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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Isaiah 62.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Isaiah 62.

Topics.

- Jerusalem shall be a crown of beauty, a royal diadem in the hand of God.
- As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, your God rejoices over you.
- Give the LORD no rest until he makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
- They shall be called the redeemed of the LORD; the city not forsaken.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).
3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22). The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

Jerusalem shall be a Crown of Beauty, a Royal Diadem in the Hand of God.

Isaiah 62:1-3 ----- ¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. ²the nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³you shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Zion: comes from the Hebrew word (*Tsiyown*) and refers to the mountain the city of Jerusalem is built upon. It carries the idea of a permanent capital mountain of Jerusalem in the sense that it is readily seen and easily visible and noticed as an important sign (i.e., a significant and historic sign and guiding pillar). It is called God's Holy Mountain because Jerusalem God's Holy City sits on it.

Though Mount Zion is not distinguished for its elevation or grandeur and though it had nothing in itself to claim attention or to excite wonder, it was the most exalted and honoured above all mountains because it was selected as the place where God was to be worshipped and the place where God's city and God's temple is built and God's worship was established.

Even though Mount Sinai had all the awesome glory of the Almighty God descend upon it and the law came from there, Mount Zion excels in excellence over it. This is because from Mount Zion came the Messiah the Christ attended by a multitude of angels celebrating his birth and on Mount Zion the Messiah the Christ came into his own temple as Malachi in the following verse prophesied he would.

- Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:1).

Added to all this royal glory, multitudes of angels ministered to the Lord in his temptation, at his resurrection and accompanied him in his ascension all from Mount Zion.

- Mount Sinai is the mountain of the Old Covenant of Law in contrast Mount Zion is the mountain of the New Covenant of Grace.
- Mount Sinai's glory of the law pales when stood before Mount Zion's grace and Christ's death and resurrection upon it.

Neither Mount Sinai nor Mount Zion can glory and boast in themselves for the following reasons. Mount Sinai is not famous or respected as a holy mountain and a mountain of God because of any majesty of itself, but because it was upon this mountain God descended and gave the Ten Commandments. It is this awesome and holy event that exalts Mount Sinai and not the mountain itself.

Likewise Mount Zion has no fame or glory of itself, its glory comes from being the honoured mountain God chose to build His Holy city upon and is the mountain that the Messiah the Christ the Saviour of the world died and rose again from. The real strength is not in Mount Zion itself, but in the LORD who is the head of the thousands of chariots and the heavenly host surrounding it and as such is the protector of his chosen dwelling-place.

Zion is sometimes used as an ancient name for Jerusalem itself and because it is often used in poetic and prophetic passages it can refer to:-

- The hill the city of Jerusalem is built on.
- The city of Jerusalem.
- The temple and by extension Judah and the people of God.

I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake: (v1) Isaiah's passion and zeal for the LORD'S glory and to see Jerusalem filled with righteousness drives him to keep prophesying and proclaiming God's word until the inhabitants of Jerusalem shine as a bright light to kings and nations for the LORD and for His Salvation.

You shall be called by a new name: (v2) the new name Jerusalem will be called by is a name that the city has never before been called and a most excellent name that the LORD Himself will give her making the name of the highest value. A famous name that will express Jerusalem's greatly improved and favoured condition. Since there has been many speculations concerning the new name of Jerusalem, the easiest way to discover what it maybe is to look at the following verses and see what they say concerning Jerusalem's new name.

- In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.' (Jer. 33:16).

In those days refers to the days when the LORD fulfils the promise He made to Israel and the days when a righteous Branch springs up and executes justice and righteousness throughout the land. When these events take place Jerusalem will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness," and the saved dwelling in Jerusalem will dwell securely. (Jer. 33:14-16).

- The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (Rev. 3:12).

Here the new name is: "the new Jerusalem, which comes down from God out of heaven." This New Jerusalem is called new, because its inhabitants are Christian Jews and Gentiles in Christ. One of the seven angels that carried John away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain gave him a vision of: -

- The Bride, the wife of the Lamb the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. (Rev 21:9-11).

This verse shows that the new name for Jerusalem also embraces the name, "the holy city Jerusalem the Bride the wife of the Lamb. Summing it all up the new and most excellent name that the LORD Himself will give Jerusalem is: -

- The LORD is our righteousness. (Jer. 33:16).
- The New Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven. (Rev. 3:12).
- The Bride, the wife of the Lamb the holy city. (Rev 21:9-11).

You shall be a crown of beauty a royal diadem in the hand of your God: (v3) applies to two different periods of time, the first being Israel's return to Jerusalem, the second to Christ's return in glory.

1. Israel's return to Jerusalem.

Throughout the previous verses the focus has been upon Israel's seventy year captivity in Babylon and God using Cyrus the king of Persia as his anointed shepherd to conquer the Empire of Babylon and set God's people free. Isaiah here is speaking comfort to the people of Israel who are under the oppressive rule and authority of Babylon while their beloved city Jerusalem lies in ruins.

Isaiah's prophetic words, "You shall be a crown of beauty a royal diadem in the hand of your God," (v3) can be applied (with limitations) to Israel's return to Jerusalem and the restoration of the city, the walls and the Temple. During this time the surrounding nations witnessed the glory and rebirth of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel

The return to Zion is believed by some to be the first time in human history where a people exiled from their homeland by the force of a foreign ruler had returned to their native soil to re-establish their own joint national home and thereby further encourage the concept of a distinct national identity for the Jewish people.

2. To Christ's return in glory.

Isaiah's prophetic words transcend the era of Babylon, Cyrus and Israel's return and travel through time and history until they arrive at their much wider and far more glorious fulfilment where we see John in the following verses of the Book of Revelation continues the theme of Isaiah's vision: -

- I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And 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. ⁴He 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. (Rev. 21:2-4).

Further on in this same vision John describes the Holy city New Jerusalem being built of pure gold clear as glass and every kind of precious stone, jewels, jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, carnelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst and pearls, (Rev 21:18-21). These are the most valued of all stones upon the face of the earth, men labour hard and risk their lives tunnelling into the dark and dangerous depths of the earth to find these most valued and treasured stones and jewels. These stones signify how much value God places on those who love and trust Him for their eternal salvation.

When anyone today who believes in Christ doubts God values them all they have to do is think of these precious stones and jewels and look back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us. This truth and the picture of these treasures jewels should comfort every faithful brother and sister in Christ since it is certain if God was prepared to sacrifice his Son for us, while we were indifferent and apathetic toward Him and uninterested and unconcerned about what honoured Him and what didn't He will with great joy do everything to keep us for eternal life now we love His Son. (He does this by daily lavishing us with grace)

As the Bridegroom Rejoices over the Bride, Your God rejoices over You.

Isaiah 62:4-5 ----- ⁴you shall no more be termed forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed desolate, but you shall be called my delight is in her (be called Hephzi-bah in KJV) and your land married (thy land Beulah in KJV): for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵for as a young man marries a young woman, (as a young man marieth a virgin in KJV) so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Hephzi-bah: comes from the Hebrew word (*Chephtsiy bakh*) it literally means my delight (is) in her and carries the idea of pleasure; desire; a valuable, acceptable and delightful thing; it refers to a thing to be desired. The Hebrew word, Cheptsibah, is a fanciful name for Palestine.

Beulah: comes from the Hebrew word (*ba'al*) it literally means to be a lord and master over; to marry have dominion and to be a husband. Figuratively it means to be an owner. In the context of these verses it carries the idea of being married, signifying Jerusalem's new relationship to God and the great improvement of her state from ungodliness to godliness.

You shalt no more be termed forsaken: (v4) as a shameful, disgraceful and dishonourable woman of low esteem is forsaken by her husband. This expression refers to God forsaking Jerusalem because of their rebellion and gross wickedness and using Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon to bring His judgment upon its inhabitants.

The armies of Babylon invaded Jerusalem, burnt the city and took the inhabitants captive for seventy years, during which time Jerusalem and all the land of Israel laid waste and was utterly forsaken of inhabitants so much so that wild animals had multiplied in their pasturelands.

You shall be called Hephzibah: (v4) (meaning my delight is in her) they will no longer be referred to as a woman forsaken by her husband, but will be given the new name "Beulah," carrying the idea of God being a Husband to them. It is a new name that is in perfect agreement with Jerusalem's new and exalted condition spoken of in these verses.

The idea is that the LORD will show Jerusalem abundant favour and have great pleasure in His people that this name of endearment would be appropriately given to her and she would be the highest object of His delight. Whereas she was in a desolate condition, she shall now be as a married faithful woman. God is saying that Jerusalem's name will no-longer be Forsaken, but the name Beulah which carries the idea of being the faithful married, blessed and favoured one of God.

Your sons shall marry you, and as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride: (v5) the Bible personifies Jerusalem as a mother and the people of Israel as her children therefore the word marry in this context is not to be taken literally, for it would be improper to say that children married their mother, the idea is of being bonded together in an everlasting faith and relationship of love as a husband and wife are. It carries the idea that they will see the increase of their children again in the land, as the fruit of their married condition to God which at this time is almost void of inhabitants.

As a young man marries a young woman: (v5) (as a young man marrieth a virgin in KJV) carries the idea that in the same way that a young man marrying his bride has overwhelming joy, delight and happiness in taking her to be his own, God will have the same overwhelming joy, delight and happiness over Jerusalem and her sons when they return to Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to the LORD their God

Jerusalem glorified and the Bride the wife of the Lamb: there is no doubt the LORD had great delight and joy as He watched His people united in one faith return with triumphant joy, praise and rejoicing to their beloved city Jerusalem, but these verses should not be limited to Israel's return from Babylon. The beautiful prophetic message seen in this vision of Isaiah reaches far beyond the generation of Israel's return to Jerusalem.

As the reader travels through the Scriptures it becomes very clear that greater light shines upon the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets so it is not surprising that we find in the book of Revelation (the final book) John picking up on this theme of Jerusalem being glorified and exalted a Bride and a wife and as a valued delight to the heart and mind of God.

John wrote: -

- Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7).

Later he tells us that one of the seven angels came and spoke to him saying: -

- Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. (Rev. 21:9).

The Bride the wife of the Lamb refers to the global faithful church made up of Jews and Gentiles who by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are counted righteous, not because of their self-righteousness, but because of Christ's righteousness and who trust in God's grace in Christ to be saved to eternal life.

Which means that Isaiah's amazing prophecy reaches far beyond the era of Cyrus and Israel's return from Babylon to Jerusalem to that glorious time when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in this first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

When these events come to pass the following words of Isaiah's prophecy will be fully and perfectly fulfilled: -

- Jerusalem will no more be termed forsaken: (v4) of unbelievers and by their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Israel's land shall no more be termed desolate: (v4) it will be filled with faithful Jews and Gentiles ruling and reigning with Christ as King.
- Jerusalem will be called "God's delight is in her" (v4).
- The land of Israel will be married: (v4) meaning filled with multitudes of believing Jews and Gentiles.
- With the same joy a young man marries a young woman: (v5), there will be great joy and rejoicing when these events come to pass and in the same way the bridegroom rejoices over the bride: God will rejoice over Jerusalem and His people.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

It should be noted: that as glorious as Christ's millennial reign will be it is not the final stage of God's eternal plan for mankind's salvation that he planned and purposed in His eternal mind before the world began. At the end of Christ's millennial reign God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead.

They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its eternal perfect fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The bridegroom rejoices over the bride: (v5) means that the Lord Jesus Christ delights and rejoices over the faithful global church: -

- As his and his Fathers own family.
- As clothed with his righteousness, washed in his blood, and covered with his grace.
- In their company and hearing their voice.
- As their elder brother, Saviour and King and as his faithful church and bride in the earth
- As his government who he will reign with as King of kings and Lord of lords during his glorious millennial reign on the earth.

Give the LORD no Rest until He makes Jerusalem a Praise in the Earth.

Isaiah 62:6-7 ----- ⁶on your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest, ⁷and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it praise in the earth.

Watchmen: comes from the Hebrew word (*shamar*) it literally means to hedge about and carries the idea of observing, guarding, protecting, preserving and saving. It refers to Old Testament watchmen standing on the walls of Jerusalem and to Levites who kept watch day and night over the temple and to ministers, priests, prophets and all the faithful of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their purpose is twofold, to protect and warn God's people of all forms of danger and to proclaim to them good news. The following verses speak of God's watchmen being set up to warn the people of Israel either of approaching danger or of God's warning toward them.

- Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. (Ezek. 3:17).
- So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. (Ezek. 33:7).

The following verses speak of God's watchmen bringing good news: -

- How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." ⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion. (Isaiah 52:7-8).

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen: (v6) is taken from the image of watchmen God had standing upon the walls of Jerusalem to announce when they see horsemen coming either with good news or with news of impending danger.

In Isaiah chapter twenty-one God sets watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem to announce when they see riders coming on donkeys and camels proclaiming, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon and all her gods," (Isaiah 21:6-11).

New Testament watchmen: are called to faithfully, honestly, joyfully and willing do what is necessary to watch over the spiritual welfare and safety of those who belong to Christ, while those who have faith in the Lord are called to heed their counsel and warnings.

The author of Hebrews wrote: -

- Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Heb. 13:17).

Concerning ministers of the Gospel Paul in his letter to Timothy wrote: -

- Always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Tim. 4:5).

God's true watchmen do not take this office to themselves but are placed in it by the Lord, nor do they lord it over others, but work with them for their joy that they will stand firm in their faith. (2 Cor. 1:24) (Matt. 20:25-28) (Mark. 10:42-45). The Lord qualifies, enables and makes them able ministers to be watchmen in performing their work in the care of his people not from a legal requirement or their own self-will, but from the love of God and of Christ in their heart.

You, who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest: (v6) carries the following ideas: -

- God's ministers are to always put Christ, the Gospel and the promises of God in the mind of His people and keep them before Him and intercede for them.
- To always make our voice and belief heard on earth by sharing our faith in the Lord and the Gospel and by sharing his love and grace toward us and toward all others.
- To invite sinners into the Kingdom of God and warn the wicked to turn from their ways.

You, who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest: (v6) the word remembrance comes from the Hebrew word (*d'miy*) it literally means quiet, rest and to be silent. The expression, "Put the LORD in remembrance," does not mean that we are required to remind God, as if He could forget His promises, but that we should take no rest in letting our voices always be interceding for His people and earnestly praying to further Christ's Kingdom on earth until it becomes a blessing to all nations and is renowned and famous in the eyes of the whole world and all nations praise him for it.

- Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! ⁴Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. *Selah* (Psalm 67:3-4).
- LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone we bring to remembrance. (Isaiah 26:13).

Here Isaiah is encouraging the people of Israel under the oppression rule and authority of the Empire of Babylon to constantly pray for each other and their deliverance from Babylon. By extension it is a call for us to pray that Christ will return and deliver his people from the antichrist Babylonian system they live in today spoken of in the following verses.

- Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! ³For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living." (Rev. 18:1-3).

They shall be called the Redeemed of the LORD; the City not Forsaken.

Isaiah 62:8-12 ----- ⁸the LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: "I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have laboured; ⁹but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary." ¹⁰go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the peoples. ¹¹behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: say to the daughter of Zion, "behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." ¹²and they shall be called the holy people, the redeemed of the LORD; and you shall be called sought out, a city not forsaken.

Gods promise that he will never again give Jerusalem grain, crops, vineyards etc., to be food for their enemies refers to Israel working as servants and slaves for Babylon during their seventy year captivity. These are emphatic words of triumph directed to comfort God's people in exile to Babylon.

I will not again: (v8) these words shine a light upon the truth that Israel was not overthrown because they were lessor in might to their enemies, but because it was the will of God that they would be.

The history of Israel and Assyria and Judah and Babylon: (v8), God sent prophet after prophet to warn Judah and Israel of impending doom if they did not change their wicked ways, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12). The LORD through the faithful prophets told them to surrender themselves to the King of Babylon and God would nurture them while in Babylonian captivity and deliver them.

But they continued to rebel against the word of the LORD and turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. The curses of the covenant are found in (Deut. 28:15-68) and the blessing of the covenant in (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.). Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to the Empire of Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. They were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years.

Archaeologists have found that at this time all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed and that the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon was brought to an end. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated. Many of the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist, but the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

Now here is the good news: while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Sometime near the end of the seventy years they humbled themselves and prayed the following prayer: -

- LORD we confess we have multiplied our transgressions before you, our sins testify to our wickedness, we are so sorry for denying you and not following your ways. We have wickedly oppressed others for our own gain and spoken lies, cheated the innocent out of justice and grossly lacked in righteousness. God we are truly sorry we have blinded the public from the truth and worse still made anyone who did forsake the iniquity we indulged in feel like they were our enemies." (Isaiah 59:12-15).

Sometime later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a golden time of prosperity and peace followed. The LORD through Isaiah is now promising Israel that He will never again allow their enemies to bring Jerusalem to such utter ruin or to lay all their cities and land waste or allow their enemies to oppress and hold them as their captives again.

I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies: (v8) the people of Babylon took Israel's grain, livestock and grapevines etc., that Israel had established. The LORD is telling Israel that they will again enter the gates of Jerusalem and again eat of their own crops, orchards and vineyards and praise the LORD in the courts of the Temple

Build up the highway; clear it of stones: (v10) refers to the path they took from Babylon to their homeland on their return to Jerusalem.

Your salvation comes: (v11) the LORD is proclaiming to all the earth (i.e., the surrounding nations that believed God had forsaken Israel) that he is about to reward them with such great freedom that they will call them the holy people that God had sought out and, because Jerusalem will be filled with inhabitants and her trade will greatly prosper they will call it a city not forsaken.

End.