

# The Fourfold Gospel in Isaiah

by A.B. Simpson

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*A.B. Simpson's sermon explores the fourfold gospel in Isaiah, highlighting salvation, sanctification, divine healing, and the promise of the Lord's coming.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 1:4-6, Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 35:8-9, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 44:3-5, Isaiah 53:5, Isaiah 55:1-2, Isaiah 58:8-11, Isaiah 61:1-2, Isaiah 66:18-23

**Topics:** "Healing", "Salvation"

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## Description

A.B. Simpson expounds on 'The Fourfold Gospel in Isaiah,' emphasizing salvation, sanctification, divine healing, and the Lord's coming. He highlights Isaiah's powerful messages of mercy and redemption, illustrating how the prophet calls sinners to repentance and offers hope through Christ's atonement. Simpson also discusses the transformative experience of sanctification, the promise of healing, and the prophetic visions of the Messiah's reign, culminating in the ultimate restoration of Israel and the world. The sermon underscores the richness of Isaiah's teachings and their relevance for both sinners and saints, encouraging believers to embrace the fullness of God's promises.

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## Transcript

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Is. 53: 5.)

### I. Salvation.

The first picture of Isaiah begins with sin and salvation. What an indictment against the sinner is contained in the opening appeal, "ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (Is. 1: 4-6.) But what a message of mercy and salvation, "Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." (Is. 1: 18.)

Again, what a glorious gospel of salvation is contained in Isaiah 53: 5, 6. "But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with

His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53: 5, 6.) How many it has brought to lay their sins upon Him and to come back to the Shepherd and the fold.

Where shall we find a more complete and attractive gospel invitation than Isaiah 55: 1, 2, 6, 7. "Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

How rich the metaphors under which the gospel is presented, water, wine and milk! How fine the figures of buying without money because someone else has paid the price, and eating until our soul delights itself in fatness! How infinite the grace that calls the wicked to forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and to return unto the Lord who will abundantly pardon!

How the call of the Jubilee rings through that splendid passage in Isaiah 61: 1, 2: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." This was the very text from which our Lord Himself preached His first sermon at Nazareth and it is the commission of every minister of the Gospel.

And finally, how stirring and awakening is the call in Isaiah 45: 22: "Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." How it takes us back to the serpent in the wilderness and the third chapter of the Gospel of John, and how many eyes have turned at the call of this heavenly summons to "look and live." Surely, Isaiah is the gospel for the sinner as well as for the saint.

## II. Sanctification.

The call of the prophet recorded in the sixth chapter of Isaiah is a testimony of sanctification. It began with a vision of God, and, as the result, a vision of himself in all the depths of his sinfulness as it stood revealed in the white light of the throne. Then came the cry, "woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." And then came the baptism of fire, the live coal upon his lips, which even the seraphim could not touch with their hands, and the glorious announcement, "lo, this has touched your lips, and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged." Then with sanctified ears and lips and feet he was ready to hear and obey the great commission that sent him forth to his long and glorious ministry. God must have holy ears and lips and feet to carry His messages and represent Him to the world.

The same high standard of holiness is required from all the servants of the Lord. The Bible contains no finer portrait of the righteous man than Isaiah 33: 15-17: "He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." This man who "walks righteously and speaks uprightly" and who not only avoids evil himself but shuts his eyes and ears from seeing and hearing evil, he shall enter in to the beatific vision, which so sublimely anticipates the parallel promise of

the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

How finely the highway of holiness is described in Isaiah 35: 8, 9: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there." How suggestively the figure of the highway, not the broad way, not the ordinary way, trodden even by the ordinary pilgrim, but the narrow path where the separated ones walk alone with Jesus. How simple their life. They do not need to be wise or strong. They are wayfaring men and often counted fools by the world, but they have learned the secret of the skies and they walk in safety with the ransomed to their everlasting home.

There is a fine passage in Isaiah 41: 10, which suggests three progressive stages of our deeper life. The first is expressed by the promise, "I will strengthen you," the second by the clause, "yes, I will help you," but the third reaches a higher plane where God's strength and help are not sufficient, but, where, ceasing altogether from ourselves we fall helpless into His almighty arms and He just "upholds us with the right hand of His righteousness," that is, carries us altogether in His own everlasting arms.

There is a still finer passage in Isaiah 44: 3-5: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Here there are two types of spiritual life distinctly contrasted. The first are those who say "I am the Lord's" and "call themselves by the name of Jacob." This represents the experience of conversion, the Jacob life. These people are undoubtedly God's people, but they have not yet reached their Peniel. The second class, however, have passed with Jacob through the gates of Peniel and come forth into the higher place of victory and entire consecration, "another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord and call himself by the name of Israel." All through this book of Isaiah we can trace these two types. How differently he speaks of them. Notice for example his striking words, "the Lord has redeemed Jacob and glorified Himself in Israel." Poor Jacob is not forgotten or discarded because he has not got further on. The Lord goes with His people even through the wilderness. But "He has glorified Himself in Israel," the life that is wholly surrendered and transformed, and showing forth "the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

These passages are sufficient to show the deep insight of the prophet's vision and the high and holy plane on which he himself walked and which he ever recognized as God's true pattern for all His children.

### III. Divine Healing.

There is no lack of material for the gospel of healing in the great Messianic prophet Isaiah. The foundation passage is, of course, Isaiah 53: 4, 5; "Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." This is the only verse in the chapter prefixed by the word "surely." This is God's great Amen to the truth proclaimed in this passage. The Holy Spirit emphasized it because He knew it was the truth that was to be questioned by the belief of later generations. There is no doubt about the literal reference of this passage to the redemption of our bodies. The word translated "griefs" literally means sicknesses and is so translated in scores of parallel passages in the Old Testament. The word "borne" is the same as that used

in the twelfth verse of this chapter with reference to Christ's atonement for sin, "He bare the sin of many." In Matt. 8: 17, this passage is translated "Himself took our sicknesses and bare our infirmities." The fifth verse gives a catalogue of the blessings of redemption, "He was wounded for our transgressions," that is our acts of sin, "He was bruised for our iniquities," that is our heart of sin, "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him," that is the spiritual blessings which His death has purchased, and, finally, "by His stripes we are healed," that is the physical effects of His redemption. Here then we have the fulness of Christ's atonement. To say that the last clause respecting healing means spiritual healing would be to make the sentence a barren repetition of what he had already said in the first part of the verse.

In Isaiah 57: 18, 19, we have another reference to the Lord's healing. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, says the Lord; and I will heal him." Here it is evident that the sickness had been caused by sin and that God had been dealing with the transgressor in chastening, "for the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him." But repentance has come and the erring one has learned his lesson and returned to God and now God's promise is "I have seen his ways and will heal him." His healing is followed by deeper spiritual experiences, "I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and unto his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him that is far off and to him that is near." This, in turn, is followed by further healing, "and I will heal him." As we know God more deeply through the teaching of the Holy Spirit we come into a profounder experience of His healing touch and power. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death."

There is another passage in Isaiah 58: 8-11, which leads us into the deeper experiences of the Lord's life for the body. "Your health shall spring forth speedily," is a fine figure of the springing life that comes to us through union and communion with the Lord Jesus. "The Lord shall make fat your bones and you shall be like a watered garden and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not;" This represents that inner nourishment which the indwelling Christ supplies to all our vital being, making fat our bones, not in the sense of mere physical flesh and increased weight and muscular strength, but that inner freshness and fulness of life which lifts us above exhaustion and disease and renews our youth like the eagles'.

#### IV. The Lord's Coming in Isaiah.

Isaiah xi. 1-16 is a picture of Messiah's reign in the millennial age, the restoration of Israel and the transformation of the material world and the whole system of nature. Righteousness, peace and universal blessedness shall pervade the world and the "knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Isaiah 32: 1-3, is a similar picture of the millennial earth when "a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Isaiah 24: 20-23, is strikingly parallel to the closing chapters of Revelation and the vision of the coming of the Son of Man. "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded,

and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." How vividly this describes the shaking of the powers of heaven at the coming of the Lord and the appearance of Christ in His glory!

Then comes in Isaiah 25: 7-9, His appearing to Israel and the removing of the veil that has been upon the face of all people. Then in Isaiah 26: 19, comes the vision of the resurrection, "your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in dust: for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead," followed by the rapture of His saints as they are got away from the great tribulation which is coming upon the earth. "Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors about you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

Isaiah has given us a striking object lesson of divine healing in the story of Hezekiah, and his remarkable healing as described in Isaiah 38. In considering this let us notice:

1. That Hezekiah's sickness was a fatal one. It is foolish to talk about his being healed through a mere poultice of figs of a disease that was declared by God Himself to be unto death.
2. In describing this event in the book of Chronicles, the record states (margin) that God wrought a miracle and healed him. If it was a miracle it was not a case of healing by remedies. A miracle is something performed by Almighty power when the case is an impossible one.
3. The figs were merely a sign to help his faith to rise from the natural to the supernatural, just as the oil of anointing is a sign of the touch of the Holy Spirit, but has not in itself any inherent healing power. It is mentioned in verses 21, 22, as a "sign."
4. We have an interesting account of Hezekiah's states of mind during the time that he was waiting under the Lord's hand for the message of healing. At first he completely sank in dejection and despair, and the prayer which the Spirit has recorded is a very weak and miserable failure, not unlike some of our wretched wailing when trouble comes to us. Listen to this, "I reckoned until morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones; from day even to night you will make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: my eyes fail with looking upward." How it reminds us of some of our chattering and mourning, but at last he reaches a turn in the dark road of doubt and fear and suddenly exclaims, "Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me." No sooner has this gasp of honest prayer reached the heart of God than a marvelous revelation comes to him and we hear him exclaim, "what shall I say? He has both spoken to me and Himself has done it." He has heard the voice of God and his faith has answered back and lo! the night is passed and dawn has broken upon his despair.
5. How tender, subdued and inspiring is his note of praise. "The living, the living, he shall praise You, I shall go softly all my days, my years."
6. But, at last Hezekiah forgot God's great mercy and "rendered not again according to the benefit received," and in later years God's chastening hand fell upon him once more because of vainglory and sinful pride.

Oh, how sacred a trust the Lord's healing is! Let us not forget that the life He has redeemed belongs to Him and must be given back in humble, loving and devoted service.

Finally, in Isaiah 27: 1, we have the binding of Satan, described so vividly in Rev. 20: 1-3: "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan, that crooked serpent: and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Then comes the reign of Israel through the millennial years, Isaiah 27: 6: "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

In the later chapters of Isaiah very many of the visions concerning Judah and Jerusalem belong to the millennial age. Isaiah 35: 10, is one of these. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." So is Isaiah 59: 20: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, says the Lord." The whole of the sixtieth chapter belongs to this glorious time.

So also Isaiah 65: 17-25: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more then an infant of days, nor an old man that has not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and my elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer: and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, says the Lord." And Isaiah 66: 18-23: "For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, says the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, says the Lord."

Only the fulfillment of these glorious passages can bring their full interpretation. We can complete the broken links in Isaiah's imperfect chain from the writings of Daniel and John, and the prophetic messages from the Master Himself. No other key will solve Isaiah's vision but the coming of the Lord, the restoration of Israel, the millennial reign of Christ and the glorious realities of the blessed hope which has grown so much clearer and nearer in the light of the New Testament and the events in the days in which we live.

When that glorious day shall come Isaiah's splendid songs and visions of glory shall have a significance and a grandeur, which even he but dimly comprehended when he wrote as the apostle expresses it "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

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