

Isaiah 51:17–52:12

Holy in, and Happy unto, the God Who Declares Himself by Saving Us

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 • Read Isaiah 51:17–52:12

Questions from the Scripture text: With what double command does v17 begin? And what command in v17b? What has Jerusalem drunk (v17d–e)? From whose hand (v17c)? Who cannot do what for Jerusalem (v18)? What have come to Jerusalem (v19)? What doesn't she have anyone to do? Why can't her sons help (v20)? Who will help her instead (v21–22)? Whom will He afflict instead (v23)? What command is now renewed in 52:1? What is she to put on? Who will no longer come to her? From what is she to rise (v2)? From what to be loosed? What have they done to themselves (v3b)? But what will the Lord now do for them (v3c)? What afflictions/oppressions does He refer to together in v4? What did their oppressors have in common (v5)? What will the Lord take this as an opportunity to make known (v6)? To whom? How (by whom) will He make this known to them (v7)? What four things will this preacher proclaim to them? Who will receive this message, and how will they respond (v8)? What command does v9a give? To whom (v9b)? Why (v9c–d)? What does YHWH do in bringing this salvation (v10a)? Before whom (v10b–c)? So what double command comes to them in exile (v11)? In what manner won't they go (v12a–b)? Why not (v12c–d)?

How will the return from exile anticipate ultimate redemption? Isaiah 51:17–52:12 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these nineteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the return from exile anticipates ultimate redemption by displaying God's glory in saving us.**

Three double commands give literary shape to our passage: "Awake, awake!" (v17). "Awake, awake" (v1). And "Depart! Depart!" (v11). Zion's restoration from exile in the near term in this passage will exemplify several things about the Lord's establishing her in the new heavens and new earth (cf. 51:16).

Man cannot do it, but the Lord will. v17–23. All affliction and misery comes, ultimately, from the Lord's wrath against sin (v17). This is why mere man can never, ultimately, deliver (v18–20). Marvelously, the very God from Whose wrath we need deliverance is the One Who will do the delivering (v21–22). And any injustice done to His people, even by those instrumental in chastising them, will be avenged by the Lord (v23).

This is how the Lord makes His glory known, v1–10. This second section is in two subsections. In vv1–6, the message itself is described. In v7–10, the relaying of that message, and response to it, are dramatized. The message is one of strength and beauty (v1) emerging by resurrection (v2a) and emancipation (v2b–d). They had played the harlot ("sold yourselves for nothing," v3b), but the Lord will redeem them at no cost to themselves (v3c), bringing them into this new strength, beauty, and liberty. Assyria's oppressing them (just as with Egypt before them, v4) will become the canvas upon which YHWH paints the disclosure of His Name to His people (v6). This is how He has been pleased to declare Himself.

The second subsection has been made gloriously famous by Rom 10:15. The lovely-footed runner races to Jerusalem to announce their own covenant God is sovereign over all and bending all unto their salvation (v7). In v8, they are arriving at the city, where the watchmen receive them and their message, responding in song. In v9, the message now gets relayed to the whole city, which still bears the marks ("waste places") of her punishment, but now joins the rejoicing and singing of the watchmen. Just as YHWH has said (v6), His saving His people is a display (making bare) of His holy arm (v10a), not only for one nation to rejoice over, but for all nations and all ends of earth to see and know the salvation of God.

So His people ought to respond with holiness and confidence, v11–12. The holiness that v11 commands, and the confidence/dignity that v12 commands, both come from the fact that the Lord has redeemed His people for Himself. Because they are drawing near YHWH, bearing His vessels (v11e), they must maintain holiness. Because YHWH goes in front and behind them (v12c–d), they must be steady and confident, rather than panicked and anxious (v12a–b). Holiness and hopefulness both rest upon the fact that our salvation is more about our Lord even than about ourselves.

How have you been learning that your salvation is ultimately about the display of God and His glory? How does that help you respond with holiness of life? How does it help you respond with hopefulness and confidence?

Sample prayer: Lord, give us to wake up to Your saving us. Forgive us for sleepwalking through life. Give us to put on beauty and strength as Your people. Forgive us for taking Your Name upon us lightly. Give us to rejoice over Your good news and appreciate the loveliness of Your proclaiming it to us. Forgive us for how thoughtlessly and unfeelingly we have received the preaching of the gospel. Give us to touch no unclean thing and maintain separation from the world. Forgive us for how easily we mingle with the worldlings around us. Give us to live as those who have a sure hope. Forgive us for the hastiness and fearfulness that often marks our lives. Grant this all, we ask, through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP46 "God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength" or TPH424 "All Authority and Power"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah 51, verse 17 through chapter 52. Verse 12. These are God's words awake awake. Stand up o Jerusalem, you who have drunk at the hand of Yahweh? The cup of his Fury. You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling and it drained it out.

There is no one to guide her. Among all the sons she has brought forth There is no one to guide her. Among all the sons she has, There is no one to guide her. Among all the sons she has brought forth. Nor is there any who takes her by the hand?

Among all the sons? She has brought up these two things have come to you, who will be sorry for you desolation and destruction famine and sword, by whom will I comfort. You, your sons have fainted. They lie at the head of all the streets, like an antelope and a net.

They are full of the fury of Yahweh. The rebuke of your God, Or please hear this, you Afflicted. And drunk, but not with wine, thus says your lord Yahweh and your God who pleads the cause of his people see. Have taken out of your hand, the cup of trembling, the drags of the cop of my Fury, you shall no longer drink it.

But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you. Who have said to you lie, down that we may walk over you and you have laid your body like the ground. And as

the street, for those who walk over, Awake awake put on your strength as I am.

Put on your beautiful garments say Jerusalem. The holy city. For the uncircumcised and the unclean shall no longer come to you. Shake yourself from the dust to rise. Sit down. Oh, Jerusalem loose yourself from the bonds of your neck. A captive daughter of Zion for thus says Yahweh. You have sold yourselves for nothing.

And you shall be redeemed without money. For thus, says the Lord Yahweh. My people went down at first into Egypt, to dwell there. Then the Assyrian oppressed them with that, cause Now therefore what have I here? Says Yahweh That my people are taken away for nothing, those who rule over them, make them well, says Yahweh.

And my name is blasphemed continually every day.

Therefore, my people shall know my name. Therefore, they shall know in that day that I am. He who speaks behold in his eye How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him, who brings good news who proclaims peace, who brings Glad Tidings of good things. Who Proclaim salvation, who says, to Zion your God Reigns.

Your Watchmen shall lift up their voices with their voices, they shall sing together for they shall see eye to eye when Yahweh brings back Zion, Break Forth into joy sing together you waste places of Jerusalem. For y'all who has comforted his people. He has redeemed Jerusalem. Yahweh has made bear his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations and all the ends of the Earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Depart depart. Go out from there, touch, no unclean thing. Go out from the midst of her be clean. You who bear the vessels of Yahweh. For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight. For y'all, I will go before you And the god of Israel will be your weird guard.

So far the reading of gods inspired and inerrant word. The prophet. Calls our attention to this whole section. Holding together by the three subsections each starting with the double command. So 52 verse 17, awake awake. Sorry, 51, verse 17, awake awake and then 52 verse 1, awake awake, and then 52 verse 11, depart depart Uh, and so the first awake awake.

Is urging. Uh, Jerusalem that Time to be comforted time for their Affliction to end. It's very Uh, close to it's recalling Comfort Comfort. My people Israel. Back from Isaiah chapter, 40, Uh, but The people of Israel have all drunk from the cup of God's Wrath drunk from the cup of God's Fury against sin.

And discipline. And so, Among the children of Israel, there is not one who has Uh, was wisdom or strength or ability. Uh to speak Comfort to them, but it is the Lord himself then who is going to comfort them. We cannot deliver ourselves from that, which The Lord does against sin and indeed, oh misery in this life is ultimately Um against sin, whether an immediate sin of ours or our general sinfulness Or the sinfulness of.

Of humanity. And so, All of our miseries, all of our afflictions, our reminders. That we live in the age of groaning, we live in the age of the consequences of Adam's first sin and our sin in him. And so long as we are in this life, we live in the age of continuing to be disciplined for our sin, chastened as the Lord, even for those who are his pursues for them and in them that Holiness without which they would not see the Lord.

So every Moment. Every difficulty, every Uh, paying a pain as a reminder that we are not able to deliver ourselves. Therefore since man cannot do it since there is no end. From within Israel, or from the Um, offspring of Israel. Who can do it? The Lord himself is going to do it.

Uh, and he himself is going to do it. So that he just displays himself. As the one who is God. The one who alone is Creator. The one who alone can be and is Uh Redeemer. This is how he has been pleased to display. His glory is by saving his people.

Uh, which When we get into the passage immediately following this, the most famous of the suffering servant passages at the end of chapter 52 and the bulk of chapter 53. Next week. Lord's, Lord willing. It'll be quite Uh, quite the juxtaposition, quite the placing side by side. This passage in which the Lord says he alone saves, because he alone can do it.

And then the next passage, which says that the servant who saves the servant, who is the Lord, as Already heard the last two passages does so by his suffering. Uh and so how extraordinary that God? Is going to save by suffering. But he's the only one who can take the cup.

Uh, of Wrath out of the hands of his people. He's the only one who can comfort them. And part of his comfort to them, is not only That. He returns. Their transgression. Uh, he gives them this two-sided, attendment, absolutely complete and absolutely perfect. Like we heard about in chapter 40 so that we are perfectly comforted and we know that our righteousness will stand and that our forgiveness is full and complete.

No such thing as Purgatory or any sort of effort or experience. Could ever take away any more sin or would ever be needed to. Because the Lord has taken. That we deserve from his wrath away from us. But another part of that Comfort is the fact That those who have sinned against us, even those who are used as they intend for evil, and God intends for good.

That God will avenge. And so verse 22, he says I've taken the cup out of your hand, you shall no longer drink it. But then verse 23 he says I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you And so, we take Our comfort from the Lord has satisfying, his own Justice.

Uh, when it comes to us and our sin and his acting Injustice in Justice and Vengeance, When it comes to the sin that has been committed against us. And, Uh, if uh, if whoever it is That has sinned against us. Outside of Christ in the last day. Then they will be punished forever, and if they're in Christ, then we may know that the fullness of God's Wrath has fallen upon Christ for what was done against God, and what was done against us.

So, that's Awake awake, man. Cannot Comfort himself for free himself. From that which comes upon us due to sin. But God himself will do it. And then, especially in the next section. The next awake awake section versus One through ten of chapter 52. Uh, he especially shows his glory.

Uh, he especially shows his glory. Uh, makes known his Glory by saving us and so we're instructed. At the beginning of this section put on your strength. As I am put on your beautiful garments of Jerusalem. The holy city, the uncircumcised And unclean shall no longer come to you.

This necessity. Of Holiness that we're going to see again in the third section. Um, That God Saves us, in order to become displays of his goodness and his power in saving. Uh, and so a Christian ought not to live. In either and Unholy or an unhappy manner. If we live in an Unholy manner, We cast shame upon the Holiness and righteousness of the one who has saved us, If we live, in an unhappy manner, Cast doubt and insult.

The power and goodness in which he has saved us. Uh and so he says be holy in verse 1. Be happy in verse two, shake yourself from the dust arise. The penalty. Was to dust, we shall return and defeat then has Has been described in terms of going down into the dust and death down into the dust.

He says shake yourself from the dust to rise. And also, That they are to live with the confidence of those who've been liberated uh even emancipated from their slavery. Sit down. O Jerusalem. Lose yourself from the bonds of your neck. Oh, captive daughter of Zion. You see? The greatness of the penalty.

Communicated with the idea of for nothing in verse three. But also, the greatness of God's Redemption is communicated with the idea of for nothing or without money, in verse three. So, For, thus, as Yahweh, you have sold yourselves for nothing. How horrible that? That they would be like, adulteresses.

Who gave themselves away just to give themselves away and have suffered the consequences of that, but the Lord is not going to require of their hand, a payment. He is the one who redeems them with no payment or cost, uh, to them. Payment from them or cost to them.

Which is glorious because we are unable to give anything for ourselves. And so, the Lord gives it all And so this wonderful combination. Of the grateness of our sin and the greater. Sorry, the great knit. So this wonderful combination of the greatness of our sin, and the greatness of his redeeming us from our sin, the greatness of our sin, you have sold yourselves for nothing.

The greatness of his Redemption you shall be redeemed without money. And he describes, how He gives his people over to afflictions. In order to show the greatness of his glory, in redeeming them from those afflictions. Whether it was Egypt, my people went down at first and into Egypt to dwell there which was not immediately Punishment for any particular sin.

Uh, but then the second part, then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause in both of these cases. They were Afflicted so that the Lord would deliver them now therefore what have I here says Yahweh that my people are taken away for nothing. My name is blasphemed. He says, therefore, my people shall know my name.

They shall know in that day that I am. He Who speaks Behold it is I And so one of the reasons that God gives us to come through afflictions weather. It is something that comes upon us. In a more generally, providential manner, like the Pharaoh arising, who did not know Joseph.

Although we know that Israel were full of sin, they were idolaters in Egypt with idolatries that stuck with them, long after they had come out of Egypt. And yet. Affliction in Egypt is not presented in scripture primarily as a punishment for a specific sin. Uh, it's something that happens in order.

Um, To show the greatness of God's Mighty arm in, bringing them out and making Israel to know that he is Yahweh and Egypt to know that he is Yahweh and the whole world to know that he is Yahweh presented in glory. Presented in scriptures primarily for the Declaration of his name.

Uh, now they exiled to Assyria, and then the Exile later to Babylon are for the sins of Israel. But still It is an opportunity that the Lord takes to vindicate, the greatness of his name when he delivers them. So whether as a consequence of a specific sin that you have committed or not as a consequence.

Of a specific sin that you have committed. One of the things that you may know whether for yourself or your household or a congregation or the church more broadly, Uh, in a place or in a time, is that when the Lord lets his people come under Affliction in this age of groaning.

That it is, especially for. Declaring that his name declaring himself. By Saving them. And so the rest of this second subsection comes by that declaration. He says, they shall know in that day that I am, he who speaks Behold it is I So you remember, he is though there's none among the sons of Israel.

Uh, who are able to speak a comfort to her and he says Um, in verse 6 behold, uh, it is, I I am he who speaks And then verse 7, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him? Who brings the good news. So, when God preaches salvation to his people, he does it.

When God proclaims salvation to his people, he does it by the use of preachers. And that's why when we had that section in Romans 10, where the Lord is saying, You must believe in Jesus whom you hear, but you cannot hear Jesus without a preacher and they cannot hear preachers unless, uh, preachers are sent it quotes.

This verse as saying, God himself not only saves but God himself, speaks proclaims his salvation to us and he does it by the means of preachers. So, we see the preachers who are sent And that's what the beauty of the feet is about, is the beauty of their being sent.

We see the preacher who has sent not upon his own merits, but as an instrument of God, as a sort of the mouth of God to us, and we Rejoice over what he proclaims to us, and he piles up. That which is brought proclaimed. Brought proclaimed said Uh, so those five things brought good news proclaimed.

Peace, brought Glad Tidings of good proclaimed. Salvation says your God Reigns And so that's the climax. What is the good news? Our God Reigns And he chooses to show. He chooses to show the greatness of his Reign by saving us. Uh, what are the Glad Tidings of good things?

Our God Reigns? What is the Salvation? That is proclaimed. Our God Reigns. Uh and so this is what the Lord Jesus has especially proclaimed in his satisfying, for our sin and And defeating death and being Our righteousness. Uh for us, he is our God who has accomplished what uh what man could never accomplish and he is our God who announces his own Sovereign salvation.

His own Almighty and full salvation, that is free to us. When he sends preachers. And so there's this dramatization in verses 7 through 10, the preachers arriving at Israel, The Watchmen who received them. I don't know if they're up on a wall because Jerusalem has had all its walls broken down at this point, but there are Watchmen on the edge of the city, and they're the first ones who receive the The Messengers, who are arriving from out of town.

And the news is so good. The Watchmen are looking at each other in the face with with joy. They see eye to eye and they lift their voices together and sing. Watchmen, don't usually lift their voices together, and sing. They usually lift up their voices together and sound an alarm.

But the message that has come is the message from God about his salvation. So instead of sounding alarm, they start a song and the entire city joins in the song Break Forth into Joy sing together you waste places of Jerusalem. Uh, and so This wonderful. Dramatization. This picture here and the song, of course, is about the Lord himself.

Both in his Mercy verse 9, he has comforted his people, his redeemed Jerusalem, and the power in which he has accomplished. That Mercy Yahweh has made bear exposed revealed. Displayed, his holy are In the eyes of the Nations. And all the ends of the Earth. Shall see the salvation of our God.

So, the first awake awake section. God Alone will save because man cannot Cannot do it. The second awake awake section in doing. So God will display and announce his glory in the salvation and bring his people and the Nations to praise him and worship him for it. And now the third double command to part to part and the instruction here and just two verses verse 11, Basically be holy in verse 12.

Be happy. Depart the part. Go out from there. And the necessity for Holiness is the people who now have been gathered to you all have been redeemed by Yahweh unto himself, for a holy purpose, for the worship of Yahweh touch, no unclean thing. Go out from the midst of her, be clean.

You who bear the vessels of Yahweh since, his Redemption is a call to worship. They're watching out now, The the pictures of them leaving this Gentile area and watching it. Don't touch any carcasses. Don't touch anyone with a discharge, don't go near a dead body because they're being called to worship as they leave.

They're not being liberated to do whatever they want. They're being liberated for the worship of God. This is the true Christian Liberty. It's not being freed to do, whatever we feel like it's doing. Uh, whatever the Lord himself has particularly freed us for And so first part, First Response to belonging to the Lord is to be holy the second response to belong to the Lord is to be happy.

Not to go out trembling wondering, if they're gonna come back out after us and get us. Um, Uh, not hurrying up and running so that we can make our Escape, but this dignified Victorious Regal, sort of March out. You shall not go out with haste or go by flight.

For y'all, they will go before you. So the pictures of the Lord leading himself out today with shoulders back and heads held high leaving his conquerors. And no worry about what happens behind either. Yahweh will go before you and the god of Israel will be your rear guard. And this is true in the whole Christian Life.

God has saved us for himself. God is the one who is working in every day of our life. We should live with this dignity with this confidence in him. Not. While anxious and threatting with our hands and and guts knotted up about what's going to happen. It should be like asaph who even in the midst of Um, The same situation in which the wicked seem to be prospering.

He goes to worship. And he realizes I am continually with you. You take me by the hand, you guide me by your counsel and afterward you will receive me into glory. That uh, this picture at the At the end of the passage in in verse 12 then shows that not only should those the redeemed live in a holy manner that is appropriate to that for which they have been redeemed to Worship the Lord verse 11, but they should live in a happy manner.

Dignified courageous. Confident in the Lord. Knowing he leads us by the hand, knowing he guides Us by his counsel. He goes in front of us and he's also our rear God, and our rear guard. And How glorious then? To be one of his people. Uh, and then Um, Lord willing was sparing us until next week.

You don't have to wait till next week you can go ahead and read the rest of 52 and all the 53. The great cost. To the servant. At which such a Salvation comes to us the servant whom we already know by now. As. The God man. Our lord Jesus.

But what a Salvation and may the Lord give us to live. With such Holiness and such happiness. As those who know that, he's done it to declare himself. For the proclaiming of his own name. Both to us. And in the sight of all the nations. Man, let's pray. Father, thank you.

Thank you for giving to us today. To begin our day. Reading and hearing such things from your word. Help us. Now we pray in the rest of the day. To live with the very Holiness and happiness, about which we have just heard. For, we ask it through Christ, your son, our Lord, and our savior, Amen.