

## ISAIAH 14-18: Taking Refuge in Zion

**EP:** Yahweh has raised up Assyria to discipline Israel, Judah, and the surrounding nations, and the only place of refuge is with the Davidic king at Zion.

**TP:** God is disciplining the nations/people today, and the only place of refuge is with Jesus.

**HP:** Use the BLESS strategy to invite others to take refuge in Jesus.

### 1. Introduction.

- a. **Image.** Many people today are hurting, worried, upset, fearful, angry, and unsettled.
- b. **Need.** We need to know what's going on. How should we respond? Where's God?
- c. **Subject.** Recognising God's warning discipline and taking refuge in Jesus.
- d. **Text.** Isaiah 14-18
- e. **Outline:** (1) Ten Truths about God, Israel, and the Nations; (2) God's Dealings with the Nations in Is 14-18; and (3) Application.
- f. **Pray.**

### 2. Ten Truths about God, Israel, and the Nations.

- a. God is King over the nations.
  - (1) **Ps 47:7-8** 7 For God is the King of all the earth. Sing praises with a psalm! 8 God reigns over the **nations** (גוֹיִם). God sits on his holy throne.
- b. All the nations have a the same origin—the eight persons who left the ark.
  - (1) **Ge 9:18-19** 18 The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) 19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the **people of the whole earth** were dispersed.
  - (2) **Ac 17:26-30** 26 ...[God] made from one man [Noah] every **nation** of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.
- c. God purposefully dispersed the nations from Babel.
  - (1) **Ge 11:8-9** 8 So Yahweh dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. 9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there Yahweh confused the language of all the earth. And from there Yahweh dispersed them over the face of all the earth.
  - (2) **Dt 32:8** 8 When the Most High gave to the **nations** (גוֹיִם) their inheritance, when he divided the sons of Adam (בְּנֵי אָדָם), he fixed the borders of the **peoples** (עַמִּים) according to the number of the sons of God.
  - (3) God has fixed the borders of the nations. He is definitely not for a borderless world.
  - (4) It is healthy/normal/understandable to love one's own nation. Nationalism is not evil.
- d. God judges each nation fairly.
  - (1) **Jer 18:6-10** 6 O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares Yahweh. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. 7 If at any time I declare concerning a **nation** or a **kingdom**, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, 8 and if that **nation**, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster

- that I intended to do to it. 9 And if at any time I declare concerning a **nation** or a **kingdom** that I will build and plant it, 10 and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it.
- (2) There is a theological story to tell for every nation on earth, including New Zealand. How would you describe New Zealand's history with God?
- e. God's plan is to bless all the nations through one nation, Israel.
- (1) **Ge 12:3** 3 I [Yahweh] will bless those who bless you [Abram], and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the **extended families/clans** (מִשְׁפָּחָה) of the earth shall be blessed.
- (2) **Ex 19:5-6** 5 ...If you [Israel] will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all **peoples**, for all the earth is mine. 6 And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
- f. God welcomes all nations to take refuge in Messiah.
- (1) **Is 11:10** 10 In that day the **nations** will seek (דָּרַשׁ) the root of Jesse [Messiah], who will stand as a flag (נִס) for the **peoples**.
- (2) **Is 52:13-15** 13 Behold, my Servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. 14 As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind— 15 so shall he sprinkle many **nations**.
- (3) **Mt 28:19** 18 And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all **nations**....
- (4) **Ro 1:16** 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the **Greek**.
- (5) In the OT, God's plan was centripetal. In the NT, his plan is centrifugal
- g. The nations, however, are susceptible to Satan's deceit.
- (1) **Re 20:3** 3 ...And threw [Satan] into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the **nations** any longer, until the thousand years were ended.
- (2) **Hab 2:13-14** 13 Behold, is it not from Yahweh of hosts that **peoples** labour merely for fire, and **nations** weary themselves for nothing? 14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.
- (3) Disinformation is nothing new. Satan has been spreading it for thousands of years.
- (4) When a nation ignores Scripture, it opens itself up to a world of hurt.
- h. The nations will increasingly turn against Jesus and his people.
- (1) **Mt 24:6-14** 6 And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For **nation** will rise against **nation**, and **kingdom** against **kingdom**, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. 9 Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all **nations** for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all **nations**, and then the end will come.
- i. God destroys nations who choose to war against Israel and her Messiah.

- (1) **Is 29:7-8** 7 The multitude of all the nations who wage war against Ariel [Israel], even all who wage war against her and her stronghold and who distress her, will be like a dream, a vision of the night. ...8 Thus the multitude of all the nations will be who wage war against Mount Zion.
  - (2) **Is 34:1-2** 1 Draw near, nations, to hear. And listen, peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. 2 For Yahweh's indignation is against all the nations and his wrath against all their armies. He has utterly destroyed them. He has given them over to slaughter.
  - (3) **Re 19:15** 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
- j. Every nation will be represented in the Messianic kingdom and beyond.
- (1) **Is 2:1-4** 1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of Yahweh shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills. And all the nations shall flow to it, 3 and many peoples shall come and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.
  - (2) **Is 66:18** 18 ...The time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, 19 and I will set a sign (אֵימָה) among them.
  - (3) **Re 5:9-10** 9 And they sang a new song saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.
  - (4) **Re 22:1-2** 1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city. Also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
  - (5) Just as Israel has a believing remnant, so every nation will have a believing remnant.

### 3. God's Dealings with the Nations in Isaiah 14-18.

- a. Isaiah at a Glance.
  - (1) Don't forget the structure of Isaiah. Remember how the segments fit together.
  - (2) Isaiah's theology of history and God's dealings with Israel and nations is very well developed. It is a Bible in miniature.
  - (3) Don't forget Isaiah was quoted all the time by the early church among the Gentiles. It is a prophetic book very friendly to non-Jews seeking the true God.
- b. Philistines (Is 14:28-32).
  - (1) **Is 14:29-32** 29 Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of you, that the rod [Tiglath-pileser III] that struck you is broken, for from the serpent's root will come forth an adder [Sargon II], and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent [Sennacherib]. 30 And the firstborn of the poor [of Judah] will graze, and the needy lie down in safety, but I will kill your root (שָׁרֵיֶשׁ) with famine, and your remnant (שְׁאֵרִית) it will slay. ...32

What will one answer the messengers of the [Philistine] nation? Yahweh has founded Zion, and in her the afflicted of his people find refuge.

- (a) The Philistines seek an alliance with Judah to defend themselves from Assyria. But Isaiah's message to them is that there is no hope for safety outside of Zion.
  - (b) God's discipline in our lives is intended to drive us to take refuge in Jesus, not to turn to another human solution that ultimately won't work.
- c. Moab (Is 15-16).
- (1) **Is 16:1** 1 Send the lamb to the ruler [Hezekiah] of the land [of Judah], from Sela [in Edom], by way of the desert [east of the Dead Sea], to the mount of the daughter of Zion [Jerusalem].
    - (a) Moab is to do a complete U-turn. Instead of fleeing from the Assyrians into Edom, they are to turn north and take shelter in Zion.
    - (b) Again we see our theme. God's discipline will either drive us away from Jesus or to Jesus. We are like Moab in Zoar.
  - (2) **Is 16:3-5** 3 Give counsel. Grant justice. Make your shade like night at the height of noon. Shelter the outcasts. Do not reveal the fugitive. 4 Let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you.<sup>1</sup> Be a shelter to them from the destroyer. When the oppressor is no more, and destruction has ceased, and he who tramples underfoot has vanished from the land, 5 then a throne will be established in loyal love (דָּוָד), and on it will sit in truth (אֱמֶת) in the tent of David one [Messiah] who judges, seeks justice (צִדְקָה), and is swift to do righteousness (קִדְמוֹת).
  - (a) Judah, specifically Hezekiah, has a responsibility, too. He is not to turn away any Moabite refugee who seeks shelter in Zion.
  - (b) Jesus won't turn us away if we seek shelter in him.
- d. Damascus/Israel (Is 17).
- (1) **Is 17:4-6** 4 And *in that day* [722 bc] the "glory" of Jacob will be brought low, and the fat of his flesh will grow lean. 5 And it shall be as when the reaper gathers standing grain and his arm harvests the ears, and as when one gleans the ears of grain in the Valley of Rephaim. 6 Gleanings (תְּלֵלֵי) will be left in it, as when an olive tree is beaten—two or three berries in the top of the highest bough, four or five on the branches of a fruit tree, declares Lord Yahweh of Israel.
  - (2) Unfortunately, only a small remnant of Israelites (and Syrians) will survive the God's discipline through the Assyrians.
  - (3) It's disappointing how few take shelter in Jesus. The majority won't.
- e. Cush/Ethiopia (Is 18).
- (1) **Is 18:7** 7 At that time tribute will be brought to Yahweh of hosts from a people tall and smooth, from a people feared near and far, a nation [Assyria/Ethiopia] mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide, to Mount Zion, the place (מְקוֹם) of the name (שֵׁם) of Yahweh of hosts.
  - (2) Isaiah sends the Ethiopian messengers on to Assyria or back to Ethiopia with a message for all nations. At harvest time, God will cut off the unfruitful branches. Zion will be honoured by all nations because it is the city of the great King.
  - (3) In the end, all nations will come to respect Jesus, the one in whom we take refuge.

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<sup>1</sup> Like Ruth with Naomi.

#### 4. Application.

- a. Use the BLESS strategy to invite people to take refuge in Jesus.
  - (1) Begin with prayer.
  - (2) Listen.
  - (3) Eat.
  - (4) Serve.
  - (5) Story. My life involves God's discipline leading me to take refuge in Jesus.
- b. It a time of crisis or uncertainty, it's easy to loose one's focus. Let's not do that.

#### 5. Summary.

- a. Since the Fall, God's plan has been very simple: "I will send the Messiah. Your job is to take refuge in him." In Isaiah's day, it was the plan. In our day, it is the same plan.
- b. If you haven't take refuge in Jesus, I invite you to do it now. Here's how.
- c. For the rest of us, let's be on the lookout for opportunities to invite others to take shelter in Jesus.
  - (1) **Mt 9:36-38** 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. 38 Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.
  - (2) **Mt 11:28** 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.