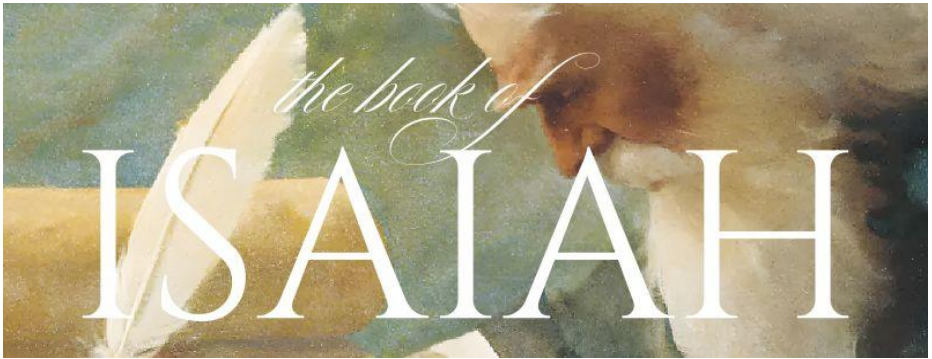


Daily Worship Notes

April 20th – 25th, 2026



Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question 63: Which is the fifth commandment?

Answer: The fifth commandment is, *Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*¹⁵¹

Scripture Proofs:

Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16.

Comment: Giving honour to one's parents is a privilege to be enjoyed. Sometimes parents can be difficult to respect, but we must seek to do so with quiet grace and love.

Psalm of the Week: Psalm 46C. The words are on page 8.

Please pray for:

Mon – Don Gilmore

Tues - Hannah Guthrie

Wed - Jon & Amy, Grace, Elloise, Rita, Margaret, Leo & Beth Harper

Thur - Jamie & Heather Hood

Fri - Stas Jesionka

Sat - Jonathan Jesionka

Bible Questions for the week:

Question: Why did the Lord want Israel to make a sanctuary for Him?

Answer: Exodus 25:8

Question: Where will the put the Lord's testimony?

Answer: Exodus 25:16

Please pray for the Holy Spirit's help as you study God's Word.

These notes have been written by Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley, drawing heavily, and frequently quoting sections directly, from Alec Motyer's book "The Prophecy of Isaiah".



Monday – Isaiah 17:1-9 – Background to what this chapter’s about.

A new oracle against Damascus

There are five sections to this oracle about Damascus, and I share it simply to show you the progression which is taking place through the prophecies as they are beginning to be given.

1. 17:1-3 – We find Aram and Ephraim stripped of the worldly security of cities, fortifications and royal power.
2. 17:4-9 – Is divided into three parts by the term, ‘In that day’:
 - Verses 4-6, Jacob will be reduced to gleanings.
 - Verses 7,8, but the remnant will turn truly to the Lord.
 - Verse 9, yet the day of their preservation will also be the day of the destruction of all their worldly strength.
3. 17:10,11 – Is an explanation of why this disaster has happened to Ephraim.
4. 17:12-14 – The theme is of the decline of the international threat.
5. 18:1-7 – Again, it has an international flavour with envoys travelling between nations and the addressing of the whole earth, while the Lord, although unseen, is actively engaging with that which He has created and sustains by the power of His Word.

This isn’t easy, and I’m not totally clear on it all myself, but something to bear in mind when trying to make sense of what Isaiah is prophesying is that it’s not in chronological order. We’re not getting a list of Isaiah’s prophecies here in date order. For example, in chapter 17, verses 1-3, we’re reading a prophecy about Ephraim and Aram, but it’s set in the same time as the relationship between Ephraim and Aram we read about in chapter 8, verses 1-4. So, the words we are now reading must have been written before the fall of Damascus in 732 B.C. And that’s just one example of the number Motyer gives, to show that these prophecies are not in date order. But here is the key point: the purpose of these oracle chapters is not to give us a strict historical record, although the historical facts are accurate; rather, they present the issues that God was addressing during Isaiah’s 20-30-year ministry. They are about what God said He would do, which were later fulfilled down to the finest detail. This is about showing us that God has decreed what will come to pass, that He then executes as He has decreed, and from that we can take that the future promises He has made about the world’s future are guaranteed to happen.

Questions

1. Does the prophecy of Isaiah unfold according to chronological time?
2. Does God always do what He decrees?

Memory Verse - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” *John 1:1*



Tuesday – Isaiah 17:1-3 – A failed alliance.

(For the background to this passage, see Isaiah 7:3-9 and 2 Kings 16:1-9.)

In these verses, the people of God, here the northern Kingdom, Ephraim, make their first appearance in the oracle sequence, which runs from chapter 13:1 to chapter 20:6. Note, and this is significant, they are not mentioned independently but are spoken of in connection to Damascus/Aram and are destroyed with them in a joint judgment. The point is that the Lord's concern for His people is a holy concern. He will not overlook their rebellion and sin, for His glory and their good, and because of that, they too will experience just divine judgment. It's not just that God organizes history for the good of His people and in doing so leaves them to do as they please. The Babylonian oracle had been for the good of His people through the destruction of their oppressors. The Philistia oracle had been to keep the Davidic promises, opening them up to the Gentile world as presented in the Moab oracle. But His holy and just actions mean that they, too, must face the consequences of their sin. And what was their sin? It was that, when confronted with the looming power of Assyria threatening to engulf them, they had turned their backs on God and sought security and safety through an armed alliance with Aram (see chapter 7:7-9). This was an abandonment of their covenant relationship with God and the refuge He grants to His people when they call on Him.

Of course, placing their trust in Damascus will prove utterly futile, for, incapable of defending itself, let alone an ally, it will become a heap of ruins. The fact that the flocks can lie down without fear of being attacked is not a scene of pastoral bliss, e.g., Psalm 23, but it is a picture of a landscape devoid of human habitation; such will be the devastating scale of the destruction.

Just as Ephraim cannot be saved by Damascus, neither can Damascus be saved by unbelieving Ephraim. They are both doomed. When the godly flee God to seek refuge in the world, the world cannot be helped by the godly. When the Bride stops preaching the gospel to the world so as not to make her feel uncomfortable, the world cannot be saved.

Questions

1. Where does Ephraim seek security from? How will that turn out?
2. Can the church have a polite relationship with the world and benefit it?

Memory Verse - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." *John 1:1*



Wednesday – Isaiah 17:4-11: Jacob/Israel's destruction and remnant.

A good heading for verses 4-6 would be 'Glory reduced to gleanings'. There are three pictures in these three verses:

- Verse 4 presents a picture of wasting sickness. The glory is the false glory of worldly power and status (see chapter 10:16ff, where Assyrian vaingloriousness is subjected to wasting disease). There are internal forces at work that are bringing about an ever-increasing, humanly irreversible decline. The result is that the nation will become weak, poor and vulnerable.
- Verse 5 presents the coming of an external force in the role of the reaper. The standing corn, the nation, is the ripe crop ready for the sickle. Which means that the coming of this reaper is marked by precision, when the nation is at its most vulnerable. But this harvest will not be a joyful one, for it announces a coming destruction. Nothing will be left unscathed. The arm of the reaper will touch all and everyone in some way. And after the reaper had passed through with devastating effect, the gleaner will follow to make sure that absolutely nothing remains.
- Verse 6, while 'everything' will be taken, the reality is that something will be left untouched. It was common that after reaping and gleaning, there would be some fruit left ungathered in the uppermost parts of the treetops, those parts of real inaccessibility. So, there is a tiny glimmer of hope in this prophecy of cataclysmic destruction. The number of berries may be counted in single digits, but there are still a few that escape the reaper's sickle and the gleaner's hand. It means survival for Israel; against all probability, it is guaranteed by the Lord Almighty and therefore assured.

Questions

1. What are the three pictures in these verses?
2. What promise is there in this for us today in terms of our eternal security?

Memory Verse - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." *John 1:1*



Thursday – Isaiah 17:7-8 – Restoration to the Lord

This is the second ‘in that day’ section, and it turns to the question of trust. The eye of expectation and confidence will be fixed solely on the Lord to the exclusion of all other possible objects of religious devotion.

Verse 7 – The use of the word ‘man’ here refers to mankind, and what it declares is that the focus of the prophecy is at this point not just on Israel and the remnant that will be left in her, but also on those who will be gathered in from the gentile world, the remnant of Syria (Aram). The statement that this remnant will *look* with singular focus on ‘his Maker’ (in contrast to the handmade gods of verse 8) as the sole object of refuge and security. And note for Israel, ‘maker’ meant more than initial creation; it pointed to the God who made Israel His special people by election and covered them by His redemptive providential care (Isaiah 44:2, 51:13, 54:5; Psalm 95:6, 149:2). *In that day*, the remnant will fully realize all that the Lord is and has been to His people. The world remnant drawn from all nations will acknowledge the one true God; they know that they are acceptable to Him, and will submit wholly to and trust in Him.

Verse 8 restates verse 7, but from the negative perspective of what the Man, the godly remnant, will not do. It’s like the first verse of Psalm 1, which states what the ‘Blessed’ man does not do. The godly remnant rejects all false religion, all religion of works and self-reliance, because their relationship with the Lord is an exclusive one based in love. All that goes with false religion will be rejected, all that supports works religion will be renounced. All man-made ways which attempt to reach God, that is, altars, the Asherim poles and the incense, will be eradicated.

It should not surprise us that when the Protestant Reformation took place, all that was central to and associated with the previously dominant Roman religious system was eradicated - altars, vestments, etc. The simple reliance on and worship of the Holy One of Israel is not something that we should consider lightly or take casually for granted. It speaks of a profound work of the living God and is therefore of immense importance for us.

Questions

1. Who is the man referred to in verse 7?
2. What does true religion mean for our worship?

Memory Verse - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” *John 1:1*



Friday - Isaiah 17:9-11 - Destruction and explanation.

These verses form the final *'In the day'* section, and return to the theme of the coming desolation in order to explain why it has happened.

Verse 9 – The strong cities are of no value to the people who have forgotten the *Rock of their refuge* when it comes to providing them with refuge and security in the day of trial. To have known better, all they had to do was look at the now deserted cities of the former inhabitants of the land, those who had been driven out by the hand of the Lord in the conquering days of Joshua. Days when the people had trusted in the Lord to provide for them and to be their protector. Now *'In that day'* the folly of seeking to trust in that which had formerly been destroyed will be again revealed.

Verse 10 – The failure to remember and keep in mind the saving God and the consistency of His provision for them is disastrous. And note the term *'Rock'* doesn't just mean divine strength, although it does speak to that, it means much more. It's a dynamic term which communicates the ongoing actions of the Lord to provide fortress like protection to His people in a menacing world. (Remember how the Lord brought forth water from the *'rock'* in Exodus chapter 17 for His people as they made their way from Egypt to the promised land.)

Verse 11 – Following on from the statement in the second half of verse 10, the point is clearly made in verse 11 that no matter how much effort they invest and how much care they take to plant and provide security for themselves through their diligent observation of seemingly attractive false religions (for that is what the pleasant plants and the vine branch of a stranger refer to) - it's all absolutely pointless. Come the day of grief and incurable pain, the impersonal demonic forces behind the gods of Canaan, those whom they have given themselves to in worship, would not come to their aid because they could not. The *'harvest'* will flee away.

How much there is in this for us as we face the trials of our lives. That we should flee from seeking refuge in the things of this world, which are fueled by vacuous promises of the prince of this world, and wholly trust in the one true God.

Questions

1. Can we trust in anyone or anything but the one true God?
2. If we do trust in anything or anyone other than God, what will be the result?

Memory Verse - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." *John 1:1*



Saturday - Isaiah 17:12-14 – The world and its power.

Verse 12 – The verse begins with ‘Ah’, a word that draws attention to what follows. ‘Ah, I see’ speaks of an observation or understanding of something. And the observation here relates to the world. The ‘roaring mighty waters’ is a metaphor used often in the Old Testament for the restless hostile threatening’s of the world against God’s people. In Isaiah’s time the conglomerate of the Assyrian Empire threatened all around her. People after people were brought under its rule and required to provide personnel to her army. (That was why the challenge to trust solely in the Lord was such a demanding one for the people of Israel and Judah, one which ultimately failed.) But it has ever been the case throughout the history of the world that the people of God have continuously faced formidable threats from the violent roaring of the world in whatever ways they have presented themselves.

Verse 13 – The truth, though, that must always be remembered and continuously reflected on, is that no matter how loud the world and its nations roar, no matter how tempestuous the waves she creates, they are never at any time beyond the reach of Almighty God. The world is always and shall forever be subject to divine command (see Psalm 2:4-6, Psalm 46:6, Ezekiel 1:3). God has and will rebuke the world when He chooses to do so, and it will always end in the same way – the world will flee in fear. Like helpless chaff, they will be blown away, by divine judgment.

Verse 14 – The evening may bring terror, but the morning will tell a different story. Just as we will see in Isaiah chapter 36 when the army of King Sennacherib of Assyria invades Judah; but then as the next chapters reveal, come the next morning, the people of God found 185,000 dead Assyrian bodies in the camp they’d set up following the passing of the angel of the Lord through it. The world will have its evening, it will roar and declare terror, but come the light of morning, they will be no more.

We need to grasp that nothing happens in the world that is beyond the all-seeing eye of Almighty God and His all-powerful hand of His devastatingly just judgment. This is why we must trust Him, because ultimately it is not about who roars the loudest, but who is left standing in the morning,

Questions

1. How does Isaiah describe what the world does?
2. Which is important – the one who roars the loudest or who stands in the morning?

Memory Verse - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” *John 1:1*

Psalm 46A

1. God is our refuge and our strength,
In trials, a proven aid.
And therefore, though the earth should change,
We will not be afraid
Though hills may slide into the sea,
And waves crash down and roar,
And though the ocean's rage may shake
The mountains on the shore.

2. A river makes God's city glad,
The Most High's holy place.
God is in her; she won't be moved;
God helps at break of day.
When nations rage, then kingdoms fall;
But when He speaks, earth melts.
The LORD of Armies is with us;
Our rock is Jacob's God.

3. O come! See what the LORD has done:
He made earth desolate.
He made wars cease, broke bow and spear;
He burned the chariot.
"Be still," He says, "Know I am God,
Exalted over all."
The LORD of Armies is with us;
Our rock is Jacob's God.