



New Life Christian Community

Join Us As We Celebrate
Only Jesus

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

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Pastoral Pondering

A Contradiction

Several weeks ago, the M'Cheyne Bible reading plan brought us through the book of Isaiah (if you don't know what the M'Cheyne Bible reading plan is - ask one of the pastors/elders about it - New Life has been reading through the Bible together and we'd love to have you reading with us). Regardless, if you haven't read through Isaiah recently, allow me to invite you to do so - but if you do, take your time. Often while reading through the prophets, it can be tempting to rush. After all, their language is strange and can sound rather harsh. But, let me tell you, even the obscure Old Testament prophets have much to teach each one of us (yes, even you, dear reader). As you read through the text, ask questions. Allow your mind to ponder the pictures that God is painting. He is a masterful artist.

One of these artistic pictures recently came alive to me in [Isaiah 21](#). If you have a moment, please grab your Bible and read Isaiah 21 (indeed, your time will be far better spent reading that chapter than even the rest of this article). Go ahead and take up and read. I'll wait.

For those who were unable to peel away from this riveting article, allow me to summarize the chapter for you. Isaiah spends his time describing (in rather colorful language) the coming destruction of Babylon. The Lord will use the different peoples of the world to bring Babylon to their knees. For example, God declares, "[Go up Elam; lay siege](#)" (verse 2). Elam was an ancient civilization on the border of Babylon. Similarly, God calls upon the Medes to "lay siege."

As the nations of the world "lay siege" to Babylon, the oracle culminates with, "[Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the carved images of her gods has shattered to the ground](#)" (verse 9). Babylon had been a world-power of the likes of Ancient Egypt. There had scarcely been a more powerful nation in all of history. Nevertheless, their end was at hand.

What is most interesting to me is how this oracle begins. The chapter opens with an artistic image that only God could paint. He declares, "[The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea](#)." If you read too quickly, you will miss the image. Slow down and read that again. "[The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea](#)." How can a wilderness be the sea. Or, how can the sea be wilderness? It seems to be a contradiction. An impossible picture. But this is precisely the point. Babylon believed it was impenetrable. Babylon was as secure as the wilderness is from the threat of the torrents of the sea. Likewise, we could say, Babylon believed that they were as secure as the sea is from the threat of the ground of the wilderness. If the nations feared the sea - Babylon did not

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Pastoral Pondering

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because it was a wilderness! But God can even make the dead wilderness a sea. Or, if you prefer, God can even make the wilderness a dead sea. Even the greatest foes will be brought to their knees.

God will take the very pride of a people and strip it all away. The contradiction becomes a reality.

As Christians, we should recognize that the ultimate contradiction of destruction was when the One who controls the sea was covered in the dirt and filth of the wilderness of death.

The great and awesome God was brought low – the one who knew no sin, became sin. The perfect spotless one bore the weight of the sin of the world. The greatest act of injustice that man could inflict – was God's greatest act of justice – there at the cross. This is the greatest true contradiction the world has known. Indeed, the wilderness has been baptized into the vast ocean of the mercy and grace of our great God.

If you are thinking that there is no hope for you – if you believe that you are too far gone – you've done too much – you believe that the contradiction of grace is far too great – that you've fallen too far from the Lord...take heart, He can take death and make it give birth to life. Turn to the one who can do what you could never do. In our hands, it remains an impossible contradiction. In Him, all is new.

In every way God fulfills His promises and His words in Christ Jesus. Praise the Lord for the wilderness of the sea.

Pastor Tony



If you are a visitor this morning or have only been coming to New Life for a few months, we are glad you are joining with us! If you would like to learn more about New Life, be sure to stop by the Resource Center in the front foyer to pick up a welcome bag we have for you. Please join us for fellowship and a meal after service today where we would love to meet and get to know you and for you to get to know us more.

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This Week's Scheduled Events:

Sun	Preaching Guild– 6:30 pm
Thurs	Men's Bible Study– 6:30 am
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study– 10:30 am
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study– Noon
Thurs	GriefShare– 6:30 pm
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study– 6:30 pm
Thurs	Men's Bible Study– 6:30 pm

August Memory Verse:

Philemon 1:4-6 (ESV)

"I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ."

August Fellowship Tip:

As we celebrate Baptisms this month and having heard many public confessions of faith in Christ, consider the ongoing call of God for all believers to be active in sharing their faith by making it a practice to publicly testify and celebrate the saving power of Christ in the Gospel and His sanctifying work of the Spirit in our lives.

Sunday Meals and Fellowship:

Aug 23	No Meal Service
Aug 30	Meal Team 4 ~Rice and Beans

Contact Barbara Judkins if interested in being on a meal team or a helper.

This Sunday's Worship Songs:

1. Come Praise and Glorify
2. It Is Well With My Soul
3. There is One Gospel
4. The Goodness of Jesus
5. Good and Gracious King

➤ **Preaching Guild:** Brothers don't forget, Preaching Guild **Tonight at 6:30pm** and Next Sunday is a Hall of Men also at 6:30pm. In both gatherings we treasure the Person and Work of Christ our Savior in His Word and the evidence of that work in the lives of His people. See you there!

➤ **Ladies Prayer and Praise:** Ladies Prayer & Praise Brunch is **Saturday, August 29th at 9am**, Coffee & tea provided. Please feel free to bring a breakfast food item to share such as scones, muffins, fruit, egg bakes & boiled eggs, etc. If you are planning on coming, please reach out to Ana Smith for the location as it will not be held at the building this month.

➤ **Immerse:** Wednesday evening Immerse study begins **September 9th**. This is a midweek gathering of the saints young and old to explore the depth and riches of God's grace towards us in Christ Jesus our Savior from the book of Ephesians. Gathering **Wednesday evenings from 6:15 - 7:30 pm**. Sign-up today on the welcome counter to be a teacher, assistant or occasional substitute teacher.

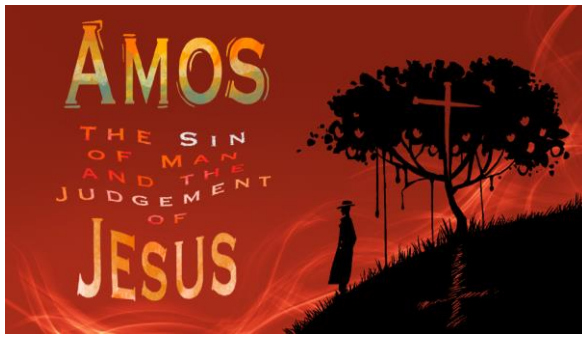
There will also be a **Teachers/assistants meeting next Sunday 8/30 ---11:30am** after service. Teachers will receive the first semester passage breakdown and outline of the book of Ephesians, the Immerse year calendar, and other activities for the children. We will gather to talk through simple helps and suggestions for teaching the material, and to spend time in prayer together.

➤ **Building and Grounds:** There are samples of the new siding and trim along with some mock-up designs of the upcoming exterior renovations available for viewing in the prayer room. Check it out!


Busy Bags
Available by the Door

nlcc
resourcecenter

Have you visited the Resource Center lately? Our shelves hold so many great books to help you grow in your knowledge of and love for God and to help guide you in your daily walk with Him. Perhaps you'll find a book to read with a friend or form a book group with! We also have many great resources that you may want to consider for your gift-giving needs for the young or old and all ages in-between. Come check us out after service today.



SERMON NOTES:

Today's Passage:

Pastor Tony's message is from the
Old Testament book,

Amos 7:1-9