

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH

by Henry Mahan

Mahan's exposition of the gospel message as found throughout the Book of Isaiah, tracing Christological themes and messianic prophecies that point forward to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

25 Chapters

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00.3. Acknowledgements

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I cannot sufficiently thank these faithful servants of our God for all they have done to assist in the production of these volumes.

—Donald S. Fortner, Pastor, Grace Baptist Church of Danville, KY

00.4. Addendum

Highlights in the Life and Ministry of

Henry Mahan

March 1947 – Pastor Henry Mahan and his wife, Doris, moved to Ashland, KY to work with Pastor Donald Wells and the Southern Baptist church –Pollard Baptist.

September 1947 – Realizing that he needed more training and education, the Mahans moved to Chattanooga, TN, where he attended Tennessee Temple College for three years. While there he pastored the Oakwood Baptist Church.

April 1950 – The Pollard Baptist Church called Pastor Mahan to be Pastor Wells' assistant pastor.

Rolfe Barnard came to the Pollard Church to preach a two week meeting, and Pastor Mahan heard (for the first time) how God can be just and justifier of sinners. He read Boettner's, 'Doctrine of Predestination,' Boston's, 'Fourfold State,' the various old confessions of faith and other Calvinistic writers, and the Lord revealed the gospel of Christ to him and to many of the members of the Pollard Church.

August 1951 – Pastor Wells resigned the church and moved to Chattanooga, TN. The church called Pastor Mahan to be their pastor in October 1951. From that time, he tried several ways, books, and methods to teach Sunday School for the people. He bought John Gill's Commentary and tried to teach his 'Body of Divinity,' chapter by chapter.

Finally, in the late 70's he began to write his own Sunday School lessons, verse by verse through the New Testament; and the teachers used these from that day forward.

Bill Clark, missionary to France, and Pastor Mahan became close friends in 1965. They traveled and preached together in the United States and in England, Ireland, Spain, France, and Africa.

Bill moved his family from France to Welwyn, England and started Evangelical Press in an effort to distribute grace literature worldwide. By 1983 Pastor Mahan had gone through most of the epistles of the New Testament verse by verse and Bill and John Rubins asked for the copyright on his commentaries. They printed them in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and in 1994 in Russian. Evangelical Press also printed his Gospel of John and Old Testament Pictures of Christ in 2 volumes. The Lord made it possible for these commentaries to be sent to several countries as a missionary effort. Bill Clark was the instrument God used to get these books printed and distributed. He went to be with the Lord November 8, 1998 at age 66. He will be remembered by all of us who knew him so well as one of the Lord's most outstanding and faithful preachers and missionaries.

01. Come now and let us reason together: Isaiah 1:1-20

Come now and let us reason together

Isaiah 1:1-20

Isaiah was one of the sixteen prophets whose writings are contained in the Holy Scriptures. There are more testimonies and quotations in the New Testament taken out of Isaiah than out of all the other Prophets. Isaiah so fully describes the person, offices, sufferings, and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ that some have called him 'the fifth evangelist,' and his book, 'The Gospel According to Isaiah.'

Isaiah 1:1. His prophecy is called a 'vision' because the truth that God revealed to him was as clear to his mind as bodily objects are to men's eyes. He foresaw and he foretold (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:10-11).

Isaiah 1:2. Isaiah calls upon the whole creation to hear the Lord's charge against Judah and Jerusalem. The Lord said, 'I have made them my people (Deuteronomy 7:6-8), I blessed and sustained them above all nations, I gave them the law and the prophets, and they have rebelled against me.'

Isaiah 1:3. They are more stupid and ungrateful than beasts. We hear the sayings, 'Stubborn as an ass,' and 'Dumb as an ox;' but even these dumb beasts acknowledge and obey their masters and benefactors. But my people do not know me, consider nor think upon me, reverence nor obey me.

Isaiah 1:4. 'They are laden with iniquity.' The word 'laden' means heavy, full and thick, as full of sin as an egg is full or a sponge is full (Romans 3:12-18). 'A seed of evildoers;' children of rebels (Romans 5:12) who have forsaken the Lord and gone their own way (Isaiah 53:6). God is angry (Psalms 7:11; Hebrews 10:30-31).

Isaiah 1:5. They are so depraved and rebellious that even afflictions and the judgments of God have no effect upon them (Amos 4:6; Amos 4:9-11). 'Why should I chasten and correct you?' You are so mentally warped (head is sick) and spiritually dead (heart is faint) that even correction brings out rebellion. Judgment will not produce repentance in a depraved sinner (Revelation 16:9; Romans 2:4).

Isaiah 1:6. Here is the result of Adam's fall, a description of total depravity, the true condition of fallen flesh! From the very sole of our feet to the top hair on our heads there is no life, no truth, no light, no goodness in us (Romans 7:18; Romans 8:8; Ephesians 2:13). These wounds and sores of sin are open and ugly and have no remedy.

Isaiah 1:7-8. Because of your rebellion and disobedience you lie desolate, destroyed by the enemy, bruised, broken, and afflicted. You have no peace, rest, nor happiness. Men without God are without hope in this world or in the world to come (Ephesians 2:12).

Isaiah 1:9. If the Lord of hosts, by his infinite grace and goodness, had not chosen a people from Adam's race, defeated our enemies in the person and work of his Son, and called us effectually by his Spirit, no one would be saved. We would have all been cut off as the people of Sodom (Romans 9:27-29). 'Salvation is of the Lord' in its origination (2 Thessalonians 2:13), in its execution (Galatians 4:4-5), in its application (Galatians 1:15), in its sustaining power (Jude 1:24-25), and in its ultimate perfection (Revelation 21:3-6).

Isaiah 1:10-15. Here is a startling revelation! Believe it or not, these ungrateful, irreverent, totally depraved people make a pretence of being religious! They are inwardly wicked and outwardly religious (Matthew 23:25-28). They kept the outward forms, ceremonies, and holy days; yet they did not love, obey, nor worship God in their hearts. It is so often true that the less a man knows of God and the farther he departs from the true and living God, the more of the outward form of religion he adopts. The less internal devotion, the more emphasis is placed on the external ceremony and the outward rules and regulations. Their outward show of piety, prayer, sacrifice, and sabbaths was an abomination to God (Luke 16:15).

Isaiah 1:16. 'Wash ye, make you clean.' Notwithstanding their sacrifices and ceremonies, they were unclean (as all men are) and needed to be washed in the blood of Christ (Psalms 51:7; 1 John 1:7). The blood of animals cannot put away sin, nor can the deeds of the law nor religious works, 'Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes.' Not only put away the doing of evil, but also the evil of doing, which is an attempt to be justified before the eyes of God by our doings (Romans 10:1-4).

Isaiah 1:17. 'Learn to do well.' These are the true works of righteousness that are produced by a right relationship with God in Christ Jesus (Galatians 5:22). Observing the ceremonies, sacrifices, and sabbaths outwardly are meaningless; but a regenerated, renewed, and cleansed heart will find delight in serving God and others.

Isaiah 1:18. God in grace proposes a conference, not to determine if we are sinners nor the extent of our sins, but what is to be done about the matter. We are sinners and our sins are double-dyed, as scarlet and red like crimson. Only Christ can put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26; Hebrews 10:12-14; Hebrews 10:19-20). If you be made willing to come to Christ in repentance and faith, you shall eat the good of God's great land; if you refuse him, you shall be devoured, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

1. Are we willing to own and confess our sins?
2. Are we willing to repent of dead works and personal merit?
3. Are we willing to call on God in Christ for mercy and grace?
4. Are we willing to confess him and bow to him as Lord (Romans 10:9-10)?

Then you shall be saved!

02. Here am I—send me: Isaiah 6:1-8

Here am I—send me

Isaiah 6:1-8

Isaiah was a prophet of God who lived about 700 years before Christ came to earth in the flesh. He lived about 120 years and preached about 85 of those years. He was a prophet in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah-kings of Judah.

Isaiah 6:1. 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord. ' Is there some connection between the death of King Uzziah and Isaiah's vision of God's holiness? Perhaps! Uzziah was a great and successful king whom Isaiah probably admired (2 Chronicles 26:22). He did many great and notable things, but he became proud and presumptuous. His pride led him to the temple to offer incense to God, not through God's priest but by his own hand. This is a denial of the holiness of God and the work of Christ, our great High Priest (2 Chronicles 26:16-20). Christ is God's priest (typified by the Old Testament priesthood), and not even a king can come to God except through him (John 14:6). God judged Uzziah and he died a leper. When Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the Lord.

1. Isaiah saw the supreme glory of Christ. It was the enthroned Christ, the sovereign Christ of all authority and glory; for John wrote of it in John 12:41, 'When Isaiah saw his glory, he spoke of him.'

2. Isaiah saw the victorious Christ, for he was sitting on a throne. Men and nations rush to and fro; we pace the floor and fret and worry. He sits amid complete order and purpose (Isaiah 46:10-11; Psalms 110:1).

3. Isaiah saw the infinite glory of Christ, for 'he is high and lifted up.' His name and throne are above every name and throne. 'None can stay his hand or say unto him what doest thou?' (Php 2:9-11).

4. Isaiah saw the universal glory of Christ. His glory and presence 'filled the temple.' 'Christ is all and in all.' Every revelation of God to human eye, ear, or heart is Jesus Christ (John 1:18). Isaiah saw Christ, the Lord, exalted King of kings and Lord of lords!

Isaiah 6:2. Around the throne Isaiah saw the seraphims. Who are these seraphims? There are many opinions, such as heavenly creatures, or angels, or perhaps (in figurative language) the true ministers of Christ.

1. They cover their faces in modesty and humility before the Lord; for they are less than the least, unworthy to be ministers, and the chief of sinners.

2. They cover their feet, conscious of the imperfection of their walk, conduct, and ways. 'O wretched man that I am.'

3. With two wings they did fly in haste to declare the truth of his glorious person and work.

Isaiah 6:3-4. What is their cry? 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.' The chief attribute of God is his holiness. God is love, God is just, God is merciful; but 'holy and reverend is his name.' All that God is and does must be in agreement with his holiness. Nowhere is the holiness of God revealed more than at Calvary, when his holiness demanded and carried out the death of his Son to redeem a people (Romans 3:25-26). The whole earth is his; all that is in it and all creation shall serve his glory (Revelation 4:11).

Isaiah 6:5. What was Isaiah's response to this revelation of God's presence and holiness?

1. He saw himself. 'I am undone and ruined; I am a sinful man; I am reduced to silence.' A man may look at others and say, 'I thank thee, I am not like other men.' He may look at the written law and say, 'I am blameless.' But when a man is exposed to the absolute holiness and righteousness of God, he must cry, 'Woe is me.'

2. He saw the evil of his heart and mouth. Unclean lips speak from an unclean heart. The lips are the outlet of the heart.

3. He saw the total ruin of the human race (Romans 3:10-19; Psalms 14:2-3). The two-fold cry of the word, of the gospel, of those who have seen the Lord is 'All flesh is grass' and 'Behold your God' (Isaiah 40:6-9). The sinfulness of sin, the inability of the flesh, and the need of sovereign mercy are only discovered in the light of God's holiness. Job experienced this (Job 42:5-6) and so shall all whom God is pleased to bring to a saving knowledge of Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 6:6-7. God revealed to Isaiah, the sinner, his mercy and grace. When he saw the holiness of God, realized his corruption and evil, and confessed his sinfulness and inability, there follows the application of mercy and grace in Christ. Self-judgment always precedes forgiveness (1 John 1:8-10). Grace is only for the guilty; Christ died only for the ungodly (1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 5:6-8).

1. The seraphim which came to him is the minister of the gospel, who comes to men sent of God (John 1:6-7). God sent Philip to the eunuch (Acts 8:29-30).

2. The live coal in his hand is the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—his word of grace, the good news of mercy (Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 1:13). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16-17).

3. The altar of fire from which the live coal was taken is the sacrifice of Christ, our Lord. The Passover lamb was roasted on the altar of fire as our Lord Jesus (who is our Passover) was sacrificed for us. He endured the fire of God's wrath for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21). The pardon of sin, the cleansing, the power of God to redeem come from the blood of Christ at Calvary (Hebrews 10:12-17).

4. He laid it on my mouth. That cleansing, purging fire of Calvary, the blood of the Son of God, actually met our sins, came in contact with all our iniquity, engaged to purge, burn out, and eradicate all our transgressions (Isaiah 53:4-6). 'He bore our sins.'

5. 'Your iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged.' Your sin is completely atoned for and forgiven. God said, 'I will remember their sins no more.' How can this be? Only in Christ, our substitute! God can be holy, just, and righteous and justify us in Christ only. He obeyed the law, giving us a perfect

righteousness (Romans 5:19); and he died (the just for the unjust) to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18). 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace kiss at Calvary' (Psalms 85:10).

Isaiah 6:8. 'Who will go with the message of substitution and satisfaction through the person and work of Christ?' Only the man whose lips have been touched by experience with that fire from the altar. 'Here am I, send me.' I know, have experienced, and love that gospel.

03. Immanuel—God with us: Isaiah 7:1-14

Immanuel—God with us

Isaiah 7:1-14 The nation Israel, and especially the kingdom of Judah, shall be kept from destruction from its enemies and preserved by God until the Messiah shall come to earth. Jacob declared this in Genesis 49:8-10. In spite of Israel's backslidings, idolatry, enemies, and ignorance of true worship and true redemption, the temple shall stand, the Passover shall be observed, and the law of ceremonies, circumcision, Sabbath, and sacrifices shall continue unchanged until the Messiah shall come to fulfill all things and redeem true Israel by his blood and righteousness. The tribe of Judah, the house and lineage of David, must continue until he comes to Bethlehem, city of David (Luke 2:1-4, Micah 5:2). That is what this seventh chapter of Isaiah is all about!

Isaiah 7:1-2. It was in the days of King Ahaz (king of Judah) that the enemies of Judah besieged Jerusalem but could not prevail. Fear and dread gripped the hearts of the people of Judah when they learned that the ten tribes of Israel were allies of Syria against Judah. Fear of the enemy, distrust of the power and care of God, and guilt because of their sinfulness made their hearts tremble like trees sway in a hurricane.

Isaiah 7:3-9. The Lord spoke to the Prophet Isaiah and sent him to meet King Ahaz in a certain place with the Lord's message. The Lord instructed Isaiah to comfort Ahaz and exhort him to be quiet, fear not, and neither be faint-hearted; for the conspiracy formed against him by Syria and Ephraim would be fruitless, and the rival kingdom of Israel in 65 years would be broken.

Isaiah 7:10-11. Although Ahaz was not a godly king, but was a wicked man, yet the Lord said to him, 'Ask for yourself a sign (a token or proof) of the Lord your God.' The Lord was his God, as he is every man's God! And God will use every man to accomplish his divine will for Israel and the world (Romans 9:17, Proverbs 16:4). Knowing Ahaz's unbelief and hesitancy to follow God's prophet, the Lord says, 'Ask of me a sign that will be convincing to you that God has spoken and will keep his word.' Ask what you will—a miracle to be done on the earth or in the heavens. Examples: the dividing of the sea for Moses or the sun standing still for Joshua.

Isaiah 7:12. But Ahaz (unwilling to hear God's prophet, unwilling to be quiet and wait on God, unwilling to rely on the promise and power of God, unwilling to depend on God and not seek the help of others) now refuses to obey the prophet and ask God for a sign. He pretended religion and a reverence of God by saying, 'I will not tempt the Lord.' To ask a sign of God, when he offered one, is not irreverence; but to refuse one when offered is great stubbornness and ingratitude!

Isaiah 7:13. Isaiah addresses the king; but also his words of rebuke apply to the whole house of David, the entire nation, which, like their king, pretended religion and reverence for God only to openly disobey him and refuse his words. 'It is a small thing to you to weary, vex, and disturb the prophets of God by your obstinacy and unbelief; but will you weary and vex my God also?' Read Matthew 10:40-42. Unbelief is the sin of all sin, the damning sin, the sin that plagued Israel all their days and robbed them of blessings innumerable (Hebrews 3:17-19).

Isaiah 7:14. Therefore (whether you ask a sign or no!), 'The Lord himself shall give you a sign.' How was this birth from a virgin (many years later) a sign of the deliverance of the nation Judah at that time?

1. The power of God to cause a virgin to give birth to a son, and the promise of God that it will come to pass should give them assurance (Numbers 23:19). On these two things Abraham's faith rested (Romans 4:20-22).
2. The promise of the Messiah, made often before and repeated here, who must come from the root of Jesse, the tribe of Judah, and the loins of David, guarantees the preservation of this people.
3. The seed of woman (Genesis 3:15), the priest like Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18), the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:13), the prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18-19), and the King (son of David (Psalms 132:11) is this virgin's son; and in him are all of God's mercies and promises. Of him the prophets wrote, for him the ancient believers waited, to him they all looked; and he shall come and not tarry (Isaiah 46:13). The virgin shall call his name Immanuel, which signifies God with us, God dwelling among us in our nature (John 1:14), God and men meeting in one person (2 Corinthians 5:19), one mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5). The virgin knew that she had not known a man, and this is indeed the Son of God (Luke 1:34).

He was called Jesus! This is the name given him by Joseph, according to God's command (Matthew 1:20-21); the virgin called him 'Immanuel;' Isaiah 9:6 called him 'wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting God, the Prince of Peace;' Jeremiah called him 'the righteousness of God.' But the design of these words and names is not so much to relate the names by which Christ should commonly be called, as to describe his nature and office. 'To be called' is often put for 'to be!' Example: Jeremiah 33:16. The incarnation of our great God and Saviour is called by Paul 'the mystery of godliness' (1 Timothy 3:16); and he is our hope, our peace, and our salvation. Isaac Watts put it in these words:

"Til God in human flesh I see, my thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred three are terrors to my mind.
But if Immanuel's face appear, my hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fear; his grace removes my sin.'

04. Jesus Christ-the mighty God: Isaiah 9:6-7

Jesus Christ-the mighty God

Isaiah 9:6-7

We have before us the greatest of all subjects, yet the most difficult and mysterious—the incarnation of God! God became a man. God took on himself ‘the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men’ (Php 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 3:16). The gift of Christ is called ‘unspeakable’ and the riches of Christ are called ‘unsearchable’ (2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 3:8). The Ancient of Days became an infant of days; he who made woman was made of a woman; God who is spirit actually became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). In the same breath that the Prophet calls him a child, he calls him counsellor. In the same breath that the prophet calls him a son, he calls him the everlasting Father. The warrior’s garments are rolled in blood, yet he is the Prince Of Peace. He is a ‘Man of sorrows’ (Isaiah 53:3), yet he is the mighty God. He is ‘Rejected of men’ (Isaiah 53:3), yet the government is on his shoulders. There are no contradictions here. Every word is true, but it is not learned by research and reason - only by revelation (1 Corinthians 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 2:14) . As scripture is only interpreted in the light of scripture so, 1. There is no seeing Christ except in his own light (John 1:18).

2. He is the lesson learned, yet he, himself, is the teacher.
3. He is the one to whom we look and the light by which we see.
4. He is not only the tabernacle, the priest, and the mercy-seat, but he is the sacrifice and the one to whom it is offered.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

There is no repetition here. The careful student knows that the Spirit does not waste words.

1. ‘A child is born,’ a man-child made of a woman, who lay nine months in the womb and came forth as all children are born, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Jesus Christ, the man, was born of a woman just as all men come into the world.

2. ‘A son is given.’ This Son was not born but given, sent from heaven. He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:3-4). When the angel announced to Joseph the coming of Christ in the flesh, he quoted Isaiah 7:14, ‘A virgin shall be with child and she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.’ The virgin birth is not simply a matter for argument or amazement but of necessity. Jesus Christ is not only man and called the son of man, but he is God and the Son of God. The Son of God can have no human father but is conceived by the Holy Ghost. If he were the seed of man and not the seed of woman, he would be born in sin: but he is ‘holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners’ (Hebrews 7:26). Is it true that God became a man? If it is true, then we have a righteousness, a redeemer, a mediator, and a hope of eternal glory. If it is not true, if there

is no man in glory called Jesus Christ, then no other man will ever be in glory, then we stand alone before God's awful throne with no mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). The government shall be on his shoulder The government, not only of the universe and the world in general, but of the kingdom of God in particular.

1. All things in heaven and earth were made by him, for him, and are held together by him (Colossians 1:16-17).
2. He has all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18) and all authority over all flesh (John 17:2).
3. He reigns as King and surety over the kingdom of God. This government is delegated to him from the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).
4. He is head of the church, has all pre-eminence (Colossians 1:18-19), and a name that is above every name (Php 2:9-11). His name shall be called wonderful

We carelessly call many things wonderful that are unworthy of such distinction. He alone is wonderful. He is wonderful in his eternality (Proverbs 8:24-31); wonderful in his person—the Godman; wonderful in his everlasting, infinite, and unchanging love; wonderful in his perfect, holy life; wonderful in his substitutionary death; wonderful in his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:1-4). His name shall be called Counsellor The world is full of people who want to be counsellors and advisers, but there is but one counsellor—Jesus Christ. Would you know God? Christ reveals him! Would you know the will, way, and purpose of God? They are all found in Christ! He is both the wisdom and the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:30). Someone asked Mr. Spurgeon, 'What is the best body of divinity?' He replied, 'There is but one body of divinity—Christ Jesus.' (Colossians 2:9-10). Religious people say, 'Are you in trouble? Do you need the Lord? Then call us.' Don't do it! Call on Christ; he is the Counsellor! His name shall be called the mighty God The disciples said, 'Show us the Father.' Christ replied, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father' (John 14:8-9). 'I and my Father are one' (John 10:30). Jesus Christ is God (Acts 20:28 : 2 Corinthians 5:19; Hebrews 1:8). Every attribute of deity is found in him—omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence. The disciples asked, 'What manner of man is this that even the waves obey his voice?' He is the mighty God! His name shall be called the everlasting Father No man can explain the trinity; we can only believe. Our God is one God, yet three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7). He that hath the Son hath the Father (2 John 1:9; 1 John 2:23). When Moses asked God, 'What is thy name?' the Lord replied, 'I AM THAT I AM.' On how many occasions did our Lord Jesus use these words, 'I AM'? (John 8:58). His name shall be called the Prince of Peace

He is the author of peace between God and sinners (Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:20). He is our peace of heart and conscience (John 14:27). He brings to us everlasting peace; for his government, his peace, his kingdom are established on principles of judgment and justice (Isaiah 9:6). This is no temporary peace; for Jesus Christ, the God-man, effectually, sufficiently, and once for all honored God's law and satisfied justice for all who believe (2 Corinthians 5:21 : 1 Peter 3:18; Acts 13:38-39).

05. The Messiah—Rod and Branch of Jesse: Isaiah 11:1-16

The Messiah—Rod and Branch of Jesse

Isaiah 11:1-16

Jesus Christ of Nazareth, a Rod and Branch out of Jesse (house of David), endued with the Spirit of God, is the promised Messiah. As prophet, priest, and king, he shall establish his kingdom of peace and gather Israel from the four corners of the earth. The people of his church shall be victorious over their enemies, and 'to him shall the Gentiles come.'

Isaiah 11:1. Jesse is the father of David (tribe of Judah). Though this family and house were very prominent and illustrious during the reign of King David and Solomon, from the Babylonian captivity until the coming of Christ it was very low, like a tree cut down with nothing left but a root in the ground—a stump! (Genesis 49:10; Micah 5:2; Hebrews 7:14; Matthew 1:6-16; Luke 3:23-31). 'The Branch' is a well-known name of the Messiah (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Zechariah 3:8; Zechariah 6:12).

Isaiah 11:2. The Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh; yet he was a man, made of a woman, made under the law, subject to every temptation (as we are), and dependent upon the Spirit of God which was upon him. He was conceived by the Spirit of God (Luke 1:35); the Spirit descended upon him at baptism (Matthew 3:16); the Spirit anointed him to be our prophet, priest, and king (Luke 4:18-19). He had the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and reverence without measure (John 3:34). The human nature of our Lord is difficult to define, but he was truly a man of flesh and blood (Luke 2:51-52); and the Spirit of the Lord was upon him to fulfill all required of us (Romans 5:19).

Isaiah 11:3. The word 'quick' refers to scent or smell, because the sense of smell is more sure in judging whether something is good or bad than the senses of seeing or hearing (meat or milk, for example). Our Lord has perfect understanding and knowledge of those who fear (truly reverence) the Lord and those who merely profess to know him. He knew Nathaniel (John 1:47), and he knew the Pharisees (Matthew 22:18). He does not judge by outward appearance (Luke 16:15), nor does he need the testimony of men (John 2:24-25; John 6:64).

Isaiah 11:4. 'But with righteousness shall he judge the poor'—his righteousness! He came to preach good news, salvation, and redemption to the poor in spirit (1 Timothy 1:15). The poor sinner who knows it, confesses it, and seeks righteousness in Christ shall be accepted in him (1 Corinthians 1:30). The poor, meek, and humble shall find pardon; the Lord shall take their part and deal with their enemies (Matthew 5:3-5).

'The rod of his mouth and the breath of his lips.' By his word he is pleased to reveal Christ and save some; so by his word he shall destroy his enemies (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Isaiah 11:5. It is said of our Redeemer, 'Holy and reverend is his name; he loveth righteousness and righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom.' By his active and passive obedience, he imputed

to us an everlasting righteousness! He is faithful to his Father, to his word, to his work, and to his church. These two attributes give us hope—'faithful and just' (1 John 1:9); 'just and justifier' (Romans 3:26).

Isaiah 11:6-9. These verses are not to be understood literally at this time, but the prophet speaks spiritually. The meaning is that many sons of Adam of fierce, cruel, and evil dispositions shall be changed, transformed by the grace of Christ and the preaching of the gospel; and they shall become most humble, gentle, and kind servants of God and his church, as cruel Saul of Tarsus and the rugged jailer in Philippi (2 Corinthians 5:17). But one day there shall be a new earth on which shall dwell the creatures of God in perfect peace and tranquility (Romans 8:19-21; 2 Peter 3:13).

Isaiah 11:10. An ensign is a signal, a banner displayed for the gathering of soldiers for battle—where they shall stand, whom they shall follow, and the certain identification of the company. Christ, the son of Jesse, is our banner (Exodus 17:15)! Our Lord Jesus 'lifted up' is our banner (John 12:32; John 8:28). Both Jew and Gentile are one church in him (Ephesians 2:14-15; Ephesians 3:6)—chosen in him, redeemed in him, accepted in him, and seated in him. To him we come, and his rest is glorious.

Isaiah 11:11-16. 'The Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people.'

1. The first time was (as most believe) the deliverance out of Egypt.
2. It may be (as Romans 11:11-15 seems to indicate) that in the days of Messiah, national Israel will be visited in grace. We shall have to wait to see; but Isaiah 11:16 says, 'Like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.'
3. Romans 11:25-32 seems to indicate the future conversion of many Jews. Some say this refers to spiritual Israel (Jew and Gentile believers), but it does not fit the context.

06. The day of divine visitation: Isaiah 12:1-6

The day of divine visitation

Isaiah 12:1-6 This chapter contains a song of praise and thanksgiving for redemption and salvation in Christ Jesus. This is strictly 'family fare' and cannot be appreciated, understood, nor sung by any but the redeemed of the Lord.

Isaiah 12:1. 'And in that day.' This is a phrase used repeatedly by Isaiah to indicate a particular time of divine visitation. It may not be a twenty-four hour day, but rather a time when the Lord is pleased to reveal to his elect his grace and mercy in Christ.

1. It is a day of conviction (Isaiah 2:10-11), for judgment precedes justification, emptying precedes filling, and repentance precedes comfort.
2. It is a day of revelation (Isaiah 25:8-9) when, like Simeon of old, the believer cries, 'I have seen thy salvation!'
3. It is a day of assurance (Isaiah 26:1-4) when his rest, peace, and joy settle upon the heart and mind, and we are enabled to trust him with complete confidence.

'I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.' The Lord's anger toward his elect is difficult to explain in the light of the fact that 'He has loved us with an everlasting love,' and he declared, 'Jacob have I loved' before Jacob was born. But the scripture says, 'We were children of wrath, even as others' (Ephesians 2:3-4), and, at that time, we Gentiles were without Christ and without God' (Ephesians 2:11-13). Whatever it means, we know that in Christ Jesus his anger and wrath are turned away (Romans 8:31-33; Romans 8:38-39). 'God was in Christ reconciling us to himself' (2 Corinthians 5:19); and we are comforted by his promises, by his love shed abroad in our hearts, and by his indwelling Spirit (John 14:16-18; John 16:13-14).

Isaiah 12:2. 'Behold God is my salvation.' This may read, 'God is my saviour.' Christ, who is God, is my saviour (John 1:1; John 1:14). He is a just God and a Saviour (Isaiah 45:21-22). He was appointed by the Father, provided in the covenant, promised in the word, sent in the fulness of time, and became the author of my salvation by his obedience, death, and exaltation (Acts 13:38-39; 1 Peter 3:18).

'I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song.' I will trust him for all things needed and required—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). I will rest confidently in him and believe that, in him, I am secure from all wrath and condemnation (Romans 8:1; Romans 8:33-34). I will not be afraid of sin, Satan, death, hell, nor the wrath to come (Isaiah 26:3-4).

'He also is become my salvation.' In the light of our weakness, failure, and flesh, how can we have such confidence and assurance of our security and acceptance before God? Because he is our

salvation! He is our strength! He is our song! God set him forth to be a mercy-seat. God laid on him our iniquities; God made us accepted in the Beloved. 'How shall he not with him freely give us all things' accomplished by our Redeemer-God? (Romans 8:32). It would be nothing short of blasphemy to reckon that God would renege on his promises to Christ and his church (Isaiah 46:9-11; Romans 11:29).

Isaiah 12:3. 'Therefore with joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation.' The Father is called 'the fountain of living waters' (Jeremiah 2:13). The Lord Jesus is 'the giver of living water' (John 4:10; John 4:14). The Holy Spirit is the source of 'rivers of living water' (John 7:38-39). These are the wells of salvation, and from them with joy we draw water (grace) for every need. Our needs go beyond a once-for-all justification and acceptance; our needs are daily needs. He taught us to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' which is not only food for the body but comfort, faith, joy, peace, strength, and love. I must always remain at the fountain 'drawing water' for my thirsty soul.

Isaiah 12:4. 'And in that day shall ye say. . . .' If there has indeed been for you a day of Divine visitation, of conviction, of revelation, of mercy, then shall you say—

1. 'Praise the Lord,' for mercy to this chief of sinners, for all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3-7).
2. 'Call upon his name,' which takes in the whole of worship. To worship God is to call upon his name. Whether in faith, for mercy, in prayer, in thanksgiving, in trial, or in a daily walk, we constantly 'call upon his name.'
3. 'Declare his doings among the people,' not only his works of creation, of providence, and miracles, but especially his doing and dying to redeem a people. 'I have finished the work thou gavest me to do' (John 17:4). That work of redemption is the doings we especially declare.
4. 'Make mention that his name is excellent' (Php 2:5-11).

'There's none other name given among men, There's none can with him compare;

All others are marred, by sin they are scarred;

He's fairer than all the fair.'

Isaiah 12:5. 'Sing unto the Lord for he hath done excellent things.' Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, vocally and together, as gospel churches, to the glory of God. Let him be the subject of our songs, for he hath done great things for us and in us and will yet glorify the riches of his grace to us! He is worthy to be praised by all his creatures (Psalms 150).

Isaiah 12:6. 'Cry out and shout all ye who are in Zion (his church) for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.' Christ Jesus is the Holy One of Israel, the head of the church; and he has promised and grants his presence to his church; wherefore, he is worthy of our praise—for his greatness, for his mercy, for his grace.

07. Our Lord's return: Isaiah 25:1-12

Our Lord's return

Isaiah 25:1-12

Most of the prophecies concerning our Lord Jesus, written by Isaiah, have to do with his coming to earth in the flesh to redeem his people. However, this chapter seems to fit his victorious and triumphant return and the glory which shall be ours eternally (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9).

Isaiah 25:1. 'O Lord, thou art my God.' O, Jehovah (Saviour-God), thou art my God, not by creation only, but by covenant grace. Whatever others may say and do, I answer with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.'

'I will exalt thee.' How can such a worm exalt and glorify God? God is who he is and where he is, and he is glorified in himself. We can exalt God by (1) ascribing all glory and deity to him, (2) by attributing the whole of salvation to him, and (3) by believing his word and bowing before his Son, our Lord.

'I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things.' Read the final words of David's prayer in Psalms 72:17-19. He has done wonderful things (1) in creation and the universe, (2) in providence and purpose, (3) in redemption and salvation, and (4) in things yet to behold (2 Peter 3:13-14).

'Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.' The covenant, counsel, and purpose of God in Christ Jesus are all done in truth and righteousness and will be faithfully performed (Acts 15:18; Isaiah 46:9-11; Psalms 85:10-11).

Isaiah 25:2-3. When our Lord returns, he will fulfill his promises and purpose concerning his people (John 6:37-49). But he will also destroy all who oppose him, no matter how many nor how strong (2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 19:11-16). There will be only two reactions to his glorious return.

1. The strong in faith—in Christ, in his power and grace, to whom the Lord is their strength—will welcome and glorify him (Hebrews 9:28).
2. The rest shall meet his return in fear and hopelessness (Revelation 6:15-17).

Isaiah 25:4. Is not this a fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1-2? God's people are poor and needy, lost and undone, children of wrath even as others, and without hope and without God until he comes in grace, strength, and power to redeem us. He is our refuge from the storm of God's wrath and from the trials of life and evil forces. 'A shadow (or shade) from the heat,' from the cradle to the grave (Isaiah 32:1-3). 'All our need he doth supply.'

Isaiah 25:5. But he will bring down the strangers! Those who by their evil works, will, and ways are strangers to God, to the gospel, and to godliness and grace, he will bring down, as the sun parches the dry earth, until not one blade is left standing. If we will not hide in him, we surely will

not be able to hide from him. The scripture describes the Lord Jesus as 'him with whom we have to do' (Hebrews 4:13).

Isaiah 25:6-8. Here is the good news!

1. 'In this mountain.' This is Mt. Zion (the church) (Isaiah 2:2-3; Hebrews 12:22-23).
2. 'Shall the Lord make a feast.' (Revelation 19:6-9). 'A feast of fat things,' of abundant promises fulfilled, 'of wines on the lees,' the best wine kept on the lees a long time.
3. He will remove the covering of darkness and ignorance spread by the fall over all creation. He will take away the vail from Israel (2 Corinthians 3:13-16) and the vail of dimness over his people, and we shall 'know as we are known' (1 Corinthians 13:12).
4. 'He will swallow up death in victory.' Death is so cruel, so grievous, so final on earth; but our Lord will, at his coming, turn it into victory and a cause for rejoicing (1 Corinthians 15:55-58).
5. 'He will wipe away all tears from their faces,' like a mother soothes the hurt of a loving child (Revelation 21:3-5).
6. 'The rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth.' True believers are not loved nor appreciated by the people of this world. They are despised, ridiculed, and made fun of. The gospel is foolishness to natural men. Our dear Redeemer is rejected and despised. Our way of worship and our way of life are rejected and misrepresented. But one day the people of God will be vindicated. When the Lord returns, when the feast is served on Mt. Zion, when the vail of ignorance and darkness is removed, when death is swallowed up in life, when all tears are gone, then shall the Lord, his gospel, and his people be vindicated; and then shall it be said, 'Lo, this is our God!' (1 John 5:20).

Isaiah 25:9.

1. 'This is our God.' Not the idols of men nor the lesser god of free-will, but the Lord Jesus Christ is our Lord and our God!
2. 'We have waited for him' (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). Our confidence, trust, and faith have been in him, and our life lived waiting for his return.
3. 'He will save us.' He has and will save us (Php 1:6). 'By grace have you been saved' (Ephesians 2:8). 'To us who are being saved, he is the power of God' (1 Corinthians 1:18). Now is our salvation completed (Psalms 17:15).
4. 'We will rejoice and be glad in his salvation' (Revelation 5:9-10).

Isaiah 25:10-12. Then it shall be in that day that everything and everyone who has not glorified him shall be reduced to nothing (Revelation 21:27).

08. Enter into the Rock Of Ages: Isaiah 26

Enter into the Rock Of Ages

Isaiah 26

Isaiah 26:1. 'In that day' is the last days, when the Christ shall come to redeem his church. 'That day' is from his coming to redeem until his coming to raise them from the grave. 'The land of Judah' is his church, his kingdom, which is often signified by the titles of Judah, Jerusalem, and Zion. His church is a strong city (the gates of hell shall not prevail against it); for he founded it, established it, and defends it. But its strength and security are not in walls, moats, and towers. Salvation in Christ Jesus—his blood and righteousness, his love and peace, his will and covenant—is their bulwark and wall against Satan, sin, death, and judgment.

Isaiah 26:2. 'Open ye the gates.' This is talking about Christ, the door, without which no one can enter into God's kingdom, presence, nor glory (John 10:1; John 10:9). This word is addressed to all concerned—angels, law, justice, ministers. Let it be known that there is one way, one door into his presence; and that way is not for, all the world, but for 'the righteous nation' (Jew and Gentile), made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them—sanctified by his Spirit and justified by his blood. These 'keep the truth' in that they hear his gospel, believe his gospel, embrace and continue in his gospel (Colossians 1:19-23; Psalms 24:7-10).

Isaiah 26:3. Those who are redeemed and righteous in Christ have access into his grace. They 'ascend into the hill of the Lord and stand in his Holy place' (Psalms 24:3-5); and they are kept in true, real, and perfect peace in him. Faith in Christ is not a passing fad with the believer; but his mind and heart are 'stayed on Christ,' fixed on Christ, rooted and grounded and firmly persuaded of his salvation, and cannot be separated from him (Romans 8:29-35). This peace is his peace and comes from a confidence in his promises, his person, his power, and his covenant (2 Samuel 23:5).

Isaiah 26:4. Christ is the Lord Jehovah, which is and was and is forever (Micah 5:2). He is 'The Rock of Ages.' In him is 'everlasting strength,' a sure refuge for all who trust in him'. 'Enter ye into the Rock' (Isaiah 2:10; Exodus 33:21-22). Our eternal Lord is the refuge of his people (Isaiah 32:1-2), and his promise is that 'they shall never perish nor shall any pluck them out of his hand' (John 10:27-29).

Isaiah 26:5-6. These verses speak of another city which he calls 'the lofty city.' 'He lifteth the poor and needy sinners out of the dust to set them among princes;' but he will bring down the proud and haughty, who trust in themselves that they are righteous and need no mercy (1 Samuel 2:6-10). God will make the enemies of Christ to be his footstool and one day shall vindicate his persecuted church by putting the proud under the feet of his despised people (Malachi 4:2-3).

Isaiah 26:7. Having spoken of God's wrath and judgments against the proud unbeliever, Isaiah returns his thoughts to the church. Their way, walk, and tenor of life are in the Spirit, unto the Lord,

and 'the way of uprightness,' because 'thou, most righteous' appointed their way. 'He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake' (Psalms 23; Ephesians 2:8-10).

Isaiah 26:8. This can be said of all the Old Testament believers who had some understanding of 'the way of God's judgment' and holiness—'we have waited for the Messiah' (Hebrews 11:13-15). The desire of our souls is to thy name (Isaiah 9:6); to God himself, in his perfection and covenant; to Christ, whose name is Emmanuel; to his gospel, which is our hope. 'Now unto him...' (Jude 1:24-25).

Isaiah 26:9. 'With my soul (sincerely, deeply, and affectionately) have I (and the prophet speaks for all of God's people) desired thee in the night' (in time of trouble and affliction, which is often called night or darkness). 'Yea (night and day), with my spirit within me will I seek thee.' I will continue to seek thee with intensesness and eagerness of spirit, for thou art the fountain of all mercy (Psalms 130:5-8; Isaiah 45:20-22). When his judgments (present or future) are in the earth, believers learn better what a righteous God he is and how wicked man is; and all the inhabitants of the world will see his holiness and justice and learn of his righteousness.

Isaiah 26:10. Judgment and affliction will not bring wicked men to repentance, and neither will the good things of this life bring them to faith in Christ. Sometimes the most evil people seem to be favored providentially, yet they do not learn the gospel of righteousness and go on dealing unjustly with others. They will not behold nor bow to the majesty of God from whom comes all goodness (Romans 1:19-22).

Isaiah 26:11. 'Though your hand is lifted high to strike them, Lord, they do not see it. But they shall see one day your love for your people and be ashamed for their evil toward thy people.'

Isaiah 26:12. Thou hast ordained peace for us, for all your works are for us and in us.

Isaiah 26:13. Other masters once ruled us, but now we acknowledge only your name.

Isaiah 26:14. The former idols are dead; you have destroyed them and made us forget them.

Isaiah 26:15. You have increased the nation a number no man can number, and you are glorified.

Isaiah 26:16-18. We have met with troubles and sought thee at the throne of grace.

Isaiah 26:19. Your dead shall live, O Lord; the saints shall be rewarded.

Isaiah 26:20-21. Come, the Lord's people, enter into the secret place, the Rock; abide in him until the storm passes by (Isaiah 4:6; Isaiah 25:4-5).

09. Christ—a sure foundation: Isaiah 28:7-20

Christ—a sure foundation

Isaiah 28:7-20 The nation Israel was blessed above all nations. A careful reading of Romans 9:1-5 will confirm this. Yet even with such advantages and revelations, they departed from God, from truth, and from true worship.

Isaiah 28:7-8. 'For all their tables are full of vomit and filthiness.' (1) The tables of the priest, where the Passover is supposed to be served, (2) the table of the prophet, where the children's bread should be prepared, (3) the tables around which the king and leaders sit are defiled. And from all these tables comes not the word of the Lord, but that which spews forth from bellies of men drunk with worldliness and evil. No place is clean, godly, nor honoring to him. Human will, wisdom, and ways command the day.

Isaiah 28:9. 'Whom shall God (or his true prophet) teach knowledge?' Who is there among these rebellious people who are capable or willing to be taught the true gospel of God's glory? 'Whom shall he make to understand the doctrine of Christ (ruin, redemption, and regeneration)?' One may as well attempt to teach infants as to teach these people. But, thank God, he does teach infants (spiritual babes—Matthew 11:25-26), those who are not too wise in man's wisdom. Those who hunger and thirst for the sincere milk of the word, he will teach (1 Corinthians 1:26-30).

Isaiah 28:10. When the reference is to these rebellious Israelites, because of their dullness and unwillingness to hear, it says that they have to be taught like little children, slowly, the same things being repeated over and over; but still they will not hear (1 Corinthians 14:20). In the case of his true children, the reference is to teach them one thing at a time, to write and learn one precept, one line at a time, until all is learned. Repetition here is desired, not avoided (Php 3:1).

Isaiah 28:11. This seems to be judgment and punishment upon these people, that God would subject them to hear teachers with stammering lips and strange languages, whom he will bring upon them and into whose power he will deliver them. Seeing they will not hear him nor his prophets, God will speak to them with a strange and rough language. Some writers believe this refers to the day when the Jews will hear the gospel from Gentiles and from men not considered to be educated and gifted.

Isaiah 28:12. The gospel was preached to them, (Hebrews 4:2; Hebrews 1:1). The Lord himself, by his prophets, said to the people (pointing to Christ in promise, prophecy, and picture) 'This is the rest!' 'All who are weary, distressed, laden with sin, come to the Saviour and find in him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption' (Matthew 11:28; Hebrews 4:9-11). 'Yet they would not hear!' 'Ye will not come to me' (John 5:39-47). They had no regard to God, to his prophets, nor his Christ (John 1:11).

Isaiah 28:13. The message of God was despised and ridiculed. They took the words out of the mouth of the prophet and ridiculed them as being too simple, too plain, and too repetitious! 'This is

all he can say—precept upon precept.’ They repeated it over and over, mocking the simplicity of it; but is this not true in all years and times, that the gospel of Christ crucified is ridiculed for its simplicity? its singleness? (2 Corinthians 11:3). The Jews seek a sign, the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ (1 Corinthians 1:22-24). Refusing the word of God, refusing the gospel of Christ—the rest of God—they fall backward upon their works, religion, and ceremonies, and so perish (Ezekiel 33:30-33).

Isaiah 28:14. Now hear the judgment of the Lord, ye scornful men (scoffers and those who make fun of his message and messengers), ye that rule in religion and lead the people in error (Romans 10:1-3).

Isaiah 28:15. This is what you have said: ‘We believe there is a God! We believe that men will die! We believe there will be a judgment and there is a hell! We believe that the flood of judgment will one day descend upon the sons of Adam! But it will not come to us because we have a covenant which we made among ourselves concerning these things. This is what we agree to be true. We have a refuge, a hiding place from the storm, and a foundation upon which we build our house and hope. This covenant is our religious denominations and organizations, our refuge is our professions of faith, and our foundation is our works, self-righteousness, and faithfulness to our religion!’ God says it is ‘a refuge of lies,’ based on false doctrine and ignorance of the truth of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

Isaiah 28:16. But there is an everlasting covenant the Lord has made (Hebrews 13:20-21; 2 Samuel 23:5). There is a refuge, a true hiding place from the storm (Isaiah 32:1-2). There is a foundation which shall stand eternally and support all who build thereon. It is our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:3-8).

1. A stone—not sand—a Rock in a weary land (Matthew 7:24-25).
2. A tried stone—tried by Satan, the law, men, and the Father; ‘yet without sin’ (Hebrews 4:14-16).
3. A precious cornerstone;
Precious to the Father who delights in him;
Precious to angels who worship him;
Precious to believers who love and look to him;
Precious for value and durability;
4. A sure foundation—one that cannot fail (John 6:37-40).
5. He that believeth shall never be ashamed here nor hereafter!

Isaiah 28:17-20. True judgment, according to the line and plummet (not by the eye and tongue). The exactness of God’s holiness, and faced with that test, the refuges of men and foundations of religion shall fall.

10. The Rock higher than I: Isaiah 32:1-4

The Rock higher than I

Isaiah 32:1-4

Most all agree that while these words apply to King Hezekiah, who reigned over Judah 29 years, who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, who was indeed a good king and a blessing to the people, this is a prophecy of the Messiah. It only has its full accomplishment in him and his kingdom.

Christ is the hiding place from winds of sin, trouble, and sorrow.

Christ is the only shelter from the storm of God's wrath.

Christ is the water of life in this dry and thirsty land.

Christ is the great rock, the tried stone, our only foundation.

Isaiah 32:1. 'Behold!' Look with wonder, awe, and rejoicing. The scriptures use this word often in reference to our Lord Jesus. 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive' (Isaiah 7:14). 'Behold, I bring you good tidings, unto you is born a Saviour' (Luke 2:10). 'Behold, the man' (John 19:5). 'Behold, I come quickly' (Revelation 22:12).

'A king shall reign.' Our Lord Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords' (Revelation 19:13-16). He reigns over the universe, over the world, and over his church (Psalms 2:6). He is Lord and King because he made all things (Colossians 1:16). He is Lord and King by royal decree (Hebrews 1:8-9; Php 2:9-11). He is Lord and King by his death (Romans 14:9). He is Lord and King by his resurrection (Acts 17:31).

'He reigns in righteousness.' Of course, 'the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom' (Hebrews 1:8; Psalms 45:6-7). His laws are just and right; his ways and rule are just and holy. But in the kingdom of the Son of his love, in the everlasting covenant of mercy to sinners, 'God set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare God's righteousness' (Romans 3:25), 'that God may be both just and justifier of believers' (Romans 3:26). Our King may show mercy; he must be righteous! Our Lord may lift the beggar from his dunghill of sin and make him a prince; but he must do it in the only way his law can be honored and his justice satisfied—by his own obedience and death as a man! (Romans 5:19; 2 Cor. 5-21; Galatians 4:4-5).

'And 'princes shall rule in judgment.' Are these his faithful 'prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers' (Ephesians 4:11-12) who are set over his church, who rule well (Hebrews 13:7) in the word, in the gospel, and in the ordinances?

Isaiah 32:2. 'And a man'—the God-man! (1 Timothy 3:16; Isaiah 9:6), the King-Messiah (Matthew 22:41-45), the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). It was promised and prophesied that Christ should come (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14); and this he willingly did and has become, for his elect, all

that God requires for their eternal salvation (Ephesians 1:3-6; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

'A hiding place from the wind,' from the wrath of God raised by our sin. Only in Christ can we be sheltered from his wrath (John 3:36). Christ has borne the wrath of the Father for us (Isaiah 53:4-6); he has endured the full penalty for sin and turned away the wrath (Romans 8:1). He is our refuge. Like the cities of Refuge protected the man-slayer from the avenger, we dwell safely, peacefully in him.

'A covert from the tempest,' or a shelter from all storms, from Satan's temptations. He is our shelter in all trouble, trial, sickness, and sorrow. Someone said, 'He who reckons on a peaceful calm from the cradle to the grave is a fool or a dreamer.' We may set sail on a sea as smooth as glass; but before the journey is over, our ships will reel to and fro, the fury of life's storms will be felt from the rudder to the topmost sail, and you will think that it shall surely sink; but he is the haven, the port, and the one who calms the storms. 'Hide me, O my Saviour, hide, 'til the storms of life be past.'

'As rivers of water in a dry place.' Isaiah is speaking of the fullness and abundance of grace in Christ. His grace is rich, free, and sufficient; for it flows from the boundless ocean of divine love! David knew something of the dry places (Psalms 63:1-2). All of the Lord's people experience the dry places and stand in need of comfort and refreshing in this dry and barren world. Oh, the times when study is a chore, when the heart is cold and depressed, when the flesh is weak and pain is great, when sorrows like sea billows roll over us and prayer seems like nothing but words! That's when he said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

'A shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' David in Psalms 61:2 gives us help on this high Rock.

1. 'From the end of the earth' is any place of absence from the temple where God dwelt above the mercy-seat, truly a weary land everywhere.

2. 'I cry unto thee when my heart is overwhelmed.' Troubles are of various kinds (provoking, perplexing, or gnawing), but these are overwhelming troubles, for life and death. 'My sins are ever before me' (Psalms 51:3).

3. 'Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.' If we would find the Rock of Ages, we are dependent upon his hand to lead us. We are so blind we can never find it, but his hand is powerful and tender. This Rock is The Rock (none other like it) which our God has laid (Isaiah 28:16). It is 'higher than I' because he is God; it reaches to heaven as Jacob's ladder. 'It is deeper than hell' (Job 11:7-9); as a man he descended to the deeps. It is a foundation (Luke 6:48), a fountain of water (John 7:37-38), a shade from the heat (Isaiah 4:6), a strong tower from the enemy (Psalms 61:3).

Isaiah 32:3-4. 'The eyes of them that see shall not be dim.' Believers who have been enlightened by the Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 4:6) to see Christ shall have a clear revelation of him in his person and work, and not dim as in the types and shadows, nor shall their sight ever be lost.

'The ears of them that hear shall hearken.' Those who hear his voice shall hear effectually, attentively, and affectionately. 'They shall come to Me' (John 10:14-16).

'The heart of the rash shall understand knowledge.' Those who have been ignorant and hasty in judging things too wonderful for them shall be taught of God, as was Saul of Tarsus (Php 3:6-8).

'The stammerer shall speak plainly.' Those who used to speak of the things of God foolishly and with no understanding shall now preach and teach plainly the good news of Christ (as we are doing now), who at one time had nothing of any value to say (2 Corinthians 4:7).

11. The joyful flourishing of our Lord's kingdom: Isaiah 35:1-10

The joyful flourishing of our Lord's kingdom

Isaiah 35:1-10 This lesson must begin with the closing verses of Chapter 34.

(Isaiah 34:1-2) The Lord will visit his enemies with great judgment; his Son shall triumph over all that oppose his kingdom; he will avenge and vindicate his church.

(Isaiah 34:14-15) Where there is great slaughter, the wild beasts, the owls, and the wolves gather together to feed upon the slain. They will all be there, everyone with her mate.'

(Isaiah 34:16-17) 'Seek ye out the scriptures,' the word of the Lord, and you will find that all of the prophecies, promises, and judgments shall exactly come to pass as he has said. 'None shall want her mate,' meaning that the prophecies shall be exactly fulfilled, even in the smallest circumstance! He has purposed it; he has commanded it; his Spirit shall fulfill them (Isaiah 46:9-11; Acts 15:18).

Isaiah 35:1-2. 'The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them'—glad for his prophecies, promises, and judgments. 'They shall rejoice and be glad' when he comes to fulfill his purpose, for they who were a wilderness and a desert shall blossom as a rose. They are described in Psalms 107:1-8; Psalms 107:14-15. His church (called out from every tribe, nation, tongue, and kindred of the world) shall be glorious as Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon, which were eminent parts of Canaan. Consider the glorious results of God's goodness to his people in Christ. Those who were strangers, wilderness dwellers, and once without God shall see the glory of the Lord. v. 3. 'Strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees.' Ye ministers and prophets and servants of God, comfort God's people, encourage those who are weak and ready to faint (Isa. 40:1-2). Give them his word of promises in Christ, which are faithful, sure, and steadfast (2 Corinthians 1:20). Encourage them with the hope of salvation, which is theirs in Christ. Hands and knees are mentioned because that is where the strength or weakness of any man appears.

Isaiah 35:4. 'Say to them that are of a fearful heart.' Is this not all of us on occasion? (a) We remember our sins and wonder how he could love and save us; (b) we consider the mysteries of Christ and the gospel, the miracle of resurrection, conformity to Christ, and eternal glory and are overwhelmed; and (c) we observe the unbelief of men and the weak and corrupt state of most churches and have a fearful heart or a hasty heart ready to flee from the enemy.

Say to them, 'Be strong and fear not.' Be strong in the faith of Christ! Fear not Satan, the world, nor any enemy. Do not doubt the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ relating to the world (he will avenge) or to his church. 'He will come and save you.'

1. He came in the flesh, took our nature; and by his obedience and death, he took vengeance on Satan, his works, principalities, and powers, which he destroyed (Isaiah 61:1-2; Romans 8:1).

2. He will come again and take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

Isaiah 35:5-6. When our Lord walked this earth, he opened the eyes of the blind, made the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak. But these miracles which he performed were not only evidence of his power, authority over demons and disease, and proof of his deity, but these miracles were types of spiritual healing and life. We, who were spiritually blind, who had no knowledge of God, nor of our deadness, nor of the way of life in Christ, do now see (2 Corinthians 4:3-6). We, who were deaf to the voice of God, now hear him speak by his spirit through his word. We, who were lame and dead, do now live and walk in the Spirit of God. These tongues, which were dumb to his praise and glory, do now speak of things heavenly, give thanks, and rejoice in him whom we once despised.

'Streams in the desert.' The most dry and barren souls and hearts now flow with living water (John 7:37-38).

Isaiah 35:7-8. This is the Lord's church—his kingdom—the congregation of the redeemed.

Once a parched ground (barren and unfruitful, a thirsty land, but now righteous in Christ, filled with the grace of God) has become a pool—'springs of water.'

We were the habitation of dragons, especially that great red dragon (Revelation 12:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-2). Now the powers of evil are gone and 'He maketh us to lie down in green pastures . . . beside the still waters' (Psalms 23:1-2). And there is a way of life in that church and kingdom called 'the way of holiness,' and the way is common to all his people. All walk in this way from the beginning of the world. 'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake' (Psalms 23:3). The unclean do not love this way, but it shall be for the redeemed. The way of holiness is Christ, who by his obedience and death makes us holy and righteous before God; and the way of holiness is the way believers live and walk. This way we preach plainly so that the wayfarer, though simple men and fools, shall not be misled.

Isaiah 35:9. It is not only a holy way and a plain way, but it is a safe and a sure way, free from all danger and death. 'He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ' (Php 1:6). 'No man shall pluck them out of my hand' (John 10:28-29).

Isaiah 35:10. The ransomed of Christ Jesus shall all return to the Lord in repentance and faith. 'They shall come to Mt. Zion with songs of joy and gladness; all sorrow and sadness shall flee away.' The salvation, joy, and happiness purchased by Christ for his people, which is begun and entered into here on earth, is continued in glory to all eternity.

12. The believer's comfort: Isaiah 40:1-9

The believer's comfort

Isaiah 40:1-9 Isaiah 40:1. 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.'

1. Who speaks? It is the Lord God of hosts. Do we have ears to hear what the Lord says?
2. To whom does he speak? He speaks to his prophets, preachers, pastors, teachers--all who are bond-servants of the Lord.
3. What is his commandment? 'Comfort ye my people.' There is a time to rebuke, reprove, and correct, and there is a time for examination; but the command here is to comfort!
4. Who are his people? We cannot comfort where God has not converted. We cannot cry 'peace' when there is no peace. We cannot give false assurance to rebels. Who are his people? They are a chosen people, a called people, a redeemed people, and a believing people.
5. Why do they need comfort? They are saved sinners who are conscious of their infirmities; they are a tried people who have troubles in the flesh; they are a persecuted people who are hated by the world.

Isaiah 40:2. What shall I say to his people to comfort them? What is the believer's source of greatest comfort? It is the good news of the gospel!

1. 'Cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished.' The battle is over and 'thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 15:55-58). All of our enemies have been engaged by our captain, and they are conquered and shall soon be under our feet as they are now under his: sin (Hebrews 10:17-18), self (Galatians 2:20), Satan (John 14:30; John 16:11), world (John 16:33), death (John 11:25-26).
2. 'Her iniquity is pardoned.' All of our sins (past, present, and future) are blotted out, cleansed, atoned for, and are remembered no more. The redeemed have no sins. 'With his spotless garments on, they are as holy as God's Son.'
3. 'Double for all her sins.' This denotes the sufficiency of his blood and the complete satisfaction made by Christ for all our sins. Not that more was required than was due; but his offering, being infinite, fully answers more than double what can be demanded. 'Where sin did overflow, grace did much more overflow.'

Isaiah 40:3-5. John the Baptist is the voice crying in the wilderness of Judea. There is a threefold effect of his office: the humiliation of some, the exaltation of others, and the revelation of the glory of Christ Jesus.

1. 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' The Messiah comes and John called upon men to repent, to lay aside all thoughts and ways contrary to his gospel and kingdom and to embrace him when he

comes.

2. 'Every valley shall be exalted.' When Messiah comes all who are depressed and bowed down with the guilt of sin, laboring and heavy laden, low and humble in their own eyes, shall be raised up and comforted.

3. 'Every mountain, and hill shall be made low.' The proud and haughty shall be brought down. Those who are elated with themselves and their own righteousness shall be humbled.

4. 'The crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain.' Could this be that those types, patterns, and pictures of the Old Testament should become clear in Christ, and prophecies, not so well understood, would be now plain and easy? (Luke 24:27; Luke 24:44-45).

5. 'And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.' Christ, himself, who is the brightness of the Father's glory (Hebrews 1:1-3), reveals his redemptive glory (Exodus 33:18-19), which is his chief glory.

6. 'All flesh shall see it;' not the Jews only, but Gentiles also, and not with bodily eyes, but with the eyes of their understanding, even the salvation of the Lord and his glory displayed in it. The everlasting gospel is called the gospel of his glory (1 Timothy 1:11; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

Isaiah 40:6-9. I prefer to look at these verses together, for I see the twofold, actually the three-fold, message of evangelism. Here is a command, 'Cry!' and a question, 'What shall I cry?' What shall I preach? What is the message men need to hear?

1. 'All flesh is grass, and all its glory and comeliness is as the flower of the field.' All flesh (young and old, Jew and Gentile, religious and profane) is as worthless, withering grass. We are born spiritually dead and worthless; nothing we can do in life improves the condition, and the death of the flesh only confirms its corrupt condition. 'In the flesh dwelleth no good thing' (Romans 7:18), and 'in the flesh no man can please God' (Romans 8:8). This must be preached in order to humble the pride of men and to show the necessity of Divine power in regeneration (John 3:5-7). Not only is all flesh grass, but even man's so-called righteousness (that which is comely and commendable compared to others) is as worthless as a fading flower (Isaiah 64:6). 'Man at his best state is altogether vanity.' We find this out 'when the Spirit of God blows upon it,' for he makes us to know the truth about ourselves in the light of God's holiness (Isaiah 6:5; Job 42:5-6).

2. 'The word of our God shall stand forever.' (Isaiah 40:8) This may be applied to the recorded word of our God, which is sure and certain, forever settled in heaven and always fulfilled, or rather Christ the word, who stands forever in his office, in the efficacy of his blood, in the fulness of his grace, and in the glory of his exaltation (Colossians 1:16-18).

3. 'Behold your God.' (Isaiah 40:9) Get up on a high mountain, lift up your voice, be not afraid, and say unto the people, behold your God!' John Gill said it best, 'Behold your God! That Divine person is come that was promised, prophesied, and expected; even Emmanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, God your Saviour; and who, being God, truly God, is able to save to the uttermost. Look to him with an eye of faith and be saved. Behold your God! Behold the Son of God, the Lamb of God, who has borne our sins and taken them away. Behold him now, as your King and your God, on the throne, made and declared Christ and Lord, crowned with glory and honor, on the same throne with his heavenly Father, having all power in heaven and earth,

and let the echo of your faith be, 'My Lord and my God.'

13. The holy one of Israel: Isaiah 41:8-14

The holy one of Israel

Isaiah 41:8-14 In the closing verses of Chapter 40, the Lord speaks to afflicted people who are groaning under troubles and sorrows, even complaining that the Lord took no notice of their calamities and sufferings.

(Isaiah 40:27) 'What are you saying, O Israel?'

1. 'My way is hid from the Lord.' Since the Lord has not delivered us from these troubles, he must take no notice of them.
2. 'My judgment (my cause and case) is ignored by God.' He allows my enemies to oppress me and does not avenge me nor take my part.

(Isaiah 40:28) The answer follows in these verses. Have you not known? Have you not heard? From the scriptures, from the history of the church, from the prophets, from all creation that the everlasting God—Jehovah—is the creator of all things, upholds all things, is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient! He does not change, faint, nor grow weary! No one can understand his majesty, his wisdom, nor his ways (Romans 11:33-36). He knows and cares for his people at all times, though they do not understand his mysterious ways.

(Isaiah 40:29) 'He gives power to the faint and strength to those who are weak.'

1. This is the good news of the gospel! 'Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come to the water; he that hath no money' (Isaiah 55:1). 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden' (Matthew 11:28; 1 Corinthians 1:26-30; Ephesians 2:1-5).
2. This is why Christ came; 'To seek and to save the lost' (Luke 19:10), to die for the ungodly and those without strength, without hope, and without God (Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:12).
3. This is the experience of all of the Lord's people! 'When we are weak in ourselves, we are strong in him' (2 Corinthians 12:9-11; 2 Corinthians 4:6-7). His grace, mercy, and strength are most glorified in our need, our weakness, and our inability. Gideon's experience is a picture of this; his army had to be depleted for God to have all glory.

(Isaiah 40:30-31) 'All who trust in and depend on the flesh shall utterly fall.'

1. Even young men who have pride in their strength and ability shall one day grow weary and utterly fall. This is a warning to those who trust in their spiritual strength, morality, and works; they shall utterly fall (Matthew 7:22-23).
2. But those who wait upon, look to, and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ—shall grow in grace, faith, patience, and understanding; shall be as eagles who fly higher out of danger and closer to God; shall walk in the spirit, continue in faith, and not quit.

Isaiah 41:1-7 is a warning to the idolators of the world. Isaiah 41:6-7 talk about them encouraging and assisting one another in making and worshipping idols.

Isaiah 41:8-9. 'But thou, Israel, art my servant.' While the nations of the world are servants of their idols and they own idols to be their gods, 'thou, Israel, art my people, and I am thy God' (Exodus 11:7; Deuteronomy 7:6-8). The reference is to spiritual Israel, represented by the nation of Israel.

1. 'Jacob whom I have chosen.' Often in scripture believers are referred to as 'sons of Jacob.' (a) Like Jacob, God loved us from the beginning; (b) like Jacob, God chose us from the beginning (Romans 9:10-13); (c) like Jacob at Bethel, God revealed the way of life to us also and promised to be with us; (d) like Jacob, God gave us a new name—Israel, 'a prince with God;' (e) like Jacob, God keeps us in all our journey and always brings us back to Bethel-his house!

2. 'The seed of Abraham, my friend.' A person is not of Israel because he is born a Jew, neither is he a son of Abraham by natural generation. We are true Israel who have been born of the Spirit of God, the word of God, and given faith to believe, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Redeemer (Galatians 2:7-9; Galatians 2:16; Romans 2:28-29).

3. 'I have taken you out of many nations, tribes, and tongues' (Revelation 7:9). 'I have chosen you and I will never cast you away' (John 6:37-39).

Isaiah 41:10-13. The people of God (the objects of his love, affection, and choice) are encouraged with the promises of grace, help, and strength from the Lord.

1. 'Fear not for I am with thee.' By purpose, providence, ordering, and overruling all things for your good, I am with you in special grace to provide for you, keep you, and comfort you.

2. 'Be not dismayed, I am thy God' by an everlasting covenant (2 Samuel 23:5).

3. 'I will strengthen thee, help thee, and uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' All of these mercies of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption are in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the man of his right hand—our righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30).

4. 'I will deal with your enemies'. That battle is not yours but mine, saith the Lord (2 Chronicles 20:15; Hebrews 10:30).

We are held in his hand as a child in the hand of a loving parent, and we need not be afraid (John 10:28-30).

Isaiah 41:14. 'Fear not, thou worm, Jacob.' By nature, birth, and practice we are worms.

1. We came from the earth, we dwell in it, are supported by it, and go back to the dust when we die. (Job 25:4-6).

2. We are impure as worms, weak and impotent as worms, mean and despicable as worms; and even our Lord himself was content to be called a worm and no man (Psalms 22:6). He was one with us to redeem us.

'I will help thee, saith the Lord (Jehovah) and thy redeemer the holy one of Israel.' This is our Kinsman Redeemer. This is our Messiah—our Substitute and Saviour (Isaiah 47:4). Over 24 times in this book of Isaiah, our Redeemer is called the holy one of Israel! We are holy in him; Israel is

holy in him! He is called 'the Lord our Righteousness' (Jeremiah 23:5-6). In him we are called, 'The Lord our righteousness' (Jeremiah 33:16).

14. The Messiah: Isaiah 42:1-21

The Messiah

Isaiah 42:1-21 This is one of the many places in the book of Isaiah which absolutely cannot be applied to anyone but the Messiah. It is evident that the prophet speaks of the Christ, for our Lord Jesus confirmed it in Matthew 12:14-21. Time and space will not permit us to comment on every word, so we will try to touch the high points.

Isaiah 42:1. His condescension.

'Behold my servant;' the Messiah, who was with God, who is God, and 'who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant' (Php 2:6-8). He is the servant, not of angels and men, but of the Divine Father, who chose him, called him, and sent him to accomplish the redemption of his people.

'Whom I uphold,' strengthen and help as man and mediator so that he did not sink under the weight of the sins of his people and the wrath of God.

'Mine elect.'

1. God chose men and not angels (Hebrews 2:16).
2. Christ is chosen, and we were chosen in him (Ephesians 1:3-4).
3. God delights and is well pleased in him and with us as we are considered in him (Ephesians 1:6-7).
4. God put his Spirit upon him, not as a divine person, but as a man for the work he would do (John 3:34-36).
5. By himself he shall bring forth righteousness, truth, and justice to the nations.

Isaiah 42:2-3. His humility and tenderness. Earthly kings and rulers cry out in defense of their programs, strive with others, lift up their standards, and campaign in the streets. They have no use for the weak and weary nor the frail and the faint, and their means are justified by their goals. But our Messiah is 'meek and lowly in heart, a tender plant, a man of sorrows, who openeth not his mouth.' He does not strive nor contend to know profit. His kingdom is not of this world, so he does not boast and try to rally support for himself in the streets. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom; his enemies are principalities and powers, rulers of darkness who are conquered and defeated by himself alone; his people are made willing in the day of his power by his Spirit and his gospel call. He came by his identification with us, his obedience and death to save sinners, weak and unworthy, frail and fainting; so he does not break the bruised, weak reed, but strengthens it! He does not quench the flickering lamp, but gives it oil to burn brighter. The bruised reed and the flickering, dimly burning lamp are his weak and frail people who are not cast off but comforted and cared for tenderly. His work is judgment and justice. The courts of heaven shall receive his people,

for he justifies them on the basis of truth and righteousness (Romans 3:25-26).

Isaiah 42:4. His success. 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged.' What the Father purposed, the Son purchased and the Spirit applied. How can it even be imagined that our God should fail to accomplish his redemptive will and work? (Isaiah 46:9-11; Isaiah 53:10-11; John 6:37-39). 'Till he have set judgment in the earth.' He fully satisfied the justice of God for the sins of his people, settled and sent his gospel to call out his people, and sat down at the right hand of majesty till all that he purposed and performed shall be done. 'The isles (islands, distant countries, and all nations) in hope wait for his word of grace,' for he shall have a people from them all (Psalms 110:1-3).

Isaiah 42:5-7. His assignment. How often our Lord Jesus referred to 'the work thou gavest me to do' (John 4:34; John 9:4; John 17:4).

1. The greatness of our God, who called and sent the Messiah, is set forth. He has the power, greatness, and authority to do what he will.

2. 'I have called and sent the Messiah in righteousness,' or in a righteous manner consistent with God's perfections (Psalms 85:10-13). Christ came a holy person (Hebrews 7:25-26) and fully obeyed God's law (Romans 5:19).

3. Christ was held, kept, sustained, and given to us as the surety, mediator, sum and substance of God's everlasting covenant of grace (Hebrews 13:20-21). All the blessings and promises of the covenant are in him, by him, and given through him (Hebrews 10:14-18).

4. 'He came to open blind eyes,' spiritually blind, to enable them by his gospel to see the sinfulness of sin, their need of a Saviour, and who he is! 'To set the prisoners free;' prisoners of sin, shut up to unbelief, and under the judgment of the broken law, in the darkness of spiritual death and ignorance (Luke 4:17-18) . 'If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.'

Isaiah 42:8-9. His name and knowledge. 'I am Jehovah. His name expresses his eternity, his immutability, his redemptive character. It is the name by which he made himself known to Israel of old. 'The just God and Saviour' (Isaiah 45:21). His name expresses his character and his redemptive glory (Exodus 33:18-19), which he will not give to another. Men who truly believe his name, call upon his name, and glorify his name shall be saved (Romans 10:13-14). He declares the former things and the new things before they come to pass (Isaiah 46:10).

Isaiah 42:10-12. His praise. These verses are summed up briefly in one phrase, 'Let them give glory unto the Lord and declare his praise' (Psalms 150).

Isaiah 42:13-15. His victory over his enemies. The Lord, for many ages, has permitted Satan, idolators, and rebels to go to and fro. He will one day roar, destroy, and devour them at once. The last enemy, death, shall one day be destroyed, and righteousness shall reign universally.

Isaiah 42:16-21. His redemptive glory. Isaiah 42:16-18 are spoken of the Gentiles, who shall be made to see and hear what they have never seen and heard; and Isaiah 42:19-20 refer to the Jews, who are called the servants and messengers of God and who claim to see and be perfect. But none are so blind and deaf as those who think they see and hear but do not! 'But the Lord is well pleased!' (Isaiah 42:21) for the obedience and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, who in life

and death magnified God's law and made it honorable. There is nothing so important to any who would know God as to be taught by God's spirit three things: (1) The holiness of our God, (2) the sinfulness and inability of our flesh, and (3) the righteousness of God effectually and sufficiently displayed in, and wrought out by, our Lord Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:1-4).

15. The believer's confidence: Isaiah 43:1-13

The believer's confidence

Isaiah 43:1-13 The first thing to be established in studying this awesome yet comforting scripture, with its positive promises and covenant mercies, is to whom does the Lord speak?

Isaiah 43:1. 'O Jacob ... O Israel.' He is not speaking to national Israel nor to the Jews which are natural descendents of Abraham. The Lord is speaking to his elect of all nations, to all who have been redeemed by Christ, called by his spirit, and who believe on him. In several places in scripture these believers are called 'sons of Jacob' or the 'seed of Jacob' (Isaiah 44:21-23; Isaiah 45:19; Malachi 3:6).

True Israel and true sons of Abraham and Jacob are only those who are in Christ (Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 3:7; Galatians 3:29).

We are sons of Jacob because, like Jacob, the Lord loved us, chose us, and gave us the birthright and a new name, 'Israel,' which means 'a prince of God' (Genesis 32:28).

'O Israel, fear not.' If a person does not fear sin, death, and judgment, he is either ignorant of the fearfulness of these enemies or God has assured him of deliverance from them. That is exactly what we have here!

1. 'Fear not I have redeemed thee.' I have, by my blood and righteousness, delivered thee from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:10-13); I have forgiven all your sins (1 Peter 1:18-19); I have redeemed you from all judgment (Romans 8:1).

2. 'Fear not, I have called thee by thy name' (John 10:14-16). This call is a divine call—'I called thee' (Romans 8:29-30). This call is a personal call—'by thy name.' This call is from darkness to the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13).

3. Fear not, thou art mine' (John 17:9-10). You belong to me.

Isaiah 43:2. 'When you pass through the waters' of trouble, sickness, and sorrows, I will be with you; and the rivers shall not overwhelm you nor destroy you.

'When you walk through the fire' of temptation, persecution, disappointment, and the Lord's 'trial by fire,' you will not be burned nor consumed (1 Peter 1:7).

Two comforting statements support us during these experiences. 'I will be with thee' (Psalms 23:4-6), and 'When you pass or walk through the water and the fire.' Our way to glory lies through these paths of suffering. Yet these paths, though they seem long, will end in his glorious kingdom. They are temporary!

Isaiah 43:3. 'For I am the Lord thy God.'

1. 'I am Jehovah;' the covenant God of his people. He is the holy, just, and righteous God of heaven and earth; and he is our Saviour and sanctifier. Here is the very heart of the gospel—'God was in Christ reconciling us' (2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Isaiah 45:21-22; Matthew 1:21-23). In Christ, God is just and justifier (Psalms 85:10).

2. Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba were all the enemies of God's people. He is saying that he will deal with, use, and even sacrifice all of these enemies to accomplish his purpose and the redemption of his kingdom (Exodus 11:5-7; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23).

Isaiah 43:4. Every believer knows that by our natural birth, carnal nature and walk, we are no different and in no wise better than the greatest sinner. But;

1. 'You are precious in my sight.' I chose you, adopted you into my family, and blessed you with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.

2. 'Thou hast been honorable;' or I have honored you by giving you to my Son to be his bride. I have crowned you with righteousness and glory and will conform you to his image.

3. 'I have loved you.' This love is the source and spring of all mercy and blessings from our God (Jeremiah 31:3). This is everlasting, infinite, and unchangeable love in Christ (Rom. 9:38-39; 1 John 4:10).

Isaiah 43:5-7. The promise in these verses is that 'his seed' (Galatians 3:16), 'his sons and daughters' (Hebrews 2:10-12), and everyone who is 'called by my name' (John 6:37-40) I will bring to glory (1 Peter 3:18) from all nations, kindred, and people. He created us, formed us, and made us accepted in Christ for his glory (Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 1:6; Ephesians 1:12; Ephesians 1:14).

Isaiah 43:8-9. The Lord God challenges the heathen nations who have eyes but cannot see his glory, who have ears but hear not his word, who worship idols! Produce your gods who can declare the future from the beginning (Isaiah 45:20-21). Give us witnesses and proof of the deity of your idols, or be still and know that I am God and there is none else. 'It is truth.'

Isaiah 43:10. 'You are my witnesses.'

1. I have chosen you from the beginning.

2. I have given you to Christ and Christ to you in an everlasting covenant.

3. All that I have written, promised, and pictured of him has come to pass as I have spoken (Isaiah 46:9-11).

4. I have called you out of darkness, given you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand me, to know me, and to believe me (1 John 5:20).

Isaiah 43:11-13.

'I am the Lord; beside me there is no saviour.'

'I have declared you to be mine and I have saved you.'

'I will work and none can hinder nor reverse it.'

16. A just God and a Saviour: Isaiah 45:16-25

A just God and a Saviour

Isaiah 45:16-25 This chapter contains prophecies concerning Cyrus (the deliverer of the Jews from captivity) and the great things God would do for him and by him (Isaiah 45:1-3). The reasons God would do these things were for the sake of Israel and that he might be known to be the only true God, who is the maker and owner of all things (Isaiah 45:4-7). A declaration is made of the Messiah as the author of salvation and righteousness (Isaiah 45:8), and the contention and murmuring of the Jews about the Messiah, son of man (Isaiah 45:9-10). Christ is the antitype of Cyrus; and the Lord says, 'Ask of me and expect great things to be done by me through the Messiah, whom I have raised up in righteousness. He shall build my city' (Isaiah 45:11-13). The conversion of the Gentiles is prophesied, who shall come over to the church, subdued and conquered by the grace of God, saying, 'God, the only God, is in thee' (Isaiah 45:14). God is sovereign in mercy and will reveal himself as Saviour when and to whom he will (Isaiah 45:15). But the makers of idols and worshippers of false gods shall be confounded and ashamed forever (vv.16).

Isaiah 45:17. 'But Israel shall be saved in the Lord.' The word 'Israel' is used in the Bible over 2500 times. Most of the time it refers to the nation Israel, the typical people. But here and in many other places it refers to spiritual Israel—the true people of God among all nations. True Israel are the sons of Abraham in Christ, the seed (Romans 4:16; Galatians 3:7; Galatians 3:16; Galatians 3:29). He is not a Jew (Israel) which is one outwardly (Romans 2:28-29; Romans 9:7-8). All who are given to Christ, for whom he died, who are called to repentance and faith are Israel and shall be saved with an everlasting salvation (Malachi 3:6; Romans 11:29; John 6:37-39). They shall never be ashamed nor put to shame, forever!

Isaiah 45:18. This is no idle promise! God's creation is not in vain. He created the heavens and the earth; and out of all of it will come his new heaven and new earth, which he formed to be inhabited by a people conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:19-23; Romans 8:29-30). The end of all things is decreed and determined by our God before one stone was laid in the earth's foundations (Isaiah 46:9-11; Ephesians 1:3-6).

Isaiah 45:19. This covenant of grace and plan of redemption is no secret plan! God said, 'I did not whisper the way of life in secret; I did not hide it in a dark place, nor did I say in vain to the sons of Jacob, seek ye the Lord.' God, the Lord, speaks in righteousness and justice to all the earth. He has made known his law, his righteousness and holiness, and his mercy to sinners by his grace through the one great Mediator, High Priest, and atonement, which enables him to be both just and justifier (Romans 3:19-26). The scriptures (translated into 2000 languages) are clear to all who read, but 'ye will not come to Christ' (John 5:39-40).

Isaiah 45:20. Men who turn from the Almighty God to their own gods and ways of salvation have no knowledge, for they pray to and preach about an impotent god who cannot save. The god of

men cannot do his will but must wait upon the will of the creature. The living God cannot lie and can do nothing contrary to his nature; but he can save sinners, for in his infinite wisdom and power he has provided in Christ a righteousness which enables him to be a 'just God and a Saviour' (Romans 10:1-4).

Isaiah 45:21. He has declared this glorious salvation from ancient times, from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Matthew 25:34; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8). Who can do this? Who only can declare the end from the beginning? Only the sovereign, almighty, omnipotent God; and there is none beside him. But here is a key—a truth to be learned—he is a 'just God and a Saviour.' In saving sinners God cannot, will not, and does not compromise his holiness. That is why Christ, the God-man, must come, must obey the law, must die on the cross—to enable God to be holy as well as merciful (Romans 3:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 1:16-17).

Isaiah 45:22. Then to whom should we look if we would be saved? To whom must we look if we would be saved? To him!

1. The word is look, not work, labor, nor serve. These things are the results of salvation, but salvation and eternal life is the gift of God through the person and work of Christ. Only believe and live! (John 3:14-16; John 3:36; Acts 13:38-39).

2. 'All the ends of the earth.' All men died in Adam, all men are under the curse of sin, and all men (Jew or Gentile) will look to Christ and be saved or they will perish (John 14:6; Acts 4:11-12).

Isaiah 45:23. Christ, being the true God, can swear by no greater (Hebrews 6:13). This shows that what follows is of the greatest importance. 'The word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness,' concerning how men are to be saved, agreeable to truth and justice, 'and will not return' nor be changed. 'Unto Christ Jesus shall every knee bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord' (Php 2:9-11). Men will repent, believe, and own Christ to be their Lord now and be saved (Romans 10:9-10); or they will, in the day of judgment, confess it in their utter damnation.

Isaiah 45:24. This is the confession of all believers, 'In the Lord Jesus Christ we have righteousness, acceptance, and strength.' We came to him; and in coming to him, we came to God (1 Peter 3:18). We were at one time 'incensed against him' and are ashamed of our unbelief, and those who continue to reject him shall eternally be ashamed.

Isaiah 45:25. All of spiritual Israel, whether Jew or Gentile, given to Christ, represented by Christ, redeemed by Christ, and interceded for by Christ shall be justified in him and shall glory in him, not in themselves, but in him who is made unto us all we need (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

17. The Messiah – prophet: Isaiah 49:1-16

The Messiah – prophet

Isaiah 49:1-16 This is another powerful and encouraging prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ, redemption by him, and his promise never to forget his covenant people. If we consider six points set forth in these verses, it will help us to understand the passage.

Isaiah 49:1-4. The nations are exhorted to listen to God's Messiah-prophet.

1. 'The Lord hath called me.' He is the Father's prophet (Deuteronomy 18:18-19). He is the messenger of the covenant (Malachi 3:1). He is the apostle of our profession (Hebrews 3:1) and God's last prophet (Hebrews 1:1-2). Before he was born, all of the prophets wrote of him (Acts 10:43; John 5:46). They not only told of his coming, but they wrote and preached 'his name,' which fully identifies his work.

2. 'The Father hath put his words in my mouth like a sharp sword.' (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 1:16). The word of the Messiah is the living, quickening, saving words of God. The word of Christ is like a sharp, two-edged sword, so alive, so penetrating it reaches the most secret places, discerns the thoughts, and reveals the will and purpose of God (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23).

3. 'Thou art my servant' (Isaiah 42:1; Hebrews 10:7). 'O Israel' is a name of Christ as the Head of the Israel of God. 'In whom I will be glorified.' This is why Christ came, why he died, and why we are saved—to glorify God' (John 17:1-4; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; Ephesians 1:3-6).

4. In Isaiah 49:4 it appears that the Messiah-Prophet (like all of the prophets) complains that his message and ministry are in vain because the world knew him not and Israel received him not (John 1:10-11; Matthew 23:37). 'Yet, surely' my work of justifying and judgment is assigned by my Father, and so is my reward promised by him (John 6:37; Php 2:9-11; Isaiah 53:10-11).

Isaiah 49:5-6. The Messiah's call and appointment to his office and his success.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ was ordained of the Father before the world was, in an everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20-21; Hebrews 7:21-22) to be his servant.

2. 'To bring Jacob again to him.' Jacob is all of his chosen people, loved of God, the Israel of God from all nations (called the seed of Abraham in Galatians 3:7; Galatians 3:29). He will redeem all of them and bring them to God (1 Peter 3:18; John 6:37-40; John 10:27-29).

3. 'Though the Jews be not gathered.' Only a remnant shall be saved (Romans 9:27; Romans 11:1-5). 'Yet I am glorified and pleasing in the eyes of my Father' (Matthew 3:17; John 8:29).

4. 'It is a light thing.' To redeem anyone is a great thing and can only be accomplished by the God-man, and that by his sovereign power—his perfect life and atoning death. But his Father has given him more than the remnant of Israel; he has given him the world of believers (Psalms 2:6-8;

Revelation 7:9-10).

Isaiah 49:7-8. He is despised of men, but chosen of God, the victorious head of the church.

1. Isaiah speaks in Isaiah 53:1-3 of the attitude of both Jew and Gentile toward God's Redeemer and Holy One. But though he is despised of most, he is beloved, believed, and worshipped by those whom the Lord is pleased to call; and among the called ones are even some kings and princes. The Lord said, 'not many' noble; he did not say 'not any' (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

2. 'In an acceptable time...the day of salvation' is the fullness, of time, when God was pleased to prepare for him a body and send him into this world to redeem his people (Galatians 4:4-5). The Father gave him for a covenant of the people, that by him all of his elect shall be fully saved. As the man sent to redeem, the Father heard him, helped him, preserved him, and accepted him, and accepted all whom he represented in him (Ephesians 1:3-7).

Isaiah 49:9-12. The full and complete redemption of the entire kingdom. When Israel left Egypt, Moses said, 'There shall not a hoof be left behind in Egypt' (Exodus 10:26). Just read carefully these words in Isaiah 49:9-12 describing the full and glorious exodus of his church out of all bondage into the glorious kingdom of our Lord Jesus (Colossians 1:13).

Isaiah 49:13. He is worthy of all praise in heaven and earth.

1. 'The heavens are joyful'—the seraphims (Isaiah 6:2-3), the angels (Hebrews 1:6; Luke 15:10), the multitude of redeemed in glory (Revelation 5:9-10). This is the song of praise heard there (Psalms 24:7-10).

2. 'The earth break forth into singing.' This is the believers on earth. All men ought to praise the Lord, but they will not. His people will continually praise him; and if they did not, the stones would (Luke 19:38-40).

3. What is the cause of such praise and rejoicing? Here it is! 'The Lord Jesus hath comforted his people (Isaiah 40:1-2) and will have mercy upon his afflicted people.' vv.14-16. The church experiences tribulation but is assured of his love forever.

1. Because of heavy and fiery trials, Zion (the church), out of sorrow and heartache, sometimes feels deserted and forsaken of her Lord. David experienced this (Psalms 73 : Psalms 77:7-9).

2. But the Lord assured us of his infinite, everlasting, and unchanging love forever! Can a woman forget the child of her womb? Yes, some do! 'Yet I will not forget thee!' As the names of Israel's tribes were graven on the breastplate of Aaron, the High Priest (Exodus 29), and upon his heart, our names are on the heart and hands of our Great High Priest—the Lord Jesus! The walls of his church (the living temple) are continually before him.

18. The Redeemer describes himself: Isaiah 50:1-11

The Redeemer describes himself

Isaiah 50:1-11

All scriptures declare and reveal the person and work of Christ Jesus, our redeemer (Acts 10:43). He is the 'key of knowledge' denied by the Pharisees and lawyers (Luke 11:52). When Paul wrote, 'He died, was buried, and rose again according to the scriptures,' he was referring to the Old Testament scriptures such as those before us (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Isaiah 50:1. 'Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?' When a man divorced his wife, he was required to give her a paper stating that he had officially divorced her. Our Lord says, 'You have no such bill; I did not forsake you.'

'Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?' When a man was so heavily in debt that he could not pay, he would sell his children into slavery to satisfy his debts. The Lord owes no one; he has no creditors. The truth of the matter is, 'for your sins you have sold yourselves. For your transgressions are you separated from God.' Man's ruin, spiritual death, and slavery lie at his own door. 'Your sins have separated between you and your God' (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Isaiah 50:2-3. 'When I came, was there no man?' He was in the world and the world knew him not; he came unto his own and his own received him not (John 1:10-11; Isaiah 53:1-3). 'When I called, was there none to answer?' He called to peace, rest, and to the marriage feast; and they made light of it. He stretched out his hand, and no man regarded (Proverbs 1:24-28). Sinners are not to be pitied, but rather to be blamed; for our condemnation is our own fault.

God is able to save; he is able to redeem all who call upon him. He has power to deliver; nothing is too hard for our God. (1) He dried up the sea for Israel to cross over, (2) he made the river Jordan a wilderness, (3) he clothed the heavens with blackness (Exodus 10:21), (4) he made sackcloth to cover the sun (Revelation 6:12). Preachers today may make man to be more than he is and God to be less than he is; but when our God describes himself, he declares his majesty, power, and total sovereignty (Romans 9:15-16). The Bible knows nothing of an impotent God nor a doormat named Jesus. He declares, 'I have spoken it. I will bring it to pass. I have purposed it. I will do it. My counsel shall stand' (Isaiah 46:9-11; Romans 8:29-31).

Isaiah 50:4. The Lord describes his prophetic office. You are familiar with the fact that our Lord has a three-fold office. He is the King, typified by David. As King he reigns over all by decree, by design, and by the fact that he died that he might be Lord. He is that priest forever after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:17-25), and he is that prophet spoken of by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18-19). 'This is my beloved Son; hear ye him' (Hebrews 1:1-2). 'He that heareth me, heareth my Father.' 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him' (Matthew 11:27; John 17:6-8). Our Prophet reveals and manifests the Father's will, word, and work.

Isaiah 50:5. The Redeemer declares his submission as the messenger of the covenant and the Father's servant (Isaiah 42:1). He is the God-man and servant who was willing to do all that was required to redeem the elect. 'The Lord hath digged or bored my ear.' This comes from the scripture in Exodus 21:1-6 where the slave, who had served his time and was free to go, chooses out of love for his master to remain as a willing, loving bonds slave, and has his ear bored before the judges. 'No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down willingly' out of love for the Father's will and love for his people.

Isaiah 50:6. The Redeemer describes himself as the suffering servant. 'He opened not his mouth' against the witnesses, the charges, nor those who abused him (Isaiah 53:7). 'He gave his back to the smiters' (Matthew 27:26) and his face to those who spit upon him and pulled out his beard (Matthew 26:67). The suffering and death of our Redeemer was no accident nor unexpected tragedy. It was decreed by the Father (Acts 2:23; Acts 4:27-28), prophesied in scripture (Isaiah 53:4-6; Acts 13:29), and fulfilled by the Son--willingly.

Isaiah 50:7-9. The Redeemer describes the success of his work.

1. 'The Lord God will help me.' This is no contradiction of the deity of Christ nor any sign of weakness in him, but he was a man with the weaknesses and limitations of flesh and needed the strength and power of his God to effect the greatness of the work of our redemption (Luke 27:42-43).

2. 'I shall not be confounded nor ashamed,' neither of his ministry (which was with power and authority in truth), nor of his obedience (which was perfect and pleasing to the Father), nor of his sufferings (for the sake of his people), nor of his work of redemption (which was effectual) (John 17:4-5).

3. 'I have set my face like a flint (Luke 9:51) for he is near that justifieth me.' The Father designed and decreed his death and sent him into the world. The Father was near him in his whole state of humiliation and justified him from all the false charges brought against him and from the sins of his people laid upon him as evidenced by his resurrection (Acts 13:29-30; Acts 17:31). 'Who shall contend with me and who shall condemn me?' Not Satan, nor the law, nor the justice of God. Satan came and found nothing in him, and he honored the law and satisfied justice.

Isaiah 50:10-11. The Lord sets forth two classes of people.

1. Those who fear the Lord and have been given ears to hear the voice of Christ and see the glory of God in the face of Christ. They know they are in the darkness of sin and have no light; therefore they look to Christ, trust him for all truth and righteousness, and stay upon their God. These shall never be ashamed.

2. But there are those who will not come to him, but rather depend upon their own works and righteousness. They 'kindle a fire' and 'walk in the light of their own fire.' These shall lie down in death and eternal sorrow and have judgment at God's hand.

19. Thy God reigneth: Isaiah 52:7-15

Thy God reigneth

Isaiah 52:7-15

Introduction:

(Isaiah 52:1-6) By Zion is meant the church in the days of the Messiah and following his manifestation in the flesh and his exaltation. 'My people went down into Egypt; they were oppressed and my name was continually blasphemed;' but Isaiah 52:6 is the good news of redemption!

1. 'My people shall know my name'—Jehovah (Saviour-God). They shall understand my power and goodness in Christ (1 John 5:20; Jeremiah 31:33-34).
2. 'In that day,' when the Lord Jesus is revealed at Bethlehem, the cross, and resurrection. 'He that hath seen me hath seen my Father' (John 14:9; 2 Corinthians 5:19).
3. 'That I am he that doth speak.' All the promises and prophecies are in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20) and are not the words of a weak and deceitful man, but are the words and promises of the unchangeable, omnipotent, and covenant-keeping God who speaks and says, 'Behold, it is I' (Luke 24:36-39).

Isaiah 52:7. This is Christ, the messenger of the covenant (Malachi 3:1), the apostle of our profession (Hebrews 3:1), who was anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek (Isaiah 61:1) 'upon the mountains' of Israel and of the Gentile world.

1. This may be applied to all those who preach the gospel and bring the good news of salvation in Christ, to the Lord's sheep. The messenger and the message are both loved and welcomed.
2. 'That publisheth peace...that publisheth salvation.' This is the good news to Zion—city of God—church of the firstborn; permanent peace and salvation, eternal peace and salvation are accomplished by the blood of Christ. And it is full, complete, and free to them because their God, who is sovereign, who reigns, has finished the work (Hebrews 10:12-14). It is the published record (1 John 5:10-12).

Isaiah 52:8. 'Thy watchmen;' perhaps this refers mainly to his apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastor-teachers, bringers of good tidings in Christ.

1. 'They lift up their voices.' It is a public ministry (Isaiah 40:9-10). There are many of them who labor together (1 Corinthians 3:4-9; Php 1:16-18).
2. 'They shall see eye to eye' (2 Corinthians 4:5-7). In the Old Testament the Lord refers to his revelations to his servants as being 'mouth to mouth' (Numbers 12:8) and 'face to face' (Exodus 33:11) and 'eye to eye' (1 John 1:1-2). They are eye and ear witnesses of the word and works of

Christ. Therefore, their testimony of the gospel shall be valuable and essential when 'The Lord shall bring again Zion.' Read Romans 10:13-15! They must and will hear!

Isaiah 52:9-10. This calls for joy, singing, and praise; for the Lord God has comforted and redeemed his people. He has 'made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations.' That is, he has revealed the gospel of his power, glory, and righteousness openly in the sight of all nations. Everywhere Christ is preached, his holiness and power are set forth (Psalms 98:3). The sound of the gospel is everywhere (Romans 10:17-18; Psalms 19:3; Hebrews 4:2).

Isaiah 52:11-12. These verses will open up to us when we read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. When the Spirit of God reveals the gospel of Christ to us, as he did to religious Saul of Tarsus, we depart from our works religion, our former false gospel, and 'touch not the unclean' and have no more part with them. 'Ye that bear the vessels of the Lord' (his preachers) must be pure from false methods, means, and messages. His servants 'go not in haste or by flight.' They do not hide, flee, nor fear the enemy, but openly, boldly, quietly, and safely preach his gospel; for 'the Lord will go before you and will be your reward.' He will be your captain and gather you up.

Isaiah 52:13-15. The chapter is concluded with an account of the humiliation, exaltation, person, work, and office of the Messiah!

1. 'Behold, my servant.' This is the title given to our Lord frequently (Isaiah 42:1; Isaiah 49:5-6; Isaiah 53:11; Php 2:7).
2. 'Shall deal prudently.' He shall manage the affairs of his kingdom with wisdom and shall prosper (Isaiah 53:10-11). He shall give understanding and make men wise unto salvation.
3. 'He shall be exalted, extolled, and be very high.' Here are three words which signify the same thing to express the height, glory, and majesty to which the Father has exalted him because of his work (Php 2:5-11; Revelation 5:12-13).
4. 'As many were astonished, amazed at thee.' The servant of God—the Son of God—became an object of horror. His sufferings of soul were indescribable and beyond our understanding (Isaiah 53:10); and 'his visage (his face, body, and whole appearance) were marred more than any man.' From the manger to the cross, he was an object of ridicule, contempt, and 'a reproach of men and despised' (Psalms 22:6). But his death under the curse of the law and the wrath of God was with sweat and blood, with scourging and intense agony. 'Astonished' can not only be applied to how low he became, but to how high he is raised.
5. 'So shall he sprinkle many nations' (a) with his blood, which is called the blood of sprinkling (Hebrews 12:24) and shall justify them (Isaiah 53:11; Titus 3:5); or (b) with his word, which is compared to rain (Isaiah 55:10-11; Deuteronomy 32:2-3) and to water (John 3-5).
6. 'Kings shall be silent before him' out of humility, reverence, and admiration for his wisdom. He is the King of Kings! All who are called (1 Corinthians 1:26-30) shall be eager to hear of him.
7. 'That which had not been told or heard shall they see and consider' (Romans 15:19-21). This certainly is true of the Gentiles who had not the law, the testimony, or the tabernacle. But all to whom the Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus have their eyes opened to behold the glory of Christ, and their ears anointed to hear him speak in his word (Matthew 13:16-17).

20. Our confession of faith: Isaiah 53

Our confession of faith

Isaiah 53

Someone asked an old minister of the gospel, 'Is your creed in print?' He replied, 'Yes, you will find it all in Isaiah, Chapter 53.' Here is the gospel of God's grace in one chapter.

Isaiah 53:1. 'Our report' is our message of the love, mercy, and grace of God in Christ Jesus. It is the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1-4). There has never lived a prophet who did not mourn the fact that men would not believe the good news of grace.

'The arm of the Lord' is Christ Jesus, the wisdom and power of God; for the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Natural men do not see, hear, nor understand how God can be just and justifier, righteous and merciful to sinners through the obedience and death of Christ, the substitute (1 Corinthians 2:8-14). He must be revealed to the heart by the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 53:2. 'A tender plant' signifies his lowly entrance into the world. He came not full grown in the pomp and glory of men but as a tiny, frail, helpless infant, born of a woman (Galatians 4:4-5).

'A root out of a dry ground' reveals the condition of David's house and the nation of Israel at this time. There was nothing left of the glory of David's kingdom, only dry ground, its king an unlikely son of a carpenter (John 6:42).

'No form ... no comeliness ... no beauty.' In sending our Redeemer into the world, the Lord God rejected and refused all fleshly, human attraction. Anything that would attract the eye of the flesh or support of the natural mind was refused. 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 1:10-11).

Isaiah 53:3. 'Despised and rejected of men.' Because of the lowliness of his birth, the poverty of his parents, his hometown and vocation, his lack of formal education, the people with whom he associated, his personal habits, the doctrine he preached, his claim to be one with the Father, and his condemnation of their tradition, everybody who was anybody turned from him, esteemed him not, and despised him. 'A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' From the cradle to the grave, two words can sum up his pilgrimage through this world—'Jesus wept' (Lamentations 1:12).

Isaiah 53:4. 'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' The grief and sorrows, spiritual infirmities and sicknesses (Matthew 8:17), which he bore were not his own but ours. He had no sin, knew no sin, and did no sin. He was our substitute and representative.

'Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.' The wrath of God and the sword of God's justice were sharpened to pierce him because he bore our sins and stood in our place. Though he had no sin, he stood before the justice of God as the world's greatest sinner; for on him were laid all the sins of all the elect of all ages.

Isaiah 53:5. If you would learn the gospel, then learn the meaning of these two words—substitution and satisfaction. ‘He was wounded for our transgressions.’ He was literally our substitute before the law and justice of God. In our place, in our stead, bearing our transgressions and all of our iniquities, he took upon himself all that justice could inflict. He made full satisfaction, for ‘by his stripes we are healed.’ God is reconciled, the debt is paid, justice is satisfied. He fully reconciled us to God by his obedience and his death (2 Corinthians 5:19-21). The heart of the sinner was not changed toward God in the sufferings of Christ (that is accomplished later by the Holy Spirit and the word), but the wrath of God was removed toward the sinner. Reconciliation is the work of God in Christ toward himself (Romans 3:24-26).

Isaiah 53:6. The prophet is careful not to say ‘they’ or ‘them,’ but ‘we!’ ‘All we like sheep’ and ‘the iniquity of us all.’ Read Isaiah 53:4-6 and put your name in every place you read ‘our’ and ‘we.’ Someone wrote: ‘My sins, my sins, my Savior, how sad on thee they fall; when I see them in thy death, I ten-fold own them all. My sins, my sins, my Savior, their guilt I never knew; till I saw them at the cross, the Lord of hosts they slew.’

Isaiah 53:7. ‘He opened not his mouth.’ He was a willing Redeemer. ‘No man takes my life, I lay it down.’ He was brought as a lamb to the altar, as a sheep to be shorn of all dignity, comfort, honor, and even his life. ‘Yet he opened not his mouth,’ not against his people, his Father, his enemies, nor justice. He was willing to die for his sheep (John 10:14-18).

Isaiah 53:8. His life was taken away in a violent manner, under a pretense of justice. Wrong charges were brought against him; false witnesses lied. ‘He was cut off out of the land of the living.’ Who shall declare the wickedness of men? But for the transgression of his people he was stricken (1 Peter 3:18).

Isaiah 53:9. ‘Grave with the wicked’ signified the fact that he was assigned to die between two thieves. ‘With the rich in his death’ denotes the fact that he was laid in the borrowed tomb of a rich man. Such vile and wicked treatment was accorded him, although he had done no violence and knew no sin.

Isaiah 53:10. ‘It pleased the Lord to bruise him.’ This is a key verse. (1) The Lord bruised him, (2) the Lord put him to grief, and (3) the Lord made soul an offering for sin. The Father not only permitted him to suffer as our substitute and sin-offering, he purposed it, predestinated it, and willed him to die (Acts 2:22-23; Acts 4:26-28). His soul suffering shall make an offering, an atonement for our sins; and ‘he shall see his seed’ (every son, sheep, and elect person is seen, known, and loved by Christ); ‘he shall prolong his days’ (he lives forever and so shall they); and ‘The pleasure, purpose, and will of the Father shall prosper, be accomplished, fulfilled in his hands’ (John 3:35; Ephesians 1:3-14).

Isaiah 53:11. Our Lord did not suffer in vain. He is ‘satisfied,’ yea even seated, having finished his work! All for whom he suffered are justified, for he bore their iniquities (Romans 8:29-32). ‘Payment God’s justice cannot twice demand, first at my bleeding surety’s hand, then again at mine.’

Isaiah 53:12. He is exalted above all exaltation (Php 2:9-11), and he shall divide the spoil of the strong because:

1. He has poured out his soul unto death—satisfaction.
2. He was numbered with the transgressors—representation.
3. He bore the sins of many—substitution.
4. He made intercession for the transgressors—mediation.

21. Seek ye the Lord: Isaiah 55

Seek ye the Lord

Isaiah 55

Isaiah 53 sets forth the gospel provided through the suffering Saviour. Isaiah 54 sets forth the gospel promises that are sure and certain (Isaiah 54:10; Isaiah 54:16-17). Isaiah 55 sets forth the gospel proclaimed to the needy. The mercies of God in Christ are a proclamation to all men (Mark 16:15) and an effectual call to his sheep (John 10:27-29).

Isaiah 55:1. 'Ho, everyone that thirsteth,' not in a natural sense as the woman at the well first thought; but everyone whose soul thirsts for fellowship with God (for mercy, forgiveness, and life) is called to the fountain of life.

'Come to the waters.' Come to the water of life that cleanses and refreshes, to the wine that makes the heart glad and to the milk which gives life and health. It's free to those who are poor and have nothing to pay; it's already paid for by the blood of Christ (Romans 3:24).

Isaiah 55:2. Why do men spend time, energy, and strength in pursuing a false religion which is not the bread of life and can never satisfy? Salvation by works is not bread, it is chaff; it is not nourishing, it is harmful; it will not satisfy, only condemn! 'Listen to me,' saith the Lord, and feed upon Christ; and your soul shall rest and delight itself in his fulness (Colossians 2:9-10).

Isaiah 55:3. Here are two precepts and two promises. The precepts

1. 'Incline your ear.' Is this asking too much of beggars? of guilty sinners? The body is fed through the mouth, and the soul is fed through the ear. You can hear the error of the world and poison your soul, or you can hear the precious word of God and live. 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'

2. 'Come unto me' (Isaiah 1:18; Matthew 11:28; John 7:37-38). Don't turn to religion, to law, nor to men. 'Come to me.' The promises

1. 'And your soul shall live.' There is power and life in the gospel (Romans 1:16; James 1:18). All that God has for sinners is in Christ. Those spiritual blessings are ours through a union with Christ; that union with Christ comes by faith; faith comes by hearing the word of truth (Ephesians 1:13-14).

2. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' Peter calls these 'precious promises.' This is the everlasting covenant which David (on his dying bed) called 'all my salvation and all my desire' (2 Samuel 23:5). Here are five of those sure mercies of David.

'I will be their God and they shall be my people' (Jeremiah 31:33).

'They shall all know me' (Jeremiah 31:34).

'I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sins no more (Jeremiah 31:34).

'I will give them one heart and one way' (Jeremiah 32:39).

'I will not turn away from them and they shall not depart from me' (Jeremiah 32:40).

Isaiah 55:4. This everlasting covenant is made with our Surety, that great Shepherd of the sheep, Christ Jesus (Hebrews 13:20-21). The Lord has given him for a witness, for he is that Prophet who manifests and reveals the Father (Deuteronomy 18:18-19). He is a leader, for he is our great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec; he is our shepherd, who leads us in the paths of righteousness; and he is commander, or King of kings!

Isaiah 55:5. We do not look to nor follow him in vain, for he shall not fail (Isaiah 42:1-4). He shall call and save the Gentiles, who shall willingly run to him because of the power of God (Psalms 110:3). All that Christ is, does, and will do for his people shall be for the glory of God (John 17:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:27-28; Ephesians 1:6; Ephesians 1:12; Ephesians 1:14).

Isaiah 55:6. Are you thirsty? Are you poor? Have you inclined your ear and heard? Have you beheld the great Messiah, Christ Jesus? Then 'seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.' Bartimaeus did; the woman with the issue of blood did; the thief did! What is it to seek the Lord?

1. It is to discover that by nature I do not have him and I need his grace.
2. It is to desire his mercy and fellowship with him more than all.
3. It is to be made willing to be saved on his terms that he might be just and justifier.
4. It is to be willing to part with all that is opposed to Christ.
5. It is to him, not his. If we have him, we have that which is his.

Isaiah 55:7-9. Our thoughts are not God's thoughts, and our ways are not God's ways. This is evident in all things. But the main reference here is concerning God's thoughts and God's way of redeeming sinners! Our thoughts and ways, which seem right to the natural mind, are the ways of works and will lead to death. Naaman, when confronted with God's way, said, 'I thought.' Do you think that God can accept our imperfect righteousness or pardon a sinner without justice being fully honored? Suppose he did. Suppose that without Christ's righteousness and blood God accepted you. What peace could you have?

1. A god who could pardon without justice may one day condemn without reason.
2. A god who could set aside his righteousness may one day set aside his mercy.
3. A god who could deny his law may one day deny his gospel.
4. A god who could change his character may one day go back on his promises. But the God of glory is never unjust in order to be gracious. He saves and accepts sinners, but not until Christ has honored his law and satisfied his justice. This is God's way, and it is the way of peace and assurance!

Isaiah 55:10-11. As the rain and snow falls from heaven in its season and makes the corn, wheat, and vegetables to grow and is not drawn up again into heaven but abides for a time on the earth to

do the work for which it is sent, 'so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth.' His word of truth, his gospel of Christ, our Lord, and the sure mercies of David, which are contained therein, are sent forth into this world and shall not return until that word has accomplished that which he pleased and that for which he sent it—the salvation of his sheep (Isaiah 46:9-11).

Isaiah 55:12-13. God's people shall go out of bondage with joy and be led forth in peace without fear of ever being retaken by their enemy. Even the creation shall rejoice with them and for them. Their land, once subject to the same bondage of sin, shall be freed and partake in their redemption (Romans 8:19-23). In all this his name shall be exalted and glorified.

22. The person and work of the Messiah: Isaiah 61:1-3

The person and work of the Messiah

Isaiah 61:1-3

(Luke 4:16-21)

Isaiah 61 should be read along with Luke 4:16-21. Word had come back to Nazareth concerning one whom they knew quite well—one who had been brought up in their town, working as a carpenter. They had heard of some of the great things he had done and said (Luke 4:14-15; Luke 4:23). Now, he was back in town; so they all gathered at the synagogue on the Sabbath day, knowing that he would be there (Luke 4:16) and would read and speak. Our Lord selected the Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 61:1-3, read it, and declared, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.'

If we can discover what this scripture is saying, we will have an understanding of the person and work of our great Messiah. The people of Nazareth did not understand him nor his ministry and sought to kill him (Luke 4:28-30). I pray that we understand the person and work of the Messiah.

Isaiah 61:1. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.' Even the Saviour's mission and ministry were dependent on the Spirit of God (Mark 1:9-11; John 3:34-35). The Father ordained and anointed the God-Man, Christ Jesus, to be our surety, substitute, sin-offering, and Saviour. He gave him the Holy Spirit without measure. He came from the Father on behalf of his elect to accomplish the Father's will, speak his words, perform his work, honor his law, and satisfy his justice.

'The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek' or the gospel to the poor. Our Lord preached (Matthew 4:17) by his words, his miracles, his silence, and his looks. He lived the prince of preachers, he died the theme of all preaching, and he arose the Lord of preachers. He preached good tidings of grace, mercy, and forgiveness of sin to the poor, not necessarily to the materially poor (for even the rich are poor spiritually), but to the poor in spirit. These are those who are sensible of their sins and humbled because of them. These poor disown any righteousness of their own and stand naked and condemned before God. These poor have nothing, know nothing, and can do nothing acceptable unto God. They are in desperate need of all things and ascribe all that they receive to the grace of God.

'He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted.' A broken heart is painful and finds no relief for its distress in the flesh. A broken heart is helpless. We know what to do for a broken arm, but a broken heart needs a transplant—a new heart which only our Lord can give (Psalms 34:18; Psalms 51:17; Ezekiel 36:25-27).

'To proclaim liberty to the captives.' In September, 1862, Mr. Lincoln issued an Emancipation Proclamation effective January 1, 1863, freeing all slaves. It was not a request nor an invitation nor a suggestion, but a proclamation—they were free! Our Lord came to set the captives of the law free from its curse, the captives of Satan and sin free from his dominion and from the penalty of sin

(Romans 8:33-34). By his grace through his offering, we are free forever (Hebrews 10:12-14).

'The opening of the prison to them that are bound.' Believers, who have been bound by sin and in bondage to the flesh, are set free; but some are set free from the darkness and bondage of false religion, like Saul of Tarsus. False religion, tradition, and legalism are a prison. We are delivered by Christ (Galatians 5:1).

Isaiah 61:2. 'to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' This is the fulfillment of the 'year of Jubilee' (Leviticus 25:8-10). Every seventh year was the Lord's year and was a Sabbath of rest to the land. But on the year following the seventh of these sevens was the year of Jubilee. Every man sold into slavery was set free, all property and family land was redeemed and returned, all debts were discharged, and a year of rest was proclaimed. Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer, has done all of this for us. Our souls are free, our inheritance is restored, our debts are paid, and we have entered into his rest forever.

'And the day of vengeance of our God.' I know that many read this to be that awful day of vengeance when God was pleased to visit all the iniquity and transgressions of his people on Christ. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he was smitten of God and afflicted. This is true, but the gospel is proclaimed with a two-fold effect! All men do not believe. 'Some believed and some did not believe.' The gospel preached is a fragrance of life to those who have life, but it is an odor of death and judgment to those who will not believe. God will visit his wrath upon those who will not believe (John 3:36; Mark 16:15-16; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16). This is the day of vengeance of our God.

'To comfort all that mourn.' Christ is the true comfort for all true mourners. They mourn under a sense of sin (their own sins and the sins of others); they mourn under trial and affliction; they mourn when they cannot repent as they should, believe as they should, nor pray as they should. But they find comfort for all this in Christ, his blood, his intercession, and the precious promises of his word.

Isaiah 61:3. 'To give them beauty for ashes.' Ashes mean the fire has gone out. Our fire of joy, life, and hope is burned out in Adam; but Christ restores the beauty and warmth of spiritual fire. Ashes mean death; 'Dust to dust and ashes to ashes.' In Christ we have eternal life, never to die. Ashes represent sorrow. In extreme sorrow there were ashes and sackcloth. But he took our death, our mourning, and bore our sorrows, giving to us beauty, his beauty (Ezekiel 16:14).

'Beauty for ashes, oil of joy for mourning, and a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' Here is what Isaiah is saying: The Lord Jesus gives his mourners the beautiful garments of his salvation, the robe of his righteousness, the graces of his spirit, and his gracious presence, together with his word; and these yield joy, peace, and comfort through all of this pilgrim journey.

'That they might be trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.' Several things are suggested.

1. Trees are planted by someone. These are 'the planting of the Lord.' (Matthew 15:13).
2. Trees that live have roots in water (Matthew 13:6; Psalms 1:3). Our root is in Christ, the living water.

3. The life of the tree is the sap within. The Spirit of God dwells in believers (John 7:37-39).
4. Trees which God plants bear fruit (Galatians 5:22).
5. Trees which God plants never wither (Psalms 1:3-4). And in all of this God is glorified! From Alpha to Omega in the redemption of a sinner, God is glorified (John 17:1-4).

23. The church prays for the presence of God: Isaiah 64:1-12

The church prays for the presence of God

Isaiah 64:1-12

Isaiah 64:1-2. 'O that thou would rend the heavens and come down.' The church prays for the triumphant and glorious return of her Lord to the earth, as promised in John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (a) to accomplish his purpose, covenant, and redemption of his people, and (b) to vindicate his church and expose and destroy the antichrists.

'That the mountains may flow down at thy presence.'

1. Kings, kingdoms, and evil powers so dominate this earth that, like mountains, they seem to be firm and stable and overwhelming.
2. But they shall melt like wax, flow like water, and disappear at the coming of the King of kings. He will consume them in wrath (Isaiah 63:3-4).
3. The wrath of God against all enemies is compared to 'the melting fire' (that melts metal), to extreme heat 'which makes water to boil.' The fire of God described in 2 Kings 1:6-15 illustrates the fierceness of his wrath.

Isaiah 64:3. The Prophet may refer to the judgments of God upon Egypt, which were unexpected and not looked for, or the giving of the law at Sinai, or other mountains which 'flowed down at his presence' (Judges 5:4-5; Psalms 68:7-8).

Isaiah 64:4. Here is a passage quoted by Paul, the apostle, in 1 Corinthians 2:9. The fearful judgments of God against sin and the enemies of God are unheard of, unseen, and beyond the understanding of men. Even so, the glorious, eternal, unspeakable blessing of his grace in Christ to those who love him and wait for him are neither heard by the outward ear, nor seen by the eye of flesh, nor understood by any son of Adam! These include:

1. The present peace of God of sin forgiven that is ours in Christ (Romans 5:1).
2. The joy and fellowship of the church with Christ now (1 John 1:3).
3. The future glory and perfect holiness when we are conformed to his likeness (1 John 3:1-3).

These things are purposed by the Father, prepared by the Son, and revealed by the Spirit to those who love him, who certainly will wait for him! And unless the Lord gives men ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand, divine truth will remain unknown to them (1 Corinthians 1:10-14). By his sovereign grace and will the Lord has been pleased to reveal Christ in us (Galatians 1:15).

Isaiah 64:5. This verse and the ones which follow flow from the heart of God's prophet in Israel and from God's preachers in the church today; for the conditions which existed in Israel (who professed to be God's people) exist today! Some know the Lord, rejoice in him, and long for his

presence; but most in religion are strangers to grace and workers of iniquity (Matthew 7:22-23).

1. The Lord meets those who rejoice in the person and work of Christ. He meets us at the mercy-seat (Exodus 25:21-22) 'who worketh righteousness.' Our sanctification and righteousness are not ours, but his! Yet those who are righteous before God in Christ do delight to do works of righteousness by faith (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

2. The Lord communes with those who 'remember thee in thy ways.' They remember him in his ways of grace and mercy (1 Corinthians 11:24 - his death for men). They remember him and rejoice in his ways of providence (Romans 8:28). 'Known unto God are all his ways and works from the beginning' and we rejoice therein!

3. 'Thou art wroth; we have sinned.' We sinned in Adam, by birth and choice, and yet do sin each day; but there is forgiveness with God and we shall be saved from all our sins in Christ (Hebrews 10:14-17). There is 'continuance in his ways' of grace and mercy. His love is everlasting and endures forever (Php 1:6).

Isaiah 64:6. We are not unclean now; but we have been, as all men, unclean and impure before God. Even our righteousnesses and so-called good works are as filthy rags in his sight. The only righteousness acceptable to God is Christ's righteousness; and any duty, work, or goodness done by men in the best manner possible are filthy rags before God. Without Christ 'we fade as a leaf falls from the tree;' in Christ 'his leaf also shall not wither (fade) and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper' (Psalms 1:3). Without Christ 'our iniquities have taken us away' and separated between us and God (Isaiah 59:2). In Christ our sins are all put away (Isaiah 53:4-6).

Isaiah 64:7. This was true of most of Israel (Hebrews 3:15-19) and is true today. 'There is none that call upon thy name, none that seek thy face' (Romans 3:9-12).

1. There are and always have been men who are religious and pray, but few who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and men, the only way of access to God, the 'only name given among men whereby we must be saved.'

2. None stirreth himself to lay hold of Christ; as Paul declared in Php 3:8-14; as JACOB who said, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'

3. Because men will not call upon his name nor seek his face, the Lord has turned away, left them to themselves, and will consume them in his wrath (Romans 1:19-24).

Isaiah 64:8. 'But now, O Lord, thou art our Father!' There is a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11:3-7; Romans 8:14-17). He is the potter and we are the clay (Romans 9:16-23). Out of every tribe and nation he has chosen a people, given them to Christ, and adopted them into his family.

Isaiah 64:9. 'Be not wroth, neither remember iniquity forever.' Not to remember sin is to forgive it (Hebrews 10:17). 'We are thy people,' not only by creation but by covenant. All whom God gave to Christ are his redeemed people (Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 1 Peter 2:9-10).

Isaiah 64:10-12. The cities of Judah and of David are in ruins, the temple is destroyed, Israel is a wilderness. Almost every remembrance of the true God is gone from Israel, and religion today is a

wasteland without a true message! The question! 'How long will the Lord be silent, hold his peace, and not plead his own cause and the cause of his people?'

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