

Isaiah's great commission.

Isaiah 66:18-21.

Sunday evening, July 19, 2009.

I. Reason and Intent. Vs. 18.

A. The reason behind the great commission.

“For I know...;” read “because I know...,” or “inasmuch as I know their works and their thoughts...”

1. The reference is to unbelieving Israel; to those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves to do evil; to serve their own desires religiously speaking.
2. It is the opposite of seeking and seeing the Lord's glory.

B. The intent of the great commission and the gospel is the glory of God.

For man to come to the place where he seeks and sees and declares the glory of God is what is promised here. See also the end of vs. 19.

Application:

1. It is no easy thing to come to the place in life where we see and seek and proclaim the Lord's glory. This in itself is a work of grace.

- It requires self denial; a realization that we are dealing with something much bigger than ourselves.
- It requires a disposition in life that is not concerned primarily with itself. “Am I having fun yet?” Rather self-abandonment.
- It requires a pre-occupation with the things of the Lord; His people, His truth, His ways and His means. Servant hood.

2. There is a lot of self-seeking in the Christian Church, broadly considered, today.

Israel's decline into idolatry was not a wholesale abandoning of the Lord in their minds. It was often a worshipping of the Lord “in their own way.” With the help of idols and rituals of their own devising, or worse, of the devising of the pagan nations around them. See Exodus 32:1-6.

- What's in it for me? How do I like it? What do I get out of it? These and other questions like it are still very often the leading sentiments which determine the when and where and how we will worship the Lord.
- In short we have made a consumer item of religion.
- These were the leading questions for the Pharisees as they considered the worth of the Lord Jesus. Self-denial was not part of the equation.

II. I will set a sign among them... Vs. 19.

A. What is meant is something of a supernatural order, and an abiding nature.

B. We need not consider this sign too narrowly.

1. What is in view here is the significance of the Christ event. He is “the sign, spoken against.” Luke 2:34.
2. That Sign did abide among the faithful remnant, after the Lord Jesus went back to heaven, in the abiding presence of the Person of the Holy Spirit. John 14:16-18.
3. So it does to this very day.

III. Those... who escape I will send to the nations. Vs. 19.

- A. It is speaking of those who would escape from the great judgment that would come on unbelieving Israel.
- B. With this does agree the preaching of Peter following the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:40; and Paul in Acts 13:45,46 and 1 Thess. 2:13-16.
- C. With this also agrees the great commission of the Lord Jesus and the practice of the Apostles and the early church. Acts 13:46,47 and Acts 28:28.

IV. Then they shall bring all your brethren... Vs.20.

- A. Here is an early version of Ephesians 4:14.
The breaking down of the middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile.
- B. Isaiah is very bold indeed:
 - 1. He calls these Gentiles "brethren."
 - 2. He constitutes these Gentiles "an offering to the Lord."
 - 3. He brings these Gentiles into the House of the Lord.
 - 4. To top it all off the Lord will take these Gentiles and make them priests and Levites in His house. Vs. 21.All four of these concepts were absolutely unthinkable concepts for the Jewish mindset.

V. For an offering... Vs. 20.

- A. Not a literal sacrifice, but spiritual offerings, acceptable to God, through Christ. 2 Cor. 11:2 and Col. 1:28, and Rom 12:1.
- B. So ministers of the gospel seek to present their people as a sacrifice and service to the Lord.

VI. In a clean vessel... Vs. 20.

This is nothing but the gospel vessel.

- A. The sheet let down out of heaven in Peter's vision. Full of clean and unclean animals. Inside this vessel they were not to be regarded as such. Acts 10:9-16.
- B. The gospel is the vessel through which those who were afar off are brought near, And through which strangers and foreigners become fellow citizens with the saints. Ephesians 2:17-19.

VII. To My holy mountain, Jerusalem. Vs. 20.

- A. Jerusalem below was a type of Jerusalem above, the city of God.
The temple below was a type of the temple above, the heavenly sanctuary.
- B. In the prophetic vision of the OT. they are seen as extensions of each other; they blend together.
- C. These Gentiles then are gathered in by every possible means (in chariots and litters - covered wagons-; on mules and on camels), and they are brought to New Jerusalem as an offering to the Lord.