

Series: Isaiah

Title: Awake, Stand Up, O Jerusalem!

Text: Isaiah 51: 17-21

Date: March 28, 2013

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our text is Isaiah 51: 17-21. It pictures the church of God as a woman staggering drunk but not with wine, forced to lay down as her enemies walk over her. There are none to help her of all that she has brought up. But God who pleads the cause of his people, tells his people in the midst to “Awake and Stand Up.” God says he has taken this bitter cup from her hand and given it to those who so shamefully afflicted her.

Title: Awake, Stand Up, O Jerusalem!

Divisions: I. THE CALL TO AWAKE—**Isaiah 51: 17: Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.** II. A DESCRIPTION OF PERILOUS TIMES- **18: There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up. 19: These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee? 20: Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.** III. THE PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE BY OUR LORD--**21: Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: 22: Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:** IV. GOD PROMISED JUDGEMENT UPON THOSE WHO AFFLICT US. **23: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.**

Proposition: Our text gives us a word of assurance from the LORD for dark times such as his true church now faces. As deplorable as the condition of the visible church now appears to be, the ultimate triumph of God’s true church is sure.

I. THE CALL TO AWAKE--Isaiah 51: 17: Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

Suffering in the Midst of Judgment

In Isaiah’s day God gave Israel over to Babylonian captivity because the religious and civil leaders of Israel led the people to sin against God. In their midst, was God’s true, elect remnant. God’s judgment was not upon his true church and his holy nation, but upon those which called themselves so in name only. But though the true church was God’s people, they suffered when the rest of the nation was taken into captivity.

So it is for God’s true elect remnant in our day. The judgment of God—the woes of these last days—has come upon the visible church and our nation. The judgment of God is come for the same reason as in Isaiah’s day—it is due to false preachers and corrupt civil rulers. God has given us—his true people—the cup of trembling, not in the sense that the cup of fury is against the Lord’s people. But just as God’s elect remnant suffered when God’s judgment came upon Israel, so true believer’s suffer in our day when God’s judgment is upon our nation and this world. True believers suffer from the consequences of God’s judgment upon the world in which we live.

Awake! Awake! Stand Up!

But in Isaiah's day, in the midst of these perilous times, the LORD says to his people, "**Awake, awake, Stand Up, O Jerusalem!**" Notice God says "Awake" two times. We need to be awakened from the sleep of unbelief AND from the stupor of despair.

Brethren, the world's religion has always grown faster than God's true church. They are of the world, they speak of the world, and the world receives its own. For this reason, the scriptures tell us there will come a time when false religion shall rule the world. And the scriptures tells us there will come a time that it will appear the Lord's witnesses—his preachers and his people—lay dead in the street. And the world will rejoice that it is so.

Revelation 11: 10: And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Application: For the believer, such times easily cause the sleep of unbelief and the stupor of despair. The Lord has not given us to know the times he has appointed for his return. And it is impossible for us to know exactly which of these woeful times we are living in.

Believers in every age have experienced heresy, apostasy, violence, and war. But not knowing keeps us constantly looking for Christ's glorious return. That is why the Lord has not given us the precise time—so we will live in anticipation and longing for him to come.

We are indeed living in a perilous time. I want our young people to understand something. The homosexuality that you see being legalized by politicians and paraded on television—is not a new day of tolerance and open-mindedness—it is the judgment and fury of God's wrath upon us.

In Romans 2, They "CHANGED the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did CHANGE the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." (Ro 1:25-27) They "did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." (Ro 1: 28)

The world who is the church in name only is really one with the wicked in this world for when either the self-righteous religious world or the wicked hear the truth declared, they both say, "Away with it!" And both rejoice when lies appear to triumph over truth. They make merry, and send gifts one to another; they are glad because the truth of God's gospel tormented them that dwell on the earth.

For the true child of God, such times can easily cause us to fall into the sleep of unbelief and the stupor of despair—but God says, "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem!"

I do pray that God would speak this command effectually into our hearts personally, now. And that God would do so sending the Spirit of life to revive his true church, as he promises he shall before Christ returns.

II. GOD'S DESCRIPTION OF THESE PERILOUS TIMES.

No Sons to Guide Her

The church has none to guide her. In verse 18, **“There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.”** The visible church is pictured as a woman staggering in despair. But she has no son to guide her or take her by the hand.

By God’s grace, in day’s past there have been many sons brought forth by God. But scriptures says just before Christ returns there will come a brief but definite time when there will be very few true sons of God in this earth until Christ himself shall revives his church. (Rev 11)

Application: How we ought to cherish brethren! To have someone to comfort you with the word of God is a great gift of God in this earth. Speak often to one another. Visit with one another often.

This may be a rebuke—note: “sons SHE brought forth” rather than waiting on God to bring them forth. We must remain true to the word of God. Religious efforts are constantly made to make new converts using every kind of method under the sun except the preaching of the truth of God. But if sinners are converted by being told lies that they can save themselves then they will teach others the same lie. This is not how the church will be revived. The church will have no sons to guide her and take her by the hand except God gives us sons through the Holy Spirit.

Application: Therefore, it is time to “Awake, awake, and stand up, O Jersualem!” It is time to tell sinners the truth that they are depraved. Now, is the time to “Awake” and tell sinners they must be born again. Their will is in bondage to their sin-nature. God must create in them a new nature that delights for Christ to receive all the glory and for them to put their face in the dirt! It is time to “stand up” and tell sinners they cannot justify or sanctify themselves by their law obedience!

Galatians 3: 21: Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

It is time to preach the gospel of God’s salvation by grace, to ask God to bring forth HIS Sons, and to wait on God to do so.

Illustration: The children in the wilderness—“We know not what is become of Moses—up make us gods to go before us.” Scoffers are in the church, saying, “We know not what is become of this Jesus Christ, up, let us make our own converts.”

2 Peter 3: 3: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4: And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Desolation and Famine

God has brought us into times of great sorrow and trial, we read in verse 19, **“These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?”**

Desolation and destruction means violence, havoc (social sin); and breaking of a dream, shattering of interpretation. The preaching from those who are the church in name only—morality preachers—have created a people, “filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters,

inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” (Rom 1: 29-31) Breaking of interpretation may mean what Paul says in 2 Thess 2: 10-12, “because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Also, there is a famine of the word and the sword—persecution.

Amos 8:12: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*.

Numbers 14: 43:...ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you.

By Whom Shall I Comfort Her

Christ sends forth his true ambassador’s with this charge, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.” (Isa 40:1-2) We go forth declaring salvation is accomplished fully by the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has conquered our enemies. By his obedience unto death, Christ Jesus has so put away our iniquity and rewarded us with holiness and righteousness to that those called by the Spirit of God are complete in Christ. That is what Christ’s ambassadors declare because God sent them and through that message God comforts his true church—his people in particular in our hearts. But if the sons the church has brought forth were brought forth by the running and willing of man’s flesh, through lies, then there will be no sons for God to use to comfort his people—they do not have the message, do not believe the message and will not preach the message.

Her Sons Have Fainted

The sons the church has brought forth have fainted in verse 20, “**Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.**” How do God’s true children not faint? The same way we receive mercy to begin with is the way in which we do not faint, by the excellency of the power of God. Paul said, “As we have received mercy, we faint not;” (2 Co 4:1) How did we receive mercy? “...the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” (2 Cor 4: 7) But if any saved themselves by their power, by their running and their willing—no wonder they have become faint.

Illustration: A wild bull caught in a net wants to be delivered. It fights, getting more entangled, till it lies exhausted and faint.

Her sons became faint because rather than bowing to the will of God, they tried to accomplish deliverance, rather than waiting for it to be accomplished by God. Therefore, they only make matters worse. They lie exhausted in the head of every street.

III. THE PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE BY OUR LORD—

Having shown the church that there is none among her who can save her, the LORD says, verse 21, “**Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine.**”

Thy Lord the LORD

Now, he speaks to his elect, his true church. Be sure to catch these next words, verse 22, **“Thus saith thy Lord the LORD.”** Small letter “Lord” refers to the Lord Jesus. Capital letter “LORD” tells us he is Jesus the Jehovah—Jesus the God. Now catch that little word just before his name. It makes this good news sweet to ME—“**THY** Lord the LORD.”

- Thy Lord by divine election of grace in Christ
- Thy Lord by eternal adoption as his sons and daughters
- Thy Lord by the blood of the everlasting covenant
- Thy LORD whom none shall be able to separate you from

A poor worm like you and me can lay claim to,

- His omniscience and omnipotence to watch over me
- His omnipresence to be my company
- His immutability to be my security
- His throne of grace always open to me
- His justice always to defend me!
- His holiness always to separate and keep me!
- His truth always to teach me!
- His mercy always to forgive me!
- His eternity ready to receive me!

Because his everlasting pledge is “Thus saith, **THY** Lord the LORD!”

God Pleads the Cause of His People

Now listen to what he says, verse 22, **“thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people.”** He pleads the cause of his people. God is both the Judge and Advocate of his people. He pleads the cause of his people for them.

First, he pleads the CAUSE of his people in the COURT OF JUDGMENT on Calvary’s cross. All his people are guilty of sin. Yet, Christ Jesus—thy Lord the God—stepped forward from eternity to be Surety for his people. When the time was come, he stepped forward to take flesh and live under the law for his people. Then when the hour was come, he stepped forward to take his people’s place on the cross. He said in behalf of each of his people, “I will plead their cause. Whatever they owe, lay their sin to my charge.” We owed a righteousness we could not work out and we owed justice death by which we could not satisfy. But Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the law for us that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us—and Christ is our Righteousness!

Secondly, having pleaded the cause of his people on the cross, Christ pleads our cause IN THE COURT OF OUR CONSCIENCE. It is not enough for a soul to be free from sin, we must be personally holy and righteous as God is holy and righteous. Therefore before we can enter into God’s presence we must be created anew in righteousness and true holiness. We must be washed in the blood in regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. If God will receive us we must have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us through faith. So thy Lord the God send each of his people the good news of what he has accomplished for us. As you hear the words of God’s messenger, the Holy Spirit enters in giving life. He applies the blood in the court of conscience, purging our conscience. We hear him say, “Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem!” We see our awful condition in sin. We see all our works have been in vain. But from our dead works he turns us to the living God! As you hear the words of preacher, suddenly they become the words of—Christ thy Lord, THE God. He speaks into your heart, declaring, “I plead the cause of MY PEOPLE. And because

you are mine, I lived the life of perfect Righteousness FOR YOU. I obeyed the law in every jot and tittle FOR YOU. I put away all your sin by laying down my life FOR YOU. Dear child, YOU are forgiven, YOU are justified, YOU are sanctified, YOU are made the righteousness of God IN ME. All because I, your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, THE God of heaven and earth—hath pleaded THY CAUSE. He says verse 22, **“Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again.”** For the first time, you truly believe Christ has pleaded MY CAUSE—Christ has taken FROM MY HAND the cup of trembling, Christ has drank it FOR ME, even the dregs of the cup of God’s fury—justice is satisfied. He promises—THOU SHALT NO MORE DRINK IT AGAIN! All FOR ME—are you resting in Christ? Can you say from the heart, “Christ is MY Righteousness and MY Sanctification—in whom God will receive ME?”

Thirdly, not only does Christ plead the cause of his people from eternity, not only from the cross, not only in the court of conscience, but the Lord Jesus thy God now pleads the cause of his people IN HEAVEN BEFORE GOD THE FATHER. Saints pray, but being yet in this body of sin, we pray very badly. Saints sing, but having an old sin nature, even if we sing like a song bird our sin fills our songs with lots of bad notes. The faith of every saint is accompanied by good works, yet sin being mixed with all we do, our best works is tainted with the slime of sin. Yet, before God the Father thy great High Priest—the GodMan—pleads the cause of his people. So our prayers, our songs, our works—yea, we ourselves—come up to God our Father in Christ Jesus “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.” (Eph 5: 2)

Fourthly, in that last day, in the great white throne judgment Christ Jesus will PLEAD THE CAUSE OF HIS PEOPLE ASSURING US THAT WE SHALL RECEIVE THE INHERITANCE—“he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Is 53: 12)

IV. THOUGH WE SUFFER AFFLICTION AS GOD JUDGES THIS WORLD, GOD PROMISES JUDGEMENT UPON THOSE WHO AFFLICT US--v23: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

At times, it appears that the Lord’s church is being forced to lay down under the feet of false religion and this wicked world and that we will surely be defeated. But God promises to remove the bitter cup from us and give it to those who would tread us under their feet.

In Revelation 11, God gives us a spiritual picture confirming the truth we have in our text. Here “the temple, and the altar, and the people therein” were measured BUT the outer court was not measured. The measuring of it shows us that God protects his holy sanctuary, his holy people, from the world and all worldly religion. It shows us that God separates the precious from the vile.

Revelation 11: 1: And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2: BUT the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they TREAD UNDER FOOT forty and two months.

The temple, and the altar, and the people therein which WERE measured picture the church which God purchased with his own blood. We are told throughout the new testament “ye are the temple of God.” 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16-17; Eph. 3:21). As we just saw from our text, we who believe are God's 'holy city, his royal priesthood.' We worship God in the holy place, “Having, therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God” (Heb 10: 19-21) We offer up

sacrifices of prayer and praise which are accepted by God because Christ Jesus pleads our cause. (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

But the outer court was not to be measured. The outer court represents all false religion and false professors in religion—represented by the Gentiles. The same picture is given in Ezekiel. There God tells us plainly who the outer court represents:

Ezekiel 22: 25: There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof...27: Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. 28: And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. 29: The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. 30: And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. [that is what God said in our text] 31: Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.

Because this world's religion outgrows the true church—due to their ungodly means and message—they shall overpower the true church more and more as long as this gospel age lasts. That is what is meant in:

Revelation 11: 2:...And the holy city shall they TREAD UNDER FOOT forty and two months.

Forty two months simply means the definite period of time throughout this gospel age. As long as this gospel age lasts, the world shall more and more, join with this world's false religion—their preachers are of the world, they speak of the world, and therefore the world receives them. So as false religion grows and grows, there will come a time when it shall appear that God's two true witnesses—his preachers and his people—have been TRODDEN UNDERFOOT and, that we lay dead in the street.

But this distinction God put between the inner court and the outer court, assures his true people, that God knows those who are his particular people and God shall protect his people, his true witnesses—against those who are not his.

Before Christ returns, the world will be full of anti-christ religion—men standing in the temple of God as one man with one voice speaking of how they saved themselves, as if they were God.

Revelation 11: 10: And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

They will rejoice that it appears God's true witnesses are dead because our gospel torments them. But in our text, "thy Lord the God, thy God who pleads our cause" says to us, "Awake, awake, stand up, o Jerusalem!" He described our awful condition but he said, "Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God *that* pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, *even* the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over." (Is 51: 22-23) Now, look at verse 11. So concerning the true preachers and true people of God who appeared dead he says,

Revelations 11: 11: And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Before Christ returns, after a brief and set period of time, the church of God shall be revived by the Spirit of life from God. Great fear shall be upon the wicked political and vainly religious who tread us under foot.

Revelation 11: 12: And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13: And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Did you catch that? In the same hour, that the Lord delivers his people the the fury of God's judgment shall begin to fall upon those who would have tread us under foot. And they "gave glory to God of heaven." They will not repent but "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2: 10-11)

Application: What shall we do in the light of these things?

First, awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem! This is not a time to slumber and sleep but a time to give ourselves to personally feed upon the word and to give ourselves to setting it forth to others.

Secondly, trust in the name of the Lord! No matter how it seems the enemy shall prevail believe on the Lord. Thy Lord the God, thy God pleads the cause of his people.

Thirdly, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord!" "The battle is not yours, but the Lord's!"

Amen!