



SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 1:21-28; 10: 13; 19: 24-25; 31.
DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 9: 1-11.

God and Nations

Lesson for October 16, 1949

WHEN the Spanish fleet was about to invade England, back in Queen Elizabeth's time, nothing the English had could stop them. But when the Armada arrived, that vast fleet had been blown to bits by a storm, and the English neatly mopped up what was left. How do you account for that? The English always said God was with them. When the Nazis had overrun France in 1940, it would have been simple for them to invade England. There was next to nothing to stop them. But Hitler delayed from summer till fall . . . and by that time the British were able to mount an invincible defense. How do you account for that? Over and over again in history the unexpected, the unexpected, the "miraculous," has happened. Some call it chance; but others call it God.



Dr. Foreman

God in History

BUT GOD does not always or usually operate in spectacular ways. God works in history as he works in nature, out of sight, visible to the eye of faith but seldom if ever otherwise. History, from the Christian point of view, is the working-out of the purposes of God.

The pattern is not entirely clear to us, because we cannot see enough of it at once. But looking back through history, we can see signs that God has been there. This is the message of the prophets of Israel, especially of the great Isaiah.

In a troubled era, when everything seemed to be in most complete confusion, Isaiah gave out some clear and plain truths from God, and helped men then and now read the pattern of God's design.

The Life Of A Nation

ONE TRUTH is that justice is a nation's life and sin is a nation's death. God being the God of justice, his purpose is to set justice in the earth. God plays no favorites among nations. Any nation that lives by God's laws, lives; the nation that defies God has signed its own death warrant. There are no peoples who can "get by" with what they please, if what they please is not the will of God. There are people now who do not believe that. They would say, Look at Russia! In Isaiah's time there were those who would say to Isaiah: You must be wrong—look at Assyria! There is a nation that does not know God, and yet grows every year stronger and stronger.

God's Ax

ISAIAH has a startling answer to that objection. (Chap. 10.) Assyria is a tool in God's hand, no more. He admits that Assyria has no standard but force, she worships only sheer Power. But there are other nations, wicked, ones, which God intends to punish; one of these is the nation of Israel.

Assyria was destined to destroy Israel once and for all, and to damage Judah so severely she never would recover. All this, Isaiah says, is in God's plan.

God does not punish an evil nation with legions of angels; he punishes it with invasions and defeats in war. Assyria was an ax in the hand of God, cutting down the rotting trees of selfish and unjust nations.

Return To God!

PEOPLE in Isaiah's time were putting their trust, just as we do nowadays, in alliances, pacts, international combinations of all kinds. Isaiah warns ominously that this will not do, by itself. Not that all alliances are bad; in chapter 19 he actually pictures Assyria, Egypt and Israel as brothers-in-arms.

But he does not hold out any political scheme or combination as the best hope of a nation. Return to God! is the prophet's call. So in our time, whether it be a general MacArthur or a theologian Brunner.

Many of our ablest men are warning us even now, that humanity is facing an alternative; Either go on the way of selfishness and war down to destruction, or else go back to the Source of justice, truth and love, the God in whom alone is salvation.

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RURAL CHURCHES

Pleasant Mills Baptist Church

D. B. Gehres, pastor
Lowell Noll, Supt.

9:30 — Bible School. Lesson:

"God and the Nations."

10:30 — Worship service. Sermon theme: "The Condescension, Ascension and Descent of Jesus Christ."

"Christ is the great central fact in the world's history, to Him everything looks forward or backward." — C. H. Spurgeon.

St. Paul and Winchester

U. B. Circuit

Dale Osborn, pastor

St. Paul:—

Sunday School 9:15 a. m.

Christian Endeavor 7 p. m.

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Conference Speaker



The Rev. Jared F. Gerig, dean of the Fort Wayne Bible Institute, will speak at the second annual Bible conference at the Decatur Missionary church Oct. 18 to 23.

His series of messages will be on the general theme of the second coming of Christ, based on Matthew 24 and 25. The public is invited to attend.

Subjects for the week are: Tuesday, "The birth pains of a new age;" Wednesday, "The high water mark of world tribulation;" Thursday, "The end of this age and the revelation of Christ;" Friday, "The days of Noah, the great historical pattern;" Saturday, "Readiness for the rapture;" Sunday morning, "The judgment of the nations;" Sunday evening, "The millennium of God's new world order."

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