



GREAT CHAPTERS FOR GREATER LIVING

“GOD’S INVITATION”

ISA. 1: 16-18

ISAIAH’S CALLING AS A PROPHET WAS TO INDICATE TO HIS PEOPLE THE SOURCE OF THEIR TROUBLES AND TO CALL THEM TO REPENTANCE AND REMIND THEM OF GOD’S READINESS TO RECEIVE THEM. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY SEEN, THE NATION WAS IN TROUBLE BECAUSE OF SIN AND ISAIAH HAS ANALYZED IT FOR THEM. HE HAS SHOWN THEM THAT SIN IS REBELLION, FOOLISHNESS AND MADNESS, AND IT TURNS PEOPLE INTO HYPOCRITES. AFTER BRINGING FORTH THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THE LORD, THROUGH THE VOICE OF HIS PROPHET, NOW MENTIONS IN VV. 16-17 A LIST OF NINE THINGS WE EXPECTS OF THEM. THIS IS A PRELUDE TO HIS GREAT INVITATION. GOD MAKES AN APPEAL: “COME, NOW.” GOD IS MAKING THAT SAME APPEAL TO ALL OF US, AND TO ALL OF THE WORLD. IT MEANS THAT HE IS NOT FINISHED WITH US; HE STILL HAS SOMETHING TO SAY TO US. WHAT NOW DO WE SEE IN THE WORDS OF ISAIAH?

I. THE RIGHTNESS OF GOD’S DEMANDS

GOD IS OUR MAKER AND HE GAVE US FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND HE SPELLED OUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CHOICES. HE THEREFORE HAS THE RIGHT TO LAY DOWN CONDITIONS FOR WHICH WE ARE TO LIVE. AND WHAT HE DEMANDS FROM US IS ESSENTIALLY RIGHT AND GOOD IN AND OF ITSELF. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE RIGHT AND GOOD, SO ARE THE BEATITUDES, AND SO IS EVERYTHING ELSE CONTAINED IN HIS WORD.

II. THE JUSTICE OF GOD’S PUNISHMENT

GOD THREATENS PUNISHMENT IN THE WHOLE OF THE BIBLE. BUT THE THREAT OF PUNISHMENT CANNOT BE TAKEN OUT BECAUSE THERE NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN A SALVATION WERE IT NOT FOR PUNISHMENT. THERE NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN THE CROSS ON CALVARY WERE IT NOT FOR THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST SIN. THESE THINGS ARE INDISSOLUBLY LINKED.

GOD HAS ESTABLISHED THE PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT AND HE HAS TOLD US EXACTLY WHAT THE TERMS OF THE JUDGMENT ARE. COULD ANYTHING BE FAIRER? BEFORE WE CAN STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD WE MUST BE CLEAN, AND HE TELLS US HOW WE CAN BE CLEAN.

III. THE GRACE OF GOD’S OFFER

“THOUGH YOUR SINS BE AS SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY BE RED LIKE CRIMSON, THEY SHALL BE AS WOOL.” THIS WAS HIS FINAL WORD TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND IT IS HIS FINAL WORD TO US AND TO THE WORLD. WHEN HE HAS CONVICTED US OF THE RIGHTNESS OF HIS DEMANDS AND THE JUSTICE OF HIS PUNISHMENT, HE APPEALS TO US TO COME TO HIM IN REPENTANCE AND FAITH AND CAST OURSELVES ON HIS MERCY. IF WE DO THAT, THEN HE WILL GIVE US FREE AND FULL FORGIVENESS. THIS IS OFFERED TO US THROUGH HIS BLESSED SON, JESUS CHRIST. IT IS AN OFFER WE CAN’T REFUSE!