



# Bible Study

March 30, 2016

Isaiah 11:10-12:2

Genesis 7:11-8:3

Proverbs 10:1-22

Isaiah 11:10-12:2 (NKJV) -

And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious. It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they shall plunder the people of the East; they shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; and the people of Ammon shall obey them. The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dry-shod. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt. And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'

Genesis 7:11-8:3 (NKJV) – In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark— they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life.

So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in. Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and

every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.

Proverbs 10:1-22 (NKJV) – The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivers from death. The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish, but He casts away the desire of the wicked. He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame. Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked. The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot. The wise in heart will receive commands, but a prating fool will fall. He who walks with integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will become known. He who winks with the eye causes trouble, but a prating fool will fall. The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked. Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins. Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, but a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding. Wise people store up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction. The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty. The labor of the righteous leads to life, the wages of the wicked to sin. He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray. Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool. In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom. The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.

### **Commentary -**

In today's Old Testament readings, we are warned against two ways in which Christian faith can be distorted. If we succumb to either of these distortions, in either direction, we will lose the fullness and depth of our faith, and fail to draw close to our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ both in this world, and in the next. We live in a world which, as distorted as it has become by humanity's sin and wickedness, is still created by God, belongs to Him, and which He is incarnate, lives, and died in order to save. Likewise, the promise of God to human persons who have suffered and struggled in this world is that they will have life forever in the world to come. To lose sight of either of these two aspects of Christ's redemption of the world is to lose sight of our faith, and fail to have the life in abundance that the Lord desires to share with us.

Today's reading from Proverbs reminds us that the way we live our life in this world has consequences in this world. There is a path through this world that leads to death and destruction, and there is a path in this world that leads to life. The former path is easy, and not hard to find, though we are often deluded while we walk upon it as to where precisely it is leading us. Often, it seems, by its ease and immediately fulfilled promises in this world to be the right path, the path of happiness and fulfillment of who we are. The latter path, that leads to life everlasting, can be difficult to find, and even more difficult to travel. This difficulty can also be deceptive to us, in making us think that the

hard road, the road that may involve suffering and struggle, is the one we should avoid. To discern the correct path takes wisdom. Fortunately for us as Christians, not only is God willing to give generously of His wisdom to all who ask for it, but He has revealed His Wisdom and Power in the person of Jesus Christ to all the world. We can see in the life that Christ lived in this world the contours of the path that we too must follow, and be both warned as we undertake the journey, and comforted when we struggle and suffer, by the reality of His own struggles and suffering. Possessing this comfort, and the hope of the life to come, we are able to live lives that are full of the love, peace, and joy of the Lord not because life is smooth and easy and we are 'blessed', but in spite of the times of testing and temptation that come, looking to Christ and His Cross. Our faith can and must give us hope, contentment, and joy in this world, in this life, in our real hardships and joys, moments of happiness and sorrow, or we have lost sight of the object of our faith, Christ Himself.

St. Paul tells us, however, that if we have the hope of Christ only in this life, we are among all men most to be pitied. Just as we cannot lose sight of Christ in this life, we must be always mindful of His Second and Glorious Advent. When Christ returns, He is going to receive a people prepared for Himself, who have been refined and purified by their time in this world as gold is refined in a furnace. These people, from all the nations of the world, will be preserved from the wrath and judgment that will befall this world, and be brought through safely like Noah and his family to live forever in the world to come. What marks out this people, as we read in today's reading from Isaiah, is not their perfection, their holiness, the fact that they've been arbitrarily chosen by God, or anything else other than that they have had their sins forgiven. They have sinned and brought as much condemnation upon themselves as the rest of this world, but they have repented and been forgiven those sins, and comforted by Him.

The promise of the beautiful hymn that ends today's reading from Isaiah, fulfilled in Christ, belongs to each and every one of us. He will be for us, in this life, our source of strength to make it through the struggles, the cares, the worries, and the sorrows of this life, and our song, giving to us a sense of joy and peace through it all that the world cannot understand. And at the end of our lives in this earth, either at His Glorious Appearing or at our own death, He will become our salvation. These promises are ours for undertaking a life following Christ, a life of repentance of our sins and struggling toward God, empowered by our faith that Christ has already won the victory for us on our behalf, and that He will lead us home.

### **Questions to Ponder -**

- 1) In today's reading from Isaiah, the hope of Israel, a nation being destroyed by the Assyrians, is laid out. That hope was not in a military victory, though we have here a poetic description of victory. Rather that hope was in the forgiveness of sins, the restoration of the people of Israel, and the rallying of all of the world's peoples to follow Israel's God and King. The means by which people became a part of this victorious people is not by meeting a set of requirements but by receiving forgiveness of their sins. When you consider your life as a Christian, are you approaching God by trying to follow and check off certain rules and requirements, or are you living a life of repentance? Do you believe that if you've done certain things (gone to church a certain number of times, spent a certain amount of time in prayer, etc.) you're 'covered', or do you honestly assess the state of your soul and pursue confession and forgiveness?
- 2) Today we read about God's preservation of Noah and those with him in the ark from the flood. Throughout Christ's teaching, and in St. Peter's first epistle, the flood is used as an image of the impending return of Christ and His final judgment. Noah spent 100 years building the ark. Like the flood, none of us knows when the moment will come that we will stand before the Lord. How much time and effort have you spent in your life preparing yourself for that moment? Is the fact that it could come at any time real to you, or is it something you push out

of your mind? If you accept the reality that today could be your final one in this world, how would you live it differently? What preparations would you make?

- 3) The book of Proverbs, and other wisdom literature, teaches us truths that should enable us to successfully make our way through our life in this world as we journey toward the Kingdom. There is not only the prospect of the final judgment where it concerns our choices and words and actions, they also have very real consequences in this life. Before we even discuss the Resurrection, one can, by his or her choices, make their life in this world, with God's help, a foretaste of the Kingdom of God, or, by turning their back on Him, a living hell. Do you seek the guidance of the Lord, through your Father Confessor, the Scriptures, and the teachings of the Church regarding the way you live your day to day life, or only about 'religious matters'? Do you try to make your family a Christian family, your business a Christian business, your relationships Christian relationships, or do you save your beliefs for Sunday mornings?

**Questions or Comments? [FrStephen@stgeorgecharleston.org](mailto:FrStephen@stgeorgecharleston.org)**

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