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

Isaiah 52.

(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.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Isaiah 52.

Topics.

- Awake O Jerusalem the Holy City, no longer will the unclean come into you.
- My people shall know my name and in that day they shall know I speak.
- How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news.
- You, who bear the vessels of the LORD, depart for God will go before you.
- My servant shall be lifted up, his appearance marred, beyond human form.

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.

Awake O Jerusalem the Holy City, no Longer will the Unclean come into You

Isaiah 52:1-2 -----¹Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean.
²Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

The previous chapter ended with Jerusalem being told that they will no longer drink from LORD'S wrath and that there was no man amongst them that could be found to guide or console and comfort them. (Isaiah 51:17-20). Now in this chapter Jerusalem is told to arise from the dust and loose the bonds of their captivity, because one is coming who brings good news of salvation and peace and they will sing for joy and return to Zion. (v7-8).

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.

There shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean: (v1) this is a reference to the armies of Babylon (the uncircumcised and the unclean) entering the gates of Jerusalem, burning the city and pillaging the temple. The people of Israel are coming near the end of their Babylonian captivity and about to be set free.

Put on your beautiful garments: (v1) for almost seventy years the garments that Israel had been forced to wear where the garments of slavery and bondage and dwelling amongst a people that worshipped idols and foreign gods. In contrast to these garments of darkness the beautiful garments refer to Israel's freedom to worship their God in the open and in the temple and live true to their faith.

By the inspiration of God Isaiah in this prophetic vision is seeing forward in time to the future deliverance of the Jewish captives from their Babylonian captivity and the future restoration of Jerusalem the Holy city of God. These prophetic words were fulfilled through Cyrus king of Persia who God used to bring the Empire of Babylon to ruin and set the people of Israel free from the bondage and captivity of Babylon.

The following verses of the prophet Isaiah show that God not only called Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd and called him by name, but also show that God said He would equip Cyrus and take him by the right hand and go before him. They picture God holding Cyrus by the right hand and opening all doors that no man can shut while Cyrus the king of Persia subdues all nations.

- The LORD says of Cyrus, *"He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfil all my purpose,"* saying of Jerusalem, *"She shall be built,"* and of the temple, *"Your foundation shall be laid."* (Isaiah 44:28).
- Thus says the LORD to *his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped,* to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed. (Isaiah 45:1).
- I (*the LORD*) will go before you (*Cyrus king of Persia*) and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, ³I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, *who call you (Cyrus) by your name.* ⁴For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, *I call you by your name, I name you,* though you do not know me. (Isaiah 45:2-3).
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; *I equip you (Cyrus) though you do not know me,* ⁶that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, there is none besides me; I am the LORD, there is no other. (Isaiah 45:5-6).

- Thus says the LORD: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, *men of stature, shall come over to you (Cyrus)* and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying: '*Surely God is in you*, and there is no other, no god besides him.' (Isaiah 45:14).

These verses clearly show that God used Cyrus King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to set His people free and give Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God. However as we progress through this chapter it becomes clear that this prophetic message transcends the generation of Cyrus and not only better fits, but also echoes a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd, and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

My People shall know My Name and in that Day they shall Know I Speak.

Isaiah 52:3-6 ----- ³For thus says the LORD: "You were sold for nothing (sold yourselves for nought in KJV), and you shall be redeemed without money." ⁴For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. ⁵Now therefore what have I here," declares the LORD, "seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail," declares the LORD, "and continually all the day my name is despised. ⁶Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I."

You were sold for nothing: (v3) (sold yourselves for nought in KJV) Isaiah takes us back to Israel's four hundred and thirty years of bondage, oppression and slavery in Egypt and then fast forwards to the Assyrians who overthrew the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and took them captive prior to Babylon taking the two tribes of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem captive.

The King James Bible's translation, "you have sold yourselves for nought," carries the idea that it was by their own rebellion, wickedness and worship of idols that God allowed them to be taken into captivity to Babylon. While the English Standard Bibles translation, "you were sold for nothing," carries the idea that it had been done without any justifiable reason on the part of Babylon, but was an act of gross and severe cruelty and oppression for their-own personal gain and advantage.

You shall be redeemed without money: (v3) the rule governing prisoners is that those who rule over others are to deal justly and fairly with those under their authority and not by tyrannical and unmerciful oppressions. The Babylonians without any justifiable right had not only made God's people captive without any provocation from Israel toward them but were causing them great grief and suffering under their oppressions.

After telling Israel that they sold themselves into captivity by their own rebellion and that Babylon had taken them captive without any justifiable reason the LORD now tells them that in the same manner that he delivered Israel out of Egypt He will deliver His people out of Babylon.

Not for money, carries the idea that they will not need silver and gold to buy their freedom, they will be redeemed without money (i.e., without any effort on their part). This freedom came about through Cyrus king of Persia who God used as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) to bring the Empire of Babylon to ruin and set the people of Israel free from their bondage and captivity in Babylon and give them written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God.

Greatest Empire in the world: Cyrus is commonly known as the great King of Persia and was notable for embracing various civilizations and becoming the largest empire the world had ever seen. He built his empire by firstly conquering the Median Empire, then the Lydian Empire and eventually the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He led an expedition into central Asia (either before or after Babylon), which resulted in major campaigns that were described as having brought into subjection every nation without exception.

He respected the customs and religions of the lands he conquered and at the end of his rule, the Achaemenid Empire (also called the First Persian Empire) stretched from Asia Minor in the west to the north-western areas of India in the east.

It is said that in universal history, the role of the Achaemenid Empire founded by Cyrus lies in its very successful model for centralized administration and establishing a government working to the advantage and profit of its subjects.

What have I here," declares the LORD: (v5) this expression could be expressed in the following way, "what shall I do, or what justifiable reason is there for my intervention to rescue my people? God upon hearing the cries and wailing of His people saw that there was something that demanded He exercise His sovereign right for the benefit of His people and assert His powers against their enemies. The sense is that the state of things in Babylon demanded His intervention as it did when His people had been oppressed by the Egyptians and the Assyrians.

His people had not only been taken away for no justifiable reason and were made subject to cruel oppressions, but His own name was being continually blasphemed. The fact that the LORD'S people had been taken captive for no justifiable reason other than the kings lust to extend his empire and for greater power and were being treated with oppressions that were grievous demanded that the LORD intervenes on their behalf and punish the Babylonians, deliver His people and bring glory to His name.

Their rulers wail: (v5) referring to the rulers of the Jewish people, the picture presented here is of Israel's, rulers, leaders and priests being in deep mourning because of the calamities and tyrannical and unmerciful oppressions their people were suffering and of them lamenting, because they have been removed from their cities (especially Jerusalem) and their land and temple of worship. The idea is that they were suffering such grievous oppressions in Babylon that they in humble mournful prayer lifted up to the LORD a cry of lamentation and grief and for this reason God by His compassion and sovereign right would intervene for His people and deliver and save them as He did in former times for those who were in bondage to Egypt

All the day my name is despised: (v5) the proud and oppressive Babylonians were worshippers of many gods and as such no doubt delighted to add to the sorrows of their Jewish captives by mocking and scorning the name of their God. It is certain that they mistakenly claimed that their gods had given them victory and were therefore far greater in might and power than the God of Israel who they believed was not able to defend His own people or save their city from ruin. It was in this way that God's name was being despised and blasphemed. Following are the three reasons God intervened on behalf of His people Israel: -

1. They had been taken away for no justifiable reason.
2. They were suffering grievous and painful oppression while in captivity.
3. The name of God was being despised and blasphemed.

On all these three accounts God had the sovereign right to exercise His power toward His people and to assert His power against their enemies. However it should be noted that God's reason for delivering His people was not because of their holiness, righteousness or goodness, but for the sake of His holy name.

- I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt. (Ezek. 20:9).
- I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. (Ezek. 20:14).

In that day they shall know that it is I who speak: (v6) this refers to the day Cyrus, God's anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) gave written permission allowing Israel to return to their own land and rebuild their temple. Prior to this the might and power of the vast Empire of Babylon was so great that Israel's deliverance seemed utterly impossible. After Cyrus conquered Babylon the people of Israel triumphantly and joyful marched to their beloved city and their homeland singing songs of praise fully aware that it was the LORD their God who had delivered them.

Cyrus and Jesus: though these verses are primarily focus on the Jewish captives in Babylon the language carries and echo of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel age. The message echoes a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd, and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ, in who God at this present time is also delivering and saving His people from the condemnation of the law which states: -

- The wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23).

The words, "You shall be redeemed without money." (v3) also soar through time to the following words of the apostle Paul: -

- The free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. ¹⁸Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. (Romans 5:15-18).
- The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:23).

The Gospel proclaims liberty to those bound with fears and freedom to those troubled by the burden of sin. Everyone who comes to Jesus can find relief from the guilt of sin. The price paid by Jesus our redeemer for our salvation, was not paid with silver and gold or any treasures of this world, but his own sinless blood, meaning his own life.

How Beautiful on the Mountains are the Feet of Him who Brings Good News.

Isaiah 52:7-9 ----- ⁷How 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. ⁹Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

God holy arm: (v10) refers to Cyrus the king of Persia who God used as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) and to the Lord Jesus Christ who was also the LORD'S anointed shepherd (Luke 4:18) (Acts 4:26) (Acts 10:38). These verses apply to three different events hundreds of years apart, the first during Isaiah's generations and the second in the future age to come and the third the most glorious of all in the latter days.

1. The first refers to Israel's watchmen (v8) proclaiming the good news that Cyrus the king of Persia (who the LORD used as His anointed shepherd) (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) has come and has given Israel written permission to return to their beloved city Jerusalem and rebuild the temple of God and openly and publically declared that that the LORD God of Israel is the God of Jerusalem and the God of heaven as the following verse show: -
 - Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up." (2 Chron. 36:23).
 - Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:2-3).

2. The second refers to the Lord Jesus Christ the LORD'S anointed shepherd who brought the Good News of the Gospel and of salvation by grace and not by the works of the law to both the Jews and the Gentiles and by extension to the apostles and everyone throughout the New Testament and the following generations who is witnessing and sharing the Good News of the Gospel and the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary that proclaim that eternal salvation is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by grace and not by works of the law and self-effort.

Jesus the LORD'S anointed Shepherd: -

- Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." (Luke 4:18).
 - God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. (Acts 10:38).
3. The third refers to the final restoration of Jerusalem and God's global Kingdom 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 the 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.

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 the titles: -

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

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The beauty of New Jerusalem: the following verses speak of the glory of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles gathered together by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There will be no more pain in the Holy City, New Jerusalem.

- I heard a loud voice from the throne (in the Holy City, New Jerusalem) 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. 21:3-4).

Nothing unclean will enter the Holy City, New Jerusalem.

- I saw no temple in the city (the Holy City, New Jerusalem), for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21:22-27).

The Throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the Holy City, New Jerusalem.

- No longer will there be anything accursed (in the Holy City, New Jerusalem), but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:3-5).

The fact non-believing secular tourist of all nations and all religions flood Jerusalem today by the thousands, and terrorists bomb its streets and café's clearly show that these verses have not yet been fully fulfilled. The apostle John in the following verses sees in his vision a much clearer and detailed picture of what Isaiah is seeing here in his vision. John wrote: -

- 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. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev. 21:1-2).

Those who have attended a wedding will understand the brilliance of Isaiah's and John's words.

I attended a wedding that was held at a magnificent dam surrounded by vividly coloured trees. The brilliant shade of green grass and the sparkling water of the dam acted as a magnificent backdrop while the Groom and guests all waited in excited anticipation for the Bride to appear.

Eventually the chatter of the invited guest was broken as the wedding music began and there she was, the Bride radiant, pure, innocent her white dress with its lacy train caressed the fresh green grass as she came closer to her first real love.

I turned and glanced at the Groom and noticed the struggle he had to hold back his joyful tears from filling his eyes like a river overflowing its banks as he saw the beauty and radiance of his Bride approaching him with her smile of grace, and charity and her obvious affection and tender compassion she had for the man she loved at first sight.

Just as I was touched by the splendour and glory of the appearance of my friends' Bride, John is touched in his vision by the same overwhelming wonder as he sees the glorious beauty of the earthy city Jerusalem restored as a Bride adorned for her husband.

We often think of how much we love the Lord and how great our rejoicing will be on that day when we see him face to face, but just as the Groom at this wedding was overwhelmed with inexpressible joy when he saw the woman who had so faithfully committed her life to him, Jesus our Groom will also be as excited and thrilled when he sees the radiance and beauty of his Bride as she approaches him, knowing she has patiently endured life's many trials and testings to be with him.

You who bear the Vessels of the LORD, depart for God will go Before You.

Isaiah 52:11-12 ----- ¹¹Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD. ¹²For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight, for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

The prophetic vision of Isaiah now reaches forward to the end of Israel's seventy years in captivity. The captives are told to depart from their Babylonian and touch no unclean thing, meaning do not take any idols or gods of Babylon with them, because God will be following behind them to protect them.

You shall not go out in haste: (v12) means they will not have to hurry or rush as they leave Babylon it is contrasting fleeing from an attacking enemy. There was no rush because they were not fleeing and enemy, but were leaving with the favour and writing permission of Cyrus the Great who had conquered the vast Empire of Babylon. Added to this Cyrus gave the people the sacred vessels of God's temple to take back with them that King Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged and taken back to Babylon.

My Servant shall Be Lifted up, His appearance Marred, Beyond Human Form.

Isaiah 52:13-15 ----- ¹³Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. ¹⁴As many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—¹⁵so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

In a very limited sense these verses can apply to the united nation of Israel who is often called God's servant in Scripture. When the Assyrians invaded Israel in the land of Samaria and the Babylonian armies invaded the land of Judah and Jerusalem and the people were taken into captivity and those who weren't were so vastly scattered amongst the surrounding nations that Israel as a nation was beyond recognition.

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.

He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted: (v13) this clearly refers to Jesus death and resurrection on the bloodstained cross of Calvary, but it also reaches forward to his return in glory and being exalted as King of kings and Lord of lords above all nations.

His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance: (v14) clearly refers to the brutal beatings Jesus suffered at the hands of the Romans and the cruel and bloody death he endured so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

He sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him: (v14) means that kings, princes, nobles and people from all nations tongues and languages will be struck with awe and humbled by his name and saved by faith in him and by God's grace.

That which they see and that they have not heard they will understand: (v115) this is a reference to the message of the Gospel and the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the apostles did not understand what Jesus meant when he said: -

- The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death ¹⁹and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day. (Matt. 20:18-19).
- They will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise. (Mark 10:34).
- After flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise. (Luke 18:33).

After appearing to the apostles in his resurrected body they clearly understood who it was that they had seen and all the words he spoke to them. They had no doubt Jesus was Israel's Messiah, the Christ the Son of God and Saviour of the world. Here is the wonder the majesty and splendour of Bible prophecy hundreds of years before these events came to pass Isaiah spoke of them. This should give all who by faith belong to Christ's global Kingdom confidence that the following prophetic words of Paul will also come to pass: -

- The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words. (1 Thess. 4:1-18).

End.