

Tuesday, September 10

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Isaiah 6:1 - 7:15

6 1 It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. **2** Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. **3** They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!" **4** Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke. **5** Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies." **6** Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. **7** He touched my lips with it and said, "See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven." **8** Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me." **9** And he said, "Yes, go, and say to this people, 'Listen carefully, but do not understand. Watch closely, but learn nothing.' **10** Harden the hearts of these people. Plug their ears and shut their eyes. That way, they will not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their hearts and turn to me for healing." **11** Then I said, "Lord, how long will this go on?" And he replied, "Until their towns are empty, their houses are deserted, and the whole country is a wasteland; **12** until the LORD has sent everyone away, and the entire land of Israel lies deserted. **13** If even a tenth—a remnant—survive, it will be invaded again and burned. But as a terebinth or oak tree leaves a stump when it is cut down, so Israel's stump will be a holy seed."

7 1 When Ahaz, son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, set out to attack Jerusalem. However, they were unable to carry out their plan. **2** The news had come to the royal court of Judah: "Syria is allied with Israel against us!" So the hearts of the king and his people trembled with fear, like trees shaking in a storm. **3** Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Take your son Shear-jashub and go out to meet King Ahaz. You will find him at the end of the aqueduct that feeds water into the upper pool, near the road leading to the field where cloth is washed. **4** Tell him to stop worrying. Tell him he doesn't need to fear the fierce anger of those two burned-out embers, King Rezin of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah. **5** Yes, the kings of Syria and Israel are plotting against him,

saying, **6** 'We will attack Judah and capture it for ourselves. Then we will install the son of Tabeel as Judah's king.' **7** But this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "This invasion will never happen; it will never take place; **8** for Syria is no stronger than its capital, Damascus, and Damascus is no stronger than its king, Rezin. As for Israel, within sixty-five years it will be crushed and completely destroyed. **9** Israel is no stronger than its capital, Samaria, and Samaria is no stronger than its king, Pekah son of Remaliah. Unless your faith is firm, I cannot make you stand firm." **10** Later, the LORD sent this message to King Ahaz: **11** "Ask the LORD your God for a sign of confirmation, Ahaz. Make it as difficult as you want—as high as heaven or as deep as the place of the dead." **12** But the king refused. "No," he said, "I will not test the LORD like that." **13** Then Isaiah said, "Listen well, you royal family of David! Isn't it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience of my God as well? **14** All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us'). **15** By the time this child is old enough to choose what is right and reject what is wrong, he will be eating yogurt and honey. **16** For before the child is that old, the lands of the two kings you fear so much will both be deserted. **17** "Then the LORD will bring things on you, your nation, and your family unlike anything since Israel broke away from Judah. He will bring the king of Assyria upon you!" **18** In that day the LORD will whistle for the army of southern Egypt and for the army of Assyria. They will swarm around you like flies and bees. **19** They will come in vast hordes and settle in the fertile areas and also in the desolate valleys, caves, and thorny places. **20** In that day the Lord will hire a "razor" from beyond the Euphrates River —the king of Assyria—and use it to shave off everything: your land, your crops, and your people. **21** In that day a farmer will be fortunate to have a cow and two sheep or goats left. **22** Nevertheless, there will be enough milk for everyone because so few people will be left in the land. They will eat their fill of yogurt and honey. **23** In that day the lush vineyards, now worth 1,000 pieces of silver, will become patches of briars and thorns. **24** The entire land will become a vast expanse of briars and thorns, a hunting ground overrun by wildlife. **25** No one will go to the fertile hillsides where the gardens once grew, for briars and thorns will cover them. Cattle, sheep, and goats will graze there.

2 Corinthians 11:16 - 33

11 16 Again I say, don't think that I am a fool to talk like this. But even if you do, listen to me, as you would to a foolish person, while I also boast a little. **17** Such boasting is not from the Lord, but I am acting like a fool. **18** And since others boast about their human achievements, I will,

too. **19** After all, you think you are so wise, but you enjoy putting up with fools! **20** You put up with it when someone enslaves you, takes everything you have, takes advantage of you, takes control of everything, and slaps you in the face. **21** I'm ashamed to say that we've been too "weak" to do that! But whatever they dare to boast about—I'm talking like a fool again—I dare to boast about it, too. **22** Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. **23** Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. **24** Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. **26** I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. **27** I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. **28** Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches. **29** Who is weak without my feeling that weakness? Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger? **30** If I must boast, I would rather boast about the things that show how weak I am. **31** God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, who is worthy of eternal praise, knows I am not lying. **32** When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas kept guards at the city gates to catch me. **33** I had to be lowered in a basket through a window in the city wall to escape from him.

Psalm 54:1 - 7

54 1 Come with great power, O God, and rescue me! Defend me with your might. **2** Listen to my prayer, O God. Pay attention to my plea. **3** For strangers are attacking me; violent people are trying to kill me. They care nothing for God. Interlude **4** But God is my helper. The Lord keeps me alive! **5** May the evil plans of my enemies be turned against them. Do as you promised and put an end to them. **6** I will sacrifice a voluntary offering to you; I will praise your name, O LORD, for it is good. **7** For you have rescued me from my troubles and helped me to triumph over my enemies.

Proverbs 23:1 - 3

23 **1** While dining with a ruler, pay attention to what is put before you. **2** If you are a big eater, put a knife to your throat; **3** don't desire all the delicacies, for he might be trying to trick you.