

## ***THE CHURCH ISAIAH SAW***

Joe Slater

From all eternity, God purposed to make His wisdom known by establishing the church (Eph. 3:10-11). Isaiah foresaw this magnificent body and described it in the second chapter of his book.

First, notice its glory! *“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills”* (2:2a). The church is the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15), the spiritual Mount Zion (Heb. 12:22). Being established on the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills indicates its glory. And the church is, indeed, glorious, having *“no spot, wrinkle, or any such thing”* (Eph. 5:27)

Second, see its universality: *“And all nations shall flow into it”* (Isa. 2:2b). The church isn’t American or European or African or Asian. It isn’t Jewish or Gentile. Jesus wants his gospel preached to everyone in all nations (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15). Peter learned that *“in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him”* (Acts 10:35).

That introduces the third point: those comprising the church are taught and obedient. *“He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths”* (Isa. 2:3). One is not a Christian by birth, but by the New Birth, which requires faith and obedience. One is spiritually begotten by spiritual seed (God’s word, 1 Pet. 1:23). The new birth is completed in baptism (immersion) as one obeys *“from the heart that form (pattern) of doctrine to which you were delivered”* (Rom. 6:17). It is here that one identifies with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4).

Praise God for His glorious, universal church! Have you obeyed the gospel to be part of it?

## **Hasty Decisions**

**"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only"** (Matthew 24:36).

In April of 1985, a large natural gas line exploded in a Kentucky county bordering Tennessee. The explosion killed five people and left a crater 90 feet long, 38 feet wide, and 12 feet deep. Flames shot hundreds of feet into the night sky, and the light from the fire could be seen over forty miles away. In areas closer to the fire, the sky became so bright that people were able to drive without headlights.

When I first saw the illuminated sky, I correctly surmised that it was either an oil or gas fire. However, many had no idea just what was taking place. Some who saw the light panicked and believed it to be the end of the world. I heard of people all over the area who sought out preachers for prayer or to make confessions. One friend later stated, "Preachers were in high demand that night."

It thrills my heart whenever I hear of people turning to God; however, waiting until the last minute to prepare oneself for eternity is risky business. After the smoke cleared (no pun intended) and people learned the truth, I wonder if the newly-found repentance truly lasted. While I can't speak for people's hearts, I can speak for Peter when he states that the Lord will return "like a thief in the night" (2 Peter 3:10). On that day, there will be no time to seek out a preacher.

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

## **How Money Lies**

God invented gold, silver, and precious stones to facilitate the survival of the human family. By converting perishable goods at harvest to non-perishable, valuable currency, we trade for necessities at non-harvest time or easily transport value over distance. Ultimately, God chose money and its equivalents to be used in worship as a means of sacrifice. But anything God planned as a benefit to man in this physical world can be corrupted. And money is no exception. Money lies . . . in the following ways:

- ❑ Bribery persuades that wrong is right.
- ❑ Covetousness convinces that it's more blessed to receive than to give.
- ❑ Theft appeals to possession as being "9/10 of the law."
- ❑ Greed substitutes "deserving" in the place of earning.
- ❑ The trappings of wealth convince others of our superior status or moral dominance, while inside we might be full of dead men's bones.
- ❑ Lack of need in this world's goods often induces one to believe he has need of nothing.
- ❑ Those in pursuit of "being rich" (an object of comparison with others) are often deceived into believing that riches justify what is often sacrificed to obtain them.
- ❑ Simony believes riches can buy God's blessing.
- ❑ The money-mind is the philosophy that crowds out God's word and allows the physical to become more important than truth. It is a weed that would love to take root in the garden of our mind.

--Jared Jackson (via ***Fortify Your Faith***, August, 2018)