

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Series: The Book of Isaiah

Teaching Summary for Week 138

Isaiah Chapter 51:1 – 52:12

Outline of Isaiah 51:1-52:12

Section	Message
51:1-8	Listen to Me – My salvation shall be forever.
51:9-16	The LORD your Maker will soon free the exile.
51:17-23	The LORD your God contends for His people.
52:1-6	My people shall know My name.
52:7-12	The LORD has bared His holy arm.

Verse-by-verse

Verses 1-8: The Lord speaks to the remnant of Israel. He comforts His people with an announcement of salvation and righteousness which will be for all people everywhere.

Verses 7-8: The Lord tells His people not to fear any man. Man is but a vapor. He is like the grass of the field: here today, gone tomorrow. But the righteousness of God endures forever.

Let's read Psalm **37**. It also speaks to us in our circumstances.

Verses 9-16:

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

Isaiah appeals to **the arm of the LORD** to take action on behalf of captive Israel (verses 9-11). 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.

The LORD replies to Isaiah. He provides His comfort, and promises to deliver Israel from her enemies and bring her back to Zion (verses 12-16).

Notice the element of time in this passage.

Verses 9b-10 speak of redemption in the distant past – the Exodus from Egypt.

Verses 11 and 16 speak of a greater redemption in the far future - the Messianic Reign, followed by the New Heavens, New Earth, and New Jerusalem.

Verses 9a, 12-15 speak of a redemption that will occur in the near future – the rescue of the captives out of Babylon and their return to Zion.

Verse 13 speaks of the LORD God as the Creator of the original heavens and earth, and **verse 16** the LORD God addresses the Servant as the Creator of the new heavens and earth.

This paragraph opens with an emotional appeal by Isaiah for the arm of the LORD to “awake, awake” . Isaiah speaks for a people who have grown weary waiting for the LORD to act on their behalf. But they have not lost all hope. They are hanging on to the promises that the LORD made to them.

There was a time in the life of King David when his heart was at such a place. He recorded his prayer to the LORD in **Psalms 13**. He expressed the same longing for the LORD to act. Let’s read Psalm 13 now.

Verses 9: What does “the arm of the Lord” mean?

We begin in **Psalms 89:8-29**. This is a Messianic Psalm. It speaks about the covenant that the Lord made with David. The Messiah will ultimately fulfill the Davidic covenant by reigning on the throne of David on earth. See verses 27-29 of Psalm 89. The arm of the Lord is mentioned in verses 10, 13, and 21 where it refers to the might and the strength of the Lord.

In **Exodus 6:6** the arm of the Lord refers to the redemption of the sons of Israel. In **Psalm 136:12**, it refers to the lovingkindness of the Lord in bringing the sons of Israel out of Egypt.

What does **Isaiah** reveal about the arm of the Lord? The image undergoes a transformation through three stages. It starts with the power and strength of the LORD in redeeming Israel from her enemies. From there the reach of the arm of the Lord extends to bring salvation to all the nations. Finally, Isaiah shows the arm of the LORD to be a Person: the Servant of the Lord – the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, he does use the image of the arm of the Lord to refer to the strength and power of the LORD acting to redeem His people, Israel. See **Isaiah 48:14** (note **v.16**), **51:9**, **62:8** (see **40:10**), and **63:12**.

Second, the arm of the Lord brings salvation, not to Israel alone, but to all nations. See **Isaiah 51:5** and **52:10**.

Third, Isaiah reveals that the arm of the Lord is the Servant of the LORD – the Lord Jesus Christ. In **Isaiah 53:1-2**, the arm of the Lord is a “He”. The arm is a Person. And the context in **Isaiah 52:13-15** shows that this Person is the Servant of the Lord. See also **Isaiah 52:10** (“bared”), **59:16**; **63:1-6** (see **Revelation 19:13-16**).

Isaiah 40:10-11 describes all three stages in succession. Regarding this, see **Revelation 22:12**.