

Peace Rejected

(Isaiah 48:12-22)

Yearly Theme: *“Peace is...”*

Series Title: *“Peace Lost”*

May 2nd, 2021

Something to think about:

All too often, people tempt fate without realizing that there is a Reality greater than themselves to Whom they are accountable. This Reality is none other than GOD (YAHWEH) the Maker and Creator of Heaven and Earth, and everything within them. Sure, a person can reject God and call the shots; they can live in rebellion to His will, His ways, and His purposes, but the world has yet to see a person in complete rebellion of God live a life of *peace*.

Today, we begin a new series for the month of May continuing with our reading through the Bible. The story we come to this week is a continuation of the rebellion of God’s people (the Israelites/Jewish people) in the writings of Isaiah the prophet of God.

At this point in their history, the Northern Kingdom (Israel – and also known as Ephraim in certain places of the Old Testament) has been overthrown by the Assyrian Empire, and now the Southern Kingdom (Judah) is all but destroyed by the Babylonian Empire. The scene is a desperate one. Now that God has their attention, He speaks through Isaiah once again with words of encouragement, but also of continued warning reminding them that their only hope is with Him and no other. They must turn from their rebellion and back to God. He extends to them a hope for future restoration even as He commissions other pagan leaders (like King Cyrus of the Persian Kingdom) to deal with the wickedness of the Babylonians as a means to set the exiles (the Israelites) free from captivity once again. Let’s pick up the ongoing story today in Isaiah 48:

Isaiah 48:12-22 (NLT),

¹² *“Listen to me, O family of Jacob, Israel my chosen one! I alone am God, the First and the Last.*

¹³ *It was my hand that laid the foundations of the earth, my right hand that spread out the heavens above. When I call out the stars, they all appear in order.”*

¹⁴ *Have any of your idols ever told you this? Come, all of you, and listen: The LORD has chosen Cyrus as his ally. He will use him to put an end to the empire of Babylon and to destroy the Babylonian armies.*

¹⁵ *“I have said it: I am calling Cyrus! I will send him on this errand and will help him succeed.*

¹⁶ *Come closer, and listen to this. From the beginning I have told you plainly what would happen.”*

And now the Sovereign LORD and his Spirit have sent me with this message. ¹⁷ *This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow.* ¹⁸ *Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea.* ¹⁹ *Your descendants would have been like the sands along the seashore— too many to count! There would have been no need for your destruction, or for cutting off your family name.”*

²⁰ *Yet even now, be free from your captivity! Leave Babylon and the Babylonians. Sing out this message! Shout it to the ends of the earth! The LORD has redeemed his servants, the people of Israel.*

²¹ *They were not thirsty when he led them through the desert. He divided the rock, and water gushed out for them to drink.* ²² *“But there is no peace for the wicked,” says the LORD.*

God draws a clear, defining line in what His desires are for His people. There is not meant to be any confusion of what God’s will is here. As a matter of fact, God says the only thing that keeps them from experiencing the peace He desires to give them by restoring them is their wickedness. Which leads to our key point...

Key Point: *“Peace is lost when God’s ways are rejected.”*

So, what does this look like in this passage of Scripture? Let’s break this down today:

- **Only the people who are willing to trust God for who He really is can have peace.**

Isaiah 48:12-16a (NLT), ¹² *“Listen to me, O family of Jacob, Israel my chosen one! I alone am God, the First and the Last.* ¹³ *It was my hand that laid the foundations of the earth, my right hand that spread out the heavens above. When I call out the stars, they all appear in order.”*

¹⁴ *Have any of your idols ever told you this? Come, all of you, and listen: The LORD has chosen Cyrus as his ally. He will use him to put an end to the empire of Babylon and to destroy the Babylonian armies.*

¹⁵ *“I have said it: I am calling Cyrus! I will send him on this errand and will help him succeed.*

¹⁶ *Come closer, and listen to this. From the beginning I have told you plainly what would happen.”*

- **There is always hope for those who are willing to follow God even when they don’t understand His ways.**

Isaiah 48:16b-19 (NLT), *And now the Sovereign LORD and his Spirit have sent me with this message.*

¹⁷ *This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow.* ¹⁸ *Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea.* ¹⁹ *Your descendants would have been like the sands along the seashore— too many to count! There would have been no need for your destruction, or for cutting off your family name.”*

- **The stubborn who refuse to admit their guilt and turn to God can never find peace.**

Isaiah 48:22 (NLT), *“But there is no peace for the wicked,” says the LORD.*

Something to take home:

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans puts things into context very well for us today. This is one of the very topics he addressed in great detail as he contrasted the Old Covenant and the New Covenant people in many of his letters to the early church. Arguing for salvation and freedom in Christ, Paul addresses the concern that the Jewish people had missed the boat so to speak when they rejected Christ. The concern was that they didn’t truly understand, nor had they really been told that the Messiah had come and that He was truly the fulfillment of the Old Covenant and Prophets. Like the Israelites had rejected God throughout the course of their history as a chosen people which ultimately led them to punishment and exile, Christians too run the risk of living in rebellion and stubbornness toward God and His teachings if we’re not careful. And honestly, it’s not that complicated. The message of the Gospel of Christ, and of evangelism, is this...

Romans 10:13-21 (NLT) ¹³ *For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”* ¹⁴ *But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?* ¹⁵ *And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”* ¹⁶ *But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, “LORD, who has believed our message?”* ¹⁷ *So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.* ¹⁸ *But I ask, have the people of Israel actually heard the message? Yes, they have: “The message has gone throughout the earth, and the words to all the world.”* ¹⁹ *But I ask, did the people of Israel really understand? Yes, they did, for even in the time of Moses, God said, “I will rouse your jealousy through people who are not even a nation. I will provoke your anger through the foolish Gentiles.”* ²⁰ *And later Isaiah spoke boldly for God, saying, “I was found by people who were not looking for me. I showed myself to those who were not asking for me.”* ²¹ *But regarding Israel, God said, “All day long I opened my arms to them, but they were disobedient and rebellious.”*

Key Point: *“Peace is lost when God’s ways are rejected.”*