. Of your life. In this world. Without Christ. All of it makes no sense. All of it is just. Meaningless suffering.

[37 : 13] Mindless pain. But what we read. In the Psalms. In Psalm 56. You know. Most appropriately. Which is. You know. I'm often quoting from. You know. Put thou my tears.

Into thy bottle. Are they not. In thy book. Every experience. Of the believer. Is for a purpose. And for a profit. Every tear. Is bottled. And we read.

In revelation. That the Lord. Will wipe away. All tears. And awful faces. They will have a purpose. They will not be for nothing. They will not be lost. They are like deposits.

In the bank of grace. All that we have endured. And the Lord. Himself. Will make it. To be seen. To have been worthwhile. If this world.

Is a world. Without Christ. It's just. Ongoing. Misery. And darkness. Is that what it is for you? Is that what your life. Is to be just. Ongoing.

[38 : 07] Material. Struggle. Ongoing. Difficulty. Pain. Bereavement. Sorrow. And all the difficulties. That you face. Because we all face difficulties. What is the purpose of it?

Is there a reason? You will find that reason. That fulfillment. That sense. To make of this life. Only in Christ. That is the solution.

Which the Lord. Posits. And sets before us. This. This is the reason. This is the answer. This is what you need. And if you don't believe. Come and see.

That's what Jesus said. To his disciples. He said to Rabbi. Where are you staying? He said. Come and see. And when Philip goes and finds Nathanael. He says. We found the Messiah. We found the one.

That all the prophecies speak of. And Nathanael says. Ah. Galilee. Can any good new thing come out of Nazareth? And he says. Come and see. Try it out. Put the Lord.

[39 : 01] If we can say it reverently. Put the Lord to the test. Fall back. Into his arms. And see. If he catches you. And if you fall flat on your back. Well you know worse off than you would.

We just stand without Christ. We hit the floor. We hit the ground. So many times. We pick ourselves up. We dust ourselves off. Bruised and scratched. And bleeding. And that's what this world is like. But if you fall back. Into the arms of Christ. And you sense and know. He catches you. He lifts you up. He gives you purpose. He gives you fulfillment. He causes your life.

To have the meaning. For which it was designed. Man's chief end. Is to glorify God. And to enjoy him. Forever.

Do you dare to hope. That one day. May all that you may have suffered. Or endured. May be made up to you. It can be. But only.

[39 : 59] In the Lord. So we go back to verse 12. The watchman said. The morning cometh. And also the night. If you will inquire. Inquire ye.

Return. Come. Inquiry is good. Returning. And repentance is better. Be not like Israel of old. Of whom Isaiah said. In chapter 30.

Verse 15. Thus saith the Lord God. The Holy One of Israel. In returning. And rest. Shall ye be saved. In quietness. And confidence. Shall be your strength. And ye would not.

He still says it to us. In returning. Returning to him. And in rest. Shall ye be saved. In quietness. And in confidence. Shall be your strength.

And ye would not. But will you. Will you tonight. Put your confidence. In Christ. And know the quietness. And the protection.

[40 : 54] Which he alone can give. Psalm 86. Verse 14. Return. We beseech thee. O God of hosts. Look down from heaven. And behold. And visit this vine. Verse 19.

Turn us again. O Lord God of hosts. Cause thy face to shine. And we shall be saved. You see. The psalmist is pleading. For the Lord to return. And the Lord is pleading.

For us to return to him. And the upshot of that. Is that the distance. Is being closed. All the time. Between us. And the Lord. Sooner.

Or later. You are going to. Encounter Christ. Either in this world. Or the next. Sooner or later. You will be brought. Face to face. With the son of righteousness. Sooner or later.

You will meet him. As he is. The distance is closing. And we turn to him. And we repent. And we receive him. Now. Whilst it is day.

[41 : 48] Whilst it is the morning. Or else the night comes. When we are stumbling around. Without the light of the world. But the good news is still. Even there. At the very last book of the Bible.

Even the very closing verses. Revelation 22. Verse 17. The spirit. And the bride say. Come. And let him that heareth say. Come. And let him that is a thirst.

Come. And whosoever will. Let him take the water of life. Freely. Without money. Without price. Freely. Come. To the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whilst it is day. The watchman say. The morning cometh. The time of opportunity. The sun of the morning. When the day star arisen in our hearts.

And also the night. If you will inquire. Inquire ye. Return. Come. And take the water of life. Freely.

[42 : 44] It is there for you. And it is there. For now. And the morning is here. But the night cometh.

Let us pray.