

# I Will Choose Their Delusions

‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.’ It is good for us to be brought back regularly to reflect on the majesty, glory and infinity of God. God is self-sufficient and needs nothing from us. He possesses all perfection. He is the first and last. Nothing can be added to God nor taken from Him. Conversely, everything we have has been given to us by Him out of His goodness and by His grace. These opening verses are a timely tonic against human pride.

## **Christ’s blood is sufficient**

Just as we cannot add anything to God’s glory, neither can we add anything to the perfect satisfaction of Christ’s death for sin. Killing an ox or lamb is no doubt a reference to sacrifice. Isaiah is again pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the poor man to whom the Lord Jehovah looked and in whom the glory of God dwelt. Isaiah is telling his generation that when the Messiah comes sacrifices will end. Trying to offer or add anything by human effort to the work of Christ is tantamount to killing a man, or re-crucifying Christ all over again.

## **Anything but the Truth**

Verse 4 contains a striking statement concerning the delusions that preoccupy the thoughts of all who are blinded by sin. Those who reject salvation by grace alone will believe anything instead. From false religion to science-fiction, men and woman will be content in their darkened minds with any vain imagination and every conceivable delusion. Yet, the elect of God will not be ashamed. Christ will appear for His own people. He will recompense the wicked for their violence and His loved ones for their suffering.

## **A faithful comforter**

Faithful to the end, Isaiah comforts the Lord’s people concerning Christ (vv. 10-12). Having spoken previously of a remnant that would return from Babylon he now tells the believing Jews how the Messiah will be ‘brought forth’ before Jerusalem is again destroyed. Then, following the coming of Christ, the gospel will expand rapidly. Their nation, the Jews, will succumb to judgment at the hands of the Romans. A new, holy nation, the church, will spring to life. Note that Isaiah attributes regeneration and conversion to the sovereign work of God (v. 9).

## **Joy and peace in believing**

Isaiah is still giving the Lord’s elect amongst the Jews reason for hope and joy. None of those first readers of Isaiah’s prophecy would be alive to see these things fulfilled, yet by faith they were comforted. They rejoiced to anticipate the coming of the Messiah and the conversion of the Gentiles. Jews and non-Jews will be adopted into one family of God and formed into one body of Christ. Judgment must follow rejection of Christ, but grace will save the Lord’s elect.

## **Empty religion**

Having preached joy and hope to the elect, Isaiah’s prophecy returns to foretell fiery judgment (v. 15-17). God’s anger will fall on those who ‘sanctify themselves and purify themselves’, that is, who try to approach God by their own natural religion apart from Christ. However, the gospel will not fail to bring many brethren into the church and for that purpose ministers and preachers will be raised up among the Gentiles.

## **Judgment and mercy**

‘The new heavens and the new earth’ may mean the new gospel order of spiritual worship spoken of in chapter 65, or the literal new creation of the last time. Both endure forever as will the church and redeemed people of God. They have constant access to the Lord and worship freely, continuously, each day of the week. Yet around them are those who are condemned already, whose consciences are seared, whose eyes are blind, whose fate is sealed and who soon shall be turned into hell. These are evidence of the justice of God while the church is a trophy to saving grace and mercy.

## **Isaiah points to Christ**

Throughout this book Isaiah has proved to be a truthful prophet and a wise comforter to the Lord’s people. From first to last he testified of the Lord Jesus Christ: His virgin birth, His atoning death, His gracious gospel, His glorious success in gathering His church and saving His people, be they Jew or Gentile. He has reminded us of God’s sovereignty in creation, history, providence and, of course, salvation.

**‘Beautiful feet’ that bring good tidings**

Isaiah has shown us that the Lord God sits upon His throne and exercises dominion in the earth. His message has humbled us and elevated the Saviour. He has shown himself to be a true prophet of the most high God, a faithful minister and preacher of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are grateful to the messenger who being dead yet speaketh. We are grateful to his Master who sent him and his Saviour with whom he now lives and reigns for evermore.

Amen

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