

## There Will Be A Day: Of Great Tribulation – Is 13:1-16

Is 13:1-16; It's been several months since we paused our study of Isaiah that we began last Fall, and I'm eager to return

It's an uncommon book, written at an uncommon time, by an uncommon author, to an uncommon people, about an Uncommon God – hence our theme for the year

And just to refresh your memory (**Review**), Isaiah prophesied ~700BC, during a time of peace and prosperity; Not unlike our day  
That peace however, led to complacency and moral decay, and it wasn't long before trouble began; With more on the horizon  
Which Isaiah began warning them about, and urging them to repent of – in order to avoid judgment and instill hope for the future  
Again, the similarities to our day are so close, it's scary

- And having left off at ch11-12, where he told of a coming day of great *salvation*, Isaiah now begins laying out several prophetic judgments . . .  
To say there will be a day of great *tribulation* (**Intro**)

And those judgments or *oracles* as he calls them, are found in chapters 13-23; Dealing primarily with the nations surrounding *Israel* at that time; At *that* time  
B/c of which we tend to treat them as throw-away chapters – having nothing to do with us; But nothing could be further from the truth; At the *very* least . . .  
They were written and preserved to *reinforce* the truth that God is completely sovereign  
That he's all powerful, all knowing, and fully in control – *even* over entire nations

- But that's definitely not it; B/c some of the oracles have to do with *us*, directly; Cluing us in as to what to expect in the days to come  
Which not only satisfies our curiosity with all things future, but more importantly, helps us prepare, helps us get ready; And helps us prepare *future* generations as well  
B/c there's going to come a day when *somebody*, *some* generation, actually experiences all this

And that's where Is 13 comes in; With its world-wide scope, its prophecies about things that haven't yet happened, and its similarities to *NT* prophetic passages . . .  
Isaiah's words are intended for more than just the local context of *his* day; They're for us as well; *All* people  
Indicating first of all, that **there will be a day** at some point in the future . . .

### When God gathers his people – anticipate it and \_\_\_\_\_ for it (v1-5)

[1] *The oracle* [prophetic warning of judgment] *concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw* [if that were the only indicator of time/place, that's where this prophecy would stop; but it's not]. [2] *On a bare hill raise a signal* [God says]; *cry aloud to them; wave the hand for them to enter the gates of the nobles* [to come together].

Which begs the question who “them” is; And we're told in v3 – *I myself have commanded my consecrated ones* [them], *and have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger, my proudly exulting ones* [the ones who unashamedly live for and worship me God says]. So the “them” of v2 . . .

Is the *consecrated, mighty, proudly exulting ones* of v3; As in, believers  
B/c as we'll see, he's not just referring to ancient Israel

The point being, that there will be a day when God summons *us*, his people, to his side  
Something we should anticipate and watch for – **anticipate it and watch for it**

It's like Jesus said when he described this day in a parable (**Mt 25:13**) – Watch *therefore for you know neither the day nor the hour.*

*And stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.* (Mt 24:42)

We need to watch for and anticipate the day when God gathers his people; Not b/c we're going to miss it or something, but in order to be ready

- When I traded commodities at the Chicago Board of Trade, there were fast times, and there were slow times; And during the *fast* times, it was like a sport  
Things were hopping, my adrenaline was pumping, and I didn't have to do anything to stay sharp – every sense I had was on edge

But when things were *slow*, it was work; And I had to exercise every ounce of discipline I had to stay alert; To anticipate the next trade, and watch for it  
Otherwise I'd miss opportunities, and even lose money

And the same is true when it comes to the day when the Lord returns and gathers us together; We should anticipate it, and watch for it  
Watch for it with the eyes of our heart, in order to be fully ready

Especially so, b/c Jesus said in **Rev 16:15** – “*Behold, I am coming like a thief!*

As in unexpectedly; Yes, there will be signs, but you're not going to get a text; This is it (the Bible)

*Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on* [his garments of salvation as Isaiah says (Is 61:10), persevering to the end], *that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!*” Blessed, fortunate – is the one who does that  
Which is all the more reason to watch for it\*\*\*\*

- And then, in v4, it's as if he pushes the “Fast Forward” button, and that day is here  
[4] *The sound of a tumult* [a commotion] *is on the mountains as of a great multitude! The sound of an uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathering together! The LORD of hosts is mustering a host for battle.* [5] *They come from a distant land, from the end of the heavens, the LORD and the weapons of his indignation* [anger], *to destroy the whole land.*

And there's our first clue that something more than *Babylon* is going on here

B/c a great *multitude* of people, coming from *the end of the heavens* – conveys a world-wide scope, and even a heavenly one

Not only that, but the destruction of *the whole land* or earth, hasn't happened yet  
Telling us this is yet to come

- So there's going to come a day when the Lord gathers his people, those who are his by faith – from all over the world; From every tribe, tongue, and nation  
And we know from the NT, it happens when Jesus returns  
When we're caught up together to meet the Lord in the air the Bible says, and then return with him for the Battle of Armageddon (1 Thess 4:17; Rev 16:13-16)  
Hence the reason he musters a host for *battle* in v4b

There *will* be a day; If the prophesied events of the *past* happened, the prophesied events of the *future* will too; And it's ours to anticipate and watch for . . .  
So that we're ready when it happens

Second, regarding this time of great tribulation, there will be a day . . .

**When God judges the world – \_\_\_\_\_ it and mourn it (v6-16)**

And we're somehow going to play a part; That's why he gathers us

We're going to play a part in executing his *anger* as v3 says, and participating in *battle* according to v4, and destroying the earth v5

And while I don't know exactly how that's going to work, I *don't* think it means we're going to be killing people, or shooting them dead with a gun

B/c the *New Testament* describes us as only being *present* with Jesus as he slays his enemies, not fighting them

*He's* the one who fells them it says, and with a word from his mouth at that (Rev 19)

So I think this is *metaphorical* language, and we participate first, by . . .

1. Showing the overwhelming influence of the gospel on all mankind – there's going to be a multitude from *every* nation there; That's a testimony to God's influence
2. Striking fear in those who oppose Jesus, just by our sheer numbers
3. Witnessing the power and terror of God's wrath, in order to testify about it, and suppress sin as we rule and reign with Christ in the days that follow

- In any case, there *will* be a day when God judges the world – v6-16 are explicit about it [6] *Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!* The *day of the Lord* is a common refrain in the OT . . .  
To denote a time of judgment that God will bring to bear; In this case, a *terrible* time of judgment

And given the fact it's near and *will* come (v6b) – we should **expect it and mourn it**  
Mourn it, b/c that's exactly what God tells us to do – *Wail* he says in v6  
Which shouldn't be hard when you consider the plight of those who will go through it  
It should bring us to tears

Unfortunately, it doesn't; B/c we either don't care, or don't really expect it; And therefore our burden for those who will face it is virtually non-existent

But that's the not the worst of it; The worst part of not expecting God's judgment of the world, is that if you're alive when it happens . . .

You'll be so shocked, and so paralyzed by fear, and so overcome by discouragement – that you'll be *useless* as a witness

- Better to not only expect it, but expect to be a *part* of it – even if it's just the *beginning* of the birth pains as Jesus said in Mt 24:8  
And with all the wars, famines, and earthquakes – I think I could make a pretty good case that we're already there  
When the *The Great Tribulation* will start, the *worst* of God's judgment – I don't know  
But I do know that it's better to expect it, and expect to be a part of it – than live in denial, or hope against hope you'll somehow avoid it; Do that . . .  
And you'll risk growing cold in your love Jesus said, or falling away altogether

- Expect to be a part of it, and expect it to be bad; Otherwise, you'll wither just like everyone else; Look at v7; God will judge . . .

[7] *Therefore all hands will be feeble* [weak], *and every human heart will melt* [lack courage]. [8] *They will be dismayed* [discouraged, demoralized]; *pangs and agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at one another* [horrified, shocked]; *their faces will be aflame*.

Maybe referring to the shame/blush they experience, due to their deeds being exposed  
Whatever the case, the *emotional* strain of God's judgment, in and of *itself* will be devastating; And it only gets worse from there

- V9 says – *Behold, the day of the LORD comes* [speaking as if it's already here], *cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it*. That's strong language; And therein lies the reason for all this  
To destroy sinners and purge the earth of their work; Which he expands on in v11

[11] *I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp* [the posturing, the showiness] *of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless*.

God, in his holiness, cannot and will not tolerate people, in their sinfulness; At least not forever; He cannot and will not

Which means there *will* be a day when God judges the world

And it will be accompanied by massive disruptions in the heavens; Look at v10

[10] *For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light*.

And then v13 – *Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the LORD of hosts in the day of his fierce anger*.

Our world is going to be rocked – literally; Something *Jesus* reiterated in Mt 24

- Expect to be a part of it, expect it to be bad, and worse yet, expect a lot of people to die  
In fact, most; Look at v12 – *I will make people more rare than fine gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir* [a particular *source* of gold in Isaiah's day].  
The bottom line being, that when God judges the world, people are going to be rare – at least comparatively speaking  
From war, famine, plagues, and earthquakes – to fire, contamination, infestation, and the martyrdom of believers (Rev) . . .  
So many people are going to die, that Jesus said in **Mt 24:22** – *If those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved*.

And you know what the absolutely mind-boggling thing is? People still won't turn

**Rev 9:20-21** says – [20] *The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, [21] nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts*.

Despite the devastation of God's judgment, despite the death, despite the punishment, and despite the misery – people will *still* rebel and reject God\*\*\*\*\*

[14] *And like a hunted gazelle, or like sheep with none to gather them, each will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land*.

IOW it's going to be chaos; Some will run like gazelles and some will wander like sheep – trying to seek security in one another; But . . .

*[15] Whoever is found will be thrust through, and whoever is caught will fall by the sword. [16] Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.*

Not a pretty picture; B/c it's going to be every man for himself, with no mercy extended, and nothing held sacred

All of which will make their *sin*, and God's justice in punishing it – *painfully* obvious when he judges the world; Something we should mourn, and expect

But thank the Lord, that's not the end of the story; B/c there will also be a day . . .

**When God establishes his reign – \_\_\_\_\_ on it and rejoice in it (Isaiah 16:4b-5)**

Is 16:4b-5; This is in the middle of God's oracle against Moab, another neighbor of Israel at the time, where he says in v4b . . .

*[4b] 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 steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness.*

This is a prophecy that has a 3-fold fulfillment – then, now, and yet to come

There was a *partial* fulfillment *then*, in the years and decades immediately following

Like when the oppression of Assyria ceased ~600BC, and Babylon in 538BC

In which case, Israel's and Moab's *oppressors* were *no more*; Their *destruction* ceased, and those who trampled *underfoot* vanished from the land

But it was only a partial fulfillment b/c a throne wasn't established by someone from David's lineage, David's tent

That didn't happen until Jesus came; In which case, there's *now* a *spiritual* fulfillment of this prophecy; *Then* was a partial fulfillment, *now* is a spiritual one

With Jesus ruling and reigning in our hearts and lives

IOW he has established his throne in *us*, characterized by *steadfast love* and *faithfulness*

- And *yet to come*, is a *future* fulfillment; When Jesus returns to establish his rule and reign over the whole *world*, in *justice* and *righteousness*

More commonly known as the Millennium – the thousand year reign of Christ here on earth, *after* the judgment of The Great Tribulation

There *will* be a day; You can **count on it and rejoice in it**

Rejoice, b/c what a day that will be; And count on it, b/c God's Word says it, and

Christ's blood guarantees it; Have you ever thought of that?

The blood of Jesus not only guarantees his reign of righteousness in your *life*, having paid the penalty for your sin . . .

But it also guarantees his rule and reign over the *world*, having conquered Satan

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Pray – Thank you Lord, for your gracious gift of salvation; Your amazing gift of righteousness and life, found in you; Find us to be watchful in light of your coming; Sober in light of your judgment; And joyful in light of your reign  
We give now as an expression of our worship – help us to use it to the utmost