

The Prophecy of Isaiah
Healed by His Wounds

About 150 years after Isaiah's prophecy, the exiled Jews in Babylon, were released from captivity by Cyrus the Persian. Having the benefit of looking back in time, we can know that Isaiah's prophecy had a much greater fulfillment in Messiah; Jesus of Nazareth, who will deliver His people from their sins.

Ironically, when the Servant of Jehovah actually arrived, the Jews were again under bondage, this time to the Roman government, and their concept of deliverance was to be a free people. To most of them, Messiah's role was to be a political king, instead of a spiritual king.

Isaiah writes in the past tense; as though the prophecies were already fulfilled.

Therefore, Isaiah pictures at the same time a suffering and humiliated Messiah, and as a Conqueror. How can this seeming paradox be reconciled?

The New Testament is clear that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah who fulfills every Old Testament messianic prophecy.

Being Brought Low, He is Exalted

Isaiah 52:13-15

Isaiah uses the same kind of language that he used in chapter 6 when referring to God. This Servant is wise and He is high and exalted.

A key thought in this passage is "Just as...So shall..."

Translations vary but the idea is the contrast between the suffering and humiliation {Just as...} and the exaltation {So shall...} will be astonishing.

It is only in the Gospel account of the death by crucifixion and burial, and the resurrection can this paradox be correctly understood.

Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53:1-3

What is wrong with the society of man?

Strife and turmoil and unrest everywhere in the world!

What causes one ethnic group to hate another ethnic group?

Arabs hate Jews; some blacks hate whites and some whites hate blacks.

Radical Islam hates everyone else!

Among certain Asian groups, Japanese hate Koreans; Chinese hate Japanese, etc.

What is the problem?

Isaiah's direct answer is sin!

Sin is what is wrong.

It is sinful humans turning away from God to follow their own way.

What is Isaiah's curious answer to the problem? The death of Messiah!

Malcolm Muggeridge, British author and commentator (1903-1990):

“What is called Western Civilization is only an advanced stage of decomposition.”

Two more quotes from Malcolm Muggeridge:

Referring to a meeting of the National Council of Churches, wrote,

“They agreed on almost everything because they believed almost nothing.”

Somewhere he wrote: ***“It is only believers in the Fall of Man who can really appreciate how funny men are.”***

So says Isaiah, has anyone believed the message and the Messenger?

Out of the “dry ground” of the state of Judaism new life will spring forth.

Messiah will not be naturally attractive, as the world defines attractiveness.

But to those to whom He is revealed, He is “altogether lovely.”

Song 5:16

His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. KJV

The Jews subscribed to “Retribution Theology.”

The idea is that when someone suffered it was because they were being directly punished for something specific they had done.

The story of Job is a refutation of Retribution Theology, yet the Jews still believed it. See John 9:

John 9:1-7

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud ⁷ and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Follow along as I read these verses and reflect on the passion of the crucifixion of Jesus. Think about why He was crucified.

Acts 8:26-40

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. ²⁷ And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

The ill treatment and humiliation of the personally innocent Jesus is prophesied here in Isaiah and in Psalm 22.

Only the infinitely wise and merciful God could devise such a way to deliver His people from their sin. Only God can bring good out of such evil and wickedness.

Acts 2:22-25

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

What is written here is at the heart of much that passes for evangelism. Is it important how we present the Gospel?

Is it our goal to get people to respond by any means at all, or should we tell the story of how Jesus died to save sinners and trust the Holy Spirit to convince and convict of sin and guilt. When the Holy Spirit gives life to the message there will be a response by the sinner that results in repentance and confession and faith in the righteousness of Jesus alone.

Carefully think on verses 10-11.

God is not frustrated as He “tries” to save sinners!

Isaiah 53:11

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: KJV

Verse 12 begins with a promise by God to reward His Servant. This reward is described as the distribution of the spoils of war after a victory. The irony is that according to the world’s standards, the death of Jesus, the Messiah, was anything but a victory. But what the world deems a loss, God makes it a gain.

Isaiah 54 describes the splendor of Judah at the time of the return of the exiles from captivity in Babylon. Isaiah portrays Jerusalem, which stands for Israel, as a barren woman. Yet, despite the stigma of barrenness in the Jewish culture, she was about to shout and sing for joy.

Why?

Just as with Abraham and Sarah, the Lord promised that Israel would have many children. [1]

Paul, in Galatians, picks up this truth, that God would have many offspring according to the promise to Abraham.

Gal 3:6-9

6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness?"

7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Gal 4:21-31

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. 23 But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. 24 Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written,

"Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband."

28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. 30 But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." 31 So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.

God's people will be so numerous that the tents will have to be enlarged to accommodate the offspring. [2-3]

Judah's exile is seen as a wife separated from her faithful husband.
Her "shame of youth" is probably her slavery in Egypt.
Her "widowhood" may be the separation in Babylon.
The Lord will restore His people to Himself. [4-8]

The Lord promised Noah that He would never again flood the entire earth to destroy it. So here, the Lord promises are renewed that He will be faithful. [9-17]

Premillennialists see this as a future literal kingdom on earth.
Amillennialists view this promise being fulfilled in those who come to faith in Christ and ultimately in heaven, the New Jerusalem that comes down from heaven.

Rev 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

God's Free Produce

Isaiah 55:1-7

A common sound in the cities of the ancient Near East was that of street vendors calling out enticements to potential customers. Here we have God calling out to the exiles as if He were a street vendor offering an abundance of food and drink.

The items He offered, however, were free of charge.
This is a beautiful picture of God's free grace.

Jesus Christ is the "bread from heaven. {John 6:32ff}
Jesus is the "water of life." John 4:10; 7:37-38

Jesus is everything we need to sustain our spiritual life.

One of natural man's biggest problems is that he thinks of God in human terms. Often you hear, "Well, I like to think of God as...."

But man is finite and God is infinite. A limited creature cannot comprehend an Infinite Being as God!

This section closes with absolute assurance that just as rain accomplishes its purpose when it falls on the ground, so does God's Word accomplish its purpose when it goes out from Him.

Try to imagine yourself as an exile in Babylon hearing about deliverance from bondage and about Messiah!

The joy is expressed in an image of the mountains and hills singing and the trees applauding. The route traveled would be transformed from a desolate wilderness into a lush garden, which would remain as a sign of God's goodness.

Scriptural Christianity is the only religion that points to what God has done.

Every other religion {including many so-called Christian sects} is based on what people do for themselves and for God.

There are only two religions in the world: Grace and works!

Works says, "Do this and then it will be done."

Grace says, "It is done!"