1. **Intro:**

   1.1. Worship tonight – Moi.

   1.2. **Story:** I have read of one that offered his prince a great sum of money to have permission once or twice a day to come into his presence, and only say, 'God save your Majesty!' The prince, wondering at this large offer for so small a favor, asked him, 'What advantage would this afford him?' "Oh sire," he said, "this, though I have nothing else at your hands, will get me a name in the country for one who is a great favorite at court and such an opinion will help me more than it costs me for the purchase."

   1.2.1. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who **does** the will of my Father who is in heaven.

   1.2.2. "Not everyone who says to me, "I'm a Christian," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who **does** the will of my Father who is in heaven."

2. **Jerusalem! (1-12)**

   2.1. **On Fire! (1-4)**

   2.2. (1) Ariel- “Lion of God”, or “hearth of fire” (in the sense of place of sacrifice)

   2.2.1. **Hearth** – Prob. refers to the *altar hearth* of God in Ezek.43:15,16.

   2.2.2. Play on words, Ariel is made Ariel.

   2.2.2.1. The hearth becomes the picture of a burning furnace.

   2.2.2.2. Is fire a good thing? Well it all depends where it is, if it’s **contained**! (A fire in its rightful place(fire place, stove) is good. **Not contained** (forest fire).

   2.2.2.2.1. Just like marital intimacy vs. extra-marital intimacy.

   2.2.3. **Hearth** – We may think of the fireplace of a home, which is often thought of as a symbol of the **home** and the **life** of the family who live in it.

   2.2.3.1. We might picture God sitting around His heavenly fire place w/pictures of all His children on the mantel.

   2.2.3.2. Or picture God warming His hands upon the warm fire of our hearts! (Could He? upon your heart tonight? – What’s your hearts temperature?)

   2.2.3.3. Arctic-icy-cold-cool-lukewarm-warm-hot-red hot-Habenero?
2.3. (4) Picture a funeral procession in Isaiah’s day (not wailing but grieving).
2.3.1. People sitting, lining the streets. You don’t speak loudly, but with hush tones.
2.3.2. In their soft mumblings they’re like mediums & enchanters.¹

2.4. Losers! (5-8)
2.5. (7,8) Then your our enemy will suddenly disappear, like it was a bad dream.
2.5.1. They’ll not only vanished, but were never to be seen again.
2.5.2. Their dreams of success have become nightmares of defeat.
2.5.3. Ultimately, nobody can fight against the people of God.
2.5.3.1. Is.54:17 “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.”

2.5.4. Q: Can this picture be used of the Church today also? (Yes!)
2.5.4.1. Mt.16:18 “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”
2.5.4.2. Heb.12:28 “we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken,”

2.6. Spiritually Blinded! (9-12)
2.7. The prophets don’t understand the visions & God’s messages anymore. (doesn’t matter how educated they are, or are not)
2.7.1. They are like “drunken, sleeping, blind men” trying to read a sealed book.
2.7.2. Q: How’s your vision? How’s your spiritual eyesight?
2.7.3. Before my Lasik surgery I could literally say, “I was blind but now I see”.
2.7.3.1. Lasik Surgery is the direct reshaping of the cornea through a surgical procedure called radial keratotomy.
2.7.3.1.1. Explain: Blue Laser light on patient in front of me!
2.7.3.2. Similar to us spiritually before Christ. Everything was fuzzy.
2.7.3.2.1. We tried squinting, glasses, contacts, but they never took care of the problem. We needed surgery!

2.8. Religion w/o Reality! (13-14)
2.9. This happens every time we are blind to God’s vision, but on the other hand adhere painstakingly to the precepts of men!
2.9.1. It speaks to those who love human traditions & rules more than the one rule of God’s Word.

¹ Harry Bulterma; pg.272
2.9.2. Rejecting sacred traditions! - *It’s amazing on how nervous people get around here if we change any part of our worship service.*

2.9.2.1. Can we have a worship service with teaching only? Singing only? Can we reverse the order (teach 1st, songs 2nd)? Could I sit & you stand the whole time? Topical vs. verse by verse? Can we just tell God’s Story (not expository)?

2.9.2.2. Q: Can you prove in Scripture what you consider the order of service?

2.10. See Mt. 15:1-3, 7-9

2.10.1. “They didn’t wash there hands before there bagel?”

2.10.2. “Tradition of the Elders” –

2.10.2.1. “Of the Elders” - This was in reference to the Oral Law “handed down” by the Elders of the past. {eventually written down, called the Mishna}

2.10.2.2. [This soon became “more important” & “more Authoritative” than the orig. law of Moses, because it defined the former.]

2.10.3. What is “Tradition” when compared w/a commandment?
What is “Tradition” when it is in conflict w/a commandment?
What are Elders in comparison w/ God?

2.10.4. We must be Flexible to change our man made traditions especially when staleness sets in! [example: The style of songs used in Worship]

2.10.4.1. “The last 7 words” of a dying church are: “We never did it that way before!”

2.10.5. They gave Mouth-Religion, & paid Lip-Homage, but not Heart Worship!

2.10.5.1. Like the one son who, when asked to work in his fathers vineyard said, “I go, sir,” but he did not go! {Lip-Service}

2.10.5.2. “God is in the hypocrite’s mouth, but the world is in his heart”

2.10.6. Ezek. had this problem w/his people! Ezek. 33:30-32 (Read)

2.10.7. Paul sums it up, “They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good”. Titus 1:16

2.10.8. Don’t miss this → Jesus used What to combat their Traditions?... Scripture!

2.10.8.1. He broke their wooden weapons w/the Sword of the Spirit!

2.10.8.2. Holy Scripture must be our weapon against the Church of traditions!

2.10.8.3. “Never lay down your sword to fight stick-to-stick combat!”
2.11. William Temple (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1942-44) said, “To Worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind w/the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to pen the heart to the love of God, & to devote the will to the purpose of God.”

2.12. Worship demands preparation! Q: How did you prepare yourself this evening?
2.12.1. “The 60 min. before Church for many Christians is the most unholy hour of the week. Eating, dressing, & scurrying around the house to finish those last minute tasks & then driving to church out-of-sorts w/one another is not conducive to a prepared heart. What we do before the service Will determine what happens within it!”

2.12.2. John MacArthur said, “The form of worship is not as important as the spiritual condition of the heart. If our corporate Worship isn’t the expression of our individual worshipping lives, it is unacceptable. If you think you can live any way you want & then go to church on Sunday morning or Thursday evening, & then turn on Worship w/the saints, you’re wrong.”

2.13. **Upside Down!** (15,16)
2.14.1. They acted as though God knew nothing about their scheming.
2.14.2. Q: “Can the thing made fool the Maker?”

2.15. Here is the blind leading the blinder!

2.16. My denial of my sin protects, preserves, perpetuates that sin!
2.17. Annie Dillard, in her book Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, writes: At the end of the island I noticed a small green frog. He was exactly half in and half out of the water. He was a very small frog with wide, dull eyes. And just as I looked at him, he slowly crumpled and began to sag. The spirit vanished from his eyes as if snuffed. His skin emptied and drooped; his very skull seemed to collapse and settle like a kicked tent...An oval shadow hung in the water behind the drained frog: then the shadow glided away. The frog skin bag started to sink. I had read about the water bug, but never seen one. The Giant water bug is really the name of the creature, which is an enormous, heavy-bodied brown beetle. It eats insects, tadpoles, fish, and frogs. Its grasping forelegs are mighty and hooked inward. It seizes a victim with these legs, hugs it tight, and paralyzes it with enzymes injected during a vicious bite. Through the puncture shoots the poison that dissolves the victim's muscles and bones and organs--all but the skin--and through it the giant water bug sucks out the victim’s body, reduced to juice.

2.17.1. Hidden sins can suck the life out of us!
2.18. **Right Side Up!** (17-21)
This is the great reversal! - Where darkness is turned to light!

2.20. **Hallowed Be Thy Name!** (22-24)
Isaiah looks forward to a time where there will be a people of God who will praise God, not with lip, but with life!

2.21. Ultimately spirituality is a life of holiness in which we are to live to God’s praise as well to worship to his praise!

2.22. Praise God!...there’s hope for those who have erred in spirit or complained!

2.22.1. In the end God’s people will hear & see His truth, rejoice in it, & honor the Holy One of Israel.

2.22.2. And you need not wait to have Him change your life!

2.22.3. Give him an honest heart, & let the Potter have his way in your life!²

² Warren Wiersbe; pg.469