

Why Christmas, Why Jesus? The World Is Doomed – Isaiah 24

Is 24. This is the 2nd week of our Christmas series titled *Why Christmas, Why Jesus?*

Shorthand for “Why do we *celebrate* Christmas” and “Why did Jesus come in the first place?” Questions fewer and fewer people are able to answer.

And I hope to accomplish *two* things by doing so.

First, for those of you who already *know* Jesus, I hope to increase your *appreciation* for him. Especially so in light of *this* message, this truth.

And second, for those of you who *don't* know him, I hope to see your faith awakened, and your soul saved. And toward the end of our time together . . .

I'm going to give you an opportunity to do just that – to pray and be saved; to know Jesus *personally*.

➤ So let's start with the bottom line: Jesus came at Christmas because the world is doomed. Not *was* doomed, but *is* doomed.

You say, “Wow, there's the Christmas spirit, Pastor. Spreadin' the joy.”

But if you want a full *appreciation* for Christmas, a full *appreciation* for Jesus, you need a full *answer*.

Not only that, but the good news of Jesus is all the greater, if the bad news is staring you in the face. And who needs good news anyway, if there's nothing bad.

Jesus is the reason for the season because the world is doomed.

And one of the most extensive teachings on it, is found in Is 24. V1-3. (Outline slide)

➤ [1] *Behold, the LORD will empty the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.* (Photos)

You need only look at the devastation of war, famine, and earthquakes to see *that*. The very things *Jesus* spoke of when this age draws to a close.

Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. Mt 24:7.*****

[2] *And it shall be* [Isaiah says], *as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor.*

[3] *The earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered; for the LORD has spoken this word.*

“I thought God was patient,” you say. He is. “I thought God was longsuffering.” He is.

“I thought God was merciful.” He is.

But not forever. *For the LORD has spoken* (3). And that spells doom for the world.

From which . . .

1. No one is exempt. (v1-3)

No one. No matter who you are, what you do, or what you have.

As with the people, so with the [pastor]; *as with the* [employee], *so with* [the employer]; *as with the* [shopper], *so with the* [retailer].

All will be scattered and all will be desolate.

From the *physical* aspects of creation, to the people who inhabit it.

It's something we're seen *glimpses* of, microcosms of, in the *past*; and something we'll see on a macro level in the future.

Especially during The Great Tribulation just before Jesus returns.

God will trample down the people in his anger it says in Is 63:6, and pour out their *lifeblood* on the earth. Which means the world is doomed. The *whole* world. (Summ)

➤ Then, in v4-6, he gives us another reason.

[4] *The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers; the highest people of the earth languish.* Once again, no one is exempt.

[5] *The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants* [corrupted]; *for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.*

It's hard to know what covenant Isaiah is referring to, but given the context it's likely the promise God implied at creation. To give us the world to subdue and enjoy . . .

If we would give him our allegiance and obedience.

Which we didn't. And still don't.

[6] *Therefore* [v6] *a curse devours the earth* [the curse of death], *and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left.*

The world is doomed because . . .

2. Sin is rampant (v4-6)

V5. The inhabitants of the earth *have transgressed the laws* [the laws of God], *violated the statutes* [his principles for righteousness] . . .

And we've *broken* our end of the bargain. *Forsaking* God instead of *following* him.

Look at your own life. Look at those around you. Sin abounds.

From sexual promiscuity and perversity, to financial impropriety and greed, to hatred, lust, lying, and drunkenness.

Not to mention the rationalizations we employ to justify it all. Sin abounds.

➤ And we suffer for it. Just like it says. Often failing to connect the *dots* between our sin and suffering. We just don't understand. Or don't want to *admit* it.

Not that *all* suffering is the result of sin. But some of it *is*. Especially *unconfessed* sin.

Rampant sin. Habitual sin.

A curse devours the earth [v6], *and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt.*

And *will* suffer, to the point of being *scorched* it says in v6. Referring to hell.

With *few men left*. Few avoiding it. At least compared to the number of *people* in this world.

That's doom, is it not? All because sin is rampant. In all of us.

None is righteous [the Bible says], *no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.* Rom 3:11-12.

Sin is rampant because we're all sin-ful. All of us.

And the world is doomed because of it. (Summary)

➤ What's more, from v7-9 . . .

[7] *The wine mourns, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.* [8] *The mirth* [the

laughter] *of the tambourines is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. [9] No more do they drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.*

In other words, the world is also doomed because . . .

3. Joy will cease (7-9,11)

No more joyful response to music, and no more celebration of life. Full stop, v11.

There is an outcry in the streets for lack of wine; all joy has grown dark; the gladness of the earth is banished. Talk about doom and gloom. That's where we're headed.

It doesn't matter how *good* you have it, how many Christmas parties you're going to, how much you enjoy your hobbies, or how many followers you have.

It's not going to last. The gladness of the earth *will be banished* (11). Period.

The only exception will be those in Christ. Those in *his* care. Those in union with the *God* of joy. For them, it will remain. Just like it remains *now* in the midst of hardship.

It's one of the reasons he came. That his joy would be *in* us, and be *full* (Jn 15:11). No matter what. Only those with the joy of Jesus will avoid the doom of despair.

4. Destruction awaits (v10,12-13)

Jesus came at Christmas because the world is doomed, and the world is doomed because destruction awaits. V10.

The wasted city is broken down [speaking of any place people dwell]; every house is shut up so that none can enter.

And then v12 – *Desolation is left in the city; the gates are battered into ruins. [13] For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the grape harvest is done.*

The olive tree is used as a metaphor for *violence* here, and the gleaning of the grape harvest, for *blood*.

Because in days of old, olives were harvested by beating the tree with clubs. When the branches were struck, the olives would fall.

And when grapes were picked, inevitably some would fall to the ground and be trampled. So that by the time the vines were gleaned at the last . . .

There was a messy paste underfoot that resembled blood.

That's what awaits the world – violence and bloodshed.

For thus it shall be [v13] *in the midst of the earth among the nations.*

Resulting in desolation, ruin, and waste.

5. Worship is ignored (v14-16)

The world is doomed in the future, because worship is ignored now.

It's abdicated. Forsaken. Set aside. From v14-16.

Which seem a bit out of place at first, but let's see if we can understand them.

[14] *They lift up their voices, they sing for joy* [in the midst of future doom, it's the first ray of hope; a remnant of God's people are still at it; they're still worshipping]; *over the majesty of the LORD they shout from the west.*

[15] *Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.* [Because *some* are worshipping, he urges

others to do so.] [16] *From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One.*

But I say, "I waste away, I waste away. Woe is me! For the traitors have betrayed, with betrayal the traitors have betrayed."

The flow of thought is a bit difficult to figure out here, but I think Isaiah is saying this:

The world is doomed, but there's still cause for worship.

God still reigns. He's still in control. He still shepherds, still loves, still keeps.

So take the cue from those who *do* worship, and *join* them. That's the idea.

➤ But Isaiah's plea falls on deaf ears. As it often does in our day. Because people are self-absorbed and full of fear – v16b.

Isaiah represents them and says, *"I waste away, I waste away."*

In other words, "I can't see past *myself*, let alone worship someone *else*." *Woe is me!*

They're self-absorbed.

And, full of fear. *"For the traitors have betrayed, with betrayal the traitors have betrayed."*

"I not only can't see past myself, and the *situation* I'm in, but I can't see past my *fears*."

My fear of those who hate me, and oppose me, and betray me."

So while a few worship, it's ignored by most.

And I'm here to tell ya, God's not good with that. He's jealous for his glory the Bible says. Jealous for our worship. Because he rightly deserves it. (Is 48:11)

Which means that a worship-less world, is a doomed world.

That brings us to v17-23, and the *final* reason for doom.

6. Judgment is certain (v17-23)

Jesus came at Christmas because the world is doomed, and the world is doomed because judgement is certain. Inevitable. V17.

[17] *Terror and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth!* [18] [On the day of the Lord] *He who flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare.* [You can't win for losing. It's certain.] *For the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble.*

That's not the windows of *blessing* like we find in Mal 3, about tithing; but the windows of *judgment* like we find in Gen 7, about the flood (v11).

It's punishment for sinful people, and there's no escaping it.

[19] *The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken. [20] The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.*

It's judgment not only for people, but the earth itself.

What's more . . .

[21] *On that day* [v21] *the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven* [the powers of darkness who follow Satan], *and the kings of the earth, on the earth.* [once again, no one's exempt; it's certain.] [22] *They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.* Just like it says in Rev 20.

At the end of The Great Tribulation Satan will be bound for a thousand years in a bottomless pit, and then released for one final battle . . .
Before being thrown into the Lake of Fire forever. Punished.
Followed by his followers. Those whose names are not found written in the book of life.

It's judgment. Final judgment. For sinful individuals (Mt 24:17-21), the earth itself (Rev 21:1b), fallen angels, and godless leaders (Rev 20:1-10). The whole world is doomed.

➤ But thank God that's not it. There's *good* news as well. V23.
Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.

Long lay the world in sin and darkness pining, but God's light will shine.
Exceeding even that of the sun and moon. So that there won't even *be* a need for the sun the Bible says. (Rev 22)
And his glory, the visible manifestation of his invisible majesty, will be obvious. Ever before us. A beacon of hope for all to see.

Yes, the world is doomed, but in the end God will *triumph*.
He'll *triumph* over sin and darkness. He'll *triumph* over the powers that be. And he'll *triumph* over all that's wrong. Because he already did. In Christ.

That's what the Bible says. **Col 2:15**.
He [God] disarmed the rulers and authorities [the host of heaven and kings of earth; he rendered them powerless] and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him [in Christ].

Why Christmas? Why Jesus? Because he's the means by which God triumphs over the doom of this world. Triumphs over sin and darkness.
By providing a way from death to life. Destruction to salvation.

➤ The only question is, on which side are *you*? (**Summary**)
Doom or triumph? Judgement or escape? The world or worship? Gloom or joy? Sin or righteousness?

If it's doom and gloom there's still hope.
But you have to put your faith in Jesus. You have to believe and trust in who he is and what he's done. That he paid the price for your sins so you wouldn't have to.
You have to put your *faith* in Jesus, and *repent* to Jesus.

Just like God said later *on* in Isaiah's prophecy. "*A Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression.*" (Is 59:20)
That *Redeemer* is Jesus. Who came at Christmas, and will come to you, if you *repent*.
If you turn from *your* way of living and thinking, to his.
He'll come to you, and save you, from the doom of this world.

If that's you, pray with me right now to be saved.

Prayer – Just call out to him in the quietness of your heart, right where you sit.
“God, I'm in. I believe in Jesus, and I trust him. With my life.”

“I believe he died for my sins to save my soul from the doom of this world. I believe it.”
“So I'm putting my faith in him right now. Forever. I trust you.”

“And I repent. I'm sorry for my sin. Will you forgive me and cleanse me?”
“I'm done living my way, and want to live yours.”
“I confess you now as Lord of my life.” (Response)

Pray – Father, you're so good in so many ways. Thank you for saving us from the doom of this world. Bless and protect those who just gave their life to you. Assure them of your salvation, connect them with our church, and use them for your glory. (Praise God)