

September 16th, 2018
“Fear Not the Reproach of Man”
Isaiah 51:1-16

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

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| Sept 9 Ezekiel 31-33 | Sept 13 Ezekiel 43-45 |
| Sept 10 Ezekiel 34-36 | Sept 14 Ezekiel 46-48 |
| Sept 11 Ezekiel 37-39 | Sept 15 Daniel 1-3 |
| Sept 12 Ezekiel 40-42 | Sept 16 Daniel 4-6 |

Lesson Introduction: *Our passage this week again features the Lord reminding His people that He will deliver them out of the hands of the Babylonians. Twice in this chapter, the Israelites are told that they need not fear the power of men, and the Lord gives them assurances as to why they can trust Him throughout the passage. As we study this week, we will consider **the fear of man, God’s faithfulness in the past, and man’s weakness compared to God’s power.***

Key Memory Verses: Isaiah 51:1

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- **God’s faithfulness in the past gives us hope for the future (V. 1-2, 9-10).**
- **The Lord’s power is far greater than any power of man (V. 7-16)**

Isaiah 51

1 *“Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the Lord:*

*look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.*

2 *Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him,
that I might bless him and multiply him.*

3 *For the Lord comforts Zion;
he comforts all her waste places
and makes her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.*

4 *“Give attention to me, my people,
and give ear to me, my nation;
for a law will go out from me,
and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.*

5 *My righteousness draws near,
my salvation has gone out,
and my arms will judge the peoples;*

*the coastlands hope for me,
and for my arm they wait.*

6 *Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner;
but my salvation will be forever,
and my righteousness will never be dismayed.*

7 *“Listen to me, you who know righteousness,
the people in whose heart is my law;
fear not the reproach of man,
nor be dismayed at their revilings.*

8 *For the moth will eat them up like a garment,
and the worm will eat them like wool,
but my righteousness will be forever,
and my salvation to all generations.”*

9 *Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the Lord;
awake, as in days of old,
the generations of long ago.
Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces,
who pierced the dragon?*

10 *Was it not you who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep,
who made the depths of the sea a way
for the redeemed to pass over?*

11 *And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

12 *“I, I am he who comforts you;
who are you that you are afraid of man who dies,
of the son of man who is made like grass,*

13 *and have forgotten the Lord, your Maker,
who stretched out the heavens
and laid the foundations of the earth,
and you fear continually all the day
because of the wrath of the oppressor,
when he sets himself to destroy?*

And where is the wrath of the oppressor?

14 *He who is bowed down shall speedily be released;
he shall not die and go down to the pit,
neither shall his bread be lacking.*

15 *I am the Lord your God,
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—
the Lord of hosts is his name.*

16 *And I have put my words in your mouth
and covered you in the shadow of my hand,
establishing the heavens
and laying the foundations of the earth,
and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people.’”*

Discussion Section 1: The Fear of Man (V. 7-8, 12)

-What do these verses tell us about Israel's mindset when it came to their captivity?

-What is God's reasoning for why men should not be feared?

-In what ways do we often walk in fear of men?

Note: *This week we are starting with these verses concerning the fear of man, and then considering two reasons from our passage why we can rest in the Lord and not fear men. Twice in the chapter God exhorts Israel not to fear men (V. 7, 12). Throughout their history to this point, Israel had certainly been the target of many world powers (Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, Babylon). It would have been easy for them to place their hope in other world powers or become fearful of men. Yet God strongly reminds them of the foolishness of being fearful of man "who is made like grass." God points out the fact that men die and are ultimately powerless (we will consider God's power compared to the power of man in discussion section 3).*

As we consider Israel's constant need to be reminded not to fear man, we ought to think on how our lives often reflect that we are more concerned with pleasing man than God. Perhaps we fear the way will be viewed by certain people or fear the repercussions of man that might come if we follow the Lord's way. It is important that we realize that this sort of fear is in direct contradiction with how Christ Himself told us we should live our lives (Matthew 10:28). Living our lives without fearing man does not mean living in an arrogant way that requires us to bow up to people at every turn, but rather it looks like humbly trusting the Lord as we walk in confidence of who He is and all that He has done.

Discussion Section 2: God's Faithfulness in the Past (V. 1-2, 9-10)

-What does God encourage His people to do in V. 1?

-What specific past events from Israel's history does God reference in these verses?

-Why do you think the Bible places such an emphasis on remembering the past?

-How has God worked on your behalf in the past, and how might that shape your future hope?

Note: *Because Israel had such a tendency to fear man, God challenges them to consider His faithfulness in the past. Verse 1 states, "look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug." God reminds His people that they were created from one man, Abraham, and yet, He had been faithful to His covenant with Abraham, to greatly bless and multiply Israel. (Genesis 12:1-3, 13:16, 15:5, 17:5, 22:17). He also points to the simply stunning works that He had done to deliver them in the past, such as the parting of the Red Sea and the Jordan.*

Throughout Scripture God calls His people to remember all that He has done for them, and where He has brought them from (Exodus 3:12, Psalm 105:5-45, Ephesians 2:1-10, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Few things are sweeter in the life of a Christian than looking back and remembering God's continual faithfulness. As we walk in remembrance of all that He has done for us, our faith is bolstered, and our fear of man diminishes in light of His faithfulness.

Discussion Section 3: God's Power Compared to Man's Weakness (V. 7-16)

-What statements in these verses reveal God's power?

-Why are we so tempted to concern ourselves with the fear of man when we have seen God's power at work?

-What are some ways that you might become more aware of God's awesome power?

Note: *This passage contrasts the weakness of man with the incredible power of the Lord. We see that while "moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool," God's "righteousness will be forever." We are also reminded that God is our "Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth," the One, "who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar." Simply put, we are children of the Sovereign ruler of the universe, and we have nothing to fear! What incredible confidence we can walk in as the children of God, never fearing man, but trusting that we are safe in the hands of our Father.*

Lesson by Steven Richardson