2 Isaiah — Woe

Assyria is here. Babylon has risen. Empire has seized control of the story again—or, at least, it feels like it to those living in it.

The people cry out as the hammer of empire drops. Those not killed are herded away to build the very empire that enslaves their children. Yet, as time turns, more kingdoms rise and fall, building their wealth on the lives of those they see as less important than their own.

This isn't new. The cycle continues—a beautiful redemption for God's people, but a cycle of heartbreak for their creator.

A beautiful redemption for God's people, but a cycle of heartbreak for their creator.

Woe to you, Assyria. Woe to you, Philistia. Woe to you, Moab, Cush, Egypt.

I wonder, what would it be like to watch this obsession with power, reaching the heavens, or having the strength of the gods, carry on for generations? For decades, hundreds, or even thousands of years? For Your name to be used in vain to conquer the foreigner, orphan, and widow, or as the reason for freedom to be stripped from the hands of your own beloved children?

Woe to you, even, Israel.

From the perspective of a parent, this pattern, this seemingly unbeatable cycle, is heartbreaking. I can't even begin to imagine the pain and anger associated with watching this on repeat. How long could I withhold my wrath? How long could I hear the cries of the innocent before deciding that restorative justice just wasn't quite enough? Would my faithfulness run out?

So often I think of God as the ruler, far up in the heavens, that I often don't think of the emotions that God may have felt, may feel. Sure, anger might be brought up when studying books like Isaiah—but did I ever stop to think about the emotions of God? Emotions that He created in us as well?

"God's wrath is what destroys the thing that destroys love."

It is the quote from Reed that has created pause in this perspective of God outside the norm of His heavenly enthroned existence.

"God's wrath is what destroys the thing that destroys love."

Love.

In the shadow of woe, there is love. In the depths of despair, there is hope. In the wake of empire, there is the Kingdom.

I'm reminded of one of my favorite Star Wars films, *Rogue One*. In the face of an empire, a small remnant of rebels choose to risk everything to overthrow that which has oppressed them their entire lives, fully aware that this promise they hold onto for a better future may not be any future they see with their own eyes. They rebel against what the world calls good and seek to create a place for all, even the misfits, orphans, and outcasts like them.

"Rebellions are built on hope," Jyn Erso says.

"Rebellions are built on hope."

And, perhaps, so does Isaiah. In the midst of empire after empire, God's heart may break again and again, but, in the face of such tragedy, He sees the remnant—the rebellion built upon His hope. Grasping it, as if that is all they have left to hold to.

This love He has for His children and creation is not one He holds lightly but embraces with ferocity. No wonder there are woes to be given and tears to be shed. I can barely begin to imagine the pain, but I can't even picture the immense joy He radiates when His children do Kingdom right. There is the hope. There is love that cannot be destroyed.

PRAYER

God of the heavens,
Our refuge. Our shade. Our shelter.
We exalt you and praise You for Your faithfulness.
We ask you to wipe away our tears,
that we may honor You with our newfound strength.
We ask you to destroy that which destroys love,
that we may hear what You have to say—
the woes of Your breaking heart—
for all that cries out in Your Kingdom.
May we join you in putting an end
to the destructive ways of our broken world.
Wiping away the tears of our neighbors.
Renewing that which makes love flourish.

Amen

EPISODE 55 (SESSION 2)

THE FOUR PILLARS



BEMA Discipleship is built on four pillars; a **Four-Pillared Perspective** to help us remember **to elevate the words of God** (not ours) and help us identify the principles that we see recurring in the story of God's people.

Here are some applications for this episode echoing the ideas of the four pillars:

I

TEXT

What stands out to you from the Text that you want to carry with you as you read the prophets? Try meditating and memorizing a bit of hope from this book. How might it impact you?

II

COMMUNITY

How does your community react to the voice of 2 Isaiah? Where do you see the impact of woe? How does the need for this strike you?

III

DISCIPLESHIP

Who is with you as you seek hope? How do you show hope in the midst of empire? How do you bring it to the young people around you to help them deal with hypocrisy or judgment?

IV

WRESTLING

What are your thoughts on the four sections of Isaiah? Does the shift between the first two voices stand out to you? What are you most curious about or struggling with?

Spotify

Are you a music listener?

Listen along to our BEMA Music Playlists on Spotify.

Song suggestions? Send them to bemabesorah@gmail.com.

BEMA SESSION 2

MEDITATION & PRAYER

REFLECTION, APPLICATION & IMPACT

There are three emphases that we are always thinking about in terms of application at BEMA. These may be stated explicitly at times, but often we will want you to do the work of finding ways to connect the dots to the things we are learning. Much of this is what makes the work of BEMA distinct as a ministry of Impact Campus Ministries.

CREATING A SPACE
SPIRITUAL FORMATION

True success is developing intimacy with God. In Session 1, we encountered the idea of "Creating Space for God" in our lives. We believe that ***if we do our part of creating that space, God will fill it*** *as He desires. You're already doing this as you dive into the Text and jump into a place to discuss. God will meet you in these places! Look for places the Holy Spirit can do work in and through you as you go about your everyday life.*

CONSIDERING CAMPUS
YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS

We believe that young adults are shaping the future of this world. *Jesus modeled a ministry of discipling young adults, and that approach has and will work. If you are a college student who is listening, we want this material to be directly helpful to your pursuits. If you are not a college student, we want to challenge you to come alongside one and work together.*

SACRED STATION
THEOLOGY OF WORK

This isn't only for church or Bible study; this is about what we do every day. How we do our job and how it may take advantage of or bring life to others is something God says is central to our presence in the world. Justice is very much something God cares about. Does our physical work (our 9–5 job) bring shalom or chaos? Does it exploit creation? The way we manage our employees, interact with customers or coworkers, care for our children, or create products can provide relief to others. ***The work we do every day is sacred and matters!***

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