

Time of Grace Ministry
Jesus is Lord: Over Satan
February 14, 2010
Isaiah 14:12-15

Tell me something. Do you believe that the federal government should be bailing out private companies? Everybody's looking for answers and hope. I want to help people find it in God. And his amazing grace.

These are really some very troubling and difficult economic times, aren't they? People are having their jobs melt away, people are looking at their life savings starting to melt away, their investments are sometimes doing very, very poorly and a whole new collection of phrases has entered the English language, phrases I'd never heard before.

One of them that is really intriguing to me is the phrase, "too big to fail." Have you ever heard that, "too big to fail?" Too big to fail means that something is such an important part of our economy that the federal government is going to get involved and break its normal rule of non-interaction with business or economic activity. For instance, great investment houses like Bear Stearns were considered to be not too big to fail. Lehman Brothers was also allowed to go under. But there are things like Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae which are gigantic home mortgage insurance backers which the government decided were too big to fail. Are General Motors and Chrysler and Ford, are those companies too big to fail? Should the federal government get involved in propping up those privately held industries? A big discussion is ongoing and an awful lot is now at stake.

You know, it strikes me that there is a parallel to be made to a time in the Old Testament and the people of God, the nation of Israel, which is our Bible study I want to talk to you about today. At this time, were these nations too holy to fail? Were they too important to be allowed to fail? And I want to talk to you about the prophet Isaiah, who has left a greater body of prophetic literature behind than any of the other spokesman for the Lord, our God. Isaiah's 66 chapters provide an enormous record of the thinking and speaking of this man and of the thoughts of God which are behind it.

It was his privilege to minister to a divided kingdom, roughly about the year 740 to 710 B.C. Now, can you imagine what it would be like in our own country if the Union Armies had not prevailed during our Civil War, if the Confederacy had prevailed, and stayed independent? That is what happened to the people of God at this time. And it was Isaiah's message first of all to the northern kingdom, "You are going to fail. You are not too big or too holy to fail. You are destined to be taken apart by the invading Assyrian Army." He was watching an already divided country. Israel had split into two and for many generations now, there had been a north country and a south country, kind of like what America would have been like if the Union forces had not been able to prevail in our Civil War. The original capital of Jerusalem was not able to keep the northern piece from splitting away, kind of like the reverse cessation that we went through in our country. And imagine if there had been two United States, two Americas, the United States and the Confederate States. That's basically what happened in Israel.

And Isaiah was called to minister really to both halves of the country, but was based in the south. Isaiah had to watch the assault invasion and destruction of the north by the Assyrian army. And it was his sad duty to tell the people, "It's your fault. God is behind the Assyrians and in fact, he has given them the military advantage and is going to see to it that you lose." Doesn't that seem unfair? Battles are supposed to be like baseball games, right? Where you go in and it's zero to zero and there's no outside influence. It's just nine against nine. Not so here. They were destined to lose, as a discipline and as a punishment.

And now, Isaiah, through the telescope of God, was allowed to look forward into the future. And he was telling people that the same thing is going to happen to the south. "Judah, Jerusalem, unless you change and repent, you're doomed as well." Only this time it's going to be a different enemy. At the very time they all were terrified of the Assyrians, he said, "It's going to be Babylon who comes for you." And Babylon was just a province in the mighty Assyrian empire. That made no sense. Nobody was afraid of Babylon. That would be today like saying, "The United States is going to be dreadfully at risk from assault by India." And you're thinking, "Huh? Did you say India? Like India India? As in South Asia? They're not any threat to America. I know they've got lots and lots of people, but they got all they can do just to manage their long running argument with Pakistan next door. They don't have the stuff to come after America for Pete's sake."

And yet, that's essentially what Isaiah was describing. To say that Babylon would be a world conquering power made no sense at the time because it didn't look like that. But Isaiah could see ahead. And what he said was that God was going to use Babylon as his instrument of chastisement, of correction, upon those stubborn unbelievers who were not listening to his word.

And God actually talked with Nebuchadnezzar and spent a lot of time with the great king of Babylon trying to get him to accept his role and to basically, be his instrument and then come to believe in him and spread his glory and spread his name. He went through amazing dialogue with this man and well, it's a long, long story and I can't summarize it all here, but God actually made Nebuchadnezzar demented for a while so that he thought he was a wild beast and then gave him his sanity back, as a way of getting his attention. "I need you to be my tool. Now work for me!" If you want to read more about that, the prophet Daniel went into captivity and spent most of his prophetic ministry in Babylon, trying to help the Babylonian king see that the true God of all was the God in Israel, not Marduke and the other gods of Babylon.

But the Babylonian kings did not get it and in their arrogance and in their power, looked at themselves and said, "I did all of this." And so, God not only prearranged that this region would grow to power, he prearranged for them to beat down and crush Judah, but then he could see that they were going to reject him, too, and so, pre-announced judgment on them as well! What this tells you of course, is that God lives in the future. For him, it's as crystal clear as though it already happened. In fact, a lot of prophetic writings in the scripture are written in the past tense, which is so unbelievable. For God, it's no big deal. He can see it all, it's all as clear as day. In his vision, it has already happened.

I want to cut away right now and talk to you a little bit about prophecy. This is kind of a hard thing and I'd like to do that with you one on one. You ever fantasize about time travel? A thousand TV shows and books and stories and novels have been written about time travel. It's a great fantasy to be able to see and interact in different eras. Reading about it is one thing, but to actually see it, wouldn't that be just awesome?

God actually used his prophets in a sense with a kind of time travel. He didn't physically move them to other places, he could be there of course, but what he allowed them to do was to see the tracks of human history from his viewpoint, from like 35,000 feet. And so, Isaiah for instance, was allowed to see not only the time that he was living and speaking in, he was allowed to look ahead and to see the fall of the northern kingdom. He was allowed to look ahead and see the fall of the southern kingdom, and also to see the fall of the oppressors of the place where he was living in the southern kingdom of Judah. He was allowed to see Babylon destroy Judah, and Judah carried off into captivity. Allowed to see the crushing of their arms, the looting and burning of their cities, the looting of the temple itself, the carrying off of the sacred vessels to Babylon, and was then allowed to see how the Meds and the Persians would overthrow the Babylonians almost overnight.

And in Isaiah 14:3, Isaiah prophetically provided a victory song like, "We Will Rock You," or something like that to show that the Israelites ultimately were going to triumph even over Babylon, their killers and assaulters. "On the day the Lord gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon." So he's like written a victory song over a century in advance of when it will be used:

"How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended!" Now, jump ahead to verse 12. He does a thing which I call 'telescoping prophecy.' Just as sometimes God would tell things about Jesus Christ based initially on the experiences of let's say, King David, on his thoughts and experiences and God would have things to say about King Jesus even farther into the future. God here takes the experiences of evil kings, like Nebuchadnezzar and the kings of Babylon, and he used them as a platform, as a jumping off point to tell us some things about the source of that evil, which is of course, Satan.

Listen to this. Verse 12 says: "How you have fallen from heaven." Well, the Babylonian kings did not fall from heaven, that's for sure. God is talking about something even deeper. "O morning star, son of the dawn!" He's not talking about a Babylonian king. He has jumped now into talking about the source of the evil, about Satan. The Hebrew word, "heylel," is the word for "morning star" and it shows that something once full of promise, just like the morning star planet Venus, is the tip-off that dawn is right about to come. "You were so full of promise, you were a son of the dawn, but now you've been cast down."

The Greek word for morning star, when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek is "phosphorus," the "light bearer." And its Latin word, when it came into Latin, "luciferos," means the light bearer, or the morning star, the Latin word for that is "Lucifer," and it is this passage in Scripture from where one of the names of the devil derives and this prophecy now is the story of Satan, of Lucifer's fall from heaven.

This is the passage in scripture where that name, Lucifer, comes from. Lucifer is a happy name. It's a name of glory. And that's how whom we now call Satan began, as an angel of light, as one of the top ranking angels! Like, he was up there with Michael and Gabriel at the top ranks. But he led a mutiny because he wanted the most basic sin of all. Of all of the thousands of ways to rebel against God, the most basic one is to say to God, "I don't want to be subject to you. I want to be my own god. I want to rule my own private little universe. I want my life to be all about me."

Doesn't that sound just like today? Today we've got the ME TV network and me.com and everything's all about me. All about me. In fact, one of the magazines I read has a new end page article that's called, "Well, enough about you." Get it? Ever talk to people at a party like that? "Well, enough about you. Let me tell you about me."

"O morning star," Lucifer, "son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations." This is a prophecy of the ultimate destruction of Lucifer. He isn't Lucifer anymore. There's no light in Satan anymore. He is now "Satanas." Satan is an Aramaic word that means the enemy. He's your deadliest enemy, who seeks to destroy you on every level. He seeks, first of all, to hurt you physically. Now, you know some of the stories about demon possession. I frankly think I know a couple of people who are demon possessed today. Honestly. I'll say that with some caution because I can't perceive that world, but I know some people who are physically tormented in ways that I simply cannot explain. That certainly was true in Bible times. When the demons would take over a human being, they sought to destroy the person physically, throwing them into convulsions, hurling them over cliffs, throwing them into fire to try to burn them and abuse them, pouring filthy curses out of their mouths.

Satan also tries to destroy us spiritually. That's where his other name comes in. Satanas or Satan is his power name. Devil, which is from the Greek word "diabolos," is the spooky name for what he can do to you spiritually. "Diabolos" means "the accuser," the one who rats you out before God, who first tempts you to sin and then squeals on you by making sure that God sees every last flaw in your sinful mind and heart and mouth and hands. That's even scarier than having your body hurt, because you can bounce back from just about anything physical. God can repair any damage to your body. But if your soul is lost, if you stand guilty on the Day of Judgment, then you share judgment with Satan, with the devil and his diabolical ways.

In Isaiah 14, God provided for his grieving people of Israel a triumph song that they could sing when their archenemy, Babylon, was going to be defeated long before they would actually need it. Through prophecy, God also provides the people of God a triumph song over Satan, who really does not look very defeated, at least in the world I'm looking at, the world I'm living in. I don't know about your world, but I see evil everywhere, on all sides, and it looks like Satan's winning. God says, "No." And through prophecy, he allows us to see not only the rise of Satan, but also his fall. In verse 13: "You," meaning Lucifer, "You said in your heart 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God.'" That's a symbolic representation of the other angels. "I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; and I will make myself like the Most High."

This is the arrogance of all sin, to try to make yourself your own god in your own little universe. But here's the triumph: Satan's doom is predicted. Verse 15: "But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit." This prophecy is linked up with the actual finale in Revelation 20 where God says exactly what will be happening. Satan and all his evil agents on earth, both inside and outside the church, both forces of say, media and forces of government which oppose and resist God, ultimately will meet their doom. They will gather together to try to destroy the church. Revelation 20 says, "Fire came down from heaven and devoured them and the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur."

Notice the verb tense? "Was thrown." In God's mind it is so certain. "And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." This is our triumph song over Satan himself. Satan has already lost and it's because of what our Lord Jesus has done. This is important news for you and me because we're not merely victims of Satan's assault. He not only would like to hurt you and your family in your body, in the way in which your life works. Not only would he like to ruin your health and enjoy watching you die, the longer and more painful the better he likes it, but he also would like to destroy you spiritually, as the accuser, as the diabolical force who gets you in trouble with God. But he's already lost and the Lord Jesus did that for you.

You and I are not only victims of Satan, we're also junior level partners of Satan. One of the reasons we so desperately need a Savior is that there's a miniature version of the devil inside of each of us. There's a beast in me and there's a beast in you, too, just trying to get out. And as you look around the world today, you might think the beast is winning. We live in a world that is very violent, very cruel. People are cruel to each other. They will do anything to take from other people, kick other people, step on them. The strong tyrannize the weak. The smart out-hustle and look down on the less bright. The good looking look down on the plain. The people with money take advantage of those with no power. The people with connections do well, squeezing out the people who are not connected. The violent take advantage of people who love peace. That's true on a personal level, and that's true on a national level.

And I'm not only disappointed in what I see in the world around me, but I look in my own life and see that I don't even have my own life under control. I need help. You need help and we all need help, but Jesus has done it. He has already triumphed over Satan. Even though it looks like Satan's winning, the Bible, through God's marvelous word, helps you to see that Satan has already lost. He lost when Christ was born on this earth and God came to the world that Satan was trying to claim as his own. Jesus was born here to say, "No, it does not belong to you. This is MY world, these are MY people." When Jesus began his ministry, he spent some very tense times dealing with Satan's temptations and on three separate moments in that initial temptation Jesus said, "No," to the devil as our substitute. Since we have so much trouble saying no to the devil, Jesus said no for us and we get to claim him as our stand-in, as our personal substitute.

During the course of his ministry, Jesus on numerous occasions cast demons out of people. He brought sanity and health and healing to their bodies and in this way showed what his real intent is. Satan showed what he would like to do, which is to destroy you. Jesus showed his intent, which is to heal you and to help your life be better.

When he was on the cross, Jesus was suffering enormous temptation to give up and Satan threw everything he had to try to get Jesus to quit. But on the cross, Jesus suffered there the blame for all of our misdeeds. Everything bad in our lives was blamed on Jesus Christ at that moment. And when Jesus said, “It is finished,” what was finished was Satan. What was finished was the purchase of our liberation. What was finished was his wonderful work. And the very next thing the Bible says that Jesus did after he died was to descend into hell. Even before his resurrection he took a victory lap in the enemy’s headquarters. And that cemented the fact that Satan is not the king of hell, he is prisoner #0001, whose torment will be the worst.

I think all of us have seen probably just one too many Lars and Far Side cartoons of the guy in the little red suit, with little horns and a pitchfork, kind of a semi-comic figure and hell is not viewed as a place of torment, just very boring and you’re not really going anywhere. And Satan’s kind of the boss of hell. Wrong! Satan will not enjoy one moment of his torment. He’s going into the lake of burning sulfur and his torment will go on forever and ever after what he has done to ruin God’s beautiful creation.

But Christ is the victor and his resurrection demonstrated to the world that he won and he is now arisen and ascended on high, ruling over all things, on the throne of heaven, attended by all the angels who had refused Satan’s invitation to join in the rebellion. And he says now through his word, often hard to see that’s why you’ve got to listen to the word, “I win. I rule, I’m in control of all things. Though you can’t see them, my angels are at work on your behalf. They’re ministering spirits sent to care for and work for the believers.”

The Bible tells us that we’re not going to become angels. They don’t outrank us. In fact, the Bible tells us they are ministering spirits, sent here to work for us. I know you can’t see them, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t there. You can’t see electricity either, but you sure can see the results, just like flipping on the lights in a dark room. The angels are God’s agents to accomplish his mission for you, which is not necessarily to make you rich or famous, but to help bring you to faith and keep you protected in faith and to get you to the finish line with your faith intact.

I’ll tell you what else – the Lord Jesus has something even better to give you than the angels and that is the gift of forgiveness. Just as we need angels to help protect us against Satan and the demons, we really need Jesus’ forgiveness to protect us against the accusations that Satan brings. Remember, that’s really what his name “devil,” means. The “diabolical one” is the accuser. But Satan’s accusations against you, because of the evil of your sins, cannot harm you any longer thanks to the forgiveness that Jesus Christ gives you. They cannot harm you anymore than say rubber-tip arrows bouncing off a tank. His accusations now bounce off you and you stand before your God because of Jesus’ victory as holy and sinless and pure as if you were Christ himself. This is great news for you and me and I want you to celebrate it with me today, that Jesus Christ is mightier than Satan, he is victorious over Satan himself.

Final thoughts from Pastor Jeske:

I just want to take a moment to say thank you. First of all, to all of you who have decided to become Grace Partners and provide regular, ongoing support. We need your support and I want to say thank you.

And I want to thank also all the people who have contacted our office and I encourage you to do that. We love hearing your calls. We want to know how we can help you and pray for you, we want to know the issues that you think are important so that we know how to plan future programs that are of interest to you and cover issues that matter in your life. We also want to say thank you for all the words of encouragement that you've sent through emails and letters. We kind of thrive on that. That's like energy for us and helps us to continue to provide good programming with stuff that matters to you in your life.

I want to know if you'd let me now pray for you, that you can experience the victory that Jesus has over Satan, also in your life as well:

Lord Jesus, I would like to pray today for all of my friends out there. Many of them are struggling or feel beaten down or feel as though somehow the evil one has triumphed and that things are unraveling in their lives and that all is coming apart.

I pray especially for the people who feel a sense of desperation, or who feel isolated and alone. Lord, assure them that you are surrounding them with your holy angels; that you have triumphed over Satan and that you, it is you, who is the Lord of the universe. Assure them also of your love and forgiveness of their sins so that your victory will become their victory.

In Jesus' name I pray, Amen. For Time of Grace, I'm Pastor Mark Jeske reminding you that every day is your time of grace.

Journey into GOD'S GRACE

Guides for Personal Bible Study with Pastor Mark Jeske



Jesus Is Lord: Over Satan

SCRIPTURE VERSE

Isaiah 14: 3, 12-15 ...you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: “How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended!”...How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God”...But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

POINTS TO PONDER

- God gave his prophet Isaiah the ability to see ahead and to foretell the destruction of Judah by the Babylonians.
- But in their grief God also provided his people with a song of victory because their enemy, Babylon, would in turn be defeated. This prophecy also foretold of Satan's defeat.
- Just as God's prophecies about Israel's downfall were written in the past tense because in God's eyes they were already a done deal, so were the prophecies God gave about Satan and his fall.
- Satan's defeat, as far as God is concerned, has already happened. It may look like Satan's winning, but Jesus secured our victory with his perfect life, death and resurrection. This, too, is a done deal.

IN SUMMARY

The book of Isaiah contains direct prophecies from God that warned the people to follow God's ways and then told them what would happen to them when they didn't. But God always provides hope for his people, then and now. When the world around us seems to be going to pieces, God reassures us that Satan's fall and damnation are already complete. Though Satan seeks to hurt us physically and destroy us spiritually, he has already lost because of what our Savior Jesus has done. Jesus won the forgiveness that we need to protect us against the accusations of the devil. His accusations (guilt) bounce off of us because Jesus is victorious over Satan!

FOR REFLECTION

Do you ever wish you had a window into the future? Sometimes we think that if we knew the outcomes of our decisions, we would do things differently. Here's an outcome we can be absolutely sure of: Jesus proved his victory over Satan with his death and resurrection. Satan cannot touch us. God's angels protect us and Jesus' forgiveness assures us that heaven awaits. Hang on people, the best is yet to come!