

# Isaiah's Good God

Overcoming a Negative World View

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To all who serve the Lord Jesus and his people  
in faith, hope and love. Your labour is not in  
vain.

Scripture quoted in this book is taken from various English translations of the Bible and sometimes has been adapted to modern English by the author. Please check your Bible translation when studying this book.

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Pass it On

Now you have a small book you can put in other people's hands. When people say,

*We are in the last days, everything is getting worse, the antichrist is about to be revealed and take over the world before Jesus comes and there is nothing we or God can do to stop the evil tide... and Christianity is on its way out...*

Christianity is not on its way out. Quite the opposite is true. Its best days globally are ahead.

## Preface

The writers of the New Testament quoted extensively from the Old Testament, showing God's promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Paul's wide knowledge and use of the Old Testament is a challenge to us. If we are pastors or teachers

of God's word today, we should endeavour to know the scriptures as well as he did, if possible. Obviously this takes time, but time should be used this way by people in the ministry. Feeding the flock is the best way we can help people and we can't feed others if we are not well fed. If we are not in the ministry we still need to know the scripture correctly. Paul wanted everyone in all the churches to know the truth in Christ as he did.

A few months ago I set out to read Isaiah from start to finish, just to find out what he said. I didn't want to miss anything in the book, because what Isaiah said in one section could well relate to his meaning in any other section. So it took labour, to search out meanings of passages, of Hebrew words, of historical background in Isaiah's time and later, trusting in the Holy Spirit, until the meaning became clear.

We interpret Isaiah by his own words. What we get from reading him today can't be different than what the text meant when he wrote it. Isaiah may not have fully understood the implications of all he wrote then, but we cannot apply a meaning to his words today that wasn't intended by the context, the poetic message, the Hebrew thought, and the Holy Spirit, in the day it was written.

In the pages of *Isaiah's Good God* you will not find any interpretation of Isaiah that is not found in one or several of the classic Christian commentaries. In writing this book we started and continued with prayer. Isaiah was read through three times while consulting commentaries and secular

history sources all the way. Long discussions were had with my wife while trying to clarify many issues and we researched several points together. Audio recordings of Isaiah were listened to. Ancient Jewish commentaries (Midrash) and the Jewish *Targum* translation of Isaiah were used. It was found that the *Targum* does not differ from many classic Christian commentaries in most of its important interpretations of Isaiah. Both the Jews and the Christians saw Isaiah as Messianic throughout its chapters. The only significant difference being the Jews did not accept Jesus as the one who fulfilled these prophecies, but Isaiah also prophesied this!

There are hundreds of prophecies in Isaiah. These are exact statements about future events, ranging from the nations in his own day, to the rise and fall of specific empires, events before Jesus came, the coming and work of Jesus and the conditions of earth that will precede the end of our current age at the final resurrection. Many of these prophecies can already be tested historically. There is no doubt *Isaiah* is the word of God. Isaiah wasn't making predictions as secular "prophets" such as Nostradamus did. He made authoritative statements as God spoke through him. The hype of end-times speculation in our time, concerning things like the tribulation and the rapture, is not different in nature to the ear-tickling speculations of Nostradamus. We should not feast on such a diet.

When I started reading Isaiah I didn't have a message in mind to garner from its pages. I didn't think ahead concerning

what I might find, nor did I really care about that. The aim was simply to see what Isaiah said and go with that. The message of Isaiah didn't dawn on me till the second and third reading. Of course, there is much I am yet to see. In coming to write this book I first tried reviewing Isaiah's main themes, but it became too complex. I'm not a good enough writer, or not patient enough! Then I started again, writing it as a commentary, but again it quickly became too complex. So in the end I chose a type of devotional style, as a way of keeping the message as simple as possible. What it lacks in detail the reader can make up in personal study.

We pray the book will inspire you to a positive future in Christ, his church and your community and nations. We pray it will inspire you to personal Bible study and growth in Jesus!

Kent & Ruth Hodge

## Prophet of Hope

During the last 100 years many in the church have held a predominately negative view of the future. Often our understanding of the scriptures has been that a mystical evil figure is about to arise and take over the world just before

Jesus returns, and our only hope will be the rapture: escape out of the world.

This isn't the idea Jesus gave us. He did say the generation of his time would experience destruction, but he drew our attention to the bigger picture of his kingdom: the reason he came.

He said his kingdom is like leaven that spreads until it permeates the whole loaf of bread. It is like a small mustard seed that grows into a large tree and provides shelter for the birds. It is like a bright light that shines from a hill. As the apostle John said, Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil.

Jesus said the church has a commission. It is the salt of the earth. He said we should pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." He actually meant this to happen through the church. His coming was like a seed sown in the earth, whose influence will grow till all things are restored.

In the *Sermon on the Mount* we see how his kingdom comes. His kingdom comes within the hearts of his people. This transforms us into his image. His image is depicted by the values we see in this sermon. As his people follow him his light is spread throughout the nations. Good will actually overcome evil. Jesus said the meek will inherit the earth. He meant this.

When Jesus said, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*, he was using a Hebrew idiom which meant his word is eternal and dependable. He also meant heaven and earth in their current form. The book of Revelation ends showing a renewed earth as our eternal habitation with God.

This is the picture of Isaiah. A friend of mine called Isaiah the prophet of hope. No matter what God's people are passing through, Isaiah shows the plan of God, the growth of Christ's kingdom and the end of it in glory. We are a part of that purpose today.

I started thinking about the kingdom of God recently. I haven't studied any book about this topic, but my heart was drawn to it in the light of the sufferings of the church in northern Nigeria. Christians have been hunted down and killed in the thousands. Isaiah shows us hope and this gives us boldness.

The youth of today need a vision. They have great passion and want to serve a good purpose and have their lives mean something in the years ahead. The vision of *nothing good and no purpose on the earth but to get out of it by the rapture* is no vision at all.

We must provide a more biblical, a more profound and a more Jesus orientated vision of life that can inform our endeavours, aspirations, training, preparation for our future,

and our understanding of God's grace working in our lives today. The church once had this. We must get it back.

God will fulfil what he intended when he created Adam, to bless the earth through the obedience of his people. He will keep his promise to Abraham, that through Christ, his seed, all nations of the earth shall be blessed. He intends to fulfil his promise spoken to Israel when he called them out of Egypt, that in choosing obedience they would fill the land with goodness, security and blessing.

Some would say these depict our spiritual blessing in the New Covenant. Yes, absolutely they do. But natural consequences come from spiritual life. God hasn't cast off his original intentions in creation, nor has he been defeated in them. This is how Moses looked through the ages as a prophet, and saw the future of *spiritual Israel* in Christ:

*Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; and also the heavens shall drop down dew. Deut 33:28*

This was the vision of Balaam, foreseeing spiritual Israel in the kingdom of Christ, i.e. all believers today and in the future (Num 23-24). This is the vision and theme of Isaiah.

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*The vision of Isaiah  
the son of Amoz,  
which he saw  
concerning Judah  
and Jerusalem in the  
days of Uzziah,  
Jotham, Ahaz, and  
Hezekiah, kings of  
Judah.*

***Isaiah 1:1***

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# Isaiah's Good God

A New King

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*And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*

**Isaiah 2:2**

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Isaiah began prophesying during the reign of King Uzziah, about 750 years before Christ. Isaiah chapters 1-5 are an overview of the book. Isaiah speaks about the sins of Judah and the progressive judgements that will come against them.

God's empathy is the main theme of these chapters. He planted Israel as a man plants and nurtures a vineyard with loving care, tending to every need (Is 5:1-7, Matt 21:33-41). He expects good fruit: kindness

and peace towards fellow man, but instead he finds harm, greed and abuse of the weak.

He is determined to save those who do justly, to bring punishment to remove the unjust from the earth, and to replace all forms of oppressive government with the rule of his kingdom.

God will bring Jerusalem down by a series of conquests, first by the Syrian/Northern Israel incursions, then Assyria, then Babylon, until its final destruction by Rome. Then he replaces the oppressive city with the reign of Christ...

*I will restore your judges and your counsellors as they once were, afterwards you shall be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Isaiah 1:26*

## The Last Days

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*And he will teach us  
of his ways, and we  
will walk in his  
paths: for out of Zion  
shall go forth the  
law, and the word of  
the Lord from  
Jerusalem.*

**Isaiah 2:3**

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The Jews recognized three ages. The first was before the Law of Moses. The second was the age of the law and the prophets when Isaiah lived. The third was the age of the Messiah. The *last days* refers, in Jewish thinking, to the end of the age of the law and prophets, when Messiah would come and establish his kingdom.

Isaiah said that during the last days of the Old Covenant age, the Messiah would come to establish his house, meaning the church or assembly of people who flow into his kingdom. His kingdom on earth would be raised over all other earthly kingdoms and people from all nations would flow into it by faith.

It is also the last days in another respect. The New Covenant would be established at the time when Jerusalem would be destroyed by Rome. The people would try to hide themselves under the rocks and in the caves from God's judgement (Is 2:19).

When Jesus spoke to the women of Jerusalem, he said this verse in Isaiah would be fulfilled in their generation (Luke 23:30). Revelation also describes the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, citing this verse from Isaiah (Rev 6:16).

## He Will Teach

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*And he will judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughs, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

***Isaiah 2:4***

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Out of the New Jerusalem, meaning Christ's kingdom, the word of God shall go round the earth and nations will come to his knowledge.

*He will teach us his ways and we will walk in his paths...* meaning the objective of the coming of Jesus was not just to save us and bring us forgiveness, but to change our lives and life styles to look like his.

He sets up a new kingdom within the earth that is in contrast to the old kingdoms of this world. This kingdom is not of this world, but changes this world.

Jesus is king of a better nation and he has citizens upon earth that follow his steps and who have his nature.

As the citizens of this world follow their rulers and act like them, so the followers of Jesus learn a new way of life in truth and righteousness that brings blessing to others.

The main aim of Jesus coming to earth is seen here, not to take us out of the world, but to transform our lives within the world and thus renew the world (John 17:15).

## New Fruit

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*And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.*

**Isaiah 4:3**

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This shows the authority of Christ over all nations. He is able to punish the oppressor by bringing them down in their own violence, as well as lead the world towards its final state of peace.

As distinct from earthly rulers, the reign of Christ shall transform the world. His judgements are just and his rule will lead man and nations to contentment and peace rather than to war and robbery.

This comes about by the spread of the gospel. First Jesus reigns within our hearts. We have peace with God and we learn of his ways. This makes us to have peace with our neighbour. Instead of covetousness, goodness becomes abundant in our nations.

People who once were enemies can now live together, not because of force, but because they have a common love for each other. All those in Christ's body learn to live in harmony.

The eventual result of this is the transformation of all nations by the gospel, till peace reigns on earth. That is, through the church, Christ reigns on earth, not as human rulers do, but through the hearts of his people in meekness.

The Book of Life

Zion was another name for Jerusalem. Old Jerusalem was a shadow of the heavenly Jerusalem and heavenly Zion, the eternal city of true holiness, also known as Christ's kingdom. Isaiah speaks of God cleansing his heavenly kingdom of all that offends (Rev 21:8).

Isaiah shows that through the call of God in the gospel, God will offer salvation to all and bring judgement upon those who don't respond. This judgement was portrayed by God's destruction of Jerusalem, but it applies to all generations.

The evil city encompasses all the cities of man, from the oppressive Nimrod's cities in Genesis to the cities of our own time. God has a new kingdom that isn't instituted on greed, but on love and righteousness. All who put wrong for right, call evil good and good evil, and light darkness, to make righteousness corrupt and to destroy the innocent, and who proudly say "where is his judgement?" (Is 5:20-21), will be taken out of the New City and burned with fire, a metaphor for judgement and torment (Is 4:3-4, 2 Pet 3:10, Matt 25:31-46, Rev 20:12-15).

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*In that day the  
branch of the Lord  
shall be beautiful and  
glorious and the fruit  
of the earth shall be  
excellent...*

*When the Lord shall  
have washed away  
the filth of the  
daughters of Zion...*

*And the Lord will  
create upon every  
dwelling place of  
Mount Zion... a cloud  
of smoke by day... for  
a defence...*

**Isaiah 4:2-6**

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## The Beauty

*The branch of the Lord* means the descendant of David, from the tribe of Judah. This designates where the Messiah will come from.

Messiah's kingdom shall be beautiful and the fruit of it shall be excellent *upon the earth*. This is not speaking about heaven, but it is showing the wide ranging impact of Christ's rule in this present world. Not only shall the gospel go far abroad, but through it Christ shall eventually subdue every enemy *on earth*.

So the problem of Isaiah is solved: the oppressive rulers of earth are replaced by one who rules in righteousness and love. To do this he must die for sin, take away the rule of our Adamic nature, and thus change our hearts and through this our societies. He came to make a new person, a new nation, and a new world.

His eternal presence within our hearts and with the church, shown by the cloud and fire, point to his protection... no enemy shall prevail against his church till its fruit is excellent in all nations.

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*In the year that king  
Uzziah died, I saw  
the Lord sitting upon  
a throne, and his  
robe filled the  
temple.*

***Isaiah 6:1***

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## God With Us

The call of Isaiah into ministry shows the theme of his message. Isaiah saw God in his temple. This speaks of the goal of God's acts on earth: fellowship with his people. Isaiah's was a message of judgement, but one should not lose sight

of why. God would renew the earth to fellowship with us.

In Revelation John saw a vision of the New Heaven coming down to earth and God dwelling eternally with his people (Rev 21:1-3). There was no temple, for God himself is our temple, which means he dwells with us directly without the need of the Old Testament rituals (Rev 21:22).

The New Heaven coming to earth shows God's intervention through Christ. "And the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us." (John 1:14) Heaven comes to earth through the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem; through the gift of his Spirit at Pentecost; through the church's mission and finally through God dwelling on earth with the church eternally. This is the message of Isaiah.

God showed Isaiah that though he would act in righteousness, those who turned from their sin could rest assured God would not cast them off, but restore them to eternal fellowship in love and peace.

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*And one seraphim  
cried to another,  
Holy, holy, holy is the  
Lord of hosts: the  
whole earth is filled  
with glory.*

***Isaiah 6:3***

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## The Whole Earth

This statement is the whole point of Isaiah's call and message. God's plan is for the whole earth to be filled with his glory. To announce this purpose God called and sent Isaiah with the message of Messiah. This plan God is today bringing to pass.

The earth being full of God's glory doesn't mean the glory of his creation as we see it today. Though creation is glorious it is marred by sin. God is speaking here of a renewed creation, with no sin and no curse: nothing on earth but his perfect redemptive will in Christ. This is the goal he is bringing us towards.

When he says the whole earth is filled with his glory, he means the whole earth is filled with people who know and love him. He says the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea (Is 11:9).

The knowledge of his glory refers to people who have intimate heart knowledge of him: his people. He is saying the day is coming when these people shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; meaning totally, so there will be no one on earth other than those who know God's redemptive love.

This is the destiny God will bring this current earth to. God showed Isaiah the end purpose of his call and message.

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*Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

*Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse evil and choose good. For before the child shall know to refuse evil, and choose good, the land that you abhor shall be forsaken of both her kings.*

**Isaiah 7:14-16**

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## Born by a Virgin

It was common in the Old Testament for prophecies to partially relate to the history at that time, but in a greater way point to the Messiah.

Isaiah told king Ahaz of Jerusalem that the kings of Syria and Northern Israel he feared would be destroyed before a child born then would have grown to maturity. This child was Isaiah's second son, whose name meant *to the spoil*: Assyria would spoil Syria and Northern Israel and deliver Jerusalem (Is 8:1-4).

But because Ahaz would not believe Isaiah, Assyria would destroy much of the land of Judah, making food scarce. People would only have a cow for milk and wild honey to eat (Is 7:20-22). By living on milk and honey the child would learn his fathers had disobeyed God. That child's generation under king Hezekiah would turn to God and have revival.

But the word *virgin* means virgin, showing only Christ fulfilled this prophecy in its wider meaning. Jesus was Immanuel, *God with us*, saviour of Israel when attacked by Rome, and our saviour from sin and eternal death. Isaiah showed that when God brought judgement to Israel he was not forsaking them, but fulfilling his promises to them through Jesus Christ.

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*And he shall be for a sanctuary: for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a sign and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.*

***Isaiah 8:14-15***

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## Just by Faith

Isaiah chapters 7 and 8 point to the gospel of faith, showing us that by faith a person is justified before God.

Isaiah told Ahaz, "If you will not believe, surely you will not be established." (Is 7:9) God promised Ahaz deliverance from Syria/Northern Israel, but Ahaz made wicked alliances with Assyria to help him. Assyria deceived him and ruined all the land of Judah. Ahaz's unbelieving heart was his snare.

In the same way when Immanuel would come to Jerusalem the Jews would reject his help and seek strength and support from Rome. They would reject the still waters of Shiloah (pool of Siloam, Is 7:3, John 9:7), the restful waters of faith, and trust in the turbulent rivers of political powers (Is 8:6).

But Immanuel shall be a sanctuary to those who believe and he will save those who put their trust in him. The still waters and humility of Christ will be a snare to the proud who see no help in him, no help in a child born in Bethlehem. Instead of turning from their sin they will seek help from man and be ruined (Luke 2:32, Rom 9:33, 1 Pet 2:8).

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*Behold, I and the children the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwells in Zion.*

**Isaiah 8:18**

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## Sign of Help

Isaiah and his sons were signs of God's promise of help to Ahaz and Jerusalem in their time of need.

The help the people sought was deliverance from Syria and from Northern Israel, but the help they needed was

deliverance from their sin. It was their sin that led them into bondage to the nations around them.

So Isaiah shows Israel will later receive a sign of their promised deliverance from sin and eternal life. This sign will be the virgin birth of Christ, his resurrection from the dead and the power given to the early church.

Thus Heb 2:13 quotes Isaiah 8:18 as referring to Jesus. Jesus was speaking through Isaiah in the first person, of his reason for coming and of the believers God would give to him. The point is that in contrast to man's normal pride, we cannot see God's plan unless he draws us to Christ himself.

When Rome destroyed Jerusalem God gave many signs of his salvation through Jesus. Today he uses us to give signs to our generation of his way of eternal life through Jesus and escape from judgement.

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*The people that  
walked in darkness  
have seen a great  
light: they that dwell  
in the land of the  
shadow of death,  
upon them has the  
light shined. You  
have increased the  
nation and increased  
the joy...*

**Isaiah 9:2-3**

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## Increased

Isaiah 9:1 refers to the land of Northern Israel that was about to be destroyed by Assyria. The whole ten tribes of Northern Israel would be taken captive and only a remnant of them would return to join Judah in Jerusalem during Hezekiah's revival. Their former land, Zebulun, Naphtali and Galilee would be inhabited by Gentiles: Samaritans.

But to this land would come a great light: fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus in the region (Matt 4:16). This also designates the great light in the gospel that would come to all Gentile nations.

God has *increased the nation*: this means he has brought the Gentiles into the nation of Israel through Jesus Christ. Israel is no longer limited to its former boundaries and people, but is now enlarged and globalized through the kingdom of Christ.

He has also increased us personally. Christ has broken our burden of sin and delivered us from darkness with such a decisive victory, as a king who burned all his enemy's weapons in a fire (Isaiah 9:4-5).

There is also a progressively increased government of Christ...

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*To us a child is born,  
to us a son is given:  
and the government  
shall be upon his  
shoulder: and his  
name shall be called  
Wonderful,  
Counsellor, The  
mighty God, The  
everlasting Father,  
The Prince of Peace.*

*Of the increase of his  
government and of  
peace there shall be  
no end, upon the  
throne of David, and  
upon his kingdom, to  
establish it with  
judgement and  
justice forever.*

*The zeal of the Lord  
of hosts will perform  
this.*

**Isaiah 9:6-7**

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## Government

A son will be born from David's lineage. He shall be given the kingdom. His kingdom shall progressively increase and will have no end.

His government is increasing *upon earth*. It is not increasing in heaven, where his rule is not challenged.

On earth he is progressively subduing all enemies under his feet till his rule is established with peace and justice throughout the whole earth (Ps 110).

He already reigns in heaven since his ascension, but on the earth the gospel is progressing forward and his kingdom of peace irresistibly establishes its dominion over all things. This dominion already fully belongs to Christ, having been won by him for us on the cross, but God allows his dominion to prevail on earth in stages through our hearts, rather than by force.

Jesus is *The Prince of Peace*, ruling in compassion and justice. Nothing will prevent the Lord performing this: establishing Christ's complete dominion over all the earth (Jer 23:5-6).

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*There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.*

***Isaiah 11: 1-2***

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## Gog and Magog

The history of Isaiah's period was an example of the kingdom of Christ today. Assyria was brought upon Israel because of Israel's disobedience, to cleanse the land and prepare it for revival. Assyria destroyed the whole land of Judah so it looked as though it would never rise. But God cut off the Assyrian army before it could destroy Jerusalem.

Today God will cleanse the nominal church of its hypocritical believers, living at ease, by a spirit of burning and of judgement. At times it will look like the church will be overrun by the world. God's promises will be established during terrible opposition which he allows. He will protect his church as it spreads and prospers throughout these attacks. It will keep rising from the grave like Jesus, more glorious than before.

The *Jewish Targum Isaiah* called Assyria *Gog and Magog* (Rev 20:8-9, Is 10:17, 33-34), representing God's enemies, which he will destroy as his church flourishes. Knowing the final outcome, we are encouraged not to fear the enemy (Is 10:24, 27) He delivers us from the enemy's camp through his cross, and the church from their power by his judgement.

## Earth Revived

After Assyria's attack on Jerusalem was foiled, God revived Judah. This refers to the reign of king Hezekiah. Isaiah looks beyond to Messiah's reign, who will also come from Jesse: from David's house. Christ will revive us to the Lord through new birth. He will revive the church when it is assaulted by the enemy. He will revive the earth through his reign in all nations.

The revival comes because he rules righteously. The thorns and thistles overtake the earth because of the corruption of man. Righteous rule brings blessing and turns back the curse. Christ reigns through the church in the nations and the curse is curtailed: poverty, sickness, war and robbery are gone.

*But with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. (Is 11:4)*

Ahaz promoted the wicked and oppressed the righteous, Hezekiah and Christ do the opposite. We need to call upon him for his righteous rule, as Hezekiah did.

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*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.*

*And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the viper's hole.*

*And none shall hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

**Isaiah 11: 6-9**

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## Earth Restored

This prophecy refers to earth, not to heaven, as also depicted at the close of Revelation (Rev 21-22).

This prophecy refers to one thing, Christ's redemption, which has several outcomes.

First, our beastly nature is changed by his rule and government in our hearts. Christ must not just be born in Bethlehem, but within our heart.

Second, the outcome of this is peace. We are at peace one with another: Judah and Ephraim; Jacob and Esau; Jew and Palestinian; you and your neighbour (Is 11:13).

Third, the outcome of this is a renewed creation. Creation goes back to a pre-Adamic-fall state, as Christ's reign of peace governs all things on earth and brings the resultant blessing.

Those who believe creation was always marred by death cannot account for these clear metaphors of curse and blessing.

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*And in that day  
There shall be a root  
of Jesse, which shall  
stand for a banner of  
the people; to it shall  
the Gentiles seek: and  
his rest shall be  
glorious.*

**Isaiah 11: 10**

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## The Banner

Knowing Judah would be almost destroyed by Assyria and carried away captive by Babylon and would not even be a nation, Isaiah prophesied that out of Judah would come one who would have the greatest name on earth. This has been fulfilled. His rest would be glorious, meaning his kingdom would be victorious

over all upon the earth.

God will gather his dispersed from Israel a second time, like he gathered them from Egypt. When Christ would come this would be a second Passover, by dying and opening the sea of separation, restoring God's people to life (Is 11:15-16).

*Israel* means all God gathers, not just the Jews. Abraham was a Gentile; Jacob became *Israel*, so all Gentiles he calls are gathered. All in Christ are true Israel through faith, not by descent, law or by earthly Jerusalem (Rom 2:28-29, 9:6-13, Gal 3:16, 29, 4:26, 6:15-16, Eph 2:13-16, Phil 3:3, Heb 12:22). The natural man could not understand these prophecies then and those without faith are blinded to them (2 Cor 3:14). "All Israel" means all who believe (Rom 11:26).

Israel shall spoil the Gentiles, meaning Gentiles shall come into Christ's kingdom through faith by the gospel (Is 11:14).

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*Therefore, with joy  
you shall draw water  
out of the wells of  
salvation.*

*And in that day you  
shall say, Praise the  
Lord, call upon his  
name, declare his  
doings among the  
people, make  
mention that his  
name is exalted.*

*Sing to the Lord, for  
he has done excellent  
things: this is known  
in all the earth.*

*Cry and shout,  
inhabitant of Zion:  
for great is the Holy  
One of Israel in the  
midst of you.*

***Isaiah 12: 3-6***

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## Promises Kept

This is spoken to us today. His salvation is known in all the earth. Jesus' name is worshipped among all nations, just as God said it would be.

We are living in the days when these things are being fulfilled and we can see them plainly.

God says we will praise the Lord when we see these things. This doesn't mean we say "Praise the Lord", but that we will tell others what he has done through the gospel and how he has been faithful and kept his promises. It means we will freely declare his truth so others will know it.

It also means that when we see these things as they are today we will know God's word is true and will have all the more reason to expect all of it to be

fulfilled in the years ahead. This will strengthen our faith, for when we are persecuted or tried we will know for certain God's kingdom will reign over all and we will count temporary persecution a small thing in the light of God's eternal promises.

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*The burden of  
Babylon. which  
Isaiah the son of  
Amoz did see...*

*Behold, the day of the  
Lord comes, cruel  
both with wrath and  
fierce anger, to lay  
the land desolate;  
and he shall destroy  
the sinners there out  
of it.*

*For the stars of  
heaven and the  
constellations of it  
shall not give their  
light: the sun shall be  
darkened in its going  
forth, and the moon  
shall not cause her  
light to shine.*

**Isaiah 13:1, 9-10**

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## Babylon's Fall

Here the book of Isaiah has completed the first series of prophecies where he showed the judgement upon Judah and Israel, and the rise of Christ's kingdom, and now he proceeds to speak to the nations around Judah in his day.

He is not speaking here of spiritual Babylon, which in the Book of Revelation was Jerusalem, but of the empire of Babylon that conquered Judah after the days of Isaiah.

Isaiah is describing the invasion of Media-Persia which brought down the Babylonian Empire. God would judge Babylon by the same standards he judged Judah: they were destroying lives so they would be removed off the earth.

Notice the language Isaiah uses. *The day of the Lord* is not the end of the world, but the end of an empire. Similarly, *the coming of the Lord* is not the second coming of Jesus, but his coming to judge a nation. And the *stars and moon not shining* are not literal, but speak of the end of the rulers of Babylon.

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*For the Lord will have mercy upon Jacob, and will choose Israel, and will set them in their own land; and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob...*

*You shall take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, how has the oppressor ceased! The golden city ceased!*

***Isaiah 14:1, 4***

---

## Captivity Turned

After the fall of Babylon Judah would be restored to their land and their enemies would be subject to them. This happened in part after king Cyrus of Media-Persia delivered Judah from Babylon, but in full through Jesus Christ, by whom the meek inherit the earth and their enemies are subdued, not by war, but by the gospel (Is 14:2-3).

Isaiah speaks against the king of Babylon. He aimed to hold God's people captive forever, but God said no and broke his dominion over them. He presumed to be worshipped as the bright morning star, but God brought Babylon down.

Far too much attention is given to Satan from passages like this and Ezekiel 28 & 31, which address man in poetic terms. These passages do not say they are referring to Satan, nor did Jesus or any of the Apostles say they referred to Satan. In Isaiah's message these kings reflect Satan's dominion through sin broken by the cross and gospel of Messiah. This is the only point the scripture makes when it refers to Satan's fall (Luke 10:18, John 12:31, Col 2:14-15, Heb 2:14, Rev 12:7-11), and this redemption is the subject of Isaiah.

---

*Do not rejoice  
Palestina because the  
rod of the one who  
smote you is broken:  
for out of the  
serpent's root shall  
come a cockatrice,  
and his fruit shall be  
a fiery flying serpent.*

*And the firstborn of  
the poor shall feed  
and the needy shall  
lie down in safety:  
and I will kill your  
root with famine, and  
he shall slay your  
remnant.*

*... the Lord has  
founded Zion, and the  
poor of his people  
shall trust in it.*

**Isaiah 14:29-30, 32**

---

## Needy Lie Down

This prophecy relates to the Philistines who afflicted God's people. Some relate it more widely to the whole Palestinian region.

Some say the rod who broke the Philistines was king Uzziah of Judah. When Uzziah died and Ahaz ruled, Judah was weak. Hezekiah ruled after Ahaz and he once again established dominion over the Philistines and gave peace to the firstborn (chosen) and afflicted Judah.

My opinion is that the language here better suits the empires of Assyria and Babylon, showing the rise of Babylon and its fall. The region of Palestine should not rejoice when Assyria falls because out of Assyria shall come Babylon (Is 23:13). Babylon was a revised form of the earlier Assyrian empire. Isaiah claimed God will

destroy both empires and their root and raise up his people in Christ and they shall inherit the land and be safe.

History shows these passages were fulfilled in the Old Testament era, but both Jewish and Christian commentators agree they also point to Messiah.

---

*Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela to the wilderness, to the mount of the daughter of Zion...*

*Take counsel, execute judgement; make your shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; do not betray the wanderer.*

*Let my outcasts dwell with you, Moab; be a cover to them from the face of the spoiler; for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceases, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.*

*And in mercy your throne shall be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the house of David...*

**Isaiah 16:1, 3-5**

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## Love Mercy

Chapter 15-16 are about the judgement of Moab. When Judah was afflicted by Assyria, Moab didn't help but oppressed them further. They are advised to turn to God by sending a sacrifice to Jerusalem, and by executing justice for the needy.

*Make your shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday (sun)...* beautiful poetry meaning be a relief to those in distress. God judges Moab by the same principles he judges Judah. They are to renounce oppression, and seek the nature of the Prince of Peace by true faith and love to neighbour. By this principle Jesus will judge all nations (Matt 25:31-46).

*The extortioner is at an end and consumed out of the land...* Assyria will fall, and all God's enemies will perish off the earth when Messiah's kingdom flourishes.

Hezekiah's reign in truth foreshadows Christ, the only one to reign in complete truth. Moab lays desolate till today.

---

*At that day a man  
shall look to his  
Maker, and his eyes  
shall have respect to  
the Holy One of  
Israel.*

*And he shall not look  
to the altars, the  
work of his hands,  
neither shall respect  
that which his fingers  
have made, either  
groves, or the  
images...*

*And behold at the  
eveningtide trouble;  
and before the  
morning he is not.  
This is the portion of  
them that spoil us,  
and the lot of them  
that rob us.*

***Isaiah 17:7-8, 14***

---

## True Riches

Chapter 17 is about the fall of Syria and Northern Israel by the army of Assyria. Most of Israel is cut off and few remain. The main issue with them is their idolatry, which leads them into gross compromise and lifestyles of oppression.

Men today may not have the same sort of idols, but still material idols which we have made with our own hands, our own careers, while compromising truth, and passing by the stranger in need. Even ministry can become a career and an idol when we use it to trample others down.

Then the remnant of Northern Israel turns to God. God often uses calamity to shake our idols down, whether economic or unsolvable issues in our lives, to bring us to our senses and turn our hearts to true riches. This is mercy, because God turns

us to eternal values, from these temporary deceptions.

Isaiah finishes by saying that after the Assyrian army has done its work it shall fall in a night. Don't fear what God uses to turn you back to him. Fear only God, who has good planned for you.

---

*Woe to the land  
shadowing with  
wings, which is  
beyond the rivers of  
Ethiopia.*

*That sends  
ambassadors by the  
sea, even in bulrushes  
upon the waters,  
saying, Go swift  
messengers, to a  
nation scattered and  
peeled, to a people  
terrible from their  
beginning: a nation  
trodden down, whose  
land the rivers have  
spoiled.*

*All inhabitants of the  
world, and dwellers  
on earth, see when he  
lifts up a banner on  
the mountains...*

*In that time shall a  
present be brought to  
the Lord of hosts by a  
people scattered...*

***Isaiah 18:1-3, 7***

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## Revival

Ethiopia or Nubia, Northern Sudan, ruled Egypt and had a vast army that stretched out as *wings* on a field (Is 8:8). They sent ambassadors to Judah to make a treaty for protection against Assyria. Judah was the *terrible people*, lion of Judah, scattering nations since coming out of Egypt, referring to the Holy God in Judah (Is 19:17, Num 23:24). Assyria found this when they came against Jerusalem (Is 31:9, *ensign*, also in Is 18). But now Judah are scattered by the raging rivers of foreign powers (Is 8:7).

God shall take glory over the Assyrian army, like a harvest ready to be plucked, on the mountains of Judah they shall be fed to the birds of the air. The world shall see God's glory and shall come to him for salvation. He shall forgive their sins and receive them.

The remnant of Northern Israel join Hezekiah in Jerusalem and the nation is revived and blessed. Even Gentile powers learn of God's glory as God has a plan to

---

*I will set Egyptians  
against Egyptians...*

*And I shall give the  
Egyptians over to a  
cruel Lord...*

*And the land of Judah  
shall be a terror to  
Egypt (they shall fear  
the God of Judah).*

*In that day there  
shall be an altar to  
the Lord in the midst  
of Egypt*

*For they shall cry to  
the Lord because of  
the oppressors, and  
he shall send them a  
saviour and a great  
one, and he shall  
deliver them.*

***Isaiah 19:2, 4, 17,  
19-20***

---

draw them to salvation.

## Many Proselytes

The tyrant king Psammitichus of Egypt eventually took power after a brutal civil war. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and Cambyses of Persia invaded and were very harsh to Egypt. When Alexander the Great of Greece eventually conquered Egypt, Egypt received him as a deliverer, an anointed messiah, as Cyrus was also received earlier (Is 45:1).

God then brought revival to Egypt. Many Jews lived there and Alexander made the Jews equal citizens with the Greek. The Greek rulers ordered the Old Testament be translated into Greek (the Septuagint version) and this prompted revival throughout the whole known world in years to come, including Egypt, former Assyria and Israel. Millions of Gentiles repented from idolatry and came to faith

in God. This all helped to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus.

Many speculate from these texts about “end times” war, or pacts between Egypt and Israel today, or nuclear war with

---

*And they shall be  
afraid and ashamed  
of Ethiopia their  
expectation, and of  
Egypt their glory...*

*Prepare the table,  
watch in the  
watchtower, eat,  
drink: arise princes  
and anoint your  
shield...*

*The watchman said,  
The morning comes,  
and also the night: if  
you will enquire,  
enquire: return,  
come.*

***Isaiah 20:5, 21:5,  
12***

---

USA. Scripture is often used in this speculative way, without any basis from the text and by ignoring history.

## Return & Come

Those who trust in oppression shall fall, no matter the strength they rely upon. The only salvation is to return to the Lord and repent from exploiting others.

Those who trust in the Ethiopian/Egyptian Empire shall be ashamed, as this empire cannot even save itself. We see the details of Babylon's ruin, which Isaiah saw long before it happened. They would be feasting when war would suddenly come upon them by the Medes and Persians and Babylon would fall (Dan 5).

They call from Seir (Edom), "What of the night", reminding Judah of their affliction. The watchman answers, Babylon's fall is morning for Judah, but not for Edom. They will be punished for their oppression unless they *return and come* and do good to others and God would forgive them.

Isaiah added the Arabians would also be punished. Some, without basis, have applied this text to today's *Arab Spring*, but it was about the history in Isaiah's time, Isaiah said in one

---

*And the key of the house of David shall I lay to his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*

*And I shall fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.*

*And they shall hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.*

**Isaiah 22:22-24**

---

year, probably fulfilled by Assyria's army (Is 21:16), and again later by the Babylonians (Jer 25:8-25).

## Faithful Servant

When Ahaz ruled Jerusalem he had evil ministers under him. God used Assyria to slay or drive away through fear all these people and renew Hezekiah's government with righteous leaders, as he promised (Is 1:26). God cleansed Jerusalem of hypocrite "believers" to revive the land (Is 22:13, 33:14). Media-Persia was then part of Assyria and chapter 22 describes Hezekiah's defences.

The Prime Minister under Ahaz was Shebna and God would replace him with Hilkiah. God would give Hilkiah the keys of the kingdom. He would be the head administrator of Hezekiah's realm. This foreshadows Christ (Rev 3:7).

*And they shall hang on him...* This means Christ shall bear the burden of the people's needs. Their needs would be hung upon him as a nail securely fastened that can hold all the people's burdens. The nail shall not be moved, but is strong. Hilkiah foreshadows Christ's kingdom. Christ nourishes all his people, with servant leadership, enthroned not for himself,

---

*And it shall come to pass that Tyre shall be forgotten 70 years, according to the days of one king...*

*And it shall come to pass at the end of 70 years, that the Lord will visit Tyre...*

*And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.*

**Isaiah 23:15, 17-18**

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but to care for others. But Shebna shall be removed from the office and shall perish (Is 22:25).

## Tyre Revived

Isaiah speaks of many nations turning to the Lord before Christ came, and also coming into his church after Christ came.

First he speaks of the rise of Babylon, saying Babylon would destroy Tyre and it would be spoiled during the 70 year period of the Babylonian kingdom. When Babylon fell, Judah's 70 year captivity and Tyre's were over and the cities were rebuilt (Jer 25:9-12). Tyre then continued in its sinful ways, but the money that was gathered through the wages of the harlot and trade was later used for the gospel. See also Ps 45:12, 72:10, 87:4.

Isaiah said the wealth was not laid up, which is the common way people deal with their money, but was used for the gospel. This is the will of God when he uses us. "When the church of God was founded in Tyre, and in other places, much of its wealth was consecrated to God... and was presented for the support of the ministry." (Eusebius, Hist. X. 4.) See Ezekiel concerning the eventual downfall of Tyre in a

---

*Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant...Therefore the curse devours the earth...*

*The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts reigns... before his ancients gloriously.*

***Isaiah 24:5-6, 23***

---

series of invasions over many years (Ezek 26-28). Isaiah died before Babylon became an empire.

## Saints Raised

This chapter is about the overthrow of Jerusalem by its enemies and finally by Rome. They have departed from the covenant and therefore the curse devours the land.

Jerusalem stands for all cities that oppress the people. They shall be taken down as a harvest fully ripe for judgement.

The peoples of the earth rejoice in the righteous acts of God, for he has relieved the sufferings and the weak and fulfilled justice in the land (vs. 15, 16).

The high ones (human authorities) and the kings of the earth shall be locked up in prison, as conquerors did to vanquished rulers (vs. 21, Jer 39:5). All oppressive rulers shall be sent to hell and visited after many days for eternal judgement (vs. 22, Rev 20:12). See "visit" in Isaiah 29:6.

The moon and the sun shall be ashamed, meaning Judah's kingdom shall fall, as all the cities of men. These are common symbols for the fall of a nation (Ezek 32:7). Their light shall be nothing compared to the glory of Christ in his kingdom in

---

*For you have made a heap from a city; a ruin from a defended city: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.*

*Therefore the strong people shall glorify you, the city of the terrible nations shall fear you.*

*For you have been strength to the poor, strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat... the offspring of the terrible ones shall be brought low.*

**Isaiah 25:2-5**

---

heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22, Rev 21:2). All the saints of old are raised from the dead to dwell with the church on earth (Rev 21).

## Defence Breach

This is another summary chapter about God removing the iniquity from the earth and the curse with it, foreshadowed by the judgements of the Old Testament era, as he renews the earth in righteousness.

The defenced city is brought down. This portrays how man strengthens himself in rebellion against God. Instead of turning to God, he builds walls, raises armies and accumulates riches to sustain his position. His plan is he will last forever. But God has removed him from the *tree of life* so the curse prevails and as a result the wicked will perish, allowing the meek to thrive.

When the world sees God's justice on the wicked the nations will turn to him. *The strong people shall glorify you*, means kings of the Gentiles shall come to Christ. Nations shall repent and turn to the Lord.

The city of God is contrasted with the city of man: Christ strengthens the poor, sustains the needy and is shade to the

---

*And in this mountain  
the Lord of hosts  
shall make for all  
people a feast of fat  
things, a feast of  
wines on the lees, of  
fat things full of  
marrow...*

*And he will destroy in  
this mountain the  
face of the covering  
cast over all the  
people, and the veil  
that is spread over  
all nations.*

*He will swallow up  
death in victory; and  
the Lord will wipe  
away tears from all  
faces; and the rebuke  
of his people he shall  
take away from off  
all the earth; for the  
Lord has spoken it.*

**Isaiah 25:6-8**

---

stranger. This is how the people of his kingdom reflect Christ to all around them.

## Swallows Death

*On this mountain...* this is a prophecy about the mountain of Jerusalem. Here Christ will die for sin and thereby prepare a feast of goodness for all people in God's kingdom. It also means the heavenly Jerusalem, the kingdom of Christ after his resurrection, the gospel for all people.

When Christ dies on Mount Calvary he will destroy sin and its deception that makes man blind will be removed in the gospel. This happened on Calvary, but has a progressive outworking in the nations. The more blindness is removed through the gospel, the more the blessing of Christ's kingdom spreads in the world.

*He will swallow up death in victory...*

When he died on the cross he took death into himself and conquered it forever. He grants eternal life to his church through the gospel, and the eventual resurrection of the body and restoration of all things: *all the earth*. Christ's victory is already final on Calvary, but worked

---

*For in this mountain  
the hand of the Lord  
shall rest, and Moab  
shall be trodden  
down under him, we  
will be glad and  
rejoice in his  
salvation.*

*And he shall spread  
his hands in the  
midst of them, as he  
that swims: and he  
shall bring down  
their pride.*

*And the fortress of  
the high fort and  
walls he will bring  
down...*

***Isaiah 25:10-12***

---

out in history in righteousness through the progress of his kingdom (Heb 2:8).

## Faithful Leader

*This mountain...* The mountain of the Lord's heavenly kingdom, of which Jerusalem in the Old Testament foreshadowed (Is 2:2). God's hand shall rest upon Christ and through his kingdom God shall bless the earth: because God found him to have the right heart for his people; God can trust the welfare of the people in his hands. He disciplines the church, taking out leaders who don't care for the sheep.

Moab here speaks of God's judgement on the Moabites in the Old Testament, but is also used representatively for all the oppressors that shall be removed from the earth. He shall bring them down with arms stretched out that sweep away all before them.

No matter the fortress they build for protection, no matter how invincible and powerful the worldly nations appear that harass the church, God shall remove their foundations and they will fall. There will be no hiding place for the wicked. We can be assured the church will always prevail.

---

*We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls...*

*Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps the truth shall enter in.*

*You will keep him in perfect peace who trust in you.*

*For he brings the proud city down.*

*When your judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*

*But (the wicked) will not see...*

***Isaiah 26:1-3, 5, 9, 11***

---

This prophecy means that the eventual outcome will be the meek shall inherit the earth.

## Joy to the World

The design of these prophecies was partly to comfort Judah in the Old Testament, showing God would be faithful to them, even when they were disciplined; but mainly to prefigure Christ's kingdom and the days we now live in. God shows us that his kingdom is open to all nations and that when persecution or trials from the oppressors rise against us we should not be troubled. We know the outcome and we will have peace by keeping our minds on this consolation from the Lord.

The design of judgements on earth and among nations is to teach righteousness. God judges the world and brings recompense on nations for their acts of oppression. We learn the fear of the Lord.

As the wonderful hymn says, "Let every heart prepare him room... He makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love... No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to

---

*O Lord other lords  
beside you have had  
dominion over us...*

*They are dead, they  
shall not live; they  
are deceased, they  
shall not rise:  
therefore you have  
visited and destroyed  
them, and made all  
their memory to  
perish,*

*You have increased  
the nation, O Lord,  
you have increased  
the nation... far to the  
ends of the earth.*

*Lord in trouble they  
came to you...*

*Your dead men shall  
live, together with  
my dead body shall  
they arise. Awake  
and sing all who  
dwell in the dust: for  
your dew is as the  
dew of herbs, and the  
earth shall cast out  
the dead.*

***Isaiah 26:13-16, 19***

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make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found." (*Joy to the World*)

## Rise on Earth

Many have oppressed God's people. But oppressors shall perish from the earth and not be seen again.

This encouragement is extended to all in the kingdom of Christ. God has increased the nation from its former borders of the land of Israel. It now covers the entire earth and all nations. The old land of Israel is no longer especially relevant in Christ's kingdom. The nations come to God when they are in trouble, when they see the vanity of their way of life.

God's kingdom shall exist eternally on earth: renewed by the morning dew of Christ. The wicked shall perish, but the saints of old shall rise, with Isaiah, and inherit the earth with all the church. *Along with my dead body shall they arise...* also means the church rises physically just as Christ did. The wicked rise, but not to dwell on earth with the saints: there will

---

*In that day the Lord  
with his sore and  
great strong sword  
shall punish  
leviathan the  
piercing serpent,  
even leviathan that  
crooked serpent; and  
he shall slay the  
dragon of the sea.*

*A vineyard of red  
wine. I the Lord do  
keep it; I will water it  
every moment: lest  
any hurt it, I will  
keep it night and day.*

*Fury is not in me...  
the briers and  
thorns... I will burn  
them together.*

*He will cause them  
who come from Jacob  
(his seed the church)  
to take root: Israel  
shall blossom and  
bud (through Christ),  
and fill the face of the  
whole world with  
fruit.*

**Isaiah 27:1-4, 6**

---

be no oppression. God's people are encouraged to be patient (vs. 20).

## Chastisement

God's kindness to Israel: He disciplines them by Assyria, to cleanse their idolatry, but he will call them again and make them fruitful (vs. 9). To achieve this he will bring down the kings of Egypt and Assyria.

His mind towards his people is not destruction, but to remove the curse, both by discipline to transform our lives, and by the death of his Son to take away our sin and destroy the spoiler. All we need to do it to turn and make peace with him: he has redeemed us (vs. 5).

His people Israel, meaning the whole church of God's people, shall fill the whole earth with fruit and he will care for it as a vineyard. The oppressor shall be burned in the fire and will receive no favour (vs. 11). There is a difference between the chastisement of his children and the destruction of his enemies.

He returns his people to worship God under king Hezekiah, so he calls us all to

---

*The Lord of hosts  
shall be a crown of  
glory... to the  
residue...*

*Whom shall he teach  
knowledge... for  
precept must be upon  
precept... For with...  
another tongue he  
will speak to this  
people... this is the  
rest... yet they would  
not hear.*

*Therefore, this is  
what the Lord says... I  
lay in Zion a stone for  
a foundation, a  
precious corner  
stone...*

*I will also lay  
judgement to the  
line... righteousness  
to the plummet...*

***Isaiah 28:5, 9-12,  
16-17***

---

worship him in Christ.

## Praises of Stones

The fall of Northern Israel by Assyria foreshadows the fall of Judah by Rome. As a remnant from Northern Israel returned to worship with Hezekiah, so in the day of Rome a residue shall survive and these shall enter into Christ's kingdom.

Northern Israel was proud and un-teachable, though God taught them line upon line. Because they would not enter rest through repentance, God "taught them" through the judgement of foreign tongues, i.e. the army of the Assyrians.

Paul applied this to his generation (1 Cor 14:21). God spoke of his praises to Jerusalem in the tongues of the Gentiles, as a sign of judgement if they would not repent and enter rest (Acts 2:11). He bypassed the proud to raise up children from stones (Gentiles, Matt 3:9).

Jerusalem would not hear. God would destroy their city and establish heavenly Zion (1 Pet 2:6-9). Christ would also become the standard by which God would

---

*Does the ploughman  
plough all day to  
sow?...*

*When he has made  
the ground plain,  
doesn't he cast on it  
the fitches, and  
scatter the cummin,  
and cast in the  
principal wheat?...*

*For his God instructs  
him...*

*The fitches are not  
threshed with a  
threshing  
instrument, neither is  
cart wheel turned  
over the cummin...*

*This also comes from  
the Lord... wonderful  
in his counsel and  
excellent in his work.*

***Isaiah 28:24-29***

---

measure righteousness and pass judgement upon the nations.

## The Farmer

In case his judgements on the earth leave his people without hope, he shows us his plan: to renew the earth with a godly city and people who know and love his truth.

First, the knowledge of the farmer comes from God. All man learns about science comes from God through his grace.

God applies farming to his own plan. His purpose of judgement is to dig up the hard ground, to clear out the thorns and the thistles, to rid the land of oppression.

But the farmer doesn't plough forever and so God won't judge the land forever. He prepares the ground first and then sows the seed of his kingdom to renew the earth.

Farmers treat harvests differently. While they cleanse the chaff from the cummin they don't crush it under a wheel as they do for wheat. So God chastises his people without destroying them, but he destroys the wicked.

---

*Woe to Ariel... it shall be to me Ariel... I will camp against it... And you shall speak out of the ground... The multitude of your strangers like dust, and like chaff that is swift, you shall pass away suddenly.*

*You shall be visited by the Lord with thunder, and with earthquake and with great noise, with storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire.*

*It shall be as dream in the night vision... for the Lord has poured in you the spirit of deep sleep.*

**Isaiah 29:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10**

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He takes great care in what he does and works for the good of his people. His work is not random.

## Jerusalem Falls

Ariel means altar, referring to the temple in Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall become an altar of sacrifice to the Lord when he judges it. Their proud voice will be humbled to the ground. Those that come against them will be all nations in the Roman army, a multitude, and they will be swift as chaff in the wind. They will destroy the city with a mound and with fire. The description in this chapter only matches the Roman invasion.

The people of Jerusalem who have rejected Christ shall be like those who were in a deep sleep and dreamed of prosperity and safety, but woke to sudden destruction. This is how Paul described the judgement coming on Jerusalem in that generation (1 Thes 5:2-9, 2:3-13).

The people of Jerusalem could not understand the signs of the times (vs. 11, Matt 13:14-15, 16:3). The rest of this chapter details the ministry of Christ and how Jerusalem treated him.

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*For as much as these  
people draw near to  
me with their mouth  
... Therefore, behold I  
will proceed to do a  
marvellous work  
among the people...*

*Lebanon (forest)  
shall be turned into a  
fruitful field, and the  
fruitful field to a  
forest.*

*The deaf shall hear  
the words of this  
book, the eyes of the  
blind shall see... the  
meek shall rejoice...*

*That makes a man an  
offender for a word  
to lay a snare...*

*Jacob shall not be  
ashamed when he  
sees his seed, the  
work of my hands...  
Those who erred  
shall understand...*

***Isaiah 29:13-24***

---

## Antioch Mission

This describes Jesus' ministry in detail. Jerusalem is very religious, but they serve God by human commands and their hearts are far from him (Matt 15:8-9). God will do a work the wise will not perceive: they count the Saviour as insignificant, merely the son of Joseph. They condemn Jesus for a word, lay snares with questions and falsely accuse him of blasphemy: as they did with all disciples they martyred.

But Jesus will bring the gospel to the meek and the deaf will hear his message and the blind will see him. He will outreach to the Gentiles. Lebanon is fruitful when Antioch becomes a mission outpost to the world, where believers are first called Christians (Acts 11:26). Old Jerusalem becomes an uncultivated spiritual land.

True Jacob will not be ashamed. Through Christ's death and resurrection God creates a new people of faith. Many sinners will turn to the Lord and the seed of Christ will be a global multitude.

---

*Woe to those who  
take counsel, but not  
from me, who seek to  
cover themselves, but  
not from my Spirit: so  
they may add sin to  
sin. That walk to  
Egypt... to strengthen  
themselves...*

*In returning and rest  
you shall be saved...  
but you said no, we  
will flee on horses...*

*And though the Lord  
give you the bread of  
adversity, and the  
water of affliction,  
yet you shall see your  
teachers.*

*And you shall hear a  
voice behind you  
saying, This is the  
way, walk in it.*

***Isaiah 30:1-2, 15-  
16, 20-21***

---

## You Will Hear

Christ's afflictions change the rebellious into God's children. Northern Israel and Judah under Ahaz seek protection from Egypt against Assyria (vs. 2, 6). But the proud will fall suddenly, like a wet wall swells and then breaches (vs. 13).

Northern Israel will fall but God will save Judah by its new king Hezekiah. When they are afflicted they repent. Hezekiah sends teachers of the scriptures to revive the land. The people now hear God's voice and are no longer rebellious.

This is applied to Christ. His ministry is Spirit led: he does what he hears from his Father (John 5:30). He eats the bread of affliction on the cross, but through this God gives him apostles to the world.

This also applies to his church. Christ gives us teachers today, and filled with his Spirit we hear his voice and follow him. We can see the layers of prophecy, which speak to Christ and his seed, both in Isaiah's time

and today. The promises address his spiritual seed then and now, not the seed of the flesh. He teaches his church.

---

*You shall also defile  
the covering of your  
graven images...*

*Then he shall give the  
rain... and the  
increase of the earth  
shall be fat and  
plenteous...*

*Moreover the light of  
the moon shall be  
like the light of the  
sun, and the light of  
the sun shall be seven  
times... in the day  
that the Lord binds  
up the breach of his  
people...*

*Assyria will be  
beaten down... with  
tabrets and harps...*

*For Tophet is  
ordained of old; for  
the king it is  
prepared; he has  
made it deep and  
large... the breath of  
the Lord kindles it.*

***Isaiah 30:22-23, 26,  
32-33***

---

## A Bright Sun

Assyria foreshadows *Gog and Magog*, a symbol of God's enemies he uses to sift hypocrites: their aim is the destruction of the church. Judah casts out their idols, the things that cover their emptiness. We allow God to renew our life and ambition.

When Judah repented God blessed the nation. The brightness of the moon and sun refer to the glory of Hezekiah's righteous reign, as compared to the curse and darkness Ahaz brought.

The Assyrian army was destroyed in every place it occupied, and the people rejoiced with music. The army was cast into Tophet, Gehenna, outside Jerusalem, and burnt with fire. So all God's enemies shall be cast into hell, where the king of Assyria was destined to end.

The glory and blessing of Christ's kingdom on earth outshines the sun, meaning his salvation when he defeats Satan on the cross and his blessing when he rolls back the curse on earth.

---

*As birds flying, so will  
the Lord of hosts  
defend Jerusalem;  
defending also he will  
deliver it; and  
passing over (same  
word for Passover)  
he will deliver it.*

**Isaiah 31:5**

---

## Passover

Those who call on Egypt for help and do not face the Lord of mercy will fall with Egypt. Those who trust in the Lord shall be delivered. His deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyria is a pledge he will protect his heavenly Jerusalem, the church, from the powers of hell forever.

Isaiah calls God's salvation of true Israel from all nations a second Passover (Is 11:11). To foreshadow Christ's deliverance of his church, the Assyrian army was killed by the angel of the Lord in the night, just as the first born in Egypt.

Passover means *the Lord will Passover his people*. That is, he will cover us with his wings to protect us from the devourer (Matt 23:37). There is a curse sent out by God because of the law, and all who have sinned will die. God does not change his law, but *he throws himself into the path of curse and takes it into himself*. On the cross Christ threw himself between us and the devourer and swallowed up death and the curse into himself. His flying over Jerusalem as a bird meant he will cover his people by his death on the cross!

As followers of Christ we should do the same for others. We put ourselves between the lost and the enemy, by taking the gospel to them and helping them in their need, even at cost to ourselves.

---

*Behold, a king shall  
reign in  
righteousness, and  
princes shall rule in  
judgement.*

*And a man shall be  
as a hiding place  
from the wind, and a  
cover from the  
tempest, as rivers of  
water in a dry place...*

*And the eyes of them  
that see shall not be  
dim... the heart of the  
rash shall  
understand...*

*No longer will the  
fool be called noble  
nor the scoundrel be  
highly respected.*

*Rise up you women  
who are at ease...  
upon the land of my  
people shall come up  
thorns and briers.*

***Isaiah 32:1-5, 9, 13***

---

## Selfless Love

This in part shows the blessing on Judah through Hezekiah's reign, and more today the blessings when nations follow Christ, but more fully the blessings when Christ's government will flourish in all nations.

We will see the opposite of what we see today. Instead of selfish ambition, every person rescues the needy. Instead of popular fashion, every person acts with good understanding. Instead of rewarding evil, righteousness and selflessness will be honoured. These are the hallmarks of a blessed community.

But the curse spreads on earth through carelessness, especially in the church, when people live for themselves. This is pictured by the idle women, whose life of ease shows the nature of the ungodly city.

Oppression is not just actively harming others, but passively living for ourselves, for our own family and for our own friends. This brings the curse on our land.

---

*Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted as a forest (wilderness).*

*And the work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.*

*And my people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation...*

***Isaiah 32:15, 17, 18***

---

## His Spirit

When we see the vision of Isaiah that Christ's kingdom will transform the nations of earth we ask how could this happen. It just doesn't look plausible today. Isaiah answers this several times, and shows the answer here. God will do it when he pours out his Spirit. It's not a complex matter.

We wonder whether this blessing speaks only of the work done in our heart through new birth, or is it the work done on earth by its transformation. It is both: the effect of the first is the second.

This chapter shows how Christ's kingdom flourishes. God pours out his Spirit, not just at the first Pentecost, but in all the earth, and transforms all his people. His kingdom comes within, by transforming our hearts. This then has the wide ranging effect of peace on earth. It will happen when he pours out his Spirit at the time he has decided. His delay is for good purpose. His people dwell securely on earth. The wilderness will be so fruitful, that the fields we now consider fruitful are a wilderness in comparison. Nature will be blessed beyond what we can imagine (vs. 19-20).

---

*The sinners in Zion  
are afraid;  
fearfulness has  
surprised the  
hypocrites...*

*He that walks  
righteously, that  
speaks uprightly... he  
shall dwell on high...*

*Your eyes shall see  
the king in his beauty  
and shall behold the  
land that is greatly  
expanded.*

*You shall not see the  
fierce people...*

*Look upon Zion... not  
one of her stakes  
shall be moved...*

*Your tackling is  
loosed...*

***Isaiah 33:14-17, 19,  
20, 23***

---

## King in Beauty

When Assyria comes against Jerusalem it is to cleanse it of hypocrites. They shall face eternal judgement (vs. 14). God will consume all the treacherous that spoil others.

But he who turns to the Lord and does justly will dwell on high, i.e. in security. They shall see the king: be delivered from Assyria and dwell in safety with Hezekiah.

The verse is Messianic and speaks of a greatly expanded land, not the old borders of Israel: Christ's kingdom possessing all nations on earth; not just expanded, but full of goodness.

The New Jerusalem shall dwell securely and the enemies of God will be a thing of the past, forgotten forever. *Not one of its stakes is moved*, Christ's kingdom shall excel in all the world.

*Your tackling is loosed...* We could not save ourselves, and the enemy took advantage of us, but when the Lord redeemed us he healed us by forgiving our sin (vs. 24).

---

*And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their hosts shall fall down...*

*It shall come down upon Idumea...*

***Isaiah 34:4-5***

---

## New Heaven

The coming of the Lord to punish Idumea, also called Edom. This prophecy of the destruction of Edom was fulfilled and the land remains till today as this chapter describes. See also the Septuagint where Edom is sometimes used to represent the Gentile nations in general (compare Acts 15:16-17 with Amos 9:11-12).

God has a controversy against all oppressive armies and nations that destroy people for plunder and persecute his church. They will be cast into everlasting fire. All evil nations shall pass away and the sinful/curse ridden form of the old earth shall vanish. Their leaders shall be dissolved and their lives shall go down to the pit. This includes Jerusalem, when it turned against God's people and was destroyed by Rome (2 Pet 3:10). It was the first *Gog and Magog* of the New Testament era (Rev 19:2, 17-18).

Not that the physical structure of the universe will be removed and replaced with another. The terms are symbolic of the overthrow and punishment of oppressive rulers and societies, all ungodliness, and all the temporary ways of man, to be replaced by the imperishable rule of Christ's kingdom and his people (2 Pet 3:12-13). The *New Heaven* means the authority of Christ and the *New Earth* is the effect.

---

*The wilderness and  
the solitary places  
shall be glad for  
them, and the desert  
shall rejoice, and  
blossom as the rose.*

*And the ransomed of  
the Lord shall return  
and come to Zion  
with singing... and  
sorrow and sighing  
shall flee away.*

**Isaiah 35:1, 10**

---

## The Kingdom

The return of the Jews from Babylon. The curse, represented by their punishment in Babylon, shall be broken and they shall be returned to favour with God. They shall come as on a highway, meaning God shall prepare a clear way for them through king Cyrus (vs. 8).

More exactly, it is the gospel preached by Christ, the return of favour to all people by Christ breaking the curse in his death and resurrection; the announcement of

good news and coming of God's kingdom through Jesus' ministry (Matt 11:1-6); the birth of his church and the harvest of all nations; the cleansing of his people from sin to walk unmolested by Satan on God's highway of salvation by faith.

Isaiah 35 is the coming of the kingdom of Christ through Jesus' appearance and ministry, the birth of the church, its ministry to all nations, the progress and blessing of Christ's government in the world through the church, and the eventual resurrection from the dead that rolls away every curse and sorrow (Rev 21:4). It begins in Christ's first coming, the gift of eternal life through the gospel, spreads and increases in the church age, and is fully accomplished by the last enemy being placed under his feet in his return to earth (Acts 3:21, 1 Cor 15:25-28).

---

*Then Hezekiah said  
to Isaiah, The word  
of the Lord is good.  
He also said, For  
there shall be peace  
and truth in my days.*

***Isaiah 39:8***

***Isaiah 36-39***

---

## Hezekiah

In many ways Hezekiah was used to foreshadow Christ's reign. He was called by God to renew the land. God gave him faith to stand against Assyria and trust him for deliverance. He brought Israel back to the word of God.

But as is common with us all, he had faults. He represents the transition between the Assyrian and the Babylonian invasions of Jerusalem. After been healed from sickness and given 15 more years to live, he fathered Manasseh, who eventually became the worst king in either Judah's or Israel's history.

It seems that Hezekiah let his guard down in his latter years. He didn't raise Manasseh well, and showed all Judah's defences to the nobles of Babylon. When rebuked for this and told of the invasion coming against Jerusalem his answer was, "It is good for I will have peace in my days" (Is 39:8). This is not very encouraging if leadership is leaving a strong faith for the next generation to follow.

He ran well most of his life and he is with the Lord in heaven now, but our last days are just as important as our first. We must realise the impact our life, faith and attitudes have on those around us, to the end of our lives. His attitude resembles the *rapture attitude* today: "just get me out"! That is not why Jesus came.

---

*Comfort, comfort my  
people... their  
iniquity is pardoned...*

*The voice that cries  
in the wilderness,  
Prepare the way of  
the Lord, make  
straight in the desert  
a highway for our  
God.*

*And the glory of the  
Lord shall be  
revealed.*

***Isaiah 40:1-5***

---

## Redeemed

Comfort my people in Babylon, and say their punishment is over, because of God's own disposition to forgive quickly.

Isaiah cries in the wilderness, the nation under curse, announcing the blessing, the return of God's favour. He calls Cyrus to prepare the way of Judah's return to Jerusalem. Every obstacle, whether governmental, military, or financial, shall be removed by Cyrus.

*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed...* All nations shall know that God

alone rules the nations and saves those who come to him in repentance and faith. God's purpose was to save many Gentiles (proselytes) before even Jesus came.

More exactly this prophecy pertains to the coming of Jesus to free us from our captivity of sin and judgement and make the way plain for us to be restored to everlasting fellowship with God. His death on the cross would deal with every obstacle of God's law in our way, and with every powerlessness or lack of God's Spirit in us to believe and to live in godliness.

John the Baptist would be the messenger to go before Christ, to announce his coming. All nations shall see the glory of God in the gospel, and in the flourishing of his kingdom on earth.

---

*All flesh is grass...*

*All nations before  
him are nothing...*

*Prepare a graven  
image not to be  
moved...*

*God brings the  
princes to nothing...*

*The Creator of the  
ends of the earth  
does not faint...*

*He shall renew your  
strength like the  
eagle... to run and  
not be weary...*

***Isaiah 40:6, 17, 20,  
28, 31***

---

## Gives Strength

All things are vanity in comparison to God. Man cannot last more than a few years. All the nations on earth are a drop in the bucket before God. The idols and false gods are without power. God made the heavens and the stars and he alone determines the history of the nations and which king rules and which kings fall.

Therefore, let no one say God doesn't see, or there is no justice (vs. 27). God will recompense the evil doer and reward the just and he will do this perfectly. Never faint in doing good. God is true and fully in charge. He does things his way, redeeming us from our faults. He will judge everyone eternally for how they live. Babylon also will fall for their sin. God

will return favour to his people and lead them back to himself.

He will give power to the faint that trust in him and wait for him in their trial in Babylon, and he will renew their strength and bring them like eagles to Jerusalem. So Christ renews all his people through his redemption. He gives us power to do God's will without a backsliding nature (vs. 31). We are as grass, but he makes us to live unto him (Gal 2:19).

---

*Who raised up the  
righteous man from  
the east, called him  
to his foot, gave the  
nations before him,  
and made him rule  
over kings...*

*Fear not, for I am  
with you, do not be  
dismayed, for I am  
your God. I will  
strengthen you, yes I  
will help you, I will  
uphold you with my  
right hand of  
righteousness.*

***Isaiah 41:2, 10***

---

## Deliverer

He raised up Cyrus from the east and calls him according to God's righteous cause: to wit, the punishment of Babylon and the deliverance of Judah. Every place is laid low before his advance. The nations fear and look to their idols for help (vs. 6-7).

God promises to be the help of Israel, not the nation, but the elect, the people of faith, whom he delivers from Babylon for the purpose of Christ and his church, and whom he delivers today through the gospel, calling them to faith from the ends of the earth.

These promises have often wrongly been read as to do with national Israel, as the Jews read them in Jesus' day, and were destroyed. The Bible is clear about their meaning, but they stubbornly looked for political deliverance, rather than accepting repentance freely through the cross.

God promises to always deliver his people and has given us Jesus as a covenant for this: whether from Babylon, or from other enemies of Israel before Jesus came, or all enemies of the church today. This promise is for all believers in Messiah, whether before or after Jesus came.

---

*Behold I will make  
you a new sharp  
threshing instrument  
having teeth: you  
shall thresh the  
mountains, and beat  
them small, and shall  
make the hills as  
chaff.*

*When the poor and  
needy seek water,  
and there is none,  
and their tongue fails  
for thirst, I the Lord  
will hear them...*

***Isaiah 41:15, 17***

---

## Nations Renewed

His church shall be a threshing instrument in God's hands to thresh the mountains as dust and the wind will blow them away (Is 2:2). This alludes to the vision of Dan 2:35, where a rock scatters the nations and then fills the earth. The church shall grow to change the old heaven and earth: renew the world.

Christ reigns in the church with good government, caring for the poor and needy and reviving the wildernesses of the earth with the blessing of God. This is the gospel in our hearts and its influence

in the nations. These promises are about the blessing of Christ's kingdom, not the restoration of national Israel.

When Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, they in the city claimed God would defend Jerusalem. When Rome destroyed Jerusalem they in the city claimed the same. Today they claim God will defend the city of Jerusalem when all nations forsake her. This is the same false hope. The promise is to Abraham and to his seed, not to earthly Jerusalem (Gal 3:16). This was the message of Jesus when he spoke to the Jews, but they would not hear (Matt 3:9, John 8:39, 42).

---

*Let them bring forth  
and show what shall  
happen: let them  
show the former  
things... or declare to  
us things to come.*

*I have raised up one  
from the north, and  
he shall come: from  
the rising of the sun  
shall he call upon my  
name: and he shall  
come upon princes.*

***Isaiah 41:22, 25***

---

## God of all Flesh

“Bring all your idols and gods from among all the nations and see which one can declare things that are to come. There is no other god beside me and none that can declare the future.”

“I though declare now that I will raise up one from the north/east of Jerusalem, and he shall call upon my name and bring down princes to free Judah and the nations from Babylon’s harsh rule.”

God’s purpose here was to have it on record beforehand that he called Cyrus, and named him even before he was born. This was to give a clear testimony to the nations, so the Gentiles would know he was God and turn from their sin and idolatry for salvation. This develops in the chapters ahead, which are clearly about God drawing in the Gentiles to his kingdom.

When the Gentiles see Cyrus raised up, doing exactly what Isaiah foretold, millions turn to faith in God, and order for the Old Testament to be translated into Greek so all nations can serve him. Later, when Jesus comes, there are millions of “God fearers” (Gentile believers) through the known world ready for the gospel.

---

*Behold my servant,  
whom I uphold; my  
elect, in whom my  
soul delights: I have  
put my Spirit upon  
him. He shall bring  
forth judgement to  
the Gentiles.*

*He will not cry, nor  
lift up, nor cause his  
voice to be heard in  
the streets (as  
pompous rulers).*

*He shall not break a  
bruised reed, or  
quench a smoking  
flax: he shall bring  
forth judgement to  
truth.*

*He shall not fail nor  
be discouraged, till  
he has set judgement  
in the earth: and the  
islands shall wait for  
his dominion.*

**Isaiah 42:1-4**

---

## His Commission

Messiah now clearly overshadows his forerunner Cyrus. He is the Saviour of all nations. He does not appear like the normal proud earthly rulers. He is gentle and compassionate to the weak.

The best way to describe the manner of his rule would be by the values he expressed in the *Sermon on the Mount*. He sets justice in all the earth. His dominion will extend to the islands (the ends of the earth). This is one of the clearest passages describing the eventual victory of Christ's kingdom in this present world.

*He will not stop...* means till he completes the commission he received from the Father: i.e. to die for our sins, to make intercession for us at the right hand of God, and to continue till the whole bride is gathered and handed to the Father, and till every enemy is placed under him. This is the commission that runs through the entire length of his reign from his

ascension to the Father's right hand, till our resurrection.

---

*I the Lord have called  
you in righteousness,  
and will hold your  
hand, and give you  
for a covenant of the  
people, for a light to  
the Gentiles.*

**Isaiah 42:6**

---

## Leads the Blind

Again Christ is compared with Cyrus. He is given for a covenant to the people and a light to the Gentiles. This means God fulfils his promises to Israel through Christ, i.e. through the New Covenant gospel of eternal life, and also includes the Gentiles in this covenant.

The claim that we are saying the church has replaced Israel isn't true. The church is *the called out people*, both in the Old and the New Testaments. It includes Jews and Gentiles and is the people through whom God fulfils his promises.

He brings the captives out of prison and opens blind eyes, literally by the miracles Jesus did, but also our eyes are open to God's plan, in contrast to the blindness of national Israel (vs. 19, 25).

God renews the whole world from its former curse, even the lands he judged (Kedar, vs. 11). Christ will lay down every barrier, remove every mountain and dry up every river in his path, to ensure he brings about the full blessing of his salvation to all nations (vs. 15). These are metaphors of the enemies to his rule and plan to bless the nations.

*He will lead the blind...* those who admit they need support, and he will show us the way. He will not forsake his promises or his people (vs. 16).

---

*Who is blind, but my servant? Or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is as blind as he that is perfect?*

*The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake.*

***Isaiah 42:19, 21***

---

## **National Israel**

God addresses national Israel, called to be his servant, but blind to his hand and purpose. God had shown them so many events in their history, blessings and disciplines, but none of these taught them and they have not benefited from them.

God will demonstrate his righteousness by judging a people given so much and who refused to bear the fruit. They were called to be a messenger to the nations, but instead they followed their sin and even sinned more than the nations. *Perfect* here means called or specially privileged. So their blindness is even more pronounced. “To whom much is given much shall be expected”, so if God did not judge them he would be counted unrighteous by the world. This applies to all who call upon his name today.

The nations will know his righteousness and many will trust in him and be saved. This is his objective, not a name for himself, but to awaken the conscience of the world to repent.

From all Israel, and even from all the nations of earth, there is no leader who can show the people the way of renewal and goodness. Even when God sent Israel to Babylon in punishment they came out no better. In the end they did not understand the reason or learn from the experience (vs. 25).

---

*When you pass  
through the waters I  
will be with you; and  
through the rivers,  
they shall not  
overflow you; when  
you walk through the  
fire, you shall not be  
burned...*

*I will bring your seed  
from the east, and  
gather you from the  
west; I will say to the  
north, Give up; and to  
the south, Keep not  
back: bring my sons  
from far, and my  
daughters from the  
ends of the earth;*

*Every one that is  
called by my name:  
for I have created  
him for my glory, I  
have formed him, yes,  
I have made him.*

**Isaiah 43:2, 5-7**

---

## New Creation

About the return of Judah from Babylon, but more specifically the calling of all his children through the gospel. The nation will not be destroyed in the fire of Babylon, just as he delivered them from Egypt. God will keep the church against all the gates of hell.

God returns the remnant from Babylon and from all nations in the known empire. Judah contains a remnant from the 12 tribes, from different times God has gathered them.

But this is specifically about God gathering his people into Christ. They return from Babylon in order to wait for Christ, which is their real return to God and deliverance from sin. God gathers all his seed, his sons and daughters, every one called by his name from the ends of the earth. He says he gathers through the new creation in Christ. This is not referring to national "Israel" today, but to all his people in

Christ, Jew or Gentile.

Notice also the oversight with which God gathers us. He gathers us individually, elects us one by one.

---

*Let all the nations be gathered... who among them can declare this?*

*Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.*

*You are my witnesses says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he...*

*I will work and who will stop it...*

***Isaiah 43:8-10, 13***

---

## **Sovereign Carer**

The gods of the nation are blind and deaf and those who worship them have become like them. Who among them knows the past or can declare the future: that God will raise Cyrus by name to free Judah, and will raise Christ out of a defeated nation, to gather his people and rule the world.

This declares the reason why God formed Israel as a nation and called them: to lead us all (Jew and Gentile) to Christ.

God called national Israel as a testimony of his plan concerning the kingdom of Christ and his salvation to the world (Heb 3:5). He did this so the world would know and then believe the gospel when it came.

He called Israel not only because of his love for them, but his love for the whole world: to ensure we all had a witness of his salvation.

Not only has he glorified himself in giving witness prior to the event, but also in showing his power and faithfulness in bringing it to fulfilment though all enemies come against his plan. He can do this because before him there was no God, nor after him will there be another (vs.10).

---

*Which brings forth  
the chariot and  
horse, the army and  
the power; they shall  
lie down together,  
they shall not rise:  
they are extinct, they  
are quenched as tow.*

*Behold, I will do a  
new thing; now it  
shall spring forth... I  
will make a way in  
the wilderness...*

*The beasts of the  
field shall honour me,  
the lizards and the  
owls; because I give  
waters... to give drink  
to my people.*

*This people I have  
formed for myself;  
they shall show forth  
my praises.*

**Isaiah 43:17, 19,  
20-21**

---

## Creation Rejoices

God's deliverance of Judah from Babylon shall be like his renewal of the whole earth. He has destroyed all oppressive armies and they never rise again.

He will do a new thing that has never been known to man. In part this is the New Covenant and removal of the Old Covenant ritual, but in full it's the impact or fruit in renewing the world.

The cursed land is blessed, referring both to eternal life in Christ and its effect on the earth. The animals rejoice, because the blessing renews all things (Rom 8:21); he renews the earth for the sake of his redeemed, *to give drink to my people*, i.e. so we dwell in a good land.

This happened in part when Babylon fell, because they ruined the trees and land to build instruments of war. But its obvious extension is the renewal of all things. It's the new creation, the church formed by

the resurrection of Christ, which inherits the earth, bringing praise to God: even as we do today by reflecting Christ (1 Pet 2:9).

---

*But you have not called upon me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel.*

*You have not brought me the small cattle of your burnt offerings.*

**Isaiah 43:22-23**

---

## Nominal Faith

Israel did not delight in God. It was a wearisome thing to be God's servants. They didn't want his honour, like Esau who despised the birthright, counting it a thing of no significance or blessing.

Israel saw God's call as legalism. They saw the honour as a heavy yoke. It made them weary. They had no delight in the Lord and so they had no delight in serving him. Even though God had blotted out their sins, it meant nothing to them (vs. 25). If this wasn't true they should show God otherwise (vs. 26). He calls to engage them and change them, if they will, but they won't.

This is a picture of nominal faith, where it is wearisome to serve God, to go to church, to spread the gospel. Faith is seen as *do's and dont's* rather than a true guide to life. People are wearied by eternal life and grace and they go back to sin.

This isn't because God has been a burden to us, but it is a refection of the state of heart. It also shows how God wants us to know and serve him. He wants our heart renewed so it is a delight to us. He doesn't want weary religious service.

But when he is a delight to us, we want to offer him our lives, our money, our time, our everything, because our heart is in it. It's like a good marriage. When we are in love it is a pleasure, and a privilege to be called, not a burden.

---

*For I will pour out  
my Spirit upon him  
that is thirsty...*

*One shall say, I am  
the Lord's; and  
another shall call  
himself by the name  
of Jacob...*

***Isaiah 44:3, 5***

---

## **Born in Zion**

God shows the true deliverance of Israel wasn't from Babylon, but through Christ. *Pouring out his Spirit* means first God brings Judah out of Babylon, returning them to favour. But he means more. By raising Cyrus and showing the world he is God, God pours his Spirit out on people from all nations: i.e. a multitude of

proselytes come to the Lord in the Intertestamental period, before Jesus was born.

The main purpose of the prophecy is to foretell Christ pouring out God's Spirit upon all flesh through the New Covenant. People from all nations call themselves by the God of Jacob, the saviour Jesus Christ, and are accepted by God.

The city of God is now heavenly Jerusalem, which gives birth through the gospel to children from the whole earth: "Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah. I will record Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me, Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush, and will say, This one was born in Zion. Indeed, of Zion it will be said, This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High himself will establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writes up the people, that this man was born there. Selah." (Ps 87:3-6)

Those people who were once enemies are now united in one body, by God's Spirit in the gospel.

---

*Yes, he makes it into  
a god and worships  
it. He makes it a  
graven image and  
falls down to it..*

*And prays to it and  
says, Deliver me; for  
you are my god.*

***Isaiah 44:15, 17***

---

## **Vain Faith**

God encourages those in captivity in Babylon not to think the gods of the idols of the nations have done this to them. God is the first and the last and he is in charge of everything Israel is passing through (vs. 8). At the appointed time he shall deliver them and bring Christ.

We can apply this today, when one group or another seems to have the upper hand over the church and the word of God doesn't seem to be bearing fruit. Sometimes it appears this way because we don't see the bigger picture. But there is no other God and all his word shall come to pass and his kingdom shall be exalted.

A main lesson God had for Judah in their captivity was the vanity of their idols that could not save them. Through Israel as a witness, God meant this lesson for all the nations, when he would show them he raised up Cyrus, and no idol did it, and no idol could stand in his way. Gentiles from many nations in that day turned from idolatry as a result of this chapter in Isaiah. They read it and turned.

Today we can likewise make gods in our imagination, to serve our own interests and ego. To seek his kingdom means first we seek his rule in our hearts to change our values and lives.

---

*I have blotted out, as  
a thick cloud, your  
transgressions, and,  
as a thick cloud, your  
sins: return to me; for  
I have redeemed you.*

**Isaiah 44:22**

---

## He Turns Us

*I have blotted out your transgression...* said of Judah in God returning them from Babylon, but the real aim is to us, speaking of Christ taking away our sin, doing what was never done in the Old Covenant, but a *new thing*, i.e. not the

temporal covering of sin, but its removal forever by one offering. They were not to remember the Old Covenant and its rituals: there were to turn away from that to the *new and living way* in Christ (Is 43:18-19, Heb 10). To continue in the former way would be to deny what Christ did.

Even though they returned to Jerusalem, God says *return to me*, showing the real captivity and real deliverer, Christ. God had universally redeemed them and done all to restore them, but this is of no benefit if they refuse it and do not return to him. He calls them to return, but their hearts are against him. The believers knew he must help them and even then they saw this help in Christ. God sent his Son to win grace for us on the cross and turn us back to God. Thus the repeated sin cycle of those he calls is broken as we grow in him...

*Let your hand be upon the Man of your right hand,  
upon the Son of man whom you made strong for  
yourself, so we will not go back from you: make us alive  
and we will call upon your name. Turn us again... Ps  
80:17-19*

---

*That frustrates the tokens of the liars, and makes the diviners mad; that turns wise men backwards; and makes their knowledge foolish.*

*That confirms the word of his servant, and performs the counsel of his messengers; that says to Jerusalem, You shall be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, You shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places.*

**Isaiah 44:25-26**

---

## All Restored

God will make the counsel of both witchdoctors and the “learned” foolish. The “learned” atheist thinks he is wise, but his counsel is as foolish as those he calls unenlightened. God will fulfil all he has spoken.

Isaiah shows here what Cyrus will achieve. He will cause Jerusalem to be rebuilt and inhabited, and the foundation of the temple to be laid. Isaiah calls this *raising up the decayed places*, meaning Jerusalem and the regions of Judah.

This prophecy refers to the church as a whole, but also speaks of Cyrus to foreshadow of the work of God in Christ. Though Judah was cast down

and poor, God would raise up his Son from Judah and through him restore the fallen state of man. He would restore the decayed places of our own personal lives, i.e. what sin has destroyed in our lives and relationships he repairs. But he also restores the earth by taking away the curse: all the decay of this creation is changed to fullness. It is impossible to limit the meaning of these metaphors to just a partial fulfilment.

---

*That says of Cyrus,  
He is my shepherd,  
and shall perform all  
my pleasure: even  
saying to Jerusalem,  
You shall be built;  
and to the temple,  
Your foundation  
shall be laid.*

**Isaiah 44:28**

---

## Cyrus

Now the Lord specifically calls Cyrus by name. Some have doubted this was written by Isaiah before the time, but there is no trace in Jewish thought of a later insertion of Cyrus's name. How could they have put his name into all the copies of the text? Why did millions of Gentiles all over the empire turn to God, before

Jesus came, on the basis of this prediction of Cyrus if it wasn't foretold? The Jewish historian Josephus wrote that when king Cyrus saw he was foretold by God, he zealously set out to obey. He used the riches he had won from the conquest of other nations to resettle and rebuild Jerusalem and Judah. This was considered an enemy city and rebuilding it certainly against the best interests of Cyrus.

It is not only his name that is mentioned in Isaiah, but all the details of his conquests and his acts in restoring Judah. These are too numerous to have been added later. It also predicts Christ with more specific details, and we know all this was written before Christ came, because Isaiah was found almost in whole in the Dead Sea caves, dating from 100 years before Christ. The Greek translation of Isaiah in the Septuagint was known throughout the whole world, so these ideas of textual tampering are more ridiculous than the truth they seek to contradict.

---

*This is what the Lord  
says to his anointed,  
to Cyrus...*

*And I will give you  
the treasures of  
darkness...*

*That they may know  
from the rising of the  
sun, and from the  
west, that there is  
none beside me...*

*I form light, and  
create darkness: I  
make peace and  
create evil...*

*Drop down heavens...  
and let righteousness  
spring up...*

***Isaiah 45:1, 3, 6-8***

---

## God's Rule

Cyrus is called God's anointed, which means his chosen. The anointed was also a term used for the king, and Messiah means king.

God will give Cyrus the treasures of darkness, which refers to the plunder of all the nations. He called Cyrus for Israel's sake, but also so all people from the east to the west may know God, turn to him and be saved. His whole purpose was the salvation of many from every nation.

He forms light and darkness, good and evil, which in this case means he raises up a nation and he brings down another. He brings blessing and cursing. It does not refer to moral evil, but to his blessing and judgement on the nations, in this case by

Cyrus.

This is the righteousness that the heavens pour down: God's judgement among the nations and recompense for the oppressed in justice. Heaven also pours down his Spirit to renew the earth in righteousness for the people he creates in the New Covenant.

---

*Woe to him that  
strives with his  
maker...*

*Woe to him that says  
to his father, What  
have you given birth  
to?...*

*Ask me about things  
to come concerning  
my sons, and ask  
counsel from me  
about the work of my  
hands.*

*He shall build my city  
and let go my  
captives, not for price  
or reward.*

*The labour of Egypt,  
Ethiopia, Sabeans,  
shall come after you  
in chains...*

**Isaiah 45:9-11, 13-  
14**

---

## Lord of All

As Cyrus spoils the nations and takes the plunder, so Christ spoils the nations and takes the plunder of souls. These are God's true riches he gives to Christ.

Concerning this plunder God addresses the Jews who object to the Gentiles freely coming in to his kingdom. Shall the creature argue with his maker about the sons he creates? This addresses the whole controversy about the salvation of the Gentiles we see in the book of Acts.

God says that instead of jealousy, the Jews should seek the Lord about the New Covenant and the children he makes in Christ, and seek to be a part, rather than reject what God does.

Cyrus builds Jerusalem without being paid to do it, but uses the plunder and gifts from Gentile nations, and many people

came and bowed down and acknowledged God had raised him. So Christ won this plunder on the cross and these same nations call him Lord and acknowledge the true God is in him.

---

*They shall be  
ashamed... but Israel  
shall be saved... and  
will not be ashamed  
world without end.*

*This is what the Lord  
says who created the  
heavens; God himself  
formed the earth and  
made it; he has  
established it, he did  
not create it in vain,  
he formed it to be  
inhabited...*

*Even to him men  
shall come; and all  
that are incensed  
against him shall be  
ashamed.*

***Isaiah 45:16-18, 24***

---

## Inhabited

He didn't create the earth to be empty, but to be inhabited. That is, the purpose for which God created the earth, to be inhabited with people who know and love him and who dwell in peace and fullness, shall be fulfilled through Christ.

He didn't call Israel in vain, but to fulfil this promise (vs. 19). Yet they wouldn't believe. He calls the Gentiles into this promise also, saying, "Look to me and be saved all the ends of the earth." (vs. 22)

The word that God has sworn, which shall not return to him in vain, is that *every knee shall bow and every tongue confess* he is Lord (vs. 23): to whom shall they bow? To Christ: *even to him shall men*

*come and all who are incensed against him shall be ashamed.*

Every nation that won't bow, that works against the Lord in rebellion and destruction of the people, will be destroyed by the Lord, until he has renewed all things.

But Israel, the people he makes in Christ, will dwell forever, *to inhabit the earth he made, world without end.* Here we see he fulfils what he purposed through Adam at creation.

---

*Bel bows down, Nebo  
stoops, their idols  
were (carried) upon  
the beasts...*

*And even to your old  
age I am he; and  
even to hoar hairs I  
will carry you. I have  
made and I will bear;  
even I will carry and  
will deliver you.*

*Calling a ravenous  
bird from the east,  
the man that  
executes my counsel...  
I have spoken it, I will  
bring it to pass. I  
have purposed it, I  
will also do it.*

***Isaiah 46:1, 4, 11***

---

## The Aged

The gods of Babylon (Bel and Nebo) fall. They are carried away on live stock. The gods can do nothing unless they are made and put in place by people who make sure they are steady and don't fall over. God in contrast cares for men who look to him. He cares for us. We don't look after him.

He even cares for the aged and makes sure they will return comfortably from their exile in Babylon. He is faithful even to our old age. He is not like the rulers of the world who only care for us when we can help them. God has every need of ours in his heart, every hair counted, and he is faithful to every minor thing concerning our lives until our last breath.

This also shows the detail to which Cyrus enthusiastically cooperated with God's call. Though he is termed a *ravenous bird*, God tamed him and he made the way of return so open and provided all that was needed, that Judah did not return in panic: even their aged were carried back in care and no one, or no nation was able to harass them on the journey through otherwise dangerous paths. This is how we ought to care for and honour the aged.

---

*Come down and sit in  
the dust, O virgin  
daughter of  
Babylon...*

*I was angry with my  
people, I have  
polluted my  
inheritance, and  
given them into your  
hand: you didn't  
show them any  
mercy, you laid your  
yoke very heavily  
upon the ancient.*

*And you said, I will be  
a lady forever... you  
are given to  
pleasures...*

*Because you have  
trusted in  
wickedness...  
therefore evil shall  
come upon you*

***Isaiah 47:1, 6-11***

---

## Cruelty

Babylon was unknown as an empire in Isaiah's day. No one would have believed it would be an empire, yet in the first half of his book and the second half, Isaiah spoke of its greatness and the details of how it would fall. Cyrus was unknown till many years after Isaiah died. Isaiah 47 speaks again of why Babylon would fall.

These themes are repeated: each time God adds detail. If they weren't repeated, people would argue with their meaning. By repeating the main themes through Isaiah, God makes his word undeniable.

God said when he gave Judah into Babylon's hands they showed no mercy. Even against the aged they showed no care. And they had such pride in their own strength they believed they could sustain their riches and empire no matter how badly they disgraced other people and oppressed them. They were given to

selfish pleasures, which in itself is a form of cruelty to others.

Because they have trusted in wickedness, God will not help them when the enemy is cruel to them.

---

*I have declared this  
to you from the  
beginning, before it  
came to pass, so you  
could not say, My idol  
has done them...*

*For my name's sake I  
will defer my anger,  
and for my praise I  
will refrain from you,  
that I will not cut you  
off.*

**Isaiah 48:5, 9**

---

## **My Name's Sake**

God says he has redeemed Jacob from Babylon only for his name's sake (vs. 11). He declared he would do this well before the event so they couldn't say their idols did it (vs. 5). When his prophets spoke of these events before, they were new. No one knew or had thought of them, and there was no natural way of foreseeing them, so these events could not be put down to natural causes (vs. 6-7). God knows the treachery of the human heart

(vs. 8), to explain away his glory, so he made it clear by his prophets concerning Babylon and Christ's coming (vs. 16).

For his name sake he will delay his anger and bring back the exile from Babylon, to ensure Christ will come. This is not for the nation of Israel he does this, but only a delay. They shall be destroyed by Rome when his work is done by Christ. The reason for the return from exile is so God will keep his promises of sending his Son for those he calls.

So he says to Israel, go out of Babylon, sing God has redeemed me, but know you are a stiff-necked people and you will not learn from this, and Rome will come against you later (vs. 20). And so God was good to them (vs. 21), but *there is no peace for the wicked* (vs. 22).

---

*And now, says the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him...*

*It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation to the ends of the earth.*

**Isaiah 49:5-6**

---

## My Israel

God calls his servant Christ to gather his elect from Jacob and from all the Gentile nations. Christ is called *Israel*. Israel foreshadows and points to Christ and his redeeming work for the nations.

Again we see here the layers of prophecy. Israel says they have laboured in vain, pointing to their own weakness, but also pointing to Christ, who died in weakness, but was raised by the power of God (vs. 4). God turns Christ's sufferings to victory.

*You are my servant O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.* Isaiah 49:3

God was glorified in the nation of Israel, for through them came the testimony of Christ and the saviour, and through them the world learned more about the righteousness, goodness and discipline of the Lord.

Christ is God's unfailing servant; through him God's mercy and faithfulness are glorified through all nations. *Out of Egypt I have bought my Son* (Hos 11:1, Matt 2:15). Israel means *overcomer*, or *prince with God*, which can only refer to Christ. When Jacob's name was changed to Israel, he was foreshadowing the true overcomer. Christ is true Israel.

---

*This is what the Lord says, the redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despises, to him whom the nations abhorred, to a servant of rulers. Kings shall see and arise, princes shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful..*

*This is what the Lord says, In an acceptable time I have heard you... I will preserve you and give you for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.*

**Isaiah 49:7-8**

---

## Promises Kept

Christ is despised and abhorred. He came as a servant, but kings and princes shall worship him. God heard his prayer during his trials and sufferings and helped and preserved him: rose him from the dead (Heb 5:7).

God will give Jesus as a covenant, meaning the avenue through which he fulfils his promises: to establish the earth, to cause his seed to inherit the desolate heritages, meaning the fruitfulness of earth that has been spoiled.

He sets his people free from their prison of sin: which Cyrus could not do (vs. 9). People go into captivity because of sin. Many *Cyrus'* can come, but captivity will return, unless Christ breaks the bondage of sin and makes us free indeed.

In Christ we will feed in the pastures of life and be watered by his Spirit of everlasting life. The seed who inherit these things shall come from far: from the north, the west and from Sinim (vs.12). It is uncertain what Sinim refers to, except it represents distant places to be included in Christ's kingdom.

---

*And kings shall be  
your nursing fathers,  
and their queens  
your nursing  
mothers: they shall  
bow to you with their  
face to the earth, and  
lick the dust of your  
feet; and you shall  
know I am the Lord:  
for they shall not be  
ashamed that wait  
for me.*

**Isaiah 49:23**

---

## So Many

God has not forsaken his people, but like a mother he has them on his heart and written on his hand, and will fulfil his promises to them in Christ (vs. 15-16).

He will gather all his children and drive out all their enemies (vs. 19). The land they inhabited, before it was destroyed by Babylon, will be too small for those the Lord will gather to himself. The children the true seed will have, after they have lost national Israel in judgement, shall say

the land is too small, give place for us to dwell in (vs. 20).

Then Israel says, *Who has born all these children, seeing we were judged and lost so many, where did all these come from, as from nowhere?* (vs. 21)

God answers, *Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set my banner among the people, and they shall bring your seed in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders* (vs. 22). The old land of Israel is too small and God expands the nation to all people and to the whole world. The seed of Judah inherits all domains of the world.

This is directed to Christ: all nations worship him; and to those in captivity: they shall not be ashamed of their loss for their coming seed shall be far more numerous in comparison.

---

*Shall the prey be  
taken from the  
mighty, or the lawful  
captive delivered?*

*But the Lord says,  
Even the captives of  
the mighty shall be  
taken away, and the  
prey of the terrible  
shall be delivered: for  
I will contend with  
him that contends  
with you and I will  
save your children.*

*And I will feed those  
that oppress you with  
their own flesh; and  
they will be drunken  
by their own blood.*

**Isaiah 49:24-26**

---

## **Protects Church**

This portion of scripture speaks of those in captivity for lawful reasons. Judah was in Babylon due to their sins. We were captives of the devil due to our sin.

The only way we could be lawfully delivered would be if God gave another captive in our place, as a ransom. In a sense Christ was given to the spoiler to spoil him on the cross, but the ransom is paid to satisfy God's just and righteous law. God did not owe the devil anything. The debt belonged to us and the debt was to God's law and righteousness.

Christ died and spoiled the strongman and delivered his captives. Judah was freed from Babylon and Jerusalem rebuilt at the cost of the Gentiles. In both cases

those set free did not pay. He has delivered us without charge to us from Satan and from those Satan uses.

This speaks of the church today. God will stand by the church and protect her, until all his purposes are brought to pass. When God birthed the church, he protected it from the Jews who were drunk with the blood of the early martyrs and caused them to eat their own flesh when they were in siege.

---

*Behold, you have  
been sold for your  
iniquities... Is my  
hand short at all,  
that it cannot  
redeem?...*

*The Lord has opened  
my ear and I was not  
rebellious... I have  
given my back to the  
smiters; and my  
cheeks to them that  
plucked out my hair.  
I didn't hide my face  
from shame and  
spitting.*

*Behold, the Lord will  
help me... they shall  
all wax old as a  
garment...*

***Isaiah 50:1-2, 5-6, 9***

---

## **Meekness Rules**

Christ is contrasted to the unbelieving nation. Judah is sold for their sins, not because God has no power to save them. There is none to call to him, who knows and trusts his goodness and strength.

Christ, on the other hand, has perfect confidence in God's protection when the enemy comes against him. This is because he has no sin and no fear. He is so sure of God's help that he sets his face like a flint to go forward in faith in the Father's will (vs. 7, Luke 9:51, Matt 26:67). He hears from the Father and his heart is steady, knowing Father is true and faithful.

All his enemies shall wax old as a garment: all nations that come against him shall likewise perish (Heb 1:11-12).

Christ is given lordship over all nations and he shall rule them. They shall perish, but he will remain. The meek shall rule the enemy.

Let us trust in the Lord when afflicted, as Christ did, rather than seek vain supports (vs. 10-11). As Judah was told, we should turn to him in rest for his deliverance, as Christ did. He will be faithful to us.

---

*Look to Abraham  
your father... for I  
called him alone, and  
blessed him, and  
increased him...*

*He will make the  
wilderness like  
Eden... I will make my  
judgement to rest for  
a light to the people.*

*The heavens shall  
vanish, the earth  
shall wax old like a  
garment...*

***Isaiah 51:2-4, 6***

---

## Shall be Changed

Those in captivity in Babylon should remember Abraham, though he was just one, God increased his number to be a large nation. So he will rebuild his people through Christ, though at present they are few in number.

Christ shall renew the whole land. His kingdom shall reign through the church and shall make the nations like Eden, as his government brings God's blessing.

In addition to this increased blessing in the nations as the church expands its influence, the current form of the heavens and the earth shall in the end perish, that is they shall be *changed* and renewed. See Psalm 102:25-26 and Heb 1:12, where *changed* means to transform into a new state (Rom 8:21, 1 Cor 15:51-54). By the gospel God transforms our spirit by new birth, our lives also by his Spirit, and he shall transform our flesh and this present creation at the resurrection.

In this transformation all wicked men and nations shall perish off the earth. So we are told not to fear them now. This earth of wickedness shall perish like a garment and the earth shall be wholly righteous from generation to generation (vs. 8). Babylon's fall foreshadowed this wicked age perishing.

---

*Are you not he who  
cut Rahab...dried up  
the sea... for the  
ransomed to pass  
over?*

*The redeemed shall  
return to Zion, and  
everlasting joy shall  
be on their heads and  
sorrow and  
mourning shall flee  
away.*

*And I have put my  
words in your mouth,  
and I have covered  
you in the shadow of  
my hand, that I may  
plant the heavens,  
and lay the  
foundations of the  
earth, and say to  
Zion, You are my  
people.*

**Isaiah 51:9-11, 16**

---

## All Things New

*Rahab* here is Egypt, reminding Judah of the Passover. He will surely deliver them from Babylon and his church by the Passover of Christ. He shall give us eternal life from his heavenly Zion. *Sorrow and mourning shall flee away...* both our joy in Christ now and also when he renews all things.

We should not fear the enemy, because God has defeated him on the cross and will banish him from earth (vs. 13).

He called Christ and put his words in his mouth and gave him to redeem his church: so he would plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth and say to Zion, *You are my people*.

Here it is clear the *New Heavens* and the *New Earth* are the church. He laid their foundations through the cross and

resurrection of Christ. The Old Heavens and Old Earth represent the wickedness of man and his kingdoms, and the wickedness of Judah under the Old Covenant; which he removes and establishes a righteous kingdom that shall cover the earth and last forever (2 Pet 3:10-13).

---

*There is none to  
guide her... neither is  
there any that takes  
her by the hand...*

*Who shall be sorry  
for you... by whom  
shall I comfort you...*

*Your sons have  
fainted...*

*Behold, I have taken  
the cup of trembling  
out of your hand and  
I will put it in the  
hand of him that  
afflicts you.*

***Isaiah 51:18-23***

---

## **Guide & Comfort**

God's whole purpose is to relieve the oppressed. There was none to guide the meek, to show them the way of justice. They had none who had not sinned that may receive the reward of righteousness and show man that God reigns over evil. Instead evil wins the day.

God saw also there was no one to comfort the afflicted. When he sent his Son and he was afflicted, showing he has come to share our suffering and also to show us by his resurrection that we shall rise.

God's purpose was to comfort us and show us there is hope for those who do well and who turn from sin, even though this present world persecutes us. He shows this present world shall change.

He sent Jesus so we will have someone to follow. When the issues of right and wrong come up at our work place and in the affairs of life, we don't have to follow Pilate who washed his hands, but we can do God's will and know God is just and he sees and rewards those who do well and punishes those who destroy. Wickedness shall not swallow good, but good shall prevail. God sent Jesus to show us this.

---

*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that brings good news, that publishes peace... that publishes salvation, that says to Zion, Your God reigns.*

*Depart, depart, go out from there, touch no unclean thing, go out from her midst, be clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord...*

***Isaiah 52:7, 11***

---

## **Babylon Fallen**

God has brought down Babylon and freed his people from their sin and declared good news to the captive of sin, to the ends of the earth (vs. 10).

The fall of spiritual Babylon in the book of Revelation was Jerusalem, which oppressed the early church, but which also represents all the oppressors of God's people. Since this marks the end of all God's enemies, then *come out of her my people and touch not the unclean thing*. This means not to partake of her compromise and her sin, so you shall also not partake of her curses and judgements.

The fall of Babylon is the fall of Old Jerusalem, the fall of the old earth and sinful habitations of man. It is the destruction and judgement of all mankind that turns away from God and who destroy the weak and innocent and bring a curse.

You were redeemed without price (vs. 3). Cyrus paid the bill, and so too did Christ. All has been paid for us, all we need do is come: the feast is ready. All we need do is repent. God has already laid down all obstacles to us coming to him.

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*Behold my servant  
shall deal prudently,  
he shall be exalted  
and extolled, and be  
very high*

**Isaiah 52:13**

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## Authority & Rule

God's servant shall be prudent: he shall obey and do all Father's will. Therefore God shall give him a name above every name, and an everlasting kingdom (Phil 2:8-10, Heb 1:8-9). All the kingdoms of the earth shall become his kingdom (Dan 2:35, 7:14, Rev 11:15).

*His visage was marred (lit. by) man...* (vs. 14) This is Paul's subject in Phil 2. Jesus didn't make a show and so many did not recognize him, and he became obedient to death, and they were astonished to see his exaltation.

They did to Jesus what they did to Judah by taking Judah captive in Babylon. Jesus bore our judgement and took the curse that was meant for many nations (lit. people). But they were brutish, while he was a servant.

*That which had not been told them...* (vs. 15) Those who had not heard of the resurrection of Christ. Many, including kings, shall shut their mouths in astonishment to hear the gospel, such things they have never even thought of before. Paul quotes this verse in regard to missions in Rom 15:21.

*He sprinkles many nations (peoples)...* (vs. 15) The gospel is not only us being cleansed and saved, but also the exaltation of Christ in the world. Being raised to Father's right hand doesn't just mean he sits there in heaven; it means *authority*, from where he rules the nations of the earth.

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*Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*

*He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he has no form nor (kingly) beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows...*

**Isaiah 53:1-3**

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## Sinless Death

No one believed the gospel; except those to whom the Father reveals the truth. Because of the humility of his coming, no one would understand who he was without Father's Spirit. It's the same today. He comes to us as "the least of these my brethren" and we often pass by on the other side (Matt 25:40).

*He bore our griefs and sorrows, pains, sicknesses and the curse (vs. 4). Man thought Jesus was stricken by God for blasphemy, but it was for our sin. What is the disease? All we like sheep have gone*

*astray, each one to his own way (vs. 6). It's a heart disease.*

*He did not open his mouth (vs. 7). He depended on his Father and did not curse those who afflicted him. Justice was taken from him, the meaning of his lamentation, My God, why have you forsaken me? (vs. 8, Ps 22:1) He was allowed to die unjustly for us. Jesus knew this and committed his way to the Father.*

*He was buried with the wicked...(vs.9), i.e. he took the curse due to us, (lit. though) he did no iniquity. The sinlessness of Christ is proclaimed. This has not been proclaimed of any other man or woman in history.*

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*Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he has poured out his soul to death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

**Isaiah 53:12**

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## Heir of All

*He shall see his seed* (vs. 10). This is a reference to his resurrection. Isaiah 53 shows the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. He has redeemed his seed.

*He shall prolong his days* (vs. 10). Father shall return him to life and he shall gather his seed from the nations: i.e. those who believe his report, whom the Father draws and gives to him by faith.

*Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great* (vs. 12). This is a third testimony

in to his resurrection. He will receive the inheritance of the great or mighty, as the champion who won the battle. He takes the devil's plunder, we who were made captive by sin. Like Cyrus routed Babylon, Jesus routes the kingdom of darkness by laying down his sinless life. In suffering for sin, he pays its penalty and removes its curse. He takes the prize, the church God has given to him to be head over, to care for (Matt 13:44-46). He can trust Jesus to care for his people.

*He will divide the spoil with the strong* (vs. 12). This is a repeat of the theme for poetic effect. Father gives the spoil to the strong. Jesus did Father's will and did not yield to Satan. It's not just the church, but the kingdom and the world he is heir of and which he shall change (Heb 1:4, 12).

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*Sing, O barren, you  
who did not bear;  
break into singing,  
and cry aloud... for  
the children of the  
desolate are more  
than the children of  
the married...*

*Enlarge the place of  
your tent, and let  
them stretch out the  
curtains of your  
habitation...*

**Isaiah 54:1-2**

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## Enlarged Land

The barren is Judah. When Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, Judah was like an insignificant village. But Isaiah boldly declares through Christ Judah shall have more children than other nations. Her seed shall rule the earth alone.

*Enlarge the place of your tent...* The old land of Israel is too small for her children. She must spread her land to the right and left to make room for all the Gentiles she will inherit. The globe becomes her land.

Though Judah is in ruin, their true seed shall not be ashamed when they see God's word fulfilled in Christ (vs. 4). They are barren yet they have a husband, God, who keeps his word (vs. 5). He will be called, *The God of the whole earth* (vs. 5).

God called Judah when she was grieved and forsaken, so he always revives the church when it looks at its lowest ebb, when all those who claim to be experts have claimed its irrelevance: then he makes their word foolish to weed out the sinners. Then *with great mercy he will gather us...* (vs. 7) It will be an everlasting kindness he will never take from his people (vs. 8). Just as God promised Noah the waters would never again cover the whole earth, he promises his church he will never remove his kindness from them.

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*O afflicted one, tossed  
and not comforted,  
behold I will lay your  
stones with fair  
colours, and lay your  
foundations with  
sapphires.*

*And all your children  
shall be taught by the  
Lord...*

*No weapon that is  
formed against you  
shall prosper, and  
every tongue that  
shall rise against you  
in judgement you  
shall condemn.*

***Isaiah 54:11, 13, 17***

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## Your Seed

The afflicted and storm tossed is Judah in Babylon, and the church, but more specifically it is Christ. He is afflicted in his sufferings and death and not comforted.

God makes a covenant with Jesus on our behalf. Because he has been obedient God pours out his blessing on him for our sake. He will set the foundations of his house, the house of the Lord, in sapphires: i.e. make his house exalted to inherit the wealth of the Gentiles (souls).

*So all your children shall be taught of the Lord.* This is the children the Father draws to him (Is 8:18). Jesus referred to this in John 6:45. We come to him because Father teaches us to believe on Jesus.

Our peace in Christ's eternal life shall be great. We shall be established in righteousness, because of his cross (vs. 14). Therefore, no accusation or curse can unsettle us and we shall dwell in security. Every enemy that shall come against the church shall fall, as God comes to our aid (vs. 17). The church shall outlast all its enemies. God created the spoiler that spoils, God has redeemed us from his hand and he has total control over him (vs. 16).

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*Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*

*For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

***Isaiah 55:1, 12***

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## **The Blossom**

Instead of labouring in idolatry and sin, where the only fruit is the curse and death, take my salvation freely offered and your lives will be full of goodness.

I have given you David's sure promise and fulfilled it through his offspring Christ. He shall command God's people in justice, and the Gentiles shall be joined to him and share in those mercies (vs. 4-5).

Therefore forsake your own way and I will abundantly pardon, as I don't think like man, I don't bear grudges, but I am willing to bestow love on my enemies (vs. 8-9).

The blessing I will give you will be so much that even the whole of creation will be renewed. The trees of the field shall be included and they shall rejoice and praise the Lord. All things in creation will fulfil their original purpose before the fall. I will take away the curse, the thorn and the thistle, and creation shall display my love forever (vs.13).

You ask how could this happen? How could such a sinful world be changed like this? It's not complex. Just as the rain brings forth the blossom, so when I pour out my Spirit, this fruit will come forth. My word will not return to me until this is accomplished (vs. 10-11).

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*This is what the Lord says, Keep judgement, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.*

*Neither let the son of the stranger, that has joined himself to the Lord say, The Lord has utterly separated me from his people...*

**Isaiah 56:1, 3**

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## Open Door

Look for God's coming salvation, by turning to him and living justly. It is close at hand, i.e. in regards to shortness of life and the certainty of his eternal plan, also in his helping the church in our time.

They are enjoined to keep the Sabbath, i.e. don't go after profit, but put his kingdom first (Matt 6:33). Don't forsake the worship of God, fellowship with believers and his word, or you will certainly wither as a dry shrub.

This is for the Gentiles. God calls all of them into his assembly. If they will choose him and do right God will freely accept them. He won't even make them feel adopted or second rate but will give them a name better than sons and daughters. So my house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations (Mark 11:17).

This was fulfilled in the Intertestamental period when millions of Gentiles turned to God and joined the synagogue. See Thessalonica as just one example: "a multitude of devout Greeks" were at the synagogue (Acts 17:4). But it more especially shows the great numbers of Gentiles who would come to Christ. Though the Jews strove against this, God shows in Isaiah he accepts them (Acts 13:47-50, 1 Thes 2:16).

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*All you beasts of the field, come to devour...*

*His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.*

*Yes, they are greedy...*

**Isaiah 56:9-11**

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## Rome at Hand

The text of Isaiah, as we will see in some of its latter chapters, moves away from its focus on Babylon to a focus on Rome and the time of Jesus. The heart of Isaiah 56 is God's plan in Christ to lay the foundation of a new temple for all his people, Jews and Gentiles, who come to him in faith. Jesus did this just prior to the Roman invasion.

*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations...* but the Jews had made it a den of thieves (Is 56:7, Mark 11:17).

Isaiah continues showing the state of affairs when Jesus would come for the Gentiles. The beasts of the field are the Gentile powers, just as Revelations speaks of Rome the beast in this way, who would come and devour Jerusalem. The Pharisees were blind leaders of the blind, asleep in regard to missing the visitation of Christ and judgement then at hand (Matt 15:14, 23:16, see all Matt 23).

This theme of Jerusalem sleeping at the time of its destruction is taken up by Paul in Thessalonians (1 Thes 5:1-11). They were covetous false shepherds, unable to bark: unable to warn of what is coming, to lead God's people to safety in Christ, as are many preachers today.

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*The righteous perish  
and no man lays it to  
heart: and merciful  
men are taken away,  
none considering  
that the righteous is  
taken away from the  
evil to come.*

*But he that puts his  
trust in me shall  
possess the land, and  
shall inherit my holy  
mountain.*

**Isaiah 57:1, 13**

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## **Manasseh**

Jerusalem during the reign of Manasseh, soon before its destruction by Babylon: the idolatry and unfaithfulness of Judah, their child sacrifice and sorcery. These were worse during Manasseh's reign than any period in their history. Manasseh did repent and God accepted him as an example of his huge love (2 Chron 33:13).

No alliance will deliver them from their destruction by Babylon (vs. 13). But if they repent in captivity God will restore them to their land and they will inherit his kingdom (vs. 13). He will prepare the way for their return and hear the prayer of the contrite and humble and he will revive them (vs. 15).

*To cast up, prepare the way and take up the stumbling block* means God has done everything to open the way to our return (vs. 14). There is nothing we need do except repent and follow him. It is fully paid for by him and he has dealt with all hindrances.

God will turn from anger to mercy so his people will not give up hope (vs. 16). The purpose of his punishment is to correct and restore, whether the Jew or the Gentile, God will reach out to both (vs. 19). But those who refuse to repent will never have peace (vs. 20-21).

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*Is not this the fast I  
have chosen? To  
loose the bonds of  
wickedness, to undo  
the heavy burdens,  
and to let the  
oppressed go free,  
and that you break  
every yoke?*

*Then you shall  
delight yourself in  
the Lord; and I will  
cause you to ride  
upon the high places  
of the earth, and feed  
you with the heritage  
of Jacob your father...*

**Isaiah 58:6, 14**

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## New World

The “fast” that God has chosen is not religious ritual, but caring for other people (vs. 5). It is to loose burdens, ensure others get justice, feed the poor, cover the naked and not hide ourselves from those in need (vs. 6-7). This is the whole purpose of his kingdom.

When the world will do this our light will break forth as the morning and the health of our nations will flourish (vs. 8-11). Our communities will be transformed, the curse will fade away. We shall call to God and he will answer. It will not be difficult to have God’s ear or favour. The Lord shall guide us continually and fill our souls with

goodness: what we try to do by materialism.

Our children shall build the old waste places and the foundations of old and shall be called the repairer of the breach (vs. 12). When we honour God like this we will ride upon the high places of the earth, i.e. rule over the nations. Truth, meekness and righteousness will overcome the wicked and those who live that way will inherit the earth.

This beautiful chapter shows what the earth will look like when God pours out his Spirit and changes the nations.

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*Behold the Lord's  
hand is not short that  
it cannot save*

***Isaiah 59:1***

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## **New Humanity**

The reason there is no peace on earth is the sin of man (vs. 2). This brings oppression and the fruit of destruction.

The way things are is the outcome of what man has done. It is not God who has done it. People may look for justice or salvation, but it doesn't exist in the world they have made. There is nothing we can do to fix this; no system will be blessed while the ways of man remain unchanged (vs. 9).

God saw there was no saviour among men to help (vs. 16). There was no one in the human family who hadn't become corrupted, who had an answer. This wasn't the way he wanted things. He had a plan to change the world back to the way he made it, even better. He sends his Son to bring righteous government, to put away those who resist the Father's good will for his creation, and to restore God's blessings to earth (vs. 17-18). His name will be honoured over the entire world. The Spirit of God will prostrate all assaults and obstacles to this stated objective (vs. 19).

So God sends his redeemer (vs. 20, Rom 11:26). He will rise from Zion, from Judah. He will turn ungodliness away from Jacob, i.e. those who turn from transgression are *his Jacob*, from whatever nation. God makes a covenant with Christ, and his seed from all nations, that is everlasting (vs. 21).

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*Arise shine, for your  
light is come, and the  
glory of the Lord is  
risen upon you.*

**Isaiah 60:1**

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## **His Presence**

This spoke to Judah in their low estate, it speaks to the church in our trouble, *but it speaks directly to Christ and his kingdom.*

Isaiah sees Christ's kingdom from its beginning, to its full blessing in the nations and to its eternal state after the resurrection.

The conversion of the Gentiles is so broad it is called the *abundance of the sea converted to Christ*. It causes astonishment (vs. 5). Nations that were enemies of Judah, or upon which Isaiah formerly announced God's judgement, are included, and the isles: the ends of the earth. They bring gifts to Christ, designating worship.

God will glorify Christ's kingdom and his gates will never close to those who comes to him (vs. 7, 11, 13, 21). All nations that turn to ungodliness will finally come to ruin (vs. 12). Others that despised Christ shall turn to him (vs. 14).

Righteousness shall bring abundance to all nations (vs. 17). Violence is banished. Old stone walls are no longer needed (vs. 18). Heaven and earth are united and God's presence on earth outshines the sun and moon and the righteous inherit the land forever (vs.19-21, Rev 21:23-27).

*A little one shall become a thousand:* Christ's kingdom started small, but shall reign over all things (vs. 22).

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*The Spirit of the Lord  
God is upon me... to  
proclaim the  
acceptable year of  
the Lord (Jubilee)*

***Isaiah 61:1-2***

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## **Earth Shall Bud**

The release of Judah from Babylon was like Jubilee, when slaves were released and debts forgiven. It was a Sabbath rest, as when God brought them out of Egypt. Jesus proclaimed he is our Sabbath and

Jubilee. He came to the meek, the broken-hearted, to set us free from sin.

Then he gives New Israel a commission, *The Great Commission*, to build the old waste places: he calls the church to restore the earth in righteousness, as Cyrus restored the cities of Judah. Gentiles shall be the main workforce and their wealth shall be applied to the mission. Instead of their former shame and debasement, the meek shall possess everlasting joy and be rulers and priests on earth (vs. 6, Rev 5:10, Dan 7:27).

God does this because he loves judgement and hates corrupting worship with oppression (vs. 8). Christ, even in his sufferings, rejoices on the behalf of his church, for the faithfulness of the Father, in the righteous and kind salvation he has planned.

*For as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations. Isaiah 61:11*

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*For Zion's sake I will  
not hold my peace,  
and for Jerusalem's  
sake, I will not rest,  
until its  
righteousness goes  
forth as brightness,  
and its salvation as a  
lamp that burns.*

**Isaiah 62:1**

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This is a full earth transforming harvest.

## **A New Light**

This is God's zeal to fulfil his promises concerning the New Jerusalem. Though his people appear forsaken when Isaiah writes, God will not rest until his glory is fully revealed in all the nations. His people will no longer be called *forsaken* or

*desolate*, but *my delight* and the land called *married* (Rev 21:2).

This is not the old land of Israel. It means all God's people are restored to safety and peace, dwelling with the Lord as a bride (whom he delicately watches over), rather than in bondage and captivity. He rids all oppression from the earth (vs. 8-9).

The Lord calls upon those who know him to give him no rest till he makes his kingdom glorious in all the earth (vs. 7). We have the hope of this transformation and call upon him till it is fulfilled. We are the lamp that burns with hope through all nations, the city of his kingdom that shines (vs. 1, Matt 5:14). Light is a main theme of Isaiah: his light starts in his church and grows till it outshines the sun.

God will go through every barrier and cast up every obstacle to bring to pass his will on earth, to subdue every enemy

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*Who is this that  
comes from Edom,  
with dyed garments  
from Bozrah?*

*O lord, why have you  
made our heart to  
err from your ways?*

**Isaiah 63:1, 17**

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under Christ's feet and give the inheritance of all things to the meek (vs. 10).

## **A New Heart**

Edom represents the enemies of God. They were trodden down as a winepress, as Jerusalem was when they persecuted

the church in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century (Rev 19:15-18). God will always stand by his people, as he stood by Christ his firstborn in Egypt (vs. 7, Hos 11:1, Matt 2:15).

The rest of this chapter is a prayer of repentance from Judah in Babylon, asking God for deliverance. They recount God's goodness to them, in defending them from the oppressor in times past and delivering them from captivity. They confess they are exiled for their sin, to correct them, and they have no righteousness of their own to ask for help. But they call upon God's mercy, to treat them as a loving father, and to redeem them for his mercy's sake, so he will be glorified in restoring the people he called long ago (vs. 15-16, 19).

This prayer is answered in Christ. Though God delivered them from Babylon, it was their wandering heart that was at the centre of their prayer. This is why they repeatedly fell into sin. God blinded them from his ways, because their heart was like a harlot (vs. 17).

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*Oh that you would  
rend the heavens and  
come down...*

**Isaiah 64:1**

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The greatest deliverance of all, of all the blessings God promises in the renewal of all things, is the renewal of our heart in Christ. Upon this New Creation, rests the New Earth.

## **A New Israel**

A prayer from Judah in Babylon (foretold by Isaiah many years before), that God would recompense their enemies and free his people: that he would rend the heaven: take away their judgement; and cast down the mountains, the nations that oppose him. They have no righteousness of their own, but only filthy rags (vs. 6). They confess their sin in affliction and ask for his loving help as a father (vs. 7-8).

Israel was not ready for the answer God gave. He provides for all their needs in Christ. By his blood he took away the brass heavens and made the way open for our favour. By the kingdom of Christ he destroys all our enemies and brings down every mountain, every nation opposed to his rule.

The disciples still had this question in their minds: “When will the kingdom be restored to Israel?” (Acts 1:6) Jesus said it’s not for them to know the times or seasons, but they would receive power from the Holy Spirit to be witnesses of Christ.

The restoration of Israel is the topic of Isaiah. It is fulfilled through Christ’s kingdom, restoring the meek to his favour and the nations by the dominion of Christ’s kingdom. We do

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*I am sought by them that didn't previously ask for me. I am found by them that didn't seek me. I said, Behold me, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name.*

**Isaiah 65:1**

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not know when this will finally be fulfilled, but as Paul took from this chapter, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man, the good God has prepared for those who wait for him" (vs. 4, 1 Cor 2:9).

## **The True Vine**

Many from the Gentile nations will be called into Christ's kingdom, but the rebellious from Israel will be destroyed (vs. 1-7).

But God will not destroy the whole nation. He finds within it one seed that is worthy and he will inherit the mountains of the Lord: the nations of the world will be given to him to rule (vs. 8-9).

*And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains, and my elect shall inherit it and my servants shall dwell there. Isaiah 65:9*

Israel shall come under judgement again. God's servants shall eat his eternal blessings. Gentiles come from the east and the west and sit down in the kingdom, but many of Israel will be cast out (vs. 13, Matt 8:10-12)

Their name shall be left for a curse in the earth, and God's servants shall be called by a new name (vs. 15, Matt 21:33-44, John 15:1). This is about the final judgement of Israel

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*For, behold, I create  
new heavens and a  
new earth; and the  
former shall not be  
remembered, nor  
come to mind.*

*They shall not hurt  
nor destroy in all my  
holy mountain.*

***Isaiah 65:17, 25***

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carried out by Rome. God would then be called the God of truth, for this display of his righteous vengeance, and his fulfilling his promises by raising Jesus from the dead (vs. 16).

## **No More War**

When God judges old Jerusalem by Rome and founds the New Jerusalem through Christ, many shall rejoice in what God has done. Isaiah calls this work the New Heaven and New Earth, because Christ makes all things new by his death and resurrection (vs. 17-18).

As Christ's kingdom expands and the nations follow him, his blessing will more and more spread. Poverty will be curtailed, child mortality will reduce, diseases will be overcome and the life span of mankind will increase greatly, as it once was. Robbery and oppression will fade away and people will dwell in peace. Nations will no longer go to war (vs. 20-25).

There will be no barrier to answered prayer. It is taken away, not only in the cross, but because the lives of the people are renewed and their ways always please the Lord. Blessing is abundant. The animal kingdom is also blessed and no one in all Christ's dominion will do harm to any in God's creation.

The New Heaven and New Earth merge: Christ brings them together in his redemption. The curse is progressively

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*Where is the house  
that you will build  
for me?...*

*But to this man I will  
look, even to him that  
is poor and of a  
contrite spirit, and  
trembles at my word.*

***Isaiah 66:1-2***

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curtailed as all things are made new, are conformed to God's will, until the last enemy, death, is placed under his feet and God's people dwell in eternal fellowship.

## **Born of the Spirit**

The message of this chapter is again the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome and the birth of the church.

The Lord decries the vain ritual worship in the temple, while their works are violent and they shed the blood of the innocent (vs. 3, Acts 7:48). When he called upon them to care for others they didn't hear him (vs. 4). God will put a stop to their ways and free his people from the false shepherds, so he destroys Jerusalem and births his church.

Jerusalem becomes like Edom, who hated their brothers. Both Edom and the Jews were the physical seed of Abraham, and again the seed of the flesh (old Jerusalem) persecute the seed of the Spirit (Gal 4:24-31). They kill the Lord Jesus and his disciples, saying "Let the Lord be glorified", tempting the Lord with their unbelief. They will be judged like Edom and their nation will be destroyed (Is 34:4-5. 2 Pet 3:10).

God's final action therefore must be, "Hear that uproar from the city, hear that *noise from the temple!* It is the sound of the Lord repaying his enemies all they deserve." (vs. 5) He

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*Before she travailed  
she brought forth...  
she gave birth to a  
man child.*

*Shall I bring to birth,  
and not cause to  
bring forth?...*

**Isaiah 66:7, 9**

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destroys Jerusalem by Rome. Jesus' words in Matt 22-24 align with Isaiah, as Jesus proclaims the judgement coming on the nation, and the coming of his kingdom. The book of Revelation is also a symbolic depiction of this event.

## **The Church**

Like a woman who gives birth without pain, national Israel gives birth to a man child: he is born without them noticing his significance. They turn upon him and his disciples. But shall God fulfil his promise in sending Jesus without also protecting his people? (vs. 9) Of course not! He who gave birth will also bring forth his kingdom in dominion.

*A nation is born in a day.* This is Christ's kingdom, born in his resurrection and seen at Pentecost after his ascension to the Father (1 Pet 2:4-10). As soon as Zion travailed, pointing to Christ's sufferings, she gave birth to a multitude of believers.

He will judge Jerusalem, but at the same time bring comfort through Christ, and send his disciples as messengers to the nations (vs. 13, 15, 19), to call in the elect from the four corners of the globe (Matt 24:31). Multitudes come to Christ's kingdom, called priests (vs. 20-21). They worship before him on earth forever. *Levite* and *Sabbath* are used to designate worship, not a return to the Old Covenant law.

But all the enemies of God, from those slain by Rome, to those in all ages, i.e. symbolically all Gog and Magog, shall perish forever in torment, symbolically called Gehenna (vs. 24, Mark 9:43-48).

## They Shall Dwell Secure

When God created the earth and made Adam he told him to be fruitful and fill the earth and have dominion. As Adam was made in God's image, God's intent was that the earth be filled with nations who live in his goodness. The question is has this original intention of God been cast aside?

When God called Israel out of Egypt he revealed the same intention to them. In obeying his word they would fill the land with communities who lived in peace in his goodness. Israel too, like Adam, did not follow the Lord. The question remains, has God cast aside this purpose?

In sending the second Adam, Jesus, God's plan is to fulfil his original purpose. Jesus came as prophesied in Gen 3:15, to crush the serpent's head. He did this first by obeying the Father: what Adam and Israel did not do. Then he defeated Satan on the cross, by taking away our sin and forgiving all our iniquity. Next he transforms our lives, so that we too love, obey and follow the Father's will. By doing this Jesus crushes Satan under his feet, first in our own natures and

then through us in all the nations of the earth, filling the earth with his kingdom and goodness.

As John put it: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifest, to destroy the works of the devil.” i.e. sin (1 John 3:8). Paul similarly said: “Till we all come to the fullness of the image of the stature of Christ.” (Eph 4:13) What Satan did to the image of God in Adam, God has restored through Jesus Christ in those who believe.

God hasn't turned aside from his original plan in creating Adam, i.e. to fill the earth with good fruit in human communities. His word to Adam and his word to Israel has not returned to him void (Isaiah 55:11), but will fully accomplish the purpose God had in mind when it was spoken.

Christ and his church are not “Plan B”. Christ and his church are the means by which he fulfils his purpose in creating the earth. All the promises he gave to Adam, to Abraham and to Israel are fulfilled in Christ.

There are so many lessons we can draw from Isaiah. It shows us the true Israel. While God judges national Israel, he gives everlasting promises to his seed among them: the remnant who believe, turn from their sin and take consolation in his word. These are the ones he saves in Christ and he adds to them his people from all the Gentile nations. This is what Paul means by “all Israel shall be saved”, i.e. all his elect, all

the seed of promise, from the Jews and Gentiles (Rom 11:26, 2:28-29, 9:6-9).

Isaiah shows us the kingdom of Christ is his redeemed Israel, where Israel is all those in Christ by faith. This is Israel not under the Old Covenant law or temple, and not in the Old Covenant land, but in a land that extends to the ends of the earth. Jerusalem is now the heavenly city of faith which blesses all nations. All the shadows of the Old Covenant are extended in Christ and fulfilled.

Isaiah also shows the principles by which God judges the world. God will bring into judgement every oppressive society. He is also the eternal judge, rewarding those who feed the hungry and relieve suffering, who turn from corruption and unrighteousness, while punishing with torment those who live for themselves and ignore God's truth and the welfare of other people. That is, many who are first in this world shall be last in the next. Those who honour God in this world will be honoured in his kingdom. This honour includes places of eldership, even over cities, because there will be many people, and we won't just be playing harps (Matt 25:14-30). The people are called *nations* in Rev 21 and they will be under Christ's good and loving government with officials from among his people.

Isaiah shows us that God will protect the church, even though enemies come against her. These enemies are used to cleanse out nominal believers, to centre our hearts on Christ and true riches, to turn us back to the truth of his

word, to make the church strong to go forward in its commission to the nations. Christ will feed and shepherd his church against all those used by hell, called *Gog and Magog*. Ezekiel used this term to describe an attack against Israel in the Intertestamental period and the term is used by Jews and Christians to depict God's protection of Messiah's people.

Isaiah shows us the Great Commission of the church. The kingdom of Christ spreads through and renews the nations. The kingdom will in the end flourish as God conforms us to his likeness and brings all enemies under his feet. The world will only change as people live as Jesus did. If our generation doesn't do this the next one will, or the one after that will (Ps 110:3). Politics does not bring his kingdom, but good politics flow from his kingdom, through the lives of transformed men and women. The Great Commission is a commission of dominion in the earth before Christ comes. Not a dominion of force, of personal power or position, but of Christ's love in our hearts, bringing the fruit shown in the *Sermon of the Mount: the manifesto of Christ's nature and rule*. "Teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you."

The kingdom of Christ came with the birth of Jesus and was sown in the earth by his Passion, and it grows through the earth by his work in the church until it flourishes above all other rule (Isaiah 2:2, 9:6, Matt 28:18-20)). His second coming occurs after all enemies are subjected under him. It's a wrong understanding of Matt 24 and of Revelation that leads us to believe he comes during an evil *end times scenario*. This leads the church to fatalism, paralyzes the

people in fear and stops us building for the future, bringing about self-fulfilled prophecy! Rather:

*All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. Ps 22:27-28*

*In his day the righteous shall flourish... He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth... Yes, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. Ps 72:7-8, 11*

*The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool. Ps 110:1*

*And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Dan 2:35*

Christ's kingdom began when he ascended and sat at the Father's right hand (Dan 7:13-14). According to Ps 110:1, Jesus will not return until all enemies are subjected under him. This doesn't mean there won't be wars ahead of us, even very serious ones, and human suffering, persecution and corruption, it means God's plan to transform these things through the church will prevail. The church needs to have the right understanding and fulfil its role. Peter stated, "For the time being he must remain out of sight in heaven until everything is restored to order again just the way God,

through the preaching of his holy prophets of old, said it would be" (Acts 3:21, *The Message*).

Adam Clarke commented on Acts 3:21, "it must mean the accomplishment of all the prophecies and promises contained in the Old Testament relative to the kingdom of Christ upon earth; the whole reign of grace, from the ascension of our Lord till his coming again, for of all these things have the holy prophets spoken; and, as the grace of the Gospel was intended to destroy the reign of sin, its energetic influence is represented as restoring all things, destroying the bad state, and establishing the good - taking the kingdom out of the hands of sin and Satan, and putting it into those of righteousness and truth. This is done in every believing soul; all things are restored to their primitive order; and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps the heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God. The man loves God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself; and thus all the things of which the holy prophets have spoken since the world began, relative to the salvation of any soul, are accomplished in this case; and when such a work becomes universal, as the Scriptures seem to intimate that it will, then all things will be restored in the fullest sense of the term. As therefore the subject here referred to is that of which all the prophets from the beginning have spoken, (and the grand subject of all their declarations was Christ and his work among men), therefore the words are to be applied to this, and no other meaning. Jesus Christ comes to raise up man from a state of ruin, and

restore to him the image of God, as he possessed it at the beginning.”

We have misunderstood statements like Peter’s (2 Pet 3:9, Jesus in Matt 24:14, Paul in 2 Thes 2:5-14), who said God was holding back judgement till all had heard the gospel. We have thought Peter was saying that God is just going to save souls before the world is destroyed, and beyond that he has no real interest in renewing the nations in our current Messianic age. Peter was speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem (spiritual Babylon) in his generation, no doubt foreshadowing the judgement or renewing of all men through Christ. God does not end our current Messianic age by the wave of his wand at any arbitrary time, he ends it when all his purposes concerning Christ’s kingdom as outlined in Isaiah have been fulfilled.

These passages that appear to indicate a negative future for the church dealt mainly with the circumstances of the first century. For example, it is difficult to understand some of Paul’s statements to the Thessalonians, as often is the case with epistles, and care should be taken in our reading. On one hand Paul is clearly consoling believers about their loved ones who have died in faith, that they will be raised, and on the other distinguishing this from events of their generation re Daniel’s prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and persecution by Nero (Dan 7:25, 9:26). These things were very near when Paul wrote. No doubt similar events will occur throughout church history as God’s enemies come against the church, but he will save his church and make it flourish.

But concerning the final resurrection there is no time indicator given by either Jesus or the Apostles. Rather than “coming soon”, this event is said to be after a “millennium”, symbolic for a long period, and the time of it we do not know (Rev 20:4, Acts 1:7). It is during this “millennium”, the church age we are currently in, that the reign of Christ advances in all nations, subjecting all things under him.

Rev 20 depicts Satan bound as the gospel spreads among the nations. On the cross Jesus bound the strongman to spoil his goods: referring to Christ’s harvest and transformation of earth (Matt 12:29). The release of Satan at the end is symbolic of his work throughout the church age and his final destiny, as God said of Assyria, also called Gog and Magog: *Wherefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.* (Isaiah 10:12)

Not only in Isaiah and Psalms, but in the New Testament the scriptures make it clear that the reign of Christ in relation to subjecting all his enemies and renewing the world through the church occurs before he returns and not after he returns. He returns at the end of the Messianic age, at the conclusion of his commission to renew the nations. Concerning the final resurrection at Christ’s return Paul said:

*Then the end comes, when he will have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.*

*For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 1 Cor 15:24-25*

Paul tells us that the reign of Christ is now, before our resurrection, during the current Messianic age. It is when he comes at the end of this age and raises the dead that he has fulfilled his mission from the Father to gather all nations and subdue all enemies. When this commission is over Christ still reigns, but as redeemer he presents the bride and creation to the Father free from sin and blemish.

*The creature itself shall be delivered from its bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Rom 8:21*

This verse has sometimes been interpreted in a way that denies the resurrection of our body and the renewal of creation, claiming this passage speaks of the conversion of the Gentiles (“creature”), as in Mark 16:15 (KJV). But the Greek word used here for “creature” is also used in scripture for creation itself, not just for people, and in Rom 8 this is clearly its intention.

Paul is comparing the sufferings of this age to the glory of the next (vs. 18). Then he says we are saved by hope in something not yet seen (vs. 24), speaking of the resurrection of our bodies (vs. 23). Some say the hope Paul was telling believers to patiently wait for was the destruction of Jerusalem, after which the gospel would obtain a new

freedom and the Gentiles would turn to God, saving the whole *body* of believers. Paul was not addressing Jerusalem's fall here, but even if he was this would only foreshadow the greater hope of the full expansion of Christ's kingdom over all things, even over nature itself (Heb 1:12). The fall of old Jerusalem was a foretaste of the fall and renewal of this whole current age in which Messiah reigns.

Some claim the resurrection of the body is only spiritual, in which Christ raises up the church among the Gentiles. Israel was sown in judgement among the nations as a natural body, but by the gospel was raised a spiritual body of believers with the Gentiles, i.e. a much larger harvest brought about by God's sovereign plan. No doubt this analogy was used by Ezekiel, but his picture was drawn from the Hebrew understanding of the bodily resurrection (Ezek 37). The problem comes when we limit Christ's rule to a partial victory, not over his whole creation. God's word through Ezek 36-48 was more than their return from Babylon. It concerned the whole redemptive work of Christ's church to all nations, to the resurrection of our body and secure dwelling on earth at the end of the current Messianic age.

When Paul spoke of a spiritual body he meant one without corruption, as Christ's physical body was incorruptible after his resurrection (1 Cor 15:44). Christ inherited this immortal body for obeying the Father, as all his people will. This was first offered to the first Adam for obedience, but inherited by the Second Adam. God created the physical body: he is not going to leave it defeated by Satan or sin.

We have already seen Isaiah speak of the resurrection. Daniel also mentioned it, speaking of Christ's kingdom coming in the days of the Roman conquest and destruction of Jerusalem (Dan 12:1-2). Like Isaiah, he spoke of the whole span of Christ's kingdom. When it began some Old Testament believers were seen raised and walking in Jerusalem (Matt 27:52-53). These were the firstfruits with Christ.

But Christ said on the last day all would be raised, not just some, and they would be raised from their graves, not just spiritually in new birth. Christ abolished the power of death on the cross in his first coming, and puts death away in his second coming.

*The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come out; they that have done good, to a resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to a resurrection of damnation.* John 5:28-29

In scripture the trumpet blasts represent Christ's redemptive acts for his people: whether his judgement of their enemies, as foreshadowed in Christ's judgement on Jerusalem in Matt 22-24 and Rev 19; or the gospel taken to the ends of the earth by his messengers in the church age (Matt 24:31, Isaiah 66:19); or the *last trumpet*, the final redemptive act of his kingdom age and submission of all things to Christ, the final resurrection (1 Cor 15:52).

Paul announces this final act of redemption in 1 Thes 4:13-17. Rather than gathering his people on earth to heaven, he comes with those in heaven. This resembles Rev 21:2, where the church descends to its eternal state on earth. Paul says we who are alive are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. In ancient times (Gentile and Jewish, i.e. Jewish weddings), people went out to meet the bridegroom or VIP, to accompany him on the final part of the journey: in the case of Christ's coming, to accompany him on the final part of his return to earth.

The Sadducees of Jesus' time didn't believe in the resurrection or in life after death. This was partly so they could hope to escape judgement, but partly because they could plainly see in scripture that God's promises related to this earth. Those who deny God today claim that because he wasn't able to fulfil these promises to Israel, Jesus and the Apostles changed their meaning to a spiritual fulfilment only.

Though Christ's kingdom is not of this world, does not originate from political power, the outcome of his rule in our hearts is God's promises fulfilled on earth, in our societies and nations.

Rev 21 finishes with this resurrection, with the entire curse swallowed up by immortality. The heavenly Jerusalem, the church, comes down to earth and dwells here with God forever and the nations of the people are blessed, just as God originally intended when he made the earth. Here is fulfilled all God's promises to Israel, in which he included the

Gentiles. This New Earth represents Christ coming down to earth, dying for sin and rising to establish his kingdom on earth; our new birth and eternal life in Christ today; the church's commission to the nations which transforms the whole earth; and the final coming of Christ at the resurrection, i.e. the eternal state.

*But you Bethlehem, though you are small among the provinces of Judah, yet out of you he shall come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.*

*And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall dwell securely: and he shall be great, even to the ends of the earth. Micah 5:2, 4*

When we look at the nations today and the corruption of man's heart we might ask how could God do this? How could he so transform the nations just by the church? God answers, *As the heavens send down rain and cause the earth to blossom, so shall my word be that goes out of my mouth. My word shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish the purpose for which I sent it (Is 55:10-11)*. When God pours out his Spirit the earth shall bear its fruit. The church shall blossom and the nations shall be renewed and then Jesus will come. It is not a complex thing to God, though with man this is clearly impossible. We await his time, but we also call upon him for it with all our lives.

The message of Isaiah is that through the current reign of Christ the church shall grow in all the earth and shall transform the nations before the second coming of Christ and final resurrection. Rev 21-22 describes the New Jerusalem people of God living on earth forever. Heaven and earth are merged: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

*And he that sat upon the throne (when John had this vision), said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said, write: for these words are true and faithful.*  
Rev 21:5

*And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face... Rev 22:3-4*

## Books by Kent Hodge

Available at Amazon, Author House and other online bookstores:

*Christ in You*, An Introduction to the New Covenant and the Christian Life

*Rediscovering Revelation*, Applying a First Century Message to Our Day (on the Book of Revelation)

*Just Love*, God's Plan in Both Testaments (on the continuity of God's character in the Old and New Testaments)

*Fearless Love*, Astounding Stories of God's Intervention in Islamic Africa, James Andrews (We used a false author's name for this book to protect our team)

*Followed by Kindness*, Ruth Hodge. Christian family issues as seen through missionary life and friends. (Out soon.)