

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 140

Isaiah Chapter 51:1 – 52:12

Verse-by-verse

Verses 9-16:

Let's read the passage – **Isaiah 51:9-16**.

In **verses 9-11**, Isaiah appeals to **the arm of the LORD** to take action on behalf of captive Israel. In former days, Isaiah recalls, the arm of the LORD delivered the sons of Israel out of Egypt. Now Isaiah pleads for the LORD to return the exiles to Zion.

Verses 9b-10 speak of the redemption of Israel from her enemies in the distant past (“days of old, generations of long ago”)– the Exodus from Egypt.

In **verse 10**, Isaiah appeals to the Lord who delivered the Jews out of Egypt. He split the Red Sea to make a path for the redeemed sons of Israel (Exodus 14:13-22).

In **verse 11**, Isaiah recites the Lord's promise that He will ransom His people from all the nations. They will return with joyful shouting to Zion. This refers to the regathering of Israel at the time of the Messianic Kingdom.

Isaiah's prayer is not limited to the return of the exiles from Babylon but extends to the Lord's final restoration of the redeemed to Zion. The removal of all sorrow refers to the time when there will no longer be afflictions or death. It is THIS day that Isaiah is asking the Lord to bring about in the near future.

In **verses 12-16**, the Lord answers Isaiah's prayer from **verses 9-11**.

Verses 12-13:

The Lord affirms that He is the One who redeemed His people from Egypt and who promises to redeem them again in the future. Then this passage picks up on the Lord's statement in **verses 7-8**, "do not fear the reproach of man". This time, however, the Lord asks them a question: "Who are you that you are afraid of mere man who dies?" See also **Isaiah 40:6-8** and **Psalms 56:4,11**.

Then the Lord chastises them for forgetting Him. This is the reverse of **Isaiah 49:14**, where Zion accused the Lord of forgetting them. He is their Maker, and He created the heavens and the earth (see also **Psalms 104:1-5**). If they would keep remembering this, they would not live in fear of any oppressor.

But who is the oppressor in verse 13? Let's examine where else Isaiah speaks of an oppressor.

In **Isaiah 9:4**, the context is the future reign of the Messiah. In **Isaiah 14:4**, the oppressor is the king of Babylon. This refers not only to Nebuchadnezzar but also to satan (see **Isaiah 14:12-15**).

Elsewhere, in **Psalms 72:4**, the context is the Messianic reign also.

This suggests that the oppressor in **Isaiah 51:13** is the enemy that God will destroy right before the Lord establishes His kingdom.

Verse 14:

Soon after the oppressor is vanquished, the Lord will free the wandering exile.

But who is the exile in verse 14? Since the oppressor is the enemy that God destroys right before the kingdom begins, the exile here must refer to the people of Israel who are in exile at that time.

At that time, the Jews will be in exile in many nations of the earth.

So the freeing of the exile in verse 14 is the return of the Jews from every nation to Zion when the Messiah sets up His kingdom. See **Deuteronomy 30:1-5; Isaiah 11:10-12; Isaiah 43:5-7; Isaiah 49:11-13; Ezekiel 36:16-25**.

Verse 15:

The LORD will set the exile free because this is who He is. He is their God, and this is what the Lord does for His people. **See Isaiah 37:32-35 and Isaiah 48:11.** He keeps all of His promises. He has the authority and power to do so.

When He says that He stirs up the sea and its waves roar, He is talking about His sovereignty over nature. See also **Psalm 107:25** and **Jeremiah 31:35.**

“**The LORD of hosts**” is the Lord of the armies, both human and angelic. Isaiah and other prophets use this title, “the LORD of hosts”, over and over again – 217 times in 207 verses. For example: **Isaiah 6:3** [angelic]; **9:7** [fulfills Davidic covenant]; **13:4** [directs Persian armies to conquer Babylon]; **31:4-5** [defeats Assyria]; and **45:13** [raises up Cyrus].

Verse 16:

Once more, the Lord is assuring His people that He will fulfill His promises to them, thereby answering Isaiah’s prayer in verses 9-11.

The statements in Isaiah 51:16 a and b are very similar to **Isaiah 49:2** and **Isaiah 50:4**. In those two earlier passages, the Servant of the LORD was speaking.

Now, in Isaiah 51:16, the LORD God is speaking. He revisits the commissioning of the Servant in **Isaiah 49:1-13**. But now He speaks in terms of what He has done and will do.

What the LORD commissioned the Servant to perform, He will accomplish. See again **Isaiah 49:5-13**.

The LORD will restore the covenant status of His people.
He will proclaim the arrival of His people to Zion.
The LORD will create the new heaven and the new earth.

The Lord God says that He will establish the heavens and found the earth after the Servant accomplishes His mission. Since this will occur in the future, He cannot be referring to the original creation of heaven and earth in Genesis.

Rather, He is describing the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth. See **Isaiah 65:17-18; Isaiah 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13, and Revelation 21:1.**

What is the message to Isaiah's audience? The arm of the LORD redeems His people, Israel. His arm:

- was acting in the past (Abraham and Moses),
- is active for them now (deliverance from Assyria and Babylon),
- and will act again in the future (when He fulfills His promises to Abraham and David at the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ).

This is His answer to Isaiah's prayer in **Isaiah 51:11**. He will fulfill the promises He made in **Isaiah 51:3-6**.