# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE ONE

## AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

Scripture Reading: Isa. 1:1; 2:1; 13:1; 15:1; 43:3; 49:26; 9:6; 7:14; 4:2; 53:2-3; 42:1-4; 53:7-12; 52:13; 40:10; 64:1; 9:1-7; 49:6; 12:2-3; 2:2-5; 11:6-9; 35:1-10; 30:26; 65:17

The book of Isaiah is the first of the books of the prophets. Isaiah's ministry, which began in 760 B.C., lasted more than sixty years. He served four generations of kings. History tells us that he was martyred in a very cruel way by being sawn in two (Heb. 11:37). He was utterly faithful.

Isaiah's prophecy has a spiritual essence, and the essence is this: The Christ processed for the divine purposes being the centrality and the universality of the great wheel of the move of the Divine Trinity for the divine dispensing of Himself into His elect. Although the term *great wheel* cannot be found in Isaiah, this book does in fact speak of the great wheel of the move of the Divine Trinity. Each of the books of prophecy unveils a part of God's universal move. Whereas Ezekiel uses the word *wheel* to describe God's universal move on earth for the fulfillment of His eternal economy (Ezek. 1:15), Isaiah takes the lead to prophesy concerning God's move.

The book of Isaiah is full of the aspects of God's eternal economy. This book shows us how God, for the fulfillment of His eternal economy, has chosen a people, Israel, to be His elect and His beloved. Around Israel are the Gentile nations. In a sense, Israel has been chosen by God, and the nations have been set aside by Him. Nevertheless, in His move God cannot neglect the nations. Therefore, both Israel, God's chosen and beloved people, and the nations are very much involved in Isaiah's prophecy.

It is not easy for us to know any book of the Bible. In the New Testament, the most difficult book to enter into and to

understand is Ephesians. In the Old Testament, the most difficult book to enter into and to understand is Isaiah. As a book concerning God's economy, Isaiah has its appearance, contents, and depths. Furthermore, this book involves God's dealing with many nations for a definite purpose. Thus, it is hard for us to enter into this book.

The book of Isaiah, which has sixty-six chapters, is a representative of the Bible, which has sixty-six books. In these messages on the book of Isaiah, we will not cover this book chapter by chapter and verse by verse, for this would lead us into a "forest." We will cover Isaiah in the way of a life-study, not for knowledge or theology but for life.

The best way to study Isaiah is to learn the secret and mysterious points of this book. Many of these secret points are related to Christ. Every aspect of what Christ is and of what He has done, is doing, and will do involves a secret. Some of these secrets are in Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6; others are in chapter fifty-three. In this book, there are secrets even concerning Babylon. When we get into all the secret and mysterious points in Isaiah, the whole book is open to us.

## I. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH, IN ITS CONTENT CONCERNING GOD'S ETERNAL ECONOMY IN CHRIST, BEING THE LEADING BOOK AMONG ALL THE BOOKS OF THE PROPHETS

The book of Isaiah, in its content concerning God's eternal economy in Christ, is the leading book among all the books of the prophets. This book is the vision which Isaiah saw (1:1), the word which Isaiah saw (2:1), and the burden which Isaiah saw (13:1; 15:1). The vision, word, and burden in Isaiah are concerned with God's eternal economy in Christ, which is thoroughly covered in this book.

## II. THE SUBJECT

The subject of the book of Isaiah is the salvation of Jehovah through the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, ascended, and coming Christ. This is not merely God's salvation; it is the salvation of Jehovah, that is, the salvation of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. This is full salvation, entire salvation.

### III. THE CONTENT

The content of Isaiah is this: God's dealing in love with His beloved Israel and His righteous judgment upon the nations bring in Christ, the Savior (43:3; 49:26), who is God (9:6) incarnated to be a man (7:14), possessing both the divine and human natures (4:2), living on this earth (53:2-3; 42:1-4), crucified (53:7-10a, 12), resurrected (53:10b-11), ascended (52:13), and coming (40:10; 64:1) to meet the need of God's chosen people and the nations (9:1-7; 49:6) in God's all-inclusive salvation (12:2-3), that the restoration of all things (2:2-5; 11:6-9; 35:1-10; 30:26) may be brought in, which will consummate in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (65:17). Hence, the content of Isaiah covers God's entire economy of the New Testament, from the incarnation to the new heaven and new earth, with the Old Testament background of God's dealing with Israel and His judgment upon the nations.

### IV. THE CENTRAL THOUGHT

The central thought of Isaiah is: Christ is God incarnated in humanity to be the Savior of man, that all the God-created universe, which is fallen, might be restored and consummate in the new heaven and new earth for eternity. This book, like the New Testament, covers from beginning to end all the things God has ordained according to His economy. The beginning is the incarnation, and the end is the new heaven and new earth. The New Testament begins with Christ's incarnation and birth and ends with the new heaven and new earth. Since Isaiah covers the same matters, we see once again that the book of Isaiah is the representative of the entire Bible, especially of the New Testament.

### V. THE SECTIONS

The book of Isaiah has five sections.

#### A. The Salvation of Jehovah to His Beloved People and to the Nations

The first section, covering the first twelve chapters, is the salvation of Jehovah to His beloved people and to the nations.

### B. The Judgment of Jehovah upon the Nations

The second section covers chapters thirteen through twenty-three. This section is concerned with the judgment of Jehovah upon the nations unveiling Satan's oneness with the nations, showing Jehovah's sovereign rule over the nations, benefiting Jehovah's beloved Israel, and providing the wonderful Christ as the Savior to meet the need of the beloved Israel and the judged nations. This section reveals that the action of God in His economy first will benefit Israel and then will bring in the wonderful Christ to meet the need of every situation. By accomplishing God's economy, Christ will meet God's need, and in His salvation He will meet man's need. We should keep these points in mind as we read Isaiah.

### C. The Issue of Jehovah's Dealing with His Beloved Israel

Chapters twenty-four through thirty-five reveal that Jehovah's dealing with His beloved Israel issues in Israel's revival and return to God and ushers in Christ with the restoration of all things.

### D. An Example of Seeking after Jehovah and Trusting in Him

In the fourth section (chs. 36—39) we have an example (King Hezekiah) of seeking after Jehovah and trusting in Him.

### E. The Servant of Jehovah and the Salvation Brought In by Him

The last section (chs. 40—66) concerns the Servant of Jehovah and the salvation brought in by Him to Israel and the nations, with the restoration of all things, consummating in the new heaven and new earth.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWO

## THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE AND THE NATIONS

## (1)

## JEHOVAH THE FATHER'S COMPLAINT AGAINST HIS CHILDREN ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: Isa. 1:1-4, 10-15, 21-23; 3:8-9, 14-16, 18-23; 5:1-4, 7-8, 11-12, 18-20, 22-23, 24b

The first section of the book of Isaiah (chs. 1—12) covers the salvation of Jehovah to His beloved people and the nations. In this message we will consider Jehovah the Father's complaint against His children Israel, paying attention to Isaiah's account of what God said concerning them.

### I. THE VISION OF ISAIAH CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM

Isaiah 1:1 speaks of the vision which Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Before the time of Isaiah's ministry, the children of Israel had been divided into two nations—the northern nation of Israel and the southern nation of Judah. At first, Isaiah does not give us an account of the failure of Israel but of Judah. The reason is that Judah bears more responsibility than Israel does. Therefore, God came to Isaiah with a vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

### II. JEHOVAH THE FATHER CALLING THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH TO HEAR HIS COMPLAINT AGAINST HIS CHILDREN ISRAEL

In 1:2a Jehovah the Father called the heavens and the earth to hear His complaint against His children Israel. It was not an insignificant thing for Jehovah to do this.

### III. JEHOVAH HAVING BROUGHT UP ISRAEL AND RAISED THEM, AND THEY HAVING REBELLED AGAINST HIM

Jehovah had brought up Israel and raised them; yet they rebelled against Him (1:2b). God did so many good things for them, but they still acted toward Him in the way of rebellion.

At this point, I would like to help you understand the difference between God's chastisement and His judgment. These two matters involve two classes of people—Israel and the Gentiles, the nations. Both are related to God because they were created by Him. Israel is God's elect, His chosen people, and the nations are those who were apparently given up by God. Actually, God has not given up the nations, for among them there are many who have been chosen by Him. In the Old Testament Israel was God's chosen people, but most of the chosen ones in the New Testament are from the Gentiles. Hence, although God gave up the nations temporarily, He would not do this for the long run, because He has chosen many from the Gentiles to be believers and to constitute the Body of Christ, which is much more crucial to God than Israel is.

Both Israel and the nations, the Gentiles, are dealt with by God, but in different ways. God's dealing with Israel, His beloved people, is always in love. For this reason, I consider this dealing not as judgment but as chastisement. God's dealing with Israel is like a father's dealing with his children to correct them, to improve them, and to bring them onto the right track. This is chastisement.

In the book of Isaiah, God's love toward Israel is exercised in a threefold way, as a Father (1:2-3; 63:16; 64:8), as a nursing Mother (66:13), and as a Husband (54:5). God was Israel's Father, Mother, and Husband. Since God dealt with His beloved Israel in a loving way, His dealing with them was not a matter of judgment but of chastisement.

God's dealing with the nations, however, is a matter of judgment. This judgment is not based on God's love; it is based on God's righteousness, on His justice.

When God comes to deal with people, He deals with them according to what He is. The Bible reveals that God is holy

and righteous. He is the Holy One and the Righteous One. As the Holy One, He deals with His people, and as the Righteous One, He deals with the nations.

God deals with His elect in love that they may be holy. Because the children of Israel were called by God and separated unto God, they must be holy, as God is holy. God's chastisement of Israel was for holiness (Heb. 12:10). Since they had become common, worldly, and completely unlike God in His holy nature, He came in to chastise them. His chastisement of Israel was that they might learn the lessons of holiness and be holy.

God's dealing with the nations is different from His dealing with Israel. Whereas God chastises Israel according to His holiness, He judges the nations according to His righteousness. God judges the nations because they are not just and righteous. Therefore, based upon what God is in His righteousness, He comes in to judge the nations.

As we read the book of Isaiah, we need to keep in mind that God's dealing with people is in two aspects—the aspect of His holiness and the aspect of His righteousness. Holiness is God's requirement for His chosen people, and righteousness is God's requirement for the nations. God wants His people to be holy, and He wants the nations to be righteous. Based upon His holiness and righteousness, God deals respectively with these two classes of people. He chastises Israel in love for holiness, and He judges the nations for righteousness.

Having made this distinction between God's chastisement and His judgment, let us now go on to consider the details of Jehovah the Father's complaint against His children Israel.

### A. Israel Not Knowing Jehovah

According to Isaiah 1:3, Israel does not know Jehovah, not even as the ox knows his owner, and the donkey, his master's manger. If Israel does not know their Master as a person, they should at least know His manger as a place of eating. Even such an animal as a donkey knows this. Israel, however,

had become a people who did not know God at all, and He complained about this.

### B. Israel's Iniquities and Corruptions

In chapters one, three, and five, Isaiah speaks concerning Israel's iniquities and corruptions.

#### *1. A Sinful Nation, a People Heavy with Iniquity*

Israel was a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity and not heavy with holiness. They were also the seed of evildoers and were children acting corruptly (1:4a).

#### *2. Having Forsaken Jehovah*

They had forsaken Jehovah, having despised their Holy One (1:4b). They had been called to be holy, yet they despised the Holy One, who had called them to holiness. They also became estranged and went backward. This means that they left God.

#### *3. Rulers of Sodom and People of Gomorrah*

Isaiah 1:10 speaks of "rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah." This indicates that their rulers were like those of Sodom and their people like those of Gomorrah.

#### *4. Jehovah Not Delighting in Their Sacrifices and Offerings*

Jehovah did not delight in their sacrifices and offerings, and their incense was an abomination to Him (1:11-13a). Because they rejected God to the uttermost, the incense they burned to Him was an abomination to Him. He would not accept their sacrifices and offerings and would not be pleased with their incense. Moreover, His soul hated their Sabbaths and feasts (vv. 13b-14a). Their way of observing these was an offense to Him, and He was weary of bearing them (v. 14b). The people had exhausted His forbearance. Thus, He would hide His eyes from them and would not hear their multiplied prayers. Furthermore, their hands were full of blood (v. 15).

#### *5. The City of Jerusalem Having Become a Harlot*

In 1:21-23 we see that the city of Jerusalem had become

a harlot. Justice and righteousness were absent, but she was full of murderers. Her silver had become dross, and her wine diluted with water. Her rulers were rebellious and were companions of thieves, all loving bribes and chasing after rewards, and not defending the orphan nor caring for the widow's plea. This reveals that Israel had become evil in every way.

### *6. Jerusalem Stumbling and Judah Falling*

Jerusalem stumbled and Judah fell because their speech and actions were against Jehovah, to rebel against the eyes of His glory. The countenance of their faces witnessed against them, and they declared their sin like Sodom, not hiding it (3:8-9).

### *7. The Elders and the Rulers of Jehovah's People Having Consumed the Vineyard*

The elders and rulers of Jehovah's people consumed the vineyard, and the spoil of the poor was in their houses. They crushed Jehovah's people and ground the faces of the poor (3:14-15).

### *8. The Daughters of Zion Being Haughty*

The daughters of Zion, the young girls, were haughty, uplifting themselves. They walked around with outstretched necks and lusting eyes, adorning themselves with luxurious and costly items (3:16, 18-23). They had no thought of God but were interested only in indulging their lust.

### *9. Jehovah, Having Made Israel a Vineyard and Having Done Everything That Is Needed for It, Expecting Justice but Beholding Bloodshed*

Jehovah had made Israel a vineyard and had done everything that was needed for it. He looked for it to produce grapes, but it produced only wild grapes. He expected justice but beheld bloodshed. He expected righteousness but heard an outcry of distress. The distressed people cried out, and God heard them. Some of the people joined house to house and laid field to field, leaving no place for others and dwelling alone in the midst of the land (5:1-4, 7-8).

10. Some of the People of Israel
Rising Early in the Morning That They May Run
after Liquor and Lingering into the Evening
That Wine May Inflame Them

Some of the people of Israel rose early in the morning that they might run after liquor and lingered into the evening that wine might inflame them. They amused themselves with lyre, lute, tambourine, flute, and wine in their banquets, not considering what had been done by Jehovah nor regarding the work of His hands (5:11-12). We should consider ourselves in the light of this word. How do we behave ourselves in the morning and in the evening?

11. Some among the People of Israel
Drawing Iniquity with Ropes
of Vanity and Sin as with Cart Ropes

Some among the people of Israel drew iniquity with ropes of vanity and sin as with cart ropes (5:18). They went so far as to ridicule Jehovah by saying, "He should hurry up; / He should hasten His work, / So that we may see it; / And the counsel of the Holy One of Israel / Should draw near and happen, / So that we may know it!" (v. 19). These evil, insulting words indicate that these people did not have any fear of God. They did not even believe in God; they had become atheists.

12. Some of the People of Israel
Calling Good Evil, and Evil Good

Some of the people of Israel called good evil, and evil good (5:20). They made darkness light, and light darkness. They also made bitterness sweetness, and sweetness bitterness. They turned everything upside down.

### *13. Some of the People Being Heroes in Drinking Wine and Men of Valor in Mixing Liquor*

Some of the people became heroes in drinking wine and men of valor in mixing liquor (5:22). They acquitted the criminal as a result of a bribe but refused righteousness to the righteous (5:23). They rejected the instruction of Jehovah of hosts and despised the speaking of the Holy One of Israel

(5:24b). They had become a people who forgot God and gave Him up. They did not care for God's word; neither did they care for morality or ethics, calling good evil, and evil good. According to Isaiah's description, their situation was terrible.

We need to be quiet and consider our own situation, not only our situation before we were saved but also our situation today. Although we are seeking the Lord, sometimes certain evil things rise up in our daily life. This is why we need to watch and pray (Matt. 26:41). If we pray without being watchful, our prayer will not be pleasing to the Lord. When we are careless in our daily life and are wrong with the Lord, with others, and even with ourselves, our prayers are displeasing to the Lord.

In chapter six Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord in glory. Seraphim were calling out, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts" (v. 3a). This indicates that God's concern is for His holiness. He wants His called people to be holy even as He is holy. When Isaiah saw this vision, he realized that he was still sinful, that he had unclean lips and dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips (v. 5).

Isaiah's experience helps us to understand our situation today. No matter how much we have been sanctified, renewed, transformed, and even conformed to the glorious image of Christ, we must remember that we are still in the flesh and in the old creation, that we still have the sinful nature within us, and that we are still living on earth, which is unclean to the uttermost. Thus, daily we need to confess our sins, defects, failures, shortcomings, wrongdoings, and mistakes. Often we are wrong not only with God but also with others, including the saints and the members of our family. We may also be wrong with ourselves, for example by being angry in such a way that we damage our body, which is the Lord's holy temple. The more we are enlightened by the Lord, the more we will realize our situation, confess our sins, and ask the Lord to forgive us. If we want to have the real experience of Christ, we need to know our sinfulness.

In the Old Testament, whenever God's people wanted to offer something to the Lord, they were required to add to that offering a sin offering or a trespass offering. The principle

is the same with us as believers today. If we offer a burnt offering or a peace offering to the Lord, we must also offer a sin offering and a trespass offering as an indication that we remember that we are still sinful. As long as we are still living on earth in the old creation, we need to realize that we are sinful and confess our sins. If we do this, God will have a way to favor us and to grace us. Otherwise, He will complain concerning us as He did concerning Israel at Isaiah's time.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THREE

## THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE AND THE NATIONS

## (2)

## JEHOVAH'S CHASTISEMENT ON HIS BELOVED CHILDREN ISRAEL AND HIS LOVING EXHORTATION AND PROMISE TO HIS CHASTISED PEOPLE

Scripture Reading: Isa. 1:5-9, 24-25, 28-31; 3:1-7; 4:1; 3:17-18, 24-26; 5:5-6, 9-10, 13-17, 24-30; 2:6; 1:16-20, 26-27

In this message we will cover Jehovah's chastisement on His beloved children Israel and His loving exhortation and promise to His chastised people.

### I. JEHOVAH'S CHASTISEMENT ON HIS BELOVED CHILDREN ISRAEL

After God exposes the actual situation of His people, He comes in to deal with them, to chastise them. His chastisement may be considered a governmental dealing.

Although God's people are different from the Gentiles and although in Isaiah God has a threefold love for His people, as a Father, a Mother, and a Husband, He still needs to deal with them. In His dealing God is often more serious than in His judgment. He may let the unbelievers go, but He will not let us go. He is very strict, very narrow, and very genuine in dealing with us because He has His divine government. He is not a God without regulating and controlling principles.

Part of the title of this message uses the words *Jehovah's chastisement on His beloved children Israel.* I use the expression beloved children to indicate that God's dealing

with us is not with a negative motive. Rather, His dealing with us as His beloved children today is always with a very positive motive. Although He chastises us, He does not judge us or punish us. However, some saints may feel that God is punishing them and that they cannot bear this punishment. Nevertheless, I still say that, instead of punishing us, God chastises us in love. He is like a loving father who disciplines his children for their good. Once a child has grown to adulthood, he may realize that what he thought was punishment was actually his father's love.

### A. Jehovah Having Chastised Them Because of Their Apostasy

Jehovah chastised the children of Israel because of their apostasy. The word *apostasy* means to forsake God and to turn to and serve another god. Israel's apostasy was most serious, and God chastised them because of it.

#### *1. Striking Them So That Their Whole Head Became Sick and Their Whole Heart Faint*

Jehovah struck them so that their whole head became sick and their whole heart faint (1:5). From the sole of the foot even to the head there was no soundness in it. There were only bruises, blows, and raw wounds, which had not been pressed out nor bound up nor softened with oil (v. 6). There was the striking but no healing or soothing.

#### *2. Causing Their Land to Be a Desolation, Their Cities to Be Burned with Fire, and Their Field to Be Devoured by Strangers*

Due to their apostasy, Jehovah caused their land to be a desolation. He also caused their cities to be burned with fire and their field to be devoured by strangers in their sight and overthrown by strangers to be a desolation (1:7).

#### *3. Leaving the City of Zion Like a Booth in a Vineyard, Like a Hut in a Cucumber Field, Like a Besieged City*

Jehovah left the city of Zion like a booth in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city (1:8).

Unless Jehovah of hosts had left to them a surviving few, they would have been like Sodom and would have resembled Gomorrah (v. 9). In order to keep them from being altogether destroyed, He left them a small number who survived.

### *4. The Lord Jehovah of Hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Easing Himself of His Adversaries and Avenging Himself of His Enemies*

The Lord Jehovah of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, eased Himself of His adversaries and avenged Himself of His enemies (1:24). These adversaries and enemies were the children of Israel. They had rebelled against God to such an extent that they became not only the adversaries, who were within God's nation, but also the enemies, who were outside God's nation. God eased Himself and avenged Himself by chastising His rebellious children. Moreover, God turned His hand against Israel. He purged away their dross as with lye and removed all their alloy (v. 25).

### *5. Shattering the Rebels and Sinners Together and Terminating Those Who Forsook Jehovah*

Jehovah shattered the rebels and sinners together and terminated those who forsook Him (1:28). He caused them to be like a dried-up terebinth (or, oak) and like a garden that lacks water (vv. 29-30). God would also cause the strong man to become tow and his work a spark, and both the strong man and his work would burn together (v. 31).

### *6. Taking Away from Jerusalem and from Judah Every Kind of Support*

Jehovah took away from Jerusalem and from Judah every kind of support—all the support of bread and all the support of water (3:1). He also took away from them all the leaders, such as the judge, the prophet, and the elder, leaving them no rulers (vv. 2-4). The people were then oppressed each by the other, and no one was willing to be the leader, because of the shortage of bread and clothing (vv. 5-7; 4:1).

As part of His chastisement of His people, God took away from them all their leaders, leaving them with no rulers. To

have no ruler is God's chastisement. If a family does not have a ruler, that family will be in chaos. In such a family there would be neither father nor mother, neither elder brother nor elder sister. No one would be able to exercise any ruling, and the family would be in a pitiful situation. Likewise, if in a church there were no leading ones, that church would be in chaos.

It is significant that Isaiah links the ruler with the food supply. To be a ruler, you must feed the people. If you do not feed them, they will rebel. In the church, if there is no feeding, there is no ruling; and no ruling results in no food. Ruling and feeding go together as a pair. Ruling produces feeding, and feeding issues in ruling. If a church is well nourished, there surely must be proper ruling in that church. But when there is fighting in the church, this indicates that there is a shortage of food and of ruling. Ruling and feeding are not only a pair—they also work together in a cycle and give rise to each other. Thus, if there is feeding, there is ruling; and if there is ruling, there is feeding. When there is the proper feeding in the church life, everything will be in order.

### *7. Striking the Scalp of the Daughters of Zion with Scabs and Removing the Beauty of Their Luxurious Ornaments*

Jehovah struck the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs, exposed their secret parts, and removed the beauty of their luxurious ornaments (3:17-18). There was rottenness instead of a sweet smell, an encircling rope instead of a belt, baldness instead of well-set hair, sackcloth instead of fine garments, and a brand instead of beauty (v. 24).

### *8. Causing the Men of Zion to Fall by the Sword and Her Mighty in Battle*

Jehovah caused the men of Zion to fall by the sword and her mighty in battle. He also caused her gates to mourn and lament and her city, being desolated, to sit on the ground (3:25-26).

### *9. Removing the Hedge of Israel as the Vineyard of Jehovah So That It Will Be Consumed, and Breaking Down Its Wall So That It Will Be Trampled*

Jehovah removed the hedge of Israel as His vineyard so that it would be consumed, and He broke down its wall so that it would be trampled (5:5). He made it a waste, not pruned nor hoed, and He also commanded the clouds not to pour rain upon it (v. 6). Furthermore, He caused many houses to become desolate, great houses to be without inhabitants (v. 9). The produce of the vineyard and the field were reduced to the lowest amount (v. 10).

### *10. Putting Them into Exile*

In 5:13-17 we see that Jehovah put the people into exile. Their nobility became famished men, and their multitudes were parched with thirst. Hence, Sheol enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth wide, without limit. Jerusalem's splendor, din, and uproar and the jubilant within her descended into Sheol. Thus, the ordinary man was humbled, and the man of distinction and the eyes of the haughty were abased. But Jehovah of hosts was exalted in judgment, and the holy God showed Himself holy in righteousness. Lambs grazed there as in their pasture, and strangers ate the wastelands of rich men.

In His judgment over the nations, Jehovah of hosts is exalted, and the holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness (5:16). If we are not righteous, we cannot be holy. Without righteousness there is no base for being holy. Righteousness is the base for holiness, and upon this base holiness is exhibited. Hence, holiness is higher than righteousness. With His righteousness as the base, God shows Himself as the holy God. In righteousness He exhibits His holiness.

God could expect only righteousness from the nations because they are not the sons of God. It is with His sons that God expects to see holiness (Heb. 12:5-11). God's chastening and disciplining is to uplift us from righteousness to holiness. In His salvation, He first justified us to make us righteous in Christ. After this, we need to go on to be sanctified, to be made holy.

To be righteous is to match God's way of doing things outwardly, but to be holy is to match God's nature inwardly. As the sons of God, we need to go on from righteousness to reach holiness, to show ourselves holy in righteousness.

#### *11. The Root of Those Who Are Unjust and Evil Being Like Decay, and Their Bud Disappearing Like Dust*

As a tongue of fire consumes the stubble and the chaff sinks in flames, the root of those who were unjust and evil would be like decay, and their bud would disappear like dust (Isa. 5:24a). Because God's people rejected the instruction of Jehovah of hosts and despised the speaking of the Holy One of Israel, the anger of Jehovah burned against them, and He stretched out His hand over them and struck them (vv. 24b-25a). The mountains quaked, and the corpses of the people were like garbage in the middle of the street. In spite of all this, Jehovah's anger was not turned away; rather, His hand was still stretched out to chastise them (v. 25b).

#### *12. Lifting Up a Standard to a Distant Nation and Summoning It to Come in a Swift, Strong, and Terrifying Way to Seize Israel as Its Prey*

Finally, Jehovah lifted up a standard to a distant nation and summoned it to come in a swift, strong, and terrifying way to seize Israel as its prey (5:26-30a). Then one would look upon the land and behold darkness and distress, and the light would be darkened in its clouds (v. 30b). The Babylonians did the very things described in these verses.

### B. Jehovah Abandoning His Beloved People, the House of Jacob

According to 2:6, Jehovah abandoned His beloved people, the house of Jacob, because they were full of the customs from the east (the nations). His people had forsaken God's law and instructions given through Moses and picked up many customs from the nations, from the Gentiles.

## II. JEHOVAH'S LOVING EXHORTATION AND PROMISE TO HIS CHASTISED PEOPLE

After Jehovah's chastisement on His beloved children, we have His loving exhortation and promise to His chastised people.

### A. Jehovah's Loving Exhortation to His Chastised People

Jehovah's loving exhortation has both a negative side and a positive side (1:16-17).

#### *1. On the Negative Side*

On the negative side, God charged the people to wash themselves, to cleanse themselves, to turn away the evil of their deeds from before His eyes, and to cease doing what is evil (v. 16).

#### *2. On the Positive Side*

On the positive side, God charged them to learn to do good, to seek justice, to correct the ruthless, to defend the orphan, and to plead for the widow (v. 17). The ruthless ones were those who oppressed others. The people were to be released from the oppression exercised by the ruthless. God cares for the oppressed, the orphans, and the widows. Therefore, He told His people to keep their hands off the oppressed, to defend the orphan, and to plead for the widow.

### B. Jehovah's Loving Promise to His Chastised People

Jehovah's loving promise is a promise of forgiveness and of restoration.

#### *1. Of Forgiveness*

##### *a. Jehovah's Invitation*

Concerning the promise of forgiveness, Jehovah first extends an invitation: "Come now and let us reason together" (1:18a). God invites the people to reason with Him about their sins.

##### *b. Jehovah's Forgiveness through Washing*

The invitation is followed by Jehovah's forgiveness through washing. Isaiah speaks of this in 1:18b. "Though your sins

are like scarlet, / They will be as white as snow; / Though they are as red as crimson, / They will be like wool." Although His people were so sinful, God was willing to forgive them.

#### *c. The Issue of the People's Obedience*

In 1:19 and 20 we have the issue of the people's obedience. If they were willing and listened, they would eat the good of the land. But if they refused and rebelled, they would be devoured by the sword.

### ***2. Of Restoration***

In 1:26 and 27 we have the promise of restoration.

#### *a. Restoring the Leaders*

First, to save the people from their chaotic situation, God would restore the leaders. He promised to restore their judges as at the first and their counselors as at the beginning (v. 26a). This mercy from God would bring their situation back to its original condition.

#### *b. Restoring the City of Zion and Its People*

There was also the promise to restore the city of Zion and its people. The city would be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city (v. 26b). Zion would be ransomed with justice, and her returning ones with righteousness (v. 27). They had become a chaos because they had given up justice and righteousness. But God's restoration would bring them back to the beginning.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FOUR

## THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE AND THE NATIONS

## (3)

## JEHOVAH'S HUMILIATING JUDGMENT ON THE HAUGHTY NATIONS AND THE USHERING IN OF THE GOD-MAN, CHRIST, ISSUING IN THE RESTORATION OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: Isa. 2:7-22; 4:2-6; 2:2-5; Zech. 8:20-23; Hosea 2:18

In this message we will cover two more of the secret and mysterious points in the book of Isaiah. These two points, which are much higher than the matters covered in the previous messages, are related to Christ as the God-man and to Israel. As we will see, Jehovah's humiliating judgment ushers in the God-man, Christ, and issues in the restoration of the nation of Israel. Both the ushering in of Christ and the restoration of Israel come from Jehovah's righteous judgment on the nations. The more God judges the nations, the more Christ is ushered in; and the more Christ is ushered in, the more the restoration of Israel issues out. The ushering in of Christ and the restoration of Israel will result in the millennial kingdom. Finally, the millennium will consummate in the ultimate age of God's economy, that is, in the new heaven and new earth.

If our understanding of Isaiah is limited to matters such as our sins becoming white as snow (1:18), our understanding will be too low. The highest point in the book of Isaiah is the ushering in of Christ as the God-man, issuing in the

restoration of the nation of Israel, which brings in the kingdom and consummates in the new heaven and new earth.

## I. JEHOVAH'S HUMILIATING JUDGMENT ON THE HAUGHTY NATIONS

Because the nations were so haughty, it was necessary for Jehovah to humiliate them, to bring them down, through judgment.

### A. The Prophet's Accusation

In 2:7-9 we have Isaiah's accusation against the haughty nations. Isaiah was displeased with the nations, and he brought their case to the heavenly court and accused them before Jehovah.

#### *1. Their Land Being Full of Silver and Gold, and Their Treasures Being Limitless*

The nations were extremely rich (v. 7). Their land was full of silver and gold, and their treasures were limitless. Their land was also full of horses, and their chariots were limitless.

#### *2. Their Land Being Full of Idols*

Their land was full of idols; they bowed down to the work of their hands, to that which their fingers had made (v. 8). They were rich not only in money but also in idols. Idols always go together with money. This is true of worldly people today. When such people are rich in money, they are also rich in idols. This is why money is called *mammon* (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:9, 11, 13).

Because the nations trusted in their idols, God judged them in order to humiliate them. Thus, the ordinary man was humbled, and the man of distinction was abased (Isa. 2:9a).

#### *3. Asking Jehovah Not to Forgive Them*

In his accusation against the haughty nations, Isaiah asked Jehovah not to forgive them (v. 9b).

## B. Jehovah's Humiliating Judgment

In 2:10-22 we see Jehovah's humiliating judgment on the haughty nations.

### *1. The Object of Jehovah's Humiliating Judgment*

#### *a. Man's Haughty Look and Man's Loftiness*

The first object of God's judgment is man's haughty look and man's loftiness (vv. 11a, 17a). Each person has his own kind of look. For example, a banker has a banker's look, and a professor has a professor's look. Those with a haughty look make a display of their dignity. The same is true of those who are lofty.

#### *b. Everything Proud and Lofty and Everything Lifted Up*

God judges whatever is lofty and proud and whatever is lifted up (v. 12). If we study history, we will see that throughout the ages God has judged those who are proud, lofty, and lifted up.

#### *c. All the Lofty and Lifted-up Cedars of Lebanon and All the Oaks of Bashan*

The objects of Jehovah's judgment also include all the lofty and lifted-up cedars of Lebanon and all the oaks of Bashan (v. 13). These cedars and oaks are types of lofty persons, those who lift themselves up. All those who uplift themselves and become lofty will be "chopped" through God's judgment.

#### *d. All the Lofty Mountains and All the Lifted-up Hills*

God also judges all the lofty mountains and all the lifted-up hills (v. 14). In figure and in typology, these mountains and hills signify countries, nations, and kingdoms.

#### *e. Every High Tower and Every Fortified Wall*

Verse 15 speaks of God's judgment on every high tower and every fortified wall. Here a high tower and a fortified wall signify defense and protection.

### *f. All the Ships of Tarshish and All Their Pleasant Artifacts*

God's judgment extends to all the ships of Tarshish and all their pleasant artifacts (v. 16). The word *artifacts* here refers to beautiful and pleasing manufactured items.

### *g. The Idols*

Finally, God judges the idols of the nations. Verse 18 says, "The idols will vanish completely."

## ***2. The Purpose of Jehovah's Humiliating Judgment***

### *a. To Show the Dread of Jehovah and the Splendor of His Majesty*

The purpose of Jehovah's humiliating judgment is, first, to show the dread of Jehovah and the splendor of His majesty (vv. 10b, 19b, 21b). In God's judgment the dread of Jehovah is displayed so that we would fear Him. God's judgment also exhibits the splendor of His majesty. Throughout history, both the dread and majesty of Jehovah have been shown in His judgment.

### *b. To Vindicate the Fact That Jehovah Alone Will Be Exalted*

The purpose of Jehovah's humiliating judgment is also to vindicate the fact that Jehovah alone will be exalted (vv. 11b, 17b). This is seen especially in the book of Revelation. Eventually, as the result of Jehovah's judgment, in which His dread and majesty are shown, Jehovah alone will be exalted.

## ***3. The Way of Jehovah's Humiliating Judgment***

The way of Jehovah's humiliating judgment is to make the earth tremble (v. 19b). In His judgment, He will shake the entire earth and cause it to tremble.

### *4. The Result of Jehovah's Humiliating Judgment*

#### *a. Men Being Abased and Humbled*

As the result of God's judgment, men will be abased and humbled (vv. 11a, 17a).

#### *b. Men Casting Their Idols of Silver and Idols of Gold to the Moles and to the Bats*

As a further result of God's judgment, men will cast their idols of silver and idols of gold to the moles and to the bats (v. 20).

#### *c. Men Entering into the Rock and Hiding in the Dust*

Because of Jehovah's judgment, men will enter into the rock and hide in the dust (v. 10). They will also go into caves in the rocks and into holes in the dust, and they will go into the crevices of the rocks and into the clefts of the cliffs (vv. 19, 21). Men will do all these things in the attempt to hide from the dread of Jehovah and from the splendor of His majesty. They will not love God but, seeing only that God is fearful and full of splendor, they will be afraid of Him.

### *5. The Lesson of Jehovah's Humiliating Judgment*

The lesson of Jehovah's humiliating judgment is that we should stop regarding man "whose life breath is in his nostrils" (v. 22a). We should not put our trust in man. Concerning man, Isaiah asks, "For of what value is he considered to be?" (v. 22b). The answer is that man is nothing.

## II. THE USHERING IN OF THE GOD-MAN, CHRIST, ISSUING IN THE RESTORATION OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL

God's judgment on the haughty nations ushers in the God-man, Christ (4:2, 5-6), issuing in the restoration of the nation of Israel (4:3-6; 2:2-5).

## A. The Ushering In of the God-man, Christ

### *1. "In That Day"*

According to 4:2, the ushering in of Christ will be "in that day," that is, in the day of the coming restoration of the nation of Israel.

### *2. The Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the Earth*

In 4:2 there are two striking expressions: *the Shoot of Jehovah* and *the Fruit of the earth*. These two are one pair, illustrating Christ's two natures: the divine nature and the human nature. The Shoot of Jehovah refers to Christ's deity, showing His divine nature, and the Fruit of the earth (Luke 1:42) refers to Christ's humanity with His human nature. As the Shoot of Jehovah, Christ comes out of God. As the Fruit of the earth, Christ, having a human body made of dust, grows out of the earth.

In the book of Isaiah, Christ is unveiled as the God-man, the Shoot of Jehovah with beauty and glory and the Fruit of the earth with excellence and splendor. In the restoration, to those of Israel who have escaped, Christ in His deity will be beauty and glory, and in His humanity He will be excellence and splendor.

The Shoot of Jehovah denotes that Christ is a new development of Jehovah God for the Triune God to branch out Himself in His divinity into humanity. This is for Jehovah God's increase and spread in the universe. The Fruit of the earth denotes that Christ, as the divine Shoot of Jehovah, also becomes a man of flesh from the earth. This is for the Triune God to be multiplied and reproduced in humanity. As a man with the divine life, He is a seed, a grain of wheat, to produce many grains through His death and resurrection (John 12:24).

Such a God-man, Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth, is ushered in by God's judgment. In particular, He is ushered in by war, which is used by God to judge the nations. The more war there is, the more Christ

will be ushered in. Many believers can testify that they were saved during a time of war.

Out of the Christ who is ushered in by judgment issues the restoration of the nation of Israel. Therefore, God's judgment eventually results in Christ, the God-man, with restoration.

### *3. A Canopy and a Tabernacle*

In Isaiah 4:5 and 6 there are another two striking expressions, revealing to us more of Christ in His divinity and humanity. These two are another pair concerning the revelation of Christ which issues from the first pair. The first of this pair is a canopy. The God-man, Christ, will also be a canopy, which is the covering glory of Christ in His divinity that covers the entire region of Mount Zion and all its convocations, that is, all the interests of Jehovah God on the earth. The glory of Christ will cover this entire region as a canopy which will be of two sections: the section in the daytime will be a cloud of smoke for a shade from the heat, and the section at night will be a cloud of brightness of a fiery flame to keep the darkness away.

The second of the second pair is a tabernacle which in the daytime will be a shade from the heat and will be a refuge and a cover (a hiding place that covers a person's body) from storm and rain. This overshadowing tabernacle is the God-man, Christ, in His humanity with His grace, as illustrated in 2 Corinthians 12:9. This is Christ as our overshadowing protection and defense. When we are in Christ as our tabernacle, we will be overshadowed from the attacks of heat, storm, and rain.

## B. Issuing in the Restoration of the Nation of Israel

### *1. The Lord Washing Away the Filth of the Daughters of Zion*

The Lord will wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion and will cleanse away the bloodstains of Jerusalem from her midst by the judging Spirit and the burning Spirit (Isa. 4:4). The Spirit will come first to judge and then to burn.

### *2. He Who Is Left Over in Zion and Remains in Jerusalem Being Called Holy*

He who is left over in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been written down in Jerusalem for life (v. 3). This indicates that there will be a book of life in which all the names are kept.

### *3. Jehovah Creating a Canopy over Zion and Her Convocations and Providing His Chosen People with a Tabernacle*

Jehovah will create over the entire region of Mount Zion and over all her convocations a cloud of smoke by day and the brightness of a fiery flame by night (v. 5a) to be a canopy of His divine glory over all His interests on the earth, that is, the God-man, Christ, as the great canopy covering Zion and the children of Israel. This is similar to the pillar of smoke and the pillar of fire that went with the children of Israel in the wilderness. Furthermore, in the restoration of Israel, God will provide them with a tabernacle for a shade in the daytime from the heat and for a refuge and a cover from the storm and rain.

### *4. Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah Being Beauty and Glory and as the Fruit of the Earth Being Excellence and Splendor to Israel*

In the day of restoration, the God-man, Christ, as the divine Shoot of Jehovah, will be beauty and glory to Israel, and as the human seed of the earth will be excellence and splendor to them (4:2). In the coming restoration, the all-inclusive Christ will be the children of Israel's beauty and glory in His divinity and their excellence and splendor in His humanity that expresses the beauty and glory of His divinity. Then what the children of Israel will manifest and express will be the all-inclusive Christ Himself.

### *5. The Mountain of the House of Jehovah Being Established on the Top of the Mountains and Being Lifted Up among the Hills*

Isaiah 2:2 reveals that the mountain (signifying the kingdom of Israel) of the house of Jehovah will be established on the top of the mountains (signifying the kingdoms of the nations) and will be lifted up among the hills (signifying the kingdoms of the nations); and all the nations (the Gentiles) will stream to the mountain—the kingdom of Israel. This indicates that the nation of Israel will be foremost among the nations.

### *6. From Zion Going Forth Instruction, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem*

Many peoples will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, / To the house of the God of Jacob, / That He may instruct us in His ways, / And that we may walk in His paths. / For from Zion will go forth instruction, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem" (2:3). This indicates that all the earth will be under the teaching of Israel.

According to Zechariah 8:20-23, among Israel there will be the priesthood. This means that during the millennium, the thousand-year kingdom, restored Israel will be priests. Actually, in the millennium the priesthood will have both an earthly part and a heavenly part. Those of the restored nation of Israel will be the priests in the earthly part, and the overcoming believers in Christ will be the priests in the heavenly part. By this priesthood all the peoples will be taught and instructed.

### *7. Jehovah Judging between the Nations and Deciding Matters concerning Many Peoples*

Jehovah will judge between the nations and decide matters concerning many peoples (Isa. 2:4a). At that time, Christ will be the unique Ruler on earth.

### *8. The Nations and Many Peoples Beating Their Swords into Plowshares and Their Spears into Pruning Hooks*

The nations and many peoples will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war anymore (v. 4b; Hosea 2:18). There will be no war, no weapons, and no learning of war.

### *9. The House of Jacob Walking in the Light of Jehovah*

Finally, when the nation of Israel is restored, the house of Jacob will walk in the light of Jehovah (Isa. 2:5).

Isaiah speaks concerning the ushering in of Christ and the restoration of the nation of Israel in several different sections of his prophecy. When we put these sections together, we will have a clear view of the revelation in this book regarding these two secret and mysterious matters.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FIVE

## A WORD CONCERNING CHRIST AS THE SHOOT OF JEHOVAH, THE FRUIT OF THE EARTH, THE CANOPY, AND THE TABERNACLE

Scripture Reading: Isa. 4:1-2, 4-6

Isaiah is a rich person. He is rich not only in description but is particularly rich in Christ. Many points regarding Christ are raised by Isaiah. In this message I want to give a further word concerning Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah, the Fruit of the earth, and the canopy.

### THE USHERING IN OF CHRIST

In the previous message, I used the expression *the ushering in of the God-man, Christ,* and now I would like to explain why I use the term *ushering in* with respect to Christ. In order to understand this, we need to consider Isaiah 4:1 and 2 and the connection between these verses. Verse 1 says, "Seven women will grasp / One man in that day, / Saying, We will eat our own bread / And wear our own clothes; / Just let us bear your name; / Take our reproach away." These women are in reproach because they do not have a husband. They do not have a man to lead them, and they want to bear the name of a man so that their reproach might be taken away. When I read this verse in my early days, I wondered about its meaning. What is the significance of this word? Its significance is that it is a link between God's judgment and Christ. As verse 2 indicates, the lack with these women is not that they are short of a leader but that they are short of Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah and as the Fruit of the earth. Verse 2 reveals that to these women who have escaped, Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah will be beauty and glory and

Christ as the Fruit of the earth will be excellence and splendor. This is the ushering in of Christ.

Now I would like to go on to give a further explanation of the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth.

### CHRIST AS THE SHOOT OF JEHOVAH

According to 4:2, Christ is first the Shoot of Jehovah. The term *the Shoot of Jehovah,* which refers to Christ's deity, denotes the riches and the refreshing of life. A shoot out of any plant indicates that the life of that plant is vigorous, growing, and productive. The principle is the same with Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah. As such a Shoot, He embodies the riches, the refreshing, the vigor, the growth, and the productive power of the divine life.

### CHRIST AS THE FRUIT OF THE EARTH

The term *the Fruit of the earth,* which refers to Christ's humanity and indicates that He grew up out of the earth, denotes the produce brought forth, carried out, and expressed in Christ's humanity. Of course, in order for this reproduction to take place, there must be the divine life. However, humanity is also needed. Suppose our Lord did not become a man through incarnation but remained simply in His divinity. What could have been produced out of Him as a fruit? The answer is that there could not have been any fruit. I would emphasize the fact that all of Christ's different kinds of fruits come out of the divine life, which is signified by the Shoot of Jehovah. But without Christ's humanity, it would have been impossible for the divine life to be productive in bringing forth fruit. The four Gospels show us that all the fruit born by Christ came out of the divine life, but it was produced in Christ's humanity. Therefore, the Shoot of Jehovah denotes the divine life in its riches, and the Fruit of the earth denotes the fruit produced by this life in humanity.

### GOD AND MAN LIVING TOGETHER

For Christ to be both the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth indicates that He is the God-man. In Him God

and man live together as one. The New Testament is a revelation of this very thing: it shows us God and man living together, with God as the life inwardly and man as the fruit outwardly.

As believers in Christ today, we need both the divine life and the human life. If we do not have the divine life, we do not have life. But if we do not have the proper human life to match the divine life, we will have no fruit. The New Testament reveals that, as those chosen and predestinated by God, we need to have the divine life expressed in our human living. If we have this, then in our experience we will have Christ both as the Shoot of Jehovah and as the Fruit of the earth.

### CHRIST AS THE CANOPY AND THE TABERNACLE

In chapter four, after speaking of Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth, Isaiah goes on to refer to this One as a canopy and a tabernacle. "Jehovah will create over the entire region of Mount Zion and over all her convocations a cloud of smoke by day, and the brightness of a fiery flame by night; for over all, the glory will be a canopy. And there will be a tabernacle as a daytime shade from the heat and as a refuge and a cover from storm and rain" (vv. 5-6). Christ is not only the Shoot and the Fruit—He is also the canopy to cover us and to cover God's move and everything related to it.

God has a great move on earth, and this move involves many things. As we have pointed out, Christ is the centrality and the universality of the great wheel of the move of the Divine Trinity. The Christ who is the centrality and universality of God's move is also the canopy to cover the totality of this move. The crucial point is that in addition to being the reality of the great move of God on earth, Christ is also the canopy to cover God's move and all that is involved with it.

In verse 5 Isaiah speaks of the canopy, and in verse 6 he speaks of a tabernacle. Christ is not only the canopy to cover all the things in God's move but also a tabernacle to overshadow God's chosen people. The God-man, Christ, who

is our canopy, is also a tabernacle as a shade in the day to keep us from the heat and a refuge and a cover to keep us from any kind of storm and rain.

I can testify in the two months prior to the time I began to give these messages on the life-study of Isaiah, I experienced Christ as my canopy. These two months were months of fighting—fighting to be able to carry out this life-study. I realized that the enemy, Satan, was not happy to see that, at the end of this age, the Christ revealed in Isaiah would be unveiled to God's children. Therefore, I began to fight concerning this. During this time of fighting, I took the Lord Jesus as my covering. I prayed, saying, "Lord, hide me under Your precious blood. I hide myself in You. I ask You, Lord, to cover me and everything related to me." Today we all need Christ as such a canopy, and we need Christ also as the overshadowing tabernacle to shade us from the heat and as a refuge and cover to protect us from any storm and rain.

## SEEING THE RICH CHRIST IN ISAIAH

The Christ revealed in the book of Isaiah is exceedingly rich. We need to see this rich Christ and know Him as the Shoot of Jehovah, the Fruit of the earth, the canopy, and the tabernacle. Perhaps you have been a Christian for many years, but before now you had not seen Christ in these items of what He is to us. Had you ever seen that Christ, the God-man, is the Shoot of Jehovah in His divinity and the Fruit of the earth in His humanity? Had you ever heard that Christ is the canopy that covers all God's interests on the earth and a tabernacle that overshadows God's people from everything that could bother them? Christians know that because God loved the world He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16), but few, if any, see Christ and know Christ as He is revealed in Isaiah. Therefore, I urge you to spend your time, ability, and energy to study this book in order to see and know the wonderful Christ revealed in it.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE SIX

## THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE AND THE NATIONS

## (4)

## THE VISION OF CHRIST IN GLORY AND HIS WARNING COMMISSION TO ISAIAH

Scripture Reading: Isa. 6:1-13; Matt. 13:14-15; John 12:40-41; Matt. 23:37-38; 24:2; Acts 28:25-27

Chapters six through eight plus chapters nine and eleven are a cluster of chapters in Isaiah's prophecy which unveil Christ to the uttermost. In this message we will consider the unveiling of Christ in chapter six.

### I. THE VISION OF CHRIST IN GLORY

In 6:1-7 we have a vision of Christ in glory.

#### A. In Spite of the Rebellion, Iniquities, and Corruptions of Israel, Christ Still Sitting on a High and Lofty Throne in Glory

In spite of the rebellion, iniquities, and corruptions of Israel, His chosen and beloved people, Christ is still sitting on a high and lofty throne in glory (vv. 1-4). These verses indicate that no matter what the situation might be on earth and regardless of the corruption and degradation among God's people, Christ is still on the throne in His glory.

When Isaiah looked at the situation among the children of Israel, he became very disappointed. For this reason, in the first five chapters of his prophecy, he had very little to say that was good about the children of Israel. It was at this point that the Lord brought him into a vision so that he could

see the Lord of glory sitting on the throne (v. 1). The Lord seemed to say to Isaiah, "Don't look down at the situation. If you look down, you will be disappointed. Look up at Me. I am still here. There may be nothing good there, but everything is good here. I am the unique good thing in the universe. Look at Me."

At the beginning of your church life, you might have experienced a church "honeymoon." But after a period of time, what was so sweet to you might have become bitter like vinegar. Then instead of a honeymoon you have a "vinegar-moon." In your disappointment with the church life, you may think that it would be better if you moved to another locality. However, I can assure you that you cannot find a church that experiences a continual honeymoon. In every church there is some vinegar. Therefore, in the church life, we need to learn not to look down at the situation but to look up to Christ. We should not look at anything or anyone other than Christ. The Christ whom we look up to is no longer on the cross; today Christ is on the throne.

### *1. The People Having Become Fallen, but Christ and His Throne Remaining the Same in His Glory*

The people had become fallen, but Christ and His throne remained the same in His glory (v. 1a). On this earth, everything changes and fluctuates, but Christ remains the same today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

### *2. The Train of Christ's Robe Still Filling the Temple*

The train of Christ's robe still filled the temple (Isa. 6:1b). Christ's long robe signifies Christ's splendor in His virtues. Whereas glory refers mainly to God, splendor refers mainly to man. The splendor of Christ in His virtues is expressed mainly in and through His humanity.

We may desire to go to heaven to see Christ's glory in His divinity, but in Isaiah's vision this Christ in glory is full of splendor in His human virtues. When we see Christ in His glory, we will see Him mainly in His humanity, which is full of virtues. All Christ's virtues are bright and shining, and

this shining is His splendor. Christ's glory is in His divinity, and His splendor is in His humanity.

#### *3. Seraphim Calling One to the Other, Praising Christ in His Holiness*

Seraphim were calling one to the other, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts" (vv. 2-3a). This was a praise rendered to Christ in His holiness.

#### *4. The Whole Earth Being Filled with Christ's Glory*

Whereas Isaiah saw the long robe signifying Christ's splendor in His virtues, the seraphim were declaring that the whole earth is filled with Christ's glory.

#### *5. The Foundations of the Threshold Shaking, and the House Being Filled with Smoke*

In verse 4 we see that the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called. This shaking signifies solemnity. In this verse we also see that the house was filled with smoke. This signifies glory burning in awe.

#### *6. John's Word concerning Isaiah's Vision*

John, in his account of Christ's living and working on earth, referred to Isaiah's vision here, saying that Isaiah saw Christ's glory (John 12:41).

### B. The Response of Isaiah

In Isaiah 6:5 we have the response of Isaiah.

#### *1. Realizing That He Was Finished*

Isaiah responded to the vision of Christ in glory by saying, "Woe is me, for I am finished!" (v. 5a). As a result of seeing this vision, Isaiah was terminated, finished.

#### *2. Realizing That He Was a Man of Unclean Lips and That in the Midst of a People of Unclean Lips He Dwelt*

Isaiah went on to say, "For I am a man of unclean lips, and in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell" (v. 5b). By this we can see that we must pay attention to our lips,

to our speaking. Every day we talk too much. A great percentage of the words we speak are evil, because most of our words are words of criticism. Nearly every word that we speak concerning any matter or any person is a word of criticism. This is the reason that our lips are unclean. Unclean things such as gossip, murmuring, and reasoning make the church life taste like vinegar. If we eliminate gossip, murmuring, and reasoning, we may find that we have very little to talk about. Like Isaiah, we need to realize that our lips are unclean.

Everyone who truly sees a vision of the Lord is enlightened. The vision he sees immediately exposes him and brings him into light. When Peter saw the Lord in Luke 5, he immediately said to the Lord, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord!" (v. 8).

How much we realize concerning ourselves depends on how much we see the Lord. For this reason, we need a revival every morning. The morning revival is the time for us to see the Lord again. The more we see the Lord, the more we see what we are. We realize that there is nothing good within us and that everything within us is without splendor or virtue.

#### *3. Knowing That He Had Seen the King, Jehovah of Hosts, with His Eyes*

Although Isaiah knew that he was finished and that he was a man of unclean lips, he nevertheless knew that he had seen the King, Jehovah of hosts, with his eyes (Isa. 6:5c).

### C. The Purging of Isaiah

Isaiah 6:6-7 speaks concerning the purging of Isaiah.

#### *1. By One of the Seraphim*

After Isaiah realized that he was unclean, he was purged by one of the seraphim, signifying the holiness of God (v. 6a).

#### *2. With an Ember from the Altar*

Isaiah was purged with an ember from the altar (vv. 6b-7a). This ember signifies the effectiveness of Christ's redemption accomplished on the cross.

### *3. To Take Away His Iniquity and to Purge His Sin*

This purging by the seraphim with an ember from the altar took away Isaiah's iniquity and purged his sin (v. 7b).

Had Isaiah not been washed by God before his experience in chapter six? Yes, Isaiah had been cleansed, but he realized that he was still unclean. This indicates that we all need to realize that we are a totality of uncleanness. No matter how many times we may be washed, we are still unclean. We all must come to know ourselves to this extent.

In our experience, whether we are clean or unclean depends on the feeling of our conscience; and the feeling of our conscience depends on our seeing the Lord. How much we see the Lord determines how much we will be cleansed. The more we see the Lord and are exposed, the more we are cleansed. When our conscience is cleansed and is void of offense, we are able to contact God. According to our enlightened conscience, we are clean, but according to the actual facts of our situation in the old creation, we are not clean. How could the old creation be clean? As long as we remain in the old creation, we can never be completely clean, for the old creation is unclean. We need the redemption of our body. Once our body is redeemed, we will get out of the old creation. At that time, we will be completely clean.

## II. CHRIST'S WARNING COMMISSION TO ISAIAH

In verses 8 through 13 we have Christ's warning commission to Isaiah. After Isaiah was purged, he received a commission from the Lord.

### A. The Lord's Need

#### *1. His Calling*

Regarding the Lord's need, we first have His calling. The Lord said, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us?" (v. 8a). The words *I* and *Us* indicate that the One speaking here is triune, that this One is not merely Christ but Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God.

### *2. Isaiah's Answer*

Isaiah's answer was very good. He said, "Here am I; send me" (v. 8b).

## B. The Lord's Warning Commission to Isaiah

### *1. His Charge*

In verses 9 and 10 the Lord gave His charge to Isaiah. The Lord said to him, "Go and say to this people, / Hear indeed, but do not perceive; / And see indeed, but do not understand. / Make the heart of this people numb; / Dull their ears, / And seal their eyes; / Lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, / And their heart perceives and returns, and they are healed." This indicates that there would be no way for the people to be healed and recovered.

### *2. Isaiah's Question*

In response to the Lord's charge, Isaiah asked a question. He said, "For how long, Lord?" (v. 11a). He was asking how long this situation would remain.

### *3. The Answer*

In verses 11b through 13 we have the Lord's answer to Isaiah's question. The Lord said to him, "Until cities lay devastated, / Without inhabitants, / And houses are without people, / And the land is devastated and a waste; / And Jehovah has sent men far away from it, / And desolate places abound in the midst of the land. / But there will still be a tenth part in it; / And it in turn is to be burned / Like a terebinth or an oak, / Whose stump remains after its felling; / Its stump will be a holy seed." Except for the word concerning the holy seed, this prophecy has been fulfilled.

### *4. This Prophetic Warning Being Fulfilled by the Babylonian Invasion and Captivity*

The foregoing prophetic warning was given in approximately 758 B.C., and it was fulfilled in approximately 606 B.C. by the Babylonian invasion and captivity (2 Kings 24—25). The Babylonians devastated Jerusalem and carried away the important people.

### C. This Warning Being Quoted by the Lord Jesus and by John

This warning was quoted by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 13:14-15, while the Lord was on earth, to remind the rebellious and stubborn Jews under His ministry. This warning was also quoted by John in John 12:40. The Lord's reminding was fulfilled in A.D. 70 by the Roman army under Titus (Matt. 23:37-38; 24:2).

### D. This Warning Being Quoted by the Apostle Paul

This warning was also quoted by the apostle Paul in Acts 28:25-27 to remind the unbelieving Jews under his preaching of the gospel; and his reminding was also fulfilled in A.D. 70 by Titus with his army. Furthermore, after A.D. 70, this warning has been fulfilled throughout the centuries.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE SEVEN

## THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE AND THE NATIONS

## (5)

## THE SIGN OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION GIVEN IN GOD'S DEALING WITH THE UNBELIEF OF AHAZ, KING OF JUDAH

Scripture Reading: Isa. 7—8

In this message we will cover chapters seven and eight. Here we have the sign of Christ's incarnation given in God's dealing with the unbelief of Ahaz, king of Judah, who was under the dread of Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah, king of Israel, who were defeated by the king of Assyria, who invaded the land of Judah.

### I. GOD'S DEALING WITH THE UNBELIEF OF AHAZ, KING OF JUDAH

In 7:1—8:8 we see God's dealing with the unbelief of Ahaz, king of Judah.

#### A. Rezin, King of Aram, and Pekah, King of Israel, Going Up to Attack Ahaz, and the Heart of Ahaz Quivering

Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah, king of Israel, went up to attack Ahaz at Jerusalem, and the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people quivered as the trees of the forest quiver in the face of the wind (7:1-2).

#### B. Jehovah Sending Isaiah to Ahaz

Jehovah sent Isaiah to say to Ahaz, "Be careful and be quiet; do not fear, and do not be fainthearted because of these

two smoking firebrand stubs, at the burning anger of Rezin and Aram, and the son of Remaliah" (v. 4). The son of Remaliah was Pekah, king of Israel. Isaiah went on to say that their evil plan against him would not stand and that it would not happen (vv. 5-7). Then Isaiah said that Rezin and Damascus of Aram, and the son of Remaliah and Samaria of Ephraim would be shattered (vv. 8-9a). Finally, Isaiah said to Ahaz, "If you do not believe, surely you will not remain standing" (v. 9b). Here we see the principle that it is by believing that we are able to stand.

### C. Jehovah Wanting Ahaz to Ask for a Sign

Jehovah wanted Ahaz to ask for a sign (7:10-25). This sign is related to the ushering in of Christ, who was born of a virgin.

#### *1. Ahaz Not Willing to Ask*

Ahaz said that he would not ask and would not try Jehovah (v. 12). Isaiah considered this as exhausting the patience of his God (v. 13).

#### *2. The Lord Giving Ahaz a Sign*

Verse 14 says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel." Immanuel means "God with us." This word concerning a virgin bearing a son is quoted in Matthew 1:23 and applied to the Lord Jesus.

##### *a. The Actual Fulfillment of This Sign*

The actual fulfillment of this sign was the birth of a son by Isaiah's wife (8:3). The son was named Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means "Swift is the booty, hastening is the prey." This name indicates the carrying away of the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria before the king of Assyria (8:4).

##### *b. The Child Eating Curds and Honey Until He Knew How to Refuse Evil and Choose Good*

Until the child knew how to refuse evil and choose good,

he would eat curds and honey. This indicates that the land of the two kings whom Ahaz dreaded would be abandoned, made desolate, by the king of Assyria (7:15-16).

## D. The Invasion of the Army of the King of Assyria

Isaiah 7:17-25 and 8:5-8 speak of the invasion of the army of the king of Assyria. Thus far, we have four parties: the party of Aram, the party of the northern kingdom of Israel, the party of the southern kingdom of Judah, whose king was Ahaz, and the party from Assyria. God sent the army from Assyria in the northeast to deal with the king of Aram and the king of Israel, who were threatening Ahaz.

### *1. The People of Judah Rejecting the Gently Flowing Waters of Shiloah at Jerusalem*

The people of Judah rejected "the gently flowing waters of Shiloah" at Jerusalem, waters which signify the tender blessings of the divine provision (8:6a). Furthermore, the people exulted in Rezin and the son of Remaliah (v. 6b). Therefore, the Lord said that He would bring upon them "the mighty and abundant waters of the Euphrates" (signifying the strong and great army), the king of Assyria and all his glory (v. 7). It would overflow all its channels and go over all its banks. It would sweep through Judah, overflowing and rising until it reached the neck, and the spreading out of its wings would fill the breadth of the land of Immanuel (v. 8). Here we have the fifth party—Immanuel.

#### *a. Jehovah Whistling for the Flies and for the Bees*

Jehovah would whistle for the flies (signifying the soldiers) which are at the ends of the rivers of Egypt and for the bees (signifying the soldiers) which are in the land of Assyria, and they would all come and settle in different places of the land of Judah (7:18-19).

#### *b. The Lord Shaving with a Razor the Head and the Hair of the Legs, and the Beard as Well*

In that day the Lord would shave with a razor hired from

beyond the Euphrates, that is, with the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the legs, and the beard as well (7:20). The hair on the head signifies glory, and the hair on other parts of the body signifies strength. Thus, the glory and strength of Judah would be removed through the "razor" of the king of Assyria.

#### *c. Everyone Left Behind in the Land Eating Curds and Honey*

In that day everyone left behind in the land would eat curds and honey, because the vineyard, all the land, and all the hills would grow thorns and thistles and would be good for the cattle to roam in and for the sheep to trample, but not good for the harvest to grow in for producing grain as people's food (7:21-25). This indicates that the land of Judah would be devastated and destroyed.

### ***2. The Land of Immanuel Indicating That the Land of Judah, the Holy Land, Is Christ's Territory Invaded by the Conquering Army of the King of Assyria***

The expression "land of Immanuel" (8:8) indicates that the land of Judah, the Holy Land, is Christ's territory invaded by the conquering army of the king of Assyria. This is the land that Christ will inherit to build up His millennial kingdom with His two elect peoples, the chosen Jews and the chosen believers.

The land of Immanuel has been occupied by invaders for twenty-six centuries. It has been occupied by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks under Alexander the Great, the successors of Alexander, the Romans, and the Moslems. If we are those who know the Bible, we should pray for the current Middle East situation in this way: "Lord Jesus, You are Immanuel. Lord, remember the good land promised by God to His people. That is Your land. O Immanuel, the invaders are filling up Your land. How long, Lord, will You allow this to continue?" I hope that we will begin to pray in this way.

In Isaiah God's dealing with the nations began mainly

with Babylon (13:1—14:23). This corresponds to the great human image which the king of Babylon saw in Daniel 2. The king of Babylon was the head of gold. Babylon actually began with Babel in Genesis 11. The words *Babel* and *Babylon* both signify confusion brought in by division. The enemies of God's people in the Old Testament began from Babylon. In the New Testament the enemy of God's chosen people, the church, still is called Babylon—Babylon the Great (Rev. 17—18). Babylon was the head taking the lead to invade and devastate the Holy Land. Eventually, Babylon will be the last one to damage God's elect in the New Testament. However, both the religious Babylon (the apostate Roman Church) and material Babylon (the city of Rome) will be destroyed. Even the termination of Babylon is included in the sign of a virgin conceiving a son called Immanuel.

We should not think that the prophecy in Isaiah 7 and 8 merely concerns things that are past. On the contrary, the sign of Immanuel is still being fulfilled today. Where is Immanuel? According to Isaiah 6, Immanuel, full of the splendor of His human virtues, is in the heavens sitting on the throne. The real strategy concerning the Middle East is in His hand, and He knows what the outcome will be.

## II. THE REAL FULFILLMENT OF THE SIGN GIVEN BY GOD TO AHAZ, THE KING OF JUDAH, BEING THE LORD'S INCARNATION

The sign in Isaiah 7:14 has had both an actual fulfillment and a real fulfillment. As we have seen, the actual fulfillment was the birth of a son by Isaiah's wife. The real fulfillment of the sign given by God to Ahaz, king of Judah, was the Lord's incarnation (Matt. 1:20-23), which issued in Immanuel, that is, God with us, for the salvation of God's people. All God's people, those who are of Israel and those who are of the church, are saved by Immanuel.

Immanuel is all-inclusive. He includes the Savior, the Redeemer, the Life-giver, and the all-inclusive Spirit. Immanuel is first our Savior, then our Redeemer, then our Life-giver, and then the all-inclusive, indwelling Spirit. We need to realize that the all-inclusive Spirit is Immanuel. On the one hand, this

all-inclusive Spirit is the Shoot of Jehovah; on the other hand, He is the Fruit of the earth (Isa. 4:2). He is God and man. Such a one is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45).

### III. CHRIST AS IMMANUEL

In Isaiah 8:9-22 we have a revelation concerning Christ as Immanuel.

#### A. For One to Overcome the Nations in Their Equipping, Counseling, and Speaking

Christ as Immanuel is for one to overcome the nations in their equipping, counseling, and speaking (vv. 9-10). God is with the one who thus overcomes; He is his Immanuel. The last part of verse 10 says, "For God is with us." The words *God is with us* are a translation of the Hebrew expression *immanu El.*

#### B. For One to Be Instructed by Jehovah

Christ as Immanuel is also for one to be instructed by Jehovah not to walk in the way of this people, not to be in their conspiracy, and not to fear what they fear, nor be awed by what they are awed by (vv. 11-12). Because the people had become degraded, the one instructed by Jehovah was not to follow them. Rather, this one was to sanctify Jehovah of hosts, regarding Him as the One to fear and the One to be awed by (v. 13).

#### C. Christ the Immanuel Becoming a Sanctuary, yet a Stone to Strike Against, a Rock of Stumbling, and a Trap and a Snare

In 8:14 and 15 we have a further indication that Christ is all-inclusive. In verse 14 Christ the Immanuel becomes a sanctuary to God's people. As the sanctuary, Christ is our dwelling place. Christ is a sanctuary to us, but He is a smiting stone to smash the image in Daniel 2 into pieces. He has also become a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel. Christians may know Christ as the rock cleft for us but not as the rock of stumbling. Many Jews have been stumbled by

Christ. Moreover, Christ is a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

### D. Causing the Prophet to Bind Up the Testimony and Seal the Instruction among His Disciples and Wait on Jehovah

Christ as Immanuel causes the prophet to bind up the testimony, that is, the law, seal the instruction among his disciples, wait on Jehovah, who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and look eagerly for Him (vv. 16-17).

### E. Making the Prophet and the Children Whom Jehovah Has Given Him for Signs and Wonders in Israel

Christ as Immanuel also makes the prophet and the children whom Jehovah has given him, typifying Christ and the believers (Heb. 2:13b), for signs and wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who abides on Mount Zion (Isa. 8:18).

### F. Causing One Not to Inquire of the Necromancers and the Familiar Spirits, but to Inquire of God

Finally, Christ as Immanuel causes God's people not to inquire of the necromancers and the familiar spirits, but to inquire of God, and not to inquire of the dead on behalf of the living (v. 19). God's people were to go to the law and to the testimony, speaking according to this word with the dawn in them, and not going through the land hardpressed and hungry, so that they rage and curse their king and their God, turning their face upward and looking to the earth, but there being nothing except distress, darkness, and gloom of anguish and they being thrust into darkness (vv. 20-22). We should not listen to anything other than God and His instruction. This God today is Immanuel. Thus, we must come to the New Testament and listen to the four Gospels, Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE EIGHT

## A WORD CONCERNING THE SIGN OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION GIVEN TO AHAZ, KING OF JUDAH

Scripture Reading: Isa. 7—8

In this message I would like to speak a further word concerning the sign of Christ's incarnation given to Ahaz, king of Judah (Isa. 7:14). We will consider this sign in relation to Satan's use of Babylon to oppose God and God's economy. The New Testament begins with the sign of a virgin conceiving and bearing a son, whose name is called Immanuel, God with us (Matt. 1:22-23). As we will see, this great sign covers the entire Bible from Genesis 11 to Revelation 22.

### GOD'S ELECT PEOPLES

According to the divine revelation in the Bible, God made a plan, and this plan is His eternal economy. God's plan, God's economy, is to gain for Himself a people from among the human beings created by Him. God's calling of Abraham was part of the fulfillment of God's desire to have a people for Himself, a people who were chosen, called, and separated to be God's treasure. With the coming of Christ, God took a further step to gain another people—the church. To God, the church is a great treasure. Therefore, God has two elect peoples: Israel in the Old Testament and the believers in the New Testament. In totality, the believers are the church, God's elect in the New Testament. For the fulfillment of His eternal purpose, God desires to gain these two elect peoples.

### GOD'S ENEMY USING THE NATIONS TO FRUSTRATE GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

God, however, has an enemy, Satan, and this enemy has

come in to cause a great deal of damage in his attempt to frustrate God from accomplishing His eternal economy. Satan's way is to use the nations—the human beings created by God but not chosen by Him—to frustrate God's eternal purpose.

## OPPOSITION COMING FROM BABYLON

### Babylon in the Old Testament

The divine revelation always has its own principle, and according to the principle of the divine revelation, the first nation used by Satan to frustrate God from accomplishing His eternal economy was Babel in Genesis 11. *Babel* was an ancient name for *Babylon*. At Babel rebellious people built a tower and a city in order to make a name for themselves (Gen. 11:4). Eventually, after many centuries, Babel was enlarged to become Babylon. According to the Old Testament, all the Gentile nations used by Satan against God began from Babylon. This human opposition to God is signified by the human image in Daniel 2. This image includes Babylon (the head of gold), followed by the Medo-Persians (the breast and arms of silver), the Greeks (the belly and thighs of brass), and the Romans (the legs of iron).

History shows us that the center of many of the wars fought between nations has been the Middle East, in particular the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates River. The land of Immanuel (Isa. 8:8) is in this area. This is the land which Christ will inherit for the establishing of His millennial kingdom with two peoples—chosen Israel as His earthly people and the chosen believers as His heavenly people. The fighting over this land is still taking place, for in the twentieth century the world situation has been centered in the Middle East.

### Babylon in the New Testament

In the Old Testament, those who invaded the land of Immanuel were physical invaders, such as the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. In the New Testament, the invaders, although still from Babylon, are spiritual invaders. The Babylon in the Old Testament was physical, but the

Babylon in the New Testament is spiritual. Toward the end of the New Testament, there is a revelation of this Babylon in its two aspects—the religious aspect (Rev. 17:1-18) and the material aspect (Rev. 18:1-24).

If we read the New Testament carefully, we will see that the warfare between Satan and God will be ended by the fighting between Christ with His faithful followers and Antichrist with his followers (Rev. 17:12-15). Antichrist, the coming Caesar of the Roman Empire, will be the one who will form an alliance with the ten toes of the image in Daniel 2 and be their leader. In a spiritual sense, Antichrist will be a part of Babylon. The head is Babylon, and the leader of the toes is also Babylon. This indicates that the opposition to God began with Babylon and that it will end with Babylon. When Babylon has been terminated and destroyed, the kingdom will come. This kingdom will be composed of the two elect peoples of God, Israel and the believers.

We need to see clearly that the sign of a virgin conceiving and bearing a son covers the Bible from Genesis 11 to Revelation 22. Today we are still in the stage of the fulfillment of this sign, the sign of a son consummating in Immanuel. As this sign continues to be fulfilled, the war between Babylon and Jerusalem is still raging. Today's Babylon has two sides: the spiritual, or religious, side, which is the Roman Church, and the material side, which will be the city of Rome.

## CHRIST UNVEILED AS IMMANUEL

In Isaiah Christ is unveiled first as the Shoot of Jehovah (4:2a) and then as the Fruit of the earth (4:2b), as a canopy to cover all the interests of God in the whole universe (4:5), and as a tabernacle overshadowing God's chosen people (4:6). Eventually, this Christ becomes the center of an all-inclusive sign—the sign of a virgin conceiving and bearing a son.

The real fulfillment of this sign was the Lord's incarnation (Matt. 1:20-23). When Christ came, He was Immanuel, which means God with us (Matt. 1:23). Christ is God with us. This is revealed not only in Matthew 1 but also in Matthew 28, where the Lord Jesus says, "Behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age" (v. 20). Actually, the

entire New Testament is an Immanuel, and we are now a part of this great Immanuel that will consummate in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity.

### Immanuel Being Our Sanctuary

Christ as Immanuel, as the Son born of a virgin, is our sanctuary. This sanctuary is the place where we may live, dwell, and worship God. We are God's priests, His worshippers, and the sanctuary is the place where we dwell with God. When Christ was incarnated, He became a tabernacle (John 1:14). *Tabernacle* is a general term used to denote the sanctuary. For us today, the sanctuary is the innermost part of the temple where we as God's priests worship God, serve God, and dwell with God.

### To the Opposers Christ Being a Smiting Stone, a Rock of Stumbling, a Trap, and a Snare

Christ has many opposers, including the Gentile nations who have invaded His land. These nations compose the image in Daniel 2. To them, Christ will be the smiting stone. According to Daniel 2:34 and 35, He will be the stone that smashes the image into pieces.

In the four Gospels we can see that when Christ was on earth, He was opposed by another category of people. Those in this category included the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, the scribes, the elders, and certain of the priests. To those in this category Christ was a rock of stumbling (Isa. 8:14b). The ones who fell upon this rock were broken to pieces.

Furthermore, many of those who opposed Christ were cunning and subtle, and in their subtlety they tried to trap or to snare the Lord Jesus. During the Lord's last visit to Jerusalem, the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, scribes, and others tried over a period of four days to trap Him, to snare Him. Instead, they were eventually trapped and snared by Him. To them, Christ was a trap and a snare (Isa. 8:14c).

We thank the Lord that to us who believe in Him, He, as Immanuel, is our sanctuary. In Him we have God's presence, and God's presence is our dwelling, the place where we worship God and serve Him.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE NINE

## THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE AND THE NATIONS

## (6)

## THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST AS THE GREAT LIGHT AND THE WONDERFUL ONE ISSUING FROM JEHOVAH'S CHASTISEMENT ON THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL AND HIS JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA

## (1)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 9:1-7; Matt. 4:12-17; Isa. 7:14; Luke 2:12; John 3:16; Judg. 13:18; Rom. 9:5; Isa. 63:16; Eph. 2:14

In this message we will consider the unveiling of Christ as the great light and the wonderful One issuing from Jehovah's chastisement on the kingdom of Israel and His judgment on Assyria.

### I. THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST AS THE GREAT LIGHT

In Isaiah 9:1-5 Christ is unveiled as the great light.

#### A. Treating the Way of the Sea, across the Jordan, with Glory, Galilee of the Nations

"Gloom does not remain in the place where there was anguish: formerly He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali contemptibly, but afterwards He treats the way of the sea, across the Jordan, with glory, Galilee of the nations" (9:1). The sea mentioned here is the Sea of Galilee. The Lord now treats that part of the world called "the way

of the sea" with glory. This part of the world is also called "Galilee of the nations."

The first group of Christ's followers, the beginning of God's New Testament elect, the one hundred twenty in Acts 1 and 2, were all from Galilee (Acts 2:7). Galilee of the nations was a despised place, but today we need to respect Galilee because it is the source of the church. It is difficult to say whether the one hundred twenty were Jews or Gentiles. Actually, they were neither Jews nor Gentiles; they were the church. The same is true of us as believers in Christ today. We, the church people, are all from Galilee, a despised region which is the very origin of the church.

Although Isaiah does not speak of the church, there are some hints in his prophecy concerning the church. One of these hints is the word concerning the Galilean believers from Galilee of the nations in 9:1.

### B. The People Who Walked in the Darkness Having Seen a Great Light

Isaiah 9:2 says, "The people who walked in the darkness / Have seen a great light; / Upon those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death / Light has shined." This prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew 4. When Christ came to Galilee, the people sitting in darkness saw a great light, and to those sitting in the region and shadow of death, light sprang up (v. 16).

The fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 9:2 is continuing even today. Jesus is still visiting the "Galileans"; He is still visiting "Galilee," the despised region, to gain the despised people. Therefore, to be in Galilee is to be blessed. If those who occupy high positions in society would be saved, they must become those who are in the despised region of Galilee.

### C. The Lord Multiplying the Nation

Isaiah 9:3 goes on to say, "You have multiplied the nation; / You have increased their gladness; / They are glad before You as with the gladness of harvest, / As men rejoice when they divide spoil." This prophecy refers to Peter, John, James, and all the early apostles, and it also concerns us. We are the

farmers in the harvest and the fighters gaining the spoil. This refers to the increase, spread, and growth of Christ on earth.

### D. The Lord Breaking the Yoke of Their Burden

Verse 4 continues, "For You break the yoke of their burden / And the staff on their shoulder, / The rod of their oppressor, / As in the day of Midian." This indicates that Christ as the great light is breaking the yoke that has been upon us.

### E. All the Boots of Those Who in Boots Trample in the Battle Quaking

Finally, verse 5 says, "For all the boots / Of those who in boots trample in the battle quake / And the garments / Rolled in blood / Are for burning; / They are fuel for fire." This indicates that a battle is going on. Today Christ is fighting, and we, His followers, are also fighting.

## II. THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST AS THE WONDERFUL ONE

In 9:6-7 we see the unveiling of Christ as the wonderful One.

### A. A Child Being Born to Us, a Son Being Given to Us

Isaiah 9:6a says, "For a child is born to us, / A son is given to us." Once again, this involves the sign of a virgin conceiving and bearing a son. In 9:6 the child born to us is both human and divine, and the son given to us is divine. Without the birth of the human and divine child, there would have been no way for God to give His divine Son to us. The divine Son was given (John 3:16) through the birth of the human child.

### B. The Government Being upon His Shoulders

Isaiah 9:6b tells us that "the government / Is upon His shoulders." This means that the divine administration is upon the shoulders of this child who is born and this son who is given.

### C. His Name Being Called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:6c says, "His name will be called / Wonderful Counselor, / Mighty God, / Eternal Father, / Prince of Peace." In translating this verse, it is difficult to decide whether a comma should be inserted between the words *Wonderful* and *Counselor*. As the human and divine child born and the divine Son given, Christ is the Wonderful Counselor, and He is also Wonderful (Judg. 13:18) and the Counselor. Furthermore, He is the Mighty God (Rom. 9:5), the Eternal Father (Isa. 63:16), and the Prince of Peace (Eph. 2:14). Every item of what Christ is is wonderful. We can never exhaust our telling of what He is. He is the wonder in the entire universe; thus, He is wonderful.

Christ is wonderful mainly in His being the Counselor. I can testify that I experienced Him as such a Counselor when I was imprisoned in China by the Japanese invading army. During the month of my imprisonment, I was examined twice daily. Each examination and trial lasted about three hours. I was asked many difficult questions. As I was considering how to answer these questions, I looked to the Lord for His counsel. As He gave me counsel, I experienced Him as the Wonderful Counselor.

### D. To the Increase of His Government and to His Peace There Being No End

Isaiah 9:7 says, "To the increase of His government / And to His peace there is no end, / Upon the throne of David / And over His kingdom, / To establish it / And to uphold it / In justice and righteousness / From now unto eternity. / The zeal of Jehovah of hosts / Will accomplish this." From the time, in Genesis 11, when mankind gave up God as their governor and made themselves the governors, the matter of government has been a great problem to man. But when the restoration comes, Christ will be the unique Governor, and the government of the Triune God will be upon His shoulders. This government will increase and fill every corner of this earth.

The increase of Christ's government and His peace will have no end. Peace is a sign that justice and righteousness are present. In the new heaven and new earth, everything will be just and right (2 Pet. 3:13). When Christ becomes Governor of this earth, the earth will be full of peace.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TEN

## THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE AND THE NATIONS

## (7)

## THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST AS THE GREAT LIGHT AND THE WONDERFUL ONE ISSUING FROM JEHOVAH'S CHASTISEMENT ON THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL AND HIS JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA

## (2)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 9:8—10:34; Rom. 9:27

In chapters four, six, seven, eight, and nine of Isaiah, eighteen items of Christ are revealed. In chapter four Christ is the Shoot of Jehovah, the Fruit of the earth (v. 2), the canopy (v. 5), and the tabernacle (v. 6) to be the shade, refuge, and cover to God's chosen people. In chapter six Christ is the One sitting on the throne in glory (v. 1). In chapter seven Christ is the child who is called Immanuel (v. 14), and in chapter eight Christ is the sanctuary to His people but a striking stone, a rock of stumbling, and a trap, and a snare to His opposers (v. 14). In chapter nine Christ is the great light (v. 2), a child born, a son given, the Mighty God, the Wonderful Counselor, the Eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace (v. 6).

Chapters nine and eleven of Isaiah reveal Christ in a wonderful way, but chapter ten deals with Jehovah's judgment (not merely His chastisement) on the kingdom of Israel and His judgment on Assyria. Chapter ten is inserted between these two chapters for the purpose of showing us how to

possess and enjoy the good things of Christ presented in the earlier chapters of Isaiah.

If we would know how to enjoy Christ, we must first know our real situation. Our real situation is not good, because we are under the judgment of God. If we would enjoy Christ as our salvation, we must realize that we are under God's judgment.

The principle is the same in preaching the gospel. In preaching the gospel, it is best not to present the good things first but the bad things. If you present only the good things, you may not touch a person's conscience. The best way to touch a person's conscience is to say something about his actual situation in a nice way.

Isaiah 10 shows that both the oppressed, the kingdom of Israel, and the oppressor, the kingdom of Assyria, were under the judgment of God. Israel was once a single nation, but after the time of Solomon, the nation was divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Because the kingdom of Israel had fallen to the extent that it was on the level of the Gentile nations, even becoming an ally to the king of Aram, Israel was not only under God's chastisement but also under His judgment. God's chastisement on Israel became His judgment on Israel. For this reason, it is correct now to speak not only of God's chastisement on Israel but also of His judgment on Israel. Furthermore, the two judgments in this chapter—the judgment on Israel and the judgment on Assyria—are actually one (vv. 22-23). Israel had become one with the Gentiles; therefore, these two judgments became one in nature.

### III. JEHOVAH'S JUDGMENT ON THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

In 9:8—10:4 we see God's judgment on the kingdom of Israel.

#### A. On Their Pride and Haughtiness

God's judgment was on their pride and haughtiness (9:9-10). Ephraim (the kingdom of Israel) and the inhabitants of Samaria (the capital of Israel) said in their pride and

haughtiness of heart, "The bricks have fallen, but we will build with cut stone; / The sycamores have been felled, but we will put cedars in their place" (v. 10). In their pride they said that they would build with something stronger than bricks and that they would replace the sycamores with cedars.

### B. Jehovah's Judgment—Exalting the Adversaries and Goading On the Enemies

Jehovah exalted the adversaries of Rezin against Israel and goaded Israel's enemies on (9:11). Aram from the east and the Philistines from the west devoured with an open mouth. But by all this Jehovah's anger was not turned; His hand was still outstretched (v. 12).

### C. On Their Not Turning to Jehovah nor Seeking Him

Jehovah's judgment was on their not turning to Him nor seeking Him. Verse 13 says, "Yet the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, / Nor do they seek Jehovah of hosts."

### D. Jehovah's Judgment— Cutting Off from Israel Head and Tail and Those Who Mislead This People

Jehovah cut off from Israel head (the elder and the highly regarded) and tail (the prophet and the teacher of falsehood) and those who mislead this people (vv. 14-16). Because of this the Lord would not rejoice in their young men and would not have compassion on their orphans and widows. All of them were profane and evildoers, and every mouth spoke foolishness. By all this Jehovah's anger was not turned; His hand was still outstretched (v. 17).

### E. On Their Wickedness

Jehovah's judgment was also on their wickedness. Their wickedness burned like a fire, devouring thorn and thistle. It burned in the forest thickets, and it rolled up into a column of smoke (v. 18).

### F. Jehovah's Judgment—His Overflowing Wrath

At the overflowing wrath of Jehovah, a land was burned up, and the people were like fuel for fire (v. 19a). No one spared even his brother (v. 19b). One carved on the left side, but was hungry; and another ate on the right side, but was not satisfied. Each ate the flesh of his own arm: Manasseh, Ephraim, and Ephraim, Manasseh, and these together against Judah. But by all this Jehovah's anger was not turned; His hand was still outstretched (vv. 20-21).

### G. On Their Injustice

Jehovah's judgment also came upon their injustice. Concerning this, 10:1 and 2 say, "Woe to those who decree decrees of iniquity, / To the busy writers who are busy writing trouble, / In order to turn the needy away from judgment, / And to tear justice away from the poor among my people; / That widows may be their spoil, / And they may plunder orphans." These verses indicate that there was no justice in Israel.

### H. Jehovah's Judgment—the Day of Visitation

Isaiah 10:3 says, "And what will you do for the day of visitation / And for the devastation that comes from afar? / To whom will you flee for help? / And where will you leave your glory…?" Here *the day of visitation* refers to the day of judgment, and *glory* refers to wealth. Verse 4 goes on to speak of one crouching behind prisoners and falling behind the slain. But by all this Jehovah's anger was not turned; His hand was still outstretched.

## IV. JEHOVAH'S JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA

In 10:5-34 we also see Jehovah's judgment on Assyria.

### A. Jehovah's Judgment on the Haughtiness of the King of Assyria

Verses 5 through 19 and 28 through 34 speak of Jehovah's judgment on the haughtiness of the king of Assyria.

### *1. Assyria, the Rod of Jehovah's Anger*

Although Assyria was the rod of Jehovah's anger, He pronounced woe to Assyria. "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger! / The staff which is in their hand is My indignation. / Against a profane nation I send them out / And against the people of My overflowing wrath I command them, / To make spoil of the spoil and to prey on the prey, / To make them a trampling ground, like street mire" (vv. 5-6).

### *2. Assyria Not Thinking So, and Their Heart Not Conceiving It So*

Assyria, however, did not think it so, and their heart did not conceive it so (v. 7a). Rather, destroying was in their heart, and the cutting down of no few nations (vv. 7b-11). This means that because Israel had become corrupt, God used Assyria as a rod and a staff to judge Israel. But Assyria, overstretching beyond the limitation, did not think of the matter in this way, nor did their heart conceive it in this way. Assyria therefore acted excessively.

### *3. Jehovah Punishing the Fruit of the King of Assyria's Haughtiness of Heart and the Glory of His Haughty Eyes*

Verses 13 and 14 expose the haughtiness of the king of Assyria. Verse 12 reveals that this haughtiness would be punished by Jehovah. "When the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He says, I will punish the fruit of the king of Assyria's haughtiness of heart and the glory of his haughty eyes."

### *4. The Ax Not to Glorify Itself above Him Who Chops with It*

Verse 15 says, "Should the ax glorify itself above him who chops with it? / Or should the saw magnify itself above him who wields it? / It would be like the rod wielding him who lifts it up, / Like the staff lifting up him who is not wood." Here God is saying that it was He who used Assyria as an ax to chop His people, but now this ax is glorifying itself above the One who chopped with it. Jehovah, therefore, would

judge the king of Assyria, as described in verses 16 through 19. He would send leanness to the fat ones of the king of Assyria, and under his glory He would kindle a kindling, like the kindling of fire. Furthermore, the Light of Israel would become a fire, and His Holy One a flame; and it would burn and devour his thorns and his thistles in one day. The glory of his forest and of his garden land Jehovah would destroy, both soul and body; and the king of Assyria would be like a sick man wasting away.

#### *5. The King of Assyria Moving Terrifyingly through Many Nations*

The king of Assyria moved terrifyingly through many nations and eventually swung his hands over the mountain of the city of Zion, over the hill of Jerusalem (vv. 28-32).

#### *6. The Lord Jehovah of Hosts Lopping Off the Boughs with an Awful Crash*

The Lord Jehovah of hosts would lop off the boughs with an awful crash. Those which were tall in height would be hewn down, and those which were lofty would be laid low. He would chop away the forest thickets with an iron ax, and Lebanon would fall at the hands of the majestic One (vv. 33-34).

### B. The Return and Release of Israel

Isaiah 10:20-27 speaks of the return and release of Israel. After the judgment on Israel and the judgment on Assyria, there would be the return and release of Israel.

#### *1. In That Day the Remnant of Israel and Those of the House of Jacob Who Have Escaped Relying upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel*

Then in that day the remnant of Israel and those of the house of Israel who have escaped will no longer rely upon him who strikes them—the king of Assyria—but they will rely upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth (v. 20). To rely upon Jehovah in truth is to rely upon Him in honesty.

Verses 21 and 22a go on to say, "A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your

people, O Israel, are like the sand of the sea, only a remnant among them will return." This word is quoted by Paul in Romans 9:27. The reason that only a remnant will return is given in Isaiah 10:22b-23. "Annihilation is strictly decided, overflowing with righteousness. For utter destruction and a strict decision is Jehovah of hosts performing in the midst of the whole land."

### *2. Jehovah Telling His People Dwelling in Zion Not to Fear Assyria*

In verse 24 Jehovah tells His people dwelling in Zion not to fear Assyria, which strikes with the rod and lifts up the staff against them the way Egypt did. Then in the following verses Jehovah says, "For in a very little while My indignation will be completed, and My anger will be turned toward their destruction. And against them Jehovah of hosts will rouse up a whip like the stroke against Midian at the rock of Oreb; and His staff will be over the sea, and He will lift it up the way He did in Egypt. And in that day their burden will be removed from your shoulders, and their yoke from off your neck; and the yoke will be broken due to the fatness" (vv. 25-27). From this we see that God's judgment will eventually issue in the return of His people.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE ELEVEN

## THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE AND THE NATIONS

## (8)

## THE RESTORATION BROUGHT IN THROUGH CHRIST AND THE SALVATION ENJOYED BY JEHOVAH'S BELOVED PEOPLE

Scripture Reading: Isa. 11—12

In this message we will consider the restoration brought in through Christ (ch. 11) and the salvation enjoyed by Jehovah's beloved people (ch. 12).

### I. THE RESTORATION BROUGHT IN THROUGH CHRIST

Most students of Isaiah pay close attention to chapter eleven, which portrays a very pleasant picture of restoration.

### A. The Coming Christ in Restoration

Verses 1 through 5 and 10 reveal the coming Christ in restoration.

#### *1. A Twig Coming Forth from the Stem of Jesse, and a Branch from His Roots Bearing Fruit*

In the restoration, the coming Christ will be a twig that comes forth from the stem of Jesse and a branch from his roots (v. 1). Israel, especially the house of David, was like a tall tree. However, because of Israel's degradation, that tree was cut down to the very root. This was the situation with the descendants of David. Both Mary and her engaged husband, Joseph, were descendants of David's sons. They were part of the royal family, but they had become poor and were

people of a low class, living in Nazareth, a despised city, in Galilee, a despised region. This shows that the house of David had been cut down to the root.

One day, a twig came forth from the remaining part. Christ as a twig came forth from the stem, the stump, above the earth, signifying that restoration is by life and of life. Also, Christ as a branch came forth from the root underneath the earth, signifying the depths of the restoring life, to branch out God and bear much fruit.

The branch and the twig are one. In His birth Christ was a twig. As He grew up, He was a branch. Because of His branching out, the whole world is filled with the fruit of this branch.

### *a. The Spirit of Jehovah Resting upon Him*

Concerning Christ as the twig and the branch, verse 2 goes on to say, "The Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him, / The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, / The Spirit of counsel and might, / The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah." The Spirit of counsel and might here equals the wisdom and power in 1 Corinthians 1:24, which tells us that Christ is God's wisdom and God's power. He is the wisdom which gives counsel and the power which gives might.

The branching out of Jehovah is altogether a matter of the Spirit. Christ was born of the Spirit, meaning that He was constituted of the Spirit. Then He was baptized, anointed, with the Spirit. The Spirit was with Him all the time and was one with Him. He walked by the Spirit and lived a life in, with, by, and through the Spirit. Thus, as John 14 reveals, the Spirit is the reality of Christ.

### *b. Savoring the Fear of Jehovah*

"He will savor the fear of Jehovah" (Isa. 11:3a). The word *savor* indicates that Christ will delight in the fear of Jehovah. Moreover, "He will neither judge by what His eyes see, / Nor decide by what His ears hear. / But He will judge the poor in righteousness, / And decide with equity for the afflicted of the land" (vv. 3b-4a). Unlike today, there will be no shortage of righteousness and equity. Verse 4b continues, "And He will

strike the land with the rod of His mouth, / And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked." Here, as is common in Isaiah's poetic writing, we have a pair: the rod of His mouth and the breath of His lips.

*c. Righteousness Being That Which Girds His Loins, and Faithfulness Being That Which Girds His Hips*

Righteousness will be that which girds His loins, and faithfulness will be that which girds His hips (v. 5). Girding the loins gives one the strength to move, act, and especially to fight. Righteousness and faithfulness are two of Christ's virtues for standing and fighting. He stands with faithfulness and fights with righteousness.

### *2. The Root of Jesse Standing as a Standard to the Peoples*

Isaiah 11:10 says, "In that day the root of Jesse, / Who stands as a banner to the peoples— / Him will the nations seek, / And His resting place will be the glory." Here we see that Christ is also the root of Jesse and that His resting place will be the glory. Where He rests, there the glory is. Glory is God's expression. Where Christ is, there is God's expression. The expressed God is Christ's resting place.

On the one hand, Christ as the twig, the branch, and the root of Jesse is connected to humanity. On the other hand, Christ is very much related to God, because where He is, God's expression is. This picture depicts Christ as both God and man, as the God-man.

## B. The Restored Beasts and Cattle

### *1. The Wolf Dwelling with the Lamb*

According to verse 6, in the restoration brought in through Christ, the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a young boy will lead them about. Everything will be peaceful and loving.

### *2. The Cow and the Bear Grazing, and Their Young Lying Down Together*

In the restoration, the cow and the bear will graze, and their young will lie down together. Also, the lion will eat straw like the ox (v. 7).

### *3. The Nursing Child Playing by the Cobra's Hole*

Verse 8 goes on to tell us that in the restoration the nursing child will play by the cobra's hole, and upon the viper's den the weaned child will stretch his hand. Verse 9a continues by saying that they will not hurt nor destroy in all Jehovah's holy mountain.

### *4. The Earth Being Full of the Knowledge of Jehovah*

Furthermore, according to verse 9b, in the restoration brought in through Christ, the earth will be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

The question I have when reading these verses is why in the restoration all the different animals will live together so peacefully, pleasantly, and lovingly. I believe that although God did not create the beasts with a negative element in them, as a result of the fall, a negative factor entered into them. When Adam fell, sin entered into him. Since he, the head of all the creatures, became fallen, something of Satan also entered into them. In the restoration this negative factor will be removed, causing a change not only in outward action but also in nature. The reason for this change is given in verse 9—the knowledge of God, that is, the knowing of God, will fill the earth. Christ's restoring power will deliver all the creatures from the poisonous element of Satan, and as a result the situation among them will be pleasant, peaceful, and loving.

## C. The Return of the Restored Remnant of Israel

Verses 11 through 16 speak of the return of the restored remnant of Israel.

### *1. The Lord, by His Hand, Recovering the Remnant of His People Who Remain*

In that day the Lord, by His hand for the second time again, will recover the remnant of His people who remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the islands of the sea (v. 11).

### *2. The Lord Lifting Up a Standard to the Nations and Gathering the Outcasts of Israel*

The Lord will lift up a standard to the nations and will gather the outcasts of Israel. The dispersed of Judah He will assemble from the four corners of the earth (v. 12). This standard which will be lifted up is Christ.

### *3. Ephraim's Jealousy Departing, and the Adversaries in Judah Being Cut Off*

Ephraim's jealousy will depart, and the adversaries in Judah will be cut off. Ephraim (the northern kingdom) will not be jealous of Judah (the southern kingdom), nor will Judah be hostile to Ephraim (v. 13). The Lord will take away the divisive factor, and the two kingdoms will become one.

### *4. Flying Down upon the Shoulders of the Philistines on the West*

The restored remnant of Israel will fly down upon the shoulders of the Philistines on the west. Together they will plunder the children of the east. Edom and Moab will come into the grasp of their hand, and the children of Ammon will submit to them (v. 14).

### *5. Jehovah Utterly Destroying the Tongue of Egypt*

Jehovah will utterly destroy the tongue of Egypt. Also, He will wave His hand over the Euphrates with the scorching of His wind, and He will strike it into seven streams and march men through it dryshod (v. 15). At present, the Euphrates River is a great separation and frustration to Israel. But for the sake of the return of His scattered people to the Holy Land, the Lord will cause this river to become small streams through which the people will easily be able to walk.

### *6. There Being a Highway from Assyria for the Remnant of Jehovah's People Who Remain*

According to verse 16, there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant of Jehovah's people who remain, as there was for Israel in the day that they came up from the land of Egypt. In the restoration, God will do all these things to make it convenient for the children of Israel to be gathered back to the land of their fathers.

## II. THE SALVATION ENJOYED BY JEHOVAH'S BELOVED PEOPLE

Chapter twelve of Isaiah describes the salvation enjoyed by God's beloved people. The way to enjoy God's salvation as described here exactly matches the way revealed in the New Testament.

### A. What Israel Will Say in That Day

Verse 1 tells us what Israel will say in that day. Israel will say, "I will praise You, O Jehovah. You were angry with me; / But Your anger has turned and You have consoled me." The Hebrew word rendered *praise* here can also be translated *give thanks to.*

### B. God Being Israel's Salvation

Verse 2 continues, "God is now my salvation; / I will trust and not dread; / For Jah Jehovah is my strength and song, / And He has become my salvation." This verse clearly reveals that salvation is the Lord Himself. We should never think that the salvation which we receive and enjoy is anything other than the Lord Himself.

### C. Drawing Water with Rejoicing from the Springs of Salvation

Verses 3 and 4a go on to say, "Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation, / And you will say in that day, / Praise Jehovah; call upon His name!" To receive the Lord as our salvation is to draw water from the springs of salvation. As our salvation the Lord is water to us. This is emphasized strongly in the New Testament,

especially in John 4 and 7. In John 4:14 the Lord Jesus says, "The water that I shall give him shall become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life." In John 7 this spring becomes rivers of living water (vv. 37-39). This indicates that for the Lord to be our salvation means that He is living water.

In Revelation 22:1 and 2 there is the river of water of life and the tree of life. These verses portray the flowing out of the Triune God. God and the Lamb are on the throne, and the river of water of life, a symbol of the Spirit, proceeds out of the throne. The tree of life, signifying Christ, lives and grows in the river of water of life. If the river does not reach us, neither will the tree of life reach us. Since the tree of life is in the water of life, the way to enjoy the tree is to drink the water. When we drink the water of life, we enjoy the Triune God. Today we should not only speak of Christ and teach Christ—we also need to drink of Christ as the life-giving Spirit.

In a recent message on Ephesians 4, I pointed out that Christ is the element of the Body and the Spirit is the essence of the Body. If we have only the element without the essence, what we have will be something merely objective, having nothing to do with us in our experience. No matter how much we may know about Christ as the element, if we do not have the essence, this element will not be related to us subjectively and experientially. But when we have the Spirit as the essence, we will also have Christ as the element. The essence of the tree of life is in the water of life. If we would enjoy Christ as the tree of life, as the element of life, we must drink Him as the water of life, as the essence of life.

Even in the Old Testament time, Isaiah revealed to us that the way to take the Lord as our salvation is to call on His name with rejoicing and praising. Calling on His name is like deep breathing. If we call, "O Lord Jesus! Lord Jesus!" we will be refreshed and revived, and we will become very living. In order to enjoy salvation, we need to realize that the Lord Himself is our salvation, strength, and song and that by calling on His name we may draw water with rejoicing out of the springs of salvation.

Isaiah 12:4b says, "Make His deeds known among the peoples; / Remind them that His name is exalted." This is a matter of preaching the gospel, of letting others know what we have enjoyed by speaking to them concerning Christ and what He has done for us. In our speaking, we need to tell the people that Christ's name has been exalted, that He has ascended and is now in the heavens.

### D. Crying Out and Giving a Ringing Shout

Verses 5 and 6 conclude, "Sing to Jehovah, for He has done something majestic! / Let it be made known in all the earth! / Cry out and give a ringing shout, O inhabitant of Zion, / For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." Verse 3 speaks of rejoicing, and verse 6, of giving a "ringing shout." A ringing shout is a shout that continues to sound. Joy is inward, but rejoicing involves some activity to express the joy that is within. This rejoicing is related to giving a ringing shout, that is, to rejoicing in a continuing way.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWELVE

## THE JUDGMENT OF JEHOVAH UPON THE NATIONS AND ITS ISSUE

Scripture Reading: Isa. 13—23; Eph. 6:12b; Dan. 10:13, 20; Rev. 3:7

In this message we will cover eleven chapters, chapters thirteen through twenty-three, a long portion concerning Jehovah's judgment upon the nations and its issue, which is Christ's coming and the restoration that follows. These chapters show us one major point—that the nations are used by God's enemy to disturb God's chosen people and to frustrate God from carrying out His economy. Thus, God would be compelled to come in to judge them. All these judgments issue in one thing, that is, the ushering in of Christ.

The more we consider the judgments exercised by God over the rebellious ones, the more we see that man needs God's salvation, and this salvation is Christ Himself. The more I study the world situation, the more I realize that the only way to solve the problems in today's world is for Christ to come. And we must believe that He is coming. As He is waiting, He is preparing everything, including all of us, for His coming. All things are working together to bring our thought, our concept, and our understanding concerning human life and the human race to a deep aspiration: "Lord Jesus, You must come back. If You are not here, there is no way. Everything must be judged by You. Lord, You must come."

### I. THE JUDGMENT OF JEHOVAH UPON THE NATIONS

First we will consider Jehovah's judgment upon the nations, and then the issue of this judgment.

### A. To Destroy Babylon by the Median Army

The judgment of Jehovah upon the nations was to destroy Babylon by the Median army (14:22-23; 13:17-19, 3-4; 21:2, 9a) because of its cruel destruction of many nations (14:5-6, 16-17) and because of its idols (21:9b).

In the human image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2, Babylon was considered by God to be the head, because it was the Babylonian invasion that destroyed the temple, captured God's people, and carried away some of the holy utensils. Although Assyria, not Babylon, was the first nation to trouble God in His economy, in the sight of God all the nations, including Assyria, are a part of Babylon. Before we were saved, we too were a part of Babylon. Even after we were saved, we have often remained a part of Babylon, because a number of times we have troubled the church and damaged God's elect. Whenever we criticize the saints, we are a part of Babylon, damaging God's elect.

### B. To Break Assyria

The Assyrians put a yoke and a burden upon Israel. Therefore, Jehovah's judgment is to break Assyria because of its yoke and burden upon Israel (14:24-27).

### C. To Destroy Philistia

Jehovah's judgment also destroyed Philistia because of its damage to Zion (vv. 29-32).

### D. To Devastate Moab

Jehovah's judgment was to devastate Moab (15:1) because of its pride (16:6).

### E. To Ruin and Forsake Damascus

Jehovah's judgment was also upon Damascus, the capital of Aram. Damascus was to be ruined and forsaken (17:1-4) because of its invasion into Israel (vv. 12-14).

### F. To Strike and Desolate Egypt

In His judgment Jehovah would also strike and desolate

Egypt (19:1, 5-7, 22a) because of its idols and wise men (vv. 1b, 11b-12). Here we see that God ranks wise men together with idols.

### G. To Capture Egypt into Captivity and Cush into Exile

In 20:4-6 we see that the judgment of Jehovah was to capture Egypt into captivity and Cush into exile by the king of Assyria, because Cush had become Israel's expectation and Egypt, their boast. Instead of trusting in God, Israel expected to receive help from Cush and to gain something from Egypt for their boast. God hated this and judged the nations because of it.

### H. To Have No Judgment on Dumah

God would have no judgment on Dumah (21:11-12). Dumah means silence; it is in assonance with Edom and it is like Edom in the desolation in store. Hence, the calling to the prophet is from Seir, which is in the mountain range of Edom and which is the capital of Edom. The prophecy concerning Dumah in verse 12 means that it is the same in the day as in the night and nothing is happening.

### I. To Desolate Arabia

Isaiah 21:13-17 reveals that Jehovah would desolate Arabia by the harshness of battle because of its warlikeness.

### J. To Trample Down the City of Jerusalem

Even Jerusalem was included in Jehovah's judgment upon the nations. In His judgment He would trample down the city of Jerusalem—the valley of vision (22:5-7)—because of its unforgivable iniquity: it did not look to the Lord and did not regard Him (vv. 11b-14). God's chosen people should have regarded Him and respected Him. They refused to do this, and their failure in this matter was unforgivable.

### K. To Destroy Tyre

Finally, these chapters reveal that Jehovah's judgment

was to destroy Tyre by the Assyrians (23:1, 13-14) because of its pride of all beauty (glory) and all its honored men (v. 9).

## II. THE ISSUE OF THE JUDGMENT OF JEHOVAH UPON THE NATIONS

Now we need to see the issue of the judgment of Jehovah upon the nations.

### A. Unveiling Satan's Kingdom of Darkness behind the Nations and His Oneness with the Powers of the Nations

The first issue of Jehovah's judgment is to unveil Satan's kingdom of darkness (Eph. 6:12b; cf. Dan. 10:13, 20) behind the nations and his oneness with the powers of the nations, such as Nebuchadnezzar as a figure of Satan (Isa. 14:12-15), whom Isaiah regards as one with Satan. According to Daniel 10, there is a prince, a fallen angel, an evil spirit, over every nation. These fallen angels are part of Satan's kingdom of darkness.

### B. Showing Jehovah's Sovereign and Just Rule over the Nations

Jehovah's judgment upon the nations shows His sovereign and just rule over the nations (13:17; 14:22, 24-25; 19:1). This rule is seen particularly during times of crisis and war; for example, this rule is seen in Hitler's decision during the Second World War to invade Russia instead of England. In His sovereignty, the Lord rules over the nations. For this reason, the Lord Jesus is called "the Ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5).

### C. Restoring and Establishing Jehovah's Beloved Israel

Another issue of Jehovah's judgment upon the nations is the restoring and establishing of His beloved Israel.

#### *1. Jehovah Having Compassion on Jacob*

Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob, choose Israel again, settle them in their land, and give them rest from

their pain and turmoil and from their hard service as slaves (Isa. 14:1-3, 32b).

#### *2. Moab Offering Sacrifices to Zion*

Moab, having changed, will offer sacrifices to Zion, seeking Israel's counsel and protection (16:1-4).

#### *3. Israel Looking to His Maker*

Israel will look to his Maker, his eyes will behold his Holy One, and he will not forget the God of his salvation and the Rock of his stronghold, which is for protection (17:7, 10).

#### *4. Cush Bringing a Gift to Jehovah*

Cush, at the time of its flourishing, will bring a gift to Jehovah, unto Mount Zion, the place of the name of Jehovah (18:1, 7).

#### *5. Egypt Building an Altar as a Sign and a Testimony to Jehovah in Their Land*

According to 19:19-25, Egypt will build an altar as a sign and a testimony to Jehovah in their land and a pillar near its border. Jehovah will make Himself known to the Egyptians, and they will worship Him with sacrifice and offering and will vow a vow to Him and accomplish it. Jehovah will heal them, and they will turn to Him and entreat of Him. Then the Egyptians will worship Jehovah with the Assyrians, and Israel will be a third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the land. Jehovah will bless Egypt, Assyria, and Israel, saying, "Blessed be Egypt My people and Assyria the work of My hands and Israel My inheritance" (v. 25).

### D. Providing the All-inclusive Christ as the Savior to Meet the Need of the Beloved Israel and the Judged Nations

The ultimate issue of Jehovah's judgment upon the nations is to provide the all-inclusive Christ as the Savior to meet the need of the beloved Israel and the judged nations.

### *1. Christ Sitting in Truth upon the Throne*

Christ will sit in truth upon the throne established in lovingkindness in the tent of David to rule Moab in justice and righteousness (16:5).

### *2. Jehovah Sending the Egyptians Christ as a Savior and a Mighty One*

Jehovah will send the Egyptians Christ as a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them (19:20b).

### *3. Jehovah Making Christ a Father to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem and the House of Judah and Setting the Key of the House of David upon His Shoulder*

Jehovah will make Christ (typified by Jehovah's servant Eliakim) a Father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of Judah and will set the key of the house of David upon His shoulder (22:20-25). When He opens, no one will shut; when He shuts, no one will open (v. 22). And Jehovah will drive Him as a peg into a sure place, and He will become a throne of glory for His Father's house. They will hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house, the offspring and the issue, all the smallest vessels, from the bowls to the jars.

Isaiah 22:25 says, "In that day, declares Jehovah of hosts, the peg driven into the sure place will be removed, even cut away, and it will fall; and the burden that was upon it will be cut down; for Jehovah has spoken." To whom does this verse refer? It refers not to Christ but to Shebna (v. 15), who was replaced by Eliakim. Verse 19, referring to Shebna, says, "I will drive you from your position, / And from your standing He will pull you down." Verses 20 and 21 tell us that Shebna was to be replaced: "I will call to My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, / And I will clothe him with your tunic, / And I will strengthen him with your girding sash, / And I will put your dominion into his hand; / And he will become a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem / And to the house of Judah." These verses indicate clearly that the position of steward over the king's house had been occupied by Shebna but that the Lord wanted to remove Shebna and replace him with Eliakim,

who typifies Christ. The fact that Eliakim is a type of Christ is proved by Revelation 3:7, which applies the word in Isaiah 22:22 to Christ. The key of David has been given to Christ; He opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open. When we put these verses together, we see that Eliakim is a type of Christ as a steward over God's house.

Verses 23 and 24 also speak concerning Eliakim as a type of Christ. Verse 23 says, "I will drive him as a peg into a sure place, / And he will become a throne of glory for his father's house." Verse 24 goes on to speak of all that will hang upon Christ as a peg: "They will hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all the smallest vessels, from the bowls to all the jars." The bowls and jars typify the different ways and means for us to partake of Christ in His riches. God's glory, all God's people, and all the different ways and means for us to partake of Christ and enjoy Christ are hanging upon this One. From this we see once again that the book of Isaiah unveils Christ in a very particular way. How rich is Isaiah in unveiling Christ to us!

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTEEN

## THE VISION OF THE ECONOMY OF GOD HIDDEN IN ISAIAH'S PROPHECY

Scripture Reading: Isa. 22:19-25; Rom. 6:6; 11:17; John 15:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:16-17

In this message I would like to give a word concerning a very crucial matter—the vision of the economy of God hidden in the first twenty-three chapters of Isaiah's prophecy. Now that we have covered twenty-three chapters of Isaiah, I would like to ask a question: What is the main thing covered in these chapters? Putting the question another way, I would ask: Have you seen the vision of God's economy concealed in these chapters? My burden in this message is that we would all see this vision.

### THREE IMPORTANT MATTERS

#### The Forgiveness of Sins

A number of important matters are covered in Isaiah 1—23. For instance, 1:18 speaks concerning our being cleansed from our sins: "Come now and let us reason together, / Says Jehovah. / Though your sins are like scarlet, / They will be as white as snow; / Though they are as red as crimson, / They will be like wool." This word is related to the word in 38:17: "You have cast behind Your back / All my sins." God has forgiven our sins and has cast them behind His back. Although the forgiveness of sins is wonderful, it is not the economy of God hidden in the prophecy of Isaiah.

#### The Sign of the Virgin Conceiving and Bearing a Son

Another matter of great importance is the sign in 7:14 of the virgin conceiving and bearing a son. This verse says,

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel." This sign covers not only the past and the present but also eternity. The Bible of sixty-six books consummates in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21—22), and the New Jerusalem is the aggregate of Immanuel. The sign of Immanuel consummates in the New Jerusalem—the totality of God being with us.

### Receiving and Enjoying God as Our Salvation

A third important matter is found in chapter twelve of Isaiah. This chapter shows us how to receive God Himself as our salvation and enjoy Him as salvation. We enjoy God as our salvation, drawing water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation, by praising the Lord, calling upon His name, crying out, and giving a ringing shout (vv. 3-4, 6). However, we may enjoy God as our salvation but still not see the vision of the economy of God hidden in the first twenty-three chapters of the book of Isaiah.

## EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE "FIRED" BY GOD AND REPLACED WITH CHRIST

The content of chapters one through twelve of Isaiah is the all-inclusive Christ. This section of Isaiah begins with the degradation of God's people and ends with the enjoyment of God as our salvation. If Isaiah's prophecy ended with chapter twelve, we might feel that it was sufficient. Of course, the book is much longer, and the next eleven chapters deal with God's judgment.

Isaiah 13—23 covers the judgment of Jehovah upon the nations, including Jerusalem, and its issue. Here God considered Israel the same as the nations. The key to this section of Isaiah is God's "firing" and Christ's replacing. In His judgment God discharged, or "fired," everyone and everything. According to Isaiah, all of God's chastising and judging is a firing. All the kings of the nations, including the kings of Babylon and Assyria, were raised up by God. He appointed them, or hired them, and eventually He also fired them. They were appointed by Him, but they proved to be unqualified

and made many mistakes. Thus, the time came when God intervened to fire them. After this hiring and firing, there is the replacing. Who is the replacement? The replacement is Christ, Immanuel.

God not only fired the kings of the nations, but He also fired Shebna, a steward in the house of the king (22:15), and replaced him with Eliakim, a type of Christ (vv. 20-24; Rev. 3:7). God also fired all the utensils and vessels, all the bowls and jars (Isa. 22:25).

What we have here is a picture showing us that in the entire universe everything in God's house and outside God's house should be fired and replaced with Christ. The nations, the steward, and all the bowls and jars in the king's house needed to be replaced. God replaced all of them with Immanuel. He replaced everyone and everything with Christ. This is the reason Christ is unveiled as a Father, a Steward, a throne of glory, and a peg (a nail) driven into a sure place (a wall), on which hang all the utensils and vessels—all the things that belong to God for His people to enjoy Him. Here we see that whatever or whoever is not Christ, God fires.

In these messages on Isaiah, we need to see not only the way to enjoy God as our salvation, but also see that we have been fired by God and replaced with Christ. God created us to be a man, but He has fired us, discharged us, from being a man. Although we have been fired, we may still keep our post as a man and go on trying to be a man. We need to see that when God created us, He hired us, and that when He put us on the cross, crucifying us with Christ, He fired us. We all have been fired by God. Concerning this, Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." God fired everyone on the cross, and He is replacing everyone with Christ.

## THE REAL CHURCH LIFE

After God's firing and replacing of everyone and everything with Christ, there will first be the restoration for the kingdom, and then there will be the restoration for the new heaven and new earth for the New Jerusalem. That will be the real church life. The real church life is a life in which all

the saints are fired and replaced with Christ. This will make Christ everything in the church. This is the vision of God's economy hidden in Isaiah 1—23, and I hope that we will all see it.

### NOT EXCHANGE BUT REPLACEMENT

In Christianity it is stressed very much that Christ is our substitute, who died a substitutionary death for us on the cross, bearing the judgment that we should have received. Although it is true that in the divine revelation concerning God's salvation Christ is our substitute, He is more than our substitute. Christ unites Himself with us and replaces us. This is something which goes further than the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross. Because Christ joined Himself to us, uniting Himself with us, when He died on the cross, we died with Him and were terminated (Rom. 6:6).

Regarding this matter, the inner-life Christians use the term *exchanged* instead of *replaced,* saying that Christ's life is exchanged for our life. However, if one thing is exchanged for another, there is no uniting of the two. The teaching concerning an exchanged life is not accurate according to the truth. Replacing demands union, whereas exchanging annuls union with Christ.

### A Grafted Life

In the New Testament, Christ's replacing of us is altogether a matter of a grafted life. This grafted life is the highlight of God's salvation in John 15. Christ is the vine, and we are the branches (v. 5). As wild olive branches, we have been grafted into Christ (Rom. 11:17). Thus, we are united with Christ, and in this union Christ replaces us. He replaces us by living in us, with us, by us, and through us. We live, yet not we, but Christ lives in us, and we live by the faith of the Son of God. This indicates a union with Christ.

### The Struggle concerning Replacement

In the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, there is a struggle between God and man. Man likes to replace God. In his reaction to God, man tries to replace God, to put God

aside, to expel God. But in His reaction to man, God does not put man aside or expel man; rather, He puts man in a terminated position so that man can live by another person, Christ.

Although God desires to replace man, man does not agree with this, because Satan is behind man. According to Isaiah 14:12-14, Satan was the first one to attempt to replace God, to expel God and take God's place, by uplifting his throne and making himself like the Most High. Now Satan is behind man, trying to do away with God and expel God. Even when man wants to do something for God, he does it by putting God aside. This is a crucial matter that we all need to realize.

## Christ Becoming Everything

Because of man's reaction, God, who had hired everyone, eventually fired everyone that He might replace everyone with Christ. When everyone and everything is replaced with Christ, Christ becomes everything. For example, He becomes to us both the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth.

In Isaiah, everything is fired, discharged by God, and then the discharging God comes in to replace everything with Christ. This is Paul's concept in Colossians 2:16 and 17: "Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." Here Paul is telling us that our food and drink, feasts, new moons, and Sabbaths are all shadows of Christ. Christ, therefore, is the replacement of all the things in God's Old Testament economy.

God put all things in place, and then He fired them all. He put all the kings in place, and then He fired them all and made Christ the unique King. However, the kingship of Christ is a corporate kingship; it includes Christ and those who are one with Him. In the same way, the priesthood is a corporate matter: Christ is the High Priest, and we are one with Him. In this way God replaces everything with Christ, and we are joined to Christ. On the one hand, we are fired, and on the other hand, we are not expelled; for Christ comes to live in us, with us, by us, and through us. This is Immanuel replacing everything and being everything in God's economy.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FOURTEEN

## JEHOVAH'S REACTION TO ISRAEL'S DEGRADATION AND HIS REACTION TO THE NATIONS' EXCESSIVE ACTION ON ISRAEL ISSUING IN ISRAEL'S TURN TO JEHOVAH AND THEIR RETURN TO THE HOLY LAND FOR RESTORATION

**(1)**

Scripture Reading: Isa. 24—27

This message and the message following will cover four main things: Jehovah's reaction to Israel's degradation, His reaction to the nations' excessive action on Israel, Israel's turn to Jehovah, and Israel's return to the Holy Land for restoration.

### I. JEHOVAH'S REACTION TO ISRAEL'S DEGRADATION

### A. Israel's Degradation

Isaiah 24:5 speaks of Israel's degradation.

#### *1. The Earth Being Polluted under the Weight of Its Inhabitants*

The earth is polluted under the weight of its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated statutes, and broken the eternal covenant. The laws here are principles, and the statutes are ordinances with judgment.

#### *2. The Unfaithful Dealing Unfaithfully*

In 24:16b and 20b we see that the unfaithful deal unfaithfully, even most unfaithfully. The earth's transgression weighs heavily upon it.

## B. Jehovah's Reaction

In chapter twenty-four we also see Jehovah's reaction to Israel's degradation.

### *1. Jehovah Making the Earth Desolate and Laying It Waste*

Jehovah makes the earth desolate and lays it waste; He distorts the surface and scatters its inhabitants (vv. 1, 4). This means that He makes the land of Israel's habitation a chaos.

### *2. A Curse Devouring the Earth, and the Inhabitants of It Being Held Guilty*

According to verse 6, a curse devours the earth, and the inhabitants of it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.

### *3. The City of Chaos Being Broken Down*

The city of chaos is broken down, and every house is shut up that none may enter. In the city desolation remains, and the gate is crushed to ruins (vv. 10, 12). This indicates that the entire city is destroyed.

### *4. The Foundations of the Earth Shaking*

The foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken asunder, it is split through and through, it is shaken violently, and it staggers back and forth like a drunkard and sways about like a field hut (vv. 18b-20a).

### *5. The New Wine Mourning, the Vine Languishing, and All the Merryhearted Sighing*

The new wine mourns, the vine languishes, and all the merryhearted sigh (v. 7). The mirth of the tambourines ceases, the noise of those who exult stops, and the mirth of the harp ceases (v. 8). Men do not drink wine in song, and liquor is bitter to those who drink it (v. 9). A cry for wine is in the streets, all joy is darkened, and the mirth of the land is departed (v. 11).

## II. JEHOVAH'S REACTION TO THE NATIONS' EXCESSIVE ACTION ON ISRAEL

In the universe, between God and man, God always does something first. Then man reacts to what God does. Then God comes in to react to man's reaction. This is somewhat like a cycle, like the exchanging of words between husband and wife. The husband speaks to the wife, and the wife reacts. Then the husband reacts to his wife's reaction. A similar exchange of words often takes place between God and man. God may tell us that we should love Him, and we may respond by saying that we are not able to love Him. Then God may say that He will be the strength for us to love Him, but we may say that we do not know how to apply this strength. This cycle of action and reaction can be stopped only by our realizing that we are not the head. We are not the one who has the right to say yes or no. This is submission.

### A. The Nations' Excessive Action on Israel

Because Israel had become rebellious, God used Assyria to discipline them. But the action of Assyria was excessive; it went too far, overstepping the limit set by God.

#### *1. The Nations Assuming to Be Other Lords besides Jehovah*

The nations assumed to be other lords besides Jehovah and were master to Israel (26:13a). In assuming to be lords and acting as if they were the master, the nations went too far.

#### *2. The Nations Being to Israel like Leviathan and like the Dragon*

To Israel the nations were like leviathan the fleeing serpent and the crooked serpent and like the dragon (or, monster) in the sea (27:1).

### B. Jehovah's Reaction

#### *1. Jehovah Punishing on High*

### *the Host on High and the Kings of the Earth on the Earth*

Jehovah will punish on high the host on high and the kings of the earth on the earth (24:21). Here the host on high refers to Satan and his angels in the air. Jehovah's reaction will deal both with Satan's army in the air and with the kings on the earth. They will be gathered together like prisoners gathered in a dungeon and will be shut up in prison. After many days they will be punished (v. 22).

### *2. Jehovah Having Made of a City a Heap and of a Fortified Town a Ruin*

Jehovah has made of a city of the nations a heap and of a fortified town of the nations a ruin (25:2a). Because of Jehovah's reaction, a palace of strangers becomes no city at all; it will never be rebuilt. Therefore, a strong people will glorify Jehovah; the cities of terrifying nations will fear Him (vv. 2b-3).

### *3. Moab Being Threshed in His Place by Jehovah*

In 25:10b-12 we see that Moab will be threshed in his place by Jehovah, even as straw is threshed in the water of a dung heap. Moab will spread out his hands in the middle of the water, as a swimmer spreads out his hands to swim. But Jehovah will abase his pride together with the trickery of his hands. The lofty fortification of his walls Jehovah will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, even to the dust.

### *4. Jehovah Having Brought Down Those Who Dwell on High, the Lofty City*

According to 26:5 and 6, Jehovah has brought down those who dwell on high, the lofty city. He lays it low to the ground; He casts it into the dust. The foot of the poor and the steps of the weak will trample it.

### *5. Jehovah Having Visited and Destroyed Those Who Assumed to Be Lords over Israel*

Isaiah 26:14 tells us that Jehovah has visited and

destroyed those who assumed to be lords over Israel. He has caused all memory of them to perish.

### *6. Jehovah Coming Forth from His Place to Punish the Inhabitants of the Earth for Their Iniquity*

Isaiah 26:21 speaks of Jehovah coming forth from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth will reveal her bloodshed and will no longer conceal her slain.

### *7. Jehovah Punishing Leviathan and Slaying the Dragon*

Finally, 27:1 reveals that in His reaction to the nations' excessive action on Israel, Jehovah will punish, with His harsh, great, and mighty sword, leviathan, the fleeing serpent and the crooked serpent. He will slay the dragon (or, monster) that is in the sea.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FIFTEEN

## JEHOVAH'S REACTION TO ISRAEL'S DEGRADATION AND HIS REACTION TO THE NATIONS' EXCESSIVE ACTION ON ISRAEL ISSUING IN ISRAEL'S TURN TO JEHOVAH AND THEIR RETURN TO THE HOLY LAND FOR RESTORATION

### (2)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 24----27

In the previous message we covered the matters of Jehovah's reaction to Israel's degradation and His reaction to the nations' excessive action on Israel. In this message we will see that this reaction issues in Israel's turn to Jehovah and their return to the Holy Land for restoration.

### III. ISSUING IN ISRAEL'S TURN TO JEHOVAH AND THEIR RETURN TO THE HOLY LAND FOR RESTORATION

The first issue of Jehovah's reaction is Israel's return to Jehovah.

#### A. Israel's Turn to Jehovah

##### *1. In Distress Seeking Jehovah*

In distress they sought Jehovah; they whispered out a prayer, for His chastening was upon them (26:16). As a pregnant woman draws near to giving birth, she writhes and cries out in her pain; so they have been before Jehovah (v. 17). Just as Israel turned to Jehovah after God's chastening, we

need to repent and whisper out a prayer and have a talk with the Lord when we are suffering in our distress.

### *2. Saying That Jehovah Is Their God and That They Will Exalt Him*

In 25:1, 4 and 5 we are told what Israel said in their prayer to Jehovah. Verse 1 says, "O Jehovah, You are my God; / I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name, / For You have done wonderful things— / Counsels of old, in faithfulness, perfect faithfulness." In words that remind us of 4:6, verse 4 goes on to say, "For You have been a stronghold to the weak, / A stronghold to the needy in his distress, / A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; / For the breath of those who terrify is like a tempest against a wall." Then verse 5 continues, "Like the heat in a drought, / You will subdue the uproar of strangers; / Like the heat through the shadow of a cloud, / The song of those who terrify will be brought low." Their haughtiness and even their singing will be subdued.

### *3. Saying That They Have Waited for Their God*

According to 25:9, in that day Israel will say, "Behold, this is our God; / We have waited that He may save us. / This is Jehovah, for whom we have waited; / Let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

### *4. Waiting for Jehovah in the Path of His Judgments*

"Indeed, in the path of Your judgments, / O Jehovah, we have waited for You" (26:8a). This indicates that while the Lord is judging, we should wait for Him in the path of His judging. While the Lord is chastening us, we need to learn something of Him and find out the lesson that the Lord would give us. However, some saints, after being chastened by the Lord, seem to learn nothing. They waste both their time and the Lord's chastening. Whenever we are chastened by the Lord, we need to learn something of Him. This is to wait for Him in the path of His judgment.

Verses 8b and 9 continue, "Your name, that is, Your

memorial, / Is the desire of our soul. / My soul desires You in the night; / Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You at the dawn; / For when Your judgments are in the earth, / The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." God's judgment always teaches us lessons in righteousness.

Verse 10 says, "Though the wicked is shown grace, / He does not learn righteousness; / In the land of the straightforwardness he deals unjustly / And does not perceive the majesty of Jehovah." Sometimes when God shows grace to us, we do not learn any lessons. So at times He has to be severe with us and chastise us that we may learn something of Him and perceive His majesty.

#### *5. Saying That Jehovah's Hand Is Lifted Up*

In 26:11 Jehovah's hand is lifted up, but they do not see it. Instead, they will see Jehovah's zeal for the people and will be put to shame. Fire will devour His adversaries. In verses 12 and 13 Israel continues to pray, saying, "O Jehovah, You will ordain peace for us, / For You have also performed all our works for us. / O Jehovah our God, other lords besides You have been master to us, / But through You alone do we mention Your name." Even though others would be lords over them, they do not mention their name. Rather, they mention only the name of Jehovah, recognizing that He alone is their Master.

#### *6. Lifting Up Their Voice, Giving a Ringing Shout*

Finally, in turning to Jehovah, Israel will lift up their voice; they will give a ringing shout (24:14a). Because of the majesty of Jehovah, they will cry out from the west, from the sea (v. 14b). Verses 15 and 16 go on to say, "Therefore in the east glorify Jehovah, / Even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the coastlands of the sea. / From the ends of the earth we hear songs: / Glory to the righteous One!"

### B. Israel's Return to the Holy Land for Restoration

Now we come to the matter of Israel's return to the Holy Land for restoration.

### *1. In That Day Jehovah Beating Out the Grain from the Flowing Stream of the Euphrates River unto the Brook of Egypt*

Isaiah 27:12 and 13 say, "In that day Jehovah will beat out the grain from the flowing stream of the River / Unto the brook of Egypt; / And you will be gathered / One by one, O you children of Israel. / And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, / And the ones lost in the land of Assyria will come, / As well as the outcasts in the land of Egypt, / And they will worship Jehovah / On the holy mountain in Jerusalem." The expression *the River* in verse 12 refers to the Euphrates, and *the grain* denotes the scattered people of Israel. According to these verses, all the outcast, lost, and scattered Israelites will be gathered back to the good land. The fulfillment of this prophecy began with the return of the captives from Babylon, it is continuing today, and it will be fully accomplished at the time of the Lord's second coming.

### *2. In That Day a Song Being Sung in the Land of Judah*

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; / He will set up salvation as walls and a rampart. / Open the gates / So that the righteous nation may enter, / They who maintain faithfulness. / You will keep the steadfast of mind / In perfect peace / Because he trusts in You. / Trust in Jehovah forever and ever, / For in Jah Jehovah we have an eternal rock" (26:1-4). Whereas in the opening chapters of Isaiah the children of Israel were not faithful, here we are told that Israel is a nation which maintains faithfulness.

### *3. In That Day Singing of a Vineyard of Wine*

Isaiah 27:2-9 speaks of singing of a vineyard of wine. In these verses it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the one speaking is Israel or Isaiah. Verse 2 says, "In that day: / A vineyard of wine, sing of it!" Jehovah is the keeper of this vine. He waters it every moment, and lest harm come to it, He guards it day and night (v. 3). The Lord says that He has no wrath toward Israel (v. 4a). Then He continues

by saying, "O, that I had thorns and thistles / In battle I would march against them; / I would burn them completely. / Or let him grasp at My strength; / Let him make peace with Me" (vv. 4b-5). In the next verse, the thought leaps to Jacob, who will be blessed. "In the days to come Jacob will take root; / Israel will blossom and bud; / And they will fill the face of the earth with their produce" (v. 6). Verse 7 continues by asking if Jehovah has stricken them like those who struck them, if they have been slain like those slain by Him. Then verses 8 and 9 go on to say, "By expulsion and by banishing them, You contended with them; / He sent them away with His harsh wind in the day of the east wind. / Thus by this the iniquity of Jacob will be expiated, / And this is all the fruit of the removal of their sin; / When they make all the stones of their altar / Like chalk stones beaten to powder— / Asherim and incense altars will not stand." Here we see that Israel will be redeemed. Their Asherim, their sun images, will be no more, for all idols and false altars will be destroyed.

### *4. Their Dead Living, and the Earth Bringing Forth the Deceased*

In 26:19 there is a word concerning the resurrection of the dead. "Your dead will live; my corpses will rise. / Awake and give a ringing shout, you who dwell in dust, / For your dew is like the dew of the dawn, / And the earth will bring forth the deceased." The dead ones, who dwell in the dust, will awake and give a ringing shout.

### *5. Jehovah Having Increased the Nation*

Isaiah 26:15 says, "You have increased the nation, O Jehovah; / You have increased the nation—You are glorified; / You have far extended all the edges of the land." To increase the nation is to increase the people, and to extend the edges is to enlarge the territory. In this restoration the Holy Land will extend from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates (cf. Deut. 11:24).

### *6. The Moon Being Abashed, and the Sun Being Ashamed*

The light of the sun and the moon will fade because of God's shining glory. According to Isaiah 24:23, the moon will be abashed, and the sun will be ashamed, for Jehovah of hosts will reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and His glory will be before His elders.

### *7. Jehovah of Hosts Making on the Mountains for All These Peoples a Feast of Fat Things*

"Jehovah of hosts will make on the mountains / For all these peoples / A feast of fat things, / A feast of wine matured on the lees, / Of fat things full of marrow, / And of filtered wine matured on the lees" (25:6). Here the word *peoples* refers to the nations. In the restoration God will make a satisfying feast for the nations. I believe that in the restoration Jerusalem with Mount Zion will be the most joyful place on earth. It will be a center in which all the peoples of the earth will find enjoyment and satisfaction. From throughout the earth, people will come to Jerusalem to enjoy the feast.

"On this mountain He will swallow up / The covering that covers up all the peoples, / Even the veil that veils all the nations" (v. 7). Today the people on earth are covered with a veil that keeps them from seeing God's economy, but in the restoration God will take away this covering. Then all the people will see something concerning God's eternal economy. Furthermore, God will swallow up death forever, and He will wipe away the tears from all faces. Also, He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth (v. 8).

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE SIXTEEN

## JEHOVAH'S PUNISHMENT OVER EPHRAIM'S DRUNKARDS ISSUING IN JEHOVAH'S RESTORATION AND USHERING IN THE TRUSTWORTHY CHRIST AND HIS JUDGMENT ON THE HYPOCRISY OF JERUSALEM'S WORSHIPPERS ISSUING IN THE RESTORATION

Scripture Reading: Isa. 28—29; Matt. 15:7-9; 1 Cor. 14:21; 2 Kings 17:3-18; 2 Sam. 5:20; 1 Chron. 14:11; Josh. 10:10, 12; 1 Chron. 14:16; Heb. 7:26; Acts 3:22-23; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30; John 1:17b; 4:23-24

This message deals with the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom is often represented by Ephraim, and the southern kingdom by Jerusalem. In chapter twenty-eight we see that Jehovah's judgment over Ephraim's drunkards issues in Jehovah's restoration and ushers in the trustworthy Christ. In chapter twenty-nine Jehovah's judgment on the hypocrisy of Jerusalem's worshippers issues in the restoration. Before we turn to these chapters, I would like to give a word to help us to understand them.

According to the New Testament, when Christ came, He came with reality (John 1:14, 17) and wisdom (Matt. 11:19; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30). With the hypocritical worship spoken of in Isaiah 29, there is vanity but no reality, blindness but no wisdom. Through His incarnation Christ brought to us the very reality of the universe—the Triune God, the Divine Trinity, embodied in a person, Jesus Christ. If we removed the Divine Trinity from the universe, it would become nothing. In the entire universe, only the Divine Trinity is

real, and the Divine Trinity has been embodied in a man named Jesus. This man came with God; thus, He is Immanuel. With this Immanuel we have the universal reality. When we have this reality, our eyes, our ears, and our understanding are opened, and we become very understanding and wise. We have wisdom. This wisdom is the embodied reality—the Divine Trinity in Christ—in our realization. When we realize the embodied Divine Trinity in Christ, this brings us wisdom. Then we have both reality and wisdom. I would ask you to keep this word in mind as we now turn to Isaiah 28 and 29.

## I. JEHOVAH'S PUNISHMENT OVER THE DRUNKARDS OF EPHRAIM (REPRESENTING THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL) ISSUING IN JEHOVAH'S RESTORATION AND USHERING IN THE TRUSTWORTHY CHRIST

### A. Jehovah's Punishment over Ephraim's Drunkards

In 28:1-4, 7-15, and 17-29 we have Jehovah's punishment over Ephraim's drunkards.

#### *1. The Drunkards' Indulgence in Drinking*

The drunkards reel with wine and stagger from liquor (v. 7a). The priest and the prophet stagger from liquor; they are swallowed up with wine, and they reel in their visions and totter in their judgments (v. 7b). All the tables are full of vomit and filth; no place is clean (v. 8).

#### *2. Jehovah's Punishment*

##### *a. Woe Being to the Proud Crown of the Drunkards of Ephraim and to the Fading Flower of Its Glorious Beauty*

Isaiah 28:1 says, "Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim / And to the fading flower of its glorious beauty, / Which is at the head of the fat valley of those who are overcome by wine." Verse 2 tells us that the Lord has someone who is strong and mighty, as a hailstorm and a tempest of destruction, as a storm of mighty overflowing waters. I believe that this someone was first the king of Assyria and then the

king of Babylon. The proud crown will be trodden under foot; and the fading flower, like the first-ripe fig before the summer, will be swallowed up by one who sees it (vv. 3-4).

### *b. Bothering Them by the Gentile Invaders' Foreign Tongue and by His Rules and Statutes Scattered Repeatedly in Pieces*

First, Ephraim was bothered by the foreign tongue of the Gentile invaders (v. 11; cf. 1 Cor. 14:21). Those who invaded Ephraim spoke in their own tongue, and to Ephraim this was not a glory but a shame.

Second, Ephraim was bothered by Jehovah's rules and statutes scattered repeatedly in pieces (Isa. 28:10). These rules and statutes were parts of the law. Verse 13 says, "Therefore Jehovah's word to them will be: / Rule upon rule, rule upon rule; / Line upon line, line upon line; / Here a little, there a little; / That they may go and stumble backwards, / And be broken, snared, and taken." The Lord had said to them, "This is rest; give rest to the weary; / And, This is repose" (v. 12). If they had kept all the parts of the law, they would have had rest and repose. God wanted His people to have rest and have repose, but they would not hear His word.

### *c. Destroying Them by the Assyrian Army*

Jehovah destroyed the northern kingdom by the Assyrian army (vv. 14-15, 17-20, 22; 2 Kings 17:3-18). This was done as a warning to Jerusalem.

### *d. Jehovah's Reaction to Fight against the Assyrians, Who Had Destroyed Israel Excessively*

Jehovah reacted to fight against the Assyrians, who had destroyed Israel excessively. We are told that He will rise as on Mount Perazim (Isa. 28:21a; 2 Sam. 5:20; 1 Chron. 14:11) and will be agitated as in the valley of Gibeon (Josh. 10:10, 12; 1 Chron. 14:16). Jehovah will arise and be agitated to do His deed, His strange deed, and to do His work, His most different work (Isa. 28:21b).

#### *e. Dealing, as a Farmer, with Them as His Crops by Different Utensils*

Finally, in Isaiah 28:23-29 we see that Jehovah, as a farmer, dealt with them as His crops by different utensils according to His extraordinary counsel and His great wisdom. A wise farmer has different kinds of utensils. God is a wise Farmer, and He knows how to deal with His crops. He deals with one person in a certain way, and He deals with another person in a different way. Using different utensils, God dealt with Isaiah in one way, with Jeremiah in another way, and with Daniel in yet another way. He has many ways and many utensils.

### B. Issuing In Jehovah's Restoration

Jehovah's punishment of Ephraim issued in His restoration.

#### *1. Jehovah Becoming a Crown of Glory and a Diadem of Beauty*

In the day of restoration, Jehovah will become a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people (v. 5).

#### *2. Jehovah Becoming a Spirit of Justice*

Jehovah will become a spirit of justice for him who sits in judgment and strength to those who turn away the battle at the gate (v. 6).

### C. Ushering In the Trustworthy Christ

Jehovah's punishment over Ephraim's drunkards will also usher in the trustworthy Christ.

#### *1. A Stone Laid by the Lord Jehovah in Zion*

The trustworthy Christ is a stone laid by the Lord Jehovah in Zion as a foundation, a tested stone. Because Christ has been tested, He can be a foundation (v. 16a).

#### *2. A Precious Cornerstone*

The trustworthy Christ is also a precious cornerstone as

a foundation firmly established (v. 16b). In Matthew 21:42 the Lord Jesus refers to Himself as the cornerstone. Furthermore, both Paul and Peter speak of Christ as a cornerstone. In Ephesians 2:20 Paul says that in building up the two parts of God's building, the Jews and the Gentiles, Christ Jesus Himself is the cornerstone. In Acts 4:11 Peter says, "This is the stone which was despised by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone." Later, in his first Epistle, Peter says, "To whom coming, a living stone, having been rejected by men, but with God chosen, held in honor" (2:4).

#### *3. The One Believing Not Hastening Away*

Isaiah 28:16c says that he who believes will not hasten away.

#### *4. The Trustworthy Christ Being the Faithful High Priest and the Trustworthy Prophet*

In contrast to the priest and the prophet described in verse 7, the trustworthy Christ is the faithful High Priest and the trustworthy Prophet to God's redeemed (Heb. 7:26; Acts 3:22-23).

### II. JEHOVAH'S JUDGMENT ON THE HYPOCRISY OF THE WORSHIPPERS IN JERUSALEM ISSUING IN THE RESTORATION

Chapter twenty-nine reveals that Jehovah's judgment on the hypocrisy of the worshippers in Jerusalem (called "Ariel," meaning "a lion of El," as a symbolic name, and representing the southern kingdom of Judah) issues in the restoration.

### A. The Hypocrisy of Jerusalem's Worshippers

The northern kingdom of Israel was full of drunkards, and the southern kingdom of Judah was full of hypocritical worshippers. Year to year the feasts ran their course without reality (29:1b). The hypocritical worshippers drew near to the Lord with their mouths, and with their lips they honored Him, yet they removed their hearts far from Him, and their fear for the Lord was a commandment of men merely learned

(v. 13). What they received was merely the commandment of men, and what they practiced in their worship was altogether false.

This kind of worship continued until the time of Christ. Therefore, in Matthew 15, which is a fulfillment of Isaiah 29, the Lord Jesus dealt with the hypocritical Jewish worshippers (vv. 1-14). In Matthew 15:8 and 9 He quoted Isaiah 29:13 to indicate that the people were worshipping God in the way of falsehood.

In John 4 the Lord Jesus again dealt with the matter of hypocritical worship. When He spoke to the Samaritan woman about her husband, she immediately asked a question concerning worship, saying, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men must worship" (v. 20). In His reply, the Lord Jesus said, "An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and reality; for the Father seeks such to worship Him" (v. 23). To be sure, the Samaritan woman was not a genuine worshipper but a hypocritical worshipper. So the Lord Jesus adjusted her and indicated that she needed to receive Him as the reality of her worship of God.

### B. Jehovah's Judgment

In Isaiah 29:1-12, 14-16 we see Jehovah's judgment on the hypocrisy of the worshippers in Jerusalem.

#### *1. Jehovah Distressing Ariel*

According to verses 2 through 8, Jehovah will distress Israel. The nations will fight against her and her stronghold.

#### *2. Jehovah Pouring Out upon Them a Spirit of Deep Sleep, and Shutting Their Eyes, the Prophets, and Covering Their Heads, the Seers*

Verse 9 says that they are drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with liquor. Jehovah has poured out upon them a spirit of deep sleep and has shut their eyes, the prophets; and their heads, the seers, He has covered (v. 10).

All the vision will be to them like the words of a book that has been sealed (vv. 11-12).

#### *3. The Lord Doing Something Wondrous with Them*

Verse 14 tells us that the Lord will do something wondrous with them, something wondrously marvelous; and the wisdom of their wise men will perish, and the understanding of those who understand will be hidden. Verses 15 and 16 go on to say, "Woe to those who hide deeply / Their counsel from Jehovah, / And whose deeds are in the dark / And who say, Who sees us? and, Who knows us? / You turn things upside down! / Shall the potter be considered to be like the clay, / That what is made should say to him who made it, He did not make me, / Or what is formed should say to him who formed it, He has no understanding?" These verses reveal that the hypocritical worshippers were in darkness and were without wisdom. They had even turned things upside down.

### C. Issuing In the Restoration

Jehovah's judgment on the hypocrisy of Jerusalem's worshippers issues in the restoration (vv. 17-24).

#### *1. Lebanon Being Turned into a Fruitful Field*

In the restoration, Lebanon will be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field will be considered to be a forest (v. 17). This indicates that Lebanon will be flourishing.

#### *2. The Deaf Hearing the Words of the Book*

The deaf will hear the words of the book, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see (v. 18).

#### *3. The Afflicted Increasing Their Joy in Jehovah*

The afflicted will increase their joy in Jehovah, and the poor of mankind will exult in the Holy One of Israel (v. 19).

#### *4. He Who Terrorizes Ceasing to Be*

He who terrorizes will cease to be, and the scorner will be consumed, and all who watch for iniquity will be cut off (v. 20).

### *5. Those Who Have Erred in Spirit Coming to Understand*

Those who have erred in spirit will come to understand, and the murmurers will learn teaching (v. 24). This means that they will acquire wisdom.

### *6. The House of Jacob Not Being Ashamed*

The house of Jacob will not be ashamed, nor will his face turn pale (v. 22). They will sanctify the name of Jehovah, the Holy One of Jacob (v. 23). This means that they will point to, in the distance, the coming Christ as the wisdom and reality to God's redeemed people (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; John 1:17b) that they may be the true worshippers of God (John 4:23-24).

If we are clean, clear, and full of understanding, we will realize that the situation among humankind today is of two aspects. First, everyone is drunk. People are drunk with today's modern fashion and style. They do not love the Lord but love other things. Second, people are not genuine, not true, but false. This is the situation of fallen humankind. Even among God's elect drunkenness and hypocrisy may be present. If we do not pray with a watchful spirit, these two things may enter into the church life. God's people may become drunken by loving things other than the Lord, and they may be hypocritical in their praying and testifying. Whenever this kind of situation invades God's elect, He must come in to exercise His judgment upon the drunkards and upon hypocrisy in worship.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE SEVENTEEN

## JEHOVAH'S DEALING WITH ISRAEL'S RELIANCE ON EGYPT AND HIS DEALING WITH THE NATIONS ISSUING IN ISRAEL'S TURN TO HIM AND IN HIS RETURN TO ISRAEL WITH THE RESTORATION

Scripture Reading: Isa. 30—31

Isaiah had a divine way of thinking, a divine philosophy, within him when he wrote his book. This divine philosophy included God's chastisement of Israel, His judgment upon the nations, the restoration of Israel, the restoration of the created yet fallen things, and the ushering in of the all-inclusive Christ.

At first, God "hired" Israel to be His testimony, His witness. But Israel failed God. Then God hired the many nations around Israel to chastise His chosen people. However, they did not do this according to what God had in His heart. They chastised Israel excessively, and this offended God. As a result, God came in to "fire" both the children of Israel and the surrounding nations. This matter was deeply impressed upon Isaiah.

God's chastisement of Israel and His judgment upon the nations who exercised excessive action upon Israel issues in three things: 1) Israel is brought back to God; 2) the created things are restored; and 3) the all-inclusive Christ is ushered in. The restoration of the created yet fallen things goes along with Israel's return to God. God intends to restore the created and fallen things, but there is the need for Israel to usher in this restoration. When Israel turns to God, there will be the restoration of all things. Then the all-inclusive Christ will

be ushered in. This is the divine philosophy in the book of Isaiah.

This divine philosophy applies to us today. No matter who we are and what our race, culture, or nationality may be, we all are utter failures as far as God is concerned. This kind of realization will cause us to turn to God. Our success never causes us to turn to God. But when we look at our failures, we are humbled, we realize that we have a need, and we repent, confessing that we are hopeless. Although we may not know what we need, we know that we need something. Eventually, the all-inclusive Christ comes in to meet our need.

Especially in the first thirty-nine chapters of his prophecy, Isaiah's thought is focused on God's chastisement issuing in a return to God and bringing in the restoration and the all-inclusive Christ. This is the logic, the spiritual and heavenly philosophy, that dominates the book of Isaiah. Although this is not clearly written, it is nevertheless the basic and governing principle of Isaiah's writing. I hope that we will all see this crucial matter and keep it in mind as we turn to chapters thirty and thirty-one, where we will see that Jehovah's dealing with Israel's reliance on Egypt and His dealing with the nations issue in Israel's turn to Him and in His return to Israel with the restoration.

## I. JEHOVAH'S DEALING WITH ISRAEL'S RELIANCE ON EGYPT

Isaiah 30:1-17 and 31:1 speak of Jehovah's dealing with Israel's reliance on Egypt.

### A. The Rebellious Children Going down to Egypt

In 30:1 and 2 the prophet speaks woe to the rebellious children, who devise counsel but not of Jehovah, and who pour out libations of alliance, but not of Jehovah's Spirit, in order to add sin upon sin; who go down to Egypt, yet do not ask of Jehovah's mouth, to take refuge in the refuge of Pharaoh, and to take shelter in the shadow of Egypt, which is their humiliation. These libations were drink offerings which the Gentiles poured out to their idols. When two parties or nations made an alliance or formed a league, they would

pour a libation upon the earth to indicate that they had made an alliance. Israel had formed such an alliance with Egypt. Therefore, the refuge of Pharaoh will be their shame, and shelter in the shadow of Egypt, their humiliation. The people of Egypt cannot be a help or a profit to them but rather a shame and also a reproach (vv. 3-5).

In typology Egypt signifies the world. Whenever God's people are in a fallen condition or low estate, they go to Egypt (Gen. 42:10). Abraham did this (Gen. 12:10). Today, when Christians become low, they often go to the world. To go to Egypt, to rely upon Egypt, or to make an association with Egypt is sin. To go to the world or to rely upon the world can never be a profit, glory, or help to us. It always issues in humiliation, shame, and reproach (Isa. 30:5). I have seen a good number of saints who became unhappy with the church life and turned to the world. Then they went into the world, and eventually they stayed in the world. Many of them could not return from the world.

Here we need to learn a lesson. No matter how low we may be, we should not go to the world. Instead, we should look up. When we look up, the Lord has a way to bring us up.

### B. Being a Rebellious People, False Children, Children Who Refuse to Hear the Instruction of Jehovah

Isaiah 30:9 says, "For this is a rebellious people, / False children, / Children who refuse to hear / The instruction of Jehovah." Here *instruction* indicates a teaching which is according to the law; it is the divine instruction given to God's people in the law. Apart from the law, God's people in the Old Testament did not have any instruction. However, in Isaiah 30 they refused to hear the instruction of the law.

In verse 15 Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, says, "In returning and rest you will be saved; / In quietness and in trust will be your strength." If they would return to God and rest in Him, they would be saved. Today, we first need to return to God and rest in Him. Then we will be quiet, we will trust, and we will have strength.

However, Israel was not willing to return to God and rest in Him. Rather, they said, "No, for we will flee on horses" (v. 16a). Therefore, they will flee until they are left like a bare mast upon a mountaintop and a standard on a hill (v. 17).

## II. JEHOVAH'S DEALING WITH THE NATIONS

After Jehovah deals with Israel, He deals with the nations.

### A. The Name of Jehovah Coming from a Distance

In 30:27 we are told that the name of Jehovah comes from a distance, burning with His anger and heavy with smoke. His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue is like a devouring fire. His breath, like an overflowing stream, reaches up to the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of nothingness (v. 28). Here *nothingness* signifies the result of destruction. God sifts the nations with the sieve of destruction. Furthermore, a bridle that leads them to err is in the jaws of the peoples.

### B. Jehovah Causing the Majesty of His Voice to Be Heard

Jehovah will cause the majesty of His voice to be heard and the descending of His arm to be seen, with the blasting of anger and the flame of devouring fire, in cloudburst, downpour, and hailstones (v. 30). For at the voice of Jehovah, Assyria will be dismayed; with a staff He will strike (v. 31). Every pass of the appointed rod, which Jehovah will lay upon him, will be with tambourines and harps; and in battles of brandishing weapons He will fight against them (v. 32). Their king will be burned in the fire of Topheth (v. 33). Topheth, a valley of continual fire not far from Jerusalem where filthy and evil things were burned, is a symbol of the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

### C. Jehovah Rising Up against the House of Evildoers

According to Isaiah 31:2 and 3, Jehovah will rise up against the house of evildoers, who go down to Egypt for help

and commit iniquity, and against those who help them. The Egyptians are mere men and not God, and their horses are mere flesh and not spirit. Thus Jehovah will stretch out His hand, and he who helps will stumble, he who is helped will fall, and all of them will be consumed together.

### D. The Assyrian Falling by the Sword Not of a Man

The Assyrian will fall by the sword not of a man, and the sword not of man will devour him. Thus he will flee from a sword, and his young men will be forced into labor (v. 8). Concerning the Assyrian, Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem, declares, "And his rock will pass away in terror, / And his princes will be dismayed by the standard" (v. 9). To His people God will be the fire and the furnace.

## III. ISSUING IN ISRAEL'S TURN TO JEHOVAH

In 30:15 and 31:6 and 7 we have a word concerning Jehovah's dealing with Israel's reliance on Egypt and His dealing with the nations issuing in Israel's turn to Jehovah. As we have seen, in 30:15 Jehovah says, "In returning and rest you will be saved; / In quietness and in trust will be your strength." In 31:6 and 7 Isaiah says, "Return to Him from whom men have deeply revolted, O children of Israel. For in that day each man will cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which your hands have made for you as a sin."

## IV. ISSUING IN JEHOVAH'S RETURN TO ISRAEL

### A. Jehovah Waiting to Be Gracious to Israel

Jehovah waits to be gracious to Israel. Therefore, He remains on high to have compassion on them; for He is a God of justice. Blessed are those who wait for Him (30:18).

### B. Jehovah Descending to Wage War on Mount Zion

As the lion or the lion cub roars over its prey and because of it a crowd of shepherds is called out, but it is not frightened by their voice, nor overcome by their noise, so Jehovah will

descend to wage war on Mount Zion and on its hill. Like flying birds so will Jehovah of hosts protect Jerusalem. He will protect and deliver it; He will pass over and rescue it (31:4-5). Just as there was a time when Jehovah gave up Israel, so there will be a time when He, like birds overshadowing their young, will return to Israel and protect her.

### C. Jehovah's Fire Being in Zion and His Furnace Being in Jerusalem

Jehovah's fire is in Zion and His furnace is in Jerusalem for the protection of Israel (v. 9b).

## V. WITH THE RESTORATION

When Jehovah returns to Israel, He will return with the restoration.

### A. A People Dwelling in Zion at Jerusalem

A people will dwell in Zion at Jerusalem, and they will weep no more. Jehovah will be most gracious to them at the sound of their cry. When He hears it, He will answer them (30:19).

Though the Lord has given them the bread of adversity and the water of oppression, their Teacher will no longer hide Himself in a corner, but their eyes will see their Teacher. Also, when they turn to the right or to the left, their ears will hear a word behind them, saying, "This is the way, walk in it" (vv. 20-21). The Teacher here is Christ. As our Teacher, Christ will no longer hide Himself in a corner, that is, at the crossroads, the place where we make a turn. When we are going astray or are taking the wrong way, He lets us go. But when we arrive at a corner, He is there. At the crossroads we have the choice to go to the right or to the left (v. 21). It is at the crossroads that Christ tells us the way to take.

According to verse 22, the people will defile the silver covering of their graven images and the gold plating of their molten idols. They will scatter them like some dirty thing, saying to it, "Go away!" Then Jehovah will give rain for their seed, which they will sow in the ground, and the bread of the increase of the ground; and it will be fat and plenteous.

Their livestock will feed in that day in a vast pasture, and the oxen and donkeys that work the ground will eat salted fodder that has been winnowed with shovel and fork. Moreover, upon every high mountain and upon every prominent hill there will be brooks and streams of water (vv. 23-25). In our spiritual experience today, we may experience the Spirit as rain, as brooks, and eventually as streams.

In verse 26 Isaiah goes on to speak regarding the lights in the heavenly host. The light of the moon will be like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, like the light of seven days, on the day when Jehovah binds up the breach of His people and heals the wound left from His stroke.

### B. The People Having a Song and Gladness of Heart

In verse 29 we see that the people will have a song as in the night when the feast is sanctified. They will also have gladness of heart as when one marches to the flute to go to the mountain of Jehovah, to the Rock of Israel. This indicates that when Jehovah returns to His people with the restoration, their gladness and enjoyment will be extraordinary.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE EIGHTEEN

## JEHOVAH'S DESTRUCTION OF THE NATIONS FOR CHRIST TO BE THE KING TO BRING IN THE RESTORATION FOR ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: Isa. 32—35

In this message we will consider chapters thirty-two through thirty-five. Before we come to these chapters, I would like to say a word concerning the main thought of the book of Isaiah.

The divine revelation in Isaiah concerns God's economy, to have Christ as the centrality and universality of God's great move. God's great move is a great wheel, having a hub, a rim, and spokes between the two. Christ is the centrality—the hub—and the universality—the rim with all the spokes. Christ is everything in God's move. This is the main thought of this book.

To understand the book of Isaiah, we need to have the view from the entire sixty-six books of the Bible. Isaiah is of two portions. The first portion includes chapters one through thirty-nine, and the second portion includes chapters forty through sixty-six. The first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah correspond to the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. The last twenty-seven chapters correspond to the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. The New Testament begins with John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-3), and Isaiah 40 also begins with John the Baptist (v. 3).

The first part of Isaiah concerns the chastisement of God's dear people and the punishment of the nations to bring in a turn among God's people. To have a turn to fulfill God's purpose, we need to realize that we have been discharged, "fired," by God. Today, our practical God, our God in our daily living, is Christ. As descendants of Adam, as those created

by God, we want to know God, worship Him, do His will, please Him, and fulfill the desire of His heart. This is right, for God wants us to be a good human being and one who fulfills His purpose. But God never planned or arranged in His eternal economy that we should do this by ourselves. He wants us to do it by Him. He wants us to let Him do it in us, by us, and through us. For example, as one who has been loving the Lord for many years, I can testify that the hardest thing for us Christians to overcome is our temper. God, however, does not want us to overcome our temper. We should neither lose our temper nor try to overcome it. Instead, we need to resign, give up, have a turn from trying to overcome our temper, and let Christ come in to be the temper-overcomer. The real spiritual turn is to resign from the position of one who is trying to be a proper human being. We need to resign from what we want to do. This is Isaiah's thought and logic.

Let us now go on to see that, according to chapters thirty-two through thirty-five, Jehovah's destruction of the nations is for Christ to be the King to bring in the restoration for Israel.

## I. JEHOVAH'S DESTRUCTION OF THE NATIONS

### A. Woe Being to Those Who Destroy and Were Not Destroyed

Isaiah 33:1 says, "Woe to you who destroy and were not destroyed, / And to him who deals unfaithfully and was not dealt with unfaithfully! / When you have finished destroying, you will be destroyed; / And when you cease to deal unfaithfully, they will deal unfaithfully with you." This indicates that everyone, regardless of his situation and no matter what kind of person he is, will be destroyed. Everyone will be fired.

### B. At the Noise of the Tumult the Peoples Fleeing

At the noise of the tumult the peoples flee. At the lifting up of Jehovah the nations were scattered. Their spoil will be gathered as the caterpillar gathers. As locusts rush to and fro, men will rush to and fro upon it (33:3-4).

### C. The Land Mourning and Languishing

According to verse 9, the land mourns and languishes. Lebanon is ashamed and withers away, Sharon is like a desert, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves. Verse 10 says, "Now I will arise, says Jehovah, / Now I will be exalted; now I will be lifted up." The breath of the nations, like fire, will devour them. The peoples will be like the burning of lime, like cut down thorns that are burned in the fire (vv. 11-12).

### D. Jehovah's Indignation Being upon All the Nations

Isaiah 34:1 says, "Draw near, O nations, to hear; / And listen, O peoples! / Let the earth and all that fills it hear, / The world and all that springs forth from it." Jehovah's indignation is upon all the nations, and His wrath is upon all their armies. He has utterly destroyed them; He has delivered them unto the slaughter (v. 2). This is God's way of firing all the nations. God fires everyone—the good and the bad, the overcoming one and the defeated one. Today, God is firing both Christians and non-Christians.

### A. All the Armies of Heaven Being Dissolved, and Jehovah's Sword Descending in Judgment upon Edom and upon the People Whom He Has Devoted to Judgment

Further details regarding Jehovah's destruction of the nations are found in 34:4-6, 8-9, 12-13. All the armies of heaven will be dissolved, and the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll. All their host will wither away, as the leaf withers from the vine, or like a sheaf withering from the fig tree (34:4). Jehovah's sword has drunk its fill in heaven. Now it will descend in judgment upon Edom and upon the people whom He has devoted (cursed) to judgment; for Jehovah has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom (vv. 5-6). According to the Bible, this sacrifice in Bozrah and slaughter in the land of Edom will be fulfilled in full in the great war at Armageddon, which will take place in a

region that extends to Bozrah. Jehovah has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for Zion's contention (v. 8). Edom's streams will be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; and its land will become burning pitch (v. 9). As for its nobles, there is no one there whom they may call to assume the kingdom, and all its princes will be nothing. Furthermore, thorns will come up in its cities; and it will be a habitation for jackals and an abode for ostriches (vv. 12-13).

### II. FOR CHRIST TO BE THE KING

Jehovah's destruction of the nations is for Christ to be the King. After all the "hired" people and kings were fired, there is another King, Christ (32:1). God hired us to be kings, but we did not do very well; therefore, we were fired that Christ could be the King as our replacement.

#### A. A King Reigning according to Righteousness

Since everyone has been fired, who will be the king? Christ will be the King, and many of those who love Him will be the rulers. Concerning this, 32:1 says, "Behold, a King will reign according to righteousness, / And the rulers will rule according to justice."

#### B. A Man Being Like a Refuge from the Wind

Isaiah 32:2 says, "A man will be like a refuge from the wind / And a covering from the tempest, / Like streams of water in a dry place, / Like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land." Here we see that Christ will also be a man who is a refuge from the wind, a covering from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, and like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land. On the one hand, Christ will be the King ruling; on the other hand, He will be a man overshadowing. Under Him there will be righteousness, protection, and enjoyment. This is a picture of the millennial kingdom.

### III. TO BRING IN THE RESTORATION FOR ISRAEL

As the King, Christ will bring in the restoration for Israel.

### A. The Eyes of Those Who See Not Being Dim

The eyes of those who see will not be dim, and the ears of those who hear will attend. The heart of the hasty will understand knowledge, and the tongue of those who stammer will hasten to speak elegantly (32:3-4).

### B. The Spirit Being Poured upon Them from on High, and the Wilderness Becoming a Fruitful Field

The Spirit will be poured upon them from on high, and the wilderness will become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field will be considered to be a forest (32:15). Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness will remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness will be quietness and assurance forever. Jehovah's people will live in a peaceful habitation and in secure dwellings and carefree resting places (vv. 16-18). This indicates that when Christ rules over the earth, righteousness will be there. This righteousness will work out peace, quietness, and assurance (or trust). Righteousness under Christ's reign will be our security. Thus, there will be a peaceful habitation.

### C. Jehovah Being Their Arm and Salvation

In 33:2 Isaiah says, "O Jehovah, be gracious to us; we have waited for You; / Be our arm every morning, / Our salvation also in the time of distress." In the morning revival we need to enjoy Christ as our arm and our salvation. We also need to enjoy Him in this way during times of distress.

### D. Jehovah Being Exalted

According to 33:5, Jehovah is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. Verse 6 continues, "And there will be stability for your times: / A wealth of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; / The fear of Jehovah is his treasure." Stability is similar to assurance. Here the word *times* refers to one's entire life. In the restoration, the life of God's people will be filled with stability.

### E. Jehovah' Eyes Seeing Jerusalem, a Secure Habitation

"Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; / Your eyes will see Jerusalem, / A secure habitation, a tent that will not be removed; / Its stakes will never be pulled up, / And none of its cords will be torn apart" (33:20). There the Majestic, Jehovah, will be for Israel a place of rivers and broad streams, for He is their Judge, their Lawmaker, and their King. He will save them (v. 21a, 22). The inhabitant will not say, "I am sick," and the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity (v. 24).

### F. The Wilderness and the Desert Being Glad, and the Desert Rejoicing and Blossoming Like the Rose

In chapter thirty-five we have a marvelous picture of restoration. The wilderness and the desert will be glad; and the desert will blossom like the rose. It will blossom and blossom and even rejoice with joy and a ringing shout. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of Jehovah, the splendor of their God. (vv. 1-2). Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. The lame will leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb will give a ringing shout. For water will break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The desert mirage will become a pool, and the thirsty ground, springs of water. In the habitation of jackals, their resting place, there will be grass with reeds and rushes. The place that was once so unpleasant will become the resting place of the restored people. A highway will be there, and a way, and it will be called "The Way of Holiness." The unclean will not pass on it, but it will be for him who walks on the way; no fools will wander (or err) in it. There will be no lion there, nor will any ravenous animal go up on it. They will not be found there, but the redeemed will walk on it. The ransomed of Jehovah will return and will come to Zion with a ringing shout, and eternal joy will be upon their heads. They will lay hold on gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away (vv. 5-10).

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE NINETEEN

## AN EXAMPLE OF SEEKING AFTER JEHOVAH AND TRUSTING IN HIM

### (1)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 36—39

In this message and in the following message, we will consider chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine. First, in this message, we need to see some crucial matters regarding the person of King Hezekiah. Then in the next message we will consider the details of these four chapters, including Hezekiah's seeking after Jehovah for his situation, Hezekiah's seeking after Jehovah for his health, and Hezekiah's failure in the enjoyment of the peaceful situation and sound health.

### THE PRINCIPLE AND THE EXAMPLE

As we read the book of Isaiah, we may wonder why Isaiah inserted chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine. The first thirty-five chapters to this book cover God's loving chastisement on His beloved Israel and His righteous judgment on the nations, in order that His elect might have a turn to Him so that the created things might be restored and that the all-inclusive Christ might be brought in. At this point, everyone and everything has been fired by God, and Christ, the only one who is qualified, is here. Why, after covering these matters, does Isaiah spend four chapters to speak of a small part of the life of one person? After spending much time to consider this matter, I believe that the Lord has shown me the reason. In chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine, Isaiah gives us an example in the person of Hezekiah, the king of Judah. We may say that in the first thirty-five

chapters of his prophecy Isaiah gives us the principle and that in the next four chapters he gives us an example.

## THE PERSON OF HEZEKIAH— GODLY BUT NOT A MAN OF GOD

### Receiving a Miraculous Deliverance

After reading these chapters, it is good to consider what kind of person Hezekiah was. Hezekiah was a godly man, but I would not say that he was a man of God, a God-man. When he was threatened by Sennacherib king of Assyria and was insulted by the word of the king's servant, Hezekiah, in his suffering, brought the trouble to the Lord and offered to Him a very good prayer (36:1-20; 37:9-20). Since Hezekiah was the king appointed by God and since he was a godly person, God did something for him. God answered his prayer and performed one of the greatest miracles in human history, killing one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrians in one night (37:22-38).

### God Adding Fifteen Years to Hezekiah's Life

After Hezekiah received this miraculous deliverance, he became mortally ill. Isaiah came to him and said, "Thus says Jehovah, Put your house in order, for you are about to die and will not live" (38:1). Then Hezekiah again prayed a very godly prayer, saying, "O Jehovah, please remember how I have walked before You in truth, with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Your sight" (v. 3). God heard Hezekiah's prayer and answered it by healing him and saying, through Isaiah, that He would add fifteen years to his life (vv. 4-5).

The number of years added to Hezekiah's life is significant. When Hezekiah became mortally ill, he was a middle-aged man, perhaps about forty years old. For God to give him another fifteen years meant that he would live until the age of approximately fifty-five. Since God was willing to heal Hezekiah, why did He not give him another thirty years and allow him to reach the age of seventy? I believe that the reason God extended Hezekiah's life by only fifteen years was that, in the sight of God, Hezekiah was not a person who

could be trusted to carry out God's purpose. Had Hezekiah been permitted to live longer, he might have caused even more trouble to God's kingdom than he did in chapter thirty-nine. During his last fifteen years, Hezekiah made a mistake that was so serious that it caused God's kingdom on earth to be lost.

### Not Considerate and Careful but Hasty

Isaiah 39 shows us that instead of being a considerate and careful person, Hezekiah was hasty. His prayers indicated that he had a sober mind and was quite wise. However, after he was healed by God, he did something foolish when visitors from Babylon came to him with a gift. Receiving the gift, he showed the visitors his treasury, his whole armory, and everything in his dominion (v. 2). This was a foolish act and a great mistake. The showing of these riches, which had been accumulated by his fathers since the time of David and Solomon, became a temptation to the king of Babylon. A little over one hundred years later, the king of Babylon came and took away these riches. Hezekiah did not consider his action carefully, nor did he pray about it. He should have been careful, knowing that Babylon was Judah's enemy and that sooner or later the Babylonian army would come to destroy him. However, Hezekiah did not take thought concerning what the king of Babylon might do. This shows that Hezekiah was hasty and not very considerate or careful.

### A Person for Himself

Some readers of Isaiah might think at first that Hezekiah was a person who was absolutely for God and not at all for himself. Actually Hezekiah was very selfish. This is proved by the way he responded to Isaiah's word to him in 39:5-7. "Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of Jehovah of hosts: Behold, the days are coming when everything which is in your house and which your fathers have laid up as a treasure unto this day will be carried away to Babylon; nothing will be left, says Jehovah. And they will take away some of your sons who will issue from you, whom you will beget, and they will become eunuches in the palace of the king of Babylon."

When Hezekiah heard this, he said to Isaiah, "The word of Jehovah which you have spoken is good.... For there will be peace and truth in my days" (v. 8). This indicates that Hezekiah was selfish.

Furthermore, Hezekiah was the king not of a worldly kingdom but of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of Judah was actually God's kingdom on earth, and Hezekiah should not have regarded it as his own kingdom. For Hezekiah to lose his kingdom was a small thing, but for God to lose His kingdom was a great thing. Hezekiah's response in verse 8 indicates that he had no thought for God and God's kingdom, nor did he care even for his own children. He was altogether for himself.

If we do not have the proper view of chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine, we may think that Hezekiah was quite good. He faced two great problems—the invasion from Assyria and mortal illness—and dealt with them in a way that seemed to be godly. We may feel, therefore, that if we could handle problems in Hezekiah's way, we also would be quite good. However, in giving us the pattern found in these chapters, Isaiah shows us how a person such as Hezekiah, who was appointed a king in God's kingdom, who was godly, and who prayed and received miraculous answers from God, eventually became not a success but a failure. He failed because of his self-glory and self-interest. He was full of self and was not able to restrict the self. Being a selfish person, he made a great mistake, became a failure, and was eventually fired by God.

### ASKING OURSELVES WHAT KIND OF PERSON WE WOULD BE

In light of this pattern, we need to spend some time with the Lord and ask ourselves what kind of person we would be. Would we be like Hezekiah, who was hasty and was so much for himself? As we consider this matter, we must learn to say, "Lord, I would not be any kind of person; I would just be nothing. I would have You as my person and my life, as the One who lives in me that I may live You. If I want to be anything, I want to be a person like this." If we would all pray such a prayer, the Lord's recovery would have a great revival.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY

## AN EXAMPLE OF SEEKING AFTER JEHOVAH AND TRUSTING IN HIM

## (2)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 36—39

In the foregoing message we saw, from chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine, what kind of person Hezekiah was. We saw that although he was godly and could pray in a godly manner, he was not a man of God. Furthermore, he was not careful and considerate but hasty, and instead of being for God and God's kingdom, he was for himself and his own interests. Thus, he was not a person who could be trusted to carry out God's purpose. In this message we will consider many of the details in these four chapters.

### I. HEZEKIAH'S SEEKING AFTER JEHOVAH FOR HIS SITUATION

Isaiah 36:1—37:38 tells us of Hezekiah's seeking after Jehovah for his situation.

### A. The Enemy's Attack

#### *1. Sennacherib King of Assyria Coming Up against the Fortified Cities of Judah and Taking Them*

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria went up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. The king of Assyria sent Rab-shakeh to Jerusalem to King Hezekiah with a great force (36:1-2a). Rab-shakeh said to those who came out to him, "Say now to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this confidence in which you trust? I say, It is but

a vain word that you say, There is counsel and strength for war. Now on whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? Behold, you have put your trust in the staff of this broken reed, in Egypt; on which, if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it, for so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him" (vv. 4-6).

#### *2. Speaking Insulting Words about Trusting in Jehovah for Deliverance*

Rab-shakeh stood and cried out with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, "Listen to the words of the great king, the king of Assyria: Thus says the king, Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, because he is not able to deliver you; neither let Hezekiah cause you to trust in Jehovah, saying, Jehovah will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria....Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land out of my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" (36:13-15, 20). Then Hezekiah's servants came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the words of Rab-shakeh (v. 22b).

### B. Hezekiah's Seeking after Jehovah

#### *1. Hezekiah Tearing His Clothes and Covering Himself with Sackcloth*

When Hezekiah heard of the situation, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Jehovah (37:1). This indicates that he was a godly person.

#### *2. Sending Eliakim, Shebna, and the Elders of the Priests to Isaiah the Prophet*

Hezekiah sent Eliakim, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, who had clothed themselves in sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet (37:2). They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, This day is a day of affliction, rebuke, and contempt, because children have come to the point of birth and there is not enough strength to bring them forth. It may be that Jehovah your God will hear the words of Rab-shakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria

sent to reproach the living God, and Jehovah your God will reprove the words which He has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant which is left" (vv. 3-4).

#### *3. The Words of Isaiah to the Servants of King Hezekiah*

In 37:6 and 7 we have Isaiah's words to the servants of King Hezekiah who had come to him. Isaiah said, "Thus you shall say to your master, Thus says Jehovah, Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he will hear a report and return to his land. And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

### C. The Enemy's Further Attack

In 37:9-11 we read of the enemy's further attack. The king of Assyria heard the report about the king of Ethiopia which said, "He has come to make war with you" (v. 9). When he heard this, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying to him, "Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, Jerusalem will not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Indeed, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, destroying them thoroughly. And will you be delivered?" (vv. 10-11).

### D. Hezekiah's Further Seeking after Jehovah

#### *1. Hezekiah Spreading the Letter before Jehovah and Praying concerning the Enemy's Attack*

In his further seeking after Jehovah, Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the house of Jehovah, spread the letter before Jehovah, and prayed to Him concerning the enemy's further attack (vv. 14-20). Hezekiah ended his prayer by saying, "O Jehovah our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone are Jehovah" (v. 20).

### *2. The Word Spoken by Jehovah concerning Sennacherib*

In 37:22-29 we have the word spoken by Jehovah concerning Sennacherib. Verses 22 and 23 say, "The virgin daughter of Zion / Has despised you and laughed at you; / The daughter of Jerusalem / Has shaken her head at you. / Whom have you reproached and reviled; / Against whom have you lifted up your voice / And lifted up your eyes haughtily? / Against the Holy One of Israel." In verse 29 Jehovah says to Sennacherib, "Because your raging against Me / And your arrogance has come up into My ears, / I will put My hook in your nose / And My bridle in your lips, / And turn you back on the way by which you came."

## E. Hezekiah's Trusting in Jehovah according to His Answer to Him and Winning the Victory in Jehovah's Fulfillment of His Answer

Hezekiah trusted in Jehovah according to His answer to him and won the victory in Jehovah's fulfillment of His answer.

### *1. Jehovah Saving Jerusalem for His Own Sake*

Jehovah said that He would save Jerusalem for His own sake and for the sake of David (37:33-35). This word unveils that Hezekiah was not a weighty, valuable, or precious person in the eyes of God. God would answer the prayer not for Hezekiah's sake but for His own sake and for the sake of David.

### *2. The Angel of Jehovah Striking the Assyrians' Camp*

Then the angel of Jehovah went out and struck the Assyrians' camp, a hundred and eighty-five thousand. When they arose early in the morning, all of them were dead corpses (v. 36). Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went back to dwell in Nineveh. When he was worshipping in the house of his god, his sons slew him with the sword (vv. 37-38).

## II. HEZEKIAH'S SEEKING AFTER JEHOVAH FOR HIS HEALTH

### A. The Attack of Illness

In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. Isaiah the prophet came to him and said to him, "Thus says Jehovah, Put your house in order, for you are about to die and will not live" (38:1).

### B. Hezekiah Seeking after Jehovah

Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to Jehovah. In his prayer he said, "Now, O Jehovah, please remember how I have walked before You in truth, with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept many tears (38:3).

### C. Hezekiah's Trusting in Jehovah according to His Answer to Him

The word of Jehovah came to Isaiah, saying, "Go and speak to Hezekiah, Thus says Jehovah, the God of your father David, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; I will add to your life fifteen years" (38:5). As a sign, Jehovah caused the sun's shadow to go back ten steps on the steps on which it had gone down (vv. 8-9).

It is significant that in answering Hezekiah's prayer, the Lord referred to Himself as the "God of your father David." This indicates that in God's consideration Hezekiah had very little credit before Him. All the credit was given either to God Himself or to Hezekiah's forefather David.

### D. Hezekiah's Victory in the Lord's Healing

Isaiah 38:10-20 is the writing of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, when he was sick and had recovered from his sickness. In verse 21 Isaiah said, "Let them take a lump of figs and rub it upon the boil, and he will live."

As revealed in his writing, Hezekiah's prayer concerning his sickness was commendable. Nevertheless, to pray is one thing, but the way we are in our being may be quite a different thing. For example, in 38:15 Hezekiah said, "I will

walk deliberately all my years." The word *deliberately* in Hebrew means slowly, softly, and humbly, with much consideration. Hezekiah's use of this word indicates that he had learned some lessons from the Assyrians' invasion and from his sufferings in his illness. He realized that he had been too hasty in the past and that his walk had not been so proper in the sight of God. Thus, in his prayer he said that he would walk deliberately all his years. But when the Babylonian visitors came (39:1-2), he did not walk in the way that he had prayed. Instead of walking in a deliberate way, he walked in a hasty way. From this we see that to pray is one thing, but to walk is another thing. Quite often we too pray a good, spiritual, and heavenly prayer. But after our prayer, when the test comes, we do not walk in the way that we prayed.

Hezekiah was for God, but in a selfish way. He prayed a good prayer, but his prayer had the taste of selfishness. In 38:18 and 19 he said, "For Sheol cannot thank You....The living, the living, he will praise You, as I do today." Here Hezekiah asked Jehovah in a selfish way to put him among the living so that he could praise Him. This indicates that he was for God in a selfish way, not in a proper way. This is what we taste in Hezekiah's prayer.

### III. HEZEKIAH'S FAILURE IN THE ENJOYMENT OF THE PEACEFUL SITUATION AND SOUND HEALTH

Isaiah 39 shows Hezekiah's failure in the enjoyment of the peaceful situation and sound health.

#### A. The Temptation of People's Gift

After he gained the victory in the Lord's healing, Hezekiah faced the test, the temptation, of people's gift. At that time the king of Babylon sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah because he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick and had recovered. Verse 2 says, "Hezekiah was glad for them and showed them his treasury, the silver and the gold, and the spices and the precious oil, and his whole armory and everything which was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah

did not show them." Although Hezekiah had victoriously passed through the sufferings of the other tests, here he became a failure. He failed in the matters of gifts and self-glorification. It is not easy to overcome the temptation of a gift. It is also not easy to overcome self-glorification. We need to be careful concerning receiving gifts and also concerning self-glorification.

### B. Hezekiah's Failure

#### *1. Isaiah Questioning Hezekiah*

According to 39:3 and 4, Isaiah questioned Hezekiah about the visitors from Babylon. First, Isaiah asked him, "What did these men say? And from where have they come to you?" When Hezekiah answered that they had come from Babylon, Isaiah went on to ask, "What have they seen in your house?" To this Hezekiah replied, "They have seen everything that is in my house; and there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

#### *2. Isaiah Speaking the Word of Jehovah to Hezekiah*

Isaiah charged Hezekiah to hear the word of Jehovah of hosts. Jehovah said to Hezekiah, "Behold, the days are coming when everything which is in your house and which your fathers have laid up as a treasure unto this day will be carried away to Babylon; nothing will be left....And they will take away some of your sons who will issue from you, whom you will beget, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon" (39:6-7).

#### *3. Hezekiah's Response to Jehovah's Word*

In verse 8 we have Hezekiah's response to Jehovah's word. Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of Jehovah which you have spoken is good." He also said, "For there will be peace and truth in my days." This indicates that Hezekiah was selfish, caring only for himself.

### C. The Factors of Hezekiah's Failure

The factors of Hezekiah's failure include: 1) making a show of what he had, according to his flesh, 2) not being

watchful, 3) not seeking after the Lord, 4) not praying, 5) not considering the issue, and 6) caring only for himself, not for God's kingdom on the earth. May we all learn from these factors of Hezekiah's failure.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY-ONE

## JEHOVAH'S WORD OF COMFORT TO ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: Isa. 40; John 1:19-27; 1 Pet. 1:23-24

In the Old Testament of thirty-nine books, the main thing covered is the old creation, and in the New Testament of twenty-seven books, the main thing revealed is God's new creation. Thus, God's two creations mark the boundary between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Now we need to see that in the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah, the old creation is covered, including God's chastisement of Israel and His judgment of the Gentiles, whereas in the last twenty-seven chapters, the center of Isaiah's prophecy is the new creation.

The coming of the new creation does not involve the immediate end of the old creation. On the contrary, after the new creation comes, the old creation remains for a period of time. In the New Testament, the new creation begins with the coming of John the Baptist. After that, the old creation remains until it is terminated at the end of the millennium. The end of the thousand-year kingdom will be the termination of the old creation as well as the completion, the consummation, of the new creation, as signified by the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1-2).

History tells us that Isaiah wrote his book during two or three periods of time. I believe that the second part of his prophecy was written at a time different from the first part.

The second part begins with a word of comfort spoken to the heart of Jerusalem (Isa. 40:1-2). The fact that this word is spoken to the heart means that it is concerned not with the outer man but with the inner man. In this chapter, the speaking of the word of comfort to the heart of Jerusalem is actually the announcing of the gospel. Thus, we may

understand the word *comfort* as meaning the preaching of the gospel.

The first thing announced in Isaiah 40 is the coming of John the Baptist (vv. 3-4). Immediately after this is the appearing of Christ as the glory of Jehovah (v. 5). The glory of Jehovah is the center of the gospel for the new creation (2 Cor. 4:4-6). Christ is the effulgence of God's glory (Heb. 1:3), and this effulgence is like the shining of the sun. The New Testament tells us that Christ's first coming was the rising of the sun (Luke 1:78). Thus, when Christ appeared, the glory of Jehovah appeared to be seen by the God-seekers and Christ-believers.

After Isaiah 40 speaks of the coming of John the Baptist and the appearing of Christ as the glory of God, this chapter tells us that, like the grass and the flower of the field, all men will wither and fade, but the word of God remains forever (vv. 6-8). The word of God is actually Christ as the gospel of God. This word is abiding, and as the word of life, it is also living. All men of flesh, all withering and fading human beings, should receive Christ, the glory of God, who comes to people as the living and abiding word of God. Those who receive Christ as this word of God will be regenerated that they may have eternal life to live forever (1 Pet. 1:23).

According to Isaiah 40:29-31, those who have received the word and have been regenerated are now waiting for Jehovah. For us to wait on God means that we "fire" ourselves, that is, that we stop ourselves with our living, doing, and activity and receive Christ as our replacement. Verse 31 says that such a waiting one will mount up with wings like eagles, signifying the resurrection power of Christ. He will not only walk and run—he will also soar in the heavens, far above every earthly frustration. This is a transformed person. Therefore, in this chapter we have the announcing of the gospel (corresponding to the four Gospels), salvation through regeneration (corresponding to the Acts), and transformation (corresponding to the Epistles).

I believe that Isaiah wrote this chapter to give us a comparison between Hezekiah, a godly man who was still in the old creation, and a regenerated and transformed person

in the new creation. As chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine indicate, no matter how good Hezekiah was, he was still in the old creation, and thus he was fired by God. But in chapter forty we see a different kind of person—one who is regenerated and transformed, one who has been fired, who has taken God in Christ as his replacement, and who is now continually waiting upon the Lord. Such a person "will mount up with wings like eagles." The apostle Paul is the best representative of the kind of person described in Isaiah 40. Let us consider the difference between Hezekiah and Paul and ask ourselves whether we will be like Hezekiah or like Paul. May we all be like Paul, who was absolutely in the new creation. With him, the old creation had been terminated, fired, and replaced, and now the new creation is here with Christ.

With this view of Isaiah 40 before us, let us now go on to consider the details in this chapter.

## I. THE PROPHET'S VISION IN THE FIRST THREE SECTIONS OF ISAIAH

In the first three sections of Isaiah (chs. 1—35), the prophet's vision concerning Jehovah's governmental dealing with Israel and His punishing judgment on the nations, ushering in the all-inclusive Christ with the expected restoration of all things, has been adequately unveiled.

## II. THE PROPHET'S VISION IN THE LAST SECTION OF ISAIAH

The last section of Isaiah (chs. 40—66) is the kind word of Jehovah spoken to the heart of Israel, His beloved people, which unveils the prophet's vision concerning the redeeming and saving Christ as the Servant of Jehovah and the all-inclusive salvation brought in by Him to Israel and the nations, with the full restoration of all things, consummating in the new heaven and new earth.

## III. JEHOVAH'S WORD OF COMFORT TO ISRAEL

### A. A Kind Word of Comfort Spoken to the Heart of His People

Isaiah 40 is Jehovah's word of comfort to Israel. This word

is actually the word of the gospel. Verses 1 and 2 say, "Comfort, O comfort My people, / Says your God. / Speak unto the heart of Jerusalem, / And cry out to her, / That her warfare has finished, / That the penalty for her iniquity has been accepted; / For she has received from the hand of Jehovah double / For all her sins." For centuries Israel has been suffering under God's chastisement, but the day will come when this word of comfort, this word of the gospel, will be spoken to Israel.

### B. Referring to John the Baptist, Who Ushered In the Expected Christ for the New Testament

Isaiah 40 also refers to John the Baptist, who ushered in the expected Christ for the New Testament (John 1:19-27). Concerning John the Baptist, Isaiah 40:3 and 4 say, "The voice of one who cries / In the wilderness: Make clear / The way of Jehovah; / Make straight in the desert / A highway for our God. / Every valley will be lifted up, / And every mountain and hill will be made low, / And the crooked places will become straight, / And the rough places a broad plane." Verse 5 goes on to speak of the glory of Jehovah, that is, the glory of Christ, who was recommended by John. "Then the glory of Jehovah will be revealed, / And all flesh will see it together, / Because the mouth of Jehovah has spoken." In the eyes of the Jews, Jesus was merely a Nazarene, yet Isaiah speaks of "the glory of Jehovah." When Jesus came, only those with discernment knew that He was the glory of Jehovah. Because the aged Simeon had such discernment, he could say of the little child Jesus, whom he received into his arms, that He was a light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Jehovah's people Israel (Luke 2:22-32). To the worldly people today, Christ is nothing, but to us into whom He has shined (2 Cor. 4:6), He is the glory of God and the hope of glory within us (Col. 1:27).

### C. Unveiling What Man Really Is and What Man Really Needs

Chapter forty of Isaiah unveils what man really is and

what man really needs. The prophet's speaking in this chapter surely is an excellent example of preaching the gospel.

### *1. What Man Really Is*

#### *a. All Men of Flesh Being Grass and All Their Beauty Being Like the Flower of the Field*

Verses 6 through 8 say, "All flesh is grass / And all its beauty is like the flower of the field; / The grass withers, the flower fades, / Because the breath of Jehovah blows upon it. / Surely the people are grass. / The grass withers and the flower fades, / But the word of our God will stand forever." Here Isaiah compares fading men of flesh to the word of God. What will remain among the human race? Everything will fade and wither except the word of God. This word is actually Christ, the glory of Jehovah. All men are fading, but Christ as the living word will remain.

#### *b. Men of Flesh Receiving the Living and Abiding Word of God to Be Regenerated*

Isaiah 40:6-8 indicates that all men of flesh should receive the living and abiding word of God to be regenerated that they may have the eternal life to live forever (1 Pet. 1:23-24).

#### *c. All Men Being Like a Drop from a Bucket*

Isaiah 40 also reveals that all men are like a drop from a bucket and are accounted as specks of dust on the scales (v. 15a). All men are as nothing before God; they are accounted as less than nothing and vanity (v. 17). All the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers (v. 22a).

#### *d. Man Not Being Compared to God*

This chapter indicates that man cannot be compared to God, who is great, who takes up the islands as very fine powder, who sits above the circle of the earth, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent, and who brings the princes to nought and makes the judges of the earth as nothing (vv. 15b-18, 22-26).

### *2. What Man Really Needs*

This chapter tells us not only what man is but also what man needs.

#### *a. The Incomparable God*

First, man needs the incomparable God (vv. 18-26). Fading man needs the eternal God, the only one who does not wither and fade but abides forever.

#### *b. The Coming Christ*

Second, man needs the coming Christ, who is to be announced as the glad tidings. The coming Christ is to be announced as Jehovah our God (v. 3) and as Jehovah of glory, to be revealed and seen by all flesh together (v. 5). Furthermore, the coming Christ is to be announced as the Lord Jehovah coming with might to rule with His arm, having His reward with Him and His recompense before Him (vv. 9-10). Finally, the coming Christ is to be announced as a Shepherd feeding His flock, gathering the lambs in His arms, carrying them in His bosom, and leading those who are nourishing the young (v. 11).

#### *c. Regeneration with the Living and Abiding Word of God*

Verses 6 through 8 indicate that man also needs regeneration with the living and abiding word of God (1 Pet. 1:23). God is invisible, abstract, and mysterious, but He is embodied in His word. Now by touching the word as the embodiment of God, we receive for our regeneration a word that is living and abides forever.

#### *d. Waiting on the Eternal God, Jehovah*

Finally, according to Isaiah 40, man needs to wait on the eternal God, Jehovah. To wait on God is to be terminated and replaced by the Triune God. Concerning Him, verse 28 says, "Do you not know, / Or have you not heard, / That the eternal God, Jehovah, / The Creator of the ends of the earth, / Does not faint and does not become weary. / There is no

searching of His understanding." His understanding is not searchable.

As the eternal God, Jehovah empowers those who are weary. "He gives power to the faint, / And to those who have no vigor He multiplies strength. / Although youths will faint and become weary, / And young men shall collapse exhausted; / Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles; / They will run and will not faint / They will walk and will not become weary" (vv. 29-31). The *wings* here signify the resurrection power of Christ. Those who stop themselves and wait on Jehovah will experience this resurrection power, be transformed, and soar in the heavens.

When we wait on the eternal God, we are terminated and replaced by Him, and then we have Him as our life and power, which is the power of resurrection. This power strengthens us and enables us to mount up with wings as eagles and to soar above the earth. This is the full experience of God's salvation revealed in chapter forty of Isaiah.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

### MESSAGE TWENTY-TWO

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (1)

## AS TYPIFIED BY CYRUS THE KING OF PERSIA AND ISRAEL AND AS A COVENANT FOR THE PEOPLE AND A LIGHT FOR THE NATIONS

Scripture Reading: Isa. 41—42; Acts 3:26; Ezra 1:2a; Acts 5:31; Rev. 1:5; Isa. 49:8b; Heb. 7:22; Isa. 49:6b; Matt. 4:13-16; Luke 4:18; John 9:14; Matt. 12:18-20

In Isaiah 41—66 Christ is revealed as the Servant of Jehovah in the most thorough and complete way. Since Jehovah is the Triune God, Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is the Servant of the Triune God.

This section of Isaiah uses three persons as types of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah: Isaiah the prophet, Cyrus king of Persia, and Israel. These three types are the key to understanding this portion of the Word.

### I. CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

### A. As Typified by Cyrus the King of Persia

In Isaiah 41:1-7 Christ is typified by Cyrus the king of Persia.

#### *1. Raised Up by Jehovah*

Cyrus was raised up by Jehovah (vv. 2a, 25a; Acts 3:26).

#### *2. Calling upon the Name of Jehovah*

Isaiah 41:25b indicates that Cyrus called upon the name of Jehovah.

#### *3. To Subdue the Nations and Have Dominion over the Kings*

Cyrus was raised up by Jehovah to subdue the nations and have dominion over the kings (vv. 2b, 25c; Ezra 1:2a; Acts 5:31a; Rev. 1:5a).

### B. As Typified by Israel

Christ as the Servant of Jehovah was also typified by Israel for the carrying out of the kind word of comfort spoken by Jehovah to Israel (Isa. 41:8-20).

### C. For the Exposing of the Falsehood and Vanity of the Idols

According to 41:21-29, Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is for the exposing of the falsehood and vanity of the idols.

In chapter forty of Isaiah, Christ is the replacement for everyone. Since we have been replaced by Christ, we must realize that we are nothing—a drop from a bucket, specks of dust on the scales (v. 15). God Himself is the only One in the universe who remains forever. Today God is embodied in the Word. As people who are withering grass and fading flowers (vv. 6-8), we need to learn to come to the Word of God so that we may touch God. When we receive the living and abiding word of God, we are regenerated, and we realize that we are part of the new creation. At such a time we can declare, as Paul did, that we have been crucified with Christ, and that it is no longer we who live but Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20). This is what it means to wait on Christ (Isa. 40:31), that is, to stop ourselves, our living, our ambition, and our everything and to receive Christ as our life, our person, and our replacement. Christ then becomes everything to us. In particular, He becomes our strength.

Isaiah 40:31 reveals that as we wait on Christ, we are renewed and strengthened to such an extent that we mount up with wings like eagles. In the Bible, the wings of the eagle

signify God's life power becoming our grace. When we enjoy God in His life power, we mount up with wings like eagles to soar in the heavenlies. This is transformation.

Anyone who is replaced by Christ and waits on Him to enjoy God's life power in grace is a servant of Jehovah. For this reason, in this book Cyrus, Israel, and Isaiah are types of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. They are not servants of Jehovah apart from Christ, but they are servants with Christ and in Christ in a corporate way. In this sense, Cyrus, Israel, and Isaiah become Christ.

Today, as members of Christ, we also are types of Christ. For what purpose are we types of Christ? On the positive side, we are types of Christ for the purpose of carrying out Jehovah's kind word of comfort (41:8-20), which is the gospel as His testimony. On the negative side, we are types of Christ for the purpose of exposing the falsehood and vanity of the idols (41:21-29). This is the New Testament testimony. We testify two things: 1) that Christ is our reality, centrality, and universality and that we are part of Him, and 2) that everything except Christ is false, vain, and an idol. As types of Christ, we testify that we are nothing, that we have been fired and replaced with Christ, and that Christ is everything to us. We also testify to the falsehood and vanity of the idols, the head of which is Satan.

## II. CHRIST AS A COVENANT FOR THE PEOPLE AND A LIGHT FOR THE NATIONS

Isaiah 42 reveals Christ as a covenant for the people and a light for the nations. Christ is a covenant, and this covenant is a testament. A covenant denotes an agreement between two parties, a contract signed by both parties. A testament is a covenant, a signed agreement, that has become a will in which certain things are passed on to the heirs. The covenant is the agreement between God and us. Through the death of Christ, the covenant became a testament, a will. Now in His resurrection Christ executes, enforces, this testament. According to the book of Isaiah, the covenant, which has become the testament, is Christ Himself. Thus, we first have the covenant, the covenant becomes the testament, and the testa-

ment is Christ. Christ has not only given us the testament—He Himself is the testament and the reality of everything contained in it. For example, two items in the testament are life and strength. Today, Christ is our eternal life, and He is our strength.

### A. Called by Jehovah, Held by His Hand, and Kept by Him

Christ has been called by Jehovah, and He is held by His hand and kept by Him (42:6). This means that Christ and the God who calls are one. First, Christ has been called by Jehovah, and then Christ is held and kept by Jehovah. Therefore, Christ and God are one. This Christ has been called to be a covenant for the people (49:8b; Heb. 7:22). Christ has also been called to be a light for the nations (Isa. 49:6b; Matt. 4:13-16), to open the eyes of the blind (Isa. 42:7a; Luke 4:18; John 9:14), and to bring the prisoner out of prison and those who dwell in darkness from the prison house (Isa. 42:7b).

### B. The Servant of Jehovah, Whom Jehovah Upholds, Jehovah's Chosen One, in Whom Jehovah's Soul Delights

Isaiah 42:1 says, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold, / My chosen One in whom My soul delights; / I have put My Spirit upon Him, / And He will bring forth judgment to the nations" (cf. Matt. 12:18). For Jehovah's Spirit to be upon His Servant means that His Spirit and His Servant are one.

The word *judgment* in 42:1 is significant; it is an inclusive term. If we have the Lord, we have judgment. Without the Lord, we do not have any judgment. When we have the Lord, everything is judged. Christ must be the judgment for everything in our daily life. For example, we should have the Lord's judgment concerning the kind of shoes we buy and the way we style our hair.

Christ's being the judgment means that Christ is the answer. In order to have Him as our judgment, we must have

Him as our answer. Without Christ, we have only questions; with Christ, we have an answer for everything.

To wait on Christ means that we bring every question to Him. Before doing a certain thing, we should bring that matter to the Lord and wait for His judgment. We must learn the lesson not to do anything or say anything before waiting on Him. When we turn to the Lord and wait on Him, judgment comes, and we are able to act and speak in oneness with the Lord.

### C. The Servant of Jehovah Not Crying Out, nor Lifting Up His Voice

Isaiah 42:2 says, "He will not cry out, nor lift up His voice, / Nor make His voice heard in the street." This verse is quoted in Matthew 12:19, where it is applied to the Lord Jesus in His ministry on earth. In His ministry the Lord did not strive with others, and He did not promote Himself. He did not seek to make Himself known to people on the streets. In a sense He was very hidden. When the Lord Jesus was living on earth, He never made Himself great. Rather, He always kept Himself small. This is what it means to say that He did not cry out, lift up His voice, or make His voice heard in the street.

Isaiah 42:3 and 4 go on to say, "A bruised reed He will not break; / And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; / He will bring forth judgment in truth. / He will not faint, nor will He be discouraged, / Until He has established justice in the earth; / And the coastlands will wait for His instruction." Not only did Christ make no noise in the street; He did not break a bruised reed nor quench a smoking flax. This indicates that He was full of mercy.

The Jews often made flutes of reeds. When a reed was bruised and no longer useful as a musical instrument, they broke it. They also made torches of flax to burn with oil. When the oil ran out, the flax smoked, and they quenched it. Some of the Lord's people are like a bruised reed that cannot give a musical sound; others are like smoking flax that cannot give a shining light. Yet the Lord Jesus will not "break" the bruised ones who cannot give a musical sound,

nor "quench" the ones like dimly burning flax that cannot give a shining light.

### D. This Being of God Jehovah

In 42:5 we are told that this is of God Jehovah, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and what springs up from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk on it. His glory should not be given to another, nor His praise to idols (v. 8).

### E. All the Peoples Singing a New Song to Jehovah

According to 42:10-12, for this all the peoples should sing a new song to Jehovah. They should sing His praise from the end of the earth, lift up their voices and sing for joy, shout from the tops of the mountains, give glory to Jehovah, and declare His praise.

### F. Jehovah Rising Up to Deal with His Enemies

Because of this, Jehovah will rise up to deal with His enemies, to expose the vanity of the idols, and to discipline and instruct His blind and deaf servant, Israel (vv. 13-25).

Verse 19 says, "Who is blind except My servant, / And as deaf as My messenger, whom I will send?" The word *servant* here refers to Israel, typifying Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. Israel was blind and deaf, having no understanding or power of perception. Therefore, Israel could not hear God's word nor see His vision. However, in the restoration Israel will become one with Christ and thus, being able to see and hear, will have the power to perceive and the ability to understand.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY-THREE

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (2)

## AS TYPIFIED BY CYRUS TO BE JEHOVAH'S SHEPHERD AND TO FULFILL ALL THE DESIRES OF JEHOVAH

Scripture Reading: Isa. 43—45; Acts 2:17a; John 10:11; Heb. 10:7; John 5:30b; Neh. 2:5-6; Ezra 1:2-3; John 2:19; Isa. 42:1a; Luke 4:18c; Rev. 1:5a

In this message we will see that in chapters forty-three through forty-five Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is typified by Cyrus king of Persia to be Jehovah's Shepherd and to fulfill all the desires of Jehovah.

### I. JEHOVAH'S WORD OF COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO ISRAEL

In Isaiah 43 we have Jehovah's word of comfort and encouragement to Israel.

### A. Jehovah Telling Israel Not to Fear

In verse 1 Jehovah tells Israel not to fear. This verse says, "Now thus says Jehovah / Who created you, O Jacob, and who formed you, O Israel: / Do not fear, because I have redeemed you; / I have called you by your name; you are Mine."

### B. Jehovah Being the Holy One of Israel, Their Savior

Verses 2 and 3a continue, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, / And through the rivers, they will not flow over you. / And when you walk through the fire, you

will not be burned, / And the flame will not consume you. / Because I am Jehovah your God, / The Holy One of Israel, your Savior." Verse 4 goes on to say that Israel is precious and honorable in the eyes of Jehovah. To be precious is a matter of value, and to be honorable is a matter of position or state. As God's people, we should be both precious and honorable.

### C. Jehovah Bringing Their Seed from the East and Gathering Them from the West

Isaiah 43:5-7 says, "Do not fear, because I am with you; / I will bring your seed from the east, / And gather you from the west. / I will say to the north, Give them up, / And to the south, Do not keep them back. / Bring My sons from afar, / And My daughters from the end of the earth, / Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory." "From the east" means from the river, and "from the west" means from the sea. From the east, west, north, and south, God will bring the scattered Israelites.

In 41:8 Israel is called God's servant. Israel's being God's servant is related to God's desire in His economy to have a corporate expression of Himself for His glory. God wants such a corporate expression so that He may be glorified. This is the reason 43:7 says that God created, formed, and made Israel for His glory. God's glory can be expressed only by a group of people. Israel is God's servant in the sense of fulfilling God's purpose to have a corporate expression for His glory.

Cyrus was also a servant of God. Because Cyrus was used by God and did many things for God, he was God's servant. God needed someone to defeat Babylon, His enemy, which had captured His people and destroyed the temple. Cyrus was used by God to subdue Babylon. Having gained dominion over Babylon, Cyrus, according to God's desire and at the expiration of Israel's seventy years of captivity, then declared the release of Israel from captivity. Cyrus also issued a decree allowing the Jews to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2-3). In doing these things, Cyrus was surely one with

Christ as a servant of Jehovah. These three matters—the defeat of Babylon, the release of Israel, and the decree concerning the rebuilding of the temple—were great matters in the fulfillment of God's economy at that time. These three things are also types, signifying Christ's defeating Satan, releasing us from captivity, and building up the church as the temple.

It is easy for us to realize that Cyrus was one with Christ as God's servant, but it is difficult for us to realize this regarding Israel. We need to see, therefore, that, apart from Israel, Cyrus could not have done anything as God's servant. For instance, Cyrus released the captives, but who were the captives? The captives were the people of Israel, the people who were to be used by God to express Him in a corporate way for His glorification. In this sense, Israel was one with Christ as God's servant. The servant of Jehovah is corporate, and Israel, having been released by Cyrus, was part of this corporate servant.

The point we would emphasize here is that in God's economy Christ is everything. He is the releasing One, typified by Cyrus, and He is also the released One, typified by Israel. Typically speaking, both Cyrus as the releasing one and Israel as the released ones are parts of Christ, who is the reality of everything in God's move, the centrality and the universality of the great wheel of God's move.

Today the church is the testimony of God in the sense of being one with Christ as the testimony of God. It is in being such a testimony that the church serves God. For this reason, all God's elect can be considered servants of God with Christ for the expression of God's glory. The glorification of God is the purpose of our service. The highest service we can render to God is to express His glory.

### D. Israel Being Jehovah's Witnesses and the Servant Whom He Has Chosen

Verses 10 and 11 say, "You are My witnesses, declares Jehovah, / And My servant whom I have chosen, / In order that you may know and believe Me / And understand that I am He. / Before Me there was no God formed, / Neither will

there be any after Me. / I, even I, am Jehovah; / And there is no Savior besides Me." How can it be proved that only Jehovah is God? This can be proved only by a group of people who are God's witnesses. Those who are God's witnesses are also His servants. Christ is God's Witness and His Servant. Today, we, the church people, are one with Christ as God's witnesses and servants.

### E. Israel Not Calling to Mind the Former Things, nor Considering the Things of Old

In verse 14 we are told that for Israel's sake God sent to Babylon and "will bring down all of them as fugitives." Then in verses 18 through 21 Jehovah tells Israel not to call to mind the former things nor to consider the things of old. He wanted Israel to forget their seventy years in Babylon and to know that He was about to do a new thing. "Behold, I am doing a new thing; / It will now spring forth; / Do you not know it? / I will even make a way in the wilderness, / Rivers in the desert. / …This people I have formed for Myself; / They will show forth My praise" (vv. 19, 21).

### F. Jehovah Wiping Away Their Transgressions for His Own Sake and Not Remembering Their Sins

In verses 22 and 23a Jehovah tells Israel that they have not called upon Him, but have grown weary of Him. They have not brought Him a sheep for their burnt offerings, and they have not honored Him with their sacrifices. Indeed, they have burdened Him with their sins and wearied Him with their iniquities (v. 24b). Nevertheless, in verse 25 Jehovah declares, "I, even I, am He who wipes away your transgressions for My own sake, / And I will not remember your sins."

## II. JEHOVAH'S WORD OF SHEPHERDING TO HIS SERVANT ISRAEL

Chapter forty-four of Isaiah is Jehovah's word of shepherding to His servant Israel.

### A. Jehovah Pouring Water upon the Thirsty One and Streams upon the Dry Ground

Verses 1 through 4 are a word concerning Israel's restoration. Jehovah, the One who formed Israel from the womb, tells Israel not to fear. Then He goes on to say, "I will pour water upon the thirsty one, / And streams upon the dry ground; / I will pour out My Spirit upon your seed [Acts 2:17a], / And My blessing upon your offspring. / They will spring up among the grass, / Like poplars beside the flowing streams of water" (Isa. 44:3-4).

### B. Israel Being a Witness That Besides Jehovah There Is No God

Jehovah, the King of Israel and her Redeemer, is the First and the Last, and apart from Him there is no God (v. 6). Israel is a witness that Jehovah is the unique God. Concerning this, verse 8b says, "You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? / Or is there any other Rock? I do not know of any." All those who make idols are a waste, and the things they delight in will not profit them (v. 9).

### C. Jehovah Redeeming Jacob and Being Glorified in Israel

Jehovah has formed Israel, His servant, and Israel will not be forgotten by Him (v. 21). He has wiped away, like a thick cloud, Israel's transgression and, like a cloud, their sins. Thus, Jehovah says, "Return unto Me, for I have redeemed you. / Sing for joy, O heavens, for Jehovah has accomplished it. / Shout, O lower parts of the earth; / Break forth with singing, O mountains, / The forest and every tree in it; / For Jehovah has redeemed Jacob / And has been glorified in Israel" (vv. 22-23).

### D. Jehovah Confirming the Word of His Servant and Fulfilling the Counsel of His Messengers

Jehovah confirms the word of His servants and fulfills the counsel of His messengers. Jehovah also says to Jerusalem, "She will be inhabited," and to the cities of Judah, "They

will be built," and "I will raise up their ruins" (v. 26). He says to the depths, "Be dried up," and "I will dry up your rivers" (v. 27). Furthermore, Jehovah says to Cyrus, "He is My shepherd," indicating that Cyrus is God's shepherd for the shepherding of Israel. Jehovah also says to Cyrus, "He will fulfill all My desire." Cyrus will do this by saying of Jerusalem, "She will be built," and of the temple, "Her foundations will be laid" (v. 28). These words are pleasant to God's ears.

### III. A SERVANT AND A WITNESS OF JEHOVAH

Isaiah 45 speaks regarding a servant of Jehovah and a witness of Jehovah.

#### A. A Servant of Jehovah

In this chapter a servant of Jehovah is raised up by Jehovah in righteousness (v. 13a). He is called by Jehovah (vv. 3b, 4b) and chosen by Jehovah (42:1a) for the sake of Jehovah's servant, Israel (45:4a). He is anointed by Jehovah (v. 1a) to subdue the nations (vv. 1b-2), to build Jehovah's city of Jerusalem (v. 13b; cf. Neh. 2:5-6), and to send away Jehovah's captives of Israel, neither for a price nor for a reward (Isa. 45:13c; Luke 4:18c).

#### B. A Witness of Jehovah

##### *1. To Testify That Jehovah Is "Jehovah" and That Besides Jehovah There Is No God*

A witness of Jehovah testifies that only Jehovah is "Jehovah" and "there is no one else" (Isa. 45:5a). Besides Jehovah there is no God. Jehovah is the One "who forms the light and creates darkness" and "who makes peace and creates evil" (v. 7). Here *evil* refers to the lack of peace.

Isaiah 45:8 says, "Drip down, O heavens, from above, / And let the clouds flow down righteousness; / Let the earth open / And bring forth salvation and righteousness; / Let them spring forth together; / I, Jehovah, have created it." What does it mean to say that the clouds will "flow down righteousness"? This means that the Spirit will flow down to dispense Christ

as righteousness into the people on earth. The *earth* here signifies human beings. Thus, for the earth to be opened is for people to be opened. On the one hand, God causes the Spirit to flow down from heaven to impart Christ as righteousness into us; on the other hand, God causes us as the earth to open and bring forth salvation and righteousness, both of which are Christ Himself. In this verse, therefore, we have a description of how God carries out His salvation. God carries out His salvation by using His Spirit to bring down Christ as righteousness and by opening us to receive Christ as salvation and righteousness.

Jehovah is "a God who hides Himself " (v. 15). Even today, God is still hiding. Jehovah is also the Savior of Israel, the Savior of those "who have escaped from the nations" (vv. 15, 20a). However, those who make idols will be ashamed and go in confusion (v. 16).

### *2. Jehovah's Loving Word of Invitation*

In 45:20-25 we have Jehovah's loving word of invitation.

#### *a. All the Ends of the Earth Turning to Him and Being Saved*

First, there is the invitation to turn to Jehovah for salvation. "Turn to Me and be saved, / All the ends of the earth, / For I am God and there is no one else" (v. 22).

#### *b. Every Knee Bowing to Him*

To Jehovah every knee will bow and every tongue will swear (v. 23).

#### *c. Righteousness and Strength Being Only in Jehovah*

"It will be said of Me, Only in Jehovah / Is there righteousness and strength. / To Him will men come, / And all those who are burning in anger against Him will be ashamed" (v. 24). Here *righteousness* refers to salvation, and *strength* refers to life. This means that in Jehovah we have salvation and life. Those who come to Him will be saved, but those who oppose Him will be ashamed.

### *d. In Jehovah All the Seed of Israel Being Justified and Glorying*

According to verse 25, in Jehovah all the seed of Israel will be justified and will glory. Here to be justified is to be saved. In Jehovah all the seed of Israel will be saved and will glory.

In chapters forty-one through forty-five, Isaiah gives us a conclusion. In the first forty chapters he unveiled in a hidden way God's economy, which is to have a people so that Christ as the embodiment of God can be expressed as everything, to be the centrality and the universality of everything in God's economy. God in Christ and Christ with God have reached this point, that is, to have Christ expressed as God's centrality and universality, to such an extent that Cyrus, a Gentile king, became one with Christ and that even pitiful Israel also became one with Him. No doubt Isaiah was one with Him. Thus, Cyrus, Israel, and Isaiah were one with Christ that God might have a corporate expression.

Everyone who is one with Christ, including us, is a type of Christ because such persons are part of Christ. All who are part of Christ are types of Christ, who is the Servant of God, and they also are servants of God. All other persons have been terminated, "fired," and put aside by God. We who are one with Christ also have been fired by God, but unlike the unbelievers, we have been replaced with Christ to be one with Him. Furthermore, we who are one with Christ have become a great corporate Christ. This corporate Christ is the same as the individual Christ in being the testimony and servant of God.

God's economy is to have Christ processed for the divine purposes to be the centrality and universality of the great wheel of the move of the Divine Trinity for the divine dispensing of Himself into His elect. The divine dispensing is implied throughout the book of Isaiah. For example, the child born and the son given (9:6) is for the dispensing of the Triune God into His chosen people. To drink the water of God's salvation is to receive His dispensing (12:3). The feast (25:6) with Christ as the canopy (4:5-6) to cover the entire

situation is for the dispensing of the riches of the Triune God into those who enjoy Christ.

With Hezekiah in chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine we do not see anything of the divine dispensing, but we see much of this dispensing in chapter forty. When a person realizes that he is nothing, that he is withering and fading, and that only God is everything and that only He abides forever, he is willing to come to the word of God to be regenerated. Regeneration by the living and abiding word of God (40:6-8) is the issue of God's dispensing. Regeneration is actually a great dispensing. We were born of Adam to be temporal persons, but we have been regenerated to be eternal persons. In regeneration, the Triune God dispenses Himself into us as life to make us eternal persons. Regeneration is followed by transformation. Becoming transformed persons who mount up with wings like eagles (v. 31) is also a matter of the divine dispensing.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY-FOUR

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (3)

## AS TYPIFIED BY CYRUS TO RELEASE JEHOVAH'S CAPTIVES OF THE BELOVED ISRAEL FROM BABYLON

Scripture Reading: Isa. 46—48; John 6:38; Matt. 3:17; Isa. 45:3-4

In this message we will consider chapters forty-six through forty-eight. In these chapters Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is typified by Cyrus to release Jehovah's captives of the beloved Israel from Babylon.

### I. THE IDOLS OF BABYLON BEING POWERLESS AND USELESS

According to 46:1-2 and 5-7, the idols of Babylon are powerless and useless and cannot be compared to Jehovah. Furthermore, the idols are a burden for Israel to carry in their coming captivity. Concerning this, 46:1 and 2 say, "Bel has bowed down; Nebo stoops; / Their idols are on beasts and cattle; / The things which you carry are a burden, / A load for a weary beast. / They stoop and have bowed down together; / They are not able to escape the burden; / But they themselves have gone into captivity." Bel was one of the gods of the Babylonians, supposed by some to be the Babylonian name of Baal.

Instead of helping the people of Israel, the idols were a burden to them, for the people had to carry them. When Israel was captured by the Babylonians, God's people still would not give up their idols and had to carry them from the good land to Babylon. In these verses, Isaiah, speaking somewhat

in a mocking way, seemed to be saying, "You people of Israel have made idols for yourselves, but they will not do anything for you. One day you will be captured, and you will have to carry your idols with you as a burden into captivity."

Anything that replaces God or occupies the position of God is an idol as a burden to the worshipper. Today's human society encourages people to make idols. A person, education, or a high position with a company can all become idols to us. Eventually, every idol will not help us but instead will become a burden that we must carry.

### II. ONLY JEHOVAH BEING GOD AND BEING ABLE TO SAVE

Only Jehovah is God, and only He is able to save. Regarding this, 46:9 says, "Remember the former things of old, / That I am God and there is no one else; / I am God and there is no one like Me." Only after they were captives in Babylon did the people of Israel realize that only Jehovah is God. This captivity proved to them that all the idols are powerless, useless, and unable to do anything, and that only Jehovah, the God whom their forefathers worshipped, is the genuine God. He alone is able to save.

In verse 11 we are told that Jehovah is the One "who calls for a bird of prey from the east, / And from a distant land a man to be His counselor. / Indeed, I have spoken; surely I will bring it to pass. / I have purposed; surely I will do it." This man as a bird of prey from a distant land was Cyrus (typifying Christ) to be Jehovah's counselor (to carry out Jehovah's counsel—John 6:38). Cyrus was the "bird of prey" called by God to subdue the nations.

### III. JEHOVAH'S LOVE TOWARD HARDHEARTED ISRAEL

Chapter forty-six also reveals Jehovah's love toward hardhearted Israel (vv. 3-4). No matter how bad the people of Israel were, God still loved them. Verses 12 and 13 say, "Listen to Me, O hardhearted ones, / Who are far from righteousness. / I will bring My righteousness near—it is not far off; / And My salvation will not delay; / And I will give salvation in Zion, / And to Israel My glory."

### IV. JEHOVAH'S PUNISHMENT ON BABYLON FOR THE SAKE OF ISRAEL

In 47:1-6 we have Jehovah's judgment on Babylon for the sake of Israel. Verse 4 is the prophet's declaration: "Our Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts is His name, / The Holy One of Israel." According to verse 8, Babylon, a lover of pleasure, says in her heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me; / I will not dwell as a widow, / And I will not know loss of children." But verse 9 says that two things will come upon Babylon suddenly, in one day: loss of children and widowhood. This will come upon her in spite of the multitude of her sorceries and the great power of her spells. Verse 14 and 15 go on to say, "Behold, they are like stubble; / Fire consumes them; / They cannot deliver themselves / From the power of the flame; / There is no coal for warming themselves, / Nor the light of a fire to sit before. / So will those with whom you have labored be to you, / Those who have traded with you from your youth; / Each one will wander off in his own direction; / There will be no one to save you." All this is to make Babylon nothing and to cause nothing to be profitable to her.

### V. ISRAEL'S UNTRUTHFULNESS, UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, OBSTINACY, AND TREACHERY

In chapter forty-eight the prophet Isaiah uses certain extraordinary words to describe Israel. Israel makes mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth or in righteousness (v. 1). Verse 4 says that Israel is obstinate, and verse 8 indicates that Jehovah knew that Israel would deal treacherously. In verse 5 Jehovah says, "Therefore I declared them to you long ago; / Before things came to pass I let you hear; / Lest you should say, My idol has done them, / And my graven image and my molten image commanded them."

### VI. JEHOVAH'S WISE CONSIDERATION IN DEALING WITH ISRAEL

Chapter forty-eight also reveals Jehovah's wise consideration in dealing with Israel. When He dealt with Israel, He exercised His wisdom. In verses 9 through 11 Jehovah says,

"For My name's sake I will defer My anger, / And for the sake of My praise restrain it from you, / In order not to cut you off. / Behold, I have refined you but not like silver; / I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. / For My own sake, yes, for My own sake, I will do it, / For how can My name be profaned? / And I will not give My glory to another."

## VII. JEHOVAH'S LOVE FOR CYRUS AND HIS USING HIM TO DO HIS PLEASURE

Another matter revealed in this chapter is Jehovah's love for Cyrus and His using him to do His pleasure, that is, to subdue Babylon and release the captives of Israel.

### A. Jehovah Being the First and the Last

In verses 12 and 13 Jehovah makes a declaration concerning Himself. He says, "I am He; I am the First, / I am also the Last. / Indeed, My hand laid the foundation of the earth, / And My right hand spread out the heavens; / When I call to them, / They stand together."

### B. Jehovah Loving Cyrus, and Cyrus Doing Jehovah's Pleasure on Babylon

Verses 14 and 15 continue, "Assemble all of yourselves together and hear! / Who among them has declared these things? / Jehovah loves him; he will do His pleasure / On Babylon, and His arm will be upon the Chaldeans. / I, even I, have spoken; indeed, I have called him; / I have brought him, and his way will prosper." The *him* in these verses refers to Cyrus in 44:28 and 45:1, typifying Christ as the Servant of Jehovah (Matt. 3:17). Cyrus will do Jehovah's pleasure on Babylon, which symbolizes the Roman Catholic Church. It was a matter of love for God to use a Gentile king to subdue Babylon and to release the captives of Israel.

### C. The Lord Jehovah Sending the Prophet Isaiah and Jehovah's Spirit

Isaiah 48:16b says, "Now the Lord Jehovah / Has sent me and His Spirit." Here *me* refers to the prophet Isaiah, typifying Christ.

## VIII. JEHOVAH'S LEADING OF ISRAEL TO COME OUT OF BABYLON

In chapter forty-eight we also have a word about Jehovah's leading of Israel to come out of Babylon. As we have pointed out, Babylon symbolizes the Roman Catholic Church. Verses 20 and 21 say, "Come out from Babylon; / Flee from the Chaldeans; / With a voice of singing declare; / Let them hear this, / Send it out unto the end of the earth; / Say, Jehovah has redeemed / His servant Jacob. / And they did not thirst / When He led them through the dry places; / He caused water to flow / From the rock for them;/ And He split the rock, / And the waters gushed out." Verse 22 concludes the chapter by saying that there is no peace for the wicked. Here the word *wicked* probably refers to the Babylonians.

In the Bible, Babylon denotes not only a nation but also a religion. Thus, in Revelation 17 and 18 we have Babylon in two aspects: the religious aspect, signifying the Roman Catholic Church, and the material, physical aspect, signifying the city of Rome, the capital of Antichrist's kingdom.

According to history, Rome took over Israel politically and militarily in approximately 40 B.C. In the eyes of God, Rome was the real Babylon, frustrating God from accomplishing His economy. It was Rome that put Christ on the cross. However, in His resurrection Christ overcame that frustration, and the church was produced. By the third century the church had become quite prevailing in the resurrection power. Then in the fourth century Constantine the Great took advantage of the dissension that existed among the church leaders at that time, and in A.D. 325 he presided over the Council of Nicaea. That council issued the Nicene Creed, which is used by Catholicism and many of the leading denominations. What was done by Constantine the Great opened the way for the formation of Romanism, which is a mingling of politics and religion. Romanism is therefore the product of the invasion of religion by politics and of the "marriage" of religion to politics in a sinful way. Eventually, the Roman Church became a harlot (Rev. 17:5), the Roman Catholic Church. By A.D. 590 the papal system was fully

established, and Babylon was completely formed and consummated in both the political and religious aspects.

When Israel came out of Babylon at the time of Ezra, they came out of political Babylon but not out of religious Babylon, for at that time there was no religious Babylon. Israel's captivity in Babylon typifies the captivity of today's Christians in the Babylonian religion. Religiously speaking, most Christians are captives in Babylon. In the Babylonian religion, the most striking thing is the worship of idols. This is especially true in Catholicism. Today, for us to be God's people, we need to come out of Babylon in its two aspects.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY-FIVE

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (4)

## AS TYPIFIED BY ISAIAH, THE PROPHET OF JEHOVAH, FOR A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE TO RESTORE THE LAND

Scripture Reading: Isa. 49—50; John 14:10; Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15b; John 13:31b; Rom. 8:33a, 31, 34a

Chapters forty-nine and fifty of Isaiah present Christ as typified by Isaiah, the prophet of Jehovah, for a covenant of the people to restore the land. In this message we will consider these two chapters.

### I. THE THREE PERSONS OF THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

In order to understand Isaiah 49, we need to see the three persons of the servant of Jehovah—Christ (vv. 5-9a), Isaiah the prophet (vv. 1-4), and Israel (v. 3). Both Isaiah the prophet and Israel consummate in Christ. All three are one servant. First, all are Israel. Israel, of course, is Israel, Isaiah was an Israelite, and Jesus Christ was a typical Israelite. Thus, as Israelites they all are one. Second, as a whole, Israel was God's servant, His witness, in the Old Testament. Isaiah as a part of Israel also was a servant of Jehovah. In the New Testament Christ is unveiled as the Servant of God (Mark 10:45) and His Witness (Rev. 1:5). This again shows the oneness of Isaiah, Israel, and Christ as servants of Jehovah. But in the New Testament, our oneness with Christ as servants of God is seen more clearly, because the New Testament says that we are in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). Together we are one corporate Christ. Since we are in this corporate

Christ, and Christ is the Servant of God, we also are one servant of God, one witness of God. This is God's eternal view, and this is the view we need to have in order to understand Isaiah 49—50.

### A. Isaiah, the Prophet of Jehovah

Isaiah, the prophet of Jehovah (typifying Christ as the Servant of God for God's speaking—John 14:10), served Jehovah as His mouthpiece to speak forth His word, which is the embodiment of Himself (Isa. 49:1-4). Isaiah spoke for God, but Christ spoke for God much more. In His ministry on earth, the main thing He did was speak for God. Even after He ascended to the heavens, He continued to speak, for He spoke in the speaking of the apostles. The Epistles of Paul, for example, are a continuation of Christ's speaking.

The word of God is God's embodiment. When we speak forth God's word, we speak forth God. We cannot speak forth God without speaking forth God's word. We all need to learn how to speak forth God's word.

#### *1. Jehovah Making the Prophet's Mouth Like a Sharp Sword*

According to 49:2a, Jehovah made the prophet's mouth "like a sharp sword" and also concealed him "in the shadow of His hand."

#### *2. Jehovah Making the Prophet a Polished Arrow*

Jehovah made the prophet a polished arrow and hid him in His quiver (49:2b). The words of the prophet were arrows, and his speaking was the shooting of an arrow.

#### *3. Jehovah Considering the Prophet His Servant*

"He said to me, You are My servant, / Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (v. 3). This indicates that Jehovah considered the prophet as His servant, a part of Israel, for His glorification. Isaiah, Israel, and Christ are all for God's glorification.

#### *4. The Prophet Considering Himself as Laboring in Vain*

The prophet considered himself as laboring in vain, using up his strength for nothing and vanity (v. 4a). Nevertheless, he was assured that the justice due to him was with Jehovah and that his recompense was with his God (v. 4b).

Since Isaiah typifies Christ, the word in verse 4 applies to Christ. People judged Christ wrongly, thinking that His word was nothing and vain. However, Christ was assured that the justice due to Him would come from God. God values Christ's word and will reward Him for His speaking.

### B. Israel, the Prophet of Jehovah

The second of the three persons of the servant of Jehovah is Israel (v. 3). Isaiah, the prophet of Jehovah, was a part of Israel; hence, he was one with Israel as the servant of Jehovah. Christ also is a part of Israel (Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15b). In the servant mentioned in Isaiah 49:3, Jehovah will be glorified. This typifies that God is glorified in Christ as the Israel of God (John 13:31b).

### C. Christ as the Servant of Jehovah Fulfilling All That Isaiah and Israel Are as the Servant of Jehovah

In Isaiah 49 whatever is spoken concerning Isaiah and Israel is also spoken concerning Christ. This means that Christ as the Servant of Jehovah fulfills all that Isaiah and Israel are as the servant of Jehovah.

#### *1. From the Womb Jehovah Forming Him to Be His Servant*

From the womb Jehovah formed Him to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel would be gathered to Him. He will be glorified in the sight of Jehovah, and His God will be His strength (v. 5).

#### *2. God Setting Him as a Light of the Nations*

Verse 6 is God's word to Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. In this verse, God says, "It is too small a thing that You

would be My Servant / To raise up the tribes of Jacob / And bring back the preserved of Israel; / I will also set You as a light of the nations / To be My salvation unto the ends of the earth." We have seen and are continuing to see that Christ is the great light to the nations and that He is God's salvation extending to the ends of the earth.

### *3. Jehovah's Word to the Despised One, the One Abhorred by the Nation, the One Subjected to Tyrants*

In verse 7 we have Jehovah's word to Christ as the despised One, the One abhorred by the nation, the One subjected to tyrants. Jehovah says to Him, "Kings will see and arise, / And princes will bow down; / Because of Jehovah, who is faithful, / The Holy One of Israel, who has chosen You." Christ was subjected to tyrants when He stood before Pilate and submitted to him. He, the Creator, was thus subject to a created human being. To this One who was subjected to tyrants such as Herod and Pilate, kings will arise and princes will bow down because Jehovah, who is faithful, has chosen Him.

### *4. Jehovah Giving Him as a Covenant of the People*

"Thus says Jehovah, / In an acceptable time I have answered You, / And in a day of salvation I have helped You; / And I will preserve You and give You for a covenant of the people, / To restore the land, to apportion the desolate inheritances, / To say to the prisoners, Come forth, / To say to those who are in darkness, Show yourselves" (vv. 8-9a). Here we see that Christ as the Servant of Jehovah has been given as a covenant of the people. A covenant is a signed agreement between two parties, in which promises are made. A covenant becomes a will upon the death of the covenanting party. In a will someone may promise to give all his riches to another person. The will becomes the title deed of all those riches. But if there are no actual riches to receive, the will is meaningless. Christ is our will, our covenant, and He is all

the riches given to us in the will. The Bible is a will that mentions many wonderful items that are to be our portion. But without Christ as the reality, the Bible would be only empty pages. Christ is the reality of the items given as bequests in the Bible.

Christ is given as a covenant to restore the land. To restore the land is to accomplish something of God's economy concerning His kingdom. The restoring of the land is mainly for the kingdom of God, which will eventually consummate in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth.

In our experience of Christ today, to restore the land means to have the land enlarged or expanded. Christ is the land. To experience Christ as the expanding land is to occupy Christ as the land for the building up of God's kingdom that His temple, His testimony, may be established. If we have only the Bible but lack the experience of Christ as the reality, we do not have the feeling that Christ as the land is expanding. But if we have the Bible with the experiences of Christ, we sense that Christ as the land is expanding. The more we experience Christ, the more we sense that Christ is expanding within us. The more we experience Christ in this way, the more God's kingdom is established with God's temple as His testimony.

## II. THE BLESSED RETURN OF THE CAPTIVES

Isaiah 49:9b-13 speaks of the blessed return of the captives. Because Christ has become a covenant for the people of Israel, the captives will return.

### A. Not Hungering or Thirsting

The captives will feed along the roads, and their pasture will be on all the bare heights. They will not hunger or thirst, neither the scorching heat nor the sun will strike them; for He who has compassion on them will lead them and will guide them beside the springs of water (vv. 9b-10). Today the Lord not only leads us in a general way but also guides us in a specific way.

### B. Jehovah Making All His Mountains into a Road

In verse 11 Jehovah says, "I will make all My mountains into a road, / And My highways will be raised up." We may apply this in a spiritual way to our experience. Before we returned to the Lord, we were lost, and we did not know where we were or where we should be. But when we returned to the Lord, immediately there were roads and highways, and we knew what to do and where to go.

### C. These Ones Coming from a Distance

Verse 12 says, "Behold, these ones will come from a distance, / And some will come from the north and the west / And others from the land of the Sinim." Here the word *Sinim* probably refers to the Chinese.

### D. The Heavens Giving a Ringing Shout

In verse 13 the heavens are commanded to give a ringing shout, the earth to rejoice, and the mountains to break forth into singing, for Jehovah has comforted His people and will have compassion on His afflicted ones.

## III. HOW JEHOVAH TREASURES ZION

Isaiah 49:14-21 reveals how Jehovah treasures Zion.

### A. Not Forgetting Her

Because Jehovah treasures Zion, He will not forget her. "But Zion has said, Jehovah has forsaken me, / And the Lord has forgotten me. / Can a woman forget her nursing child, / That she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? / Even though they may forget, / Yet I will not forget you" (vv. 14-15).

### B. Having Engraved Her upon the Palms of His Hands

In verse 16a Jehovah tells Zion that He has engraved her upon the palms of His hands.

### C. Her Walls Being Continually before Him

Zion's walls are continually before Jehovah (v. 16b).

### D. Her Captives Making Haste to Return

Zion's captives will make haste to return. She will put all of them on like an ornament and will gird herself with them like a bride (vv. 17-18).

### E. Her Waste Land Being Too Constricted Because of Her Returned Captives

Her waste, desolate, and devastated land will be too constricted because of her returned captives (vv. 19-21).

## IV. JEHOVAH LIFTING UP HIS HAND TO THE NATIONS FOR THE GATHERING OF THE DISPERSED CAPTIVES OF ZION

Jehovah will lift up His hand to the nations, and unto the peoples He will lift up His banner for the gathering of the dispersed captives of Zion (vv. 22-26a). Then all flesh will know that Jehovah is the Savior of Zion and her Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob (v. 26b).

## V. THE REASON FOR ZION'S BEING FORSAKEN

In 50:1-3 we have the reason for Zion's being forsaken.

## VI. THE INSTRUCTION THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH RECEIVED AND THE LIFE HE LIVED

Isaiah 50:4-9 describes the instruction the servant of Jehovah (Isaiah typifying Christ) received and the life he lived.

### A. The Instruction the Servant of Jehovah Received

Referring to Isaiah as a type of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah, verses 4 and 5 say, "The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one. / The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back." Christ as the Servant of

Jehovah was instructed not by man but by God. Christ did not speak His own word but spoke according to God's instructions. He thus learned how to sustain the weary ones, the weak ones, with a word. Jehovah awakened Him every morning. This indicates that every day the Lord Jesus had a morning revival. Furthermore, the Lord was never rebellious; rather, He was always obedient, listening to the word of God.

### B. The Life the Servant of Jehovah Lived

The servant of Jehovah gave his back to those who struck him and his cheeks to those who plucked out the hair. He did not hide his face from humiliation and spitting. The Lord Jehovah helped him; therefore, he was not dishonored. He set his face like a flint, and he knew that he would not be put to shame (vv. 6-7). According to verses 8 and 9, he said, "The One who justifies me is near; who will contend with me? / Let us stand up together! Who is my adversary in judgment [Rom. 8:33a]? / Let him come near to me. / Behold, the Lord Jehovah helps me [Rom. 8:31], / Who is the one who condemns me [Rom. 8:34a]? / Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; / The moth will consume them." This is the life Christ as the Servant of Jehovah lived on earth.

## VII. HOW HE WHO FEARS JEHOVAH AND HEARS THE VOICE OF HIS SERVANT HAS LIGHT WHILE WALKING IN DARKNESS

Finally, in verses 10 and 11 we are told how he who fears Jehovah and hears the voice of His servant has light while walking in darkness. Concerning such a one, verse 10b says, "Let him trust in the name of Jehovah, / And rely on his God." Verse 11 goes on to give a warning about self-made light. "Behold, all of you who kindle a fire, / Who surround yourselves with firebrands, / Walk into the light of your fire / And into the firebrands which you have lit. / You will have this from My hand: / You will lie down in torment." Those who make light for themselves and walk in their self-made light instead of God's light will suffer torment. This should be a warning to us that we may walk in the light given by God, not in the light we make for ourselves.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY-SIX

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (5)

## IN RELATION TO JEHOVAH'S LOVING DEALING WITH HIS BELOVED ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: Isa. 51—52; 53:1-2

Chapters forty-one through sixty-six are all concerned with Christ as the Servant of Jehovah, and therefore they should be understood as a whole. In this message we will consider chapters fifty-one and fifty-two.

### I. JEHOVAH'S LOVING DEALING WITH HIS BELOVED ISRAEL

In 51:1—52:12 we see Christ as the Servant of Jehovah in relation to Jehovah's loving dealing with His beloved Israel.

### A. Jehovah's Calling of Israel

#### *1. Based upon Jehovah's Calling of Their Father Abraham*

Jehovah's calling of Israel is based upon His calling of their father Abraham; hence, it is firm. Concerning this calling, 51:1 and 2 say, "Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness, / Who seek after Jehovah, / tLook to the rock from which you were hewn, / And to the excavation of the pit from which you were dug. / Look to Abraham your father / And to Sarah who travailed with you; / For I called him when he was one person, / And blessed him and multiplied him." Here the word *rock* refers not to God but to Abraham, who was the source of Israel.

### *2. Jehovah Visiting Zion*

Based upon His calling of Israel, Jehovah has visited Zion. "Jehovah has comforted Zion; / He has comforted all her waste places, / And made her wilderness like Eden, / And her desert like the garden of Jehovah. / Gladness and joy will be found in her, / Thanksgiving and the voice of song" (v. 3).

## B. Jehovah's Righteousness and Salvation for Israel

Verses 4 through 8 speak of Jehovah's righteousness and salvation for Israel.

### *1. Telling His People to Hearken to Him*

First, Jehovah tells His people to hearken to Him. "Hearken to Me, O My people; / Give ear to Me, O My nation; / For instruction will go out from Me; / And I will set My judgment as a light for the peoples" (v. 4). God's judgment is a light. Thus, if we have His judgment, we have His light. Otherwise, we are in darkness.

### *2. Jehovah's Righteousness Being Near*

In verse 5 Jehovah goes on to speak of His righteousness and salvation. "My righteousness is near; My salvation has gone forth; / My arms will judge the peoples; / The coastlands will wait for Me."

### *3. Jehovah's Salvation Being Forever and His Righteousness Not Being Abolished*

Salvation and righteousness always go together. This is clearly indicated in verse 6, where Jehovah says, "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, / And look upon the earth beneath; / For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, / And the earth will wear out like a garment, / And those who dwell there will die in like manner; / But My salvation will be forever, / And My righteousness will not be abolished."

### *4. Jehovah's Word to Those Who Know Righteousness*

In verses 7 and 8 Jehovah speaks a word to those who know righteousness, to a people in whose heart is His instruction. He says to them, "Do not fear the reproach of

man; / Do not be terrified at their revilings. / For 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 from generation to generation."

### C. Jehovah's Arm for Israel

In 51:9-16 we see Jehovah's arm for Israel. As 53:1-2 indicates, Jehovah's arm is Christ the Servant of Jehovah. Hence, Jehovah's arm for Israel is actually Christ for Israel. In 51:9a there is the prayer that Jehovah's arm would arise and put on strength. Because of Jehovah's arm, the ransomed of Israel will return and come to Zion with a ringing shout, and eternal joy will be upon their heads. They will lay hold on gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away (v. 11). Furthermore, the one who is bowed down (that is, in bonds, denoting the captives) will soon be released and will not die in the pit (that is, in prison), nor will his bread be lacking (while the released captives will be on their way of returning—vv. 14-16).

### D. Jehovah's Encouragement to Jerusalem

Isaiah 51:17-23 is concerned with Jehovah's encouragement to Jerusalem. Verses 17 through 20 speak of Jehovah's wrath and of His rebuke to her in the past. According to verses 21 through 23, Jehovah now is pleading for her.

### E. Jehovah's Encouragement to Zion

Isaiah 52:1-6 tells us of Jehovah's encouragement to Zion.

### F. Jehovah's Good News for Zion and Jerusalem

In 52:7-10 we have Jehovah's good news for Zion and Jerusalem. Verses 7 and 8 say, "How beautiful on the mountains / Are the feet of him who brings good news, / Of him who announces peace, who brings news of good things, / Who announces salvation; / Of him who says to Zion, Your God reigns! / The voice of your watchmen! They lift up their voice; / They give a ringing shout together; / For they will see with their very own eyes / When Jehovah restores Zion." The first part of verse 7 is quoted by Paul in Romans 10:15. Isaiah

52:9 and 10 go on to say, "Break forth, give a ringing shout together, / You wasted places of Jerusalem, / For Jehovah has comforted His people, / He has redeemed Jerusalem. / Jehovah has bared His holy arm [Christ, the Servant of Jehovah] / In the sight of all the nations, / And all the ends of the earth will see / The salvation of our God."

### G. Jehovah's Charge to Israel to Depart from Babylon

Verses 11 and 12 reveal that these chapters concerning Christ as the Servant of Jehovah are related to Israel's departure from Babylon. Verse 11 says, "Depart! Depart! Go out from there [Babylon]! / Do not touch any unclean thing! / Go out from the midst of her! Cleanse yourself, / You who bear the vessels of Jehovah!" This word about the vessels of Jehovah indicates that the vessels of the temple, which had been carried away to Babylon, would be brought back to Jerusalem. Verse 12 continues, "You will not go out in haste, / And you will not go in flight; / For Jehovah will go before you, / And the God of Israel will be your rear guard."

The entire Bible gives us one complete revelation. This revelation shows us that God has an economy, a plan with many arrangements, to gain a people who are regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, and conformed to His image to be His corporate expression that He may be glorified forever. This revelation includes the fact that God has an enemy—Satan. As God's adversary, Satan is always rejecting God, opposing God, and doing whatever he can to frustrate God from accomplishing His economy. This opposition to God's economy indicates that there is a war raging in the universe between God and Satan.

In the Bible, the result of Satan's work is called Babylon. In God's eyes, all the attacks carried out by the nations come from one source—Babylon. Babylon signifies division with confusion.

Babylon was first called Babel in Genesis 11, but at the end of the Bible, Babel consummates in Babylon (Rev. 17—18). Babylon is also seen in the image in Daniel 2. The head of that image is Nebuchadnezzar, indicating that Nebuchadnezzar

is the head of Babylon, and the ten toes of that image are Antichrist with the ten kings. Hence, Antichrist also will be a part of Babylon.

In the Old Testament, Babylon was mainly political, but this political Babylon also interfered with the worship of God. When Babylon invaded Jerusalem, it destroyed the temple of God and carried away to Babylon the vessels of the temple (Dan. 1:1-2), which typify the ways and means for God's people to enjoy Christ. These vessels continued to exist, but they were marred. Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, captured the people of high rank in Israel, including the royal family, and forced them to worship his god in Babylon. Hence, the worship of God was damaged and marred by Babylon. This shows that Babylonian politics went together with Babylonian religion.

In the New Testament, Babylon is mentioned in a strong way in the book of Revelation. The religious aspect is mentioned first (Rev. 17), then the political aspect (Rev. 18). The religious Babylon is revealed as "Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of the Prostitutes and the Abominations of the Earth" (17:5). In Revelation 2:20 she is signified by Jezebel. In contrast to political Babylon, religious Babylon, the apostate Roman Catholic Church, is very mysterious. It has God, Christ, and Satan within it. It has a name that it proclaims God and preaches Christ as the Savior. But when its members believe its preaching, they are brought into the secrets, mysteries, and deep things of Satan (v. 24) to worship idols. The apostate Roman Church preaches God but worships idols. This is hypocrisy.

Presently, political Babylon is less prominent than religious Babylon. Political Babylon is somewhat in a state of repose, whereas religious Babylon is flourishing. For example, Christmas, which is celebrated throughout the world, is altogether from Babylon. Participating in Christmas may seem to be a small thing, but anything that is part of Babylon is abominable in the eyes of God. The system in the church meetings of one man speaking and all the rest listening is also a part of Babylon. This Babylonian element must not be allowed to remain among us.

God commanded His Old Testament elect, Israel, to depart from Babylon and to separate themselves absolutely from Babylon (Isa. 52:11). In the New Testament, God also charges His elect, the church, to come out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4). We all need to ask ourselves whether or not we have made a thorough clearance with today's Babylon. We are here following our Christ, who is the Servant of Jehovah, and He requires us to depart from Babylon and to have a thorough clearance with Babylon.

In Joshua 6 the children of Israel gained the victory over Jericho, but in fighting against Ai they were defeated. Because Achan kept a Babylonian garment (7:21), God's people suffered a defeat. Anything that is Babylonian gives Satan the ground to defeat the people of God. Therefore, we must forsake everything Babylonian. If we would serve God as His pure people, we first need to have a thorough clearance of all Babylonian things.

## II. THE PROSPERITY OF CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH IN RELATION TO ISRAEL'S RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY AND HER RESTORATION

In Isaiah 52:13-15 we read of the prosperity of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah in relation to Israel's return from captivity and her restoration. Verse 13 says, "Behold, My Servant will prosper; / He will be exalted and lifted up and very high." According to verse 14b, His appearance was marred more than that of any man, and His form more than that of the sons of men. Even as many were astonished at Him, so will He astonish many nations. Kings will shut their mouths because of Him; for what had not been recounted to them they will see, and what they had not heard of they will contemplate (vv. 14a, 15).

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (6)

## HIS DYNAMIC REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS VICARIOUS DEATH AND REPRODUCTIVE RESURRECTION IN RELATION TO HIS BEING THE COVENANT FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY

Scripture Reading: Isa. 53—54; 42:6; 49:8

Isaiah 53 is a sweet chapter that portrays Christ's dynamic redemption through His vicarious death and reproductive resurrection. Chapter fifty-four presents Christ's redemption in relation to His being the covenant for Israel's security. Christ's vicarious death and His reproductive resurrection are both crucial for the security of Israel.

### I. CHRIST'S DYNAMIC REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS VICARIOUS DEATH AND REPRODUCTIVE RESURRECTION

### A. The Revelation and Report of Christ as the Arm of Jehovah, the Dynamic Redeemer

Isaiah 53:1 concerns the revelation and report of Christ as the arm of Jehovah, the dynamic Redeemer. "Who has believed our report? / And to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed?" Here the word *arm* signifies the dynamic might of Christ in His divinity.

### B. His Lowly Birth and Suffering in His Humanity

Verses 2 and 3 go on to speak regarding Christ's lowly birth and suffering in His humanity.

### *1. Growing Up like a Tender Plant before Jehovah*

Verse 2 says, "He grew up like a tender plant before Him, / And like a root out of dry ground. / He has no attracting form nor majesty that we should look upon Him, / Nor beautiful appearance that we should desire Him." In the Bible plants often typify humanity. For Christ to grow up like a tender plant before Jehovah means that Christ grew up before Him in His humanity. In His divinity Christ has always been perfect and complete, and thus there was no need for Him to grow in His divinity. His growth took place in His humanity. First He was a child, and then He grew into boyhood and eventually into manhood. Having become perfected and completed in His humanity, at the age of thirty He came forth to minister for God.

Christ grew up not only like a tender plant but also like a root out of dry ground. The words *dry ground* signify a difficult environment. For the Lord Jesus, this dry ground included the poor home of Joseph and Mary, the despised city of Nazareth, and the despised region of Galilee. Like a root out of dry ground, Christ grew up in the midst of hard circumstances.

Verse 2 also tells us that, in His humanity, Christ had no attracting form nor majesty; He did not have a beautiful appearance.

### *2. Despised and Forsaken of Men, a Man of Sorrows and Acquainted with Grief*

"He was despised and forsaken of men, / A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; / And like one from whom men hide their faces, / He was despised; and we did not esteem Him" (v. 3). The Hebrew word translated *sorrows* in verses 3 and 4 literally means pains, either physical or mental. According to Keil and Delitzsch, Christ was a "man whose chief distinction was, that His life was one of constant painful endurance." He, as a man of sorrows, was a despised person.

## C. His Vicarious Death

Christ's death was a vicarious death (vv. 4-10a, 12b). This means that He died not for Himself but for us. He died in

our place. Christ's death was not a martyrdom; Christ was put to death by God for us (v. 4b). Thus, His death was a vicarious death.

### *1. Bearing Our Sicknesses and Carrying Our Sorrows*

In His vicarious death, Christ bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows. "Surely He has borne our sicknesses, / And carried our sorrows; / Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, / Smitten of God and afflicted. But He was pierced because of our transgressions; / He was crushed because of our iniquities; / The chastening for our peace was upon Him, / And by His stripes we have been healed. / We all like sheep have gone astray; / Each of us has turned to his own way, / And Jehovah has caused the iniquity of us all / To fall on Him" (vv. 4-6). These verses use the words *sicknesses* and *sorrows* along with *transgressions* and *iniquities* (that is, sins). This raises a question: Do our sicknesses and sorrows need Christ's redemption? Sicknesses and sorrows are mentioned with transgressions and iniquities because our sicknesses and sorrows come from one thing—sin. If we had never sinned, we could never be sick and we would have no sorrow. Our transgressions and sins surely need Christ's redemption. Since our sicknesses and sorrows come from sin, they also need Christ's redemption. In Isaiah 53 we are told clearly that Christ bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows in His vicarious death. Therefore, when we are sick, it is proper for us to pray, "Lord, because in Your death for me You bore my sicknesses, I do have the ground to ask You to take my sickness away."

### *2. Being Oppressed and Afflicted, yet Not Opening His Mouth*

"He was oppressed, and it was He who was afflicted, / Yet He did not open His mouth; / Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter / And like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers, / So He did not open His mouth" (v. 7). He did not have any reaction toward those who were persecuting Him.

Verse 8a continues, "By oppression and by judgment He

was taken away." The word *oppression* here means persecution. First, Christ was persecuted and then He was judged. By these two things He was taken away.

Verse 8b goes on to say, "And as for His generation, who among them had the thought / That He was cut off out of the land of the living / For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?" This means that no one understood that it was for us that Christ suffered persecution and judgment and died. Even those who were with the Lord Jesus when He was dying on the cross did not understand that He was dying for them. The stroke that should have been the due of God's people fell on Him. He suffered death for us.

Verse 10a says, "Jehovah was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief." The Hebrew words translated *afflict Him with grief* literally mean "make Him sick."

This verse continues with the phrase, "If You make His soul an offering for sin." The Hebrew can also be rendered "His soul would make an offering for sin." Leviticus 4 and 5 indicate that the trespass offering may be regarded as part of the sin offering. It is from sin that Christ has redeemed us. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Redemption is thus for the sin, including the trespasses, of fallen man. While Christ was on the cross, God was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief, in order to make Him an offering for sin. This is a further indication that Christ died a vicarious death for the purpose of accomplishing redemption for us.

### *3. Pouring Out His Soul unto Death and Being Numbered with the Transgressors*

Whereas Isaiah 53:10 says that God put Christ to death, making His soul an offering for sin, verse 12 says that "He poured out His soul unto death." If Christ merely put Himself to death on the cross, and God did accept Him as an offering for sin, Christ's death would not have been a vicarious death for us; it would have been only martyrdom. Likewise, if God was pleased to put Him to death, and He was not willing to die, then His death would not have been a vicarious death.

The vicarious death of Christ depends on God's being pleased to put Him to death and on Christ's being willing to die in such a way. Moreover, if Christ had sinned, His death could not be counted as a vicarious death; He would have had to die for Himself, and He could not have died for us.

Isaiah's writing in this chapter presents a clear defense in the heavenly court, testifying that God was pleased to put Christ to death, that Christ was willing to die for others, and that He was altogether sinless (v. 9). Thus, His death was truly a vicarious death.

Verse 12b says, "Because He poured out His soul unto death / And was numbered with the transgressors, / Yet He alone bore the sin of many / And interceded for the transgressors." While Christ was on the cross, He prayed for the ones who had crucified Him (Luke 23:34).

Isaiah 53:9 tells us, "They assigned His grave with the wicked, / But with a rich man in His death, / Although He had done no violence, / Nor was there any deceit in His mouth." This verse reveals that Christ was sinless and that His death was not for any sins of His own. If He had done any violence or if there had been deceit in His mouth, He would not have been sinless and He could not have died for us. Christ was altogether sinless. Because He had no sin, He did not need to die for Himself. His vicarious death was for us.

### D. His Reproductive Resurrection

Isaiah 53:10b-12a speaks concerning Christ's reproductive resurrection.

#### *1. Seeing a Seed and Extending His Days, and the Pleasure of Jehovah Prospering in His Hand*

"He will see a seed, He will extend His days, / And the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand" (v. 10b). The seed here is the church, comprising all the believers produced as the many grains by the death of Christ as the one grain and His reproductive resurrection (John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3). He was the one grain who died to produce many grains.

Although He died as a single grain, He resurrected with many grains. His resurrection, therefore, was very productive.

Isaiah 53:10b says not only that Christ will see a seed but also that He will extend His days. Today Christ is extending His days by living in His believers. His believers are His extension. Therefore, we may sing these words: "We are Thy continuation, / Thy life-increase and Thy spread" (*Hymns*, #203).

"The pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand" (v. 10c). The pleasure of God is to see many sons born of Him to become the members of Christ, who constitute the church as the corporate expression of Christ. This is the greatest pleasure to God, and it depends altogether on Christ's death and resurrection.

Verse 11a says, "Because of the travail of His soul, He will see / And He will be satisfied." What will Christ see, and with what will He be satisfied? Christ will see the church and be satisfied with the church, just as Adam saw Eve and was satisfied with her (Gen. 2:22-23).

Isaiah 53:11b continues, "By His knowledge, the righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, / And He will bear their iniquities." Christ did not justify us foolishly or blindly but according to His unlimited knowledge. This indicates that to be justified by Christ is a great thing. When He justified us, He exercised His knowledge and considered such matters as how we would be related to God and how we would affect the kingdom of God. After much consideration according to His infinite knowledge and His complete and perfect discernment, He justified us. For Him to justify us means that He accepted us.

Since Christ has justified us by His knowledge, He surely bears our iniquities. He is responsible for us in the heavenly court. We have a great many sins, but because Christ has decided to justify us, to accept us, He is willing to bear all our sins.

### *2. God Dividing to Him a Portion with the Great, and He Dividing the Spoil with the Strong*

In verse 12a Jehovah says, "Therefore I will divide to Him

a portion with the great, / And He will divide the spoil with the strong." Here we have two parties—God and Christ. Because of Christ's vicarious death and reproductive resurrection and because He has decided to accept the believers and bear their iniquities, God will divide to Him a portion with the great, and Christ Himself will divide the spoil with the strong. Who is the great, and who is the strong? The word *great* here refers to God, and the word *strong* also refers to God. This indicates that God will divide to Christ a portion with God as the great One and that Christ will divide the spoil with God as the strong One. Hence, Christ and God, who is the great One and the strong One, divide the spoil.

The word *spoil* indicates that there has been a war. Christ fought the battle, gained the victory, and took the spoil from Satan. The entire New Jerusalem will be a spoil captured by Christ from the hand of Satan. On the one hand, the New Jerusalem will be a great pleasure, a great enjoyment, shared by God and Christ. On the other hand, the New Jerusalem will be a spoil captured by Christ from Satan.

### II. IN RELATION TO HIS BEING THE COVENANT FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY

Isaiah 54 reveals Christ's dynamic redemption through His vicarious death and reproductive resurrection in relation to His being the covenant for Israel's security.

#### A. The Multiplication and Spreading of Israel

Verses 1 through 3 speak of Christ's being the covenant for the multiplication and spreading of Israel.

#### B. Jehovah's Returning to Israel and Gathering Them Back

Verses 4 through 8 speak of Jehovah's returning to Israel and gathering them back.

#### C. Christ's Being the Covenant to Israel for Their Security

In verses 9 and 10 we have Christ's being the covenant to Israel for their security. Verse 9 says, "This is like the

waters of Noah to Me, / When I swore that the waters of Noah / Would not overflow the earth ever again; / So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, / Nor will I rebuke you." In verse 10 the word *covenant* is used. "For the mountains may depart, / And the hills may shake, / But My lovingkindness will not depart from you, / And My covenant of peace will not shake, / Says Jehovah who has compassion on you." Christ as the Servant of Jehovah being the reality of this covenant is a surety of Israel for their security (42:6; 49:8).

### D. Jehovah's Building Up of Israel in Beauty and Israel's Enjoyment in Peace

In 54:11-17 we have Jehovah's building up of Israel in beauty and Israel's enjoyment in peace.

#### *1. Jehovah Himself Laying Down Her Stones in Dark Mortar*

To the one who is afflicted, storm-tossed, and not comforted, Jehovah says that He Himself will lay down her stones in dark mortar and lay her foundations with sapphires (v. 11). The Hebrew word translated *dark mortar* literally means antimony, referring to a dark cement used for setting off the brilliance of precious stones. In verse 12 Jehovah goes on to say, "I will make your battlements of rubies, / And your gates of carbuncles, / And all your borders will be precious stones."

#### *2. All Her Children Being Taught of Jehovah*

All her children will be taught of Jehovah, and the peace of her children will be great (v. 13). She will be established in righteousness. She will be far from oppression, for she will not fear, and far from terror, for it will not come near her (v. 14). Verse 15 says, "Behold, they may fiercely attack you, but it is not of Me; / Whoever attacks you will fall because of you."

#### *3. The Heritage of the Servants of Jehovah*

Jehovah has created the blacksmith who blows the fire of the coals and brings out a weapon for its work; He has also

created the destroyer to ruin (v. 16). Therefore, He declares, "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper, / And every tongue that rises up to judge you, you will condemn. / This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, / And their righteousness which is of Me" (v. 17). This is Jehovah's declaration to the entire universe that the security of Israel is maintained by Christ, who is the covenant for them.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (7)

## HIS BEING AN ETERNAL COVENANT TO ISRAEL, EVEN THE SURE MERCIES SHOWN TO DAVID, IN RELATION TO ISRAEL'S PROSPERITY

Scripture Reading: Isa. 55—56; 42:6; 49:8; 54:10; Acts 13:34

In Isaiah 55 the most striking word is *waters* (v. 1). Water is also mentioned at the end of the first section of this book (12:3). This indicates that in the book of Isaiah, God always considers that He is our salvation as living water. In His salvation God gives Himself to us as our portion for our enjoyment.

We live by three things: air, water, and food. Air is for our breathing, water is for our drinking, and food is for our eating. Spiritually speaking, of these three things, water is the most crucial. Air actually contains water, and water conveys spiritual food. According to Revelation 22:1 and 2, the tree of life (food) grows in the river of water of life. Thus, water and food go together. Our eating should always be matched by our drinking.

Isaiah 55 indicates that we need to enjoy our God as the living water, even as the waters. The word *waters* here reveals that we may enjoy God not just in one aspect but in many aspects. The thought here is similar to that in John 7:38. In that verse the Lord Jesus says, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." These rivers are the many flows of the different aspects of the divine life, such as love, light, grace, power, strength, holiness, and righteousness.

The book of Isaiah shows us that our God may become

our enjoyment through our continual drinking of Him. However, we are sinners, and in order to drink of God, we need a proper, adequate, and complete redemption. This redemption is found in chapter fifty-three, a chapter which reveals more of the dynamic redemption of Christ than any other chapter in the Bible. The dynamic redemption accomplished by Christ is the security not only to Israel but also to the seed (53:10), which is the church as the corporate Body of the resurrected Christ.

The record concerning this accomplished redemption in chapter fifty-three is followed in chapter fifty-five by the invitation to come to the waters and drink. The call here is like that at the end of the Bible: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!...he who wills, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). The waters in these two portions of the Word are our redeeming God, the very God who accomplished redemption for us through His incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. As we will see, these waters are both the eternal covenant and the sure mercies shown to David (Isa. 55:3). God's way and God's thought (v. 8) are that we would come to drink of Him.

Let us now go on to see from chapters fifty-five and fifty-six that Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is an eternal covenant to Israel, even the sure mercies shown to David, in relation to Israel's prosperity.

## I. CHRIST AS THE ETERNAL COVENANT TO ISRAEL, EVEN THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID, BEING THE CENTER OF THE DIVINE PROVISIONS TO ISRAEL

Christ is not only the eternal covenant to Israel but even the sure mercies of David. As such, He is the center of the divine provisions to Israel (55:1-5).

### A. The Call to the Thirsty Ones to Come to the Waters

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, / And you who have no money; / Come, buy and eat; / Yes, come, buy wine and milk / Without money and without price" (v. 1). Those who have no money may nevertheless come and buy,

but they buy without paying anything. Eventually, they receive a free drink. Here we see that God's thought is that we would come and drink of Him freely. Verses 2 and 3a continue: "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, / And the result of your labor for what does not satisfy? / Hear Me attentively, and eat what is good, / And let your soul delight itself in fatness. / Incline your ear and come to Me; / Hear, so that your soul may live."

### B. Jehovah Making an Eternal Covenant with Israel, Even the Sure Mercies Shown to David

"I will make an eternal covenant with you, / Even the sure mercies shown to David" (v. 3b). Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God is the waters, and this Christ, who is the Servant of God, is also an eternal covenant with Israel (42:6; 49:8; 54:10), even the sure mercies shown to David. According to Paul's understanding in Acts 13:34 and 35 (see note 1 on verse 34 there), the sure mercies shown to David are Christ Himself in resurrection. Whereas Isaiah speaks of "the sure mercies," Acts 13:34 speaks of "the holy and faithful things." The Hebrew word for *mercies (chesed)* implies the notion of holiness. Thus, in Acts 13:34 Paul interprets the sure mercies as the holy and faithful things, and then he goes on to indicate that these things are the resurrected Christ.

In Christ as the sure mercies, God reaches us in His grace to be our enjoyment. The New Testament reveals that the incarnated God brings us grace (John 1:1, 14, 16-17). Grace is actually God Himself for our enjoyment. In order to receive this grace, we need to be in the right position. However, as sinners full of iniquities, we were not in such a position. Thus, there was the need for mercy, which reaches farther than grace and which brings us into the position to receive grace. Because our situation was miserable and could not match God's grace, Christ not only took the step of incarnation to bring God as grace to us, but He also took a further step of death and resurrection in order to become the sure mercies to us in resurrection. Through His death and

resurrection, Christ, the embodiment of God's grace, became the sure mercies, and through these mercies we are now in the proper position to match God and to receive Him as grace. This is what Isaiah prophesied in chapter fifty-five, and this is what Paul meant in Acts 13.

Isaiah 55:4 says, "Behold, I have given him as a witness to the peoples, / A leader and a commander to the peoples." This indicates that Christ is not only the sure mercies shown to David but also the real Witness, Leader, and Commander. He is the universal Commander in Chief.

### C. Jehovah Glorifying Israel

Verse 5 says, "Behold, you will call a nation that you do not know, / And a nation that does not know you will run to you, / Because of Jehovah your God, even the Holy One of Israel, / For He has glorified you." For us to be glorified means that we are brought into God and that God becomes our expression.

## II. SEEKING JEHOVAH AND RETURNING TO HIM AND HIS WORD

In verses 6 through 13 we have the matters of seeking Jehovah and returning to Him and His word.

### A. Seeking Jehovah While He May Be Found and Calling upon Him While He Is Near

"Seek Jehovah while He may be found" (v. 6a). This is to come to the Lord in order to drink of Him. "Call upon Him while He is near" (v. 6b). This is the way to drink. We drink of the Lord by calling, "O Lord Jesus!"

"Let the wicked forsake his way, / And the evildoer, his thoughts; / And let him return to Jehovah, and He will have compassion on him; / And to our God, for He will pardon abundantly" (v. 7). The wicked one is the one who does not come to drink. In the sight of God, it is wickedness not to believe in the Lord Jesus. Whoever does not believe in Christ, God regards as sinful. Jehovah will have compassion on the one who returns to Him and will pardon him abundantly.

Here *pardon abundantly* means that God forgives us not just in one way but in many ways.

### B. Jehovah's Thoughts Not Being Our Thoughts, and Our Ways Not Being His Ways

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, / And your ways are not My ways, declares Jehovah. / For as the heavens are higher than the earth, / So are My ways higher than your ways, / And My thoughts higher than your thoughts" (vv. 8-9). We should give up our thought and take God's thought. We should also give up our way and take God's way. God's way is the way of calling, the way of drinking.

### C. Jehovah's Word Not Returning to Him Vainly

Verses 10 and 11 are a further definition of God's thoughts and ways. "For just as the rain comes down / And the snow from heaven, / And does not return there, / Until it waters the earth / And makes it bear and sprout forth, / That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; / So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; / It will not return to Me vainly, / But it will accomplish what I delight in, / And it will prosper in the matter to which I have sent it." We need to eat the word and drink of the water in the word so that we may be filled, renewed, strengthened, and transformed into His image for the building up of the Body of Christ. This is what God has sent His word to do.

### D. Israel Going Out with Rejoicing and Being Led Forth in Peace

"You will go out with rejoicing, / And you will be led forth in peace; / The mountains and the hills / Will break forth before you with a ringing shout, / And all the trees of the field will clap their hands. / In place of the thorn bush, the fir tree will come up; / In place of the brier, the myrtle will come up; / And it will be to Jehovah as a name, / As an eternal sign that will not be cut off" (vv. 12-13). What God is doing regarding us will become both a name to God and an eternal sign. Here *name* signifies a memorial, and *sign* indicates strong proof. What God is doing by sending forth His word

will be a memorial and also a sign which will never be cut off. God has sent forth His word to water us, to sanctify us, to transform us, and to conform us to His image that the Body of Christ may be built up. To God, this will be an eternal memorial and an eternal sign.

## III. PRESERVING JUSTICE AND DOING RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR PROSPERITY AND JEHOVAH'S ACCEPTANCE

In 56:1-8 we have the matter of preserving justice and doing righteousness for prosperity and Jehovah's acceptance.

### A. Justice Being the Verdict of God's Judgment

"Thus says Jehovah, / Preserve justice and do righteousness, / For My salvation is about to come / And My righteousness is about to be revealed. / Blessed is the man who does this, / And the son of man who takes hold of it, / Who keeps from profaning the Sabbath / And keeps his hand from doing any evil" (vv. 1-2). In its Old Testament usage, the word *justice* means the verdict of God's judgment. This justice enables one to be righteous. If Christ had not died on the cross for us, we would have been condemned in the heavenly court. But because Christ died a vicarious death for us, God reckons that we also have died, and then He pronounces the verdict that, instead of being condemned, we are released. This is a matter of justice, and through it we are justified, that is, made righteous.

Verse 1a speaks of preserving justice and doing righteousness. From this we see that we first have justice and then righteousness. Verse 1b goes on to speak of God's salvation. Justice plus righteousness equals salvation. As the result of Christ's death on the cross for us, God's verdict concerning us is the justice which causes us to be justified, to be made righteous. This is God's salvation coming to us.

### B. The Real Meaning of Keeping the Sabbath

In verses 2, 4, and 6, Isaiah speaks of keeping the Sabbath. The real meaning of keeping the Sabbath is to cease from our work, to stop our doing, to get ourselves "fired," in order to enjoy what God has done. To believe in the Lord Jesus is to keep the Sabbath. On the day we were saved, we were

fired and replaced with Christ. Hence, that day was a real Sabbath, a day of rest, to us. "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). This is the keeping of the Sabbath. Our whole Christian life should be such a Sabbath rest. This extended Sabbath becomes a feast in which we cease from our doing and are replaced with Christ.

### C. The Declaration of the Lord Jehovah, Who Gathers the Outcasts of Israel

In Isaiah 56:8 we have the declaration of the Lord Jehovah, who gathers the outcasts of Israel. He declares, "Yet will I gather others to Him besides those gathered to Him already." This reveals that God will gather more people to Christ. First, He gathered the Jews, and then He began to gather the Gentiles from such places as Asia Minor and Macedonia. Today He continues to gather people to Christ from throughout the earth.

## IV. THE REBUKING OF THE BLIND WATCHMEN AND THE SELF-SEEKING SHEPHERDS

Chapter fifty-six concludes with Jehovah's rebuking of the blind watchmen and the self-seeking shepherds (vv. 9-12).

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE TWENTY-NINE

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (8)

## THE EVIL CONDITION AND THE NEED OF THE WICKED OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB WHO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

Scripture Reading: Isa. 57—58

In the foregoing message we saw that the real meaning of keeping the Sabbath is that we cease from our doing, stop our work, and enjoy what the Lord has done for us, drinking of Him as the waters. In the Old Testament, to keep the Sabbath was not to do any work but to remember what God had done in His creation. In the New Testament, to keep the Sabbath is to believe in the Lord Jesus. To believe in Christ is actually to be "fired," to be replaced with Christ, and to drink of Him as the waters. In the sight of God, this is the real keeping of the Sabbath. If we keep the Sabbath in this way, we will be able to say, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The more we realize that it is no longer we who live but that it is Christ who lives in us, the more we drink of the waters. The crucial point in Isaiah 55 and 56 is learning how to drink the divine waters and to keep the Sabbath by being fired and replaced with Christ.

The crucial point in chapters fifty-seven and fifty-eight is how to fast. The real meaning of fasting is to stop eating all things other than the Lord Jesus and to not have the taste for anything other than Him. We should be weary of "eating" worldly styles, fashions, and beautification. We need to fast, to cease from all other kinds of eating, to stop the taste for

all other foods, and to eat Jesus as the bread of life embodied in His word (John 6:48, 51, 63, 68). This is our fasting.

Let us keep this understanding of fasting in mind as we see in Isaiah 57 and 58 the evil condition and the need of the wicked of the house of Jacob who have nothing to do with Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. Christ was willing to serve them, but they were not willing to receive His service.

The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord. They do many things, but they do not come to contact Him, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him. In the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this. Today, we may have a morning revival, come to the meetings, sing hymns, and even pray without contacting the Lord. To do this is to be a hypocrite.

## I. IT BEING BETTER FOR THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE GODLY TO DIE THAT THEY MAY BE SEPARATED FROM THE WICKED

Isaiah 57:1 and 2 indicate that it is better for the righteous and the godly to die that they may be separated from the wicked. "The righteous man perishes, / And no one takes it to heart; / And godly men are being swept away, / While no one considers / That the righteous man is being swept away from evil. / He enters into peace; / They rest in their beds, / Each who walks uprightly." The righteous and godly ones are the ones who come to God, contact God, and enjoy God. The wicked, however, are busy with other things and do not care for God's seekers. When the righteous die and rest in their beds, no one takes it to heart. The word *beds* in verse 2 signifies graves.

## II. THE EVILS OF THE WICKED OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB

Verses 3 through 10 describe the evils of the wicked of the house of Jacob. These wicked ones were busy with many things, but they would not come to the Lord and contact Him. Today, we also may be busy, even with our morning revival, and not have any contact with the Lord. We need to learn at every moment and during every action to touch, taste, eat,

and enjoy the Lord. We should not only touch the Lord, but we should also be touched by Him.

### III. THE WICKED OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB NOT REMEMBERING JEHOVAH AND NOT FEARING HIM

The wicked of the house of Jacob did not remember Jehovah and did not fear Him (vv. 11-13a). This means that they did not care for Him. Today we may care for such things as reading the Bible, singing hymns, and coming to the meetings but not care for touching the Lord.

### IV. JEHOVAH'S BLESSING TO HIM WHO TAKES REFUGE IN HIM

In 57:13b-21 we have Jehovah's blessing to him who takes refuge in Him. Every day of our life is a storm. We need a refuge, and the refuge is the Lord Himself. To take refuge in the Lord is to get into Him and stay in Him to enjoy Him.

#### A. Inheriting the Land and Possessing Jehovah's Holy Mountain

"He who takes refuge in Me will inherit the land / And possess My holy mountain" (v. 13b). When we stay in the Lord, taking Him as our refuge, we enjoy Him, and eventually we will inherit Him as the land and possess Him as our high mountain.

#### B. Taking Up the Obstacle out of the Way of Jehovah's People

"It will be said, / Cast up, cast up; prepare the way; / Take up the obstacle out of the way of My people" (v. 14). The greatest obstacle to our Christian life is our failure to contact the Lord. This obstacle must be removed.

#### C. The Word of the High and Exalted One, Who Inhabits Eternity, Whose Name Is Holy

In verse 15 we have the word of the high and exalted One, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy. He says, "I will dwell in the high and holy place, / And with the contrite and lowly of spirit, / To revive the spirit of the lowly / And to

revive the heart of the contrite." Our heart needs to be revived in one way, and our spirit needs to be revived in another way. The way to have a real revival is to contact the Lord. If we do not contact the Lord, we will not be revived.

### D. Jehovah Not Contending Forever nor Always Being Angry

In verse 16 Jehovah says that He will not contend forever, nor will He always be angry, for the spirit would faint before Him, and the souls which He has made. In verses 17 through 19 He goes on to say, "Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry, / And I struck him; I hid Myself and was angry; / And he went on, turning away in the way of his heart. / I have seen his ways / And will heal him; / And I will lead him and restore comfort to him / And to his mourning ones, / Creating the fruit of the lips: / Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near, / Says Jehovah; and I will heal him." The expression *the fruit of the lips* refers to praise and thanksgiving. The word *peace* in verse 19 is significant. If we contact the Lord, have fellowship with Him, and remain in His presence, He will be happy and we will have peace. Otherwise, He will be unhappy with us and will contend with us.

### E. The Wicked Being like the Tossed Sea

"The wicked are like the tossed sea, / For it cannot be calm, / And its waters toss up mire and mud. / There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked" (vv. 20-21). The wicked ones cannot be calm or have peace; they are like the tossed sea, which is never calm. The wicked ones do many things, but they cannot have peace, because they do not contact the Lord, rest in Him, and remain in His presence.

## V. THE HYPOCRISY OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB

Isaiah 58:1-9a describes the hypocrisy of the house of Jacob. They fasted, but they did many things in pursuit of their own interests. They did not rest in God nor take Him as their nourishment and life supply. This was their hypocrisy.

Concerning those who fast in a genuine way, verses 8

and 9 say, "Then your light will break forth like the dawn, / And your recovery will speedily spring forth. / And your righteousness will go before you; / The glory of Jehovah will guard you from behind. / Then you will call, and Jehovah will answer; / You will cry out, and He will say, Here I am." If we fast in the way of contacting the Lord, taking Him as our nourishment and sustaining power, our light will break forth like the dawn. Otherwise, we will be in darkness.

## VI. THE INSTRUCTION OF JEHOVAH TO THE HOUSE OF JACOB

Verses 9b through 14 are the instruction of Jehovah to the house of Jacob.

### A. Removing the Yoke from Their Midst, the Pointing of the Finger and the Speaking of Wickedness

Verse 9b is a word about removing the yoke from their midst, the pointing of the finger and the speaking of wickedness. In the church life today, some may gossip about others and criticize them. To do this is to point the finger at others and to put a yoke on them. Some may think that they are right and others are wrong, that they are spiritual and others are not serious with the Lord. As a result, these ones condemn others in the church life, and their condemnation becomes a yoke on others' shoulders. For instance, an elder may be criticized to such an extent that he does not know how to serve as an elder. In the eyes of certain saints, he is wrong, no matter what he does. He must bear the yoke of criticism and condemnation.

Verse 10a goes on to speak of drawing out our soul to the hungry and satisfying the desires of the afflicted. This is to be merciful to others and to sympathize with them.

### B. Those Who Fast in the Right Way Being Full of Light and Life

To those who remove the yoke and cease from the pointing of the finger and the speaking of wickedness, Jehovah says, "Then your light will rise in the darkness, / And your gloom

will be like midday; / And Jehovah will guide you continually, / And satisfy your soul in the dry times, / And strengthen your bones; / And you will be like a watered garden, / And like a spring of water, / Whose waters do not deceive. / And those who are of you will rebuild the ancient ruins; / You will raise up the foundations of generation upon generation; / And you will be called the repairer of the breach, / The restorer of the paths in which to dwell" (vv. 10b-12). These verses indicate that the one who fasts in the right way will be full of light and life, that he will be useful, and that he will enable others to go on.

### C. Calling the Sabbath a Delight and Honoring It

In verse 13 Jehovah instructs the house of Jacob to turn back their foot from the Sabbath, from doing what they please on His holy day. They were to call the Sabbath a delight and honor it, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure and speaking idle words. They were to keep the Sabbath by enjoying God, having been fired and replaced by Him. But if they did not keep the Sabbath in this way, they would be those who do their own ways, find their own pleasure, and speak idle words.

### D. They Having Delight in Jehovah, and He Causing Them to Ride upon the Heights of the Earth

If they honor the Sabbath, they will have delight in Jehovah, and He will cause them to ride upon the heights of the earth, and He will feed them with the inheritance of Jacob their father (v. 14).

In the book of Isaiah, we have seen that God has an economy. In His economy God makes Christ the centrality and universality. God wants us to learn one lesson—to stop our doing and to keep away from the taste of anything other than Christ. We should be replaced by Christ and enjoy God continually. This is the purpose for which Christ died for us and was resurrected for us. He is our Sabbath and our food. Now we can rest in Him, feed on Him, and have Him as our replacement in every way and in everything.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (9)

## AS THE REDEEMER TO SAVE JACOB FROM THEIR SINS AND INIQUITIES AND BECOME ISRAEL'S LIGHT AND GLORY FOREVER

Scripture Reading: Isa. 59—60; 42:6; 49:8; 54:10; Rev. 21:23

In the book of Isaiah, many precious things are hidden. Two of these things are the keeping of the Sabbath and fasting.

To keep the Sabbath is to be "fired" and replaced by Christ so that we may get into Him and rest in Him for eternity. Therefore, to keep the Sabbath means that we stop our work, that we cease from our intentions, and that we are fired and replaced. This is to be crucified with Christ with the result that it is no longer we who live, but Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20).

In the early days I was taught that to fast is to restrict ourselves and our lusts. This teaching is not wrong, but it surely is not complete and it may lead to asceticism. The real meaning of fasting according to the Bible is to cease from the taste for anything other than Christ. When we fast in this way, we have an appetite only for Christ and we do not eat anything other than Christ.

Isaiah's aspiration is that we all would rest in Christ and taste Christ all the time. In the New Jerusalem for eternity, we will have a life of resting and fasting. Our unique food will be Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, as the tree of life. Furthermore, having been fully fired, we will not work but will be at rest. This will be the situation of everyone in the New Jerusalem.

Up to chapter fifty-nine, the book of Isaiah consummates in the keeping of the Sabbath and fasting. Through all His processes, Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God has accomplished God's full redemption, and now He is applying His complete salvation to His believers. Although many Christians are preaching the gospel, few people receive this preaching. Because people are busy working and eating, few have any room in their heart, any capacity in their being, for Christ. Thus, they all need to rest, to keep the Sabbath; they also need to fast. By resting and fasting we can partake of all that the processed Christ has accomplished for us. In totality, what He is and has accomplished is just the divine water, which is the consummated Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God for us to drink and enjoy.

I can testify that before I was saved, I was a busy and ambitious young man. But when I heard the gospel and received the Lord Jesus, I immediately began to keep the Sabbath and to fast. Now, more than sixty years later, I still like to rest and to fast. I want to be "fired" again and replaced by Christ more and more, resting in Him and fasting from every taste other than Him. According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, we all need to learn to keep the Sabbath and to fast.

Let us now go on to chapters fifty-nine and sixty, which reveal Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, as the Redeemer to save Jacob from their sins and iniquities and to become Israel's light and glory forever. Having redeemed us, Christ is now our Savior. On the negative side, He is saving us from our sins and iniquities; on the positive side, He is our light and glory.

## I. JEHOVAH'S HAND NOT BEING SO SHORT THAT IT CANNOT SAVE

Jehovah's hand is not so short that it cannot save, and His ear is not so heavy that it cannot hear (59:1). But Jacob's iniquities have become a separation between them and their God, and their sins have hidden His face from them so that He does not hear (v. 2).

### II. THE SINS AND INIQUITIES OF JACOB

Verses 3 through 8 speak of the sins and iniquities of Jacob. Iniquities are much more evil than sins.

### III. THE ISSUE OF JACOB'S SINS AND INIQUITIES

Verses 9 through 15a describe the issue of Jacob's sins and iniquities.

### IV. THE SAVING OF JEHOVAH'S ARM TOWARD JACOB

For our sins and iniquities, we have the saving of Jehovah's arm (vv. 15b-19). Jehovah's arm is Christ as the Servant of Jehovah, who has the dynamic might of Jehovah.

Verse 20 says that a Redeemer will come to Zion and unto those who turn from transgression in Jacob. Then verse 21 continues, "As for Me, this is My covenant with them, says Jehovah: My Spirit which is upon you and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your seed, nor from the mouth of your seed's seed, says Jehovah, from now and forever." This covenant is Christ as the reality and surety of the covenant (42:6; 49:8; 54:10).

Our mouth is for three things: breathing, eating, and speaking. Among these three, the most crucial is speaking. We need to know what to speak, when to speak, where to speak, and to whom to speak.

We can control our breathing and our eating but not our speaking. It was by her speaking that Eve committed sin. If she had not spoken to the serpent but had turned to Adam, she would have overcome the serpent's temptation. However, she spoke to the serpent, and by her speaking she fell into sin. This illustrates the fact that speaking is a problem to us all. Our speaking may minister life to others, or it may minister death to others. Whether we build up others or damage them, whether we minister life or death, depends on how and what we speak. If the saints in the church life could be corrected in their speaking, every church would be revived.

God has put both His Spirit and His word into our mouth.

His Spirit is for us to breathe, and His word is for our nourishment and also for our speaking. Today the Christian life is just to practice the breathing of the Spirit and the eating and speaking of the word. For this reason, we emphasize, encourage, promote, and advocate the matter of prophesying, that is, speaking for God, speaking God forth, and speaking God in His word into others for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Both breathing and eating are for dispensing. The more we breathe and eat, the more the elements of life are dispensed into us. Since we have God's Spirit and God's word, all day long we can be under God's dispensing if we breathe the Spirit and are nourished with the word.

God dispenses Himself into our spiritual being through His Spirit, who is the very breath of God. The Spirit is the breath of God for our breathing. The more we breathe the Spirit, the more we are under the divine dispensing. The first two lines of a hymn by A. B. Simpson on the Spirit as the breath say, "O Lord, breathe Thy Spirit on me, / Teach me how to breathe Thee in" (*Hymns*, #255). The chorus says, "I am breathing out my sorrow, / Breathing out my sin; / I am breathing, breathing, breathing, / All Thy fulness in." Instead of being limited in our breathing, we need to exercise spiritual deep breathing. The more deeply we breathe the Spirit, the healthier we will be in our spiritual life.

The word God has given to us for our nourishment is Christ as God's embodiment. The Triune God is embodied in Christ, Christ is embodied in the word, the word is realized as the Spirit, and the Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God. By such a cycle the Triune God dispenses Himself into us. Day by day we should deal with the word and the Spirit. As long as we have a proper dealing with the word and the Spirit, we are one with the Triune God, one with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Today we have Christ as the Redeemer to save us from our sins, iniquities, and transgressions. On the positive side, we have Christ also as the word and as the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. He is the Spirit for our breathing and the

word for our feeding. As we breathe the Spirit and feed on the word, we are under God's dispensing.

## V. CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH BECOMING ISRAEL'S LIGHT AND GLORY FOREVER

### A. The Glory of Jehovah Rising upon Israel

Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is the glory of Jehovah arising upon Israel (60:1-3).

### B. The Nations All Gathering Together to Israel

The nations will all gather together to Israel with Israel's captives and with the nations' wealth (vv. 4-9). This refers to the time of Israel's restoration. When Christ comes back as the saving Redeemer, Israel as God's elect and as the center of the world's population will be restored in every respect. At that time, all the Gentile nations will be for Israel. Not only Israel's captives but also the wealth of the nations will be gathered to Israel.

Verse 8 says, "Who are these who fly like a cloud, / And like the doves to their dovecote?" This may be a prophecy that many of Israel's captives will return to Israel by airplane.

### C. The Nations Building Israel's Walls and Ministering to Her with Their Wealth and Glory

The nations will build Israel's walls and will minister to her with their wealth and glory (vv. 10-14). The word *glory* in verse 13 refers to the products of the nations (Gen. 31:1, 16; Esth. 1:4). The nations will minister to Israel with their wealth and with their best products.

### D. Israel to Be Made an Eternal Excellency and a Joy

Verses 15 through 18 reveal that in her restoration Israel will be made an eternal excellency and a joy for generations. Israel will be the excellency of the human race.

### E. To Enjoy Jehovah in Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, as the Eternal Light in the New Jerusalem

In the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:23) Israel will enjoy Jehovah in Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, as the eternal light (Isa. 60:19-22). Verses 19 through 21 say, "You will no longer have the sun for your light by day, / Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; / But Jehovah will be an eternal light to you, / And your God your beauty. / Your sun will no longer go down, / Nor will your moon withdraw; / For Jehovah will be an eternal light to you, / And the days of your mourning will be ended. / Then all of your people will be righteous; / They will possess the land forever, / The branch of My planting, / The works of My hands, / That I may be beautified." Israel will have something brighter than the sun and the moon, for they will have Jehovah as an eternal light to them.

Verse 21 says that God will be beautified in Israel. Many translations say *glorified*, but *beautified* is a more accurate rendering of the Hebrew word. Restored Israel will be God's beautification. In the restoration Israel will be glorified and beautified and thus become God's beautification. God will be beautified by the restored and beautified Israel.

In chapters fifty-nine and sixty, Christ is unveiled as our Redeemer. Having passed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, He is now the saving One, saving His people from their sins and iniquities and becoming their light and glory. By putting Himself into us as the Spirit and the word, He becomes our beauty, brightness, and splendor. By means of the life-giving Spirit and the word, which is the embodiment of Christ, we receive the divine dispensing. The more He dispenses Himself into us as life and everything to us, the more we become bright, beautiful, and glorious. This is Christ becoming our light and glory. Eventually, we will become God's glory and beauty. He becomes our beauty so that we may become His beauty. In this way God and His chosen people are glorified and beautified in mutuality.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-ONE

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (10)

## THE MINISTRY OF THE ANOINTED OF JEHOVAH, CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH, ISSUING IN THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: Isa. 61—63; Rev. 14:17-20; 19:11-16, 19-21

Isaiah 61 through 63 reveals that the ministry of the Anointed of Jehovah, Christ as the Servant of Jehovah, issues in the restoration of Israel. In this message we will consider these three chapters.

### I. THE MINISTRY OF THE ANOINTED OF JEHOVAH, CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

As the Servant of Jehovah, Christ is the Anointed of Jehovah. *Christ* is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *Messiah*, which means "the anointed." Our Christ today is the anointed One and also the anointing One who anoints us with Himself as the ointment. First, He was anointed by God and with God, and then through His death and resurrection He became the ointment for the anointing of others. His ministry to us is thus a ministry of anointing. Eventually, the ministry of Christ, the Anointed of Jehovah, will issue in the restoration of Israel, His elect people.

The history of Israel is mainly a history of tragedy, although there were times of glory, such as the building of the temple under Solomon. The temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, and the vessels for the service of God in the temple were carried away to Babylon. From that time until the present, Israel has not been fully a free nation. Hence, Israel still needs restoration.

Christ's coming is of two parts and at two times. In His first coming, Christ came to minister, to dispense, Himself into His followers. In this way He carried out the New Testament ministry to dispense the Triune God into the disciples under His ministry, most of whom were Jews. This ministry in Christ's first coming laid a solid foundation for His second coming. When He comes the second time, He will come mainly in an outward way to rescue Israel from their circumstances and to bring in their restoration. This restoration will be expanded to include all things created by God. This period of restoration will last for a millennium, for the thousand-year kingdom.

The ministry of the Anointed of Jehovah is described in Isaiah 61:1-3. Verse 1 says, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, / Because Jehovah has anointed Me / To bring good news to the afflicted; / He has sent Me to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted, / To proclaim liberty to the captives, / And the opening of the eyes to those who are bound." As Luke 4:16-21 indicates, this refers to Christ in His first coming. The Lord's ministry in His first coming was one of grace, not vengeance, which is mentioned in Isaiah 61:2.

When the Lord came the first time, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and constituted with the essence of the Holy Spirit added to His humanity to be a God-man. He then lived thirty years as a man in that essence of the Spirit. At the age of thirty He came forth to carry out His ministry. At that time He was baptized in water, and immediately the Holy Spirit descended upon Him economically (Luke 3:21-22). Prior to that time, He was already constituted with the Spirit essentially, but in order to carry out God's economy, He needed the Spirit economically to empower Him and authorize Him to be the Servant of God to minister God into His chosen people. This is the significance of the words, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me."

As the Servant of Jehovah, Christ brought good news to the afflicted, bound up the wounds of the brokenhearted, proclaimed liberty to the captives, opened the eyes of the blind (physically and spiritually), and proclaimed the acceptable

year of Jehovah (Isa. 61:2a), which is the year of jubilee. Thus, He brought in the real jubilee.

Verse 2b goes on to say that the Anointed will also proclaim "the day of vengeance of our God." This refers to the Lord's second coming, for in His first coming He did not carry out vengeance. In His second coming He will avenge Israel, proclaiming the vengeance of God.

Verse 2 also indicates that in His second coming Christ will "comfort all who mourn." Verse 3 continues, "To grant to those who mourn in Zion, / To give to them a headdress instead of ashes, / The oil of gladness instead of mourning, / The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness; / That they may be called the terebinths of righteousness, / The planting of Jehovah, that He may be glorified." Here ashes signifies shame and headdress signifies glory. According to Hebrews 1:9, the oil of gladness is the Spirit. Instead of mourning, restored Israel will have the Spirit as the oil of gladness. Furthermore, instead of a spirit of heaviness, there will be a mantle of praise. As a result, Israel will be called the terebinths of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, so that He may be glorified.

The first part of Isaiah 61:1-3 refers to the Lord's ministry in His first coming (vv. 1-2a), and the second part refers to the restoration of Israel in His second coming (vv. 2b-3). Hence, this portion of the Word implies both Christ's first coming and His second coming. In Isaiah's prophecy the Lord's two comings are like two mountain peaks which, when viewed from a distance, seem to be one peak. For this reason, Isaiah put Christ's first coming and second coming together.

### II. ISSUING IN THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

The Lord's two comings bring in the restoration of Israel (61:4—63:19). The Lord's first coming has much to do with His second coming. Without the foundation laid in His first coming, there would be no way for His second coming to take place. Based upon what He did in His first coming, Christ's second coming will issue in the restoration of Israel.

In His first coming, the Lord Jesus gained His early disciples, such as Peter, John, and James, from the Jews.

They became His believers, but this does not mean that they have given up their Jewish status, for in the millennial kingdom the first twelve apostles will sit on thrones as rulers to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). At that time, they will not be apostles of the church, but, having been brought back by the Lord to their Jewish status, they will be rulers, governors, of Israel. Both Christ and His twelve apostles seemingly forsook Israel and established the church. However, in the restoration, when the Lord returns in His second coming, He will first receive the throne of David His father (Luke 1:32), and then He will be the Ruler of the nations (Rom. 15:12). His twelve apostles will be His helpers to rule over the nation of Israel. From this we can see the relationship between what Christ did in His first coming and what He will do in His second coming.

In God's eyes the Lord's two comings are two aspects which show one unique coming of Christ. In a sense, Christ's coming to earth has not yet been completed. He began to come to mankind two thousand years ago. Since His unique coming has not been finished, it will continue with the second aspect of His coming. When the second aspect of His coming is accomplished, His entire coming from God to mankind will be consummated. Today His coming is not finished, because He is still on the way. Therefore, the unique coming of Christ is of two sections. The first section took place two thousand years ago, and the second section will be accomplished in the future. Hence, in the Old Testament prophecies, Christ's coming was viewed as two mountain peaks which, from a distance, looked like one mountain range. At present, we are in the "valley" between these peaks.

### A. Israel to Be the Priests of Jehovah, and the Gentiles to Be the Laborers to Israel

In the restoration Israel will be priests of Jehovah, the ministers of their God, and the Gentiles will be the laborers to serve Israel (Isa. 61:4-9).

### B. Israel to Exult in Jehovah Her God

Verses 10 and 11 say, "I will rejoice greatly in Jehovah, /

My soul will exult in My God; / For He has clothed Me with the garments of salvation, / He has wrapped Me with the robe of righteousness; / I am like a bridegroom who wears the headdress of the priest, / And like a bride who adorns herself with her jewels. / For as the earth brings forth its sprout, / And as the garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, / So will the Lord Jehovah cause righteousness and praise / To spring up before all the nations." These verses indicate that Israel will exult in Jehovah her God with the enjoyment of His salvation and righteousness. Israel will realize that God's righteousness has brought in His salvation.

### C. Zion to Shine Forth Righteousness and to Show Forth Salvation

In the restoration Zion will shine forth righteousness and will show forth salvation as God's crown of beauty and delight (62:1-5). Because during the restoration righteousness will be dispensed, transfused, into the Jews, they will shine forth righteousness. Also they will show forth salvation as God's crown of beauty and delight. Their shining forth will be such a crown to God. God will be beautified by and will be happy and satisfied with what Israel will shine forth.

### D. Jerusalem to Be Established and Made a Praise in the Earth

Jerusalem will be established and made a praise in the earth (vv. 6-9). The whole earth will praise Jerusalem.

### E. Salvation to Come to the Daughter of Zion

Salvation will come to the daughter of Zion, and the people will be called the holy people, the redeemed of Jehovah (vv. 10-12).

### F. The Anointed of Jehovah Coming to Tread the Winepress to Save Israel from the Nations

The Anointed of Jehovah will come to tread the winepress to save Israel from the nations (63:1-6; Rev. 14:17-20; 19:11-16, 19-21). The word *winepress* in Isaiah 63:2 and in Revelation

14:19-20 and 19:15 refers to the war at Armageddon. Isaiah 61 and 62 show us that Christ will come back to be so much to Israel on the positive side. Isaiah 63 reveals that in His coming back Christ will save Israel from destruction.

During the last three and a half years of this age, Antichrist will persecute the Jews to the uttermost, with the intention of completely destroying Israel. Prior to that time, nearly all of Israel will be brought back to the Holy Land. Then, before the tribulation, Antichrist will make a seven-year covenant of peace with Israel so that they may have their freedom. But after three and a half years, Antichrist will change his mind and will oppose every kind of religion, including Judaism and Roman Catholicism. After destroying Catholicism, Antichrist will attempt to destroy the Jewish religion. At the end of the last three and a half years, Antichrist will cause the armies of the nations to surround Jerusalem. With Jerusalem as the center, the entire region from Bozrah to the Mount of Megiddo (Armageddon, Rev. 16:16) will be occupied by armies. In His coming back, Christ will descend to Bozrah, and beginning there He will tread the winepress, destroying all the armies. In this way He will rescue Israel from destruction.

We have emphasized the fact that Christ's coming is of two aspects or sections. The first section of His coming results in the producing and building up of the church. At the end of the church age, during the last three and a half years of this age, Christ will continue His coming.

This continuation of His coming will be of three parts. First, according to Revelation 12 and 14, Christ will be in the heavens to receive the raptured overcomers into His presence. Second, Christ will descend with His overcomers from the third heaven to the air. While He is in the air, the rapture of the majority of His believers will take place. Then He will judge all the believers to determine who will receive the reward of the kingdom and who will suffer chastisement and discipline during the kingdom age that they may mature. In the air, Christ will also have a wedding day, with Himself as the Bridegroom and the overcoming saints as the bride (Rev. 19:7-9). Third, Christ and His newly-married bride as His

army will descend to Bozrah to destroy the armies of the earth. Moving from Bozrah through Jerusalem to Armageddon, He will tread the winepress. Those who "destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18) and those who oppose God will be slain, Israel will be rescued, and Christ will set up His throne at Jerusalem and will judge the nations. Then He will establish His kingdom to rule over Israel with the twelve apostles as His helpers and also to rule all the nations with the overcoming saints as His helpers.

### G. Jehovah's Lovingkindness to the House of Israel

Isaiah 63:7-9 speaks of Jehovah's lovingkindness to the house of Israel, given according to His compassions and the multitude of His lovingkindnesses, in saving them by the Angel of His presence.

### H. Jehovah to Return to His Rebellious People

Finally, according to verses 10 through 19, Jehovah will return to His rebellious people, who grieved His Spirit of holiness, as their Father and Redeemer.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-TWO

## CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

## (11)

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH, BRINGING IN THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AND OF ALL THINGS, WHICH CONSUMMATES IN THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

Scripture Reading: Isa. 64—66; 61:6

In this message we will cover chapters sixty-four through sixty-six. These chapters reveal the second coming of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah, bringing in the restoration of Israel and of all things, which consummates in the new heaven and new earth. The most striking thing in these chapters is the new heaven and new earth.

### I. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

Isaiah 64:1-5a and 66:15-16 reveal the second coming of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah (cf. 31:4-5). Isaiah 64:1 says, "Oh that You would rend the heavens, that You would come down." This refers to the consummation of Christ's coming from heaven to earth, from God to man.

The Bible shows us that Christ does not intend to remain in the heavens forever. Rather, He intends to come down to earth and remain on earth for eternity. However, before He can do this, He needs to accomplish His work of renewing the earth. He wants to stay not on the old earth but on the new earth.

### II. THE PROPHET'S PRAYER

In 64:5b through 12 we have the prophet's prayer. Isaiah

knew God's heart and prayed according to it. First, he confessed the sins, failures, iniquities, degradation, and corruption of Israel. Then he asked Jehovah to look at them as His people.

### III. JEHOVAH BEING WILLING TO BE INQUIRED OF BY THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR HIM

Jehovah is willing to be inquired of by those who did not ask for Him. He has stretched out His hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts, who provoke Him to anger, and who are smoke in His nose, a fire that burns all day (65:1-7, 11-12; 66:1-6, 17).

### IV. JEHOVAH BLESSING ISRAEL WITH THE BLESSING OF "NEW WINE," AND THEY POSSESSING HIS MOUNTAIN

Jehovah will bless Israel with the blessing of "new wine," and they will possess His mountain (Zion), dwelling there, eating, drinking, and rejoicing (65:8-10, 13-16). In the restoration there will be new wine that will cheer God and His people. Furthermore, instead of working or laboring, Israel will eat, drink, and rejoice.

### V. A RESTORATION BEING BROUGHT IN BOTH TO ISRAEL AND TO ALL THINGS

Isaiah 65:18-25 reveals that a restoration will be brought in both to Israel and to all things. Verse 18 says, "Rejoice and exult forever, / In what I create, / For I am now creating Jerusalem as an exultation / And her people as a rejoicing." Jerusalem will be a joy and an exultation, and her people will rejoice. Even God Himself will exult in Jerusalem and rejoice in His people, and there will no longer be heard in her the voice of weeping and of crying (v. 19).

Verse 20 continues, "There will no longer be in her / An infant who reaches the age of only a few days / Nor an old man who does not fill up his days; / For the lad will die at a hundred years of age, / And the sinner, being a hundred years of age, will be cursed." In the restoration, an infant

will not die before reaching maturity, and one who dies at the age of a hundred will be regarded as a youth.

Verses 21 and 22 go on to say, "They will build houses and inhabit them, / And they will plant vineyards and eat the fruit thereof. / They will not build and another inhabit; / They will not plant and another eat; / For like the days of a tree are the days of My people, / And My chosen ones will enjoy the work of their hands to the full." What is the work mentioned here? The unique work carried out by God's people in the restoration will be to sing, praise, worship, and rejoice.

"They will not labor in vain, / Nor bear children unto turmoil; / For they are the seed of those blessed of Jehovah, / And their offspring with them. / And it will be that before they call, I will answer; / Even while they are speaking, I will hear" (vv. 23-24). Calling on the Lord will be their occupation. Even before they call, He will answer.

Verse 25 concludes, "The wolf and the lamb will feed as one, / And the lion will eat straw like the ox, / And dust will be the serpent's food; / They will not harm nor destroy / In all My holy mountain, says Jehovah." The expressions here are very similar to those in 11:6-9, which also speaks of the restoration brought in through Christ. In this restoration death will be limited, and there will be abundant life and much praise and rejoicing.

### VI. THE RESTORATION OF ZION AND JERUSALEM

Isaiah 66:7-14 speaks of the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem. These verses indicate that the time of the restoration will be a wonderful time. For example, verse 12 says, "I now am extending to her / Peace like a river, / And the glory of the nations / Like an overflowing stream." Here glory denotes the riches and produce of the nations (cf. Gen. 31:1, 16; Esth. 1:4), which will be brought to Jerusalem. Furthermore, whereas the hand of Jehovah will be made known to His servants, He will be indignant toward His enemies (v. 14).

### VII. JEHOVAH GATHERING THE NATIONS TO WORSHIP AT JERUSALEM

Jehovah will gather the nations to worship at Jerusalem,

and they will bring with them the scattered children of Israel as a meal offering to Jehovah, of whom Jehovah will take some for priests (cf. 61:6) and some for Levites (66:18-21). Today we offer sinners to God as sacrifices (Rom. 15:16), but in the restoration the nations will bring the scattered Israelites as a meal offering to God. Just as in the ancient time, some will be appointed to serve as priests, and others will do the Levitical service.

### VIII. CONSUMMATING IN THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

According to Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22-24, the restoration of Israel and of all things brought in by Christ as the Servant of Jehovah consummates in the new heaven and new earth. The book of Isaiah covers many things, including God's chastisement and judgment, but it consummates in the new heaven and new earth. After so many things have passed away, what will remain will be the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem.

In the millennial kingdom the Jews will be priests on the earth, and the believers will be priests in the heavens. At that time, the holy city, New Jerusalem, will comprise only the overcoming Old Testament and New Testament saints, but not the Israelites who will be saved at the Lord's coming back. At the end of the millennium, Satan will stir up opposers, mainly from Gog and Magog, to attack the camp of the Jews and the city of the saints, but fire will come down out of heaven to devour them (Rev. 20:9). In the new heaven and new earth after the millennium, the Jews who were saved at the coming of the Lord Jesus will be mingled with the New Jerusalem. Therefore, in the new heaven and new earth, there will be only two peoples. First, there will be the New Jerusalem, composed of the believers and the Jews, God's sons as the royal family to rule over the nations and as the priests to serve God forever. Second, there will be the nations, who will not be regenerated but only restored and who will live on the earth outside the New Jerusalem to be God's people (Rev. 21:3).

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-THREE

## CHRIST BEING THE SHOOT OF JEHOVAH AND THE FRUIT OF THE EARTH

Scripture Reading: Isa. 4:2-6; 7:14; Matt. 1:22-23; John 1:14; Luke 1:42; Heb. 2:14; John 12:24; Exo. 40:34-35, 38; Num. 9:15-16; 2 Cor. 12:9

Isaiah is a rich book concerning Christ. In this series of messages, we want to see the all-inclusive Christ in the book of Isaiah. We need to thank the Lord, our Immanuel, that in these last days, He has opened up the depths of this book to us.

In this message we would like to read a new translation of Isaiah 4:2-6:

2 In that day the Shoot of Jehovah will be beauty and glory, and the Fruit of the earth, excellence and splendor, to those of Israel who have escaped.

3 And he who is left over in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been written down in Jerusalem for life;

4 When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and has cleansed away the bloodstains of Jerusalem from her midst, by the judging Spirit and the burning Spirit.

5 Jehovah will create over the entire region of Mount Zion and over all her convocations a cloud of smoke by day, and the brightness of a fiery flame by night; for over all, the glory will be a canopy.

6 And there will be a tabernacle as a daytime shade from the heat and as a refuge and a cover from storm and rain.

## I. THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST BEING THE CENTRALITY AND UNIVERSALITY OF THE MOVE OF THE DIVINE TRINITY FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS DIVINE ECONOMY BY THE DISPENSING OF HIMSELF INTO HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE

In Isaiah we can see that our God is an active and aggressive God. He is moving. He has a personal desire, His heart's pleasure. Before the foundation of the world He made a plan in Himself. That plan is His eternal economy to create the universe and man so that He may have a people to express Him in a marvelous way. Isaiah's central point is to show us how God made Christ the centrality and universality of His great move for the accomplishment of His economy. This is why Isaiah reveals so many items of Christ. Christ has to be many items; otherwise, He could not fulfill God's economy.

## II. THE SHOOT OF JEHOVAH AND THE FRUIT OF THE EARTH

Isaiah can be considered as a book of poetry, and Hebrew poetry is composed in pairs. In Isaiah 4:2 there is a pair of aspects of Christ—the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth. In this pair there is a comparison. "The Shoot" is in comparison to "the Fruit," and "Jehovah" is in comparison to "the earth." The title Immanuel includes "Jehovah" and "the earth" because it means God with us, that is, God with man. God is eternal, and man came from the earth. The Fruit of the earth refers to a man made from the dust (Gen. 2:7). Hebrews 2:14 says that the Lord Jesus shared in man's blood and flesh. Furthermore, Christ is the eternal God. John 1:1 says that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was God. Then verse 14 says that the Word became flesh. Christ as God came from eternity, but as man He came from the earth, so He is the Shoot of Jehovah and also the Fruit of the earth.

### A. The Shoot of Jehovah

#### *1. A New Development of Jehovah God for His Increase and Spreading through His Incarnation*

The Shoot of Jehovah is a new development of Jehovah

God for His increase and spreading through His incarnation (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:22-23). "The Shoot of Jehovah" indicates that Jehovah is a big tree, a big plant. The shoot of this plant is a new development for Jehovah to be increased and to spread through His incarnation.

### *2. For the Branching Out of Jehovah God, in His Divinity, into Humanity*

Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah is for the branching out of Jehovah God, in His divinity, into humanity (John 1:14). When Jehovah God branched Himself out, He did it in His divinity to branch Himself into humanity. Before Jesus was born, our unlimited God was existing merely in the territory of His divinity. He did not possess humanity before His incarnation. Approximately two thousand years ago, God was incarnated. In that incarnation, He branched Himself out in His divinity into humanity. From the year of Christ's birth, our God is in both divinity and humanity. This is the difference between the unbelieving Jews' God and our God. Their God is merely in divinity without any element of humanity, but the God we Christians have is One who is in divinity and in humanity. Jesus is the incarnated God, the complete God and the perfect Man.

*Jesus* was the divine title given by God. Jesus means Jehovah the Savior, or Jehovah the salvation. *Immanuel,* meaning *God with us,* was the name called by man. According to our experience of Jesus, we have to call Him Immanuel, which means God with man. Our Jesus is the God-man. He is both God and man, both divine and human. For God to be in humanity is His spreading, His branching out, from one territory to another territory. Today our God exists in two territories—divinity and humanity. Our God today is both divine and human.

### *3. He, in His Divinity, to Be the Beauty and Glory of God's Chosen People in the Day of Restoration*

The incarnated God, in His divinity, will be the beauty and glory of God's chosen people in the day of restoration. Because Christ lives in us, we are partakers of the divine

nature (2 Pet. 1:4). In this sense, we are not only human but also divine. The divine nature is our beauty and our glory. When worldly women go to a special place, they may adorn themselves with the best material and jewelry. This is for their beauty and glory. The uniform of generals in an army is full of stars and badges. This is also for their beauty and glory. Our beauty and glory is not in such outward adornment. Our God with His divine nature is our beauty and our glory. In the day of restoration, if we are faithful, we will be the most beautiful and glorious creatures in this universe because we will have our God in a full way as our beauty and as our glory. Even today if we live Christ, those around us will see that we are weighty and dignified. When a man lives Christ, people will consider that he is a weighty man, a man of gravity, a man of beauty and glory beyond description. Whatever we do and say in Christ is full of dignity and gravity. We should not forget our divine genealogy. We are sons of God in the family of God. His divinity is our beauty and our glory.

### B. The Fruit of the Earth

Christ is also the Fruit of the earth (Isa. 4:2b). When Mary came to Elizabeth, Elizabeth said to Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Luke 1:42). The fruit in the womb of Mary was Jesus. He was in her womb as the Fruit of the earth.

#### *1. A Man Born of Human Blood and Flesh from the Earth*

As the Fruit of the earth, Christ was a man born of human blood and flesh from the earth (Heb. 2:14). The earth is the source of Christ's humanity, just as eternity is the source of His divinity.

#### *2. For the Multiplication and Reproduction of the Divine Life in Humanity*

Christ as the Fruit of the earth is for the multiplication and reproduction of the divine life in humanity (John 12:24). God in Himself, in His divinity, has no way to be multiplied.

Christ as the Fruit of the earth is for multiplication. He was a grain of wheat who died so that many grains could be produced. For His multiplication and reproduction, He needed humanity. Humanity is the soil, the earth, for the Triune God to be multiplied and reproduced.

### *3. Such a Man, in His Humanity, Which Expresses His Divine Beauty and Glory, to Be the Excellence and Splendor of God's Chosen People in the Day of Restoration*

Such a man, the Man Jesus, in His humanity, which expresses His divine beauty and glory, will be the excellence and splendor of God's chosen people in the day of restoration. Even today in the age of grace, we need to experience the excellence and splendor of Jesus in His humanity. On the one hand, a proper Christian should have the divine beauty and glory of Jesus. On the other hand, he should also have the human excellence and splendor of Jesus. A Christian must be both divine and human. Our own human excellence and splendor are very low, but when we live Christ, the human excellence and splendor which we live out are very high. We must live a life which expresses Christ's beauty and glory in a divine way and which expresses Christ's excellence and splendor in a human way. We may not realize much of this today, but when the time of restoration comes, those of us who overcome will be raptured, transformed, and glorified. Then we will fully realize that we have the divine beauty and glory of Jesus and the human excellence and splendor of Jesus.

## III. A COVERING CANOPY OF GLORY AND AN OVERSHADOWING TABERNACLE OF GRACE

There are two pairs of what Christ is in Isaiah 4. The first pair is the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth. The second pair is in verses 5 and 6 where Christ is seen as a covering canopy of glory and an overshadowing tabernacle of grace. The second pair is the issue of the first pair and is produced by the first pair. The canopy is covering, and the tabernacle is overshadowing. The canopy is of the divine glory,

and the tabernacle is of Christ's grace in His humanity. When Christ was incarnated, He was full of grace and the disciples beheld His glory (John 1:14).

### A. The Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the Earth, as the God-man in His Divinity and His Humanity as Well, to Be a Covering Canopy of the Divine Glory and an Overshadowing Tabernacle of Grace in Humanity

The Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth, as the God-man in His divinity and His humanity as well, will be a covering canopy of the divine glory and an overshadowing tabernacle of grace in humanity.

### B. A Covering Canopy of Glory

#### *1. Being the Divine Glory Covering All the Interests of Jehovah God in His Holy Mountain*

Christ as a covering canopy of glory is the divine glory covering all the interests of Jehovah God in His holy mountain (Isa. 4:5). The holy mountain is Mount Zion. God's temple was on Mount Zion, and God's people were there having all kinds of convocations. These convocations, these meetings of God's people, were the interests of God on the earth. God's interests on the earth need such a covering canopy of glory.

#### *2. Being the Cloud of Smoke as a Shade by Day from the Heat and the Brightness of a Fiery Flame by Night, Both Being Created by God*

This covering canopy of glory is also a cloud of smoke as a shade by day from the heat and the brightness of a fiery flame by night against the darkness. Both the cloud of smoke and the brightness of a fiery flame are created by God (Exo. 40:34-35, 38; Num. 9:15-16). When the day of restoration comes, there will be over Mount Zion a cloud of

smoke in the day and the brightness of a fiery flame in the night. We should not consider that the cloud of smoke and the brightness of a fiery flame are physical things. Isaiah tells us that Jehovah will create them. This means that they will be something which has never before existed, something which will be created by God. God's glory as the cloud of smoke and the brightness of the fiery flame will remain on Mount Zion all the time. In the day His glory will be as a covering cloud of smoke to be a shade from the heat. In the night His glory will be as the shining brightness of a fiery flame to keep God's people away from darkness. God Himself as the glory expressed in Christ will remain as a canopy over Mount Zion to cover His interests, which include His holy temple, His holy people, and all His holy convocations.

Our revised translation of Isaiah 4:5 conveys the proper spiritual meaning of Christ being a covering canopy of glory. This verse says, "Jehovah will create over the entire region of Mount Zion and over all her convocations a cloud of smoke by day, and the brightness of a fiery flame by night; for over all, the glory will be a canopy." The comma in the phrase "for over all, the glory will be a canopy" is very crucial. If the comma were removed from this phrase, this would mean that the canopy and the glory are two separate items and that the canopy covers and protects God's glory. This is against the spiritual principle. God's glory does not need anything to cover or protect it. Instead, His glory is always covering other things. The Concordant Version of Isaiah also puts a comma between "all" and "the glory." According to our revised translation, over Mount Zion, over the temple, and over the holy convocations, the glory will be a canopy.

### C. An Overshadowing Tabernacle of Grace in Humanity

Christ will also be an overshadowing tabernacle of grace in humanity (Isa. 4:6, John 1:14).

### *1. Being Christ in His Humanity That Expresses His Divinity*

This overshadowing tabernacle of grace is Christ in His humanity, which expresses His divinity (John 1:14b).

### *2. Overshadowing His Believers in His Grace as a Daytime Shade from the Heat and as a Refuge and a Cover from Storm and Rain*

He is presently overshadowing His believers in His grace as a daytime shade from the heat and as a refuge and a cover from storm and rain (2 Cor. 12:9). Christ is the canopy to cover God's interests, and He is also a tabernacle to be our shade and our refuge. The tabernacle is a shade, a refuge, and a cover. Our experience of this is fully explained in 2 Corinthians 12:9, which describes Christ overshadowing His believers in His grace as their strength. The Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth are one pair of items of Christ in Isaiah 4. This pair produces another pair—Christ as a covering canopy of glory and an overshadowing tabernacle of grace in humanity.

According to Isaiah 4, our Christ is the new development of God. He is the branching out of God in His divinity into humanity. As such a One, He will be the beauty and glory of God's chosen people in the day of restoration. This glory will be a great canopy to cover all of God's interests on earth. Christ is also the Fruit of the earth for the multiplication and reproduction of the divine life in humanity. This reproducing Fruit of the earth will be the excellence and splendor of God's chosen people. Christ is also a shade to us from the heat and a refuge and a cover to protect us from the storm and rain. Have we ever considered that Christ is so many items in Isaiah 4? Christ is God's development, God's branching out, and the Fruit for God's reproduction; He has the divine beauty and glory with the human excellence and splendor. Therefore, He can cover us as a canopy and overshadow us as a tabernacle to be our shade and refuge. Isaiah 4 shows that Christ is everything to us.

## IV. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTAKING OF CHRIST

Isaiah 4:2-4 reveal the requirements for partaking of Christ.

### A. The Requirements Being the Conditions for God's Chosen People to Partake of Christ in the Age of Restoration

The following four requirements are the conditions for God's chosen people to partake of Christ in the age of restoration.

#### *1. Having Escaped, Having Been Released, from Captivity*

The first requirement is that they have escaped, having been released, from captivity (Isa. 4:2b). We should be people who have escaped any kind of bondage or slavery. We should have an absolute release from captivity.

#### *2. Living and Remaining in a Holy Life in God's Chosen Place—Zion and Jerusalem*

The second requirement is to live and remain in a holy life in God's chosen place—Zion and Jerusalem (v. 3a). Today the local church is Zion, and the Body of Christ is Jerusalem. We must live and remain in the church to live a holy life. This is a condition for our partaking of Christ.

#### *3. Chosen by God according to His Record of Life*

Third, we must be chosen by God according to His record of life (v. 3b). Our being chosen by God qualifies us to partake of Christ.

#### *4. The Filth Having Been Washed Away and the Bloodstains Having Been Cleansed Away by the Lord with His Judging and Burning Spirit*

Fourth, the filth should be washed away and the bloodstains should be cleansed away by the Lord with His judging and burning Spirit (v. 4). The judging and burning Spirit should work within us to wash away our filth and to cleanse away our bloodstains. We "kill" the saints through our

gossiping and spreading of rumors. We need the judging and burning Spirit to cleanse us inwardly from these bloodstains.

### B. The Age of Grace Being a Foretaste of the Age of Restoration; Hence, the Above Requirements Being Also the Conditions for the Believers to Partake of Christ in the New Testament Economy

The age of grace is a foretaste of the age of restoration; hence, the above requirements are also the conditions for the believers to partake of Christ in the New Testament economy. The age of grace is a foretaste of the age of restoration, and we are the people who can enjoy such a foretaste. We have the privilege of partaking of Christ if we meet the requirements, the conditions.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-FOUR

## CHRIST SEEN IN HIS DIVINE GLORY WITH HIS HUMAN VIRTUES HELD IN HIS HOLINESS

Scripture Reading: Isa. 6:1-10; 5:16b; John 12:39-41

Isaiah, a book which was quoted greatly by the Lord Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament, reveals many wonderful aspects concerning Christ. In message one we saw Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth (Isa. 4:2). Isaiah 7:14 says that the virgin will conceive, bear a son, and call His name Immanuel. This is Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah for the branching out of Jehovah God, in His divinity, into humanity. This is a new development of Jehovah God for His increase and spreading through His incarnation. The Shoot of Jehovah implies the spreading of Jehovah to branch Himself out for His increase. Christ as the Fruit of the earth is for reproduction. Christ, as the one grain who fell into the earth to die, produced many grains, many believers, in resurrection (John 12:24). Divinity cannot spread or increase without humanity. The divine life is reproduced in the human life. One day the divine God came to put on human blood and flesh (Heb. 2:14). This was Christ as the Fruit of the earth, a man born of human blood and flesh from the earth.

In message one we also saw that Christ is a covering canopy of glory and an overshadowing tabernacle of grace (Isa. 4:5-6). Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth will eventually become a canopy to cover all the interests of God on this earth. When we are in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth, we will fully realize this. Christ is the universal canopy to cover all of God's interests. He is also the tabernacle overshadowing us, God's elect, protecting us from all kinds of troubles signified

by heat, storm, and rain. I hope that we can get into these aspects of Christ and fellowship about them until they become our experience.

In this message we want to see the vision of Christ in Isaiah 6. In this chapter Christ is seen in His divine glory with His human virtues held in His holiness. His glory is divine, His virtues are human, and His holiness is standing fast. The Bible says that no man has seen God at any time (John 1:18a). Our God is invisible, yet Isaiah saw Him. Isaiah declared that he saw the Lord, the King, Jehovah of hosts (Isa. 6:1).

A clear picture is presented in Isaiah 6, showing us Christ in glory. This chapter, however, does not give us a detailed description of what Christ looks like. Isaiah only says, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple" (v. 1). The Lord seen by Isaiah must have been in the image of a man because verse 1 tells us that the train of His robe filled the temple. His robe is the first main item in this scene because it fills the temple.

The second main item in Isaiah's vision is the temple being filled with smoke (v. 4). The third main item is the seraphim (v. 2). Verse two says, "Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings." The word "hovered" literally means "stood." The seraphim stood over Him. We know that they were standing for His holiness because they declare, "Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts" (v. 3). Verse 4 says, "The foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called." The divine glory is another major item in Isaiah's vision. Verse 3 says, "The whole earth is filled with His glory." John 12 says that Isaiah saw the Lord's glory and spoke concerning Him (v. 41). The smoke that filled the house, the temple, in Isaiah 6:4 is the glory. Isaiah 4:5 also refers to glory as a cloud of smoke over the convocations of Israel.

The divine glory is signified by the smoke, holiness is signified by the seraphim, and the Lord's human virtues are signified by the train of His robe. Human virtues mainly are based upon righteousness. An unrighteous person does not have human virtues. He is bankrupt in human virtues

because he is unrighteous. Human virtues depend upon righteousness. When Christ accomplished His redemption on the cross, He fulfilled the requirements of God's glory, God's holiness, and God's righteousness. As fallen sinners, we cannot fulfill the requirements of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness, but Christ satisfied them. We need to see the vision of Christ in Isaiah 6 in His glory, His holiness, and His righteousness with His human virtues.

## I. A VISION SEEN BY ISAIAH IN HIS DEPRESSION

The vision of Christ in glory was seen by Isaiah in his depression (Isa. 6:1, 5). Isaiah loved God and loved Israel, God's elect. He realized by looking at Israel's situation, that there was not the expression of God's glory. Israel had also violated God's holiness and had become corrupt in human virtues. Furthermore, King Uzziah had died. Among the kings of Israel, he was a very good king, yet he died. In that kind of environment, Isaiah was surely very depressed. The Lord appeared to him in his depression.

## II. THE LORD, THE KING, JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, APPEARING TO ISAIAH

The Lord, the King, Jehovah of hosts, appeared to Isaiah. He saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne (Isa. 6:1a). Isaiah saw the glory of God and the train of the Lord's robe filling the entire temple. He also saw the seraphim, and each seraphim had six wings. Two of the wings were for covering his face, two covered his feet, and with two he flew. These seraphim called to each other, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth is filled with His glory" (v. 3). That was their fellowship with each other, indicating that they signify or represent the holiness of Christ. They were standing there for His holiness. Such a vision should have encouraged the depressed prophet, but he did not tell us he was encouraged. Instead, he said, "Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, and in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell" (v. 5). Then one of the seraphim flew to Isaiah with an ember from the altar to touch

his mouth for his cleansing (vv. 6-7). This is the picture presented in Isaiah 6.

In Isaiah 6 Christ, the God-man, is seen in His divine glory. This God-man is unveiled in chapter four as the Shoot of Jehovah, the Fruit of the earth, a canopy covering God's interests in the entire universe, and the tabernacle overshadowing God's elect to protect them from all kinds of troubles. Isaiah 6 shows us the same One in another aspect. In Isaiah 6 He is the God in glory sitting on the throne. Because He is wearing a long robe, He is also a man. This One is the God-man with divine glory and human virtues.

His human virtues are signified by the long train of His robe. This indicates that the vision here pays more attention to Christ's human virtues. The four Gospels show us Christ as God and as man, but they show us more concerning Christ as a man. In the Gospels we see more of Christ in His manhood and in His humanity than in His divinity. Christ is expressed in His human virtues much more than in His divine glory. However, His human virtues need the divine glory as a source. Christ is a person with the divine glory expressed in His human virtues.

We all have to see the full vision of Christ in Isaiah 6. Christ is sitting on a high and lofty throne as the Lord, the King, Jehovah of hosts. He is the very God on the throne. John the apostle told us in John 12 that Isaiah saw Christ's glory. This means that Jehovah of hosts, the King, the Lord, was Christ. Christ was wearing a long robe in this vision. This means that Christ's humanity is "long." The train of Christ's robe fills the temple. The Lord who appeared to Isaiah was on a high and lofty throne in His divine glory (John 12:39-41), signified by the smoke, and with His human virtues, signified by the train of His robe. His holiness is held by the seraphim (Isa. 6:2-3).

### III. CHRIST'S PERSON

Christ is seen in Isaiah 6 as God in His divinity, signified by the smoke, and as a man in His humanity, signified by the train of His robe.

### IV. CHRIST'S DIVINE GLORY BEING UNIVERSAL AND HIS HUMAN VIRTUES BEING LOCAL

Christ's divine glory is filling the earth (Isa. 6:3b), whereas His human virtues are filling the temple (v. 1b). The glory filling the earth is universal, and the robe filling the temple is local.

### V. ISAIAH BEING SENT

Isaiah 6:8-10 shows us Isaiah being sent. He was sent by the Christ who is full of the divine glory and the human virtues in His holiness (vv. 1-4). Christ's holiness is based upon His righteousness. Isaiah 5:16 says, "Jehovah of hosts is exalted in judgment, and the holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness." God is sanctified in His righteousness. Someone who is righteous is separated from the common people. A righteous person is a sanctified person. He is not common but holy, separated unto God. Righteousness is the foundation of God's throne (Psa. 97:2), and we are expecting new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13). Since God is righteous, He is holy, sanctified, separated from the common people. In the four Gospels, Jesus surely was a separated, unique, and particular person because He was righteous all the time. Therefore, He is holy, sanctified.

Isaiah was sent by Christ to a people who were short of the divine glory, were violating the divine holiness, and were corrupt in the human virtues (Isaiah 6:5). He was sent by the Lord to lead Israel to express Christ's divine glory in His human virtues held in His holiness (Isa. 5:16b). In other words, God wanted Israel to be a holy people, fully separated from the nations. Their holiness is based upon their righteousness. Then they could express God's glory. Today to live Christ is to express God's glory. To live Christ is to be righteous. Righteousness is the base, the foundation, of God's salvation. God's salvation firstly justifies us, making us righteous. Then we will be holy, sanctified, separated. Spontaneously, we will be brought into the expression of the divine glory of Christ, which is to live Christ.

Every sent one is sent by the Lord to do the same thing.

First, God sent the prophets. Second, God sent His Son. Third, God sent the New Testament apostles. He sent them all to bring God's chosen people into a state of living Christ. He desired that they would live righteousness, showing that they are a holy people, different and distinct from the nations. Then they would express Christ's divine glory. To live Christ is to express Christ's divine glory in His holiness with His righteousness. We must be righteous people, holy people, and people full of the divine glory. Then we will be those who live Christ.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-FIVE

## A CHILD OF BOTH THE DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES BORN OF A HUMAN VIRGIN AND A SON IN THE DIVINE NATURE GIVEN BY THE ETERNAL FATHER

Scripture Reading: Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; Matt. 1:20, 23, 21; John 3:16

In this message we come to two of the greatest prophecies in the Bible concerning Christ, recorded in Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6. These prophecies speak of a child born and a son given. The word *child* in these verses implies God, implies man, implies God becoming a man, and implies God and man mingled together as one. Such a child was a God-man. This child of both the divine and human natures born of a human virgin was also a son given in the divine nature by the Eternal Father.

The first poetic pair of items revealed concerning Christ in the book of Isaiah is that He is the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth (4:2). The second pair of items concerning Christ is an issue of the first pair. This pair is Christ as the covering canopy of glory and the overshadowing tabernacle of grace (4:5-6). We are covered under the glory and we are overshadowed by grace. Christ as grace is a tabernacle overshadowing us, and Christ as glory is a canopy covering us. Many of the riches of Christ seen in Isaiah are not pointed out in the New Testament. Paul's writings, for example, do not speak of Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth. The Christ whom Paul ministered to us and helped us to pursue is God's Shoot to branch out God and the Fruit of the earth for His multiplication and reproduction. God's branching out was for Him to spread

Himself from and with divinity into humanity. In eternity past and before the incarnation, He was merely in the territory of divinity. Then through His incarnation, He branched out into another territory, the territory of humanity.

The second revelation Isaiah saw concerning Christ was that of Christ in His divine glory with His human virtues held in His holiness (6:1-10). His divine glory is signified by the smoke, His human virtues are signified by the train of His robe, and His holiness is held by the seraphim. Isaiah was sent by the Christ who is full of the divine glory and the human virtues in His holiness.

In this message we come to the third major revelation of Christ in Isaiah, seen in 7:14 and 9:6. This pair of items of Christ is a child born of a human virgin and a son given by the Eternal Father. Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 9:6 says, "For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; and the government is upon His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." The child born in 9:6 is the One born of a virgin and called Immanuel in 7:14.

## I. A CHILD BORN OF A HUMAN VIRGIN

The child born of a human virgin is Immanuel, God with man (Isa. 7:14; 9:6a). He was a human child born of a human virgin, yet He was also the very God. Isaiah was written about seven hundred years before Christ's incarnation, yet it speaks of a child born who would be the very God. This child was a "God-man child," a child of a dual nature, the divine nature and the human nature. He was a divine-human child.

### A. First, God Being Begotten in the Virgin Mary of the Holy Spirit

First, God was begotten in the virgin Mary of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 1:20 says that the angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph saying, "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary your wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit." Before Jesus was born of a virgin, God was begotten

in her, born into her. That which was begotten in Mary was of the Holy Spirit. The divine essence out of the Holy Spirit had been generated in Mary's womb before she delivered the child Jesus. God was born into Mary and remained in Mary's womb for nine months.

### B. Then a Human Child Being Born with the Divine Nature, out of the Human Virgin, to Be a God-man

Then that which was born of God the Spirit into Mary was brought forth. Jesus, Immanuel, was delivered out of Mary's womb. First, God was begotten in the virgin Mary of the Holy Spirit. Then, a human child was brought forth with the divine nature, out of a human virgin, to be a God-man (v. 23a).

### C. To Be Named Jesus—Jehovah the Savior

This One was named Jesus—Jehovah the Savior (v. 21). Jesus is not only a man but also Jehovah; He is Jehovah becoming our salvation, our Savior.

### D. Called by the Experienced Ones Emmanuel—God with Us

He was called by the ones who experienced Him Emmanuel—God with us (v. 23b). The child born of Mary was a God-man child. Jesus is a God-man. On this earth there was a child who was a God-man. God did not create such a man. He created Adam approximately four thousand years before the birth of Jesus. Before His birth, there had never been such a human being, a man mingled with God. Jesus was the name given to Him by God, while Immanuel was the name called by man. This God-man is Emmanuel, and He is also God the Savior.

He is God coming from divinity and with divinity into humanity to be Jehovah the Savior to save us from sin, on the negative side, and to save us to God, on the positive side. We were created by God and unto God, but we became fallen and left God. God placed man in front of Him, the tree of life, but man's fall caused us to turn our back to Him.

Therefore, God Himself came to be both God and man that He might be Jehovah the Savior to save us from sin unto Himself. The destination of our salvation is God. Before we were saved, we were in sin. Now that we are saved, we are in God and God is in us (1 John 4:15). In God we have been regenerated with His life to be men of God, God-men. Before a brother was saved, he may have been from Hong Kong. He was a "Hong Kong man." But now that he is saved, he is a God-man, one who is in God and who has God in him. We now have Jesus, Jehovah our Savior, and Emmanuel, God with us.

### II. A SON GIVEN BY THE ETERNAL FATHER

The child born of a human virgin is a son given by the Eternal Father (Isa. 9:6a; John 3:16).

### A. His Name to Be Called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:6 says that this One's name is to be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Thus far, we have seen that this One is both Jesus and Immanuel. Isaiah 9:6 reveals four more items of what Christ is. Some translations separate the words *Wonderful* and *Counselor* with a comma, indicating that these are two separate titles. However, because the other items in 9:6 are composed of a noun with a modifier, it is logical to say that "Wonderful" should modify "Counselor." Christ is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace.

The prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 concerning Immanuel can be seen in its fulfillment in Matthew 1:20-23. The prophecy in Isaiah 9:6 concerning Christ as the wonderful One can be seen in its fulfillment in John 3:16. Isaiah 9:6 says that "a child is born to us, a son is given to us." John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." John 3:16 is based upon Isaiah 9:6. A son was given by a child being born. In the birth of that child, there was a gift given by God—His Son. That child was both a man-child and a God-child, that is, a God-man child. The Eternal Father

gave us a gift, and that gift was His Son, who became the God-man.

His Son, the gift given to us, is called the Wonderful Counselor. He is also the Mighty God and the Eternal Father. The Gospel of John unveils the Son as well as the Eternal Father. The Son and the Father are mentioned many times in this Gospel. It shows us that the Son and the Father are one (John 10:30; 14:9-10). He is also the Prince of Peace. This title is related to government. Isaiah 9:6 says, "The government is upon His shoulders," and verse 7 says, "To the increase of His government and to His peace there is no end." In Luke 1 the angel Gabriel said to Mary that "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall not be an end" (v. 33).

This One was a child born of a human virgin and a son given by the Eternal Father. John 1:14 says that He was the Word, the very God, who became flesh. John 1:14 does not use the words *born* or *given*. It says the Word *became* flesh. He was the Word, and then He became flesh. His becoming flesh was His coming full of grace and reality. His becoming flesh was God's incarnation, in which He became God's embodiment (Col. 2:9). God came as grace and reality for us to receive Him, gain Him, and enjoy Him. This God, who is grace as our portion, is also our reality. We had nothing real until we received the incarnated God. When we enjoy Him, He becomes our portion, and this portion is our reality. When the Word became flesh, He came as grace and reality.

The child born of the virgin is Jesus and Immanuel, and this child is the gift given as the Son. This Son, this gift, is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace. When we received Christ, we received Him as so many marvelous items. He is Jehovah our Savior, to save us from sin into Himself, and He is Immanuel, God with us. We enjoy this One as grace, which is God Himself as our portion for our enjoyment. The issue of our enjoyment of Him as our portion is that He becomes our reality. We then become real men. Nothing with us now is false, unreal.

We also enjoy Christ as our Counselor every day. Sometimes when we go to our wives or husbands to ask them

something, they will say that they do not have the time at that moment to answer us. But whenever we go to Jesus, He never tells us that He is busy. He immediately gives us the counsel. In all of our relationships with others, He is our Counselor to give us the best counsel. Our Counselor is the Mighty God. Without Him, we do not have the power or the strength to carry out His counsel. He gives us counsel, and then He is our power and strength for carrying out this counsel.

We also enjoy Him as the Eternal Father and as the Prince of Peace, reigning and ruling within us in peace. When we have Him, we have His ruling, His government, His peace. When a husband is angry with his wife, he is not under any ruling, so there is no peace. If he would silently receive the cross and receive Christ as the Prince ruling over him, he would immediately have peace within. This peace comes from Christ's inner ruling.

The wonderful One we possess and enjoy today is Jesus, Jehovah the Savior, and Immanuel, God with us. He is grace, reality, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace. Jesus is everything! We have only one God, but our God is an all-inclusive God. Whatever we need and whatever we lack, He is.

### B. The Government to Be upon His Shoulders

The government is upon the shoulders of Christ, the wonderful One (Isa. 9:6). The government which is upon His shoulders will be increased with His peace without end. He will be upon the throne of David to rule over His kingdom, to establish and uphold His kingdom in justice and righteousness firstly in the millennium and then in the new heaven and new earth unto eternity (Isa. 9:7).

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-SIX

## A SANCTUARY TO THE POSITIVE ONES AND A STONE TO STRIKE AGAINST, A ROCK OF STUMBLING, A TRAP, AND A SNARE TO THE NEGATIVE ONES

Scripture Reading: Isa. 8:14-15; John 1:14; 2:19, 21; Rev. 21:2-3, 22; Matt. 21:44a; 1 Pet. 2:7-8; 1 Cor. 1:22-23

In the previous message, we saw the revelation of Christ in Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6. In those verses He is revealed as a child of both the divine and human natures born of a human virgin and as a son in the divine nature given by the Eternal Father. In this message we want to see the revelation of Christ in Isaiah 8:14-15. In these verses Christ is revealed as a sanctuary to the positive ones. He is also seen as a stone to strike against, a rock of stumbling, a trap, and a snare to the negative ones.

### I. A SANCTUARY TO THE POSITIVE ONES

Christ is a sanctuary to the positive ones (Isa. 8:14a). In order to enter into this revelation, we need to see that the Triune God is our dwelling place. In Psalm 90:1, Moses said, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." Our God is our eternal dwelling place. Because He is our dwelling place, we can rest within Him. There is also food and drink within Him. Light, air, a wall for the dweller's protection, and entrances also accompany a proper dwelling place. Our God is such an enterable dwelling place to us with all of these aspects.

The Old Testament shows that God gained a collective people, the people of Israel. He brought them to Mount Sinai and charged them to build a tabernacle. Eventually, when they entered into the good land, they built the temple to replace the tabernacle. The tabernacle and the temple were

not only the dwelling place of God but also the dwelling place of His serving ones, the priests. They lived and served in the temple of God. They were living together with God. God was their "roommate." We have to realize that God is not only our Savior, Redeemer, Master, Lord, and life but also our dwelling place. He is also one of the dwellers, so He is our roommate. The very God in whom we believe is our roommate, with whom we are living every day.

### A. The Inner Temple for God's Dwelling

We have to see the central thought of God toward the positive ones, His chosen people. The positive ones are the ones who were chosen, called, redeemed, and saved by God, the ones who have been regenerated and are being transformed into the divine image. God to them is not just an ordinary dwelling place. God to them is a sanctuary, and the sanctuary is the inner temple for God's dwelling. The most inward part of the temple is the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God. God's dwelling becomes our dwelling. Such a revelation of God as our sanctuary should cause us to aspire to live a life with God as our roommate all the time. We need to have definite, intimate, and sweet times with God as our roommate. We should live, stay, and dwell all the time with God and in God.

### B. The Holy Place for the Priests to Stay and to Serve God

Christ is the sanctuary, the Holy Place, for us as the priests to stay and to serve God.

### C. The Incarnated Christ Being a Tabernacle to God's People

When God was incarnated to be a man, He tabernacled among men on earth. The incarnated Christ is a tabernacle to God's people (John 1:14). He is the tabernacle of God.

### D. The God-man, Christ, Being the Inner Temple of God

When Jesus came out to minister, He told the Jewish

people that He was God's temple (John 2:19, 21). The God-man, Christ, is the inner temple of God. In John 1 He is God's tabernacle; in John 2 He is God's temple. The book of Isaiah, written about seven hundred years before the incarnation of Christ, prophesied that this coming One would be the sanctuary of God's chosen people for them to live with God, taking God as their roommate.

When we enjoy Him as our dwelling place and as our roommate, we have light, air, water, food, and everything that we need. When I am away from my home, the place where I stay may have many things, but it does not have what I have at home to meet my needs. There is no place on earth as good as our home. Whenever I return to my home, I have a feeling of "home, sweet home." Our home today is a person—Christ, who is also God's dwelling place.

### E. Christ with All the Members of His Body to Be Consummated as the Enlarged Tabernacle and Temple of God—the New Jerusalem

In the New Testament, we are made a part of this sanctuary, so in the Epistles we are told that we are God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16). Christ as the Head and we as the members of His Body are the temple of God. Eventually, this temple will consummate in the New Jerusalem, the enlarged, extended sanctuary of God. Christ with all the members of His Body will be consummated as the enlarged tabernacle and temple of God—the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2-3, 22).

In Revelation 21, John said that he did not see the temple in the New Jerusalem, because God and the Lamb are the temple. In the new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem will be a mutual dwelling place for both God and us for eternity. The holy city as the tabernacle of God is for God to dwell in, and God and the Lamb as the temple are for us to dwell in. God dwells in us, and we dwell in Him. God is our dwelling place, our sunshine, our air, our water, our food, our rest, and our everything. We also become His enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest. In the New Jerusalem, all of God's children throughout the ages will be His roommates for eternity. All of those who followed Satan will be his

roommates in the lake of fire. The church life is a life in which we take our God, our Lord, our Christ as our sanctuary and as our roommate.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus charges us to abide in Him (John 15:5). The word *abide* means not only to remain but also to dwell. In John 14:23 the Lord said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." The abode is the dwelling place. This is a mutual abode for the Triune God to abide in the believers and for the believers to abide in Him. In Ephesians 3 Paul prayed that the Father would strengthen us into our inner man, so that Christ could make His home in our hearts (vv. 16-17). This is Christ making us His home for us to take Him as our home. If Christ takes us as His home, we can be assured that we will have Christ as our home. Then He will live with us and we will live with Him. This is God and man living together as roommates. Eventually, the conclusion of the divine revelation is the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the aggregate of God and man living together. For eternity God will love man, man will love God, and God and man will live together as roommates.

It is amazing that seven hundred years before Christ was born, Isaiah prophesied that this One, who is Jehovah's Shoot to branch out Jehovah, in His divinity, into humanity, would be the sanctuary of all His chosen ones. When we are in God as our sanctuary, enjoying Him as our roommate, we see Him everywhere. He is our sunshine, our drinking water, our food, and our air for us to breathe. It is wonderful that we can take a deep breath of God as our fresh air. We enjoy God in all these aspects when we dwell in Him as our sanctuary, our dwelling place.

### II. A STONE TO STRIKE AGAINST, A ROCK OF STUMBLING, A TRAP, AND A SNARE TO THE NEGATIVE ONES

Isaiah was very honest and faithful to show us what Christ is to both the positive and negative ones. Christ is so wonderful to the positive ones, but He is unpleasant to the negative ones.

To the positive ones, He is an all-inclusive sanctuary. To the negative ones, He is a stone to strike against, a rock of stumbling, a trap, and a snare (Isa. 8:14b-15).

### A. A Stone to Strike against and a Rock of Stumbling

The Pharisees and the Jewish leaders struck against Christ as a stone (Matt. 21:44a), and the unbelieving ones stumbled at Christ as a rock (1 Pet. 2:7-8; 1 Cor. 1:22-23). Christ was despised by the Pharisees and Jewish leaders. Because they despised Him, they struck against Him but could not move Him. Instead, He became a stumbling stone to them (Rom. 9:33), and they fell upon Him (Matt. 21:44a). Many negative ones throughout the centuries have been stumbled by Christ.

There are many things concerning Christ that stumble people. The Old Testament prophesied that He would be of the seed of David (2 Sam. 7:12-14a) and that He would come out of the city of David, Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). His mother Mary was a descendant of Nathan, David's son (Luke 3:31b), and Joseph was a descendant of Solomon, another of David's sons (Matt. 1:6b). Joseph and Mary were poor people who lived in the despised region of Galilee in the city of Nazareth. Because of the enrollment decreed by Caesar Augustus, Joseph had to return to David's city, Bethlehem, because he was out of the house and family of David (Luke 2:1-5). By this enrollment Mary and Joseph were brought from Nazareth to Bethlehem so that the Savior might be born there for the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the place of His birth. After His birth, He was laid in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn (Luke 2:7). Later, Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth, where Jesus grew up as a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23). This was a stumbling to the unbelieving Jews, who thought He came out of Nazareth (John 7:41-42, 52). He was born in Bethlehem in a stumbling way.

Even today many things concerning Christ are a stumbling to the negative ones. Throughout the centuries thousands of people have been stumbled by Christ. Most of the people who are extremely wise, intelligent, powerful, and of the upper

class do not care for Christ (Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:26-29). The church of God is composed not mainly of the upper class, but of the lowborn of the world and the despised. To appreciate the upper class is against God's mind and a shame to the church. Because Brother Nee realized this, he visited the homes of the poor saints, not the wealthy ones. God chose mostly the foolish, the weak, the lowborn, and the despised, so that no one would be able to boast before Him.

### B. A Trap and a Snare

Christ is also revealed in Isaiah 8:14 as a trap and a snare. He is a trap for the negative ones as the running animals and a snare for the negative ones as the flying fowls. A lion cannot be snared; it must be trapped. A bird, on the other hand, must be snared. The Pharisees and the Jewish leaders can be likened to the running animals who were trapped by the Lord Jesus. They attempted to trap the Lord Jesus, but instead He became a trap to them. Matthew 22 records how the Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadducees worked together to confront Him with questions, doing their best to trap Him. They were like hunters, hunting together to trap Jesus. After answering all of their questions and avoiding their traps, Jesus asked them one question. Through that one question, He trapped all of them (vv. 41-46). Christ was a trap to these ones.

The book of Acts records that the Jews were following Paul in their opposition of him. We can say that these Jewish opposers and persecutors of Paul set snares for him. Because Paul was so capable, he could use his wisdom to escape their snares. He had a Savior who was always delivering him out of the hands of these opposers. Instead of them snaring Paul, Christ became a snare to them.

Anyone who thinks that he is more clever or wiser than Jesus will eventually suffer. To the negative ones, the unbelievers, Christ is a stone to strike against and to fall upon. He is a rock of stumbling to those who do not regard Him. He is also a trap and a snare to catch those who are negative. No one can escape from Christ. Everyone has something to do with Christ and is related to Christ. We can

either be a positive one toward Him or a negative one toward Him. We may say that we do not care for Him, but He cares for us. He is the Lord and the Creator of all men. Even among today's Christians, some are positive and others are negative. Many may acknowledge that Jesus is their Lord, their Savior, and their Redeemer, yet they may be indifferent toward Him, not caring for Him. However, He cares for us and will deal with us.

To the positive ones He is a sanctuary. We can live in Him as our sanctuary, and in Him we can receive Him as our bountiful provision and all-inclusive supply. To the negative ones, however, the unbelieving ones, He is a stone to strike against, a rock of stumbling, a trap, and a snare. One day everyone will have to stand before Him to pass through His judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Even we Christians will have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ after our rapture to the air (2 Cor. 5:10). At that time we will have to give an account to Him concerning our life and service.

We hope that we are the positive ones in our relationship with Christ. We want to dwell in Him and enjoy Him as our dwelling place, even our Holy of Holies. He is our sanctuary in whom we can enjoy all the divine riches. In Him we can enjoy Him as our divine sunshine, our divine air, our divine water, and our divine food. All of the rich provision in Him as our sanctuary is divine. This means that God is here as everything to us for us to enjoy. The only way that we can enjoy God in every way is to live in Him, taking Him as our sanctuary and living with Him as our roommate.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-SEVEN

## THE GREAT LIGHT FOR THE SHINING IN DARKNESS AND FOR THE RELEASE FROM BONDAGE

Scripture Reading: Isa. 9:1-5; Matt. 4:12-16; John 1:9, 4-5; Acts 26:18; 1 Pet. 2:9b; Col. 1:13; Luke 1:78-79; Isa. 10:26-27; Judg. 7:24-26

In the previous messages, we have seen many items of Christ unveiled in the book of Isaiah. He is the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth (4:2-6). He is the Christ in glory (6:1-5). As Immanuel, He was a child born of a human virgin and a son given by the Eternal Father (7:14; 9:6-7). He is also a sanctuary to the positive ones and a stone to strike against, a rock of stumbling, a trap, and a snare to the negative ones (8:14-15). In this message we want to see another aspect of Christ. In Isaiah 9:1-5 we see Him as the great light for the shining in darkness and for the release from bondage.

Light is crucial for our existence. Where light is, there is life. Where darkness is, there is death. According to the Bible, darkness is a punishment. Darkness equals death, and darkness is a prison. God uses darkness as death and a prison to punish people. Exodus shows that darkness was part of the punishment on Egypt (10:21-23). Revelation shows the judgment of darkness on the kingdom of Antichrist (16:10). Actually, the entire fallen world is under God's judgment of darkness (Eph. 5:8a). In every city and even in every home among fallen mankind, there is darkness. We can testify that before we were saved, we were in darkness. We were in darkness until the genuine gospel came to us, and we saw the light.

In the entire universe, light is the key to life. Plants, animals, and men all need light in order to live. In the Bible,

we Christians are called the sons of God (Gal. 3:26) and the sons of light (John 12:36). As the sons of light, we should live in the light, walk in the light, remain in the light, and be persons altogether in the light. When we are in the light, we are in fellowship with our Triune God (1 John 1:5-7). Then we participate in what He is and enjoy Him.

### I. THE GREAT LIGHT—THE TRUE LIGHT, THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Christ is the great light—the true light, the light of life (Matt. 4:12-16; John 1:9, 4). Isaiah 9:1-5, referred to in Matthew 4, unveils Christ as the great light. Then verse 6 shows that He was a child born of a human virgin and a son given by the Eternal Father. Christ as the great light shines in darkness. When we have light, everything is in order. If I awake late at night, I dare not go into the kitchen if there is no light there. We cannot see in the darkness, and we do not know what lurks in the darkness. When we see everything, we have peace.

As the all-inclusive One, Christ is the light. If He were not the light, we would have no way to go on spiritually. The Gospel of John is a book on life. John 1 stresses that Christ came as light and life. This light is the true light and the light of life (vv. 9, 4; 8:12). This light "shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (1:5). Darkness cannot overcome light. Wherever light goes, darkness flees. Light subdues, defeats, and overcomes darkness. A brother may be quarreling with his wife, but when the light shines within him, he stops quarreling. He exchanged words with his wife because he was in darkness. But when the light shines, darkness is gone, and he stops quarreling. When darkness is present, everything is in disorder. But when light is present, everything is in order, and everyone is at peace.

Isaiah unveils Christ as the light in a very beautiful and poetic way. Isaiah 9:1 and 2 say, "But gloom does not remain in the place where there was anguish: formerly He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali contemptibly, but afterwards He treats the way of the sea, across the Jordan, with glory, Galilee of the nations. The people who

walked in the darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death light has shined." He treats the land with glory by being the great light. Gloom, anguish, and contempt were in the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali—Galilee of the nations—because darkness was there. However, the people who walked in this darkness saw a great light. They were dwelling in the land of the shadow of death. Darkness is the shadow of death. When people walk in the darkness, they are in the shadow of death. But upon those in the land of the shadow of death, light has shined.

**II. FOR THE SHINING IN DARKNESS**

Christ is unveiled as the great light for the shining in darkness. He shines upon the people walking in darkness (Isa. 9:2a; John 1:5; Acts 26:18; 1 Pet. 2:9b; Col. 1:13), shining upon those dwelling in the shadow of death (Isa. 9:2b; Luke 1:78-79).

Christ as the great light firstly shines. Our salvation was a shining of Christ as the great light upon us. When He shined upon us, we were saved. His shining is our salvation, and His shining is His saving of us. By His shining, darkness is gone. When darkness is gone, everything negative is gone. Before I was saved as a teenager, my mother had a difficult time dealing with me, but when I was nineteen years old, Christ shined upon me. My love for the things of the world was gone. My mother wondered what had happened to me. Even though many outward negative things were dealt with, many inward negative things still remained within me. This is why we need more shining. The inner shining is Christ's saving.

The people in darkness either walk or sit. They walk in the darkness (Isa. 9:2), and they sit in the land of the shadow of death (Matt. 4:16). When a person is in darkness, he is limited to walking a little bit and sitting. Before we were saved, we were walking and sitting in darkness. Then Christ as the great light shined in the darkness and brought us into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9).

We need to realize the tremendous importance of the shining of light. If the sun did not shine for one day, the entire earth would suffer. If it did not shine for three weeks, many things on the earth would die. Every day the living things of the earth live under the shining of the sun. In Luke 1:78-79, Zachariah referred to Isaiah's word when he spoke of Christ as the rising sun from on high visiting us to appear to those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. We Christians were the ones who were walking in darkness and sitting in the shadow of death. Then we received the Lord's shining, and that shining saved us.

### III. FOR THE RELEASE FROM BONDAGE

Isaiah also speaks of Christ as the great light for the release from bondage. The shining of the light is the release, and the darkness is the bondage. In 9:2 Isaiah speaks of the great light. Then in verse 3 he talks to the Lord directly: "You have multiplied the nation; / You have increased their gladness; / They are glad before You as with the gladness of harvest, / As men rejoice when they divide the spoil." The nation here is the people of God. The Lord has multiplied the people of God, increased their gladness, and they are glad before the Lord. Their gladness is like the gladness of those who have a harvest and like the gladness of those who divide the spoil after winning the battle.

Verse 4 says, "For You break the yoke of their burden / And the staff on their shoulder, / The rod of their oppressor, / As in the day of Midian." The gladness of the people of God has been increased because the Lord breaks the yoke of their burden, the staff on their shoulder, and the rod of their oppressor. He does this as in the day of Midian, where the army of Gideon defeated the Midianites (Judg. 7:24-25). The king of Assyria came to invade Judah and to oppress them, but the Lord destroyed them as He destroyed the Midianites through Gideon.

Isaiah 9:5 says, "For all the boots / Of those who in boots trample in the battle quake / And the garments / Rolled in blood / Are for burning; / They are fuel for fire." This verse shows that Christ as the great light destroys our enemies

and destroys their armor. The boots and the garments are the enemy's armor for fighting. Christ as the great light puts these into the fire and burns them. When the Lord Jesus fights for us, we have the feeling that He has destroyed Satan with all of his armor. He not only has defeated Satan but also has burned Satan's "boots" and "garments," his armor. Satan is finished. The boots and garments of the enemy are for burning, and they are fuel for fire. The Lord Jesus fights against His enemy by fire.

When Isaiah was prophesying this, it had not yet been fulfilled. Isaiah 10:26 and 27 say, "And against them Jehovah of hosts will rouse up a whip like the stroke against Midian at the rock of Oreb; and His staff will be over the sea, and He will lift it up the way He did in Egypt. And in that day their burden will be removed from your shoulders, and their yoke from off your neck; and the yoke will be broken due to the fatness." This was to be God's judgment on the Assyrian oppressors and His release of Israel from their bondage.

By the Lord's shining, He releases the imprisoned ones from bondage. This release from bondage is actually the multiplication of God's people. The more God's people are released from bondage, the more they are multiplied. When we go out to preach the gospel, we bring the shining of Christ to those who are in darkness (Acts 26:18a). When they are enlightened and receive this shining, they receive Christ. Then they are released from their bondage, from their imprisonment, and from the yoke, the staff, and the rod of their oppressor. When they become released in this way, God's people are multiplied.

Then these released people will have gladness. Christ will increase their gladness, and that gladness is the gladness of the harvest. As the preachers of the gospel, we are like the farmers who harvest God's people. Whenever there is a harvest, there is joy. If we went out today to visit people with the gospel, and three were baptized, this would be a harvest, making us full of joy and gladness. That gladness is also the gladness of victory. On the one hand, we are the farmers, and on the other hand, we are the warriors, the fighters. We have the gladness of the harvest and the gladness of the

warriors dividing their spoil from their victory. Isaiah's unveiling of Christ as the great light in such a way describes our Christian life.

Through His shining, He breaks the yoke of our burden, the staff on our shoulder, and the rod of our oppressor. Before we were saved, we were yoked under a heavy burden. We also had a staff upon our shoulder, and the enemy put his rod upon us. He yoked us, burdened us, and put us into the imprisonment of darkness. But the Lord broke the yoke of the burden of the people of God, broke the staff on their shoulder, and broke the rod of their oppressor as in the day of Midian when Gideon gained a great victory over the Midianites. Later in the history of Israel, the king of Assyria came to threaten them. He became a burden, a yoke, a staff, and a rod to them. Isaiah described how the king of Assyria punished the children of Israel. Then Christ as the great light came to break all the bondage by shining.

We can see the Christian life in Isaiah 9:1-5 with the enjoyment of Christ as the great light, and this great light is the true light, the light of life. The shining of the light is our salvation. Christ saves us by shining in us. If two people are roommates, they are prone to arguing and disagreeing with each other and bothering each other. What can stop this unpleasant situation between roommates? Christ as the light can stop this. This is why we need a morning revival with the Lord. We may disagree with someone in the evening, but in the morning when we are in the Word and in the Lord, the Lord takes the opportunity to shine into us. There may be only a "narrow crack" in our being as an opening to Him, but He shines into us through that opening. Because of His shining, we are enlightened, and we may say with tears, "Lord, forgive me." This is an example of Christ's saving us by His shining.

In addition to our time of morning revival, we need to walk in Christ as the light. Just as we wash our hands many times a day, we need the washing of His blood through the confessing of our sins under the shining of His light many times a day. This continual shining and washing is our salvation. This salvation releases us from all bondage. Then

we will be the proper harvesters and fighters for the multiplication of the people of God, and we will have joy, rejoicing, and gladness. Wherever Christ is preached, there is light, shining, and salvation. There is also the breaking of the yoke of the burden of the people of God, of the staff on their shoulder, and of the rod of their oppressor. This is all due to Christ being the great light.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-EIGHT

## A TWIG FROM THE STEM OF JESSE AND A BRANCH FROM THE ROOTS OF JESSE BRINGING IN THE RESTORATION OF LIFE AND A BANNER TO THE PEOPLES AND A STANDARD TO THE NATIONS BRINGING IN THE RETURN OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND THE SUBMISSION OF THE GENTILES

### (1)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 11:1-9

In this message we want to see the all-inclusive Christ in Isaiah 11. This chapter covers the Lord's coming in the last days to bring in the restoration of all things, the revival of Israel, and the submission of the seeking Gentiles. For this purpose Christ has to be four items. These four items in Isaiah 11 form two pairs in the poetic writing of Isaiah. The first pair is Christ as a twig from the stem of Jesse and a branch from the roots of Jesse bringing in the restoration of life (vv. 1-9). The second pair is Christ as a banner to the peoples and a standard to the nations bringing in the return of God's people and the submission to the Gentiles (vv. 10-16). The banner and the standard are the enlargement of the twig and the branch. Christ has to be these two pairs of four items for the fulfilling of God's economy.

### I. A TWIG FROM THE STEM OF JESSE AND A BRANCH FROM THE ROOTS OF JESSE

Christ is a twig from the stem of Jesse and a branch from the roots of Jesse (Isa. 11:1-9). Christ is typified by a twig from the stem of a great tree which has been hewn down to the roots (cf. Isa. 10:32-34). Nearly everything concerning

Israel and the house of David had been cut down. Only Jesse, David's father is mentioned in Isaiah 11. All that remained was Jesse, the source of David. The issue of Jesse, the house of David, had been hewn down, but the source from which David came still remained. The royal family of David, the house of David, was cut down when Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came to conquer Judah and subdue Israel. He destroyed the holy city, Jerusalem, and the holy temple. He captured the royal family of David, including the king and his family, and carried them away to Babylon. This was meant to be the termination of the royal family of David. The big tree of the house of David was hewn down, but the stem with the roots was still there. Christ came out of this source as a twig from the stem and as a branch from the roots.

The royal family was cut down, leaving the stem with the roots there for approximately six centuries, from about 606 B.C. to the time Christ was born. When Christ was born as prophesied in Isaiah 7:14, He was the twig from the stem of Jesse. Not many people would pay attention to a twig. Jesus was a twig from the stem of Jesse. Although He became so "small," no amount of persecution or suffering could put Him down. As the twig from the stem of Jesse, He remains forever.

Christ's coming in incarnation as the twig was the revival of David's deprived royal family. David's royal family was deprived to such an extent that there was hardly anything left of it. But one day in God's incarnation, a child was born to David's family. Both Mary and Joseph were descendants of David. Out of Mary a twig was born. David's "hewn down" royal family was revived at the birth of that twig.

We must realize that the revival of David's family is still going on. According to our thought, Christ has two comings, but according to God's realization, He has sent His Son once for all. This sending started from Bethlehem. When Jesus was born, that was the beginning of God's sending His Son to the earth. This sending has not yet been fully accomplished. It is still going on. This sending began at the time Jesus was born and will be completed when the Son of Man comes to

the earth in an open way. Matthew 24:27 says, "For as the lightning comes forth from the east and shines to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." That will be the completion of God's sending His Son.

Christ as the twig from the stem of Jesse came into existence about two thousand years ago, but His being sent has not been fully accomplished. The completion of His being sent by God is accomplished in three ways: by His building up of the church, by His preparing of Israel, and by His adjustment, His judging, of the nations. The present situation in the entire Middle East is altogether for the benefit of Israel. Israel has enjoyed the benefit of the recent war between the United States and Iraq. This can be considered as a part of Christ's coming in His preparation of Israel. The recent war involving Iraq was also God's adjustment of the nations. Since 1987 we have seen a great adjustment on earth among the nations—firstly involving Russia and its satellite countries and secondly among the countries in the Middle East. What an adjustment this has been! Christ has taken a big step in these recent years in the world situation. He is much nearer to appearing on earth in an open way, and He is still on His way.

The Lord came at His birth. Then He went to the cross to die. The disciples thought He was going to leave them. However, the Lord revealed that this was not His going but His coming (John 14:3, 17-20; 20:19-22). The Lord's going through death and resurrection was actually His coming to the disciples as the Spirit to get into them and dwell in them. He also came on the day of Pentecost as the Spirit, baptizing His Body in one Spirit (Acts 2:4a, 17). Today He is still on the way. He is coming. The entire world situation is an indication of the steps of Christ's coming. He was a little twig in the manger at Bethlehem, but as the lightning in Matthew 24:27, He will be a great standard to the nations.

We need to consider what is revealed in Isaiah 11. Isaiah 11 reveals Christ as the twig and the branch. He is full of the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah (v. 2). What a Spirit! This Spirit is the sevenfold

intensified Spirit (Rev. 1:4). Along with this Spirit is God's administration, God's government (Isa. 11:3-5). Then there is the restoration of life (vv. 6-9). Eventually the twig becomes a banner to the peoples (v. 10), and the branch becomes a standard to the nations (v. 12). Even the Gentiles will come to Christ. Where is the center of the earth? Where is the center of the human race? Where is the center of world history? Look at the banner. Christ as the banner is the center, to whom the nations must go. This is the revelation in Isaiah 11.

Christ as the twig and the branch has already come. On the one hand, Christ as the twig and the branch is in the heavens, and on the other hand, He is within the believers and the church. What is He doing? He is still going on. He is still on His way. He is still "stepping" toward us. He is in us, but He is still stepping toward us. This is the marvelous truth of His coming.

In His incarnation He was a twig. In His resurrection He is a branch in full. At the beginning this branch was the Shoot of Jehovah as revealed in Isaiah 4:2. His being the Shoot of Jehovah indicates His divinity. His being a twig from the stem of Jesse and a branch from the roots of Jesse indicates His humanity. Actually, He is one branch, a branch that is both divine and human.

### A. A Twig from the Stem of Jesse

As we have seen, Christ is a twig from the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11:1a). The stem of Jesse indicates the deprived human royal source (Ruth 4:17b). A twig from the stem of Jesse indicates the restoring power of life in freshness. A twig is so green, so tender, and so fresh.

### B. A Branch from the Roots of Jesse

Christ is also a branch from the roots of Jesse (Isa. 11:1b). The roots of Jesse indicate the hidden deepening power of life. A branch from the roots indicates the growing power of fruitfulness. A twig is the beginning of a branch, and a branch is for fruitfulness.

### C. Full of the Spirit of Jehovah

When Christ as the twig and the branch is here, the Spirit is here. The four Gospels show us that wherever Jesus is, the Spirit is. In the four Gospels, the twig is there, the branch is there, and the Spirit is there. This Spirit is the Spirit of Jehovah, who is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, and the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah (Isa. 11:2). The Spirit of wisdom and understanding is for the mind and is mainly related to humanity. The Spirit of counsel and might points to Jesus Himself as the Wonderful Counselor who gives us counsel all the time by the Spirit (Isa. 9:6). The Spirit has both counsel and might.

The Spirit is also the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah. The fear of Jehovah goes together with the proper knowledge. Before we were saved, we were afraid of nothing because we were ignorant. From the time we were saved by the Lord, we have been receiving a spiritual education and acquiring spiritual knowledge. Today many of us can testify that we would not dare go to a movie or to other worldly and sinful places. There are many places to which we dare not go, because we have the fear of Jehovah. Someone may ask us to do something, but we dare not do it, because we have the fear of Jehovah. We dare not buy certain clothes which have the modern appearance of this age, because we fear Jehovah. We fear Jehovah because of the spiritual knowledge. Because this Spirit is of seven items—Jehovah, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of Jehovah—we may say that He is the sevenfold intensified Spirit. These seven items depict the situation in the church. Therefore, this indicates that Christ as the twig and the branch is here with us. The Spirit is His presence.

### D. To Carry Out the Administration of Jehovah

As the twig from the stem of Jesse and the branch from the roots of Jesse, Christ carries out the administration of Jehovah (Isa. 11:3-5). The administration of Jehovah is of two items—righteousness and justice. Christ delights in the

fear of Jehovah (v. 3a). He always delighted in the fear of Jehovah, even as a boy of twelve. He does not judge by what His eyes see nor decide by what His ears hear, but He judges the poor in righteousness and decides with equity for the afflicted (vv. 3b-4a). Equity is justice. Christ decides with equity, justice, fairness, for the afflicted. The unrighteous things in human society are mainly done to the poor. Injustice is mainly exercised over the afflicted, the suffering ones. The dark and backward countries on earth are full of unrighteousness and injustice toward the afflicted. Every good government, however, must be righteous and just. Otherwise, that government is dark. God's administration is righteous and just.

When Christ returns, He will strike the land with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips, He will slay the wicked (v. 4b). The breath of His lips is His word out of His mouth. Righteousness girds His loins, making Him strong, and faithfulness girds His hips, making Him steady (v. 5). For a government to be strong, it must be righteous. For it to be steady, it must be faithful. A government that is not righteous cannot stand for long, and a government that is not faithful is not steady. God's administration is strong and steady.

### E. Bringing In the Restoration of Life

The administration of Jehovah brings in the restoration of life (vv. 6-9). In the restoration of life, the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid (v. 6a). The wolves prey on the lambs, but in the restoration of life, they will dwell with the lambs. In the restoration of life, the calf, the young lamb, and the fatling will be together, and a young boy will lead them about (v. 6b). The cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox (v. 7). The nursing child will play by the cobra's hole, and upon the viper's den the weaned child will stretch his hand (v. 8). Isaiah 11:9 says, "They will not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." This God-fearing knowledge comes from

the Spirit through the administration of Jehovah in the restoration of life.

This restoration of life will be in the next age, but we should not forget Hebrews 6:5, which tells us that we have a foretaste in this age of the works of power of the coming age. What will happen in the next age as recorded in Isaiah 11 should be among us today as a foretaste. Among us there should be no "wolves," "leopards," "bears," "lions," or "vipers." Paul told the brothers in Acts 20 to beware of fierce wolves coming in among them (v. 29). Because the church life is a foretaste of the coming age, all the "wolves," "leopards," "bears," "lions," and Svipers" should have their nature changed. This is the restoration of life. In the past we may have been such persons in a negative sense, but now our nature has changed. Sometimes we may consider that a certain brother is a "leopard" until we find out that his nature has changed. The church life may be considered as a "zoo" of the restoration of life where all have their nature changed through the Spirit and by Christ as the twig and the branch.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE THIRTY-NINE

## A TWIG FROM THE STEM OF JESSE AND A BRANCH FROM THE ROOTS OF JESSE BRINGING IN THE RESTORATION OF LIFE AND A BANNER TO THE PEOPLES AND A STANDARD TO THE NATIONS BRINGING IN THE RETURN OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND THE SUBMISSION OF THE GENTILES

### (2)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 11:10-16

In this message we want to continue our fellowship concerning the revelation of the all-inclusive Christ in Isaiah 11. We have seen that in Isaiah 4 there are four items typifying Christ, and these four items form two pairs. The first pair is Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth, and the second pair is Christ as a covering canopy of glory and an overshadowing tabernacle of grace. In Isaiah 11 there are also four items typifying Christ, and these four items form two pairs. The first pair of items is Christ as a twig from the stem of Jesse and a branch from the roots of Jesse. The second pair of items is Christ as a banner to the peoples and a standard to the nations.

Isaiah 11 is altogether a chapter on the coming restoration of life, especially the restoration of the returned nation of Israel. In these messages we are not studying the future fulfillment of Isaiah 11. We are studying the principle of the restoration of life. The twig and the branch come up in life, and this life is full of restoring power, deepening power, growing power, and fruit-bearing power. A twig coming out from a dried and dead stump is a strong indication of the

restoring power in this life. The branch signifies that this life has the deepening power, the growing power, and the fruit-bearing power. This life brings in the Spirit, and this Spirit carries out God's administration where we see a full restoration of life. Wherever Christ as life grows in freshness and depth, there is the Spirit with His riches, there is the government of God in righteousness and justice, and there is the restoration of life.

### II. A BANNER TO THE PEOPLES AND A STANDARD TO THE NATIONS

Through the restoration of Israel, Christ will become a banner to the peoples and a standard to the nations. We need to consider the distinction between a banner and a standard. In order to understand the biblical truths, we need to understand the proper meaning of the words used in the Bible. Isaiah 11 describes the scene of a recovery, a revival, a restoration. When the peoples see such a restoration, they will ask, "What is this? Who is carrying this out?" This is why there is the need to put up a banner full of explanation, description, and instruction. This convinces people, convicts people, and captures people. This banner becomes a magnet. It is very magnetic. In the restoration, there will also be the need of a standard to call the people and to gather the people. Thus, in Isaiah 11 the banner is mentioned first and then the standard. The banner is mainly for designation, explanation, and instruction, and the standard is mainly for calling and gathering. The standard is placed as the central object of the called and gathered people.

In our church life, when the Christ among us grows bigger and bigger, eventually we have Him as the banner. This grown up Christ becomes a banner to describe, to designate, and to explain. Christ as the banner instructs people concerning the revival and restoration in the church. This banner will be a great magnet, a great attraction. It will become very magnetic. Actually, this great magnet is also a standard which draws people, attracts people, calls people, collects people, and gathers people.

Wherever Christ is exalted and taken as the central object for His seeking ones to be gathered to, there is the return of God's people and the submission of the subdued ones. The church life then becomes an attraction, not by the church itself but by Christ as the twig to become the banner and as the branch to become the standard. We need to see why Isaiah couples Christ as the twig and the branch with Christ as the banner and the standard. When we have Christ as a twig growing among us, this growing up twig becomes a banner, which describes, explains, designates, and even gives some instructions concerning what Christ is to the church. The same Christ is also a branch growing up to be a standard.

### A. A Banner to the Peoples

Christ is a banner to all the peoples. Isaiah 11:10 says, "And in that day the root of Jesse, / Who stands as a banner to the peoples— / Him will the nations seek, / And His resting place will be the glory." *The root of Jesse* indicates the same human royal source as that of the twig in verse 1. David is this human royal source. The word *stands* indicates being full of strength and ability. Christ stands full of strength and ability as a banner to the peoples.

A banner, probably being the enlargement of the twig in verse 1, indicates an ensign as a gathering and collecting mark. The Hebrew word for *banner* in verse 10 may also be translated as *ensign* (ASV) or *signal* (NASB). Christ as a banner is the gathering and collecting mark to the peoples of the earth. The phrase *to the peoples* in verse 10 indicates to all the people of the earth.

*Him will the nations seek* indicates that all the nations of the earth will turn to Him and be willing to be His people. The day will come when all the peoples on this earth will turn to seek after Christ and will be happy to be His people. We are expecting that day.

*His resting place will be the glory* indicates that the divine glory of God will be Christ's resting place. The divine glory will be His bed, His sofa, His resting place. This indicates that the divine glory is one with Christ. The divine glory being His resting place implies His divinity, which means

that He and God are one. Actually, the banner to the peoples is God Himself.

### B. A Standard to the Nations

Christ is also a standard to the nations (v. 12a). *A standard,* probably being the enlargement of the branch in verse 1, indicates the influence of the calling and gathering power. A standard, standing high, always calls and gathers people to that place where it is. Such a standard becomes a great magnet to the nations. *To the nations* indicates to all the earth.

### C. Bringing In the Return of God's People and the Submission of the Gentiles

Christ as the banner to the peoples and the standard to the nations will bring in the return of God's people and the submission of the Gentiles (Isa. 11:11d, 12b-16). The Lord will recover for the second time the remnant of His people from the nations and gather them from the four corners of the earth (vv. 11, 12b). The first time the Lord recovered Israel was in their exodus from Egypt. Even today most of the Jews are dispersed, scattered everywhere, throughout the globe.

Verses 13 and 14 say that Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor will Judah be hostile to Ephraim. They will be together to plunder the nations on the west and on the east; the nations will come into the grasp of their hand and submit to them. Ephraim was the northern nation of Israel, and Judah was the southern nation. The one nation was divided into two—the nation of Israel and the nation of Judah. Instead of their being hostile toward one another, they will be harmoniously one. They will be together to plunder the nations on the west and on the east. The nations will come into the grasp of their hand and submit to them. In our experience this signifies the result of our preaching of the gospel. If we are jealous of each other and hostile to each other, we cannot be together to plunder the people from the west and from the east, and they will not fall into the grasp of our hand and submit to us.

Furthermore, Jehovah will destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt (the gulf of the Red Sea) and will dry up Euphrates, the great river, with the scorching of the wind and will strike it into seven streams; and there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant of His people which remain to return (vv. 15-16). The sea of Egypt is the Red Sea, and the tongue of the sea of Egypt is the Gulf of Suez, the gulf of the Red Sea. The day will come when this gulf will be destroyed. In that day God's people, Israel, will be able to walk through from Egypt to their holy land.

Isaiah tells us that Jehovah will dry up "the River" (v. 15). This is the great river, the Euphrates, which Abraham crossed (Josh. 24:2-3). The great river Euphrates is also mentioned in Revelation 16:12 in relation to the war at Armageddon. In the coming days, God will dry up the Euphrates with the scorching heat of the wind. Then that river will be stricken into seven streams, so that God's people can walk through it to return to their land.

There will also be a highway from Assyria for the remnant of His people which remain to return. The Lord will build a highway from Assyria to the Holy Land. He will change the situation of the earth. First, the tongue of the sea of Egypt, which frustrates the traffic from Egypt to the Holy Land, will be destroyed. Second, God will use the scorching heat of the wind to dry up the Euphrates into seven streams. Verse 15 says that He will march men through it dryshod. *Dryshod* literally means *in sandals.* This big frustration will be dried up so that the children of Israel can walk through it. Third, God will build up a highway to the Holy Land from Assyria. All of this will solve the three big problems and frustrations for the return of the children of Israel.

We also have to overcome frustrations for our preaching of the gospel in the Lord's move. I was recently fellowshipping with some brothers about my feeling that the Lord's recovery should reconsider its direction. The world has changed and it is still changing. There have been four great recent changes in the world situation. First, today Europe has a common market. Second, East and West Germany have been united. Third, there has been much political change in the small

European countries. Fourth, Russia and all her satellite countries have changed and are still changing. All the leaders of this earth are considering what steps to take for their economy, their industry, and their education for their future among all the nations on earth.

We have pointed out in the past that the entire world situation is the preparation for the Lord's move in His gospel. The book of Isaiah shows that God's chastisement of His chosen people and His judgment of the nations ushers in Christ. Christ is just the gospel, and the world situation is for the gospel. The present world is changing for the advancement of the gospel. Even the Lord Jesus came as the world was changing. The Roman general Pompey had conquered Jerusalem in 63 B.C. In 27 B.C. Augustus received the approval of the Roman Senate to form the Roman Empire. That prepared the way for Christ's birth just twenty-seven years later.

The apostles' preaching of the gospel followed the political situation at that time. In the past twenty centuries, the gospel has always traveled according to the political changes on this earth. The brothers who have traveled to Russia recently have shared that the Lord has opened up Russia to our publications. There are many encouraging letters from the Russian people testifying of this. We cannot merely observe this situation and be complacent. We have to reconsider our direction in light of the world situation today.

Acts 13 shows five prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch fasting and praying together. Then the guidance came that Paul and Barnabas should be separated and sent out. They carried the gospel from Antioch to Asia Minor. That was a big step for the Lord's move. I believe that these five prophets and teachers were considering how to bring the Lord's gospel from the Holy Land to the Gentile world, and during their consideration, the guidance came.

In Paul's second journey, he and his co-workers intended to speak the word in Asia, but they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6). Then they tried to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them (v. 7). The Holy Spirit's forbidding them to go to the left, to Asia, and the

Spirit of Jesus' not allowing them to go to the right, to Bithynia, indicated a straightforward direction for the apostle and his co-workers. Spontaneously, they should have just gone forward to Macedonia. But Paul had to receive a vision during the night of a Macedonian man entreating him to come over across the Aegean Sea into Macedonia to help them (v. 9). Then Paul and his co-workers concluded that God had called them to bring the good news to Macedonia.

They crossed the Aegean Sea into Europe and came to Philippi. Philippi was a fortified outpost of the Roman Empire in a foreign country, where the citizens had equal rights with those at the capital, Rome. As a fort of the ancient empire of Rome, Philippi was a very strategic city for the spread of the gospel at its beginning in Europe. From there the gospel spread throughout Europe and eventually to Greece and Rome.

We have to consider the present world situation and our present direction. Should we just look at the situation and say that everything is good with the Lord's recovery? Many young ones among us have been trained in the past few years, and we presently have over one hundred in the full-time training. We are praying about this matter. It may be that in our next term of training, we will change our language lessons to Russian, French, and German, plus British English. If one has a knowledge of these four languages, he can travel and speak to people throughout nearly all of Europe and Russia. I encourage the young people to learn French, German, and Russian for the Lord's move.

In these days we need to pay our full attention to the all-inclusive Christ, who is the centrality and universality of the great wheel of the move of the Divine Trinity for the divine dispensing of Himself into His elect. In the church life for the Lord's recovery, where the proper revival and restoration of life are taking place, Christ should be the twig, the branch, the banner, and the standard. First, we ourselves must have a restoration of life. Then this will be propagated and will be designated by a banner, Christ. He will then be sought after by the nations, and He will become a standard to them. Hallelujah for Christ!

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY

## THE SPRINGS OF SALVATION

Scripture Reading: Isa. 12; John 1:14a; Col. 2:9; Matt. 1:21; Heb. 5:9; 9:12; John 4:14; Rev. 21:6

### THE FOUNTAIN OF SALVATION, THE SPRINGS OF SALVATION, AND THE FLOW OF SALVATION

In this message we want to see the springs of salvation in Isaiah 12. We need to know the difference between the words *fountain* and *springs*. Deuteronomy 8:7 speaks of the good land as "a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains." The fountain is the source, the spring is the issue of the source, and the waterbrook, or the river, is the flow. The source of the Jordan River is in Mount Hermon. Some of us visited there and saw the spring of water gushing out from the fountain to become a river. In its verbal form *spring* means to gush out or gush up. Exodus 15 speaks of the children of Israel arriving at Elim on their journey in the wilderness. At Elim there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees (v. 27—ASV). The source of these springs may have been one fountain.

Isaiah 12 does not use the word *spring* in the singular but the word *springs* in plural. Verse 3 says, "Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation." The term *the springs of salvation* implies that salvation is the source. The source of the springs of salvation is a fountain, and that fountain is salvation. The *source*, the *fountain*, and *salvation* are synonyms. Who is the source, the fountain, the salvation, in Isaiah 12? Verse 2 says, "God is now my salvation; / I will trust and not dread; / For Jah Jehovah is my strength and song, / And He has become my

salvation." *Jah* is a short form of Jehovah. This is similar to a person's full name also having a short form, such as *Benjamin* and *Ben*.

The main word stressed in Isaiah 12 is *salvation*. God is our salvation, and Jah Jehovah is our strength and song. Strength and song both indicate experience. When God's salvation is experienced by us, this salvation becomes our strength, and eventually it will be our song, our praising. The strength and the song are experiences of salvation. In our experiences our God is Jah and Jehovah. In the New Testament, our God is called Jesus and Christ. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. When we are calling upon Him, we can say in a very intimate way, "My Lord Jesus Christ." Sometimes we can express this in a more dear way by saying, "My dear Lord Jesus Christ." Jah Jehovah in the New Testament is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Out of the fountain of salvation come the springs. This salvation is Jah Jehovah. In the New Testament, Jah Jehovah is Jesus, the incarnated God. *Jesus* means the *salvation of Jehovah*. This salvation is the source of all the springs. In John 7:38 the Lord Jesus said that out of our innermost being would flow rivers of living water. Not just a river, but rivers flow out of us. When I was young, I was bothered because I knew that the rivers, which are plural, refer to the one Spirit. I did not see at that time that the book of Revelation speaks of the seven Spirits (1:4; 4:5; 5:6). God's one Spirit has been intensified sevenfold. In John 7 the rivers of living water are the many flows of the different aspects of life (cf. Rom. 15:30; 1 Thes. 1:6; 2 Thes. 2:13; Gal. 5:22-23) of the one unique river of water of life (Rev. 22:1), which is God's Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2).

The springs issue out of the fountain. The springs are Christ. These springs become the rivers, which are the Spirit. The salvation is the source, the fountain, out of which Christ springs up. The processed Triune God is the fountain, the springs, and the river of water of life. The Father is the fountain, the Son is the springs, and the Spirit is the river of water of life.

The water in a fountain comes from the heavens. This water comes down to the earth and gets deeply into the earth. Eventually, it becomes a fountain under the earth, and this fountain springs up to become springs. This is a picture. The water is the processed Triune God becoming a fountain, out of which we can have the springs of salvation for our enjoyment and experience. When we receive this water, it becomes a stream flowing within us. God as our salvation is the fountain; Christ is the springs of salvation for our enjoyment and experience; and the Spirit is the flow of this salvation within us.

In John 4 the Lord Jesus showed the Samaritan woman that the very living water would become in her a spring of water welling up into eternal life (v. 14). In Revelation 21:6 the Lord says, "I will give to him who thirsts from the spring of the water of life freely." Both the Old and New Testaments show that the living water is God's practical salvation. This practical salvation is the processed Triune God Himself.

## RECEIVING THE TRIUNE GOD AS OUR SALVATION BY DRINKING HIM

Most people do not consider that God's salvation is so subjective to us. Most think of His salvation in an objective way. Some think that they need the Lord Jesus to stretch out His hand to rescue them and pull them out of the fall. Actually, the Lord's salvation is absolutely not like this. If we want the Lord to save us, we must drink Him. The way to receive the processed Triune God as our salvation is by drinking Him. When the water gets into us, it permeates our entire being. The way that we get nourished, transformed, conformed, and glorified is by drinking Christ into us. This is the way to receive God as our salvation. The source of this water is a fountain, which is immeasurably deep and wide, and this fountain has many springs.

The springs at Niagara Falls are not drinkable because they are too great and fierce, but Jesus is a gentle spring. In the ancient times in the Middle East, people would go to a spring where there was a well from which they drew water for themselves and for others. We can also come to the Lord

to draw living water from Him for ourselves and for others. This shows that the processed Triune God as our salvation is very subjective. The water that we drink passes through our entire being, is assimilated by us, and even becomes us.

In both the Old and New Testaments, water is used as an illustration of our Triune God. At the end of the Bible in Revelation 22, there is a picture of a throne, upon which the Lamb-God is sitting. Out from the throne underneath the Lamb, flows the river of water of life. In this river grows the tree of life, and this river passes through the entire holy city. The river actually spirals down from the throne in the middle of the golden street to water the whole city. Every part of the city is nourished and watered by this river. This is a full picture of the Triune God to be our salvation. Every day we need to drink Him.

### BREATHING AND DRINKING BY CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

Along with drinking the Lord, we also need to breathe Him in. According to the spiritual reality, breathing is drinking. M. E. Barber said in one of her hymns, "Just to breathe the Name of Jesus / Is to drink of Life indeed" (*Hymns*, #73, verse 2). To breathe the name of Jesus is to drink the water of life. By calling "O Lord Jesus" we breathe, and by breathing we drink.

Isaiah 12 speaks of drawing water (v. 3). No doubt, this is for drinking. Now we need to consider where breathing is revealed in this chapter. Verse 4 says, "And you will say in that day, / Praise Jehovah; call upon His name!" Praising Jehovah and calling upon His name are put together as one. Whenever we call on the name of the Lord, that implies praising. When we say "O Lord Jesus," that is not only calling but also praising. When we say, "O Lord Jesus, I love You," this is praising and breathing. Many Christians are deadened because they do not practice this spiritual breathing. If we do not breathe physically, we will die within a short period of time. This shows how crucial calling on the Lord is.

Acts 2:21 says, "And it shall be that everyone, whoever calls on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." The note on

this verse in the Recovery Version points out that calling on the name of the Lord began with Enosh, the third generation of mankind, in Genesis 4:26. The name *Enosh* means frail, mortal man. We human beings are altogether weak, frail, fragile, and mortal. We cannot do anything apart from the Lord. Because we need Him in everything, we need to call on Him. When we call on Him, we breathe Him in, and our breathing is our drinking.

The air we breathe includes water. When water becomes vapor, it gets into the air. The air sends water to the earth in the form of rain, and the water on the earth vaporizes and goes back to the air. There are devices called vaporizers which convert the water into vapor for inhalation. The water in the vaporizer goes into the air. When we breathe in this air, we get the water because the water is in the air. This illustrates that our breathing is also our drinking. Spiritually, our calling is our breathing, and our breathing is our drinking. When we say, "O Lord Jesus," we breathe Him in, and we are watered and refreshed.

### CHRIST AS GOD INCARNATED BEING THE VERY EMBODIMENT OF THE TRIUNE GOD

Christ is the springs of salvation for our enjoyment. As God incarnated, He is the very embodiment of the Triune God (John 1:14a; Col. 2:9). The name of this Christ is Jesus—Jehovah the Savior becoming Jehovah the salvation (Matt. 1:21). Jesus, Jehovah our Savior, has become the source of our eternal salvation through the process of His vicarious death for the accomplishment of the eternal redemption (Heb. 5:9; 9:12). In order for the Lord Jesus to go from the throne in the heavens to the cross on Mount Cavalry, He had to pass through many processes. He came from and with His divinity into humanity. He was born of a human virgin, and He passed through human living. He passed through all kinds of sufferings.

We should not think He was arrested and put on the cross unwillingly. He voluntarily gave Himself up on the cross. When He was arrested, He said, "Do you think that I cannot beseech My Father and He will provide Me at once more than

twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so?" (Matt. 26:53-54). He volunteered to present Himself to the Father on the cross. This was for the accomplishment of our eternal redemption, which is the base of our eternal salvation. Salvation is based upon redemption. The Triune God can be our Savior because He passed through the necessary processes to accomplish redemption. Based upon His redemption, He as our Redeemer becomes our Savior and our salvation.

The source of salvation is the very fountain of the Triune God's salvation, out of which well up many springs (Isa. 12:3b). Thus, the processed Triune God has become our salvation (v. 2) with Christ, the life-giving *pneuma*, as the many springs from whom the believers draw the water of life (v. 3a; John 4:14; Rev. 21:6). The enjoyment of this salvation with the springs of the water of life becomes our strength and song (Isa. 12:2).

### THE WAY TO DRAW WATER FROM THE SPRINGS OF THE DIVINE SALVATION

Now we want to consider the way to draw water from the springs of the divine salvation. First, we need to be those who are repenting to turn God's anger and receive God's consolation of forgiveness (Isa. 12:1). We also need to be those who are praising Jehovah, calling upon His name (v. 4a). Furthermore, in order to draw water from the springs of salvation, we should make God's saving deeds known among the peoples and exalt His name among them (v. 4b). We also need to sing to Him for He has done something majestic, and we must let this be made known in all the earth (v. 5).

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-ONE

## THE KING REIGNING IN THE TENT OF DAVID, THE ETERNAL ROCK, A SAVIOR—A DEFENDER, AND A TEACHER

Scripture Reading: Isa. 16:5; 24:23; 26:3-4; 17:10; 30:29; 19:20; 30:20-21

In this message we want to see four more items of the all-inclusive Christ in the book of Isaiah: the King reigning in the tent of David, the eternal Rock, a Savior—a Defender, and the Teacher.

### I. THE KING REIGNING IN THE TENT OF DAVID

According to Isaiah 16:5, the all-inclusive Christ is the King reigning in the tent of David. We may wonder what this aspect of Christ has to do with us since Christ will reign as a king in the tent of David in the coming age during the restoration of the nation of Israel. We need to realize, however, that we can also enjoy Christ as the reigning One in the tent of David in the age of grace.

The Gospels show that Christ is intimately related to David. The Gospel of Luke was of course written by Luke, a Gentile, and it was basically written to Gentiles. But Luke reports the angel telling Mary that the One conceived in her womb would be given "the throne of David His father" (1:32). The One that Mary would bring forth would be a descendant of David and would inherit the throne of David. What does this have to do with the new testament believers? We have to realize that, according to Hebrews 6:5, the age of grace, the new testament age, is a foretaste of the coming age. Actually, the age of grace is a miniature of the coming age, and the coming age is the consummation of the age of grace. We

are not in the coming age of the kingdom yet, but we are in its miniature, the age of grace. Thus, what we are enjoying today is a foretaste of the coming kingdom in the age of restoration.

Divine healing is a part of the restoration in the coming age, but today in the age of grace we may also enjoy and receive divine healing. This is a foretaste of the power of the coming age. As ones who are saved by grace, we are enjoying Christ in the age of grace as the miniature of the coming age.

Thus, today we have to realize that Christ is our King. He reigns not only in our hearts but also in the tent of David. In the Old Testament, when the tent of David was set up, when David's kingdom was fully established, that was a great consolation and joy to the Israelites. In the coming age, when Christ reigns in the tent of David, that will be a greater consolation to Israel. Christ reigning in the tent of David signifies consolation, encouragement, and restoration. Today we are enjoying Christ as the King ruling not only in our heart but also in the tent of David. For Him to reign in us in the tent of David means that He reigns in us with a kingdom.

Isaiah 16:5 says, "Then will a throne be established in lovingkindness, / And upon it One will sit in truth / In the tent of David, / Judging and pursuing justice / And hastening righteousness." Christ's throne will be established in loving-kindness. Lovingkindness means tender affection. All of us can approach His throne because lovingkindness is there.

Christ sits upon His throne in truth. Truth here means truthfulness and faithfulness. Christ is not only living and kind but also truthful and faithful. He is the worthy One. As the One sitting upon the throne in the tent of David, He is the real David. He judges and pursues justice. To judge is to adjust and correct in order to make peace. Christ is the unique Judge in the whole universe. In our natural being, we do not treat others justly. The husbands do not treat the wives in justice, nor do the wives treat the husbands in justice. But Christ is perfectly just with everyone and pursues justice in

all of His judgments. He is also the One hastening righteousness.

Isaiah 16:5 shows that with Christ there is lovingkindness, truthfulness, faithfulness, justice, and righteousness. Today Christ reigns in us in the tent of David, bringing in the kingdom with lovingkindness, truthfulness, faithfulness, justice, and righteousness. If we are under His ruling, His reigning, we will be the same as He is in these virtues.

Isaiah 24:23 confirms that when Christ will reign in the tent of David in the age of restoration, it will be Jehovah of hosts reigning because Christ is Jehovah of hosts. When Christ will reign as Jehovah of hosts in Zion and Jerusalem, the moon will be abashed, and the sun will be ashamed. For it will be Jehovah of hosts who will reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and His glory will be before His elders. When Christ reigns in the millennium, even the brightest things "will be ashamed." But even today we can enjoy Christ reigning in us as a foretaste of His reign in the coming age.

**II. THE ETERNAL ROCK FOR HIS PEOPLE TO TRUST IN**

Every human being apart from Christ has nothing to trust in, but we have the Lord as the eternal Rock to trust in. Isaiah 17:10 says, "For you have forgotten the God of your salvation, / And the Rock of your stronghold you have not remembered. / Therefore you plant plants of delight / And set them with plant cuttings to a strange god." Christ is the God of our salvation. Actually, He Himself is our salvation. He is the Rock of stronghold for His people to remember Him as their salvation. If we forget Christ as our God, we will be like those who plant plants for another god. We have to pray, "Lord, we do not ever want to plant plants for another god. We want to always remember You." As the Rock of our stronghold, Christ is the God of our salvation in whom we should trust.

He is also the Rock of Israel for His people to contact Him as their joy. Isaiah 30:29 says, "You will have a song / As in the night when the feast is sanctified, / And gladness of heart as when one marches to the flute / To go to the mountain of Jehovah, to the Rock of Israel." Although this verse describes

the coming age of restoration, we enjoy a foretaste of this in the meetings of the church and the ministry. We are those feasting on the Lord and with the Lord and singing in the Lord and to the Lord. We have gladness in our heart as those who are marching to the flute to go to the mountain of Jehovah, to the Rock of Israel. Today when we come to the meeting, we should come with gladness in our heart, as those who are "marching to the flute to go to the mountain of Jehovah."

### III. A SAVIOR—A DEFENDER

Isaiah 19:20 reveals that Christ is also a Savior—a Defender, who is the Mighty One, especially for Egypt—the Gentiles. Today we, as the Gentiles, do enjoy Christ as our Savior and our mighty Defender. He not only saves us in many ways but also defends us at the time of need.

### IV. THE TEACHER

Christ is not only the King, the Rock, and the Savior—the Defender, but also the Teacher. Isaiah 30:20 and 21 say, "And though the Lord has given you / The bread of adversity and the water of oppression, / Your Teacher will no longer hide Himself in a corner, / But your eyes will see your Teacher. / And your ears will hear a word behind you, saying, / This is the way, walk in it, / When you turn to the right or turn to the left." In the Old Testament, Christ hid Himself in a mystery, but in the age of restoration He will be manifested to Israel. Today in the new testament age of grace He is already manifested to us. We all can see Him inwardly in our spirit. He is no longer hiding Himself in a corner. We can hear His word on the way telling us to turn to the left or to turn to the right. We have such a Teacher who will no longer hide Himself in a corner from His people but will always instruct His people to turn to the right or turn to the left at the crossroad.

These four items of Christ—the King reigning in the tent of David, the eternal Rock, the defending Savior, and the Teacher—are what He will be to us in the coming age. But today we are enjoying Him in these four aspects in the age

of grace as a foretaste. Christ is our King, our eternal Rock, our Savior as our mighty Defender, and our Teacher. Every day He is teaching us. He is no longer hiding. Whenever we come to a crossroad, He is there at the corner, telling us whether we should turn to the right or to the left. We should treasure the book of Isaiah because in it we can see many items of the all-inclusive Christ.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-TWO

## WHAT CHRIST IS AS THE STEWARD IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, TYPIFIED BY ELIAKIM

Scripture Reading: Isa. 22:15, 20-24; Rev. 3:7

In this message we want to see what Christ is as the Steward in the house of God, typified by Eliakim. Eliakim is one of the most all-inclusive types of Christ. This type is seen in only five verses of Isaiah 22—verses 20-24. Although this portion of the Word is short, it is very difficult to understand and interpret.

This type in these verses reveals six aspects of Christ. First, He is the Steward in God's house. Second, He is the Father as the Source and Supplier to the people of God. A father of a home is always the source of that family and the supplier. Third, Christ is typified as a key-holder. The Lord Jesus referred to Himself as the One who has the key of David in Revelation 3:7. He is the One who holds the key of the house of David. The house is the place where a person keeps all his precious things. The house which keeps the precious things is the treasury. Isaiah 39:2 records how Hezekiah showed the Babylonian visitors his treasury, which literally means "the house of his precious things" (see note 1 of verse 2—Recovery Version). The house of David was a treasury. Hezekiah opened up this treasury to show the Babylonian visitors the riches of the house of David. Christ is the One who has the key to the house of David.

Fourth, Christ is seen as a peg, a nail, driven into a sure place. Zechariah 10:4 and Ezra 9:8 are other verses which refer to the peg, or the nail. Fifth, Christ is a throne of glory for His Father's house. Sixth, Christ is the One upon whom hangs all the glory of His Father's house. All the people of

God's house are hanging on Him, and these people are likened to vessels.

We may say that whatever is in the New Testament concerning Christ was already referred to in the Old Testament. In principle, this is true. But we also need to realize that there are many details in the Old Testament that cannot be found in the New Testament. The New Testament does not tell us that Christ is a peg, a nail, and no New Testament verse tells us directly that Christ is the throne. The New Testament tells us that Christ is a slave, a servant of God, but it does not tell us directly that Christ is a steward. The New Testament says that we believers are stewards (1 Pet. 4:10), but it does not use the word *steward* in reference to Christ. A servant may not be a steward, but a steward is surely a servant.

In ancient times, a large family would have a steward to dispense the riches of the household to all of its members. The book of Genesis records that Joseph was such a steward of Pharaoh's house to distribute the riches of this house. Isaiah 22 speaks of Shebna as the steward over the king's house, the royal household, the royal family. All the treasures were in the king's house, and the key to this house was in his hand. Eventually, he was replaced by Eliakim, a type of Christ as the Steward in the house of God. The New Testament does not relate so many details concerning Christ. We need to see how rich the all-inclusive Christ is. He is not only the Steward and the Father but also the Key-holder and the peg. He is also a throne of glory and the One upon whom hangs all the glory of His Father's house.

Our fellowship in this message to point out the aspects of Christ in the type of Eliakim shows that we need the exposition and interpretation of the Bible. Without the proper exposition and interpretation of the Bible, we would not be able to understand it. Darby, Scofield, and Newberry all recognized that Eliakim was a real type of Christ. Today we are standing on the shoulders of the teachers of the Bible who have gone before us so that we can see and enter into more of the riches of the all-inclusive Christ.

## I. THE STEWARD IN GOD'S HOUSE INTO WHOSE HAND THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY IS PUT

Eliakim typifies Christ as the Steward in God's house (Isa. 22:15, 21a). Christ is the real steward of God's house, the divine household. God's household is the greatest house in the universe, including all the believers throughout the ages. In this vast divine household, Christ is the unique Steward. He takes care of God's household in every way to serve us.

His service is a kind of governing, or ruling. In His service there is the dominion, the administrative authority. When we are served by Christ, we are under His government. He governs us and rules over us, taking care of us. The more He takes care of us, the more we are under His authority, His administration. When I was initially saved, I did not consider Christ's ruling over me in His divine government. But the more I went on with the Lord and enjoyed Him, the more I was caught by Him. The more I enjoyed Him, the more I became governed by Him.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s in Elden Hall in Los Angeles, a number of hippies were saved and came into the church life. As they went on with the Lord and enjoyed the Lord, they were brought under the Lord's government. Gradually, as these young brothers were brought under the divine authority, they stopped wearing their headbands, they shaved their beards, and they put shoes and socks on their feet. Most young people want freedom. I was the same way as a young person, but I was saved by the Lord. The more I prayed to Him, the more I enjoyed Him, and the more I enjoyed Him, the more He restricted me. I was and still am experiencing His inward governing. While a steward serves the children of a certain family, he or she also governs them. Similarly, while Christ as the Steward serves us in God's house, He governs us. Christ is God's Steward taking care of God's children.

## II. THE FATHER AS THE SOURCE AND SUPPLIER TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Isaiah 22:21b says that Eliakim, typifying Christ, will become a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Christ is a Father to us. As the Father, He

is our Source and Supplier. The more we go on as children of God, the more we realize that our Savior, Christ, is our Source and our Supplier. Everything comes from Him. He supplies us and supports us physically, psychologically, and spiritually in every way. If we are short of understanding and wisdom, we should call on Him, look to Him, and wait on Him. Then He will be our understanding and wisdom. We should not be confident in our own understanding and wisdom concerning certain situations or people. We should look to Christ in everything so that He can be our understanding and wisdom. Today Christ is a Father as the Source and Supplier to support us in everything and in every way.

### III. THE ONE UPON WHOSE SHOULDER THE KEY OF THE HOUSE OF GOD IS SET

The all-inclusive Christ, as typified by Eliakim, is also the One upon whose shoulder the key of (the treasury of) the house of God (typified by the house of David for the building up of the kingdom of God) is set (Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7). The house of David was for the establishment of the kingdom of David, and the house of God is for the establishment of the kingdom of God. Second Samuel 7:16 indicates that David's house was for his kingdom. Today God's house is for God's kingdom. The church is God's house (1 Tim. 3:15), and the church is also the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17). The kingdom of God is not that evident today because the house of God has not been strongly and adequately built up. When the church as the house of God is adequately built up, the church is manifested as the kingdom of God.

Christ today holds the key of this house, this kingdom. Isaiah 22:22 says that Jehovah would set the key of the house of David upon Eliakim's shoulder. It does not say that Eliakim holds the key but that the key is set upon his shoulder. This expression indicates that this key is a great key. A small key is merely held by someone; it is not put upon his shoulder. The key that God has put on the shoulder of Christ is a great one. Such a big key indicates that the door which it opens is big and thick. Such a door would be

a stronghold to protect and keep the treasures of the house of God.

The key is for the keeping of the treasures of the house of God. The treasures today in the house of God are all the riches of Christ. In the beginning of my ministry in the United States in 1962, I spoke mostly on the enjoyment of the riches of Christ. Later, I felt that I should go on in the ministry to open up the New Testament to the saints. Therefore, we began to have a life-study of the New Testament beginning in 1974. The subject was seemingly changed from the enjoyment of the riches of Christ to a book-by-book exposition of the New Testament. But many of us can testify that this exposition is full of the riches of the all-inclusive Christ.

Hymn #541 in *Hymns* is concerning the experience of Christ versus all things. It speaks of the things that replace Christ, such as the law of letters, philosophy, and religion. All these things are really "Shebnas" which replace Christ. According to Isaiah 22, Shebna was "fired" and replaced by Eliakim as the steward over the king's house. Darby said that Shebna typifies a false Christ. He should be removed and replaced by Christ. Christ should not be replaced by us. Instead, we should be replaced by Christ. All of us are "Shebnas" who should be removed and replaced by the real Eliakim. Christ, our Eliakim, should replace everything and everyone in God's economy. We should sing Hymn #541 with such a realization. This hymn says:

1 Not the law of letters,
But the Christ of life
God desires to give us,
Saving us from strife;
It is not some doctrine,
But 'tis Christ Himself
Who alone releases
From our sinful self.

2 Any kind of teaching,
Any kind of form,
Cannot quicken spirits

Or our souls transform;
It is Christ as Spirit
Gives us life divine,
Thus thru us to live the
Life of God's design.

3 Not philosophy nor
Any element
Can to Christ conform us
As His complement;
But 'tis Christ Himself who
All our nature takes
And in resurrection
Us His members makes.

4 Not religion, even
Christianity,
Can fulfill God's purpose
Or economy;
But 'tis Christ within us
As our all in all
Satisfies God's wishes,
And His plan withal.

5 All the gifts we're given
By the Lord in grace,
All the different functions
Cannot Christ replace.
Only Christ Himself must
Be our all in all!
Only Christ Himself in
All things, great or small!

We should not allow anything or anyone, including ourselves, to replace Christ. We need to be replaced by Christ. He Himself must be everything in us and to us.

Christ has a big key to open the treasury of all His riches. When He opens the treasury, no one will shut. When He shuts the treasury, no one will open. Christ is the One who can open up to us all the riches of God embodied in Him. He can also shut the door to these riches. Sometimes we

experience the door of the divine treasures being open to us to flood into us. But at other times we may do something to offend the Lord. Then we have the sensation that the door is shut and that the riches coming to us are stopped. His opening and His shutting are all for one thing—the enjoyment of His riches as the treasure.

I believe the direct application of Isaiah 22:22 is this—Christ has the key to control the door of God's treasury, in which are the riches of God in Christ for our enjoyment. We have experienced both His opening of these riches to us and His shutting up of these riches. When He shuts up these riches, we have the feeling of being dried up or inwardly deprived. Our experience indicates that Christ is the One who has the key to all of His riches.

### IV. THE ONE WHOM GOD DRIVES AS A PEG (NAIL) INTO A SURE PLACE (THE HEAVENS INTO WHICH CHRIST WAS EXALTED)

Christ is the One whom God drives as a peg, or nail, into a sure place (Isa. 22:23a). In typology, the sure place typifies the third heaven (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2b). Christ was raised up from the dead, and He was exalted to the third heaven where God is. Actually, to be exalted to the third heaven is to be exalted to God the Father because the Father is in the third heaven. In Luke 15:18 the Lord Jesus relates the story of the prodigal son saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you." *Against heaven* equals *before you* (God the Father). Sinning against heaven is sinning before God because God the Father is in heaven (Matt. 6:9). Heaven, referring to the heavens, is the sure place where God the Father is.

Without the book of Isaiah, we would not know that when God exalted Christ, God drove Him as a peg into the place where He is, the heavens. Christ today is in the heavens as a peg driven into God. He is the peg upon which all of us hang. Sometimes when I was in a plane flying to another locality, the devil injected a thought into me that the plane in which I was flying would drop. My response to this thought was, "I am not actually in this plane; I am in Christ." In other words, I am not hanging on the plane; I am hanging

on Christ. Christ is the peg on which I hang. The sisters may think that they are hanging on their husbands. They need to realize that their husbands are not good, trustworthy "hangers." The best hanger is Christ who has been driven into God in the heavenlies.

### V. A THRONE OF GLORY (THE GLORY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY) FOR HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

Christ as a peg will become a throne of glory for His Father's house (Isa. 22:23b). In Hebrew the word for glory here means both honor and glory. Christ is a throne of honor, a throne of glory. According to Isaiah 22:24 the glory is the children of God as the offspring and issue of God, and these children of God are the vessels of Christ, hanging upon Him as the peg. Christ being a throne of glory for His Father's house is the issue of His people, who are vessels, hanging upon Him as the peg in order to contain Him and minister Him to others. These people, the children of God, are the glory of Christ. With the glory there is a throne, and this throne is actually Christ Himself. The throne signifies the administrative authority and the kingdom. Christ in His administrative authority is the throne governing everything within the house of God.

### VI. THE ONE UPON WHOM HANGS ALL THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

Christ is the One upon whom hangs all the glory of His Father's house—the Father's offspring and issue (descendants), like all the smallest vessels, from the bowls to all the jars (Isa. 22:24). Glory refers to God's descendants, all of God's people. Children are the parents' glory. As the children of God, we are His offspring and issue. Offspring implies the second generation, and issue implies the later generations. Some reference books indicate that *offspring* is the word for shoot and *issue* is the word for growth. As the children of God, we are God's shooting out and also God's growth. The children of God as the offspring and the issue are glory in the house of God. In Isaiah 22:24 "the glory" is in apposition

with "the offspring and the issue." Hence, they refer to the same thing.

Furthermore, "the offspring and the issue" is in apposition with "all the smallest vessels, from the bowls to all the jars." The glory refers to the children of God, and the children of God are the vessels. Today in God's house, on the one hand, we are God's children, and on the other hand, we are the vessels. The Hebrew word for *bowls* may also be translated *cups,* and the Hebrew word for *jars* refers to large, bulging bottles or pitchers. Some of the children of God are smaller, like cups, and others are bigger, like jars, bulging bottles, or pitchers. Whether we are small cups or bulging bottles, we are all vessels.

Cups, or bowls, are small vessels to contain water, and bulging bottles, pitchers, or jars are big vessels to contain wine. Water typifies the Spirit of Christ, and wine typifies the divine life. This signifies that in the house of God all His children are vessels to contain His Spirit as water to quench people's thirst and His life as wine to cheer people unto rejoicing. When we were saved, we received Christ as the living water. Then that water became wine to us. Every one of us should be filled with the divine water and the divine wine.

At times we are too silent in the meetings because we are not filled with the divine life. We should be "drunk" with the divine wine, the life of God. We need to be the bulging bottles full of God's life as the new wine. When we are "drunk" in this way, we cannot be silent. Furthermore, some of us are too depressed. When we are filled with the new wine, we will be happy and excited. We will be eager to hear the word of the ministry and to receive help from the ministry. The new wine, in a proper sense, will make us "crazy." When we are all "crazy" by being filled with the new wine, we will also enjoy the outpouring of the Spirit. We will be full of joy and rejoicing. We may even be so excited that we will jump before the Lord.

Instead of being filled with the divine wine to such an extent, we may merely be nice, polite, and regulated. To be nice, polite, and regulated in this way is to be dead. Instead

of being living members of the Body of Christ, we may be "dead as a doornail." If we feel that we are dead, we need to drink the living water and drink the new wine. The living water will quench our thirst, and the new wine will cheer us unto rejoicing.

Isaiah 22:24 indicates that the vessels, which are for containing water and wine, are hanging upon Christ as the peg. This implies that in the house of God all the riches of the bountiful supply for the enjoyment of God's children are hanging on Christ as the peg, the holder. This implies too that in the house of God all His children who hang on the all-inclusive Christ and who are the containers of the riches of God in this Christ should also be the vessels for ministering Christ to others. As the vessels we are for containing the living water and the new wine for our enjoyment, and we are also for the ministry of the riches of Christ to others.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-THREE

## A CROWN OF GLORY AND A DIADEM OF BEAUTY; A STONE AS A FOUNDATION, A TESTED STONE, AND A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE; AND A KING LIKE A REFUGE, A COVERING, STREAMS OF WATER, AND THE SHADOW OF A MASSIVE ROCK

Scripture Reading: Isa. 28:5, 16; 32:1-2; 33:22; Rom. 9:33; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11-12; Psa. 118:22-24, 26; Matt. 23:39

This is the final message on the first section of Isaiah concerning the all-inclusive Christ. The book of Isaiah may be divided into two sections. The first section is composed of the first thirty-nine chapters, and the second section is composed of the next twenty-seven chapters, from chapters forty through sixty-six. This is similar to the division of the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament has thirty-nine books, and the New Testament has twenty-seven books. At the end of the first section of Isaiah, from chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine, there is the account concerning Hezekiah. Thus, this last message on the first part of Isaiah covers the aspects of the all-inclusive Christ up through chapter thirty-five. In the next message we will begin to see the aspects of Christ in chapter forty, the first chapter of the second section of Isaiah.

In this message we want to see Christ as a crown, a stone, and a King. He is a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty; He is a stone as a foundation, a tested stone, and a precious cornerstone; and He is a King as a man to be a refuge, a covering, streams of water, and the shadow of a massive rock. These items of Christ will all eventually be completely fulfilled in the age of restoration after God will have completed His governmental dealing with Israel.

Today the nation of Israel is confined to a narrow strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea. Without God's sovereign arrangement to have a nation such as the United States to protect Israel, Israel would have already been more diminished. The recent crisis in the Middle East was the exercise of God's sovereignty for the uplifting of Israel and the putting down of the opposing Arab countries. Although Israel has been uplifted, it is still suffering. The day will come, however, when Israel will be fully restored. The landmark of that day will be the second coming of Christ in His glory.

Deuteronomy 11:24 speaks of the boundaries of the territory of Israel—"Every place on which the sole of your foot treads will be yours; from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even unto the farmost sea will be your border." The farmost sea is the Mediterranean Sea. The territory of Israel will stretch from the Mediterranean Sea all the way to the Euphrates within Iraq. Today the nations are debating about what land should belong to Israel and what land should belong to the Palestinians. But the Lord set the boundaries of the land of Israel in Deuteronomy, and He promised that He would cut off and drive out others who possessed this land (Exo. 23:23, 28, 31). What the nations of the world feel about Israel does not matter. The Lord's feeling and decision regarding the situation of Israel mean everything.

### I. A CROWN OF GLORY AND A DIADEM OF BEAUTY

Isaiah 28:5 says, "In that day Jehovah of hosts / Will become a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people." In this verse Christ is revealed as a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty. We need to consider the difference between a crown and a diadem. We may think that these are the same, but these items are not in apposition in verse 5. There is a conjunction between them—a crown of glory *and* a diadem of beauty. This is Isaiah's marvelous writing. A crown is like a hat or turban, whereas the diadem is the most beautiful, glorious part of the crown. It is the headband. Generally speaking, a crown signifies glory, but its beauty is in its diadem, which may be full of jewels and

precious stones. The diadem is the beauty of the glorious crown.

Christ will be a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of Israel, God's chosen people, in the age of restoration after all the dealings of God. He will be His chosen people's glorification. Glory and beauty are two distinct things. Something may be very glorious but not that beautiful. Christ will be both glory and beauty to His elect people.

We need to remember that the age of grace is a miniature and a foretaste of the coming age of restoration. Today we enjoy a foretaste of Christ as our crown and diadem. Regretfully, many do not feel glorious to tell people that they are Christians. Some Christians may talk about other persons or things in a glorious way, but when they come to the subject of Christ, they may feel shameful. This is not right. When we talk about Christ and when we tell people that we are Christians, we should consider that Christ is our crown and diadem, our glory and beauty.

I experienced Christ in this way about fifty years ago when Japan invaded China and I was imprisoned by the Japanese army. On the one hand, they shamed me, judged me, and tortured me. On the other hand, they respected and regarded me because I behaved as a Christian. Paul said in the book of Philippians, while he was imprisoned in Rome, that he had the earnest expectation and hope not to be put to shame but to magnify Christ (1:20). Paul magnified Christ to such an extent that even some in Caesar's household became believers in Christ (4:22). In Paul's experience, he had Christ as a crown with a diadem. We should feel glorious that we are Christians. When we are defeated, we feel ashamed, but when we repent and receive the dispensing Christ in a fresh way, we feel glorious.

## II. A STONE AS A FOUNDATION, A TESTED STONE, AND A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE

Isaiah 28:16 says, "Therefore thus says / The Lord Jehovah: / Behold, I lay a stone in Zion as a foundation, / A tested stone, / A precious cornerstone as a foundation firmly established; / He who believes will not hasten away." Christ,

who is our glory and our beauty, is also a stone in many aspects. He is a stone laid by God in Zion.

This stone is a foundation firmly established for God's building in Israel. We can enjoy Christ as such a firmly established foundation today. With the worldly people who do not believe in Christ, everything is fading. This is because they do not have Christ as a stone, a foundation, on which to stand. As Christians, we have Christ as a crown upon our heads and as a rock under our feet. This rock is firmly established for God's building among His people.

Christ is a tested stone which has been tried and which is trustworthy. Christ as a stone was tested during the thirty-three and a half years of His human life. From the time that He became a man, He was tested every day of His earthly life, and He had no failure. He is perfect, complete, solid, and strong. He is fully qualified to be our foundation because He has been tested.

According to Isaiah 28:16, he who believes in this tried and trustworthy stone "will not hasten away." The King James Version renders this portion as "shall not make haste." Darby says in a note that this can be translated as "shall not hasten with fear." This can also mean "will not hurry in panic." Christ is a trustworthy stone, and we believe in Him. Whatever happens to us, we do not need to be in haste or in panic. We can be at peace. The worldly people, even including Christians who do not trust the Lord so much, are always in haste, in panic, whenever something happens to them. In their haste they do not know what they should do.

I would like to share a little more about my experience of the Lord as the tested stone when the invading Japanese army arrested me about fifty years ago. Two men from the Japanese military police came to the meeting hall to see me early on Monday morning. I had been there only a few minutes. They came to know that I always went to the hall to do my work from eight to noon. I welcomed them to my study room, which was upstairs in the meeting hall. I was not hastening away in panic, in fear. Instead, I was steady. They told me that they wanted me to come to their headquarters. I agreed to go with them and presented them a

small pocket version of the entire Bible. That Bible became a help to me when they interrogated me later. When I went with them, I asked a brother in the hall to please tell my wife that I was going to the military police headquarters. I was imprisoned by them for thirty days. They examined me twice a day, and each session lasted about three hours. I was always under their threatening.

One day one of them asked me why we called our conferences "revival conferences." I replied that we did this because our church does everything according to the Bible. He asked me this because they suspected that I was doing a work for the Nationalist government to revive the Chinese people. In China at that time, those in Christianity used a word meaning *endeavoring;* only we used the word *revival.* After I told him that we do everything according to the Bible, he asked me if the matter of revival was in the Bible. When I said "yes," he took the small Bible I had given them as a gift, threw it to me, and said, "Show me where it is." Under the Lord's sovereignty, I opened the Bible to the very page of Habakkuk 3:2, where Habakkuk prays, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years."

The book of Habakkuk is one of the twelve minor books in the Old Testament. It is very difficult to remember the order of these books in the Bible. But that day I opened the Bible to the very page where this verse concerning revival is. It was a miracle for me to turn directly to this verse and point out the word "revive" to him. This showed him that our practice was according to the Bible. If I had been in haste, I might have fully forgotten where the verse concerning revival is, and I might have turned to another place in the Bible. This is a testimony that "he who believes will not hasten away."

We should not forget that we are believers in Christ. Christ is our foundation, and this foundation has been tested. He is trustworthy, so we should put our trust in Him. We should not be in haste, in panic. In my study of this portion of the Word, one reference book quoted a proverb which said that haste is of the devil. When we are in haste, in panic, we should not forget that this is of the devil. We do not have to

be in haste because we have Christ as a tested stone to be our foundation.

This stone is also a precious cornerstone for the joint of God's building. Whereas the foundation stone holds the entire building, the cornerstone joins two parts of the building. The New Testament tells us, based upon Psalm 118:22-24, that Christ is the chief cornerstone (Rom. 9:33; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11-12; Eph. 2:20). According to the New Testament, Christ as the cornerstone joins together the two walls, one of the Jewish believers and the other of the Gentile believers. Because Christ took the lead to join together the Jews and the Gentiles, He is the first cornerstone. Even today we are not only held by Him as our foundation stone but also joined together by Him as our cornerstone. I am joined to you, and you are joined to me. We are joined together by Christ. Without Him, we are separate and detached. Today's Christianity is lacking in the experience of Christ as the joining cornerstone. We need to experience Christ as the tested, trustworthy stone to be the firmly established foundation holding us and the cornerstone joining us together. This issues in God's building, the Body of Christ.

This item of Christ has been fulfilled as a foretaste in today's age of grace. When Paul spoke of the righteousness of faith in Romans 9, he quoted Isaiah 28:16 by saying that whoever believes on this stone, Christ, will not be put to shame (v. 33). We can experience Christ as the stone today. He is our cornerstone, our foundation stone, our tested stone. In Him we trust. The complete fulfillment of Christ as the stone will be in the next age, the age of restoration.

The Lord Jesus' word to the Jewish leaders in Matthew 21:42 indicates that they were the builders, but they did not have the discernment to see that they were rejecting the cornerstone of God's building, Christ. The Lord Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22-23 by saying that the stone which the builders rejected was made the cornerstone by God. Peter quoted the Lord's word in Acts 4:11-12. In verse 11 he mentioned Christ as the cornerstone, and in verse 12 he indicated that today this cornerstone is our Savior. Very few Christians know that Jesus Christ, their Savior, is the cornerstone. Our Savior,

Jesus, saves us into God's building and joins us to God's building.

In the age of restoration, all these items of Christ will be completely fulfilled. Psalm 118:22-24 will definitely be fulfilled in the time of the restoration, because verse 26 of this psalm was quoted by the Lord in Matthew 23:38-39 when He told the Jews, "Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For I say to you, You shall by no means see Me henceforth until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." This will be the day of restoration at the Lord's second coming, when all the remnant of Israel will turn to believe in Christ and be saved (Rom. 11:23, 26).

### III. A KING LIKE A REFUGE, A COVERING, STREAMS OF WATER, AND THE SHADOW OF A MASSIVE ROCK

Christ is not only a crown and a stone, but also a King (Isa. 32:1-2; 33:22). Isaiah reveals Him as a King for supplying us, caring for us, and covering us. Christ as the King is Jehovah, God, and He is also a man. Our King is very human and even lowly. The presidents of the United States may try their best to lower themselves down to be among the people, but no one can compare with the Lord Jesus. He is a King, yet He is very human and lowly.

Isaiah 32:1 says, "Behold, a King will reign according to righteousness, / And the rulers will rule according to justice." He does not rule directly by Himself but indirectly through the rulers according to justice. We need to consider the difference between righteousness and justice. Righteousness is to be right, whereas justice is righteousness with a judgment. Without judgment, there is no possibility of justice. Justice comes from the judgment according to a person's righteousness, and it declares his righteousness. When judgment is exercised on someone according to what he is and has done, that verdict, that judgment, is justice. This is why justice is carried out by the rulers who judge. Christ will reign according to righteousness, and He will rule through His helpers, the rulers, to judge the people according to

justice. The entire earth is lacking in righteousness, and nearly all the governments are short of justice.

This One who reigns and rules through the rulers according to righteousness and justice is not only God but also a lowly man. In Isaiah 32:1 this King is a man, and this Man-king is a refuge to us from the wind (v. 2). "Wind" always comes to us in the course of our human life. The husbands have to admit that their wives are the source of much wind. The wives "blow upon" their husbands much of the time. To be a proper husband is not easy because the wind from the wife always comes. The husbands need to take Jesus as their refuge from the wind. Whenever the wind blows, we need to run to this man, taking Him as our refuge. Then we are protected.

As a man, He is also a covering from the tempest (v. 2). We have seen the difference between a crown and a diadem and between righteousness and justice. Now we need to see the difference between the wind and the tempest. Regardless of how strong the wind is, in itself it is not a tempest. A tempest is a turmoil, a tumult. It is much stronger and more troublesome than just wind. A tempest is much harder to face than wind. The man Jesus is not only a refuge from the wind but also a covering from the tempest. Because He is our covering, the tempest, the turmoil, cannot bother us or damage us. We should learn to experience the Lord in these aspects. Especially in the past three years, the tempest came to me. I took the Lord as a covering from this tempest.

This man is also streams of water in a dry place (v. 2). These streams of water are our supply, comfort, and satisfaction. Today whose situation is not a dry place? Whose marriage is not a dry place? Married life always dries people up. Some husbands are so capable in drying up their wives. Some wives are the same. Our businesses and jobs are also very dry places. In these dry places, we need to take a drink. Instead of taking a cup of coffee, we should "take a cup of Jesus." Then we will be watered in a dry place. He is not merely a small amount of water, but He is streams of water. We Christians should be able to testify of this.

He is also the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land (v. 2). A wasted land is a desert, but not a natural desert. A natural desert was not made that way by human hands, but a wasted land has been touched by some, wasted by some. Because this wasted land is full of heat, there is the need of a shadow. This shadow in a land full of heat functions like today's air conditioner. We need Christ as such a shadow to be a canopy over us. Our Christ is wonderful! As the man Jesus, He is our King, our refuge, our covering, our streams of water, and our shadow, our shade. He is so practical to us in our daily life.

Isaiah 33:22 says that He is our Judge, our Lawmaker, and our King to save us. In His divine government, He is such a person of three aspects. The United States government is divided into three sections in a similar way. This government has three branches: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. In the past I thought that the United States invented such a marvelous government with the balance of powers. Eventually, I found out that according to Isaiah 33:22, God had already practiced this. Christ as the King is the executive branch of the divine government. He is also the Lawmaker, the Legislator, as the legislative branch. Finally, He is our Judge as the judicial branch. He is in these three aspects to exercise His divine government in saving His people. In the United States government these three branches are always balancing one another, but many times they fight against one another. The Lord Jesus in His divine government, however, is perfectly balanced in every way. The three sections of the divine government are one person. Our Jesus is the executive, legislative, and judicial branches in His divine government.

Whatever is in the Bible is much superior to man's invention. The system of communism was formulated by Karl Marx according to the biblical practice in Acts 2 of the believers having all things common (v. 44). But history has shown that the practice of communism does not work. God gave the children of Israel a way to balance the wealth in the Old Testament, and He does this in a spiritual way in the New Testament (2 Cor. 8:14-15), but fallen man has no

way of practicing this in the flesh. Nothing in human culture can exceed what is mentioned in the Bible. Nothing can compete with the divine revelation in the Bible because the Bible is the writing of our God, who knows everything.

The Bible shows us all the riches of the all-inclusive Christ. Isaiah tells us that our Savior, Christ, is a King to reign according to righteousness and to rule according to justice. He is also a man as a refuge, a covering, streams of water, and a shadow. Furthermore, He is the judicial, legislative, and executive branches in His divine government. He is everything. In addition to these items, He is the stone. He is also our glory as a crown and our beauty as a diadem. He is our wonderful, all-inclusive Christ.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-FOUR

## JEHOVAH THE SAVIOR

Scripture Reading: Isa. 40:3-31; John 3:34a; 7:17; 1 John 2:17a; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; Matt. 9:36; John 10:2-4, 11, 14; Eph. 6:10; Phil. 4:13, 12; 2 Tim. 4:7

In the previous message we pointed out that the book of Isaiah may be divided into two sections. The first section is composed of the first thirty-nine chapters, and the second section is composed of the final twenty-seven chapters. Chapter forty, the first chapter in the second section, shows us Christ as Jehovah the Savior. Chapters forty-one through sixty-six reveal Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. As the Servant of Jehovah, He is typified by three persons—Cyrus, Isaiah, and Israel. In the book of Isaiah, Cyrus is presented in a very good and positive sense. God said that He chose Cyrus, loved Cyrus, and appointed Cyrus to carry out His commission. In Isaiah, Cyrus typifies Christ. Isaiah, the prophet of Jehovah, also typifies Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. Israel as the corporate servant of Jehovah also typifies Christ. Christ is the totality of Israel. In this message we want to see the revelation of the all-inclusive Christ in Isaiah 40, where Christ is revealed as Jehovah the Savior, as the glad tidings.

The book of Isaiah is not easy to understand. Chapter forty may be considered as the most difficult chapter in this book. Isaiah wrote this chapter in a marvelous way with a definite prophecy concerning John the Baptist. Chapters forty through sixty-six, altogether twenty-seven chapters, may be considered as one word from Jehovah to His chastised, chosen people, Israel. This word is a word of comfort. In the first thirty-five chapters, Isaiah did not have a good feeling about Israel. He rebuked, condemned, and exposed Israel to the

uttermost. Jeremiah is even stronger than Isaiah in this respect. He points out repeatedly how evil Israel is. The first thirty-five chapters of Isaiah are full of his rebuking of Israel. Chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine are an interval concerning one person—Hezekiah. After this short history of four chapters, Isaiah's tone altogether changes. There is no more rebuking or condemnation. Instead there is Jehovah's word of comfort to Israel, and the beginning of the word of Jehovah is the glad tidings. Isaiah says in 40:9, "Here is your God!" As long as God is here, the glad tidings are here.

The New Testament shows that God came to man as Jesus, the incarnated One. God Himself was incarnated (John 1:1, 14). That was His coming to man. Genesis 18 records how God came to Abraham. He came with two angels to visit Abraham. He and these angels all were in the form of men when they came to Abraham, but Jesus came in a different way. He came in the way of incarnation, the way of entering into man and becoming a man to directly participate in man's humanity, partaking of man's blood and flesh. For His coming there was the need of a forerunner to usher in the incarnated God to His people. This forerunner was John the Baptist. The New Testament opens with John's ushering, recommendation, and introduction of the incarnated God.

## I. USHERED IN BY THE VOICE OF ONE (JOHN THE BAPTIST) CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

John's introduction was prophesied by Isaiah in 40:3-4. Jehovah the Savior, Jesus, was ushered in by the voice of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness. In verse 3, the voice cries, "Make clear / The way of Jehovah; / Make straight in the desert / A highway for our God." To make clear the way of Jehovah is to make clear the way of Jesus. Jesus is the New Testament Jehovah. Jehovah and Jesus are one person. In the Old Testament, the name of Jesus is Jehovah, and in the New Testament the name of Jehovah is Jesus. To make clear the way of Jehovah is to make straight in the desert a highway for our God. The way of Jehovah, Jesus, is a highway for our God. This means that Jesus is our God.

Verse 4 says, "Every valley will be lifted up, / And every mountain and hill will be made low, / And the crooked places will become straight, / And the rough places a broad valley." When I first came to the United States, I traveled frequently, and the highways were a marvel to me. If there was a valley, a bridge was over it. The terrain was leveled and adjusted so that the highways could be constructed.

We need to consider what Isaiah means by making a highway for our God. To prepare the way of Jehovah is to prepare our heart. Jesus comes with the intention of getting into our spirit, but to enter into our spirit, He must pass through our heart. Our heart is composed of four parts—the mind, the emotion, the will, and the conscience. The human heart is full of valleys, mountains, hills, crooked places, and rough places.

Before we were saved was our heart straight or crooked? Was it fine or rough? In our heart there were valleys, mountains, crooked places, and rough places. Even now we have to confess that our heart is not that straight, not that level. Our heart is still crooked and rough. The highway is a paved heart. Every part and avenue of our heart need to be straightened by the Lord through repentance that the Lord may enter into us to be our life and take possession of us (Luke 1:17).

Our mind may be full of crooked places, and our emotion may be very rough. We may be cold toward the Lord. This is why John was crying in the wilderness to make straight in the desert a highway for our God. The human heart is like a desert full of crooked and rough places. What is our heart like? Is it straight and paved, without valleys, mountains, crooked places, or rough places? This is John the Baptist's crying word to usher in the Savior, who is Jesus as the revealing of Jehovah God.

## II. THE REVEALING OF JEHOVAH

The revealing of Jehovah is the appearing of Jesus. John told people that he was not the Christ but the one coming before Christ to prepare His way (Mark 1:1-8). Jesus, the One coming after John, would be the appearing of Jehovah. Jesus,

who is Jehovah, is our God. He is the revealing of Jehovah. Isaiah 40:5 says that all flesh will see Him. This is the glad tidings, the good news.

Verse 5 also indicates that Jehovah is revealed through His speaking (John 3:34a; 7:17). In the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus told us that He was sent by the Father (5:36b-37a) and that He did not speak from Himself (14:10). He was speaking from His Father, His teaching was altogether of His Father, and His speaking was the expression of the Father. The more you listen to His speaking, the more you see Jehovah. John 3:34a says, "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God." He was sent by God for the purpose of speaking the word of God for God's expression. In other words, His speaking was the revealing of God. When you listen to Him, you see God. In His word, His speaking, God is unveiled and presented to you.

Isaiah goes on to say in 40:6-8a that all flesh withers like the grass and fades like the flower. All flesh, all of mankind, will not last. First John 2:17 says that the world is passing away. The world here, according to its usage in John 3:16, refers to mankind, to human beings. Human beings will pass away, but the word of Jesus will stand forever. There have been many famous people throughout history who spoke, but their words do not abide forever. When they died, their words died with them, but the speaking of Jesus remains forever. Jesus is still speaking, and His words remain forever.

When we hear His word, we see him. We were saved by hearing His word. Some may say that at a certain time they saw Jesus and were saved. Actually, they did not see Him physically, but they heard His word. His word is just Himself, and He is Jehovah, and Jehovah is God. Thus, we may say that the word is God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God (John 1:1). When I speak, I always exercise not to speak from myself. I exercise to speak the word of the Lord. When we speak in this way, the Lord is present in our speaking, and others are able to see Jesus. When we are under the ministry of the Lord's word, we see Jesus, Jehovah, the Savior, God, the glad tidings. All of these are one. This is why we, the saved ones, like to come to the meetings. In

the meetings there is the speaking of the Lord, the word of God. When we hear His word, we see Him.

His word will stand forever to enliven men that they may partake of His eternal life for their enjoyment (Isa. 40:8b; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). When people listen to His word, they are enlivened. When we heard the gospel, we saw Jesus, we were made alive, and we partook of His eternal life for our enjoyment. Peter told us in his first Epistle that we have been regenerated through the living and abiding word of God. As fallen men, we were like withering grass and fading flowers, yet we heard the living word, which is abiding forever. This living word brought the eternal life into us to regenerate us, and we received the eternal life for our daily enjoyment. This is the first aspect of the glad tidings.

### III. THE GLAD TIDINGS—"HERE IS YOUR GOD!"

Isaiah 40:9 declares the glad tidings—"Here is your God!" This is Jehovah's appearing. Jehovah is here, and He is your God. This is the glad tidings. If you have God, you have everything. If you have God, every problem will be solved, every lack will be supplied, and every shortage will be filled. This short word—"Here is your God!"—is the glad tidings. We should pray adequately to be filled with God, to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Then when we come to the meeting, in a sense, we may not need to speak that much. Instead we can all declare, "Here is our God!" This is the second aspect of the glad tidings.

### IV. THE LORD JEHOVAH COMING

The third aspect of the glad tidings is the Lord Jehovah coming. He comes as a mighty One to rule and to recompense (Isa. 40:10). He is the Ruler who comes as a mighty One to rule over us. He is also the Judge. He will either reward us or punish us. This is His recompense, which is His judgment. Jesus came as the Savior, but in the four Gospels we also see Him as the Judge. In Matthew 5 the Lord spoke nine blessings for the kingdom people, but in Matthew 23 He spoke an eightfold woe to the scribes and Pharisees. He declared again and again, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,

hypocrites." This is His judging. With Him is a reward on the positive side and a punishment, which is a recompense on the negative side. He will judge us.

As the mighty One, the ruling and judging One, He comes to be a Shepherd (Isa. 40:11; Matt. 9:36; John 10:2-4, 11, 14). In a shepherd's care for his flock, he rules over the sheep to correct them. His ruling and correcting is his shepherding. In the past, we may have been wild persons who would not listen to the gospel or to the word of God. But in His ruling, Jesus did something to regulate us. His regulating is His shepherding. Many of us were saved because of Jesus' regulating. His regulating shepherds us to bring us into the flock, to get us on the right way, and to adjust us to the proper pace. He is adjusting us not to go too fast or too slow, but to take the pace of the flock. Today He is still shepherding us by adjusting us. He directs us, stops us, and urges us on.

As the Shepherd, He also feeds His flock, gathers the lambs in His arm, carries them in His bosom, and leads those who are nursing the young. Among us some are lambs and some are those who are nursing the young. Jesus, our Shepherd, takes care of His entire flock. This is surely a part of the glad tidings.

### V. THE HOLY ONE, THE ETERNAL GOD, JEHOVAH, THE CREATOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, SITTING ABOVE THE CIRCLE OF THE EARTH

After this kind of shepherding, the flock, the sheep, will know Jesus as the Holy One, the eternal God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, sitting above the circle of the earth (Isa. 40:22, 25-26, 28a). As we feed a new believer whom we have brought to the Lord, he will be helped by us to know Jesus more. He will be helped to know Jesus as the eternal God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

Actually, Isaiah 40 reveals the steps of the God-ordained way. We have to get people saved and feed them. Then they will begin to know that their Savior, Jesus, is the Holy One, the eternal God, Jehovah, and the Creator of the heavens and the earth. When we go to visit the new believers, we should speak to them about Jesus in these aspects. Then they

will be fed. They will realize that Jesus is wonderful. Can Socrates, Confucius, or Buddha be compared with Him? There is no comparison between Him and anyone or anything else. As the Holy One, Jesus is unlimited, unsearchable, incomparable, and high (Isa. 40:12-14, 17-18, 28b, 22a).

Isaiah 40:15 and 17 say that all peoples are like a drop of water from a bucket, like specks of dust on the scales, and are nothing, even less than nothing, just vanity—emptiness. Perhaps you will bring a college professor to the Lord and then begin to feed him. A college professor may consider that he is a very important person with much prestige. As you feed him, however, he will come to know that he is like a drop of water from a bucket or a speck of dust on the heavenly scale. Eventually, he will realize that he is nothing and that Christ is everything. He will realize that apart from Christ, he is even less than nothing, vanity, emptiness. This will be the result of your visiting him to feed him again and again.

We have to preach Christ to such an extent, causing people to know that they are just vanity, emptiness. The more they realize that they are nothing, empty, and vanity, the more they will appreciate Christ and be filled up with Christ. They will treasure Christ. Saul of Tarsus was like this. Eventually, he realized that all things were dung and that only Christ is the excellent One. He even considered the knowledge of Christ to be excellent (Phil. 3:8). If a brother with a high position treasures this position, he will not be able to enjoy Christ that much. We have to count all things dung that we may gain Christ and enjoy Christ. This is the fourth aspect of the glad tidings.

### VI. EMPOWERING AND STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO WAIT ON HIM

The fifth aspect of the glad tidings in Isaiah 40 is that Jehovah the Savior empowers and strengthens those who wait on Him (vv. 29-31). We experience this when we prophesy, when we speak for the Lord. When we prophesy, we are empowered and strengthened.

The Lord gives power to the faint, and to those who have no vigor He multiplies strength (v. 29). In Ephesians 6:10

Paul said, "Be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength." He also declared, "I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me" (Phil. 4:13). Christ is the empowering One, so we who wait on Him will not faint or become weary. In Christ as the empowering One, we will mount up with wings like eagles. Isaiah 40:30 and 31 say, "Although youths will faint and become weary, / And young men shall collapse exhausted; / Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles; / They will run and will not faint; / They will walk and will not become weary." This is the Old Testament way of describing those who trust in Jesus. The New Testament expresses this in Ephesians 6:10 and Philippians 4:13. Paul also says in Philippians 4:12, "I have learned the secret." He learned the secret of sufficiency in Christ, so he did not faint or become weary. At the end of his life, in 2 Timothy 4:7, he declared, "I have finished the course."

Isaiah 40 presents a marvelous picture of the all-inclusive Christ as Jehovah the Savior. Through His living and abiding word, we have been regenerated. We have been fed by Him to know Him as the Holy One, the eternal God, Jehovah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is unlimited, unsearchable, incomparable, and high. We human beings are as a drop of water and specks of dust. We are nothing and even less than nothing, vanity, emptiness. When we know Christ in this way, we are qualified to wait on Him. We are nothing, and He is everything. Therefore, we do not have any trust in ourselves. We put our trust in Him and wait on Him. He then gives us the eagles' wings to mount up, so that we can run the course of the Christian life without fainting or becoming weary. This is the very Christ presented to us in Isaiah 40.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-FIVE

## THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH
## As Typified by Cyrus the King of Persia, by Israel, and by Isaiah the Prophet

Scripture Reading: Isa. 41:2, 25; 45:13, 1; 48:14b; 46:11b; 44:28; 41:8-16; 42:1a; 43:10; 44:1-5, 21; 49:3; 46:13b; 48:16b; 49:1-4; 50:4-9

In this message we want to see Christ as the Servant of Jehovah typified by three persons—first, by a Gentile king, Cyrus the king of Persia; second, by God's selected corporate people, Israel; and third, by a typical, bonafide, top prophet of Jehovah, Isaiah. All three were God's servants in the sense of a type. Because Christ is so great, many types are needed to describe Him. The Old Testament is full of types of Christ. In the New Testament, the four Gospels portray Christ in four aspects, but He has many, many aspects. In the book of Isaiah we can see many aspects of the all-inclusive Christ.

Isaiah was a wonderful, poetic writer. His writing is long. We have pointed out previously that the sections of Isaiah are very significant. The first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah symbolize all the significances in the contents of the Old Testament, which is composed of thirty-nine books. The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament may be considered as the element, and the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah are the essence extracted from this element. The last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah are the second section of this book, and they correspond to the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. This section of twenty-seven chapters can be considered as the essence of the New Testament, the extract of the real significance of the New Testament. This extract is concerning one person. Today we call Him the Lord Jesus

Christ, which equals the Lord Jehovah in the Old Testament. The Lord Jehovah is the Old Testament Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the New Testament Lord Jehovah.

The first chapter of the second section of Isaiah is chapter forty, where Christ is revealed as Jehovah the Savior. In this chapter what is covered is the revealing of the Lord Jehovah. Revealing means manifesting. When a person is hidden, concealed, and covered, we cannot see him. When his covering is removed, he is revealed to us. This means He is manifested. The revealing is the manifestation. Chapter forty covers the revealing of the Lord Jehovah, which is the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this chapter Isaiah declares, "Here is your God!" (v. 9). The revealing of the Lord Jehovah is the appearing of the very God, and this Lord Jehovah, the very God, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jehovah, the Lord God, appears as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior.

From chapters forty-one through sixty-six, Christ is revealed as the Servant of Jehovah. These twenty-six chapters cover this one person. In this message we want to cover the revelation of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah in chapters forty-one through fifty. In these ten chapters there are four servants of God—Cyrus, the Gentile king; Israel, God's chosen corporate people; Isaiah, God's wonderful prophet; and Christ. They are four, but eventually they are one, so they are four-in-one.

Now we need to consider what these servants as types of Christ did and what Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is doing today. They surely were one with God to carry out His commission to build the temple as the center and reality of God's interest on the earth. Today's temple in the New Testament is the church (1 Cor. 3:16-17). The church is not a physical building with a tower and a bell. Paul tells us that the church is God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:15-16).

Both the Old and New Testaments talk about the church. However, in the New Testament, Paul tells us that the church was hidden in the Old Testament. It was a mystery (Eph. 3:4-5, 9). Although the church was hidden in appearance in the Old Testament, in type it was not hidden. Eve, for example, was the wife of Adam to be the type of the church

as Christ's counterpart. If we want to know the church, we need to know the type of Eve. Eve as the counterpart of Adam has a number of very significant points. Eve was built with Adam's rib (Gen. 2:22). God used this rib to build a woman. Eve was out of Adam. This signifies that the church is something out of Christ. Thus, the church was not created. The church was built up with something that has come out of Christ. Without the type of Eve, we could not understand the church that well. Eve was out of Adam and eventually went back to Adam to be one flesh with Adam. This is a good picture of the church in a type. The Old Testament is full of types of the church.

The New Testament speaks of the church as the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17) and the house of God, the household of God (Eph. 2:19). The house, the dwelling place, is also the household, those who dwell in the house. The church as the household is composed of the sons of God (Gal. 3:26), the members of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). The church is also the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23) and the new man (2:15). Thus, the church is the kingdom of God, the house of God, the household of God, the sons of God, the members of Christ, the Body of Christ, and the new man. Eventually, the church will consummate in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2). The new man is enlarged to be the New Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem is the holy city, the tabernacle of God and the temple of God. All of these aspects of the church can be seen in typology in the Old Testament. Paul said the church was hidden as a mystery, but the church is not hidden in the types in the Old Testament.

We need to see the revelation of the all-inclusive Christ from the types in the book of Isaiah. In Isaiah, God has four servants: Cyrus, Israel, Isaiah, and Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. What did they do? They built up a city, that is, the kingdom of God. The city is a symbol of the kingdom. They also built up the temple, and the temple is a symbol of God's house with God's people as God's household. Israel was God's people, and Isaiah and Christ were both a part of Israel. They were both Jewish. In Hosea 11:1 Israel refers to Christ (Matt. 2:15).

**I. TYPIFIED BY CYRUS THE KING OF PERSIA**

Cyrus was raised up by Jehovah (Isa. 41:2a, 25a; 45:13a; Acts 3:26a), anointed by Jehovah (Isa. 45:1a; Luke 4:18a), and loved by Jehovah (48:14b; Matt. 3:17). He did God's pleasure on Babylon, symbolizing the Roman Catholic Church in Revelation 17. He was God's counselor (Isa. 46:11b; Heb. 10:7) to subdue the nations and have dominion over the kings (Isa. 41:2b, 25c; 45:1b; Ezra 1:2a; Acts 5:31a; Rev. 1:5a). He was also Jehovah's shepherd for the fulfilling of His desire in building up the city (symbolizing the kingdom) and the temple of God and in releasing God's captives (Isa. 44:28; 45:13b; Ezra 1:2-3; John 10:11; 5:30b; 2:19; Luke 4:18b). In all of the above aspects, Cyrus was a type of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah.

Isaiah tells us that Cyrus was the one whom God chose, whom God raised up, whom God called, whom God anointed, whom God loved, and the one who would do God's pleasure to make God happy all the time. He was loved by God and worked to please God, to do God's good pleasure. God's good pleasure is His people, Israel. Israel was God's counterpart. Jeremiah 2 speaks of the bridal love, the honeymoon love, between Jehovah and Israel. Verse 2 says, "Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown" (ASV). In the Bible the honeymoon love is called the bridal love. Jehovah was married to Israel and had a honeymoon with them. At that time they both enjoyed the bridal love. It is amazing that these romantic terms came out of the mouth of Jehovah God. He fell in love with Israel. God is the Husband, and His redeemed people are His wife. In Jeremiah 3:14 God said that He was Israel's Husband.

God loves Israel, loves His kingdom signified by the city, and loves His house signified by the temple. Cyrus took care of these three things. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, did something ugly to God. First, he captured God's people. Second, he burned the temple. Third, he destroyed the city.

These three treasures which are in God's heart, His desire, were devastated by Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, throughout the entire Bible, God hates Babylon.

Cyrus came in to release the captives of Israel. He did not want any compensation from them for this release (Isa. 45:13). He supported them and provided a way for them to go back to their fathers' land (Ezra 1). That was God's first desire. Then he charged them to go back to build up the temple of their God. That was God's second desire. He also charged them to build the city, which was God's third desire. God loved Cyrus because he did the things on His heart. What he did touched God's heart.

Jehovah stirred up this man, Cyrus, from the east (Isa. 41:2a) and from the north (v. 25a). This man was a bird of prey (46:11). He would get everything from the Lord for the purpose of releasing the Lord's people so that they could rebuild His temple and raise up His city. Cyrus was used by God to release God's captured elect, to build His house, His household, and to establish His kingdom on this earth.

What are we doing today? We need to be those who are going out to get sinners. This is what it means to release God's chosen people. In eternity past God chose millions of people, but they all were captured by Satan, typified by that evil Nebuchadnezzar. In Isaiah 14, Isaiah combines Satan with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon (vv. 12-23). All the sinners are Satan's captives. Every time we bring a sinner to salvation, he gets released from Satan's captivity. If we gain one hundred sinners for Christ, that means we reach one hundred captives for God.

All the angels rejoice when just one sinner is saved, when one captive is released (Luke 15:10, 7). The first verse of hymn #1068 says:

In tenderness He sought me,
Weary and sick with sin,
And on His shoulders brought me
Into His flock again.
While angels in His presence sang
Until the courts of heaven rang.

This verse tells us that when a sinner is saved, the angels'

singing fills the courts of heaven. The angels in heaven rejoice every time a sinner is saved.

Our gospel preaching is to release the captives. Then we build up the church, God's house and household, with the released sinners saved through our preaching. We also establish the kingdom of God. All the sinners saved through our preaching will be members of the house of God and of the kingdom of God. Furthermore, they will become the members of Christ's Body and the constituents of the new man. Eventually, they will consummate in the coming New Jerusalem. Day by day and week by week we should be working in this way for God's good pleasure to touch God's heart.

Each one of us needs to be today's Cyrus. Like Cyrus, we need to be birds of prey who go out to gain sinners for God's kingdom. The saved sinners are our prey. All of these saved ones are the released captives who have been made sons of God and members of Christ. How good it is! Such a pleasant work should never tire us out. We should only know how to make our God happy. God's charge to us should be sweet and pleasant. If we realize what we are doing for God's good pleasure, we will be happy.

Cyrus did not ask for any recompense for releasing Israel. Nebuchadnezzar captured them, and Cyrus wanted to send them back home. This was his pleasure, and it was also the pleasure of God. God in heaven could have applauded Cyrus as a good servant. God could have said to Cyrus, "You are doing something according to My good pleasure in My heart. I'm happy to see you release My people for them to build up the temple and erect the holy city again."

### II. TYPIFIED BY ISRAEL

Israel as a type of Christ is more subjective. As the ones chosen by God, they are God's kingdom, God's house, and God's household. Israel as a type of Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, was chosen by Jehovah and upheld with the right hand of His righteousness. Like Christ, Israel overcame the enemies by Jehovah and rejoiced and gloried in Him, the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 41:8-16; 42:1a; Rom. 8:37; 1 Thes. 2:19-20).

Israel also typifies Christ as the Witness of Jehovah (Isa. 43:10; Rev. 1:5a; 3:14). Just as the Spirit was poured out upon Christ, the Spirit of Jehovah was poured out upon Israel for the blessing of his offspring (Isa. 44:1-5, 21; Matt. 3:16; Luke 4:18-19). Also in Israel, Jehovah was glorified, just as God was glorified in Christ (Isa. 49:3; 46:13b; John 17:1; 12:28). Cyrus the king of Persia was working for Israel as Israel's servant. He was not only serving God but also serving them. His pleasant service sent them back to their fathers' land and provided for them on the way. In the ancient days, it was a long journey from Babylon, today's Iraq, to Jerusalem. The returned captives needed a lot of protection on the way. Otherwise, people could rob them and kill them. Cyrus did everything for them, and they went back to their forefathers' land, the Holy Land, safely. That was Cyrus's service. Today, on the one hand, we are Cyrus, and on the other hand, we are Israel.

### III. TYPIFIED BY ISAIAH THE PROPHET

Isaiah also worked as a type of Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, to accomplish God's heart's desire. His prophecy helped in the release of Israel and the rebuilding of the temple and the city. Cyrus, the Gentile king, Israel, God's chosen people, and Isaiah, the prophet set up by God, all did the same thing to please God. They served to release God's people, to build up God's house, and to build up God's kingdom signified by the city. When Jesus came, He did the same thing. Luke 4:18 says that Christ was anointed by God to release the captives. He also built up the church as the temple of God and established the church as the kingdom of God. By this we can see that Cyrus, Israel, Isaiah, and Jesus Christ were all servants of God doing the same thing. They are four-in-one, and the first three—Cyrus, Israel, and Isaiah—are wrapped up with the last One, Christ. In all the three you can see Christ. In Cyrus you can see Christ; in Israel you can see Christ; and in Isaiah you can see Christ.

Today we are the servants of God. We need a vision to see Cyrus, Israel, and Isaiah typifying Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. We need to have the realization that we are

today's Cyrus, Israel, and Isaiah because we are one with our Lord Jesus Christ. We all are God's servants doing the same thing in the universe—to release God's people, to build up His temple, the house, and to build up His kingdom, the city. Whenever I consider what I have been doing, am still doing, and will be doing to carry out God's good pleasure in this way, I become happy. If we give ourselves to accomplish the desire of God's heart, we are the wisest men on this earth. We have the best job with the best destiny. We need to realize that our job as God's sent ones is the highest job.

Isaiah told us that he was sent with the Spirit of Jehovah by Jehovah (Isa. 48:16b). God did not send Isaiah alone. He was sent by God with God the Spirit. The New Testament tells us that when the Lord Jesus was sent by the Father, the Father sent Him with the Spirit of God (Luke 4:14). The Spirit was always with Jesus. Furthermore, the Father who sent the Son also came with the Son. Jesus also said that He was not alone, but the Father was with Him (John 8:29). When Jesus came, the three in the Godhead all came. We must have the assurance that when we go to people, the Spirit and Christ go with us. Moreover, Christ is the embodiment of the Father, so the Father goes with us. When we go out to preach the gospel, the Triune God goes with us. We need to experience this just as Isaiah did.

Isaiah typifies Christ as one made by Jehovah to be His mouthpiece to speak forth His word (Isa. 49:1-2; John 3:34a). I am happy because I am a mouthpiece to speak forth God's word. All of us should be happy in the same way. All of us are mouthpieces to speak God's word. If we are not mouthpieces, we are not servants of God. Every servant of God speaks for God. We must learn to speak Christ for God in many ways and in many aspects.

Isaiah as a type of Christ considered himself as Jehovah's servant, a part of Israel, for His glory (Isa. 49:3; Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15). We also need to realize that we are a part of today's Israel. Galatians 6:16 says that the church is the real Israel of God. We are releasing sinners for the building up of the church, and we are the church. When we are building

up the church as the Body of Christ, we are building up ourselves for God's glory.

In Isaiah 49:4, Isaiah told us that he considered himself as laboring in vain, using up his strength for nothing and vanity; yet he was assured that the justice due to him was with Jehovah and his recompense with his God. I had this kind of feeling and experience in the past. Quite often I felt that I was living in vain and that I had used up all my strength for nothing, for vanity. After serving the Lord for a while, we may feel that we are laboring in vain. We may feel exhausted and that we have used up our strength for nothing in vanity. All the servants of the Lord have the same kind of feeling. On the one hand, in the morning we may be happy, praising the Lord that we are carrying out the top job. Later in the day, however, we may feel that we are laboring in vain for nothing. Despite this, Isaiah said that he was assured that the justice due to him was with Jehovah. I can testify that although people have condemned me and defamed me, deep within I have the assurance that the justice due to me is with Christ. He knows whether I labor for vanity or for reality. The justice due to me is with Jehovah, and the recompense due to me is with my God.

Isaiah 50:4 and 5 speak of the instruction received by Isaiah as the servant of Jehovah—"The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one. / The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back." We should not go to speak to others as professors. We should go to speak as learners, as trainees, as instructed and taught ones. To speak a word to sustain the weary, we must have the tongue of an instructed one. Sometimes I am a little concerned for myself and for the trainers in the full-time training. We may speak like teachers who know something. This actually means that we know nothing. We need to speak with the tongue of an instructed one, a learner. Even though I am teaching, I should teach in humility, considering and confessing that I myself do not know much.

As the instructed ones, we need to be awakened by the Lord morning by morning. This is the real morning revival. He awakens our ear to hear as an instructed one. When the Lord Jehovah opens our ear and speaks to us, we should not be rebellious or turn back. We should take His word and obey. This was Isaiah's attitude as a learner serving Jehovah. This also typifies Christ. The four Gospels show that the Lord Jesus held such an attitude.

Isaiah 50:6-9 shows the life lived by Isaiah as the servant of Jehovah. In these verses Isaiah, as the servant of Jehovah typifying Christ, said, "I gave my back to those who strike me / And my cheeks to those who pluck out the hair; / I did not hide my face / From humiliation and spitting. / The Lord Jehovah helps me; / Therefore I have not been dishonored; / Therefore I have set my face like a flint, / And I know that I will not be put to shame. / The One who justifies me is near; who will contend with me? / Let us stand up together! / Who is my adversary in judgment? / Let him come near to me. / Behold, the Lord Jehovah helps me, / Who is the one who condemns me? / Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; / The moth will consume them." These verses also describe the life lived by Jesus on earth (Matt. 26:67; 1 Pet. 2:23). This was not only Isaiah's word but also the word of the Lord Jesus. Isaiah typified Christ in his receiving of instructions from God. In the life he lived, Isaiah was a real type of Christ.

In Isaiah 41 through 50 we can see three servants typifying one Servant. These three servants—Cyrus, Israel, and Isaiah, are wrapped up with the fourth Servant, the all-inclusive Christ. They all are one, serving Jehovah God for His good pleasure to make Him happy in releasing and raising up God's elect to build God's temple and God's city and to set up God's kingdom, which will be enlarged to consummate in the New Jerusalem. This is exactly what we are doing today.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-SIX

## THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH
### As a Covenant to the People and a Light to the Nations

Scripture Reading: Isa. 42:1-7; 49:5-9; Matt. 3:17; Luke 4:18a; Heb. 7:22; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:15-17; Col. 2:9; 1:19; John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 9:5; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2:9b; Acts 26:18a; Zech. 12:1; Rom. 1:16-17; 5:18b; Titus 3:7; Luke 4:18b; Col. 1:13

In this message we want to see more concerning Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. As the Servant of Jehovah, He is a covenant to the people and a light to the nations. Christ is the very covenant given to us by God. He is not only the covenant but also the light. The covenant was given to God's chosen people, Israel, and the light was given to the nations. Both Israel and the nations are fully qualified to inherit Jesus Christ as the covenant and to enjoy Him as the light.

The covenant is a matter of righteousness according to the law. Every covenant is something legal. A covenant actually is a kind of legal agreement. It fulfills the requirement of the law. If there is no fulfillment of the requirement of the law, the covenant means nothing. The covenant is also a matter of righteousness.

Paul said in Romans that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (1:16). Unto salvation means for salvation. To do anything we need power. The power of electricity is for all our electrical conveniences. The gospel is the power of God for us to be saved, for our salvation. This is because in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed (v. 17). God has saved us not only by His love and not only by His grace but also by His righteousness. His righteousness binds Him, and His righteousness gives us the ground, the standing, to say, "God, You have to save me." If God did not save us when we repented and believed into the Lord Jesus, He would not

be righteous. God's Son, our Savior, died for us to fulfill all the requirements of God's righteousness. That was according to the law, so the law has been fulfilled. The legal requirements of God have been fulfilled by our Savior according to God's righteousness. Thus, God has to save us according to His righteousness. He has to justify us.

Before the death of our Savior, God could condemn us. We did not have any ground to claim any kind of justification, forgiveness, and salvation. But now His death has accomplished all the requirements of God's righteousness according to His law, so this death gives us a righteous ground. Now God has to forgive us, justify us, and save us.

In the early years of my Christian life, I was not this bold. I was always begging. I was afraid that God might regret that He made a mistake in saving me. If He were to change His mind, my salvation would be gone. Later I came to know that God saved me not only by love and not only by grace but also by righteousness. Whether we are good or bad, God has to save us because our Savior died for us to fulfill all of God's righteousness.

The justification, the forgiveness, and the salvation God renders to us have all been "covenanted." In Matthew 26 the Lord Jesus enacted a new covenant, saying, "For this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (v. 28). The new covenant is the Lord's blood, and His blood signifies His death. He died for our sins and transgressions. The symbol of His death is the blood. The blood was the very means by which He made for us the new testament with His Father. Thus, redemption, justification, forgiveness, and salvation have all been covenanted by Him through His blood. Today our salvation is a covenanted salvation.

We can use the buying of a house to illustrate this. We may say we have bought a house, but we need the title deed as a proof of our purchase. The deed is an agreement, a covenant. The house has been covenanted to us, and the guarantee of this covenant is the title deed. Our purchase has been covenanted. It has been legalized. In a sense, we may say that the title deed, the covenant, equals the house.

The title deed to the house is the covenant, and the covenant is the house.

Isaiah says twice, in 42:6 and 49:8, that God has given Christ to us as our covenant. This means that God's salvation, God's blessings, and all of God's riches have been covenanted to us, and this covenant is just Christ. Just as my title deed equals my house, Christ equals all of God's salvation, blessings, grace, reality, and riches. All of this has been covenanted to us. Our covenant is Christ. God's salvation, God's righteousness, God's justification, God's forgiveness, God's redemption, God's riches, and all He has and will do have been covenanted to us.

In Greek the word for covenant is also the word for testament. Every proper covenant eventually becomes a testament. Before the person who enacted the covenant dies, it is the covenant. After he dies, that covenant becomes a testament. A testament in today's terms is a will. What if your father had a will which said that you were entitled to ten million dollars, twenty houses, and fifteen commercial ships. Would you not be happy? Our Father in heaven has given us a lot of things. We have a will full of hundreds of bequests. My heavenly Father has given me all these bequests, and they have been covenanted to me as a testament. That is the new testament. We have the New Testament of the Bible in our hands, but this is not the reality. The reality of all the hundreds of bequests in the New Testament is Christ. Without Christ, the Bible is empty, so the real testament, the real will, is Christ. Christ is our title deed, and this title deed is in our spirit as the all-inclusive, life-giving, indwelling, consummated Spirit.

Christ as the Spirit is one with us, so we are one with Him as the testament. We know that we have been forgiven, justified, redeemed, and saved because the Bible tells us so. The Bible is God's covenant, and after Christ's death this covenant has become a testament, a will. But without Christ the Bible is empty. Actually, Christ is the covenant, and this Christ who is the covenant is in our spirit and has become one spirit with us (1 Cor. 6:17).

This covenant is altogether according to God's righteousness. It is not a matter of love. A will is a legal matter that does not depend upon love or grace. It depends on the law, and the law is a matter of righteousness. Christ has been given to us as such a legal covenant. He is our forgiveness, our justification, our redemption, and our salvation. This is not my word. This is Paul's logic. Paul said that the gospel is the power of God to save because the righteousness of God is in the gospel. First Corinthians 1:30 tells us that God has made Christ our righteousness. This righteousness is wrapped up with God's covenant. God's salvation today is a covenanted salvation. Today the very salvation and redemption we have received is covenanted by Jesus Christ. He Himself actually is the covenant.

### I. HIS SOURCE—IN HIS DIVINITY

Christ, the Servant of Jehovah as a covenant to the people of Israel and a light to the nations has a source, an origin. This source is in His divinity, in His deity, in His being God. He was God from eternity past, He is still God today, and He will be God in the future, so He is the One who was, who is, and who shall be. This is Jehovah. Christ's capital is His deity, His divinity, His being God. If one is going to do business, he needs the capital. Christ's deity is the basic capital for Him to do business. Jesus, the Servant of Jehovah, is God, and He came from the source of God. His source is in His divinity. Some people may boast about their source, about where they are from, but actually our source as human beings means nothing. In ourselves we are nothing, and we may even say that our source is nothingness. However, the source of Christ being the Servant of God is God Himself.

#### A. Chosen by Jehovah

As the Servant of Jehovah, Christ was chosen by Jehovah (Isa. 42:1b; 49:7b). Our president has been selected and chosen by the people, but this cannot be compared to being selected and chosen by God.

### B. Formed from the Womb by Jehovah to Be His Servant

Christ was also formed from the womb by Jehovah to be His Servant (Isa. 49:5a). To form something requires the material, the elements. A stand on which to place things may be formed with two elements—steel and plastic. With what did Jehovah form Jesus? Isaiah 49:5 does not say that Jehovah created Jesus but that He formed Him. To create is to make something with nothing, but to form is to work with some elements. Genesis 2:7 says that God formed man's body of the dust of the ground, and He formed a spirit within man with His breath (Zech. 12:1). The Hebrew word for breath in Genesis 2:7 is *neshamah*. This is the same Hebrew word for "spirit" in Proverbs 20:27, which says that the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord. Thus, the breath of life is man's spirit. This is how God formed man. The divine revelation shows that God formed Jesus to be His Servant in the womb with His divinity saturated and mingled together with His humanity. Thus, when He came out of the womb of His mother, He was a God-man.

### C. Called in Righteousness by Jehovah

He was also called in righteousness by Jehovah (Isa. 42:6a). We need to consider what "in righteousness" means. This means that in every aspect, in every way, in every direction, and on every side, the calling of Jehovah rendered to Jesus was right. Every aspect was in righteousness.

For example, the trainees in the full-time training have all been accepted by the training in righteousness. Suppose that one of the trainees had only studied for two and a half years in college, but on his application form he said that he had completed four years. This would mean that his acceptance into the training was not righteous. The glasses I am wearing were purchased by me, so my having them is altogether in righteousness. If I had stolen them, I would have them in unrighteousness. God called Jesus altogether in righteousness. The Pharisees' claim to be the servants of God was in unrighteousness. During Jeremiah's time there

were many false prophets. Jeremiah was one of the few genuine ones. All those false prophets were not prophets in righteousness, but Christ was called by God in righteousness.

### D. Held by the Hand of Jehovah

Christ was not only called but also held by the hand of Jehovah (Isa. 42:6b). There may be a distance between a called one and the calling one, but God held Christ by Christ's hand. The Holder is Jehovah, and the held One is Jesus.

### E. Upheld (Sustained) by Jehovah

He was also upheld (sustained) by Jehovah (42:1a). We need to consider the difference between the words *hold* and *uphold*. When someone is standing, we may hold him, but when he is falling we need to uphold him. To uphold is to sustain someone, not letting him fall, but keeping him standing. This is what God was doing related to Christ.

### F. Helped by Jehovah

Christ was also helped by Jehovah (49:8b). *Helped* may be a small word in our understanding, but actually Jehovah's helping Jesus was His doing everything for Jesus. God did everything for Jesus. Jesus could not raise the dead by Himself apart from God. God did it for Him and through Him.

### G. Kept (Preserved) by Jehovah

He was kept (preserved) by Jehovah (42:6c; 49:8c). To keep is to preserve.

### H. In Him Jehovah Delighting

In Him Jehovah delights (Isa. 42:1; Matt. 3:17). God delighted in Christ Jesus as the Servant of God. In Him God is happy.

### I. Upon Him Jehovah Having Put His Spirit

Upon Him Jehovah has put His Spirit (Isa. 42:1; Luke 4:18). Actually Jehovah's Spirit is Jehovah. When Jehovah

put His Spirit upon Jesus, that meant He gave Himself to Jesus.

### J. Glorified (Honored) in the Sight of Jehovah

He was glorified (honored) in the sight of Jehovah (Isa. 49:5c). Although He was despised by people, abhorred by the nation of Israel, and subjected to tyrants, He was respected by kings and worshipped by princes (49:7). Christ was glorified, honored, in the sight of Jehovah. *Tyrants* here, no doubt, refers to the Roman officials. Pilate and Herod were the tyrants who mistreated Jesus, and Jesus was subjected to them. The Gospels tell us that Pilate had Jesus beaten and delivered Him up to be crucified (Matt. 27:26). That was a severe mistreating. Even though He was mistreated by and subjected to tyrants, He was still respected by kings and worshipped by princes. After His resurrection until today, many kings have respected Him, and many princes have worshipped Him. He was not only glorified, honored, by God but also respected by human kings and worshipped by human princes.

### K. Strengthened by God

As the Servant of Jehovah, Christ was also strengthened by His God (Isa. 49:5c). God was His strength.

## II. HIS QUALIFICATION—IN HIS HUMANITY

Now we need to see His qualification in His humanity. In His qualification, He is in humanity. In His qualification, Isaiah said that He did not break a bruised reed or extinguish a dimly burning flax (42:3a). Because the plants in the Old Testament are types of Christ in His humanity, Christ is also typified by a reed and flax. In Exodus 30, Moses used the plant life and its extracts to signify Christ's humanity. Christ is the myrrh, the cinnamon, the calamus, and the cassia (vv. 22-25). His qualification is not depending upon His divinity but upon His humanity. How could Jesus Christ be qualified as a Servant of God? Look at His human virtues.

### A. Not Crying Out, nor Lifting Up His Voice, nor Making His Voice Heard in the Street

In His humanity, He did not cry out, lift up His voice, or make His voice heard in the street (Isa. 42:2). To be quiet indicates a kind of victory. If a person is condemned and scolded, and yet still remains quiet and does not argue, that is a victory. If I do not lift up my voice, that is a victory. This kind of victory is a qualification. Generally speaking, young people want their voice to be heard by everyone. Isaiah tells us, however, that Christ in His humanity did not make His voice heard in the street.

### B. Not Breaking a Bruised Reed nor Extinguishing a Dimly Burning Flax

Isaiah 42:3 says that Christ did not break a bruised reed or extinguish a dimly burning flax. The Jews used to make flutes of reeds. When a reed was bruised, they broke it, because it could not give a proper sound. But Jesus Christ never breaks any bruised reed. Some of the Lord's people are like the bruised reed that cannot give a musical sound, but the Lord will not break these bruised ones. He is kind and sympathetic.

He does not extinguish a dimly burning flax. The Jews made torches with flax to burn oil. These burning torches were used as lamps. If the flax in these torches was unsuitable and was smoking, it would be extinguished and thrown away. But Jesus would never do this. Some of the Lord's people are like the smoking flax that cannot give a shining light, yet the Lord will not extinguish these smoking ones.

### C. Not Fainting (Burning Dimly) nor Being Discouraged (Bruised), until He Has Established Justice in the Earth

The Lord Himself does not faint (burn dimly) nor is He discouraged (bruised), until He has established justice in the earth (Isa. 42:4a). The Hebrew word for "faint" is the root of the word for "burn dimly." That means He was a torch made

of flax who did not burn dimly. To burn dimly is to faint. Christ never fainted. He does not extinguish the dimly burning flax, but He Himself never burns dimly. To be discouraged means to be bruised. Christ was never discouraged.

He will never faint or be discouraged, until He finishes His commission to establish justice in the earth. Justice here refers to salvation as the result of judgment. Our salvation, the salvation which we have received, is the result of God's judgment on Christ. Christ as our substitute was judged by God according to His righteous law, completely fulfilling all the requirements of that law. The result was salvation to us. To establish justice in the earth means to establish God's salvation, which is the issue of God's judgment on Christ. His commission was to establish such a salvation in the whole earth. Christ will come again when He finishes the establishment of God's justice, God's salvation, in this earth.

Justice is righteousness passing through judgment. A person may be righteous without justice being exercised with him. When he is brought to the court, the judge makes a judgment that he is just. Thus, justice is the issue of righteousness through judgment. In the Recovery Version of Isaiah, 42:1 says that "He will bring forth judgment to the nations." Verse 3 says that "He will bring forth judgment in truth," judgment in reality. Verse 4 says, "Until He has established justice in the earth." Judgment and justice are the same Hebrew word in these three verses.

Justice is righteousness under judgment. When righteousness has been judged, it becomes justice. Justice is the verdict of the judgment on righteousness. I may have righteousness, but if I have never been judged, I cannot have justice. After my righteousness has been judged, the result of that judgment is justice. The justice in Isaiah is equal to salvation. To establish justice on this earth is to establish God's salvation in this earth. To bring forth justice is to bring forth God's salvation to the earth.

Justice is the salvation of God and the verdict of the judgment of righteousness. Righteousness is the fulfillment of God's law. If you have any item that does not fulfill the

law, you are not righteous. If your being and your behavior fulfill every part of the law, you are righteous. If this passes through judgment, your righteousness becomes your justice, and this justice is your salvation. Without such a justice, you will be condemned. Today we can proclaim that on the whole earth there is justice! This justice is the verdict of God's judgment over the righteous One, Jesus. The declaration of this justice is the preaching of the gospel.

Salvation in God's gospel is very lawful and very just. I did a lot of preaching fifty years ago in China. The Chinese are very logical. Some would ask me, "Do you mean that if I were a bank robber, I could be saved? If so, your God is not righteous." This is quite logical. How could a bank robber be saved? If you said Confucius could be saved, that might be logical to these Chinese, but what about a bank robber? I answered them in the following way. A bank robber should be sentenced to death. But this bank robber has a Savior, and the Savior died for him. This Savior not only died for him but also paid back all the things he had stolen from the bank. Now the judge must forgive the robber. Is this not righteous? This is not just righteousness, but also justice declared by the verdict issued by the judge in the court. My explanation did much to convince these logical Chinese. They were convinced that the God whom I preached is a righteous God, a just God, a God who carries out judgment.

Sinners have been redeemed by One who is qualified to die for them and to repay all their debts. Based upon Christ's death, God forgives all of us, the believers. This is logical and just, and this forgiveness is a kind of justice. If God would not forgive us now that our debt has been paid by Christ, there would be no justice. We may say that this justice is forgiveness and salvation. Now the salvation, or the gospel we preach, is this kind of justice that comes out of God's judgment over Christ's righteousness.

### III. HIS COMMISSION

Now we come to the all-inclusive Christ's commission as the Servant of Jehovah.

### A. To Raise Up the Tribes of Jacob

Christ's commission is first to raise up the tribes of Jacob (Isa. 49:6a). At the time of the prophets, all the tribes were put down. They were down, but Christ received the commission from God to raise them up. We were in the same situation. Before we were saved, we were put down. We were very low, but Christ came to raise us up.

### B. To Bring Jacob Back to Jehovah So That Israel Would Be Gathered to Him

Christ also was commissioned to bring Jacob back to Jehovah so that Israel would be gathered to Him (49:5b; 6a). Jacob is a negative title, and Israel is a positive title referring to the same person. Jacob was a supplanter, but Israel is the one who was transformed. Genesis 32 records that one night Jacob wrestled with God. Jacob would not let Him go until God blessed him. God touched his thigh and changed his name to Israel (vv. 24-30). *Israel* means a prince of God. God was telling Jacob that he was to be a transformed prince of God. Thus, Christ raised up Jacob and brought Jacob back to Jehovah. In this way Jacob could become Israel so that Israel could be gathered to God.

In a similar way, God raised us up and brought us to Himself. When we have been brought to God, we become believers, saints. Christ raises up sinners, brings them to God, and these sinners brought to God become saints.

Isaiah 49:6 says that these two items—Christ raising up the tribes of Jacob and bringing Israel back to God—are too small a thing; the greater things are to follow. What are the greater things? These greater things are all the things related to Christ becoming a covenant of the people of Israel.

### C. To Be a Covenant of the People (of Israel)

Jesus Christ became a covenant to us (Isa. 42:6d; 49:8d). As a covenant, He is a surety of God being the inheritance to His people (Heb. 7:22). This covenant is a guarantee. It guarantees that God Himself is our inheritance. Ephesians 1:14 says that the Spirit is the pledge of God being our

inheritance. Furthermore, the Spirit's sealing is to seal us as God's inheritance (vv. 13, 11). The Spirit put Himself upon us as a seal to indicate that we belong to God. God will inherit us. After this sealing, the Holy Spirit stays in us as a pledge to guarantee us that we have the right to inherit God as our inheritance.

We are God's inheritance not poor sinners. As mere sinners we have nothing and are nothing. We are His inheritance because we have been redeemed into Christ as the element. Because Christ is our element, we have been made excellent, a treasure to be God's inheritance. God Himself is also our inheritance. His divine attributes have become the unsearchable riches of Christ which we inherit. For this, Christ is a surety, and the Spirit is the pledge.

Legally speaking, we sinners, who offended God to the uttermost, could not inherit anything of God. But Christ fulfilled all the requirements of God's righteousness for us. This fulfilling of God's righteous requirements became a justice whereby we are forgiven and redeemed. Now we are no longer sinners, but saints. As saints, legally speaking, we are qualified. We have a righteous standing, a legal standing, to inherit all the things of God! Actually all the things of God are God Himself. God is life; God is love; God is righteousness; God is holiness; God is power; God is strength; and God is might. He is everything. We inherit Him, who is everything, as our inheritance. Christ is the surety, the guarantee, that we will inherit everything of God embodied in Christ.

Christ enacted the new covenant (which became the new testament—the will) with His blood for the redemption of the transgressions of God's people (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:15). Suppose that Christ did not die or shed His blood. Then He would have nothing based upon which He could make a covenant. But He died for us according to God's righteous requirements, and the blood He shed through that death was used to form a covenant. Even He Himself said that the cup of the Lord's table was a symbol of the new covenant in His blood (1 Cor. 11:25). He redeemed us back to God and qualified

us to inherit everything of God. This is the new covenant. Actually, this new covenant is Christ Himself.

In resurrection Christ became the bequests of the new testament and the Mediator, the Executor, to execute the new testament (Heb. 9:15-17). This implies that Christ is the covenant. Suppose your father gives you a will which says that he will give you ten million dollars and much property. He has the deposit certificate for this money and also the title deeds to the property. If the will did not have these legal papers, the will would be nothing. Thus, in reality, all these legal papers are the will. The new testament is the covenant given to us by God. But what if there were no Christ? Then all the bequests in the new testament—the will—would be nothing. When God gave us the Bible as a will, this meant that God gave us Christ. Christ is the centrality and universality as the reality of the new testament. When Christ is given, that means He is the covenant. We not only have the items of the new testament in our mind, but we also have the reality of this covenant, who is Christ, in our spirit. Christ in our spirit is the reality of the new testament, so He is the covenant.

Christ, as the embodiment of the riches of the Godhead and as the crucified and resurrected One, has become the covenant of God to His people (Col. 2:9; 1:19). He is the covenant of God given to us, the reality of all that God is and of all that God has given us.

### D. To Restore the Land

As such a covenant, He restores the land (Isa. 49:8e). Israel lost the land, and Christ came, in His commission, to restore it.

### E. To Be a Light to the Nations

Christ's commission is also to be a light to the nations (42:6e; 49:6c). He is the light of life, the true light, to shine over the world and enlighten every man (John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 9:5). This light is the light of life to enliven man for regeneration (1 Pet. 1:23). He is the divine, marvelous light to deliver God's chosen people out of the darkness of death,

the death-realm, the authority of Satan, into God's life-realm of light (1 Pet. 2:9b; Acts 26:18a). Christ as the covenant is for God's people to gain God with His riches as their inheritance; whereas Christ as the light is for God's people to receive God as life for their new germination. The covenant is for inheritance, the light is for life, and Christ is both. Thus, when we receive Christ, we have the surety of our inheritance and the life for our new germination. We have Christ as our inheritance and our germinating life.

For His chosen people to receive Christ as such a covenant and as such a light, God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth and as the One who gives breath to men, gives also spirit to them, that they may be able to enjoy Him, the Triune God, as their inheritance and life (Isa. 42:5; Zech. 12:1). Isaiah 42:5 says that God is the One "who created the heavens and stretched them out, / Who spread forth the earth and what springs up from it, / Who gives breath to the people upon it / And spirit to those who walk on it." This verse is a sister verse to Zechariah 12:1, which says that God stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. Why did God, after creating the heavens and the earth, form a spirit in man? This was so that man could have a recipient, a receiver, to receive God who is the Spirit to be his inheritance and life. I did not understand until recently why verse 5 in Isaiah 42 was placed between verses 4 and 6. Verses 4 and 6 indicate that there are many riches for us to receive. But how could we receive these riches without a receiver? If there were a table full of food, yet we did not have a stomach, how could we take in the food? Our spirit is our spiritual stomach to receive all the riches of God embodied in Christ.

### F. To Bring Forth Justice (the Judgment of Righteousness) for Salvation in Truth to the Nations

The commission of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is also to bring forth justice (the judgment of righteousness) for salvation in truth to the nations (Isa. 42:1, 3b; 49:6d). Justice—the judgment of righteousness—is for God's justification in

His salvation based upon Christ's redemption through God's righteous judgment; the light of life is for God's impartation of life in His salvation. God's salvation has two aspects—the aspect of justification and the aspect of His impartation of life. First, God in His salvation justifies us. Then we have His righteousness. Then He imparts His life into us in His salvation. Now we have righteousness and life.

Righteousness in God's justice and life through God's light are the two basic factors of God's salvation (Rom. 1:16-17; 5:18b; Titus 3:7). Romans 1:16 and 17 say that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. Romans 5:18 says that the result of the one righteous act, the act of Christ, was justification of life to all men. Justification is in the covenant. Life is in the light. Thus, God gives Christ as the covenant to us for justification, and God gives Christ as light to us for life. Titus 3:7 says that having been justified, we have become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Justification brings us life, justification is by the covenant, and the life is by the light.

### G. To Open the Eyes of the Blind That They May See the Divine and Spiritual Things concerning God's Eternal Economy

Christ was commissioned to open the eyes of the blind that they may see the divine and spiritual things concerning God's eternal economy (Isa. 42:7a; Luke 4:18b; Acts 26:18a). If our spiritual eyes are not opened, we cannot see God's economy. We need the spiritual eyes to see all the divine and spiritual things concerning God's eternal economy.

### H. To Bring the Prisoner Out from the Prison, Those Who Dwell in Darkness Out from the Prison House, That They May Be Released from the Dark Kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of God's Beloved Son

The last item of Christ's commission is to bring the prisoner out from the prison, those who dwell in darkness out from the prison house. I like one of Charles Wesley's

hymns concerning being justified in Christ (*Hymns,* #296). In the first verse of this hymn, Wesley says, "And can it be that I should gain / An int'rest in the Savior's blood?" When we sing this hymn, we can say, "Yes, it can be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood." In this hymn, Wesley says that he was in a dungeon, in prison, and in darkness. But one day a quickening ray of light shined into him. He was saved and came out of prison to follow the Lord (see verse 4). Christ brings us out of the prison house that we may be released from the dark kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's beloved Son.

This message conveys to us the logic and the reality of God's salvation in two aspects—the aspect of Christ as the covenant for justification and the aspect of Christ as the light for life. We are justified unto life. This is God's salvation.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-SEVEN

## THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH
## As a Covenant to the People and a Light to the Nations
## TO BE GOD'S FULL SALVATION

Scripture Reading: Isa. 42:5-7; 49:6, 8b-9a; Rom. 10:3; 3:21-22; Gal. 2:16, 21; Rom. 5:16b, 18a, 12, 21a; John 5:24; Rom. 5:18b; 8:17a; Gal. 3:29b; Acts 26:18; Eph. 2:5; John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:15; Titus 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29, 30b; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 7:22; 9:15-17; John 9:5; 1:4, 9; 8:12; Heb. 7:16b; 2 Tim. 1:10b; 1 Tim. 6:19, 12; Rev. 21:2-3, 9b-11, 18-23; 22:1-5; Zech. 12:1; Rom. 8:4b; Rev. 1:10a; 2 Tim. 4:22; Isa. 12:3-4

In this message I would like to say more concerning Christ as the covenant and the light to God's chosen people. Why did Christ need to be given to us by God as a covenant? What is the significance of this? Apparently, it is not difficult to grasp logically the thought that Christ is the light given by God to the nations. But the thought that God has given Christ to us as a covenant is difficult to grasp. Nevertheless, we need to realize that in these two matters, the covenant and the light, the entire Bible is embodied. The entire Scripture of sixty-six books is embodied in these two things—in Christ being the covenant and in Christ being the light.

There is a clear word in two portions of the Bible that says that Christ has been given to us, God's chosen people, first as the covenant and, second, as the light (Isa. 42:5-7; 49:6, 8b-9a). Isaiah 42:6b says, "I have kept You [Christ] and I have given You / As a covenant for the people, as a light for the nations," and Isaiah 49:6b and 8b say, "I will also set You as a light of the nations / That you may be My salvation to the ends of the earth....And I will preserve You and give You for a covenant of the people."

We should be deeply impressed when we read such a word. Many Christians, when they come to the Word of God, see only the shallow things. When they read a chapter such as Ephesians 5, they prefer to see that wives should submit to their husbands and that husbands should love their wives. This is according to their taste, their preference. Although the Bible does teach that wives should submit to their husbands and that husbands should love their wives, this is a very small item in the teaching of the Bible. The principal item unveiled in the Bible is God's economy. God's economy is to dispense Himself into us as our life, our person, and our everything. This is what the Bible teaches, and this is what the Old Testament and the New Testament unveil to us. But, sorry to say, nearly all the readers of the Bible have their eyes covered concerning this matter, and thus they cannot see this.

## I. GOD'S FULL SALVATION BEING BASED ON HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND CONSUMMATED IN HIS LIFE

The Bible shows us that God has an economy, an eternal plan, to dispense Himself into us as our life, our person, and our everything. Unfortunately, however, after man was created, he became fallen. In man's fall, man broke the requirements of God's righteousness. As a result, man was condemned by the righteousness of God. Now, between us, the fallen sinners, and God there is the problem of condemnation. All the sinners, all the descendents of Adam, are under God's condemnation because of the breaching of God's righteousness. Thus, we need God's justification to erase God's condemnation. There is no other way for God to erase our condemnation but by God's justification.

The Israelites, the people of God under the old testament, tried their best to establish their own righteousness so that they might be justified by God based on their own righteousness. But their righteousness was not up to the standard of God's justification (Rom. 9:31; 10:3). God's justification is according to the highest standard, the standard of His righteousness. Paul told us clearly that for this purpose God has given Christ to us as the righteousness of God. First

Corinthians 1:30 says that God first put us into Christ and then made Christ His righteousness to us. Thus, the first item that Christ is to us is the righteousness of God. We do not need to establish our own righteousness. Needless to say, it is impossible for us to do this. Even if we were able to establish our own righteousness, that righteousness would not measure up to the standard of God's righteousness.

Our righteousness is like yellow dust, whereas God's righteousness is like bright yellow gold. The standard of our righteousness is far too low. Thus, if we bring our own righteousness to God, this means nothing. This is why the Bible says that no flesh, that is, no fallen man, shall be justified by God through his own works of keeping the law (Rom. 3:20). Whatever we do, regardless of how much we can accomplish according to the law, does not match God's requirement and thus does not measure up to the standard of God's justification. Only the righteousness of God is able to match such a standard.

The Old Testament gives us a good illustration, the illustration of Abraham's gaining a son, to show that man's righteousness cannot meet the standard of God's justification. In a very real sense, Abraham's son Isaac signifies God's righteousness. God promised Abraham that he would have a son from God and that this son would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth (Gen. 15:3-5; 18:10, 14; 22:18). But Sarah, Abraham's wife, proposed that he bear a son through her maidservant, Hagar, and Abraham accepted that proposal (Gen. 16:1-4a, 15). What Abraham produced by that means was Ishmael, who was rejected by God. God told Abraham to send Ishmael away (Gen. 21:10-12). Hence, what Abraham produced did not count. Only what God gave counted. Genesis 15:6 says that after hearing God's word, Abraham believed God, and his believing was counted by God as righteousness.

Hence, God's righteousness can be seen in the comparison between these two boys, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael surely did not match God's righteousness. Only Isaac matched God's righteousness. The unique way in which Abraham could receive such a son that equaled God's righteousness was by faith. The apostle Paul said the same thing. He said that we

should not endeavor to establish our own righteousness (Rom. 10:3; Phil. 3:9). That would produce Ishmael, and it would never be counted by God as what He desires. We must believe God; then we will receive something from Him, and that something is Christ as today's Isaac. This Christ is the righteousness of God given to us as our righteousness, our acceptance by God, and this eventually becomes the blessing. Today God's intention is to give Himself, embodied in Christ, as everything to us. So we need to receive Him first as our righteousness, then as our life, then as our person, then as our everything, and finally as our inheritance.

Now we need to consider how this Christ could be our righteousness given to us by God. First, as the righteousness of God and as our Substitute, Christ had to die. God's righteousness required Christ to die a vicarious death for us, and Christ did this. In the evening before His death, He established a table for His disciples that they might remember Him and enjoy Him. In that establishing of the Lord's table, He took the cup and said to His disciples, "This cup is the new covenant established in My blood, which is being poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). This word connects the thought of God's righteousness with Christ's blood. It is through Christ's blood that we can receive and gain God's forgiveness, and God's forgiveness equals God's justification. When God justifies us, He forgives us, and when God forgives us, He justifies us. According to the word of the Lord Jesus, this forgiveness, or this justification, is fully based on Christ's death, which has fulfilled all the requirements of God's righteousness.

In the new covenant it seems that we have received many things, but actually we have gained only one thing—Christ. The old testament established through Moses gave people only a law. But the new testament, the new covenant, established by Christ through His death, gives us Christ. First, this Christ died for our sins to solve all the problems related to God's righteousness. Then, after this death Christ entered into resurrection. In His resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit that He might enter into us to enliven us, to germinate us, to animate us, to make us alive. Although Christ's death justifies us, we are still dead persons. By itself,

Christ's death cannot impart life to us to make us alive that we may enjoy all the issues of God's justification. After God justified us, He desired to give us many blessings; but if we were still dead persons, it would be impossible for us to enjoy all His blessings as our inheritance. Hence, Christ needed to take a further step, the step of resurrection. In the resurrection that followed His death, Christ became a life-giving Spirit. It is altogether right for us to say that He became a life-imparting Spirit, even a life-dispensing Spirit, because the giving of life is the impartation of life, and the impartation of life is the dispensing of life. As such a Spirit, Christ entered into us to enliven us, to bring life into us, to impart the divine life into us to make us alive. In this way we were regenerated to be God's children, to be no longer merely justified sinners but children of God.

Initially, life was in God, having nothing to do with us. But through Christ's death, we were cleansed; we were justified; we were forgiven. Yet we were still dead persons. Then Christ became a life-giving Spirit in resurrection to impart, to dispense, the very life which was in God into us, to enliven us, to regenerate us, to make us children of God, to make us those who are born of God and are no longer merely a justified corpse. We were enlivened; we were regenerated; we were born again to be the children of God.

Romans 8:17 says that as children of God, we are also heirs of God to inherit God as our everything. This means that we will inherit God as our inheritance. Many times the Old Testament, especially the book of Jeremiah, says that Israel will be God's people and He will be their God. The New Testament, in 2 Corinthians 6:16, quotes this word. For us to be God's people means that we are God's inheritance, and for God to be our God means that He is our inheritance. Before this mutual inheritance existed, both God and we, we and God, were poor. Before we had God, we had nothing, and before God had us, He was childless. That was the reason that He desired to dispense Himself into us, to make us all His children; and all His children are now His inheritance. Now God is rich. By this we can understand the significance of this simple word: "I will be your God, and you will be My

people." Today, as the children of God, we have Christ, and Christ is the embodiment of God. This God who is embodied in Christ is our life, our person, and our inheritance. Likewise, God also has an inheritance. We are His inheritance.

This is all due to two things: Christ as our covenant and Christ as our light. Christ as our covenant takes care of God's righteousness, and Christ as our light releases God's life into us. We have Christ as our covenant; thus, we have no problem with God's righteousness. We also have Christ as our light; hence, we are rich in the divine life. Now, based on the righteousness of God and in the life of God, we enjoy God as our inheritance. This, in totality, is God's full salvation to us.

The sixty-six books of the entire Bible reveal many things to us. When all these things are embodied together as one entity, that is the New Jerusalem. The sixty-six books of the Bible consummate in the New Jerusalem. The totality of all the positive things recorded in the sixty-six books of the Bible is the New Jerusalem. On the one hand, we may say that the Bible unveils to us the central line of the divine revelation, which is God's economy and God's dispensing. On the other hand, we may say in brief that the totality of what the Bible reveals to us is the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the total composition of the entire revelation of the Bible.

The foundation of the New Jerusalem consists of twelve layers of precious stones (Rev. 21:14, 19-20). Some fundamental books written on the foundation of the New Jerusalem have pointed out that the colors of the twelve layers of precious stones in the foundation of the New Jerusalem look like a rainbow. According to Genesis 9:8-17, the rainbow is a sign that reminds us of God's faithfulness in keeping His word. God's faithfulness is based on His righteousness. If there were no righteousness, there would be no faithfulness. Thus, the foundation of the New Jerusalem is the righteousness of God with God's faithfulness.

Within the New Jerusalem there is a river of life, which flows, or spirals, from the top of the city to the bottom, to reach all the twelve gates (Rev. 22:1). That flowing of the river of life saturates the entire city. On the two sides of the

river the tree of life grows. Thus, the content of the New Jerusalem is life. Within the city the river of life flows and the tree of life grows as a vine along the two banks of the river, to supply the entire city. This indicates that the entire New Jerusalem is a matter of life built on the foundation of righteousness. Life is the consummation of righteousness, and righteousness is the base, the foundation, of life.

In the New Jerusalem, life issues from light. According to Revelation 21:23, in the New Jerusalem there is no need of the shining of the sun or the moon, for the glory of God illumines it, and its lamp is the Lamb. This means that Christ is the lamp, and the very God embodied in Christ is the light. Hence, in the foundation of the New Jerusalem we can see faithfulness based upon righteousness. We can also see that the light in the New Jerusalem issues in life. Thus, the New Jerusalem is the embodiment of God's full salvation, and God's full salvation is a composition of God's righteousness as the base and God's life as the consummation. This is the revelation of the Bible.

Ultimately, God's full salvation is Christ as the covenant plus Christ as the light, and this is the composition of the New Jerusalem. God's full salvation is based on His righteousness and is consummated in His life. Christ as the covenant takes care of God's righteousness. Hence, that covenant is the foundation of God's salvation. Then Christ as the light carries out God's salvation to consummate God's salvation in life. Thus, Christ as the covenant and Christ as the light, added together, equal God's full salvation.

### A. God's Righteousness Justifying Us through the Death of Christ

God's righteousness justifies us through the death of Christ (Rom. 10:3; 3:21-22; Gal. 2:16, 21). This is to save us, the sinners, from God's condemnation (Rom. 5:16b, 18a) and also from Satan's death (Rom. 5:12, 21a; John 5:24). As sinners, we have condemnation over us from God and also death within us from Satan. The condemnation of God is dissolved by Christ as the covenant, and the death that comes from Satan is annulled by Christ as the light that issues in

life (John 8:12). This is to bring us, the believers, into the divine life that we may become God's heirs to inherit God with all His riches as our divine inheritance (Rom. 5:18b; 8:17a; Gal. 3:29b; Acts 26:18b). These items constitute the substance of the gospel according to the ministry of the apostle Paul in the three books of Romans, Galatians, and 1 Corinthians.

### B. God's Life Germinating Us by Christ as the Life-giving Spirit

God's life germinates us by Christ as the life-giving Spirit (Eph. 2:5; 1 Cor. 15:45b). This is to beget us unto the divine sonship, that we may have the sonship of God and be the sons of God (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:15). As sons of God, we are also heirs who will inherit God (Rom. 8:17a; Eph. 1:13-14a). For us to inherit God as our inheritance, we need Christ to satisfy the requirements of God's righteousness. Also, we need Christ to be the light that issues in the divine life so that we can be regenerated to be God's heirs to inherit Him as our inheritance.

God's life also germinates us to renew us, the old man (Titus 3:5). We were not only sinful and dead, but also old. So, we need to be renewed. We need to be renewed not merely by being washed but by being germinated with God's life.

God's life also germinates us to transform and conform us into the glorious image of God's firstborn Son, making us, the many sons of God, like the Firstborn. This is accomplished by life. Begetting, renewing, transformation, and conformation are all carried out by life.

Finally, God's life germinates us to glorify us with the divine glory (Rom. 8:30b). The divine glory is the expression of God's divine life. When God's life is expressed, it becomes the shining glory.

The above matters are the substance of the gospel according to the ministries of the apostles John and Paul. First, John ministered on life, and then Paul ministered on righteousness and life. In his Gospel and in the beginning of his first Epistle, the apostle John did not touch the matter of righteousness. Later in 1 John, he did touch God's

righteousness (2:28—3:10). But Paul was different. Paul touched God's righteousness first, then God's life. Romans 5:18 says that God justifies us unto life. Thus, justification brings us into life. When we receive God's justification according to Christ as God's righteousness, the issue in us of this justification is the divine life. Therefore, justification is unto life.

## II. CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH SERVING GOD BY BEING A COVENANT AND A LIGHT TO GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE THAT HE MAY BE THE FULL SALVATION OF GOD

Christ as the Servant of Jehovah serves God by being a covenant and a light to God's chosen people that He may be the full salvation of God (Isa. 42:5-7; 49:6, 8b-9a).

### A. Christ as the Covenant to Be the Salvation of God

The concept of many Christians is that Christ serves God by love, by gentleness, by humility, or by kindness. However, Isaiah was different. Isaiah said that this Servant of Jehovah serves God by being a covenant. The Lord Jesus said that He would serve us by giving up His life (Mark 10:45), that is, by His death. Christ served us by dying for us, and that was to serve us by being a covenant. He said that He was the good Shepherd who would lay down His soulish life for the sheep that He might minister the divine life to them (John 10:10-11). Christ died for us that He might be life to us. These are the two things by which He serves God. He serves God by ministering life to us through His death and resurrection.

First, Christ established the new covenant according to God's righteousness through His redeeming death (Matt. 26:28). Then, Christ is the righteousness of God to us for our justification (Rom. 3:22; Gal 2:16). Christ also has become the bequests, the reality, the surety, the Mediator, and the Executor of this new covenant, the new testament, in His resurrection, for our inheritance of the promise (Heb. 7:22; 9:15-17). In the new testament as a will, there are many

promises. All these promises are the bequests of that will. Christ is everything for that will, and He is every item of that will. Eventually, He is the will. We have often said that without Christ the Bible is empty. Christ is the reality of the Bible. This means that Christ *is* the Bible. Without Christ, the new covenant, the new testament, is empty. Christ is the reality of the new testament; therefore, Christ *is* the new testament. It is impossible to separate Christ from the new testament. Now we can understand the logic by which God considers Christ to be a covenant given to us. Hence, Christ has become the new covenant as the new testament according to God's righteousness to be the base of God's full salvation, through His death and in His resurrection.

### B. Christ as the Light to Be the Salvation of God

Christ is also the light to be the salvation of God (Isa. 42:6b; 49:6b). Isaiah 49:6b says, "I will also set You as a light of the nations / That You may be My salvation unto the ends of the earth." Thus, God gave Christ as a light to the nations that He might be God's salvation to all the world. This light issues in Christ as the divine life to us (John 9:5; 1:4, 9; 8:12). John 1:4 says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." In reading such a verse, we might ask whether light came first, or life. It is difficult to answer such a question. Verses such as John 1:4 and 1 John 1:1-7 indicate that life issues in light. But, based on Genesis 1, it is also possible to say that light issues in life. First, God said, "Let there be light" (v. 3). Then, there was light, and after that, the different kinds of life—the vegetable life, the animal life, and the human life—came out of the light (vv. 4-28). In the experience of a sinner, the first thing that comes in is not life but light. When we heard the preaching of the gospel, light came to us and shined over us (2 Cor. 4:4-6). Then, when we received this light, it issued in life, and we were regenerated. After our regeneration, light comes out of life. Therefore, first we receive light, and then we receive life. Then we live by this life, and this life issues in light.

The life of this light becomes God's salvation to us in His righteousness (Isa. 49:6b). We have seen that life is the

consummation of God's salvation. But God's salvation still needs a foundation. The foundation, the base, of God's salvation is righteousness. Thus, the life of this light becomes God's salvation to us in His righteousness.

The life of this light also ensures us, guarantees us, the heirs of God in His life, the right to inherit God with all His riches as our eternal inheritance (Acts 26:18). If we do not have such a life, which is of the light, we do not have the assurance that we will be able to inherit God as our inheritance. Since we have such a life, this life is our assurance that ensures our right to inherit God as our inheritance in life.

The life of this light, as the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16b), the incorruptible life (2 Tim. 1:10b), and the real and eternal life that we should lay hold on (1 Tim. 6:19, 12), grows in us all the time, issuing in our church life today and consummating in the New Jerusalem in eternity (Rev. 21:2-3, 9b-11, 18-23; 22:1-5). Today we are living the church life by this life, and we will also enjoy the New Jerusalem by this life. This is the consummation of God's full salvation.

### III. THE WAY TO RECEIVE AND ENJOY SUCH A FULL SALVATION OF GOD

The way to receive and enjoy such a full salvation of God, constituted of Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, as the covenant and the light to us, God's elect, is to exercise our spirit, to live according to our spirit, and to remain in our spirit, with which is the very Christ, by calling on Christ our Lord's name (Isa. 42:5; Zech. 12:1; Rom. 8:4b; Rev. 1:10a; 2 Tim. 4:22; Isa. 12:3-4). Isaiah 42:5-6 says, "Thus says God Jehovah, / Who created the heavens and stretched them out, / Who spread forth the earth and what springs up from it, / Who gives breath to the people upon it / And spirit to those who walk on it. / I am Jehovah; I have called You in righteousness; / I have held You by the hand; / I have kept You and I have given You / As a covenant for the people, as a light for the nations." Before God spoke in verse 6 of giving Christ as a covenant for the people and as a light for the nations, He declared that He gave us a spirit (v. 5). First, He told us that He had

prepared a "stomach" (a spirit) within us; then He told us what the "foodstuffs" (Christ as the covenant and the light) are. Our spiritual stomach is our spirit, and Christ is the food that we are to receive into our spiritual stomach. Thus, the way to receive and enjoy Christ is to exercise our spirit, to live according to our spirit, and to remain in our spirit, with which is the very Christ. Second Timothy 4:22 says, "The Lord be with your spirit." Since Christ is with our spirit, we must exercise our spirit, live according to our spirit, and remain in our spirit in order to receive and enjoy Him.

Every day I practice this. First, I exercise my spirit by calling, "O Lord Jesus." If we merely shut our eyes and meditate, we may "wander" all over the world. But if we call, "O Lord Jesus," for ten minutes, we will be in the third heavens; that is, we will be in our spirit. Today our spirit is our third heavens, the Holy of Holies, the place where we meet the Lord.

We should walk, live, and have our being according to this spirit. Sometimes as I am about to speak to certain people, I am checked: "Will you say this from yourself or from Him who is with you in your spirit. Who is your person, Witness Lee or Jesus Christ?" We may say the right thing, but we may say it by the wrong person, that is, by our self. We must say the right thing by the right person, and we must also do the right thing by the right person. Quite often we speak of loving the saints. However, we must be careful by what person we love others—by our self or by Christ. We should not forget that as believers in Christ, we have two persons: we have our self, the old person, and we have the Lord Jesus, the new person. We surely need to do the right thing, the good thing, the excellent thing, but we must go further to check by what person we do things—by our self as our person, or by our dear Savior, Jesus Christ, as our person. We should not live in our own person; rather, we need to live according to the spirit and remain in our spirit.

At times we may laugh, but if we laugh too much, we get out of our spirit. Then, after laughing for quite a time, we may silence ourself and go to our bedroom to pray, "Lord, forgive me; I have laughed too much. I want to come back to

my spirit to be with You." We need to remain in the spirit continuously. First, we need to call on Him, to exercise our spirit; then we need to live according to our spirit, and then remain in our spirit. In Revelation 1:10 the apostle John said that he was in spirit on the Lord's Day; that is, he was remaining in his spirit. Isaiah 12:3-4a says, "Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation, / And you will say in that day, / Praise Jehovah; call upon His name!" These verses in Isaiah tell us that there is a salvation that is full of springs and that we need to draw water from this salvation by praising Jehovah and calling upon His name. This is not my teaching but the divine revelation. God's full salvation is constituted of Christ as the covenant and as the light, and this full salvation is full of springs. We need to learn to come to draw water out of these springs by calling on His name. This corresponds exactly with the New Testament teaching (Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:12-13). All Jesus' followers should be His callers. This is the way to enjoy Him as our covenant and as our light that we may enjoy God's full salvation.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-EIGHT

## THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH AS THE ARM OF JEHOVAH, THE REIGNING GOD, AND THE EXALTED CHRIST IN RELATION TO ISRAEL'S RETURN AND RESTORATION

Scripture Reading: Isa. 51:9-11; 52:7-15

In this message we will cover three points concerning Christ's being the Servant of Jehovah—the arm of Jehovah, the reigning God, and the exalted Christ. Isaiah is a book of sixty-six chapters. In previous messages we pointed out that the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah correspond to the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, and the last twenty-seven chapters correspond to the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Chapter forty, the first chapter of the last twenty-seven, is the same as the beginning of the New Testament, in which John the Baptist was introduced. Verses 3-5 of that chapter, speaking of John the Baptist, say, "The voice of one who cries / In the wilderness: Make clear / The way of Jehovah; / Make straight in the desert / A highway for our God. / Every valley will be lifted up, / And every mountain and hill will be made low, / And the crooked places will become straight, / And the rough places, a broad plain. / Then the glory of Jehovah will be revealed, / And all flesh will see it together, / Because the mouth of Jehovah has spoken" (cf. Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6). Immediately after this chapter that introduces the New Testament, there are twenty-six chapters, from chapter forty-one through chapter sixty-six, concerning Christ as the Servant of Jehovah.

We need to see that Christ as the Servant of Jehovah, occupying twenty-six chapters in Isaiah, is mainly for Israel's

return and restoration. When these twenty-six chapters were written in the way of prophecy, Israel was destined to be scattered, to be captured, to be exiled from their fathers' land to some foreign lands to suffer there. In such a condition of captivity and exile, they needed Christ as the Servant of Jehovah to serve them in order to bring them back from their captivity and also to restore them. As captives in Babylon, the Israelites needed not only to be released but also to return to their fathers' land. Then, after their return, they needed to be restored. Their nation was devastated to the uttermost. It had become a desolation, an uninhabitable wilderness, with no rain, no soil for growing crops, and no food for people to eat. Surely they needed a restoration. Thus, Isaiah has twenty-six chapters on Christ serving God's elect to bring them back and to restore them.

Isaiah 51:9-11 and 52:7-15 reveal that Christ is the Servant of Jehovah as the arm of Jehovah, the reigning God, and the exalted Christ. The first two of these items—the arm of Jehovah and the reigning God—have the tone of the Old Testament. But the final item—the exalted Christ—does not bear an Old Testament tone; rather, it is an item of God's New Testament economy. This final item is mentioned at the end of Isaiah 52, in verses 13-15. Chapter fifty-two is continued by chapter fifty-three. It is important for us to see that Isaiah 53 is a direct continuation of the end of chapter fifty-two. The three verses at the end of chapter fifty-two do not bear an Old Testament tone. They bear a New Testament tone in which the exalted Christ is revealed.

Christ's being the Servant of Jehovah as the arm of Jehovah is covered in Isaiah 51:9-11. If we read these three verses carefully, we can discover that these three verses are a parenthesis. Actually, verse 12 continues verse 8. In verses 8 and 12 Jehovah is the speaker. Suddenly, from verse 9 through verse 11 the speaker changes. Verse 9 begins, "Arise, arise! Put on strength, / O arm of Jehovah; / Arise as in the days of old, / As in the generations of past ages." This is not Jehovah's speaking but Isaiah's, representing the people of God. Isaiah seemed to cry out, "Arise, arise, O arm of Jehovah and put on Your strength! Do the same things that You did

in the days of old. Do You not remember how You dried up the sea and made it a highway for us all to walk through? Do the same thing today to bring back all those who are in exile."

Then, 52:7 says, "How beautiful on the mountains / Are the feet of him who brings good news, / Of him who announces peace, who brings news of good things, / Who announces salvation; / Of him who says to Zion, Your God reigns!" The announcing of "Your God reigns!" is the announcing of the restoration. In Isaiah 40:9, which speaks concerning the beginning of the New Testament, the glad tidings is, "Here is your God!" Here, in 52:7, the glad tidings is, "Your God reigns!" The former speaks of God coming to accomplish redemption unto salvation for His people, whereas the latter, after redemption has been accomplished, says that in the restoration God reigns. The reigning God in chapter fifty-two is the Redeemer, the Savior, mentioned in chapter forty.

Finally, Isaiah 52:13, speaking of Christ in His exaltation, says, "Behold, My servant will act wisely and will prosper; / He will be exalted and lifted up and very high."

## I. THE ARM OF JEHOVAH

Whatever is covered in chapters forty-one through sixty-six of Isaiah concerns Christ as the Servant of Jehovah in relation to Israel's return and restoration. In Israel's return and restoration, the all-inclusive Christ is, first, the arm of Jehovah, second, the reigning God, and, third, the exalted Christ.

The arm of Jehovah signifies the strength of Jehovah. Christ as the arm of Jehovah is the strength of Jehovah. Isaiah 51:9 begins, "Arise, arise! Put on strength, / O arm of Jehovah." To put on strength is to wear strength as a garment. Christ is the garment of God as the strength of God.

Jehovah, the complete Triune God, is the great I Am (Exo. 3:13-14). Whatever we need, He is. In a positive sense, He is everything. He is strength, righteousness, justice, light, and many other items. God as strength is embodied in Christ. In this aspect, His name is the arm of Jehovah.

### A. Arising and Putting on Strength As in the Days of Old

In 51:9-11 Isaiah cried out that the arm of Jehovah should arise and put on strength as in the days of old, as in the generations of past ages, especially as in the exodus of His elect out of Egypt. In the exodus from Egypt, the first obstacle the children of Israel met was the Red Sea. Behind them Pharaoh's army was chasing them, and in front of them was the Red Sea. They could do nothing about the situation, but the arm of Jehovah did something. He caused a strong wind to blow so that the water was divided. The sea was dried up, and Israel walked in the sea on dry land. Isaiah was burdened that the arm of Jehovah would do the same thing in his day so that the captives of Israel would be brought back.

In Isaiah's prophecy Christ has a name which is called "the arm of Jehovah." This name is mentioned not only in 51:9 but also in 53:1, where Isaiah shouted, "Who has believed our report? / And to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed?" The arm of Jehovah mentioned in both of these verses is Christ. Christ is the arm of Jehovah, who is the Triune God, the great I Am. Christ is the arm of Jehovah to save God's people.

### B. For the Redeemed of Jehovah to Return and to Come to Zion with a Ringing Shout and Eternal Joy

The arm of Jehovah's arising and putting on strength as in the days of old is for the redeemed of Jehovah to return and to come to Zion with a ringing shout and eternal joy (51:11). In the Bible, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, we are told that God's people need God's redemption. This is because we as God's elect often become fallen. Whenever there is a fall, there is the need of redemption. First, we fell into sin. Humanly speaking, because we fell into sin, we may feel that we need deliverance. But legally speaking, according to God's economy, we need God's redemption to redeem us from sin. Human beings do not have such a thought because human beings do not know God's govern-

ment. God's government always involves the matter of righteousness. Our falling into sin involves God's righteousness. For God to come to rescue us is not simple. Before God can rescue us, there must be a redemption that fulfills the requirements of God's righteousness.

Because God's elect in both the Old Testament and the New Testament have fallen into sin, they first need God's redemption to fulfill God's requirements. Actually, to redeem us from sin is to redeem us from God's condemnation. When we fell into sin, we immediately came under God's condemnation. Because we were sinful, we were condemned by God's righteousness. Hence, we needed something to fulfill God's righteous requirement so that we could be redeemed from God's condemnation.

Then, as God's elect, we quite often fall into some trouble. In the Old Testament the children of Israel fell into captivity. In their captivity they needed to be released. However, instead of using the word *released*, the Old Testament uses the word *redeemed*. Isaiah 51:11 begins, "Therefore the redeemed of Jehovah will return...." The word *return* indicates what it means to be redeemed here. To be redeemed here is to be released from captivity, after which the redeemed ones can return. Thus, to be redeemed out of a troublesome situation is another aspect of redemption.

When Israel was under Pharaoh in Egypt, they were suffering as slaves under the Egyptian tyranny. So God came in to send Moses to redeem them (Exo. 6:6). By these examples we can see that God's Old Testament people had at least three kinds of needs. First, they were under God's condemnation; second, they encountered environmental troubles; and third, they were enslaved under a certain kind of tyranny. From each of these three things they needed to be redeemed. It is the same with God's people in the New Testament.

When God redeemed Israel out of Egypt, He established an ordinance that every family had to kill a lamb and then put the blood of the lamb upon their doorposts as a mark for the angel who came to kill all the firstborn sons in Egypt (Exo. 12:3-7). When the killing angel saw that blood, he passed over that house (v. 13). The lamb that was slain was

called the Passover lamb. That lamb was for the redemption of God's people out of God's condemnation.

All the firstborn in Egypt, whether Egyptians or Israelites, were sinners. Everyone should have been judged and put to death. However, Israel's firstborn escaped that judgment by being redeemed from God's condemnation through the blood shed by the slain lamb. This kind of redemption did not require power or strength. Through the blood the Israelites were immediately redeemed. All the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed, but the firstborn of Israel were redeemed from God's judgment and God's condemnation.

Nevertheless, they were still in Egypt, still under slavery and tyranny. To deliver them from that slavery required strength; it required an arm. The Israelites needed to be strengthened so that they could walk out of Egypt. To strengthen His people, God fed them with the lamb (vv. 8-9). After they killed the lamb and put the blood on the doorposts, they entered into their houses and ate the meat of the lamb. The eating of the lamb was not for redemption from God's condemnation. That was accomplished already by the blood. The eating of the lamb was to strengthen the Israelites to walk out of Egypt. The people ate the lamb with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand (v. 11). Immediately after eating the lamb, they walked out of Egypt.

After leaving Egypt, the children of Israel came to the Red Sea. The Egyptian army was chasing them from behind, and in front of them was the sea. At that juncture, they did not need the blood; they needed the arm of Jehovah. In Exodus 14 the arm of Jehovah was called the Angel of Jehovah. It was that Angel who did a miracle to make the sea a highway. The Angel of Jehovah first took the lead in front of the army of Israel. But when Pharaoh's army came, the Angel of Jehovah turned to the rear to protect Israel (v. 19). That Angel of Jehovah was the arm of Jehovah. Thus, in chapter fifty-one Isaiah reminded the Lord by shouting, "Arise, arise! Put on strength, / O arm of Jehovah; / Arise as in the days of old." This is the all-inclusive Christ in the return of God's people.

Recently a number of Jews went back from Russia to their fatherland by airplane. In addition, a number of flights carried Jews to Israel from Ethiopia. The power by which these Jews returned to their homeland was not merely the power of an airplane; actually, that power was the arm of Jehovah operating in a hidden way. In a similar way, the power that overthrew Communism in Russia and put away the iron curtain was not an earthly power but the all-inclusive Christ as the arm of Jehovah. Recently, a group of brothers who went to Russia and distributed literature to the people there reported that the freedom to speak concerning the Lord Jesus is greater in Russia than in the United States. Today the people of Russia want the Bible. They also want to know God and to follow Christ. The One who did this is Christ as the arm of Jehovah.

### C. Jehovah Baring His Holy Arm in the Sight of All the Nations, and All the Ends of the Earth Seeing the Salvation of Israel's God

Isaiah 52:10 says, "Jehovah has bared His holy arm / In the sight of all the nations, / And all the ends of the earth will see / The salvation of our [Israel's] God." The arm of Jehovah here is the all-inclusive Christ. All the Arab countries surrounding the small country of Israel have been unable to destroy Israel or to gain any of Israel's territory. This is because they have been restricted by the arm of Jehovah, who is Christ as the all-inclusive Servant of Jehovah.

## II. THE REIGNING GOD

### A. Your (Israel's) God Reigns!

Isaiah 40:9b says, "Say to the cities of Judah, / Here is your God!" This word speaks of God's revealing of Himself in His becoming a man through incarnation. The coming of Jesus is the coming of God. Thus, when Jesus is here, God is here. By comparison, Isaiah 52:7 says, "Your God reigns!" This is the glad tidings, the good news, and the announcing of peace.

### B. A Good News, a Glad Tiding, of Peace and Salvation

In the day when Israel returns from their captivity, the sound will go forth, "Your God reigns!" The reigning of God on this earth among men is not a small thing. Today many nations are reigning on the earth. We cannot yet see the reign of God in full. But in the day when the exiled Israel returns to their fathers' land, the watchman will shout, "Your God reigns!" This is truly a glad tiding and a good news to the returned Israel.

Today the leaders of the nations are very concerned about the economic condition of their countries and whether those under their administration will have an adequate supply of food and other necessities. However, as long as our God reigns among us, we do not need to worry about anything. When God reigns, He also supports, supplies, and provides. When He reigns, He provides the food that His people need. Under His reign there is no lack of food. "Your God reigns" is the good news, the glad tidings of peace and salvation. As long as we have peace and salvation, we can be satisfied; we do not need anything else.

### C. To Restore Zion by Jehovah

After Israel returns from their captivity, they need to be restored. Isaiah 52:8 tells us that the reigning of God is to restore Zion by Jehovah.

### D. To Comfort His People and to Redeem Jerusalem by Jehovah

Then, verse 9 says that the reigning of Israel's God is to comfort His people and to redeem Jerusalem by Jehovah. To redeem Jerusalem here is to deliver Jerusalem out of any kind of trouble, any kind of oppression, and any kind of tyranny.

### E. It Being the Salvation of Jehovah's Holy Arm

Verse 10 says that the reigning of God is the salvation of Jehovah's holy arm. This salvation is the salvation of Christ as the holy arm of Jehovah.

### F. Jehovah Charges Israel to Depart from Babylon

In verse 11 Jehovah charged Israel to depart from Babylon. God was redeeming Israel out of Babylon; hence, they needed to depart. God provided a way for the Jews to depart from Babylon, yet many were not willing to depart. According to prophecy, a good number of Jews will be left in foreign countries because they are not willing to depart.

In verse 12 Jehovah said that He will go before the departing and returning ones and will be their rear guard, just as the Angel of Jehovah did for Israel in the exodus from Egypt.

## III. THE EXALTED CHRIST

Thus far in Isaiah 51 and 52 we have seen both Israel's return and Israel's restoration. After their return and their restoration, Israel still needs to know Christ further. Thus far the redeemed, returned, and restored people of God know Christ only as the arm of Jehovah and as the reigning God. This knowledge is very good, but it is not sufficient. God's people still need to know Christ in the New Testament sense.

The section of the word in the Old Testament from Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53 is a portion that is absolutely in the New Testament sense with the New Testament tone. From my youth, every time I read Isaiah 53 I had the sense that this was a New Testament chapter. The returned and restored Israel still has not come to know Christ in the New Testament sense. They still do not know how Christ died an all-inclusive and vicarious death and then was resurrected. Isaiah 53 gives us a full record of Christ's death, including a description of the environment of Christ's death. It tells us how God put all our sins upon Him (v. 6), how He was brought like a lamb to the slaughter (v. 7), and how after His death He was buried (v. 9) and then resurrected (v. 10b). All these things are in the New Testament, but the Old Testament elect did not know these things, and even the Jewish people today do not know these things. They know Jehovah, they know the power of Jehovah, they know the strength of Jehovah, and they know the arm of Jehovah. In their praises to God for

the exodus, they did not speak much about the blood. They praised God mainly for His power; very rarely did they praise God for the blood. This means that the Jews know God in His power, they know God in His arm, but they do not know God in His New Testament redemption. They do not know that God became a man, that He died and resurrected, and that He has now become a life-giving Spirit to enter into His elect and dwell in them as the indwelling Spirit. Thus, there is the need of another portion in Isaiah to reveal to them the New Testament Christ.

### A. He Will Act Wisely and Will Prosper

Isaiah 52:13a says that Jesus will act wisely and will prosper. After His ascension to the heavens, Jesus has been acting prudently and wisely on this earth, and in whatever He has done He has prospered. Although many attacks have come upon Him, none of these attacks has frustrated Him. Communism tried to frustrate Christ for seventy years, but it was not successful. A recent newspaper article reported that in the parliament of Soviet Russia an announcement was made that Russia no longer wanted atheism. Now, the emptied Russians want the Bible, God, and Christ. When I left Communist China forty-two years ago, there were at the most approximately four million Chinese Christians, including Catholics. Today in China there are more than fifty million believers. The more they are oppressed, the more Christians rise up. Christ acts wisely and prosperously. Who can frustrate Him?

Actually, the book of Acts is not a record of the acts of the apostles. It is a record of the acts of Christ in the heavens through the apostles in their spirit. The acts of the apostle Paul were the acts of Christ, and they were carried out wisely and prosperously. Today no one can defeat Jesus Christ.

### B. He Will Be Exalted and Lifted Up and Very High

The second half of Isaiah 52:13 says that Jesus will be exalted and lifted up and very high. Actually, the Lord Jesus has been exalted already (Phil 2:9).

### C. Many Will Be Astonished at Him

Isaiah 52:14 continues by saying that many will be astonished at Him: "Even as many were astonished at Him— / His visage was marred more than that of any man, / And His form more than that of the sons of men." The Hebrew word for *mar* here means to disfigure. The word *visage* denotes the appearance and also refers to the face or facial expression, the countenance. This was Isaiah's poetic writing. In such a poetic writing Isaiah portrayed Christ in the New Testament sense. He was exalted and lifted up and is very high, and He has acted prudently and has prospered in every way. Today even the opposers of Christ respect Him. They all know that Christ is a great One. But when we meet Him, we will see that His face was marred, or disfigured. Christ was disfigured for us.

On the one hand, Christ is now glorified, but on the other hand, He still bears the impress of His being disfigured for us. Today the Jews might know Christ somewhat as the glorious Christ, but they do not know the disfigured Christ. We believers know the disfigured Christ much more than the glorified Christ. We were saved not only by a glorified Christ but also by a disfigured Christ. A so-called picture of Jesus popular among Christians today portrays Him as a handsome man. However, Christ our Savior was not that handsome; rather, He was disfigured. Isaiah said that many people were astonished at this.

According to people's concept, Jesus is great, high, stately, and glorified. Who would think that Jesus would be such a disfigured One? After I preached the gospel in China, many learned ones, after listening to the message, came to me and said, "Is this Jesus? We thought that Jesus Christ was a great man, a great figure. Is this disfigured One, this marred One, really Jesus?" Yes, this is Jesus. If He were not so, He could never save us; He could never be our Substitute on the cross. This is something astonishing.

### D. He Will Surprise Many Nations, and Kings Will Shut Their Mouths because of Him

Verse 15 begins, "So will He surprise many nations; /

Kings will shut their mouths because of Him." Jesus not only astonished people, but He also surprised many nations. Kings shut their mouths because of Him, meaning that these kings regarded Jesus in a very positive way. Jesus is high, Jesus is wonderful, and Jesus is glorious, but when the kings met Jesus, they were told many things about Him according to what is recorded in the New Testament. The kings imagined a great Jesus, but eventually they met a little Nazarene. They were surprised that such a great One could be put on the cross and crucified.

Verse 15 continues, "For what had not been recounted to them they will see, / And what they had not heard of they will contemplate." What had not been recounted to them was that Jesus became a man with two natures, the divine nature and the human nature; that He lived the life of a Nazarene; that He was crucified; that He was buried; and that He was resurrected. All these things had never been recounted to them. But now they will see these things, and what they had not heard of they will contemplate, that is, they will understand, they will realize. This means that they will hear the gospel.

Isaiah 53 follows immediately after the end of chapter fifty-two. The things spoken of in Isaiah 53 are the things mentioned in 52:15 that are to be recounted, to be seen, to be heard of, and to be contemplated. The first verse of Isaiah 53 says, "Who has believed our report? / And to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed?" Verse two continues, "For He grew up like a tender plant before Him, / And like a root out of dry ground." The entire chapter is a recounting, a telling, of the things concerning Christ according to the New Testament gospel.

In the future the returned and restored Israel will read the account in Isaiah 53. After all the Jews have returned to their fathers' land and have been restored there, they will be told, charged, instructed, and directed to know Isaiah 53. They will know Jesus not merely as the arm of Jehovah and the reigning God, but they will know Him as the exalted Christ. That Christ was exalted indicates that He was first humiliated. In His incarnation, and even in His daily living

for thirty-three and a half years, He was very much disfigured and marred. Then He was brought to Calvary, a little mount outside of the city of Jerusalem, and He was crucified there for six hours. All these things the Jews need to know.

Today, as New Testament believers, we first know these things concerning Christ, and later we will know the arm of Jehovah in His miraculous power (cf. Heb. 6:5). But today many Pentecostal people have dropped knowing Jesus in the New Testament sense. In its preoccupation with miracles and power, Pentecostalism brings people back to the Old Testament. I thank the Lord that from my youth, for over sixty-five years, He has never led me to know Him in the way of miracles and power, but He has always led me to know Him as a humiliated Jesus. This is the reason that I like to follow Jesus, to take His steps as the One humiliated by people. To be glorified by anyone is a shame. To follow the Lord in His humiliation is to know Jesus Christ in the New Testament sense. Later, when He comes, we will see Him and know Him as the arm of Jehovah and as the reigning God. We all will shout to one another, "Our God reigns!" Then we will be in the time of restoration. This is our Christ, the all-inclusive One, as the Servant of Jehovah in relation to Israel's return and restoration.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FORTY-NINE

## THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH REVEALED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ECONOMY

Scripture Reading: Isa. 52:13—53:12; Acts 2:33a; 5:31a; Matt. 13:54-57; 8:17; 1 Pet. 2:24; Acts 8:32; Matt. 26:63-64; 27:12, 14; Acts 8:33; Matt. 27:26b; John 19:38-42; Acts 13:39; Eph. 4:8-12; Luke 23:32, 34a

In this message we come to Isaiah 53, a chapter that is very familiar to many Christians.

The last three verses of chapter fifty-two, verses 13-15, and the first verse of chapter fifty-three should be put together. This portion of Isaiah's record is very difficult for people to understand. Such a portion was included in the holy Word because people's knowledge concerning Christ differs. Generally speaking, people either do not know Christ, or they know Christ in a natural way as some kind of great person. This kind of knowledge can be found in the Old Testament. There are a number of Old Testament verses that speak concerning the different aspects of Christ's greatness, such as His majesty, His authority, and His power. In the previous message we mentioned three items in Isaiah 51 and 52 concerning the knowledge of Christ. The first item is to know Christ as the arm of Jehovah, which refers to the strength, the might, and the power of Jehovah. Then, the second item is to know Christ as the reigning God. Surely these two are items of Christ's greatness. At the end of Isaiah 52, verse 13 says, "Behold, My Servant will act wisely and will prosper; / He will be exalted and lifted up and very high." We may think that this refers to Christ's acting wisely to do great things. But if we enter into this portion of the Word, we will realize that this is not the meaning here.

First Corinthians 1:22-24 says, "For indeed Jews require signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Thus, in 1 Corinthians wisdom refers to Christ. However, the wisdom mentioned here does not refer to the wisdom exercised in creating the universe. According to the context, the wisdom and power in 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 both refer to Christ as the deep things of God, that is, the depths of God. First Corinthians 2:10-11 says that only the Spirit of God can search the depths of God. The depths of God are the deeper items of Christ.

The first deeper item of Christ is Christ's crucifixion, Christ's cross, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:23. No one can understand why Christ, who was God incarnated as a man and who could have called more than twelve legions of angels to protect Him (Matt. 26:53), was willing to be nailed to the cross and to hang there for six hours. This is one item of the depths of God concerning Christ. Then, Christ died on that cross. Who understands fully the meaning, the significance, of Christ's death? The understanding that, because we were sinners, God sent His Son to die for us so that He could save us according to His love is correct, but it is too superficial. The death of Christ has a much deeper significance than this. In its deeper significance, Christ's death not only involved Christ Himself but also included us (Gal. 2:20). Furthermore, Christ's death terminated all the ordinances among mankind concerning the different ways of living (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14). This too is something deeper concerning the significance of Christ's death. Then, according to John 12:24, Christ's death, like a grain of wheat falling into the ground, released God's divine life. Christ's death also judged the world (John 12:31) and destroyed the one who has the might of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14). These are additional items of the deeper significance of Christ's death.

Another item of the depths of God concerning Christ is Christ's resurrection. Apparently, Christ's resurrection was simply His rising up from death. However, the resurrection

of Christ was much more than merely His rising up. According to its deeper significance, the resurrection of Christ was a great birth. In the resurrection of Christ, not only Christ Himself was born (John 16:20-22; Acts 13:33); millions of Christ's believers also were born in His resurrection. First Peter 1:3 tells us that through the resurrection of Christ, we all were regenerated, and Romans 8:29 says that Christ is now God's Firstborn among many brothers. This is a deeper aspect of Christ's resurrection. Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 15:45b says that as the last Adam, Christ became a life-giving Spirit through resurrection. Before His resurrection Christ was a man in the flesh, but through His resurrection He was transferred out of the realm of the flesh and became a life-giving Spirit. This is certainly a matter of great depth. All these deeper things concerning Christ are fully revealed in the New Testament, but it is very difficult to see these things concerning Christ in the Old Testament.

When they come to either the Old Testament or the New Testament, many readers of the Bible hold to their own natural concepts. In a very real sense, the kind of person we are determines the kind of Bible we have. The Bible contains many deep things that are difficult to understand; but thank the Lord that He is the searching Spirit, and He is also the unveiling Spirit, the revealing Spirit. In Acts 8 the Ethiopian eunuch was reading Isaiah 53:7-8, concerning Christ as a lamb brought to the slaughter and as a sheep that was dumb before its shearers. These words are very simple, yet the eunuch did not understand them. He asked Philip, "Concerning whom does the prophet say this? Concerning himself or concerning someone else?" The Bible is full of deep things such as these. Thus, whenever we come to the Bible, we need to forget about what we know, what we have learned, and what we have heard, and pray, "Lord, I look to You for my understanding of Your Word."

## I. CHRIST AS THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH REVEALED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ECONOMY

Isaiah 52:13—53:12 reveals Christ as the Servant of Jehovah not in the Old Testament economy but in the New

Testament economy. The Christ who is revealed in these verses is not great or powerful. Isaiah 53:2 says that He grew up like a tender plant and like a root out of dry ground. Isaiah 52:13 says that Christ as the Servant of Jehovah will act wisely and will prosper, implying that He will accomplish great things. However, according to Isaiah's poetic writing in verse 14, many were astonished at Christ because His appearance and His form were marred. They were astonished because they did not expect a servant of God to be a marred one, a disfigured one, as Christ was.

### A. Acting Wisely and Prospering in the Pleasure of Jehovah

Isaiah 52:13a and 53:10b say that Christ will act wisely and will prosper in the pleasure of Jehovah. From the day that He came out to minister on this earth, the Lord Jesus acted wisely and prospered in God's pleasure.

First, the Father's pleasure was that the Son would go to the cross and die for His chosen people. In Gethsemane the Lord Jesus prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39). Later, as He was being arrested, He told His disciples, "The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). Because the Lord Jesus prospered in God's pleasure, God the Father could say, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight" (Matt. 3:17).

Christ entered into death and then rose up from death to enter into resurrection. Through this, God the Father begot many sons. This too is the Father's pleasure, and it is also Christ's prosperity in His resurrection. Christ's resurrection was not only a matter of His rising out of death. In Christ's resurrection millions of God's chosen people were born. Although we were not yet born, we all were regenerated two thousand years ago, when Christ resurrected. This is the wisdom by which Christ as the Servant of Jehovah acted wisely. Christ acted wisely not according to the Old Testament economy but according to the New Testament economy. From the first day of His ministry until the day of His resurrection, the Lord Jesus did nothing according to the Old Testament

economy. Rather, He did everything according to the New Testament economy.

### B. Being Exalted and Lifted Up, and Being Very High

The second part of Isaiah 52:13 says that Christ as the Servant of Jehovah will be exalted and lifted up and very high. The Bible tells us that Christ has been exalted to the third heavens, to the right hand of God (Phil. 2:9; Heb. 4:14; 7:26; 8:1). Christ was not only exalted but also lifted up. In the history of mankind there has never been one who was as exalted and lifted up as Christ was. The human mind cannot understand the meaning of Christ's being exalted and lifted up, because the "economy" of the human mind is natural. The record in the New Testament is according to the economy of God, which is much higher and much deeper than man's economy.

### C. Many Being Astonished at Him, for His Visage and Form Were Marred (Disfigured) More Than Any Man

Isaiah 52:14 says, "Even as many were astonished at Him— / His visage was marred more than that of any man, / And His form more than that of the sons of men." Christ is exalted and lifted up and very high, but when men saw Him, He was different from what they expected Him to be. Hence, many were astonished at Him because His visage was marred, or disfigured, and His form also was marred. In your thought, in your imagination, what kind of Jesus do you have? In Christianity there is a so-called picture of Jesus, portraying Him as a very handsome man. However, we might be astonished to see that instead of being handsome, the Lord was disfigured.

### D. Surprising Many Nations, and Kings Shutting Their Mouths Because of Him

Isaiah 52:15 begins, "So will He surprise many nations; / Kings will shut their mouths because of Him." Just as many great men on this earth were astonished at Jesus (v. 14), so

Jesus will also surprise many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of Him. Jesus will surprise many nations because what He is, is altogether different from what they imagined. Many will be shocked, and the kings will shut their mouths because of Him. These kings told their people how great Christ is. But when Christ comes, He is not as great as they thought. Thus, the kings' mouths will be shut because of Him.

Verse 15 continues, "For what had not been recounted to them [as revealed in the next chapter] they will see." The kings will see something that had never been recounted to them. Quite often, even today, when we go to contact sinners to preach the gospel to them, especially to the learned ones such as the professors and the philosophers, they have their concept about Christ. Their concept is that Christ is a great man, a giant in history. However, they are surprised when we read some of the verses in the New Testament telling them that when Christ was on the earth, He was a small man who lived in the despised region of Galilee, in the despised city of Nazareth, and in a poor home. Upon hearing such a word, the thoughtful people would ask, "Why did such a great person in history live in a small house in a despised city in a despised region? And why was such a great person rejected?" This is difficult for the natural mind to understand.

All the great teachers, such as Confucius and Socrates, spoke great words, but Jesus always tried to speak small words. For instance, in John 4 the Lord Jesus asked an immoral Samaritan woman to give Him some water to drink (v. 7). This does not seem to be fitting in a classical writing such as the Bible. Is this the divine economy, or is this the human economy? Many thoughtful people would reject such a small Jesus. Thus, what the New Testament records is absolutely different from our human thought.

Verse 15 concludes, "And what they had not heard of [as reported in the next chapter] they will contemplate." There are many things concerning Christ that the kings have never heard. For example, the Bible tells us that Christ died, and we died with Him (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:14; Col. 3:3a). According to human logic, since Christ died for us, it is not

necessary for us to die. It is very difficult for the natural human mind to understand such things.

## II. THE REPORT OF THE PROPHETS BASED UPON THE REVELATION OF JEHOVAH

### A. The Report of the Prophets and the Revelation of Jehovah

Isaiah 53:1 says, "Who has believed our report? / And to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed?" The first half of this verse speaks of a report, and the other half speaks of a revelation. The revelation equals the recounting in the preceding verse, 52:15. Isaiah's word in 53:1 indicates that the prophets preached the New Testament gospel in the New Testament economy, but no one believed their report. Their report was based upon God's revelation. God revealed to them the arm of Jehovah, who is Jesus. Jesus is the real arm of Jehovah. However, when Jesus comes to us, we might say, "Is this the arm of Jehovah? I cannot believe that such a small Nazarene could be the arm of Jehovah." Not many people would believe the prophets' report concerning Jesus as the arm of Jehovah. Thus, the prophet asked, "To whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed?"

In a sense, to preach the gospel is an easy thing; actually, however, it is the most difficult thing on this earth. To convince people to believe what we preach concerning Jesus is very difficult. When we go to speak to people concerning Jesus, we often feel that it is difficult to present such a One to them. The preaching of Jesus is in the New Testament economy; it is altogether in God's way. Hence, there is the need of the power of the Holy Spirit.

### B. Concerning Christ, the Servant of Jehovah

This report and this revelation are concerning Christ, the Servant of Jehovah (vv. 2-12).

#### *1. As the Incarnated Savior, Living a Suffering and Sorrowful Human Life*

First, this report and this revelation reveals Christ as the

incarnated Savior, who lived a suffering and sorrowful life (vv. 2-3).

*a. Growing Up like a Tender Plant before Jehovah*

Apparently, Isaiah 53 says nothing about incarnation. However, the first part of verse 2 says, "For He grew up like a tender plant before Him, / And like a root out of dry ground." In the New Testament economy, it was unveiled and reported concerning Christ that He was like a tender plant, like a root out of dry ground. This certainly is a reference to Christ's incarnation. Just these few words indicate that Christ is the incarnated One. As such a One, He grew up before God like a tender plant.

*b. Having No Attracting Form nor Majesty*

The second part of verse 2 says, "He has no attracting form nor majesty that we should look upon Him, / Nor beautiful appearance that we should desire Him." Very few people would pay any particular attention to a tender plant. In one sense, the Lord Jesus is beautiful. There are a number of hymns in our hymnal concerning His beauty (*Hymns,* #170-178). However, in another sense, Jesus is not beautiful. He has no beautiful appearance that we should desire Him.

*c. Having Been Despised and Forsaken of Men, a Man of Sorrows and Acquainted with Grief*

Verse 3 says, "He was despised and forsaken of men, / A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; / And like one from whom men hide their faces, / He was despised; and we did not esteem Him." According to the account in the four Gospels, the Lord Jesus was continually despised, was forsaken of men, and was a man of sorrows who knew nothing but grief. Furthermore, He was like one from whom men hide their faces. Men did not like to see Him, and they did not esteem or regard Him (Matt. 13:54-57). Based on this account we would not consider such a One as a great man, nor would we consider ourselves inferior to such a One.

### *2. As the Crucified Redeemer, Sacrificing Himself for Our Trespasses for the Accomplishing of Jehovah's Eternal Redemption*

Second, in the report of the prophets and the revelation of Jehovah, Christ was revealed as the crucified Redeemer. As our Redeemer, Christ sacrificed Himself for our trespasses, or, for our sin, for the accomplishing of Jehovah's eternal redemption (Isa. 53:4-10a). It is difficult to understand how one who is great could be crucified. Those who are crucified are usually very low and mean. Nevertheless, our Redeemer was crucified, sacrificing Himself for our trespasses for the accomplishing of God's eternal redemption. All these things concerning Christ are revealed in a heavenly language. Today we call this the gospel, the glad tidings, the good news. Actually, however, according to our natural human thought, we might wonder how such words could be considered as glad tidings.

When they go out to tell people about Jesus, many Christians do not speak of Jesus in this way. They dare not tell people that Jesus was a tender plant, that He was like a root out of dry ground, and that He has no beauty, attracting form, or majesty. Perhaps you have never told people that your Jesus was like a tender plant growing up before God and that He was like a root out of dry ground, growing with difficulty because there was no water. We prefer to know Christ and to present Christ as a great person in the Old Testament economy. Thus, we need the Lord's grace to bring us into the New Testament economy.

#### *a. Bearing Our Sicknesses and Carrying Our Sorrows*

Verse 4 says, "Surely He has borne our sicknesses, / And carried our sorrows; / Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, / Smitten of God and afflicted." People thought that Christ must have been wrong in something; otherwise, why would He be stricken, smitten of God and afflicted? They did not understand that Christ bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows (Matt. 8:17).

### *b. Being Wounded Because of Our Transgressions and Crushed Because of Our Iniquities*

Isaiah 53:5 says, "But He was wounded because of our transgressions; / He was crushed because of our iniquities; / And the chastening for our peace was upon Him, / And by His stripes we have been healed." This indicates that Christ's suffering was altogether vicarious; He suffered everything in our place. He was stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded, crushed, and chastened in our place that we may be healed (1 Pet. 2:24b), that we may be saved.

### *c. We All like Sheep Having Gone Astray; Each of Us Having Turned to His Own Way, and Jehovah Having Caused the Iniquity of Us All to Fall upon Him*

Isaiah 53:6 says, "We all like sheep have gone astray; / Each of us has turned to his own way, / And Jehovah has caused the iniquity of us all / To fall upon Him." It was when God was judging Jesus on the cross that He caused the iniquity of us all to fall upon Jesus. On the cross the Lord Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). God the Father forsook the Son because at that juncture God caused all our sins to fall upon Him. For a short time, while Jesus was hanging on the cross, in God's eyes He was the unique sinner. Today, if a sinner hears this, he will be astonished. This is the report, the revelation, in the New Testament economy.

### *d. Being Oppressed and Afflicted, yet Not Opening His Mouth*

Isaiah 53:7 says, "He was oppressed, and it was He who was afflicted, / Yet He did not open His mouth; / Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter / And like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers, / So He did not open His mouth." The Lord Jesus experienced all these things according to the New Testament economy (Acts 8:32; Matt. 26:63-64; 27:12, 14). This may seem to be a strange recounting, but we need to

consider this the good news. This is absolutely extraordinary and altogether uncommon. Thus, when this is recounted, people are surprised. It is by being reported, recounted, and revealed in such a way that Christ surprises many nations (Isa. 52:15).

### *e. Being Taken Away by Oppression and Judgment, and Being Cut Off out of the Land of the Living for the Transgression of the Prophet's People*

Isaiah 53:8 says, "By oppression and by judgment He was taken away; / And as for His generation, who among them had the thought / That He was cut off out of the land of the living / For the transgression of my [the prophet's] people to whom the stroke was due?" In being arrested, judged, and crucified, Christ was oppressed and judged. He was judged in an unjust way by the high priest and by Pilate. Through that kind of judgment He was taken away and brought to Calvary and put on the cross. And as for His generation, who among those at His time had the thought that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of the prophet's people, the Jews, to whom the stroke was due? (Acts 8:33; Matt. 27:26b). The stroke should have fallen upon the Jewish people, but Christ as the Servant of Jehovah suffered the stroke for them.

### *f. His Grave Being Assigned with the Wicked, but with a Rich Man in His Death*

Isaiah 53:9 says, "And they assigned His grave with the wicked, / But with a rich man in His death, / Although He had done no violence, / Nor was there any deceit in His mouth." Although Christ had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth, the Jews intended to bury Him with the wicked people; but under God's sovereignty, He was buried in a rich man's tomb.

### *g. Jehovah Being Pleased to Crush Him, to Afflict Him with Grief*

Isaiah 53:10a says, "But Jehovah was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief." God was pleased to do this.

### *3. As the Resurrected Life-giver, Producing a Seed for the Building Up of His Body as His Continuation for Jehovah's Pleasure and His Satisfaction*

Third, the prophets' report and Jehovah's revelation unveil Christ as the resurrected Life-giver. Isaiah 53:10b-11 says, "When He makes Himself an offering for sin, / He will see a seed, He will extend His days, / And the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand. / He will see the issue of the travail of His soul, / And He will be satisfied; / By the knowledge of Him, the righteous One, My Servant will make the many righteous, / And He will bear their iniquities." Although the term *life-giver* is not used in these verses, the thought of a life-giver is implied in the seed mentioned in verse 10. That seed surely is produced by life. Thus, Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is the Life-giver so that He can produce a seed for the building up of His Body as His continuation for Jehovah's pleasure and for His satisfaction. The Father is pleased and Christ is satisfied with the Body of Christ, which is constituted of the seed brought forth by Christ as the life-giving Spirit.

#### *a. Making His Soul an Offering for Sin and Seeing a Seed*

According to verse 10b, Christ made His soul an offering for sin. *Sin* is a common title that includes trespasses, iniquities, wrongdoings, and every wrong or evil thing. Christ's making His soul an offering for sin indicates that He was willing and volunteered to sacrifice Himself as an offering for sin. By doing this, Christ entered into resurrection, in which He produced a seed. This was His satisfaction, and this was also the Father's pleasure.

The seed produced by Christ in His resurrection is His believers for the building up of His Body as His continuation, with which He will extend His days. Christ extended His days by producing a seed—the believers—to build up the Body of Christ, and this Body of Christ is still extending. As the

Body of Christ is extending, the days of Christ also are extending.

At the end of verse 10 we are told that Christ will prosper in the pleasure of Jehovah. In the past two thousand years Christ has been very prosperous. He has been the most successful One. Although He encountered all kinds of attacks, all kinds of opposition, and all kinds of troubles, no one has been able to defeat Him. Instead, He has prospered. The Lord has prospered in spreading His recovery to America, and now He is preparing to spread to Russia. That too will be Christ's prospering. This is also the prolonging of His days. Christ still lives on this earth. Since we are here, Christ is here.

In 52:13 we were told only that Christ will prosper, but we were not told in what He will prosper. Now, in 53:10 we are told clearly that He will prosper in the pleasure of Jehovah. The pleasure of Jehovah is to reveal Himself into us, to make us the seed of Christ, to make us a part of Christ, to make us the sons of God. This is God's pleasure.

#### *b. Seeing the Issue of the Travail of His Soul and Being Satisfied*

Isaiah 53:11 says, "He will see the issue of the travail of His soul, / And He will be satisfied; / By the knowledge of Him, the righteous One, My Servant will make the many righteous, / And He will bear their iniquities." The issue of the travail of Christ's soul refers to the many who are justified (made righteous) by knowing Christ, for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ. Acts 13:39 says, "And from all the things from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, in this One everyone who believes is justified." All the justified ones will also be regenerated. They will all become Christ's seed; they will all become the members of His Body to build up the Body as His organism.

### *4. As the Ascended Victor, Sharing the Spoil with God for His Triumphant Glory*

Fourth, the prophets' report and Jehovah's revelation unveil Christ as the ascended Victor. Christ is the incarnated

Savior, the crucified Redeemer, the resurrected Life-giver, and the ascended Victor.

Isaiah 53:12a says, "Therefore, I will divide to Him a portion with the Great, / And He will divide the spoil with the Strong." The mentioning of spoil, or prey, here indicates Christ's victory. In His ascension, Christ shared the captured ones with the Great and the Strong. In the whole universe, only God is great and only God is strong. God is also the real Victor; He has gained all the spoil. He and this ascended Victor, Christ, shared the captured ones as the spoil. Ephesians 4:8-12 tells us that when Christ ascended to the height, He led captive those who were taken captive by Satan. We were sinners captured by Satan, but through His death and resurrection, Christ overcame Satan, and He captured all those who were held captive by Satan. These captives eventually became Christ's captives, and they are the prey, the spoil. Christ brought all these captured captives to the heavens and presented them to the Father. Then the Father shared this spoil with Christ, the ascended Victor.

*a. Jehovah Dividing to Him a Portion with the Great, and He Dividing the Spoil with the Strong*

Isaiah 53:12 says, "Therefore, I [Jehovah] will divide to Him [Jehovah's Servant] a portion with the Great [God], / And He [Jehovah's Servant] will divide the spoil with the Strong [God]; / Because He poured out His life unto death / And was numbered with the transgressors, / Yet He bore the sin of many / And interceded for the transgressors." The first part of this verse says that Jehovah will divide to His Servant a portion with the Great, that is, with God, and Jehovah's Servant will divide the spoil with the Strong, that is, with God. The second part of the verse gives the reason why God would do this: because He, Jehovah's Servant, poured out His life unto death, volunteering to die to be such an offering, and was numbered with the transgressors, yet He alone bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors. Because Christ did all these things, He is now qualified to share the spoil. The victory was gained by God through Christ's volunteering to die, through Christ's being willing to be numbered

among the transgressors. When Christ was crucified, on His left and on His right two criminals were crucified with Him (Luke 23:32-33). Thus, He was numbered among these wicked ones. That was a shame to Him. Christ suffered all this, and He also bore the sin of many. On the cross, Christ bore our sins (1 Pet. 2:24a). Because of all these things God counted Him worthy to share the spoil of the spiritual war on this earth. God counted Him as the Victor.

All the recounting, all the reporting, and all the revelation in this portion of the Word are in the New Testament economy. In Isaiah 53 Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is unveiled in the New Testament way. When we read the Old Testament through without reading Isaiah 53, we receive the impression of the Old Testament economy. But when we come to Isaiah 53 and read it, the flavor, the taste, is altogether of the New Testament, not the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, Isaiah 53 is the unique chapter that bears the color, the taste, and the atmosphere of the New Testament.

I trust in the Lord that He will cause us all to understand these things, not in a natural way but in the unveiled, revealed way, that we may know Christ as such a One. The view of Christ in Isaiah 53 is absolutely different from the human view. We all need to believe Isaiah's report concerning Christ. We need to be enlightened so that we may have the right view and receive the revelation to know Jesus Christ in the God-ordained economy, that is, the New Testament economy.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FIFTY

## THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST IN HIS FOUR STAGES ACCORDING TO GOD'S NEW TESTAMENT ECONOMY

### (1)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 53:1-10b, 11c, 12c; 1 Cor. 1:24; John 1:1, 14; 1 Tim. 2:5b; Heb. 2:14-18; Matt. 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Matt. 26:57, 59, 65-68; Luke 23:1-12; John 18:33-38; 19:1-16; Luke 23:32-33, 34a; Matt. 27:59-60, 45-46; Heb. 9:14a; John 10:17-18; Heb. 9:12; Acts 10:43; 13:39; Rom. 5:10; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:9b; Phil. 1:19b

Prayer: Lord, how we thank You that You have gathered us again into Your name. Today the whole world is busy, yet You have separated us unto Yourself that we may come here to know You through Your word. We want to be clear about You, about Your steps, about Your stages, about what You are and what You have done. Lord Jesus, be with us tonight. Cover us with Your prevailing blood against all the frustrations from the dark one. Lord, we trust in You that You will come to anoint every one of us, to anoint every action in this meeting. And Lord, we do tell You that we love You. We desire to live You. So we want to know You in every detail. Lord, defeat the enemy, and be merciful to each one of us. Amen.

In this message and the next two messages, the subject will be "The All-Inclusive Christ in His Four Stages according to God's New Testament Economy." If we desire to know Christ according to Isaiah 53, we must realize that Isaiah 53 speaks clearly concerning Christ in four stages. The first stage is the stage of Christ's incarnation; the second, the stage of His crucifixion; the third, the stage of His resurrection; and the fourth, the stage of His ascension. In

this message we will consider the first two stages, and in the next two messages we will see the last two stages.

Isaiah 53 is a very significant chapter. This chapter is a confession that will be made by the household of Israel who will be saved at the Lord's coming back. Zechariah 12 tells us that when the Lord Jesus comes back, the household of Israel will be saved on the same day and even at the same time. Zechariah tells us that the Jews will return to their fathers' land (8:7-8). At the beginning of the last week, the last seven years of this age, Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel, and in the middle of that week he will change his mind (Dan. 9:27). Then, for three and a half years he will persecute the Jews to the uttermost. According to Zechariah 13:8, two-thirds of the Jews will be killed by him; only one-third will be left. Those who remain will probably be mostly in the area of Jerusalem. After killing that many Jews, Antichrist will still not be satisfied. According to Zechariah 14:2, he will capture Jerusalem, and half of the city will be exiled. Those who remain will constitute only about one-sixth of the Jews who return to their fathers' land. At that juncture Antichrist will attempt to devour, to destroy, the entire race of Israel, but the Lord will come down to defeat him, and the remaining Jews will see Him and recognize Him as the One whom their forefathers pierced. Then they will all repent and wail (12:10-14). By so doing, this remnant will receive Christ. They will all be saved in a household salvation. At that time they will recount Isaiah 53, and that portion of the Word will be full of taste to them.

Isaiah 53 was written nearly twenty-seven hundred years ago. Although throughout these twenty-seven centuries the Jews have read this chapter again and again, they do not know what it talks about. Today nearly all who read the Bible appreciate Isaiah 53, but they may not truly understand this chapter. I have discovered that the best way to make this chapter clear to you is to help you to see the four stages of Christ revealed in this chapter.

Christ was in the first stage, the stage of incarnation, for thirty-three and a half years; He was in the second stage, the stage of crucifixion, for approximately six hours; and He

has been in the third stage, the stage of resurrection, for two thousand years already. The stage of Christ's resurrection will have no ending; it will last for eternity (Rev. 1:18). After His resurrection, Christ entered into His ascension. He ascended in resurrection. It is impossible to separate Christ's resurrection from His ascension. Today Christ is in both resurrection and ascension. He was incarnated and He was crucified, but now He is in ascension and resurrection. He is in ascension based on His resurrection. His resurrection issued in His ascension. These two can never be separated. Now He lives forever in both resurrection and ascension. He is not only the resurrected Christ, but also the resurrected and ascended Christ.

## I. IN THE STAGE OF HIS INCARNATION

The first stage of Christ, the stage of incarnation, was not a part of His redemption. Christ is our Savior, and He did redeem us, but His incarnation by itself was not His redemption. Isaiah 53:2 says, "For He grew up like a tender plant before Him, / And like a root out of dry ground." Christ's being like a tender plant and a root out of dry ground was not part of His redemption. Likewise, His not being esteemed (v. 3) was not part of His redemption.

Isaiah 53:1b-3 refers to Christ's incarnation. Verse 1 says, "Who has believed our report? / And to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed?" *The arm of Jehovah* is a figure of speech signifying Jehovah Himself in His power. Thus, the arm of Jehovah is God Himself in His saving power. This arm of Jehovah has been revealed. Two thousand years ago, when the Lord Jesus came out of Nazareth to preach the gospel, that was the unveiling of the arm of Jehovah. Christ as the arm of Jehovah was revealed to many, but they did not realize that He was the arm of Jehovah. They did not see that He was Jehovah Himself coming in power to save them.

Based on this revelation of the arm of Jehovah, the apostles reported (1 John 1:3). But who has believed their report? When the Lord Jesus comes back, the remnant of Israel will all repent and wail. At that time they will recount

Isaiah 53:1: "Who has believed our report? / And to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed?" Then they will go on to recount, "For ..." The word *for* at the beginning of verse 2 is a great word. Why did no one believe the report and receive the revelation concerning Christ? Because He grew up not like a king but like a tender plant before Jehovah. Because of this they did not believe the apostles' report. A number of times in the four Gospels the Jews despised the Lord Jesus, speaking words such as, "Can anything good be from Nazareth?" (John 1:46) and "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matt. 13:55). If Jesus had come out of Bethlehem, out of the city of the royal family, perhaps many Jews would believe in Him. But they have not believed, because He grew up like a tender plant before Jehovah, and like a root out of dry ground.

Isaiah 53:3 begins, "He was despised and forsaken of men, / A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." In verse 1 Christ is referred to as the arm of Jehovah, and in verse 3 He is called a man of sorrows. The arm of Jehovah is Jehovah in His power, and the man of sorrows is Jesus. When these two are put together, they equal incarnation. One day Jehovah, the very Elohim, became a man by the name of Jesus. In Isaiah 53 Jehovah is signified by the arm of Jehovah, and Jesus is called a man of sorrows. This is incarnation.

### A. As the Complete God to Become a Perfect Man

As the complete God, signified by the arm of Jehovah, the power of God (v. 1b; 1 Cor. 1:24), Christ became a perfect man, signified by a man of sorrows (v. 3a; John 1:1, 14; 1 Tim. 2:5b). The Old Testament term is *the arm of Jehovah*, whereas the New Testament term is *the power of God*. First Corinthians 1:22-24 says, "For indeed Jews require signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." In these verses Christ crucified corresponds to the man of sorrows in Isaiah 53:3, and the power of God equals the arm of Jehovah in Isaiah 53:1. Thus,

in these two portions of the Word, incarnation is clearly mentioned.

### B. As a Perfect Man to Live a Lowly and Sorrowful Human Life

As a perfect man, Christ lived a lowly and sorrowful human life. His birth was lowly, and His family also was in a lowly state. His living was also full of sorrow.

#### *1. Growing Up like a Tender Plant before Jehovah, and like a Root out of Dry Ground*

First, He grew up like a tender plant (like a small, delicate person) before Jehovah (Isa. 53:2a). The plant here actually refers to a sprout, which is very tender, small, and delicate. Christ did not grow up like a large tree, but like a small, delicate sprout. Because He was such, no one would pay any attention to Him. He also grew up like a root out of dry ground, meaning that He was born of a poor family. His mother, Mary, and her husband, Joseph, lived in a despised city called Nazareth, in a despised region, Galilee. It is true that they were descendants of David, but David reigned approximately one thousand years before Jesus was born. When Mary and Joseph came into being, the royal family had become insignificant. In Isaiah 11:1 the royal family of Jesse was likened to the stump of a tree. From that stump a sprout, Christ, came out. Hence, His birth was very lowly.

#### *2. Having No Attracting Form nor Majesty that Men Should Look upon Him*

Second, the Lord Jesus had no attracting form nor majesty that men should look upon Him, nor beautiful appearance that men should desire Him (53:2b). If Jesus had been very handsome and attractive, very majestic and powerful, everyone would have been attracted to Him. But Jesus had neither an attracting form nor majesty, nor did He have a beautiful appearance. Instead of majesty, He had poverty, and instead of a beautiful appearance, He had a visage and form that were disfigured (52:14).

#### *3. Being Despised and Forsaken of Men, like One from Whom Men Hide Their Faces and Whom Men Do Not Esteem*

Third, Christ was despised and forsaken of men, like one from whom men hide their faces and whom men do not esteem (53:3). Often when the Jews saw Him, they hid their faces. When He was hanging on the cross, many hid their faces from Him. Furthermore, they did not regard or respect Him. This was Christ's human living.

#### *4. Living as a Man of Sorrows and Acquainted with Grief*

Fourth, Christ lived as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (53:3a). As a man in His human living, Christ did not have riches; rather, He had sorrows. Moreover, He was acquainted with grief. He knew nothing but sorrow and grief. This was not for redemption; rather, this was part of Christ's qualifications for accomplishing redemption.

### C. Fully Qualified to Be the Savior to Save Fallen Men from Satan, Sin, Death, and Self

Christ's being such a man and living such a lowly and sorrowful human life fully qualified Him to be the Savior to save fallen men from four things: Satan, sin, death, and self (Heb. 2:14-18; Matt. 1:21). All the foregoing items have nothing to do directly with redemption or salvation. These are only the qualifications that qualified Christ to be our Redeemer and our Savior.

## II. IN THE STAGE OF HIS CRUCIFIXION

### A. As a God-man Savior to Die a Vicarious Death for Sinners

As a God-man Savior, Christ died a vicarious death for sinners (Isa. 53:4-5, 8, 11c, 12c; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18a).

#### *1. Bearing Our Sicknesses and Carrying Our Sorrows*

In His vicarious death for us, the sinners, Christ bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows (Isa. 53:4). It may seem

that He did this while He was ministering on the earth, because at a time when He healed many sick ones, Matthew 8:17, quoting the word in Isaiah 53:4, says, "He Himself took away our infirmities and bore our diseases." Actually, Christ bore our sicknesses at the moment He was judged by God on the cross, in the hour when God put all our iniquities upon Him. He bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows when He bore our evildoings, wrongdoings, mistakes, transgressions, trespasses, iniquities, and sins on the cross.

### *2. Wounded for Our Transgressions, Crushed for Our Iniquities, Cut Off out of the Land of the Living for Our Transgression, and Bearing Our Sin, that We May Have Peace and Be Healed*

In His vicarious death for us, Christ was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, and cut off out of the land of the living for our transgression, and He bore our sin, that we may have peace and be healed (Isa. 53:5, 8b, 11c, 12c). A well-known hymn by Charles Wesley (*Hymns*, #300, stanza 3) speaks of the wounds Christ bore for our transgressions. The Hebrew word translated *wounded* in Isaiah 53:5 is different from the word for *pierced* in Zechariah 12:10. Christ was wounded by the nails in His hands and His feet, by the spear that pierced His side, and by the crown of thorns on His head. He was wounded for our transgressions. You may feel that, because you have never killed anyone or robbed anyone, you are a good person. You may be a good person, but did you not lose your temper toward your mother at least once? Was that not a transgression? We do not count small transgressions, but God counts them. Whether we owe someone one million dollars or one dime, we are still debtors.

Christ was not only wounded for our transgressions, but He was also crushed for our iniquities, our evildoings. Furthermore, He was cut off out of the land of the living for our transgression. Not only our iniquities but even our small transgressions required that Christ be cut off for us. Not only so, Christ also bore our sin. John 1:29 says, "Behold, the

Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" In this verse *sin* refers to the totality of evildoings, iniquities, trespasses, wrongdoings, and transgressions. All these things are of one category, which is called sin. Christ bore our sin, including our wrongdoings, mistakes, iniquities, evildoings, trespasses, and transgressions, that we may have peace and be healed.

Since at the time of Matthew 8 Christ had not yet died to bear people's sicknesses, how could people be healed by Christ at that time? This could happen because with God there is no time element. God is eternal, and with Him everything is eternal. In the eyes of God, the death of Christ is eternal. According to human history, Christ was slain almost two thousand years ago. But Revelation 13:8 says that He was slain from the foundation of the world. In God's eyes there is no element of time; there is only the eternal fact. Christ's death is a fact that is eternal. Although Christ was not yet physically crucified, in Matthew 8 the fact of His crucifixion was there already. By such a death we could be healed and have peace.

### *3. Oppressed, Afflicted, and Led to the Slaughter like a Lamb and Sheared before the Shearers like a Sheep, with No Reaction*

In His vicarious death for sinners, Christ was oppressed, afflicted, and led to the slaughter like a lamb and sheared before the shearers like a sheep, with no reaction (Isa. 53:7). First, Christ was oppressed; then He was afflicted. Affliction is more serious than oppression. Then, third, He was led to the slaughter.

On the night in which He was betrayed, He was praying in Gethsemane. Then the soldiers came and arrested Him and bound Him. That was an oppression. As a man, Christ was entitled to certain human rights. He had done nothing wrong. Therefore, for people to come and arrest Him was an oppression. After being arrested, He was judged, first by the Jewish leaders according to their religious law, and, second, by the Roman officials according to Roman law. While they

were judging Him, people spat on Him and mocked Him. These were afflictions. After all this, they made the decision to crucify Him. Then they led Him like a lamb to the slaughter and like a sheep to be sheared before the shearers. Christ was not only led to the slaughter; He was even sheared like a sheep by the shearers, the Jewish people. Yet, He did not react against any of this. He did not argue, vindicate Himself, or justify Himself; instead, He was silent. This surprised Pilate (Matt. 27:13-14).

### *4. Taken Away by Oppression and by Judgment*

Isaiah 53:8 says that Christ was taken away by oppression (of the hypocritical Jewish leaders—Matt. 26:57, 59, 65-68) and by judgment (of the unjust Roman officials—Luke 23:1-12; John 18:33-38; 19:1-16). First, Christ was oppressed; then He was judged. By these two things He was taken away. All these things are included in and issued in His crucifixion.

### *5. Numbered with the Transgressors and Interceding for the Transgressors*

According to Isaiah 53:12c, when Christ was crucified on the cross, He was numbered with the transgressors (Luke 23:32-33) and He interceded for the transgressors (v. 34a). Christ was crucified between two criminals, one on His left and one on His right. Thus, He was numbered with the transgressors. In speaking of Christ's crucifixion, Isaiah's sequence proceeds from Christ's being oppressed to His being numbered with the transgressors. While on the cross, Christ interceded not only for His companions, the transgressors, who were beside Him, but also for those who were killing Him. He prayed for the transgressors.

### *6. Assigned a Grave with the Wicked, but with a Rich Man in His Death*

According to Isaiah 53:9, Christ was assigned a grave with the wicked, but with a rich man in His death, although He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. Those who crucified Him planned to bury Him with the two transgressors, the wicked ones; but eventually God in His

sovereignty caused Christ to be buried in a rich man's tomb. After Christ died, a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, came to claim His body, and he put the body into a new tomb (Matt. 27:57-60). Christ had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth, yet people treated Him in a mean way. But God in His sovereignty came in to carry out His justice. After Christ died, God's judgment had been completed, so God immediately took Him away from any kind of suffering and put Him in a rich man's tomb.

### B. Jehovah Having Caused the Iniquity of Us All to Fall on Him

All the aforementioned things were done by man. It was man who oppressed Christ, afflicted Him, judged Him, led Him to the slaughter, put Him on the cross, and crucified Him between two transgressors. After man had done all these things, Jehovah caused the iniquity of us all, who have gone astray like sheep and have turned to our own way, to fall on Him (Isa. 53:6). In Isaiah 53:6, the phrase *us all* refers to the remnant of the Jews at the time of the Lord Jesus' coming back. At that time all the remaining Jews will repent and will speak the words of this verse. Jehovah caused the iniquity of us all to fall upon the man who was oppressed, judged, afflicted, and crucified.

By reading the four Gospels carefully, we can see that Christ hung on the cross for six hours, from nine o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon (Mark 15:25, 33-37; Matt. 27:45-50; Luke 23:44-46). During the first three hours, from nine o'clock until noon, all that Christ suffered was inflicted by man. Then, at noon God came in to cause all the iniquities of His chosen people to fall upon that dying One. Immediately the sky became dark. This was a sign of God's dealing with His chosen people's sin. Then Christ shouted, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). It must be a fact that at that juncture God forsook Him. God had been with Christ continuously until that time. In John 16:32 the Lord said, "I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." But at noon on the day of His crucifixion, God caused all the iniquity of His chosen

people to fall upon Christ, taking Him as our Substitute, legally, according to God's law. God removed all the iniquities from us and put them on Christ, making Christ the unique sinner. Then God forsook Him because at that time He was our Substitute. Thus, Christ died a vicarious death, a death that was recognized and approved by God's law.

If a man dies while attempting to rescue someone who is drowning, that death can be considered a bold death but not a vicarious death. Something that is vicarious must be related to the law. The bold death of a rescuer is not a death that can be recognized by God's law. But Christ died a vicarious death that was legal according to God's law and was recognized by God. That death of Christ was recognized by God legally, according to His law, as the vicarious death of the One who was the Substitute for us, the sinners.

Some say that Christ was merely a martyr who was murdered because of His philosophy. They say that Christ's death can be considered only a martyrdom and that Christ is nothing more than a martyred hero. This is the talk of the so-called modernists, who do not believe that the Bible is wholly inspired, that Christ died on the cross for our sins and shed His blood for our redemption, and that Christ was resurrected both spiritually and physically. Acts 7:52 does say that Christ was murdered. As he was speaking to his persecutors, Stephen said, "And they killed those who announced beforehand concerning the coming of the righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become." To murder is to kill. No doubt Christ was killed, but His death should not be considered as only a murder for the cause of martyrdom.

Christ's death was much more than a murder. In one sense, in the eyes of God, Christ was not murdered; but in another sense, in Acts 7 when God came to condemn the Jews, He accused them of murdering the Lord Jesus. In the first three hours that Christ was on the cross, He was being killed by man, but in the last three hours He was not being killed by man but was being judged by God. God killed His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross. Thus, that killing was not a murder but a vicarious death to accomplish redemption for us.

Furthermore, Christ's death was not a martyrdom. Christ was not killed by His enemies because of His philosophy or His teachings. Christ's death was something carried out by God Himself according to His law. Hence, His death was the death of One who was a Substitute for others; it was a vicarious death. This vicarious death was accomplished in the last three hours that He was on the cross. At that juncture He cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Today we, as the sinners saved by Him, all must answer, "Lord, it was because of my sins. Because my sins were put on You, at that time You were counted by my God as the unique sinner; so God forsook You for my sake, because You were my Substitute there, dying a vicarious death for me that was recognized legally by God according to His law." Christ's death was not merely a murder, nor was it a martyrdom; rather, it was a death for the accomplishing of redemption, a redeeming death. We all need to know the truth concerning Christ's vicarious death.

#### *1. Considering Him as the Substitute for Sinners and Forsaking Him as the Unique Sinner at That Moment*

We have seen that during the last three hours that Christ was on the cross, Jehovah considered Him as the Substitute for sinners (1 Pet. 3:18) and forsook Him as the unique sinner at that moment (Matt. 27:45-46). How marvelous it is that in this universe there is such a Substitute for you and me!

#### *2. Being Pleased to Crush Him, to Afflict Him with Grief*

According to Isaiah 53:10a, in Christ's vicarious death as the Substitute for sinners, Jehovah was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief.

### C. Making Himself an Offering for Sin

Isaiah 53:10b says that Christ made Himself an offering for sin. This means that Christ volunteered to make Himself an offering for sin. In Hebrew the word translated *Himself* in this verse literally means "His soul." The composition of

this verse can also have the sense of "When His soul would make an offering for sin." This implies that Christ volunteered to be an offering for sin. The offering here is not a sin offering but an offering for sin, referring to sin in its totality. Likewise, John 1:29, speaking of Christ as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," does not refer to the sin offering (although the sin offering is included there) but to an offering for sin in its totality—for wrongdoings, mistakes, trespasses, transgressions, evildoings, and iniquities.

### *1. Through the Eternal Spirit*

Hebrews 9:14 says that Christ offered Himself to God through the eternal Spirit. God is triune. At the moment the Father condemned Him and forsook Him, the Spirit was still with Him. If the eternal Spirit were not with Him, how could He offer Himself through the Spirit? We must not forget that in essence God is one, but in doing things, He is three. His being one God in essence is essential, whereas His doing things as three is economical, for His economy. In God's economy the Father condemned and forsook the Son, and the Spirit was with the Son to support and strengthen Him. When He was dying on the cross, the Lord Jesus was a human being with flesh and blood. Surely He felt a great deal of pain as He hung on the cross for six hours. He suffered there as a man, and therefore He needed to be strengthened. Thus, when the Father forsook Him, the Spirit came to strengthen and support Him.

### *2. By Pouring Out His Life unto Death*

Isaiah 53:12b says that Christ poured out His life unto death. The Hebrew word for *life* literally means "soul." Thus, the Lord poured out His soul unto death. This corresponds with the Lord's word in John 10:17-18: "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment I received from My Father." In the Lord's death He laid down His life, and in His resurrection He received it back.

Christ poured out His human life to be an offering. Every

offering, if it is a sacrifice, must be killed, and the blood must be poured out. No sacrifice that is still living can be an offering to God. Every sacrifice must be killed, and the blood must be shed. Then it can be an offering accepted by God. In His death Christ poured out His life in such a way.

Thus far, we can see that in Christ's crucifixion, man did something, God did something, and Christ Himself did something. Christ's crucifixion could not have been accomplished without the participation of any one of the three parties. Man did the murdering, the killing, but God carried out the legal judgment to kill Him as a legal Substitute that He might die a vicarious death for the ones for whom He died as a Substitute. Moreover, He Himself was willing to be such an offering. He made Himself that offering, and He poured out His life for that purpose.

### D. To Accomplish God's Eternal Redemption, that the Believers in Christ May Be Redeemed unto the Life Union in His Resurrection, the Reality of Which Is the Life-giving Spirit

Christ's crucifixion was for the accomplishing of God's eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12), that the believers in Christ may be redeemed (forgiven of sins—Acts 10:43, justified—Acts 13:39, and reconciled to God—Rom. 5:10) unto the life union in His resurrection, the reality of which is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:9b; Phil. 1:19b). Christ's redemption includes forgiveness of sins, justification, and reconciliation to God. As sinners, we all needed forgiveness and justification. We were not only sinners but also enemies of God; thus, we also needed reconciliation. Christ's redemption did all this for us. Christ's redemption accomplished the forgiveness of sins and justification for us, the sinners, and it also accomplished reconciliation for us, the enemies of God. These three things added together constitute Christ's redemption.

Redemption is unto a life union in Christ's resurrection. Romans 5:18 says that justification is "of life." This means that justification is for life, or unto life. We are justified that we may have life. This life is a life union in Christ's resurrection. In Christ's resurrection, which followed His crucifixion, we have life, and this life is a union. We enter into this union by being redeemed. Through Christ's redemption, we are justified unto this life union in His resurrection, the reality of which is the life-giving Spirit.

Christ's death was not merely a murder, nor was it a martyrdom; it was a redemption carried out by the Substitute for God's chosen people. It was Christ who bore our sin in total before God. Through such a death we were redeemed, forgiven of our sins, justified, and even reconciled to God. Such a redemption brings us into a life union in Christ's resurrection, and the reality of that resurrection is Christ Himself as the life-giving Spirit.

We all need to spend some time to know Christ in His four stages. Since we believe in Him as our Savior, have received Him as our Redeemer, and trust in Him as our life, we should know Him. Thank the Lord that there is a chapter, Isaiah 53, that tells us all these things concerning Christ, and thank Him that He has opened this chapter to us in such a way.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FIFTY-ONE

## THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST IN HIS FOUR STAGES ACCORDING TO GOD'S NEW TESTAMENT ECONOMY

### (2)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 53:10c-11b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 14:17-20; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5a; Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17; Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 2:10a, 11b-12; Eph. 2:19; Gal 6:10; Eph. 1:11; John 12:24; 3:30a; Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 10:17; Rev. 1:18a; Eph. 1:5, 9; Phil 2:13; Rom. 4:25b; Col. 3:4a, 10-11

Prayer: Lord, we want You to know that we still need You. We need You as the life-giving Spirit. We need You as the anointing ointment. Lord, do speak in our speaking, and do be one spirit with us. Lord, cover us all against all the enemy's attacks. We hide ourselves in You. We believe that You are here with us. We are meeting into Your name. Lord, do honor Your name, and anoint everyone. Visit everyone, and touch every heart. Amen.

This message is the second in a series of four messages on the all-inclusive Christ in His four stages according to God's New Testament economy. In this message we will consider the stage of Christ's resurrection.

Isaiah 53:10b-11b says, "When He makes Himself an offering for sin, / He will see a seed, He will extend His days, / And the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand. / He will see the issue of the travail of His soul, / And He will be satisfied; / By the knowledge of Him, the righteous One, My Servant, will make the many righteous." In this portion of the Word there are four points: (1) Christ's making Himself an offering for sin; (2) His seeing a seed and extending His

days; (3) His seeing the issue of the travail of His soul and being satisfied; and (4) His making many righteous by the knowledge of Him. The first item of the four belongs to the second stage, the stage of Christ's crucifixion. The remaining three points belong to the third stage, the stage of Christ's resurrection.

In Isaiah 53:11a, the words *the issue* have been inserted; they are not present in the Hebrew text. The issue is the outcome, the result, of the travail of Christ's soul. Christ suffered by pouring out His soul unto death (v. 12b). Surely there should be an issue, an outcome, of that travail. Isaiah said that Christ would see the outcome, that is, the issue, of the travail of His soul, and He would be satisfied.

Then, Isaiah 53:11b says, "By the knowledge of Him, the righteous One, My Servant, will make the many righteous." The phrase *by the knowledge of Him* does not mean by Christ's knowledge; it means by knowing Him, the righteous One, the resurrected Christ as God's Servant. By such knowledge of Him, Christ will make the many righteous. Many versions of the Bible translate this verse, "will justify the many." The Hebrew text can mean both. But we prefer to translate it, "will make the many righteous," because this refers to Christ in His resurrection. Justification is related mainly to Christ's death. However, for Christ to make us righteous is not merely to justify us through His death by His blood. It means primarily to make us righteous. It must be in resurrection that the living Christ lives in us so that He can be lived out of us as righteousness. Thus, Revelation 19:7-8 says that when the bride is ready for the marriage of the Lamb, she will be clothed in fine linen, which is the righteousnesses of the saints. The righteousnesses of the saints refer to the subjective righteousness lived out of us by our living of Christ. Christ in His resurrection will make us all righteous by Himself as the resurrection life being lived out of us.

Isaiah 53:12a says, "Therefore I will divide to Him a portion with the Great, / And He will divide the spoil with the Strong." This brief portion in Isaiah 53 refers to Christ's ascension. It is in His ascension that Christ brought us to the heavens as His captives. We were Satan's captives, but

through His death and resurrection, Christ released us. Then, in a sense, He captured us. Now we are His captives. In His ascension He brought all of us as His captives with Him into the heavens. When He was ascending, Ephesians 4:8 says that "He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men." The Amplified New Testament renders this, "He led a train of vanquished foes." This means that Christ conquered Satan and captured Satan's captives, making them His captives. In His ascension Christ brought all these captives to the Father. There in the heavens He and the Father, who is the great One and also the strong One, shared the prey and divided the spoil.

### III. IN THE STAGE OF HIS RESURRECTION

To consider Christ's resurrection and all the items produced in and through Christ's resurrection, we need to be calm and also to have a sober mind. The seed and the issue mentioned in Isaiah 53:10 and 11 imply a great deal. Because of this we need to include many items in the definition of Christ's resurrection in the New Testament. In his writings Paul explained and defined Christ's resurrection to the uttermost. In Paul's definition of Christ's resurrection, many items concerning the produce of Christ's resurrection are unveiled to us.

#### A. As the Processed Christ, the Last Adam, Becoming the Life-giving Spirit

In His resurrection, as the processed Christ, the last Adam, Christ became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17). After Christ's resurrection, His being processed was consummated. Originally, Christ was the very God in eternity past (John 1:1; Phil. 2:6). He was only God; with Him there was only divinity and all the attributes of this divinity. John 1:1 indicates this, saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then, four thousand years after man was created, almost two thousand years ago, the unique God became incarnated. That was the first step of His process. When He was incarnated, He entered into the "tunnel" of His process. By so doing, He

became a man, a God-man. Outwardly, He was a man; inwardly, He was nothing less than God. After His incarnation, He was no longer merely God. As a little child born of Mary and lying in a manger, He was not only God but a God-man. It is wrong to say that only God was lying there in the manger, because He was lying there not only as God but also as a little boy. Likewise, it is wrong to say that only a boy was lying in the manger, because within that little boy there was God.

In His incarnation Christ lived as a God-man for more than thirty years. He traveled all around the holy land from north to south, mainly from Galilee to Jerusalem, on the west side of the Jordan. In such a narrow strip of land the Lord Jesus traveled back and forth for three and a half years. Although as a God-man He was very great, only once did He do anything to manifest His greatness. In Matthew 17:1-8, He ascended with His disciples, Peter, James, and John, to Mount Hermon and was transfigured before their eyes. Six days before, He had told His disciples that some among them would not taste death until they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. In His transfiguration on the mount, His appearance was still that of a man, but His face shined like the sun, and His garments became as white as the light. At that moment He was a man in glory. This was altogether a part of His process.

At the end of His incarnation, that is, at the end of His human life, He went voluntarily into death. Christ's death was wonderful in three aspects. In the human aspect, He was murdered. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7), and He was slaughtered by man for three hours, from nine o'clock in the morning until noon. Then from twelve o'clock to three o'clock in the afternoon, God came in. When God put all our sins upon Him, He counted Him as the unique sinner in the universe. Thus Christ died a vicarious death for us, the sinners. On the cross God wounded Him, crushed Him, cut Him off from the land of the living, and judged Him (vv. 5, 6, 8, 10a). Because of this, His death was counted by God as a vicarious death for us.

During those three hours from twelve o'clock until three o'clock in the afternoon, the universe became dark, and the veil in the temple was split in two from the top to the bottom (Matt. 27:45, 51a). This means that Christ tore the separation between God and man through His death. Not only so, the earth was shaken and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had died were raised (vv. 51b-52). They were not resurrected yet, but they waited for some time. At the time that Christ resurrected, they also resurrected, and they came out of the tombs and entered into the holy city and appeared to many (v. 53). Where they went after this we have no way to trace. All these things indicate that Christ's death was not just a death caused by man, but a death carried out by God directly, according to His righteousness.

Then, in the third aspect, He Himself was willing to die. He was not forced or compelled to die, but He poured out His life, His soul, to die for us (Isa. 53:12b).

In His resurrection Christ as the processed One, that is, the last Adam, became the life-giving Spirit. In John 7:37-38, at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Lord Jesus stood and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." This word indicates that His believers would receive *the* Spirit. However, at that time *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified (v. 39). The Holy Spirit of God was there, but He was not there as *the* Spirit, because before Christ's resurrection the Holy Spirit of God had not been consummated. *The* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Jesus was glorified when He was resurrected. When Jesus entered into resurrection, He was immediately glorified. Thus, on the day of His glorification, that is, the day of His resurrection, He came back to His disciples as *the* Spirit. He did not come back to teach them; rather, He breathed on them and told them to receive Him as the Spirit (John 20:19-22). Before Christ's resurrection, such a Spirit was not yet.

Because many Christians know little concerning the produce of Christ's resurrection, they have not seen that in Christ's resurrection, He as the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. Many do not even believe that today Christ is the Spirit. They consider this a heresy. In their consideration, the three of the Trinity are separate—the Father is the Father; the Son is the Son; and the Spirit is the Spirit—and it is wrong to say that the Son is the Spirit. To say that the Son one day became the Spirit is heresy. However, if we say that Christ is not the Spirit, we annul 1 Corinthians 15:45b and 2 Corinthians 3:17, two verses that indicate clearly and confirm strongly that the Lord is the Spirit. Jesus became such a Spirit by passing through the process of death and the process of resurrection. When He reached the stage of resurrection, He became a life-giving Spirit. This is the first item of the produce of Christ's resurrection. Christ's resurrection produced the life-giving Spirit.

### *1. To Be the Reality of the Pneumatic Christ*

This life-giving Spirit is the reality of the pneumatic Christ. The word *pneuma* in Greek means "spirit." Thus, the word *pneumatic* actually means "spiritual." Christ is the *pneuma;* therefore, He is very pneumatic. The English word *pneumatic* means "of or pertaining to air." Thus, to be pneumatic is to be full of air. Our Christ today is pneumatic, full of the heavenly, divine, spiritual air. Today we may go to a gasoline station to get gasoline, air, and water. Let us come to Christ as our "gasoline station" to get the spiritual gasoline, the spiritual air, and the spiritual water. We need these things in order to "drive" our spiritual "car." The life-giving Spirit is the reality of such a pneumatic Christ. Our Christ today is not physical but spiritual. He does have a physical body (Luke 24:39-43), but His body is spiritually physical (1 Cor. 15:44). Today Christ is pneumatic; He is the life-giving Spirit.

### *2. For Propagation through Life-imparting*

This is for propagation, for producing, for spreading, through life-imparting. We are all parts of Christ. Before we

were saved, we were not parts of Christ. Then the life-giving Spirit went along with the preaching of the gospel to impart Christ into us, and we were regenerated and became parts of Christ. This is Christ's spreading; this is Christ's propagation. In a real sense, we are not Americans, Chinese, Japanese, or Koreans. We are Christ's propagation; we are parts of Christ.

### B. As the Preeminent One Becoming the Firstborn from among the Dead

In His resurrection Christ, as the preeminent One, the One who has the first place in all things, became the Firstborn from among the dead (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5a). In 1 Kings 17 Elijah raised a widow's son, and in John 11 the Lord Jesus raised Lazarus. Since at least these two were resurrected before the Lord Jesus was, how could Jesus be considered the Firstborn from among the dead? The answer is that Elijah's raising of the widow's son and even the Lord Jesus' raising of Lazarus cannot be counted as resurrection in full, because after being resurrected, both of these resurrected ones died. However, the Lord Jesus was resurrected to live forever (Rev. 1:18). Not only so, in resurrection the Lord today is in glory. Neither Lazarus nor the one resurrected by Elijah entered into any kind of glory. But Jesus, when He came out of the tomb, entered into glory. He was not only resurrected, but His physical body was transfigured to become a spiritual physical body. This is a resurrection that is up to the standard. Before Jesus, no one experienced such a resurrection. Thus, He is the Firstborn from among the dead. This is the second item of the produce of Christ's resurrection.

Christ's resurrection, in which He became the Firstborn from the dead, was for the germination of God's new creation (Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17) and also for Christ to be Head of the Body. In His resurrection, Christ became the Germinator of the new creation, and He also became the Head, the top One, of the Body. This too is the produce of His resurrection.

### C. As the God-man, in His Humanity, Being Begotten of God

In His resurrection Christ as the God-man, in His humanity, was begotten of God (Acts 13:33). Before His resurrection Christ was the Son of God already. Why then did He need to be begotten of God? The answer is that before His resurrection, Christ was the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18). Not only so, when He was the only begotten Son, He was only divine; He was not human. He had only divinity; He did not have humanity. He had only the divine nature without the human nature. Through incarnation He became a God-man. In the aspect of His being God, He no doubt was divine. But in the aspect of His being a man, He was not divine before His resurrection. In His resurrection He "sonized" His humanity. Before His resurrection He was the Son of God in His divinity, but He was not the Son of God in His humanity. However, Acts 13:33 tells us that Christ's resurrection was a birth. In His resurrection He was begotten of God to be the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29b). Christ's resurrection was a great birth, a great delivery, of a corporate child, which includes Christ and all His believers (John 20:17). He as the Son of Man was born of God to be the firstborn Son of God. Now, as the firstborn Son of God, He is both divine and human. He possesses two natures: the divine nature and the human nature. Hebrews 1:6 says that when the Lord Jesus comes back, He will not come as the Only Begotten but as the firstborn Son of God. This also is the produce of Christ's resurrection. Christ's resurrection produced the firstborn Son of God.

Christ as the firstborn Son of God is a model for conforming many sons to His image (Rom. 8:29a). If He were not human, how could we, who are human, be conformed to His image? If He were not human, He would not have a human image. But today He is both divine and human. He is God in God's form, in God's image, and He is also man in man's form, in man's image. He is divine and human, and we are human and divine. Thus, we can be conformed to His image. He is the model; we are the mass production,

the many sons of God. Hence, Christ's resurrection also produced many sons of God.

### D. As the Resurrection Life Regenerating All His Believers

In His resurrection Christ as the resurrection life regenerated all His believers (1 Pet. 1:3). Christ's believers are His brothers, and His brothers are the many sons of God (Heb. 2:10a, 11b-12; Rom. 8:29b). In this way Christ has become our inner life. He is the firstborn Son of God, and He has made us the many sons of God.

The many sons of God are the members of God's household to be God's kingdom (Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10) and God's precious inheritance (Eph. 1:11). Before Christ's resurrection God had a home, but in that home there were no children. Before Christ's resurrection, God, in a sense, was childless. It was through Christ's resurrection that God begot the firstborn Son and the many sons. Thus, from that time God began to have a family, a household. Eventually, this household becomes God's kingdom, and the children of God, the household of God, become God's precious inheritance. As God's many sons, we are God's inheritance. God considers only us, His sons, as His inheritance.

### E. As the One Grain of Wheat Bearing Many Grains

In His resurrection Christ, as the one grain of wheat, bore many grains (John 12:24). Through Christ's death and resurrection the one grain, Christ, became the many grains. When a single grain of wheat is sown into the earth, it grows and eventually produces many grains. In a sense, the original grain ceases to exist; it becomes the many grains. All the many grains together equal the original grain. Since Christ is in us, the many grains, He is wherever we are. Thus, He has become us. He is the aggregate grain, and we are the many grains produced by His resurrection.

#### *1. To Be His Increase*

The many grains produced by Christ's resurrection are

His increase (John 3:30a). Farmers make a living by the increase of their seed. They sow a relatively small quantity of seed into the earth, and after three months they reap a large harvest. That harvest is the increase of the seed. When Jesus was on the earth traveling in the holy land, He was the unique grain. But today, consider how many "Christs" there are on this earth. There are not only thousands but millions around the globe. This is the vine mentioned in John 15. This great vine covers the entire globe. The church, which is Christ (1 Cor. 12:12) as His increase, is the true vine. This too is a product of Christ's resurrection. This is Christ's increase, propagation, and surplus.

The fourth stanza of *Hymns*, #203 reads:

> We're Thy total reproduction,
> Thy dear Body and Thy Bride,
> Thine expression and Thy fulness
> For Thee ever to abide.
> We are Thy continuation,
> Thy life-increase and Thy spread,
> Thy full growth and Thy rich surplus,
> One with Thee, our glorious Head.

In this verse a number of words are used to express the fact that the church is Christ's increase and expansion.

### *2. As the Components of His Body—the One Bread, the Church*

Furthermore, the many grains as the increase of Christ are the components of His Body, that is, the one bread, the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 10:17). Every Lord's Day we take the Lord's table to participate in the bread. That bread signifies, first, Christ's physical body, which He gave up for us on the cross, and, second, Christ's mystical Body, which is the one bread, the church.

## F. Through His Life-releasing Death and with His Life-imparting Resurrection Producing a Corporate Seed as the Issue of the Travail of His Soul, Whom He Saw in His Resurrection and Was Satisfied

Through His life-releasing death and with His life-imparting resurrection, Christ produced a corporate seed as the issue of the travail of His soul, whom He saw in His resurrection and was satisfied (Isa. 53:10c-11b). Isaiah 53:10b says, "When He makes Himself an offering for sin, He will see a seed." As we mentioned previously, Christ's making Himself an offering for sin is related to His crucifixion. It is the "cause," and the "effect" is His seeing a seed in His resurrection. Here *seed* is singular, indicating that the seed is a corporate seed. This corporate seed implies all the many grains, all the members of Christ's Body, all Christ's brothers, and all the sons of God. The great "delivery" of Christ's resurrection still has not ceased. This delivery is continuing; it has produced millions of saints, and it is still producing. We, the gospel preachers, are the midwives. When we go out to contact sinners, we help to speed up the delivery.

All those brought forth through the gospel are the components of this corporate seed. This was accomplished through Christ's life-increasing and life-releasing death with His life-imparting resurrection, which produced a corporate seed as the issue of the travail of His soul, whom He saw in His resurrection and was satisfied. I believe that, even today, when the Lord Jesus looks at us, He is satisfied. We are a part of the seed; we are a part of the issue, the outcome, of His travail.

### *1. To Be His Continuation for the Extension of His Days*

This seed is Christ's continuation for the extension of His days (Rev. 1:18a). Because Christ continues to live by living in us, we are the extension of His days.

### *2. For the Pleasure of Jehovah, Which Will Prosper in His Hand*

This is for the pleasure of Jehovah (Eph. 1:5, 9; Phil. 2:13), which will prosper in His hand. This is the fulfillment of God's economy. Ephesians 1:5 and 9 are two verses that mention God's good pleasure. God's economy comes out of God's good pleasure. God's dispensing is to fulfill God's good pleasure, which is to produce many sons to be the components of the Body of Christ, the church. This is God's good pleasure. In the whole universe nothing but the church could be God's good pleasure.

In our gospel preaching, merely to save souls is inadequate. We need to realize that our preaching of the gospel is to produce something to be God's pleasure, something to make God happy. When one soul is saved, thousands of angels in heaven rejoice (Luke 15:10). The angels are so happy because this is God's good pleasure.

Isaiah 53:10c says that the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in the resurrected Christ's hand. Christ's hand today is still moving, working, and operating to produce more and more believers for God's good pleasure.

### *3. For Making the Many Righteous, Who Will Know Him as the Righteous One*

Isaiah 53:11b says that Christ will make the many righteous, who will know Him as the righteous One. Today as long as a person would say, "Lord Jesus, You are the righteous One," this righteous One will enter into him to make him righteous. This is not merely to justify us objectively but to make us righteous subjectively, to live in us and live out of us to make us righteous. This is a subjective righteousness produced from within us, not by us but by Christ as the resurrection life living in us.

## G. As the Life of the Believers, Being All the Members and in All the Members of the New Man

As the life of the believers, the resurrected Christ is all the members and in all the members of the new man (Col.

3:10-11). Before Christ's resurrection the life-giving Spirit, the firstborn Son of God, the Firstborn from the dead, the many sons of God, the many grains, the church, the Body of Christ, the new creation, and the new man did not exist. All these items were produced through Christ's resurrection.

As one of the items produced through Christ's resurrection, the new man is God's new creation, that is, the church. This new man carries out God's New Testament economy according to God's good pleasure.

### H. Issuing in the Following Items

As we have seen in this message, Christ's resurrection issued in the following items:

1. The incarnated Christ becoming the compound, consummated, and all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.
2. The preeminent Christ becoming the Firstborn from among the dead to germinate God's new creation and to be the Head of the Body.
3. The only begotten Son of God being begotten to be the firstborn Son of God in both divine and human natures.
4. Many sons of God to be the household of God as the kingdom of God:
   a. As the many brothers of Christ, forming the church.
   b. As the many members of Christ, constituting the Body of Christ.
   c. As the many grains of wheat, forming the one bread.
   d. As the one corporate seed to be His continuation to extend His days and to carry out the pleasure of God according to God's New Testament economy.
5. The all-inclusive Christ being all the members and in all the members of the new man.

All these things were produced by the resurrection of Christ. This is the revelation of the all-inclusive Christ according to the holy Word. Although Isaiah wrote only a few lines concerning Christ in His resurrection, his writing comprises all the above-mentioned items as the explanation,

the definition, of Christ's resurrection given by the apostle Paul.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FIFTY-TWO

## THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST IN HIS FOUR STAGES ACCORDING TO GOD'S NEW TESTAMENT ECONOMY

### (3)

Scripture Reading: Isa. 53:12a, 10c; Eph. 4:8; Acts 2:36; Rev. 17:14; 19:16; Eph. 1:22b, 10-11; Acts 5:31; Rev. 1:5a; Heb. 4:14; 7:26; 8:1-2; 7:25; 4:15-16; Rev. 1:13; 2:1b; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 1:4b

In this message we come to the last verse of Isaiah 53. As we have seen in the previous two messages, Isaiah 53 covers the four stages of Christ. In the whole universe Christ is the most wonderful One. As such a One, Christ has four stages: incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. The entire Bible of sixty-six books speaks mainly concerning these four things. Nothing in the universe is as crucial as Christ's incarnation, Christ's crucifixion, Christ's resurrection, and Christ's ascension. In this message we will see Christ in the stage of His ascension.

Colossians 2:15 says that while Christ was hanging on the cross, the Father stripped off the rulers and authorities, the evil angelic powers. This verse opens a window to show us that while Christ was being crucified on the cross, a war was raging between God and Satan. Before that time Satan had induced a group of angels to rebel against God and to follow him and become his subordinates. In Ephesians 2:2 Satan is called "the ruler of the authority of the air," indicating that under him are the rulers and authorities in the air, which are the evil angels. When Christ was crucified on the cross, there was a war between the good angels and the evil angels, and even between God and Satan. This is

clearly indicated by Colossians 2:15, which says, "Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it." The antecedent of the pronoun *He* in this verse is *God* in verse 12. If we read only the four Gospels, we will not be able to see that during Christ's crucifixion a war was raging between God and Satan. Only Colossians 2:15 shows us such a scene.

We need to realize that in the universe there is an invisible scene behind the visible scene. In the entire universe there are two scenes; one is visible, and the other is invisible. When Christ was crucified, there was a visible scene. All the people standing there saw that visible scene. The soldiers put Christ on the cross and nailed His hands and His feet. Then they erected the cross. The bystanders saw these things, but they could not see and they did not see that behind the visible scene there was an invisible scene: God and Satan were fighting there. In this fighting God stripped off all the troublesome rulers and authorities, and He made a public show of them, triumphing over them in Christ and in the cross.

This indicates that in the whole universe only four things are crucial to God and to us, His elect. All other things are insignificant. In the books of the New Testament we can see the invisible scene behind the visible scene concerning Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. This scene is continuing even today.

The Old Testament, in books such as Daniel, also shows that at that time there were both a visible scene and an invisible scene. In the scene that was visible to people, Babylon came to capture Jerusalem (Dan. 1:1-2). That captivity endured for seventy years. At the end of those years the Medo-Persian Empire defeated Babylon. All these things were visible. But people could not see that behind that scene there was another, invisible scene. They could not see that behind Persia was the prince of Persia, and behind Greece was the prince of Greece. When Greece under Alexander was fighting against Persia, the two princes also were fighting in the air (10:13, 20).

In each of the four steps of Christ, not only men but also

angels were involved (Luke 2:8-14; Col. 2:15; Matt. 28:2-7; Acts 1:10-11). This indicates again that concerning Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension there is both the visible scene and the invisible scene. However, of these two, the invisible scene is more important.

### IV. IN THE STAGE OF HIS ASCENSION

#### A. Leading Captive Those Who Were Captured by Satan because of Sin and Death, and Taking Them with Him Triumphantly in His Ascension

Isaiah 53:12a says, "Therefore I [Jehovah God] will divide to Him [the ascended Christ] a portion with the Great, / And He will divide the spoil with the Strong." The word *spoil* in this verse is very significant. It indicates that there was a war. Without a war there could be no spoil. Spoil signifies prey, and prey denotes captives taken in a war. The word *spoil* indicates that a war was fought and someone won that war, and the winner got the prey, the captives, the spoil. This one word opens a wide window to us, enabling us to see the invisible scene of a war. Christ, the One who won that war, divided the spoil with the Great and the Strong. Here, *the Great* and *the Strong* refer to God. God is the Great, and God is also the Strong. As the Great, He received the honor from Christ's ascension, and as the Strong, He gained the victory. So the two, Christ and the strong and great One, shared the spoil with each other.

This indicates that in Christ's ascension there was a demonstration of Christ's victory by the sharing of the captives, the spoil, the prey, taken in Christ's victory. Isaiah 53:12a, just one half of a verse, is the only portion in Isaiah 53 that speaks concerning Christ's ascension. But this half verse, with the demonstration of Christ's victory by the sharing of the prey, opens a wide window to us. God the Father was the Great and also the Strong, and God the Son was the Fighter. He fought the battle on the cross and in His resurrection. He won the battle, and by winning that battle He captured all Satan's captives. All men, beginning from Adam and including us, were captured by Satan. We became Satan's captives.

However, according to Ephesians 4:8, when Christ ascended to the heavens, "He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men." This verse is a quotation from Psalm 68:18. *Those taken captive* refers to those who had been captured by Satan. This verse indicates that when Christ ascended to the heavens, He led a train, a procession, of captives. These captives included all the saved sinners. Before that time, we were captives under Satan's hand. Satan captured us and made us his captives because of sin and death. We were in slavery to Satan under sin and death. Then Christ through His death and resurrection defeated Satan, and He captured all the captives under Satan's hand and made them His captives. First we were captives of Satan, but now we have become captives of Christ. Then, in His ascension Christ led us in a triumphal procession, "a train of vanquished foes" (The Amplified New Testament), to the heavens.

Perhaps we do not realize that we have already been in the heavens. Ephesians 4 tells us that when Christ ascended to the heavens, He led a procession of captives, who were originally the captives of Satan, and He brought all these captives to the heavens to present them to the Father. These captives included you and me. We were among those vanquished by Christ. Satan also was vanquished by Him. Many people have never heard such a gospel. Thus, we need to preach the higher gospel to them according to Ephesians 4:8, telling them that Christ vanquished and captured them through His death and resurrection and took them to the heavens in His ascension. As a triumphant Victor, Christ led a triumphant procession to celebrate His victory, and He brought these captives to the heavens to offer them to the Father, saying, "Father, these are the prey, the spoil, gained by Me through My fighting. Now, Father, I present them all to You as My presents. You sent Me, and I went. Now I have come back to You with a present, a gift, from the cross and from Hades. I captured these, and now I present them all together to You as a present." The Father accepted this gift from the Son. Then the Father gave all these captives back to the Son as a gift from the Father. This is the invisible scene in Christ's ascension.

### *1. Making Them Gifts in His Resurrection Life*

After receiving all the captives as a gift from the Father, the Son transformed all these captives in His resurrection life, making every one of them a gift (Eph. 4:8b). Paul was made such a gift, and we also were made such gifts. Then Christ gave these gifts to the church. Thus, Ephesians 4:11 says that "He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers." We are all gifts given by Christ to the church. The church has many gifts. Every member in a local church is a gift to the church.

Before he was saved, Saul was a captive of Satan. But after being saved by the Lord, Paul became a gift. We too were once Satan's captives. Then Christ defeated Satan and captured us and brought us to the Father; and the Father gave us to the Son. The Son made us a gift by transforming us with His resurrection life. Have you not been transformed? We all must confess that we are different today from what we were before we were saved. Now, instead of being captives of Satan, we all are gifts to the church.

### *2. For His Body*

Ephesians 4:12 tells us that it is by the perfecting of the saints as gifts that the Body of Christ is built up. This building up is the unique work of the New Testament ministry. My burden is not to annul you by making you a layman in a system of clergy and laity, but to develop and perfect you as a gift to build up the Body of Christ.

We need to learn to see the invisible things behind the visible scene. Behind the visible scene there is another scene that is invisible to our physical eyes. But those who have spiritual eyes can see the invisible scene behind the visible. Isaiah 53:12a shows us the invisible things that took place in the invisible scene behind the visible one. Through the window opened up in this verse we can see that in His death on the cross Christ was a Warrior who was fighting a war. When He was dying there, He was fighting. According to Colossians 2:15, while Christ was fighting on the cross, the Father joined the war, and the evil angels came to frustrate

the Father. The Father stripped them off and made them a public display to shame them, thus triumphing over them. That was the war fought during Christ's crucifixion. Then, 1 Peter 3:18-20 tells us that after He died on the cross, Christ went to Hades to proclaim to the evil angels God's victory over Satan and his power of darkness through Christ's death on the cross. That too was part of the invisible scene.

After the war, Christ the Son resurrected, and in His resurrection He gained the victory. He captured all the captives of Satan and led them in a triumphal procession, and He brought them to the heavens and presented them as a gift to the Father. Then the Father returned them as a gift to Him, and He accepted them and made every one of them a gift. According to Isaiah 53:12a, in the heavens there was a demonstration of Christ's victory. In that demonstration the Son and the Father shared the prey. The Father acknowledged the Son's victory and divided to Him a portion of the spoil. There Christ enjoyed a portion of the spoil, the captives, with the Father as the Great and the Strong. This was a demonstration of the Son and the Father in the enjoyment of Christ's victory.

Neither the Father nor the Son received the ultimate benefit from such a demonstration. Eventually, the Body of Christ, the church, gained all the gifts, all the spoil. Both the portion divided to the Father and the portion divided to the Son were given to the church as gifts. Such good news as this should cause us to rejoice. Hallelujah, we were saved out of the hand of Satan and brought to the heavens, and we were given by the Son to the Father as a gift. The Father was pleased to receive such a gift, and He returned us to the Son, and the Son made us a gift through transformation with His resurrection life. Then He gave us as gifts to the church in our locality to do the work of the New Testament ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ.

Although we are here on earth, we can see the scenery in the heavens. We are now seeing things that are absolutely invisible to the earthly people. While they are enjoying the worldly entertainments in their visible scenery, we are enjoying the heavenly things in our invisible scenery.

### B. Being Made Both Lord and Christ

In His ascension Christ was made both Lord (Lord of lords) and Christ (Acts 2:36; Rev. 17:14a; 19:16b).

#### *1. Lord to Lord over and Possess All Men and All Things*

Christ was made the Lord (Lord of lords) to lord over and possess all men and all things. All men in every nation belong to Christ as His possession and are under the lordship of Christ. Christ is Lord over them and possesses them.

#### *2. Christ to Execute God's Plan and to Accomplish God's Will*

In His ascension, Christ was also made Christ to execute God's plan and to accomplish God's will. Christ is the anointed One of God to execute God's plan and to accomplish God's will.

### C. Given to Be Head over All Things to the Church

The ascended Christ has been given to be Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22b).

#### *1. To Head Up All Things at the Fullness of the Times*

As the Head over all things, Christ will head up all things at the fullness of the times (Eph. 1:10). When the fullness of the times comes, Christ will head up all things, including the things in the heavens and the things on the earth. Today among the millions of people on this earth there is no head. But when the fullness of the times comes, Christ will head up all the people.

#### *2. For the Church to Be the Inheritance of God according to the Counsel of God's Will*

Christ's heading up of all things is for the church to be the inheritance of God according to the counsel of God's will (Eph. 1:11). According to Ephesians 1:7 we were redeemed into Christ not only as a person but also as a sphere and as an element. We were redeemed into this sphere and into this element. According to 1:11, with Christ as the element we

were made something precious, a treasure to God. This precious treasure is the church as God's inheritance. This has a great deal to do with Christ's heading up of all things. In order to head up all things, first Christ has to make us a treasure, the inheritance of God. Based on this, Christ will go on to head up all things in good order under Himself as the Head.

### D. Being Made Leader and Savior

In His ascension Christ was made Leader (the Ruler of the kings of the earth, King of kings) and Savior (Acts 5:31; Rev. 1:5a; 17:14a; 19:16a).

#### *1. Leader to Rule over the Unbelievers*

Christ was made Leader (the Ruler of the kings of the earth, King of kings) to rule over the unbelievers. All the unbelievers today, regardless of how unruly they are, are under Christ's ruling.

#### *2. Savior to Save the Believers*

Christ was made Savior to save the believers. He is both the Leader (the Ruler) and the Savior. Christ is the Leader (the Ruler) to the unbelievers and the Savior to us, the believers.

### E. Ordained to Be the Great High Priest

In His ascension Christ was ordained to be the great High Priest (Heb. 4:14; 7:26).

#### *1. To Minister to the Believers the Heavenly Things with All the Riches of the Heavenly Christ*

Christ was ordained to be such a High Priest to minister to the believers the heavenly things with all the riches of the heavenly Christ (Heb. 8:1-2). Today the Christ whom we enjoy is not an earthly Christ but a heavenly Christ. If Christ were not in the heavens, He would not be so rich or so high. Today, the very Christ whom we enjoy is in the heavens as a Priest, ministering Himself to us with the things of the heavens.

Many Christians hold the understanding that the ministry

of Christ includes only His incarnation, that is, His becoming a man, His death on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection that we may be resurrected with Him. I would not say that this is wrong, but this is only a small part of Christ's ministry. Today, Christ continues His ministry in the heavens. This is His heavenly ministry. In executing such a ministry, He is the Lord in the heavens, the Christ, the Head, and the great High Priest. As such a One He is busy today in the heavens. First, He is building up His universal Body. In the old creation Christ as the almighty One simply spoke a word, and things came into being (Gen. 1:3; Psa. 33:9). But in the new creation, He must do a lot of work in order to build up His Body. Then, concerning the world, concerning the great image in Daniel 2, Christ must do a lot of work. In recent world events, it seems that the United Nations is exercising its control over certain nations, but actually, Christ is controlling all the nations. Christ is administrating the entire world situation. Although Communism is a formidable system, it could remain in Russia for only seventy years. For this we must give the glory, the praise, to the Ruler of the entire earth. Christ is busy; He is preparing the situation, the environment, and the time so that He can come back with the eternal kingdom of God. He is getting everything ready so that He can return to smash that great image precisely on the ten toes, to defeat Antichrist, the ten kings, and their armies (Dan. 2:34-35; Rev. 17:12-14; 19:11-16, 19-21). For the past forty-five years all the nations have been busy competing in the realm of military might. Today, Christ and the Antichrist also are preparing. One day there will be an ultimate war, which will be at Armageddon (16:16). In that war Christ will lead God's army, and Antichrist will lead Satan's army. Two armies will fight there. Christ is preparing His army. That army needs us to be overcomers, whom Christ will marry as His bride. Christ's bride will be His army (19:7-8, 11, 14). Today Christ is doing a lot of work in the heavens to prepare for that day.

### *2. To Save the Believers to the Uttermost by Interceding for Them*

Christ has been ordained to be the great High Priest to save the believers to the uttermost by interceding for them (Heb. 7:25). Christ is in the heavens interceding for the church. He is interceding not only for the believers in general but also for every believer individually. We need to believe and be assured that Christ is interceding for each of us by name. This interceding work is not His earthly ministry but His heavenly ministry, a ministry by Christ as the High Priest.

### *3. To Take Care of the Believers with Sympathy by Ushering Them to the Throne of Grace*

Christ was ordained to be the great High Priest to take care of the believers with sympathy by ushering them to the throne of grace that they may receive mercy and find grace for timely help (Heb. 4:15-16). When we enter into the Holy of Holies to touch the throne of grace, we may not realize that it was Christ who ushered us there. He brings us into the Holy of Holies and places us at the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely need. Such a ministry is carried out by Christ not in a general way but in a very fine and detailed way.

### *4. To Walk among the Churches as the Lampstands and to Dress Them*

As the great High Priest, Christ walks among the churches as the lampstands and dresses them (Rev. 1:13; 2:1b). The lampstands among which Christ is walking are not on the earth but in the heavens. All the churches today are in the heavens. In the heavens and in His heavenly ministry Christ is caring for all the churches and dressing them as the lampstands by trimming off the charred wicks (dealing with the old and charred natural life) and adding more oil (supplying the Holy Spirit) to make them shine brighter. This is Christ's work in His heavenly ministry today.

### *F. Sharing the Prey of His Victory by His Death and Resurrection with God, the Great and the Strong*

As we have seen previously, in His ascension Christ shared the prey of His victory by His death and resurrection with God, the Great and the Strong (Isa. 53:12a). Then Christ gave the prey of His victory to the church as gifts—some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers—for the building up of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:8b, 11-12).

### G. Consummating in:

The ascension of Christ consummates in the following three main things:

#### *1. The Heavenly Ministry of Christ in the Heavens*

First, Christ's ascension consummates in the heavenly ministry of Christ in the heavens. In such a ministry, Christ ministers as the anointed One of God to carry out God's eternal economy for the propagating of the gospel, the raising up of the church as the kingdom of God, and the building up of the Body of Christ.

#### *2. The Distributing of the Prey from His Triumphant Victory as Gifts to His Body*

Second, Christ's ascension consummates in the distributing of the prey from His triumphant victory as gifts to His Body. This is for the accomplishing of the pleasure of Jehovah, which will prosper in His hand according to God's desire and plan (Isa. 53:10c). The pleasure of Jehovah is the building up of the Body of Christ. God is pleased only with the building up of the Body of Christ. The accomplishing of God's pleasure is for the fulfillment of God's New Testament economy (1 Tim. 1:4b).

#### *3. The Accomplishment of the Work of God for His New Creation*

Third, Christ's ascension consummates in the accomplishment of the work of God for His new creation. God is

producing His new creation among His old creation and out of His old creation. The old creation is like an egg, and the new creation is like a little hen. Just as a hen comes out of an egg, the new creation comes out of the old creation.

*a. In and through the Four Ages of His Old Creation*

The work of God for His new creation is carried out in and through the four ages of His old creation. The four ages of God's old creation are (1) the age before the law, from Adam to Moses (Rom. 5:13-14); (2) the age of the law, from Moses to the first coming of Christ (John 1:17); (3) the age of grace, from Christ's first coming to His second coming; and (4) the age of the kingdom, from Christ's second coming to the end of the thousand-year kingdom. By these four ages God is creating the new creation. The new creation is created altogether in Christ, by Christ, through Christ, and with Christ. This is carried out mainly in Christ's heavenly ministry. Christ's death and resurrection, which belong to His earthly ministry, only terminated the old creation and germinated the new creation. The continuing work of constituting the new creation is being done in the heavens in Christ's heavenly ministry.

*b. To Complete the Constitution of the New Jerusalem*

The work of God for His new creation is to complete the constitution of the New Jerusalem as the mingling of the processed Triune God with His transformed tripartite saints to be God's expression and the saints' blessing for eternity. At the end of the sixty-six books of the Bible, a city is unveiled, that is, the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the consummation of Christ's ministry, including His earthly ministry and His heavenly ministry. Again, the greatest part of this ministry is not His earthly ministry but His heavenly ministry. The ministry of Christ, in both its earthly and heavenly parts, will consummate in a city, and this city is the mingling of the processed Triune God with His transformed tripartite saints to be God's expression and the saints' blessing for eternity. For eternity God will have an expression, and for eternity we will enjoy a blessing, that

is, the New Jerusalem as the consummation of Christ's ministry in the four stages—incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FIFTY-THREE

## THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH AS THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID, A REDEEMER TO ZION, AND THE LIGHT TO ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: Isa. 55:3b-4; 59:20; 60:1-3

Prayer: Lord, we still worship You. We worship You as the One who has all the realities of God. Lord, thank You. You are the embodiment of the fullness of God, You are the Word, and You are the Spirit. Lord Jesus, we give You all the glory, and we trust in You for tonight's meeting. Lord, You know we can do nothing. We trust in You for Your speaking. Lord, You are so living, and You are even living within us as the living Word and as the life-giving Spirit. Lord, honor Yourself, honor Your name, among us. Lord, bless everyone who is here in the meeting. Give us a heart that is seeking after You, and give us the eyes that we could see You. Lord, remember Your enemy. We accuse him. We hand him over to You. Cover us. We hide ourselves under the precious blood that is prevailing against the enemy. Amen.

### I. THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID

The all-inclusive Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, is the sure mercies of David (Isa. 55:3b-4). History tells us that David was a marvelous king. It is difficult to understand how an excellent, marvelous, and majestic king would need mercies. According to our concept, poor people, low-class people, need mercies. David may be considered as the top king in human history. How could such a high person need mercies?

David wrote many marvelous psalms. It is hard to believe that such a writer murdered a person and took that person's

wife (2 Sam. 11). Murder and fornication were committed by this one king. Did he not need mercy? Among all the good psalms written by David, there is Psalm 51. This is a psalm of David's repentance and confession after he had committed fornication and murder. This psalm shows that even David was a person who needed God's mercy. This indicates that everyone in the human race needs the mercy of God.

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles speak of the history of the children of Israel and their kings. To a great extent the record of the citizens of the commonwealth of Israel with their kings is terrible. Few of the kings were good; most of them were bad to the uttermost. In such a bad situation, there was the need of God's mercy.

The book of Isaiah is full of Isaiah's condemnation of the children of Israel. He compared them to the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:9-10; 3:9). Jeremiah was also strong in his condemnation of Israel. Jeremiah shows us how much the kings of David's family needed God's mercy. Jeremiah speaks of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. He was warned by Jeremiah to the uttermost but he would not listen. Eventually, he was captured. After Jerusalem fell, he attempted to escape, but he was captured by the Babylonian soldiers and brought before Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar slew his sons, put out his eyes, bound him with chains, and carried him away to Babylon (Jer. 39:1-7; 52:1-10). This shows the pitiful situation of the Lord's people at that time. In such a pitiful situation, they needed God's mercy.

### A. Christ Being God's Sure Mercies to David

When Isaiah came to chapter fifty-five, after having written so many chapters concerning Christ, he spoke of an aspect of Christ which we would never dream of or imagine. This aspect of Christ is that He is "the sure mercies shown to David" (v. 3b). The word *shown* is not in the Hebrew text of Isaiah 55:3. A number of translations say "the sure mercies of David," but this can be interpreted as David having a lot

of mercies. This is not correct. These mercies are shown to David or promised to David.

We have pointed out that the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah are divided into two sections. The first section of thirty-nine chapters matches the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament; and the last section of twenty-seven chapters matches the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. The content of these two sections also matches the thought in the Old and New Testaments respectively. The second section, matching the New Testament, is altogether a word of comfort. There is no more condemnation or rebuking. In this word of comfort, there is a portion which says that Christ, the all-inclusive One, is the sure mercies that God has shown to David and promised to David. God promised that the very Christ, who would come out of David's descendants, would be the sure mercies of God toward the royal family of David.

No one could blot out the entire royal family of David because of the sure mercies of God, Christ. Christ, one of the descendants of David, became God's sure mercies to David. Jeremiah said that just as the ordinances of the sun for light by day and of the moon and the stars for light by night will never depart, so the seed of Israel and David would not cease from being a nation before Him forever (Jer. 31:35-36; 33:24-26). In other words, nothing can annul God's feeling toward the royal family of David. Many kings among David's descendants are mentioned in 1 and 2 Kings. The last king of the royal family of David will be Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's sure mercies. He is the sure mercies to the house of David. These mercies include many gracious things and blessings from God to the house of David.

The Scriptures speak of God's love, God's grace, and God's mercy. Luke 15 says that when the prodigal son came back, the father, who was expecting him, was moved with compassion (v. 20). Compassion is a tender kind of mercy. The father's tender mercy was touched because the returned prodigal son was in such a poor condition, just like that of a beggar. He was altogether not worthy of the father's love. The father's love was so high, and his son had fallen to the bottom level. Thus, the father's compassion was moved.

The apostle Paul in Romans 12 exhorted the saints through the compassions, the mercies, of God (v. 1). Why did Paul not exhort the saints through the great love of God? This is because the great love of God is too far away from us in our pitiful condition and situation. Love and grace are too high for us to touch in our low state. But, hallelujah, God has another attribute called mercy. Mercy reaches the farthest. We are so low, but the mercies of God can reach us in our pitiful situation and wretched position. Often in my prayers before ministering the word, I tell the Lord, "We trust in Your mercy." I dare not tell the Lord that we trust in His love. If I am so poor, I am not on the level to match God's love. But God reaches us on the bottom level through His mercies.

A number of Christians may speak about the great love of God in Christ, but I am concerned that what they speak is not so thorough. If they were thorough in knowing God in His attributes in different levels, they would speak much about God's mercy. This is because our day by day present situation does not match the level of God's love. Our real practical situation surely fits the lowest level of God's attributes, that is, God's mercy.

God's love and God's grace are on a higher level than His mercy. Grace is a gift. God has a heart loving us, and out of that heart God prepares a gift for us. That gift is grace. Because we are not worthy of this gift, however, God has come down to reach us in His mercy. In His attribute of mercy, He can reach us on the lowest level. Very few of God's children, however, realize that they need God's mercy. In my prayers in the early days of my being a Christian, I spoke about God's love. Today after many years of experience, however, I trust in God's mercy. This is because my low situation does not match the high level of God's love.

We may consider that we are ladies and gentlemen, but really we are "scorpions" and "gophers." The people considered David as a high king, but he considered himself as a worm (Psa. 22:6). This is why he told God that he needed His mercy (51:1; 52:8b). Eventually, David's very descendant would be

the King of kings on this earth to be the sure mercies to the entire royal family of David.

Mercies are somewhat like kindness and compassion. God's mercies (kindness and compassion), as the initiation of God's grace in His love, reach us the farthest. Mercy is the initiation for God's grace to come in with God's love. God's grace cannot be separated from His love. His mercies usher us into God's grace. When we get into grace, we have His love. God's mercy reaches us the farthest. Many times in our experience we are far away from God. We are not so close to God. Thus, we need God's attribute of mercy to reach us.

Jeremiah and Lamentations really show us the pitiful situation of Israel. God could not come to them in His love or in His grace. God needed to exercise His mercy. Without mercy, He could not have reached His people. According to Jeremiah, the children of Israel at the time of the exile to Babylon were in a pitifully low situation. It is difficult to even describe how low their condition was. That was why God gave them up for seventy years. But after seventy years, God came back to them in His mercy.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus came in mercy. He came in a very low level to have mercy upon the fallen Israelites, but most of them rejected Him. Eventually, the Lord cried for them and wept for them. In Matthew 23:37-38 the Lord said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I desired to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left to you desolate!" The Lord predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed. In reference to the buildings of the temple, He told the disciples, "Truly I say to you, There shall by no means be left here a stone upon a stone, which shall not be thrown down" (24:2). This was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Titus and the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem. Josephus, in his history, tells us of the terrible destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

In the Gospels the house of Israel offended the Son. In the Acts they offended the Spirit. The Spirit was with the apostles, especially with Paul. Shortly after Paul was martyred, Titus

the Roman prince came with an army to utterly destroy Jerusalem. That was the final and consummate exile of the people of Israel. They were scattered for close to twenty centuries. The first exile by the Babylonians lasted only seventy years, but this final exile lasted about two thousand years. It was by God's mercy that in 1948 a small number of Israelites returned to restore the nation of Israel.

Today there is a controversy among Israel and neighboring Arab countries about how much land Israel should have. Israel regained the Golan Heights in the six-day war in 1967. Now some want Israel to give up the Golan Heights. According to biblical prophecy, however, we cannot agree with this. That is a part of the good land. According to the Scriptures, the good land extends from the shore of the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:4), where present-day Iraq is. The good land is that spacious! According to God's ordination, Israel will surely keep the Golan Heights. This is the Lord's mercy to Israel. Furthermore, the royal family will be recovered. Who will be the last king of David's royal family? The Lord Jesus will be the King. He is the sure mercies promised and shown to David by God.

These mercies were covenanted. This means that a contract was made for these mercies. A covenant is not just a promise but a contract, and this covenant is Christ. Isaiah shows that Christ is an eternal covenant (Isa. 55:3b; 61:8b) and the covenant of peace (54:10) to the people. Christ is also the Maker of the covenant. This means that Christ guarantees Himself to be the real mercies. A verbal or even a written promise does not stand quite strongly, but a covenant is absolutely binding. God did not merely promise Israel the sure mercies of David. He made a covenant. Isaiah 55:3b says, "And I will make an eternal covenant with you, / Even the sure mercies shown to David." This eternal covenant is the sure mercies.

We know that the sure mercies refer to Christ by Paul's word in Acts 13:34-39 (see note 1 of verse 34 in the Recovery Version). There Paul indicates that the sure mercies promised to David are the resurrected Christ, who never saw the corruption of death. The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew

word for *mercies*, *chesed*, is translated as *the holy things* (plural) or *Holy One* (singular) in Acts 13. Verse 34 speaks of "the holy things of David, the faithful things" and verse 35 of Christ as the "Holy One." The holy things of David, the faithful things, are the sure mercies of David. The Holy One is Christ, the Son of David, in whom God's mercies are centered and conveyed. Christ is the sure mercies, and He is also the One who is holy. This shows that these sure mercies will do a work to sanctify all the enjoyers.

According to the parable in Luke 15, the Father's compassion sanctifies the returning son. The prodigal son came back home like a beggar, but the father's compassion separated him from the world. The Father's compassion sanctifies the returning son, makes him holy, separating him entirely unto the Father.

Even though I did say that we all are probably "gophers" and "scorpions," I still would say that we are saints (1 Cor. 1:2). We are holy positionally before God. We are the sanctified ones. Christ is the sure mercies, and these mercies have sanctified us. Christ made us saints by His mercies. Today I can speak the holy word to God's holy people. I can declare all the holy things. This is the work of God's sure mercies.

These sure mercies have been covenanted with an eternal covenant. This covenant is the enacting Christ (Isa. 42:6b; 49:8b), and the covenant of peace (54:10). Peace means that all the problems are solved. When I say that I am a saint, this implies that I have no problems. We should have peace that enables us to say, "I have no problems because I am a saint." If we have even a little problem, we are not that holy.

### B. The Resurrected Christ Who Did Not See the Corruption of Death and Became the Base of God's Justification to His Believers

God's sure mercies are the resurrected Christ who did not see the corruption of death and became the base of God's justification to His believers. This heavenly language is spoken in Acts 13:34-39. We need to study these six verses

again and again. Otherwise, we will not be able to enter into a proper understanding of them. We all have been sanctified, but sanctification needs a base, and the base of sanctification is justification. If you are not justified, you can never be sanctified.

Christ is God's sure mercies for our sanctification. For this He also became the base of justification in His resurrection. Paul said in Acts 13 that it is by this Man, Jesus, who is the mercies of God, that we can be justified. Thus, justification is based upon the resurrected Christ who has never seen the corruption of death. Acts says that death cannot hold Him. That means death cannot touch the resurrected One. Such a resurrected One, Jesus, is the foundation, the base, of our justification. Based upon such a justification in Christ's resurrection, we are enjoying Christ as the mercies which sanctify us.

We should not forget that the resurrected Christ today is the sure mercies of God to us. He has become the base of our justification, and upon this justification something is built up, that is, sanctification. Furthermore, sanctification is something built with and by the sure mercies of God. These sure mercies are Christ.

### C. Having Been Appointed a Witness to the Peoples (Nations)

Christ as the sure mercies of God has been appointed a Witness to the peoples, nations (Isa. 55:4a). Revelation 1:5a says that Christ, the second person of the Divine Trinity, is the faithful Witness of God. He is the Witness of the entire Godhead. Revelation 3:14a also says that He is the faithful and true Witness. Christ is the Witness to testify the true God.

### D. Having Been Appointed a Leader and a Commander to the Peoples

He has been appointed a Leader and a Commander to the peoples (Isa. 55:4b; Acts 5:31a). He is the Leader above all the kings, the Leader above all the rulers. This is for His administration. He has also been appointed a Commander.

He is the General to fight the battle. When He returns, He will fight in the war at Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21). He will be the Commander, the fighting General, to defeat the biggest army on earth with Antichrist as the opposing commander.

### II. A REDEEMER TO ZION

As the Servant of Jehovah, Christ will also be a Redeemer to Zion (Isa. 59:20). He will and can come as a Redeemer to Zion at His return because He is the sure mercies. Without being God's mercies, Christ could never be a Redeemer to the rotten, corrupted children of Israel. Only the merciful God with all His mercies would redeem them. Thus, Christ is not only the sure mercies of God but also God's Redeemer coming to redeem Zion at His return.

He will be such a Redeemer to the remnant of Israel who will turn to Him from their transgression. In Zechariah 12 there is a record of the repentance of the remnant of Israel at the Lord's return (vv. 10-14).

### III. THE LIGHT OF ISRAEL

Christ will be the light of Israel (Isa. 60:1-3). He will come as light (the glory of Jehovah) upon Israel at His return (v. 1). The entire earth today is under darkness, including Israel. But when Christ comes as a Redeemer to Israel, He will be their light to enlighten them, and that light is the glory of God. Our light today in our homes is from electricity, but their light at the Lord's coming back will be the glory of Jehovah. It will not be sunlight or man-made light, but the light which is God Himself in His glory. Israel will have such a light by Christ being God's sure mercies.

When Christ comes as light upon Israel at His return, the darkness will cover the earth and the heavy darkness will cover the peoples, the Gentiles (v. 2a). All the Gentile nations will be covered by darkness. Only Israel will have light, and that light is the appearing God in His glory. Christ as Jehovah will rise upon Israel, and His glory will be seen upon her (v. 2b). Today the nation of Israel is suffering under the pressure of the nations, but when Christ comes back, Israel will rise up.

The nations, the Gentiles, will come to Israel's light, and kings will come to the brightness of her rising (v. 3). The nations will desire to be enlightened by Israel since they are in darkness. In that day Israel will be "rising," but today they are being put down by the nations. Israel has been put down and down for over two thousand years. Especially today they are suffering, but when Christ returns they will rise up.

Because we believers have Christ within us, we are rising up. We are not being put down. Today Christ is our divine mercies; He is our Redeemer; and He is our light. Based upon Him, we are rising.

# LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

## MESSAGE FIFTY-FOUR

## THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH AS THE ANOINTED OF JEHOVAH AND THE ANGEL OF THE PRESENCE OF JEHOVAH FOR THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL UNTO THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH

Scripture Reading: Isa. 61:1-3; 63:1-6, 9; 64:1; 65:17-25; 66:15, 22

Prayer: Lord, how we thank You for Your mercy and grace that You have brought us to today. Lord, You know what we need. We thank You that we have gotten through all the points concerning Yourself as the all-inclusive Christ in Isaiah. Thank You tonight that You have brought us to the last message. Lord, bless us as You did in the past. We trust in You, in Your mercy, in Your blessing, in Your utterance, in Your speaking, and even in our being one spirit with You. Stand with us and speak in our speaking. Defeat the enemy and bless every attendant. Thank You. Amen.

In this message we want to see the all-inclusive Christ as the Servant of Jehovah in two aspects. First, He is the Anointed of Jehovah. This is a very precious term in the Old Testament. Second, He is the Angel of the presence of Jehovah. Some may think that to say "the Angel *of* the presence of Jehovah" is wrong. We may prefer to say "the Angel *in* the presence of Jehovah." But the text of the Scripture says "the Angel *of* His presence" (Isa. 63:9).

The most striking chapter on the Angel of Jehovah is Exodus 3. The Angel of Jehovah was the One who escorted the entire race of Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness and into the good land. Eventually this One, the Angel of Jehovah, is in Zechariah 1. He is the One who rides on the red horse, who was suffering with God's suffering people in

order to serve them. The Angel of Jehovah served the children of Israel in their whole journey of forty years in the wilderness. In Exodus 14 we can see that He was taking the lead at the forefront. When the Egyptian army was chasing after Israel, the Angel turned to the rear (v. 19). He Himself protected Israel from the Egyptian army. That Angel of Jehovah was the Lord Jesus.

The last item of the all-inclusive Christ in the book of Isaiah is the Angel *of,* not *in,* the presence of Jehovah. His being the Angel *of* the presence of Jehovah means that He is the presence of Jehovah. *Of* indicates apposition. If I am *with* you, that means you and I are two persons. If I am *of* you, this makes us one. A husband may say that he is *of* his wife. That means that he and his wife are one. *In the presence* implies two persons. *Of the presence* means one person. The Angel of Jehovah is just Jehovah's presence. If I say, "the life in Christ," this means the life and Christ are two. If I say, "the life of Christ," this means the life is Christ. *The Angel of the presence of Jehovah* means that this very Angel is the presence of Jehovah.

The Angel of Jehovah, from Exodus 3 through Isaiah to Zechariah, was always with Israel. Quite often He was suffering with Israel. Zechariah 1 presents the vision of a man as the Angel of Jehovah riding on a red horse and standing among the myrtle trees in the bottoms of the valley (vv. 7-17). The myrtle trees signify the humiliated people of Israel in their captivity. Christ as the Angel of Jehovah was standing among these myrtle trees in the bottoms of the valley. This means that He was remaining strongly among the captured Israel in the lowest part of the valley in their humiliation.

Eventually, this One will tread the great winepress at Armageddon. Armageddon is referred to in Isaiah 63. That winepress will extend from Bozrah of Edom (vv. 1-6) to Armageddon (Rev. 16:16), a distance of one thousand six hundred stadia, that is, one hundred eighty-two miles (Rev. 14:20). The Angel of Jehovah, the coming back Jesus, will tread that great winepress. Without Isaiah we would not know

that the treader of that great winepress will be the Angel of the presence of Jehovah.

The Anointed of Jehovah and the Angel of the presence of Jehovah are the last two items of what the all-inclusive Christ is to Israel in Isaiah. *The Anointed of Jehovah* is a sweet term to God's people. But *the Angel of the presence of Jehovah* is a term mostly applied toward the enemies of God's people. First, He was there dealing with Pharaoh and his Egyptian army. He was protecting God's people in the front and at the rear. Even in Zechariah He was the protecting Angel, depicted as the rider on the red horse. Isaiah concludes his view of the all-inclusive Christ with these two items—one is so sweet to God's elect, and the other is so strong toward the enemies of God's elect.

Israel's last enemy will be Antichrist and all the nations with him. Revelation 19 tells us that Antichrist will collect all the evil persons on this earth to be the armies to destroy Israel. Even today there are many Arab nations who would like to destroy Israel. The final one who will have a kind of conspiracy to destroy Israel will be Antichrist with his allies, the nations. But the Angel of Jehovah will fight him down, will defeat him, and will put him directly into the lake of fire. The Angel of Jehovah is the Lord Jesus as the presence of the Triune God. He will come to defeat Antichrist and his armies.

## I. THE ANOINTED OF JEHOVAH

Isaiah 61:1-3 is a prophecy concerning Christ as the Anointed of Jehovah.

### A. This Prophecy Having a Foretaste Fulfillment at Christ's First Coming

This prophecy concerning Christ as the Anointed of Jehovah had a foretaste fulfillment at Christ's first coming. In the Old Testament, we cannot see the two comings of Christ. It shows us only that Christ will have one coming. The two comings of Christ can be likened to two peaks of a mountain range. They may only look like one peak from a distance, but when you come near them, you can see that

there are two peaks with a big valley, a big plain, between them. The prophecy concerning the coming of Christ in Isaiah 61 is actually in two aspects.

In the New Testament, the peak of the Lord's first coming is mentioned in Luke 4. Luke 4 speaks of the Lord entering into a synagogue on the Sabbath day. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him, and He read the first few verses of Isaiah 61. Then the Lord rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, sat down, and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 21). All of them marveled at the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth (v. 22).

Luke 4 gives us a record of the first "peak" of the prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-3. But in Isaiah 61 itself we can see only one peak, not two peaks. The final twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, from Isaiah 40 through 66, speak about Christ's coming. Isaiah told us that the Lord's coming will bring in the time of restoration, the restoration of Israel. But when we come to Isaiah 40—66 today, in the view of the New Testament light, we can see two comings here.

For instance, Isaiah 40 speaks of the glory of Jehovah being revealed (v. 5) and of the Lord Jehovah coming with might (v. 10). This refers to Jesus' appearing. That appearing surely is not His second coming. It was His first coming ushered in by John the Baptist (vv. 3-5; Luke 3:4-6). The chapters following Isaiah 40 contain many verses telling us about Christ's coming. Isaiah 53 tells us that the Lord comes as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground (v. 2), and as a man of sorrows (v. 3). This surely refers to His first coming. Today we know this, but in the ancient times they did not have this thought. I doubt even whether Isaiah knew this. They only knew that Messiah would come. To them there was only one coming. But actually Messiah, the Anointed One of Jehovah, will come two times. The first time is for the age of grace, and the second time will be for the age of restoration.

The age of grace is a foretaste of the age of restoration. Hebrews 6 tells us that the age of grace is a foretaste of the power of the coming age (v. 5). Today we are enjoying the power of the coming age, the age of restoration. This coming

age is the age of the kingdom, the age of the millennium. When we get into the age of grace, we are walking toward the next age, the age of restoration, the age of the kingdom. What we are enjoying today is the foretaste, but this foretaste will have a full taste in the time of restoration. The first fulfillment of the prophecy concerning Christ's coming is a foretaste, whereas the second fulfillment is the full taste.

The prophecy concerning Christ as the Anointed of Jehovah had a foretaste fulfillment, at Christ's first coming, for the age of grace, in producing the church, as the acceptable year of Jehovah (Luke 4:16-22a). In the Old Testament, the church was hidden. The church was hidden between the two peaks of Christ's coming. After the Lord read Isaiah 61:1-2, He sat down and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). That meant that since the Lord was there, that was the acceptable year of Jehovah. But this was just a foretaste. The acceptable year of Jehovah will come in full when Christ comes the second time.

### B. Having a Full Taste Fulfillment at Christ's Second Coming

The prophecy concerning Christ as the Anointed of Jehovah in Isaiah 61:1-3 will have a full taste fulfillment at Christ's second coming, for the restoration of Israel unto the new heavens and new earth. The restoration age will usher in the new heaven and new earth.

### C. The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah Being upon Him

Isaiah 61:1a says, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me." The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah was upon Christ in His first coming and will be upon Him in His second coming. When the Lord Jesus comes the second time, the striking significance will be that the Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Him. Here Isaiah especially adds in the word *Lord*. It is not just the Spirit of Jehovah but the Spirit of the Lord Jehovah. The Spirit of such a One will be upon the coming Jesus.

### D. Jehovah Having Anointed Him

Jehovah has anointed Christ (Isa. 61:1b; Matt. 3:16). He anointed Christ in His first coming. When Christ was baptized, He rose up from the water, and the Spirit of God came upon Him in a bodily form as a dove (Luke 3:21-22). Today the Spirit upon us is not in a visible figure. But on the day of Jesus' baptism, the Spirit came upon Him in a bodily form as a dove. It was very striking. The Spirit's coming upon Jesus after His baptism was the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1 and was carried out to anoint the new King and introduce Him to His people. That anointing Spirit will still work in His second coming.

Jehovah anointed Him to do a number of things. First, He was anointed to bring good news, the gospel, to the afflicted, the suffering ones (Isa. 61:1c). Second, He was anointed to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted (v. 1d) and third, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the release of those who are bound (v. 1e). This may also mean the release of those who are imprisoned. Fourth, Christ was anointed to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah and the day of vengeance of our God (v. 2a). The acceptable year is toward God's people; the day of vengeance is toward the enemies of God's people. When Christ comes again to Israel, that will be the acceptable year to them and also the day of God's vengeance over the enemies of God's people, Antichrist and his followers. Fifth, Jehovah anointed Christ to comfort all who mourn (v. 2b). Mourning indicates that you are suffering more. At the beginning of your suffering, you may not mourn. Later, you mourn.

Sixth, Christ was anointed to grant to those who mourn in Zion a headdress instead of ashes, oil of gladness instead of mourning, and the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness (v. 3a). Zechariah tells us that when Christ comes again all the scattered Israelites will have returned to their forefathers' land. Two-thirds of them will be slaughtered by their enemies (13:8). Even today the nations around Israel hate Israel. The plight of Israel throughout the last twenty centuries is the fulfillment of the Lord's word in Matthew.

The Lord lamented over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37) and prophesied of its coming destruction (24:2). This prophecy was fulfilled when Titus and the Roman army came in A.D. 70 to destroy Jerusalem and the temple, not leaving one stone upon another. From that day the Israelites were scattered from their forefathers' land to all the nations for nearly nineteen hundred years. They were wandering for so many centuries, but in 1948 they were re-formed as a nation. Nineteen years later, in 1967, they captured back Jerusalem and the Golan Heights through the six-day war.

Today Israel is being pressed to release the land which they have regained. Israel will not do this. All the Arab countries which surround Israel hate Israel today. In the future Antichrist and his armies will do their best to slaughter the people of Israel. According to Zechariah they will slaughter two-thirds of them, so only one-third will be left (13:8-9). Out of this one-third, half of the city of Jerusalem will be captured (14:2). Then the Lord will return to fight against and defeat Antichrist and his armies.

At that time the Lord will grant something to those who mourn in Zion. They will mourn because they will have lost their relatives. But when Christ comes, He will give them a headdress instead of ashes. A headdress is a turban. Those who mourn in Israel put ashes upon themselves, but Christ will remove the ashes and give them a turban, a headdress. He will also give them the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and the mantle of praise for praising Jehovah instead of a spirit of heaviness. These are also very fitting for us believers today. Before we were saved, we were like this on the negative side, but the Lord gave Himself to us in such a rich way as all the above items. He will also be all these things to Israel at His return.

The Lord does all these things in order that the people of Israel may be called the terebinths of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that He may be glorified (Isa. 61:3b). Although many of them will be slaughtered, those who remain will become growing trees of righteousness. Terebinths, according to my study, are the best oaks. The people of Israel will be the planting of Jehovah, that Jehovah may be glorified.

This will be at Christ's second coming, in which He will be the Anointed of God to take care of God's scattered and suffering people.

### E. As a Standard Raised Up for the Gathering of Jehovah's Scattered People

At Christ's return, He will be as a standard raised up for the gathering of Jehovah's scattered people (Isa. 62:10b). By that time, all Israel will be coming back. They have to see a sign, a standard, to which they can all be gathered together. Christ, the Anointed of Jehovah, will be that gathering standard.

### F. As the Salvation Coming to Zion to Rescue Her from the Destruction of Antichrist and the Nations with Him

This Anointed of Jehovah will come to rescue Zion. Zion was one of the mountains upon which Jerusalem was built, and that mountain originally was called Moriah, where Abraham offered up his son, Isaac (Gen. 22:1-2). The temple was built on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 3:1). Later, Moriah was referred to as Mount Zion (Psa. 2:6; 48:2, 11; 74:2). The Lord will be the salvation coming to Zion to rescue her from the destruction of Antichrist and the nations with him (Isa. 62:11b; Zech. 12:2-9). At that juncture, Antichrist will have captured half of the inhabitants in Jerusalem. Christ as the Anointed of Jehovah will come to rescue them out of the killing hand of Antichrist.

## II. THE ANGEL OF THE PRESENCE OF JEHOVAH FOR DEALING WITH THE NATIONS

Christ is the Angel of the presence of Jehovah for dealing with the nations (Isa. 63:1-6, 9; 64:1; 65:17-25; 66:15, 22).

### A. To Rend the Heavens and Come to Save Israel from the Nations

He will rend the heavens and come to save Israel from the nations (Isa. 63:9; 64:1). The heavens will be rent, and there will be a wide opening for the Angel of the presence of

Jehovah to appear, to come to the earth. By that time He will no longer be a tender plant. He will be so great.

### B. To Come with Fire to Judge the Nations with His Burning

He will come with fire to judge the nations on the whole earth with His burning (Isa. 66:15-16a). Recently there was a great wildfire, a great burning, in Oakland, California, and many people lost their homes. But when Christ comes the second time, the whole earth will be a wildfire. He will come with fire to judge the nations with His burning.

### C. To Tread the Great Winepress, to Destroy Antichrist and the Evil People of the Nations at Armageddon

He will also come to tread the great winepress, to destroy Antichrist and the evil people of the nations at Armageddon (Isa. 63:1-6; Rev. 16:12-16; 19:19-21). This treading is not the positive reaping of a harvest. It is the negative reaping of God's judgment upon the evil people.

### D. To Bring In the Time of Restoration—the Millennial Kingdom unto the New Heavens and New Earth

Finally, when Christ returns, He will bring in the time of restoration—the millennial kingdom unto the new heavens and new earth (Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22; Rev. 20:4-6). At Christ's coming back, He will burn the world and tread the great winepress, which includes Antichrist. By doing these two things, He will clear up the whole earth. Then He will bring in God's kingdom to this earth, and that will be the time of restoration. The returned, repentant Jews will enjoy that restoration, and the overcoming Christians will be in the heavenly part of the kingdom of the heavens. The Jews will remain on this earth to enjoy God's creation, which was damaged but will be restored by Christ's second coming. That restoration will usher in the new heaven and new earth. This is the best eschatology.