

Look To Your Maker • Isaiah 22:8-11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *How Do We Respond To Crisis?*

1. Every so often a major crisis comes that *cannot* be avoided
2. How we respond to that crisis reveals what we're really made of

B. *Setting The Scene*

1. The people of Jerusalem were facing a crisis unlike any they had ever known
2. The mighty Assyrian army was marching toward them from the north
3. Now, you need to know that the very name "*Assyrian*" struck abject terror in them
 - a. for a couple decades, the Assyrians had dominated the kingdoms of the Middle East
 - b. even mighty Egypt feared them
 - c. and they had a reputation for cruelty which was unrivaled in the ancient world
 - d. not content to merely conquer, they delighted in the humiliation and torture of their enemies
 - e. they are the ones who invented the practice of deporting the entire population of the lands they conquered.
 - f. they would shuffle people around as nothing more than an exercise of their power
 - g. they would skin their captives alive or roast them slowly over fire
 - h. they were brutal!
4. And now, they had their sights set on Jerusalem
5. In fact, the Assyrian king had already sent one of his generals on ahead to offer King Hezekiah clemency if they would surrender
 - a. but Hezekiah had locked the gates and turned him away
 - b. so he stood outside the wall and shouted to the people who were listening that the rest of the army would soon be there and there was no way they could hope to hold out
 - c. after all, greater and stronger nations than Judah had already fallen before the Assyrian juggernaut
 - d. what made Jerusalem think they would be any different?
6. This sets the scene for our study this morning . . .

II. TEXT

A. *Vs. 8-11*

- 8 He removed the protection of Judah. You looked in that day to the armor of the House of the Forest;**
- 9 You also saw the damage to the city of David, That it was great; And you gathered together the waters of the lower pool.**

- 10 You numbered the houses of Jerusalem, And the houses you broke down To fortify the wall.**
- 11 You also made a reservoir between the two walls For the water of the old pool. But you did not look to its Maker, Nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.**
1. Whenever a city looked forward to a protracted siege, they would take inventory of several things to make sure they were ready for it
 2. And as news of the advancing Assyrians arrived, the people of Jerusalem frantically began to get ready
 3. First they checked their inventory of weapons
 - a. they would need swords and spears, bows, and arrows
 - b. they would need special equipment that was used to repel those who tried to scale the walls or damage the gates
 - c. the armory for Jerusalem was called the House of the Forest
 - 1) it had been built by Solomon and was the place where all the arms were made
 - 2) it was a stockpile of weapons
 - 3) so they took inventory and fired up the forges to replenish their stocks
 4. Second, the walls of the city had fallen into disrepair
 - a. it had been many decades since Jerusalem had faced any need for secure walls
 - b. and by this time there were gaps that need to be repaired
 - c. the most vulnerable part of a city wall was the gate - so the walls around gates were reinforced with towers
 - d. but the towers had become choked with debris and had to be cleaned out and mended
 5. Archaeologists have discovered that the city of Jerusalem had by this time outgrown its old walls
 - a. the ridge that lies to the west of the Old City was in Hezekiah's and Isaiah's day covered with houses
 - b. and Hezekiah, realizing the need to provide some protection for this area sought to expand the city's walls around them
 - c. but this required a lot of stone - way more stone than they would be able to quarry in many years, let alone a few weeks
 - d. so Hezekiah drew a line where he wanted the wall built, and the people set about dismantling houses so they could build a defensive wall - just as it says in v. 10
 - e. Hezekiah's wall can be seen today in an archaeological park right in the middle of the Jewish Quarter of the Old City
 - f. it's called the "Broad Wall" because of its tremendous width
 - 1) it's 23 feet wide and almost 30 feet high
 - 2) it had to be built this thick to withstand the Assyrian battering rams
 - 3) when you stand there and look at it today, and then read this passage you can't help but be impressed with just how *desperate* the people must have been
 - 4) they had to have torn down literally *hundreds* of houses to supply the stones to build this wall

6. Third, and this was the most important, they had to make sure they had enough water to outlast a long siege
 - a. so Hezekiah ordered new reservoirs built
 - b. the main water supply of Jerusalem was a spring that was *outside* the city walls
 - c. all an enemy had to do was take the spring, and it wouldn't be long before a thirsty Jerusalem opened its gates
 - d. so Hezekiah ordered a tunnel cut through the solid rock from the spring to the other side of the city
 - e. two crews worked from opposite ends toward each other
 - f. they cut through over 1700 feet of rock and somehow managed to meet up
 - g. to this day, the water flows from the spring on the eastern side of the city to the Pool of Siloam on the western side

B. Busy, Busy, Busy

1. You can almost picture the people of Jerusalem frantically working at all these projects
2. Everyone set aside their normal jobs and hobbies and set about the task of shoring up the defenses and provisions of the city
3. After all, their lives were on the line!
4. We can understand why they would be so anxious and busy
5. But God's perspective was very different from either ours, or theirs
6. Isaiah said,

11 You also made a reservoir between the two walls For the water of the old pool.

But you did not look to its Maker, Nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.

7. In all their busyness, in all their preparation and work, they never took the time to look to God for help
8. After all, who had time to stop and pray - the Assyrians were coming for goodness sake!
9. Pray *after* the wall's built - talk to God after the pantry's full - Seek the Lord after the water jars have been filled - Pray later, but get busy NOW!!!!!!!
10. I want to ask you to picture yourself standing on a hillside overlooking Jerusalem
 - a. standing beside you is Isaiah the prophet
 - b. together you are watching the city just abuzz with activity - it looks like an anthill in which the ants have been disturbed
 - c. it is a mass of movement
 - d. but Isaiah just shakes his head and says, "Look, they're diverting the waters of the Gihon Spring through that tunnel. But they never stopped to ask help from the one who *made and gave* them the spring in the first place.."
 - e. "They are *called* God's people, and this is *called* God's city - but they will not call upon Him."
 - f. "They trust more in themselves, in their work, in their wall, in their provisions, in their arms, than they do in their Maker!"
 - g. "When will they learn? When will they realize that God is Lord of history

and that all that transpires is part of His plan to bring people to himself and to bring His people *back* to Himself?"

11. You see, God was using the Assyrians as the instrument of His judgment on the corrupt and wicked nations of the ancient Middle East
12. And He even allowed them to march into Judah and lay siege to Jerusalem as a wake up call to His people that they had strayed from Him

C. What Happened

1. Now, let me tell you how this story turns out . . .
2. King Hezekiah was convicted by Isaiah's message and turned to the Lord for help
3. He realized that all the preparations and defenses in the world could not stop the Assyrians if it was God's purpose to deliver the city in their hands
4. So he repented of his having neglected God, and pled for mercy and help
5. And as the Assyrians were camped around the city, a plague swept through their camp and decimated them

D. Crisis Help

1. I began today by saying that every so often a *major crisis* comes that *cannot* be avoided
2. How we respond to that crisis reveals what we're really made of
3. Each of us will face challenges in life that will test our mettle, that will lay bare what we are really trusting in
 - a. this is God's way with us
 - b. we see it in the lives of the men and women of scripture
 - c. and we see it time and again in history
4. We may not have to face a foreign army, but we will face our own battles; battles that will drive us to the wall
5. And here's the point - will we respond like the people of Jerusalem or like Hezekiah?
 - a. will we take all of the "practical" steps we can to cope but forget God
 - b. will we put our confidence in our savings account or our ingenuity
 - c. or will we put our trust in the Lord and then take whatever steps He directs us to take
6. You see, there is nothing wrong with being practical and taking steps to deal with a crisis
7. The problem is when were are trusting all *that* rather than God
8. Let me use a very timely illustration . . .

E. Y2K

1. There is a striking parallel between this story and something that is taking place today.
2. Just as the people of Jerusalem heard about the Assyrians and saw them approaching, so we are now being bombarded with about reports of Y2K - and we see it coming as each day passes
3. Depending on who you listen to, the problems associated with Y2K vary from

- mild hiccup to complete social meltdown
4. Any way you slice it - it's a major crisis; You see -
 - a. even if the computer bug itself turns out to be nothing more than a single ant,
 - b. people could over-react in their preparations and *create* a crisis
 5. It's a prudent step for people to do some research and decide what would be a wise response to the whole Y2K issue.
 6. We held a special evening seminar some time back in which we covered this issue and shared some solid information and suggestions - the tapes are in the bookstore
 7. But the point is this - no matter what preparations you chose to either make or *not* make - don't trust in *that* - TRUST GOD!
 8. Could it be that *ultimately*, God intends to *use* the whole Y2K thing as a way to shake His people from their complacency?
 9. The more I have pondered and meditated on this whole thing, the more certain I am that that is precisely what is happening
 10. God is shaking His people loose from dependence in *things* and *themselves* to dependence in Him

F. Other Stuff

1. With as big a crisis as Y2K, there is an even larger and more deadly crisis that looms on the horizon most people are completely unaware of
2. It's the battle for the heart and soul of our culture!
3. You and I live in a generation which is seeing the contest between two opposing world views
 - a. there is the Biblical World view which sees God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe and the Lord of history
 - b. and then there is the materialist world view which believes all that matters is matter
 - c. the first believes that we are eternal beings who can by, faith in Christ, inherit heaven
 - d. the second believes that when you die, it's over, so this life is all you have and the one who dies with the most toys wins
 - e. the Christian world view believes in real right and wrong while the materialist believes right and wrong are defined by personal preference and majority opinion
4. And while most people are blind to the fact that we are right now as a culture at a critical moment of deciding which of these views will take over, they are seeing the results of holding to a materialist world view on a daily basis
 - a. they see it in stock brokerage offices of downtown Atlanta
 - b. they see in a child care center in LA
 - c. they see it on a high school campus in Littleton, CO
5. But you know where they put their trust and hope when they see the inevitable result of their own world view?
6. They put it in the psychologists and therapists who are invited in to provide counseling for the traumatized

7. They put it in the educational system to teach kids to grow up to be good men and women
8. They place it in gun control legislation or in medical science to develop drugs to medicate those prone to anti-social behavior
9. They put their hope in gene research to discover the place on the DNA molecule that regulates violent behavior
10. They trust in their favorite political candidate - why if he or she could just get voted into office, then things would turn around

G. *Not Our Salvation*

1. But friends, none of these things are our salvation
2. We can put our hope in none of them!
3. Things are too far along the path to ruin -
4. There is only one place we can look for help now - and that is to God!
5. You must look to Him / I must look to Him / And the only way we will be able to survive this crisis and weather this storm, is if we can persuade others to look to Him as well
6. You and I can do *far more to turn things around* by leading our friends and neighbors to Christ than by electing people to office
7. BUT - we will not have what it takes to lead them to Christ if we haven't first ourselves put all our trust and confidence in Him alone.
8. Look to Your Maker - Look Now!