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Isaiah 51

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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 perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Isaiah 51.

Topics.

- Look to Abraham and Sarah that I might bless him and multiply him.
- The LORD comforts Zion and her wilderness like the Garden of Eden.
- Heavens vanish like smoke and the earth will wear out like a garment.
- The moth will eat them like a garment, but my salvation will be forever.
- Awake, O LORD; was it not you who cut Rahab and pierced the dragon?
- The ransomed of the LORD shall return to Zion with everlasting joy.
- Have you forgotten your Maker, who created the heavens and earth?
- Wake, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk the cup of LORD'S wrath.
- Thus, says your LORD, I have taken from you the bowl of my wrath.

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 TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

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.

ISAIAH 51:1-2

2

Look to Abraham and Sarah that I Might Bless Him and Multiply Him.

- **Isaiah 51:1-2:** "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. ²Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him.

The previous chapter spoke of those who looked to idols and pagan gods and trusted in their own self-righteousness and good works to be counted righteous and be saved. In response to this the LORD is saying look to Abraham their father and to Sarah who bore them, because he was a righteous man when God called him. In this context righteousness means that Abraham even though he was raised amongst idols and the gods of Ur, he turned his back on them and left them when the LORD called him.

The rock from which Israel was hewn in this context is Abraham, while the quarry refers to Sarah. Abraham is the father of faith, God promised that from Abraham and Sarah will come, kings and nations and their offspring will be multiplied as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven. God has multiplied Abraham through Israel and today is continuing to multiply his offspring through the Gentiles in Christ.

ISAIAH 51:3

The LORD comforts Zion and Her Wilderness like the Garden of Eden.

- **Isaiah 51:3:** For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

Eden: was the garden God originally gave to Adam and Eve, it means delight. It had four major rivers and multitudes of fresh water streams flowing through its fertile soil. Eden is often used in Scripture as a symbolic name for fields, hills and land that produces abundant growth and wealth.

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.

For the LORD comforts Zion: (v3) these words are spoken as a rebuke to those of the previous chapter who were trusting in idols and foreign gods to prosper them and bless their land.

- **Isaiah 51:4-6:** "Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples. ⁵My righteousness, draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. ⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.

Some believe Isaiah's words literally mean that the sky, the heavenly planets and the stars will all vanish and the earth will be totally destroyed. Others believe Isaiah is using biblical lofty language whereby the heavens are a symbol of Israel's high priest and the Levitical priesthood while the earth is a symbol of the common people of Israel, or heaven is a symbol of Judah (the faithful) while earth is a symbol of Israel (the unfaithful).

Biblical language: The Bible often uses extreme colorful exaggeration to highlight the story, the message, the moral, the teaching, God's power, or the event. The following examples support the idea that Isaiah is using the words heaven and earth poetically and symbolically rather than literally.

Joseph: said, "The sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to him." (Gen. 37:9). Here the sun and moon symbolize Jacob and Rachel, while the eleven stars symbolize Joseph's eleven brothers.

Moses: said, "Give ear, O ye heavens and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." (Deut. 32:1). Moses was speaking to the nation of Israel; the heavens symbolize the high priest, the Levitical priesthood and the prophets while the earth symbolizes the common folk.

Daniel: said, "A little horn cast some stars down from heaven to the ground and stamped on them." (Dan. 8:9-10). The little horn here is symbolic of a powerful ruler, while the stars of Israel are symbolic of Israel or the faithful of God's people.

Zophar: said, "Though man's head reaches into the clouds, yet he will die." (Job 20:4-7). Obviously, a man's head does not reach into the clouds; the focus is upon extreme pride.

Isaiah: said, "The earth staggers like a drunken man, because its transgression lies heavy upon it." (Isaiah 24:18-23). The earth didn't stagger; the focus is the extreme sin that is rampant across the face of the earth.

David: said, "Smoke went up from God's nostrils, and fire from his mouth." (2 Sam 22:9). David is using lofty language to highlight the extreme sense of anger and wrath God was feeling.

Solomon: said, "God's people are as numerous as the dust of the earth." (2 Chron. 1:9-10). Clearly the people of Israel have never been as the dust of the earth.

Habakkuk said "Horsemen, "fly like an eagle swift to devour. (Hab. 1:8). Horses don't fly this is lofty language to highlight the power and speed of the horsemen and their horses.

Jesus said: "Capernaum will be exalted to heaven." (Luke 10:15). Jesus is using lofty language to highlight the extreme pride of Capernaum. For further information concerning biblical lofty language, see the title: Lofty Language and Figurative Language of the Bible.

In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Verses four to six carry the following three interpretations each one being greater and far more magnificent than the previous one:

1. **GOD'S JUDGMENT ON BABYLON:** in this scenario God's judgment on Babylon refer to Cyrus the 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.

- 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).

In this scenario the expressions:

- **I will set my justice for a light to the peoples:** (v4) refers to Cyrus who God used as His anointed shepherd to conquer the mighty Empire of Babylon.
- **My righteousness draws near and my salvation has gone out:** (v5) refers to Cyrus giving Israel written permission to return to their beloved city and rebuild the Temple of God.
- **My arms will judge the peoples:** (v5) again refers to Cyrus and his armies bringing God's judgement upon the Babylonian Empire.
- **The coastlands hope for me:** (v5) refer to the Jews that had been scattered amongst the nations during the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions
- **For my arm they wait:** (v5) means that the Jews in captivity are waiting for God's deliver to come and set them free, which of course in this scenario is Cyrus.
- **Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath:** (v6) means look and observe what is happening amongst the kings and rulers of the nations and see the signs that God's promise of a deliver is about to come.
- **The heavens vanish like smoke:** (v6) refer to the powerful King of Babylon and the princes and nobles in the royal palace being brought to utter ruin.
- **The earth will wear out like a garment and all in it will die:** (v6) refer to the populations of the Empire of Babylon and all the nations in alliance with Babylon's king being brought down to the grave.
- **My salvation and righteousness will be forever:** (v6) is stated to highlight the truth that the mighty Empire of Babylon will be brought to utter ruin while God's salvation and His Kingdom will endure forever.
- **My righteousness will never be dismayed:** (v6) means that all who trust in God and His plan of salvation will not be disappointed or ashamed that they held fast to their faith.

2. **THE BIRTH AND MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:** in this scenario Isaiah's prophetic message transcends the era of Cyrus and echoes a future King who the LORD also calls His anointed shepherd, and his name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ, which means the expressions:
- **I will set my justice for a light to the peoples:** (v4) refers firstly, to Christ's judgment upon the prideful, hypocritical religious leaders of his generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and the scribes) and the justice and fairness he showed toward the lame, the blind and the poor. Secondly, to Jesus being God's light to Israel and to the Gentiles, summed up in Jesus words, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)
 - **My righteousness draws near and my salvation has gone out:** (v5) refers to the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel of grace going out amongst the Jews and the Gentiles.
 - **My arms will judge the peoples:** (v5) refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - **The coastlands hope for me:** (v5) refers to the Jews amongst all nations waiting for their promised Messiah and Saviour.
 - **For my arm they wait:** (v5) refers to the lost sheep of the house of Israel waiting for their Messiah the Christ to come as promised in Scripture.
 - **Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath:** (v6) means look and observe what is happening amongst the kings, rulers and governments of the world and current events and see that the stage is being set for the promise of Christ's return.
 - **The heavens vanish like smoke:** (v6) refers to the religious leaders of Jesus generation the chief priests, Pharisees and the scribes being stripped of all their power and authority over the people.
 - **The earth will wear out like a garment and they who dwell in it will die:** (v6) refers to the common people of Israel who rejected Jesus and mocked and scorned him. This came about when Rome burned the city of Jerusalem in 70AD.
 - **My salvation and righteousness will be forever:** (v6) is stated to highlight the truth that all the kingdoms of the world, no matter how great are all temporary, while God's salvation and Kingdom is eternal.
 - **My righteousness will never be dismayed:** (v6) means that all who trust in Christ righteousness and not their own to be counted righteous and trust in God's grace to keep them will not be disappointed or ashamed that they held fast to their faith when the Lord returns in glory.
3. **THE RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:** in this scenario Isaiah's prophetic message refer to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ 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. In this scenario the expressions:
- **I will set my justice for a light to the peoples:** (v4) refers to Jesus reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) from God's Holy City Jerusalem and his word going out to the nations during his glorious millennial reign.
 - **My righteousness draws near and my salvation has gone out:** (v5) embrace all (Jews and Gentiles) who belong to the global Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **My arms will judge the peoples:** (v5) refer to the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ when some will be counted worthy and others will be counted unworthy and some will be rewarded while others suffer loss.
- **The coastlands hope for me:** (v5) refer to Jews and Gentile amongst all countries and nations.
- **For my arm they wait:** (v5) refers to those who belong to the global family of Christ waiting patiently for their Saviour and King the Lord Jesus Christ to return in glory and gather the faithful to himself.
- **Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath:** (v6) means observe the weather patterns and natural disasters and look at what is happening amongst the kings, rulers and governments of the world and current events and see that the stage is being set for the promise of Christ's return.
- **The heavens vanish like smoke:** (v6) refer to all the false priests, prophets and religious leaders of the world being utterly brought to ruin
- **The earth will wear out like a garment and they who dwell in it will die:** (v6) refers to that day when the angels' words, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon," (Rev. 14:8) comes to pass (i.e., the entire global financial system and trade collapses and the antichrist system is brought to ruin).
- **My salvation and righteousness will be forever:** (v6) all the kingdoms of this world will pass away while those saved by God's grace and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will remain forever.
- **My righteousness will never be dismayed:** (v6) means that all who trust in Christ righteousness and not their own to be counted righteous and trust in God's grace to keep them will not be disappointed or ashamed that they held fast to their faith when the Lord returns in glory. In this scenario Christ returns in glory and those who have died 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 the nations that 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).

Whichever of these three interpretations one chooses to accept all carry the same theme, God will send a Saviour to His people who come with righteousness and salvation and who will judge their enemies and that whoever trusts in him will not be dismayed, disappointed or put to shame.

NOTE: at the end of Christ's glorious Kingdom age 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 fullness and majestic royal glory.

ISAIAH 51:7-8

The Moth will Eat them like a Garment, but Salvation is Forever.

- **Isaiah 51:7-8:** "Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. ⁸For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations."

The speech is now directed toward those amongst the people who are faithful and who do obey the word and will of God. The LORD is telling them not to fear what man can do (i.e., kill them), because His righteousness leads to eternal life. These verses shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that though God desires that we would all live-in peace and prosperity while dwelling upon earth, His greater focus is that all attain to eternal life regardless of their circumstances (good or bad) on earth. In the eyes of the Eternal God, I suspect mortal death is not seen as we view it, but as a birth into a life that by far supersedes any kind of love or any type of joy that we may have experienced in this life. This is why before God eternal life is the greatest gift those made of the dust of the earth can possess.

Consider for a moment: if our world's top scientist and medical practitioners could invent a pill that would give people eternal life the billionaires of this world would write out a cheque no-matter what the cost to buy them for all their family and friends, and almost all the world would sell everything they had to purchase one. This is the high value Peter, the apostles and Paul placed on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the apostles, Paul and Peter there was nothing in this world more valuable for any man or woman to possess than the gift of eternal life. How sad it is that in some modern churches today this high value of eternal life has been lost and replaced by a Gospel that focuses on a blessed, prosperous and successful life now in this mortal and corrupt world and messages that appeal to self, ego and pride. Especially when one considers what it cost God the eternal Father and the high price His Son paid to purchase this gift of eternal life for all who would humbly accept by faith the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The moth and the worms will eat them: (v8) in these verses the moth and the worm is not only pictured as consuming a precious and valuable garment, but also pictured as bringing it to such ruin that it is only fit to be thrown away since it no longer has any use for its owner. The moth and worm in this context are much the same in that both bring ruin. The idea is, that the enemies of the faithful and righteous of heart (symbolised by the precious garment) will be consumed and destroyed as easily as a moth and worm eats a garment. In the same way as a moth and worm consumes

a precious woollen garment the owner of that garment will destroy the destructive worm and moth likewise God will bring His judgment upon those who hurt or harm the righteous of heart. There are three applications to these verses, one during the generations of Isaiah and the other two are future events yet to happen:

- 1 The Empire of Babylon (symbolised by the worm and the moth) having taken Israel (symbolised by the precious garment) into captivity being brought to utter ruin. This came about when God used Cyrus the king of Persia as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) to bring the vast Empire of Babylon to utter ruin and set God's people free.
- 2 To the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to gather the faithful to himself and bring judgment upon the enemies of God's people.
- 3 To that glorious day at the end of Christ's millennial reign when God Himself descends to earth on a Great White Throne and the sea, death and Hades give up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. (Rev. 20:13). Then Death and Hades and those counted unworthy are thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15) a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total and utter extinction). For further information concerning this world changing event, see the title:

- The second resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection ON WEBSITE MENU.

My righteousness and salvation will be forever to all generations: (v8) it will abide through the endless ages of eternity. Though Isaiah is speaking to Israel the principle applies to all the faithful of all generations who trust in God. By faith in Christ they are now heirs of eternal life not by their righteousness, but by Christ's righteousness.

9

ISAIAH 51:9-10

Was it Not the LORD who Cut Rahab and Pierced the Dragon?

- **Isaiah 51:9-10:** Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon? ¹⁰Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?

Rahab: many believe Rahab to be some type of dragon or mythical monster of the deep, but it becomes clear after a careful look at the following verses that this is not so:

- God will not turn back his anger; beneath him bowed the helpers of Rahab (the proud helpers do stoop under him in KJV) (Job 9:13).

Rahab in this context refers to prideful mighty and powerful nations and those aligned to them that God has humbled and will humble.

- God divides the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smites through the proud (Rahab in Hebrew). (Job 26:12).

In this context Rahab refers to the proud.

- I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me (Zion and the city of God): behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. (Psalm 87:4).

Rahab in this context refers to powerful nation (most likely Egypt).

- God crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. (Psalm 89:10).

In this context Rahab refers to a powerful nation that is an enemy to God and His people.

- For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength (Rahab in Hebrew) is to sit still. (Isaiah 30:7).

Rahab in this context refers to the strength of Egypt

- Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon?
¹⁰Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? (Isaiah 51:9-10).

In this context Rahab refers to Egypt at the time of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea. These verses make it very clear that Rahab is not some dragon or mythical monster of the deep, but refers to prideful powerful nations that are opposed to God and His people (this of course would include the kings of these nations). In the Hebrew language the word (*rahab*) means proud and strength it carries the idea of prideful strength and acting proudly especially against God and His people. The message concerning Rahab is that no one no matter how powerful and mighty a king, a nation or an army maybe no one can stop God from accomplishing His purposes.

Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon?
(v9) in the context of the passage this refers to the armies of Egypt being destroyed in the Red Sea. Because Israel has forgotten their God (v13) Isaiah is saying, wake up people remember what your past generations did, they dried up the Red Sea. Though it was the LORD that dried up the Sea Isaiah is simply trying to alert the present unbelieving and fearful generation of Israel to the greatness of Gods' power that was working through the man Moses and for the nation of Israel.

ISAIAH 51:11

The he LORD'S Ransomed shall return to Zion with Everlasting Joy.

- **Isaiah 51:11:** And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

There are two applications to these verses, one during the generations of Isaiah and the other is a future event yet to happen:

1. To the end of Israel's seventy year captivity when Cyrus the king of Persia who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) conquered the Empire of Babylon and gave Israel written permission to return to Mount Zion and their beloved city Jerusalem.

Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to Mount Zion 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 Mount Zion with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed and their faith was once again established a golden time of gladness, prosperity, joy and peace followed.

- 2 To Jesus return 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. For further information concerning Christ's return see the notes titled, "The return of the Lord Jesus Christ," following (v4-6) (above).

ISAIAH 51:12-14

Have You Forgotten your Maker, Who Created Heaven and Earth.

- **Isaiah 51:12-14:** "I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass, ¹³and have forgotten the LORD, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and you fear continually all the day because of the wrath of the oppressor, when he sets himself to destroy? And where is the wrath of the oppressor? ¹⁴He who is bowed down shall speedily be released; he shall not die and go down to the pit, neither shall his bread be lacking.

You fear all the day because of the wrath of the oppressor: (v13) the oppressor refers to Babylon the reason they fear every day is because they are in captivity and subservient to their authority. They would have also feared because the fierce armies of Babylon laid the city of Jerusalem waste, pillaged the temple of its sacred vessels and took the people captive. Sadly, what Israel didn't understand was that the only reason Babylon had the power to overcome God's people was because God was using Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:9) and his armies to bring judgment on Israel. God was using Babylon in this way because Israel had not only set their hearts diamond hard against the word of the LORD and His prophets, but was also worshipping Idols and pagan gods and had entered into gross wickedness. They didn't understand they weren't in captivity, because their God lacked the power to save them, but because they had broken the covenant by their spiritual adultery and instead of bringing His favour upon their nation had brought His judgment and wrath.

He who is bowed down shall speedily be released: (v14) those bowed down refers to the people of Israel in captivity that had been humbled by Babylon. God is now telling the captives not to be afraid of their mortal enemy Babylon who is as the grass that dies, because the LORD is about to release them.

ISAIAH 51:15-16

11

Wake, Jerusalem, You Who Have Drunk the Cup of LORD'S Wrath.

- **Isaiah 51:15-16:** I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the LORD of hosts is his name. ¹⁶And I have put my words in your mouth and covered you in the shadow of my hand, establishing the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, and saying to Zion, 'You are my people.'

The LORD reminds the Jewish captives of Babylon of His great power and might over creation and tells them that they are His people. The principal to learn from these verses is that when life hits a crisis and hardships and troubles come it does not mean that God has cast us out of His family or withdrawn His love and grace.

I have put my words in your mouth: (v16) the following shows that God's word is frequently said to be put into the mouths of the people. When Isaiah was speaking to the people of Israel about their Redeemer coming to Zion he said:

- As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the LORD, "from this time forth and forevermore." (Isaiah 59:21).

Moses when speaking to the people of Israel said:

- The word is very near you, it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. (Deuteronomy 30:14).

Joshua when speaking to the people of Israel said:

- This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Josh. 1:8).

These verses show that the expression, "I have put my words in your mouth," (v16) carries the idea that God has made known to the people dwelling on Mount Zion and dwelling in Jerusalem and in its wider sense to all Israel carries the idea that God has made known and given to them:

- His truth, His statutes, His commandments and His laws.
- All things concerning the promise of the Messiah.
- His promise to restore them again to their own land and preserve them for future generations.
- The assurance that the true faith would be spread to other nations.

By the statement, "I have put my words in your mouth," (v16) the LORD is highlighting the truth that these are not the vain words of unfaithful men who can lie and deceive, but the glorious promises of the Almighty, faithful God who cannot lie and therefore they are guaranteed to come to pass.

- In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies (cannot lie in KJV), promised before the ages began (Titus 1:2).

I have covered you in the shadow of my hand: (v16) the language here is entirely figurative it refers to the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity and the restoration to their own land and the establishment of their faith. It means that God by His almighty power has protected and kept the people of Israel so that He might fulfil His promise to Abraham that He would raise up a faithful people that would be multiplied as the stars of heaven.

Establishing the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth: (v16) (I may plant the heavens in KJV), the heavens in this context signifies the high priests and the Levitical priesthood, while the earth refers to the common folk it means that the LORD is promising to establish Israel in their faith of their fathers and in the city of Jerusalem and in their land. It means that God will reform Israel in a most glorious manner and bring them back to Himself. It also echoes new and blessed glorious millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ which in Scripture is referred to by the following expressions:

- I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. (Isaiah 65:17).
- For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. (Isaiah 66:22).
- According to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:13).

Establishing Israel in their land and bringing Christ's millennial Kingdom to pass is compared to God's work in forming the heavens and laying the foundation of the earth, it carries the idea that to bring about these changes would require almighty power and produce great changes.

Saying to Zion, "You are my people," (v16) means that God will restore Israel to their own land and acknowledge them as His own people. This He did through Cyrus the king of Persia who God called His anointed shepherd and used to conquer the Empire of Babylon and give Israel written permission to return to Jerusalem, which they did with triumphant joy and great rejoicing. Upon returning to their homeland they rebuilt the city, the temple of God and established their true faith.

However these promises will more fully and perfectly come to pass in another servant of the LORD who is also called God's anointed shepherd and His name is not Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ in who not only the faithful of Israel will be restored, but also all Gentiles who come to him through the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel.

- I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. (Isaiah 65:19).

This will be fully realised when God's new spiritual creation going on in the world today by the Gospel is manifested to the world when Christ returns in glory. Until that day all those in the global Kingdom of Christ should keep upper most in their mind that they are:

- God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10).

NOTE: it is the good works that were created before the world began and not those in Christ Jesus. God did not predestine some to be saved and others to be condemned, before time began, but he did establish from the beginning holy and good laws for all those who belong to him to follow.

ISAIAH 51:17-20

Wake, O Jerusalem, who Have Drunk the Cup of the LORD'S Wrath.

- **Isaiah 51:17-20:** Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering. ¹⁸There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up. ¹⁹These two things have happened to you—who will console you?—devastation and destruction, famine and sword (i.e.; war) who will comfort you? ²⁰Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God.

In these verses Jerusalem is personified as a mother who has given birth, to many sons, but amongst all the sons she has raised there is not one who is able to take their mother (Jerusalem) by the hand and guide her. God is calling the inhabitants of Jerusalem to repent and return to Him.

13

O Jerusalem, you have drunk from the LORD the cup of His wrath: (v17) this primarily refers to Babylon burning the city of Jerusalem, pillaging the temple and taking the people captivity for seventy years, but in a much wider view can embrace all the invasions of Assyria against the people of Israel in the land of Samaria and against the cities of Judah.

Who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering: (v17) the dregs of the bowl, refers to what is left on the bottom of a bowl after most of what was in it has been eaten. In the context of these verses it carries the idea that God's wrath is almost over, the people are near the end of their captivity, their deliverance is near.

These two things have happened to you: (v19) this refers to the devastation and destruction of the entire population of Judah and Israel; their cities, towns, villages, Jerusalem and the temple being brought to ruin and their land laying waste. Amongst all this destruction, grief and sorrow the LORD asks, "Who will console you?" In the following verses the LORD says that Israel will no longer drink of His wrath and the following chapter speaks of One coming who will console them saying:

- 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." (Isaiah 52:7).

ISAIAH 51:21-23

The LORD has Taken from you the Bowl of His Wrath.

- **Isaiah 51:21-23:** Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine: ²²Thus says your LORD, the LORD, your God who pleads the cause of his people: "Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering (trembling in KJV); the bowl

of my wrath you shall drink no more; ²³and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, 'Bow down, that we may pass over'; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over."

Staggering: (trembling in KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*tar`elah*) it means to reel and tremble in astonishment. It carries the idea of shaking in terror and fear.

Drunk, but not with wine: (v21), in this context means that they are staggering like a drunk person, but not because they are drunk with wine, but because of God's judgment.

The LORD now speaks words of comfort to the afflicted in captivity telling them that His wrath will no longer be upon them, but instead God will turn His wrath toward all those nations that have afflicted and humbled Israel and who has made them their slaves and servants.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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