

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 235 – The Burden Of Damascus (Isaiah 17:1-14)

1. In the days of Isaiah, did Damascus have hope to be a strong city for years to come?

No, it was going to be a ruinous heap: *“The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap” (Isaiah 17:1).*

- When you talk about Damascus you are talking about the Syrians (**Isaiah 7:8**).
- They were going to be taken away (**Jeremiah 49:23-27** and **Amos 1:3-5**).
- The Assyrians were going to get at them (**II Kings 16:9** and **Isaiah 8:1-4**).
- God can bring any city to a ruinous heap (**Isaiah 25:1-2**, **Isaiah 37:26**, **Jeremiah 49:2**, and **Micah 1:6**).

2. What was going to happen to the cities of Aroer?

Forsaken and becoming a wilderness: *“The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid” (Isaiah 17:2).*

- IE, and I say IE, Aroer is the same city; it was once given to the Reubenites and to the Gadites (**Deuteronomy 3:12**).
- The fact that this area would become safe for flocks tells us that human habitation would cease (**Isaiah 32:14**).

3. Were those being told they were to be as the glory of Israel getting good or bad news?

Bad news as the glory of Israel was going to be made thin: *“(3) The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts. (4) And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean” (Isaiah 17:3-4).*

- The downfall of Ephraim and Syria are tied together because they were in an alliance against Judah (**Isaiah 7:1** and **Isaiah 7:5**; cf. **II Kings 16:5**).
- Israel was swallowed up (**Hosea 8:8**).
- Why Ephraim was smitten... (**Hosea 9:16-17**).
- Israel’s punishment would go beyond Damascus (**Amos 5:1-2**; **25-27**).

4. When it became as a harvestman gathered corn and when there were little left, whom was man going to look to?

God rather than idols: *“(5) And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim. (6) Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel. (7) At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel. (8) And he shall not*

look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images” (Isaiah 17:5-8).

- The imagery of harvest and gathering in respect to a judgment day (**Jeremiah 9:22, Jeremiah 51:33, and Matthew 13:36-42**)
- Shaking the tree to get the few left after harvest (**Isaiah 24:13-15**) signifies that there would be a small remnant from this judgment (i.e. **Isaiah 10:22**). There would be no cluster though (**Micah 7:1**).
- Eyes of man toward the Lord (**Zechariah 9:1**).
- Even when the heathen nations were punished, they would turn to God at times in response (**Isaiah 19:22**).
- **In regard to Ephraim, whose judgment was tied to Syria**, they were the firstborn of God and would be gathered back (**Jeremiah 31:9-10**).
- No more turning to idols (**Hosea 14:8**).

5. In the time Damascus looked to God, what were they being told was going to happen to their strong cities?

Forsaken and desolate: “In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation” (Isaiah 17:9).

- God can destroy the strength of any nation and cause desolation anywhere (**Isaiah 9:9-12, Isaiah 24:1-12, Isaiah 27:10, Isaiah 28:1-4, and Micah 7:13**).
- It is interesting to consider some of this imagery in light of what God wanted done with fruit left behind after harvest. It could be that God left some land for Israel and used this imagery to explain why (cf. **Deuteronomy 24:19-21**).

6. Because they forgot God, what would happen to the crops they grew?

A heap: “(10) Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips: (11) In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow” (Isaiah 17:10-11).

- Forgetting God (**Deuteronomy 8:11, Deuteronomy 8:19, and Hosea 8:14**).
- God is the source of salvation and death (**Psalms 68:20**).
- Strange slips... Meaning of is that others would reap what they sowed (**Leviticus 26:16 and Deuteronomy 28:30**).
- Bear no fruit (**Hosea 9:16**).

7. What did the Lord say concerning those who were many, noisy, and had spoiled the Jews?
Come to not: *“(12) Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! (13) The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. (14) And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us” (Isaiah 17:12-14).*

- Make all the noise possible, but God is still stronger (**Psalm 93:3-4, Isaiah 25:4-5, Isaiah 26:4, Isaiah 30:30-33, Isaiah 46:9-10, Jeremiah 31:11, Jeremiah 32:17, Luke 1:37, and I Corinthians 1:25**).
- The portion that belonged to all who caused God’s people to suffer (**Isaiah 41:10-11 and Jeremiah 2:3**).
- Even to this day, there is something in store for those who cause God’s people to suffer (**Romans 12:17-21**).