

Pillars of Promise: Completed Punishment and Commitment to Return

Text: Isaiah 51:17-52:12

Date: 11-13-22 10:30 AM

I. Jerusalem: Awake and see that your tragic plight is coming to an end (Isa. 51:17-23)!

Isaiah pictures Jerusalem as a drunken woman lying down prostrate in the city's ruins drinking the last of the cup of God's wrath. Even just a cup of God's judgment reduces man to a place of trembling where he staggers, stumbles, and falls to the ground.

The nation is left in a state of judgment without anyone to direct it back to God.

Man cannot help himself from his wicked predicament. Only One can do this: Jehovah, who both promises and intends to restore His people.

Jerusalem sees her sons in her streets yet can do nothing to stop the completion her judgment.

The people had drained the cup of Jehovah's wrath, "...imbibing to the fullest the fury of His judgment" (Hailey 428).

Like a glimmer of hope of finding water in the desert comes God's promise to end His judgment and restore His people.

Judah has served its sentence. The time of judgment is over. God, the One who had determined their judgment, now has determined its extent and the time of restoration. The Sovereign God who had chosen wrath for His people now is choosing restoration and mercy for them. God determines the same for us. He determines judgment and restoration on the basis of His Son. Everything regarding justice and mercy meets at the cross of Jesus Christ.

II. Zion: Awake and strengthen yourself for your time of renewal is coming soon (Isa 52:1-2).

The time is come for her to arise, put on her beautiful clothes, for a great transformation was about to happen.

This will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns to establish God's kingdom on the earth.

Where Zion had been "desecrated, for unclean persons had come into her midst, corrupted her pure worship of God . . ." now God was declaring that His city would become holy again. Jehovah would solely act to bring the nation from despair to strength, from defilement to beautiful, from unclean to clean.

Earlier in the book, Isaiah described Judah's position as one that sits on the ground (3:26) and one that would speak from the dust (29:4).

Isaiah later wrote that Babylon, because of God's judgment, would sit down in the dust without a throne (47:1), and now to Zion He commands them to arise from the dust and sit down on a chair (52:2).

Thus the state of both cities is completely reversed for "one is reduced from worldly glory to humility and shame; the other is exalted from shame to divine glory" (Hailey 431).

III. Jehovah: Awake for His power will free His people (Isa. 52:3-12)

While Judah had been sold on account of her sins (50:1), they had not been sold into bondage for anything of value. Since nothing was paid for them, God would buy them back without paying a ransom for God can redeem without payment if He so chooses.

God's people will know His name on account of His actions, on account of His redemption and purification. They will know all of God's power, sovereign design, and all of His character. All will know His anger and wrath, justice and holiness. They will know His love and mercy.

The boldest statement in the Bible is right here: Literally, Here I am! I am keeping my word and I will fulfill my promises. I will deliver my people!

Upon the mountaintop is a messenger who brings:

**Cheerful tidings

**Proclaims peace – between God and His people

**Proclaims salvation – by God

**Announces total deliverance – redemption from bondage personally and corporately, spiritually and politically.

The foundation for all of these blessings is *thy God reigns!* The message is now delivered to the captives in Babylon dispelling both their fears that God doesn't hear them and that God not will act to save them.

The response to this great news is singing, praise, and adoration.

Here is what God has done for His people. The comfort of 40:1 is fulfilled in 52:9. There is every reason for shouting and praise: the God of Israel has won a great victory.