

Faithfulness and truth

O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

Isaiah 25:1

As Isaiah continues through these early chapters to announce the judgments of the LORD, he is well aware of God's constant and consistent faithfulness and truth. Message after message is brought against the enemies of Israel, as well as against Israel and Judah themselves. At least from the perspective of the Israelites, none of these should have been a surprise. Through Isaiah and the prophets before him and contemporaneous with him, the LORD had given warning to His people to repent of their evil ways, which were clearly against His revealed word, as they followed their heathen neighbors in idolatrous and sinful attitudes and actions of life. Over the years they had ridden the roller-coaster of sinful and repentant courses as a nation, yet their general trend continued downhill until both Israel and Judah would be destroyed, the former taking place during Isaiah's tenure. Yet even with the prophecies against the northern kingdom being fulfilled in their days, God's warnings to Judah remained unheeded. For example, in chapter 22, as he reminded Judah of their futile attempts trusting in their own ingenuity instead of trusting in the LORD, His word would go unheeded (22.8-11). Then in response to being called to mourning and repentance, they instead feasted and reveled in the face of certain calamity. The LORD's pronouncement on their attitudes and actions was that the only remedy for their iniquity would be their own death (22.12-14).

While such response from the Jews seems unfathomable, it is in fact a demonstration of the depravity of all mankind, even in the face of the many warnings and mercies provided by the LORD to call them to repentance. We may even reach back further, as well as move on ahead, in Isaiah's prophetic messages, to find the moments of glorious promises of the kingdom to come when Messiah shall reign. Yet Isaiah here in our text is careful to exalt and praise the LORD in the midst of it all, recognizing that God has been faithful in His proclamation of truth through His messages through the prophets concerning His people and their foes, and the need for all to repent. It is no surprise then that we should find a reflective discussion of the true and faithful judgments of God continuing to be proclaimed in the opening chapters of the Roman epistle (e.g., Romans 2:2). Therefore, we can join Isaiah in recognizing that the LORD has done wonderful things, both in faithfully and righteously judging sin in light of His proclaimed truth, as well as declaring His righteousness in providing salvation for lost people, both Jew and Gentile, through faith alone in Christ (Romans 3:23-26).