

EXPOSITORY NOTES ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

by

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ISAIAH CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

THE GOOD TIDINGS TO ALL

THEN comes another call in the next chapter:

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money” (verses 1-3).

These three consecutive calls to awake are very clear and definite. First, it is the call of the people in their sorrow and in their trouble. **“Awake, awake . . . O arm of the Lord.”** Remembering how the arm of the Lord had been manifested on their behalf in ancient times, they cry out from the depths of their heart, **“O God, come in and undertake for us! Awake, O arm of the Lord!”**

As will soon be shown in chapter fifty-three, the arm of the Lord is a Person. It is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So it is really He who is being addressed, though the people do not know it. **“Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!”** They call on Him to rise for their deliverance, and, thank God, in due time He will. This is one of the first things that will take place. There will be a moving on the part of a remnant of Israel, a recognition of their past failure and sin, and they turn back to the Lord. Here the words apply: **“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near . . . Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”**

In response to that cry, **“Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord,”** God addresses Israel in her present broken condition, and says, **“Awake, awake, O Jerusalem; arise from the dust; clothe yourself in your beautiful garments; turn from your iniquity, acknowledge your sin, confess your transgressions.”** And when they do, then deliverance will come. He goes on to show them that the Lord in His own time will bring them back to Zion, the ransomed of the Lord shall return with everlasting joy upon their heads.

Here God is addressing the restored people when at last the work of repentance has been wrought in their souls, and now that they have turned back to Him, the day of their blessing has come. He says, **“Awake, awake, O Zion,”** calls upon them to sing with gladness as they come forth from the lands of the Gentiles, to enter again into their own land and into happy reconciliation with God and joyful subjection to the Saviour whom He has provided.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (verse 7).

The remnant company of the last days go out over the mountains, out to the world to proclaim the Gospel of peace, the Gospel of the kingdom, but it is not a different Gospel from that which we preach today. There is only one Gospel. The Apostle Paul says, **“Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”** And he emphasizes this: **“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”** (Galatians 1:8, 9). There is only one Gospel, the Gospel of God concerning His Son! But that Gospel takes on different aspects at different times, according to God’s dispensational dealings.

John the Baptist proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom of God, but that doesn’t mean that he did not tell sinners how to be saved. It was he who said, **“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”** But the emphasis of his message was the responsibility of Israel to receive the King, and so enter into the kingdom.

When the Lord Jesus began to preach, He went from city to city proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, and sent His disciples out to all Israel to preach it, but when the kingdom was rejected, a new thing came in, and now we preach the glorious Gospel of the grace of God. The light of the knowledge of it shines in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:6), for grace and truth came by Him. But does that mean that we have to be silent in regard to the King and His kingdom? Surely not, because during the forty days that He appeared on earth after His resurrection we are told that the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples **“of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”** Many years after, Paul abode two years in his own hired house, still preaching the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3; 28:23, 31). We too preach the Gospel of the kingdom, but now the emphasis is on the Gospel of the grace of God, God’s grace to a lost, ruined world.

When this age has come to an end, and the Church has been taken home, and God calls out a little company called in Daniel 12:3, 10, the Maskilim, the wise - **“the wise shall understand!”** - they will be those with beautiful feet to go forth proclaiming the glad tidings that the time has drawn near when the PRINCE of Peace will return, and there will be blessing for all the world through Him. How fitting it is that these words should come here immediately before Isaiah presents the greatest and most complete Messianic prophecy in all the Old Testament, in which we come to the very Holy of Holies.

~ end of chapter 52 ~

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