

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## ISAIAH 50:1-52:12

At the time Isaiah wrote his prophecy a national crisis had just been averted. The Assyrian invaders had been overthrown. God had delivered His people.

The Jews were at home in Judah. Jerusalem was a thriving, bustling, prosperous city again. It's inhabitants were enjoying a peace. *Life couldn't be better!*

I'm sure it sounded strange to hear a prophet such as Isaiah speak of coming judgment, destruction, and captivity - the nation was headed for "*dire straits.*"

Isaiah anticipates a troubled future for God's people.

Think of it, Isaiah wrote of a generation not yet born, a situation that didn't yet exist, an ax of judgment that had yet to fall. It would take 100 years before Isaiah's warnings became a reality - for Babylon to invade Judah, destroy Jerusalem, send the Jews into exile.

And it was in Babylon, during their 70 years of time-out that Isaiah was studied by his most ready readers.

The Jews in Babylon found comfort in the writings of Isaiah. The prophet had accurately predicted their demise, but He'd also prophesied their deliverance. God would bring Judah out of Babel and back home.

Chapter 50 again speaks of that deliverance. Yet here Isaiah's words go much further than just Israel's return from Babylon. Isaiah predicts that God will save His people from a far worse captivity. He'll free them from *the prison of pride* and from *the shackles of sin*.

Chapter 50 begins, “Thus says the Lord: “Where is the certificate of your mother’s divorce, whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, and for your transgressions your mother has been put away.” The Jews in exile will wonder *why!* They’ll ask why have they been displaced from their homeland...

*Had God forsaken them?*

*Had the Lord divorced His bride?*

*Had their Master sold them into slavery?*

Yet God answers their inevitable whys. The reason for their trouble had nothing to do with God turning His back on them - *but the Jews turned their back on God.*

Listen again to God's sobering explanation, "*for your iniquities you have sold yourselves...*" It was their sin that brought on their trouble. It wasn't God's fault. It was their own fault. They sold themselves into slavery.

And this is the first step in a person overcoming an enslaved situation - or what we might call an *addiction*.

We have to stop blaming our circumstances, or the people in our lives, or even God - and admit that the problem is me! Take some personal responsibility.

As the old AA saying goes, "*If I am not the problem there can be no solution.*" If I'm not walking in freedom from *alcohol*, or *drugs*, or *pornography*, or *gambling*, or *video games*, or whatever it is that has me trapped - it's not God's fault. I'm not tapping into His power!

God has provided us a deliverance through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But we have to learn to appropriate that power - *repent and believe...*

Imagine, falling out of your raft. You're flailing in the rapids, being swept downstream. There's a life rope next to you, but you don't see... you haven't grabbed it. There's *hope on a rope*, but it's got to be embraced!

And the same is true spiritually! 1 Corinthians 10:13 promises us, "No temptation has overtaken you except as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." There is a way out. Turn from your sin and look to the Savior. He is faithful.

The reason the Jews were enslaved wasn't because God sold them into slavery - *they sold themselves.*

Verse 2, “Why, when I came, was there no man? Why, when I called, was there none to answer?” God always wants to deliver His people, but when He knocked no one answered - no one opened the door.

“Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?” Is God’s arm too short? Is there a tight spot He can’t reach to pull you out? *No!*

“Indeed with My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness; their fish stink because there is no water, and die of thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.” There is nothing God cannot do. He dries up rivers. He turns a daytime of sunshine into a black backdrop at night. If God can dry up the sea, He can deliver you and me.

It’s interesting the phrase, “*when I called, was there none to answer?*” The reason men aren’t saved isn’t that God hasn’t provided - *the Jews haven’t answered.*

Even with *our salvation*, God made advance plans. He made a provision that He spoke of beforehand.

In Hebrews 10:5, before Jesus came into the world, the Savior said of Himself, “In the volume of the book it is written of Me...” All throughout the Bible God unfolds His plan to atone for sin, and redeem mankind.

It’s not surprising that He does that here. In the next verses of Isaiah 50, Messiah speaks. The eternal Son of God anticipates His future feelings when He comes to Earth. Even the ways His people will treat Him...

These are the words of Jesus, beginning in verse 4, “The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens

Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.”

If I were to ask you what did Jesus do His first thirty years on earth, most of you would say, "He worked in a carpenter's shop." But that would be only partially true.

His primary task was to study the Scriptures!

Day by day, morning by morning, Jesus “*learned*” the voice of God. He studied the Scriptures. He prayed.

Recall at twelve years of age, His parents left Jesus behind in Jerusalem. When they returned looking for Him, He was in the Temple confounding the scholars.

How often in the Gospels did Jesus use an OT verse in a new and timely way? Jesus was so steeped in the OT Scripture, He could speak a word “*in season.*”



And if the author thought it necessary to be *“learned”* in the Scripture, how much more is that true for us?

Have you ever been on the receiving end of *“a word in season to (a person) who is weary?”* Just the right word at the right time can lift our spirits, and refocus us on what’s true and right. It can be a great encourager.

But only the *“tongue of the learned”* can deliver such a word. This is why we need to study our Bible. Jesus knew *what to say*, and *how to say*, and *when to say it*.

And God may want to use you in similar fashion. Be prepared and become *“learned”* in the Word of God.

*“The Lord God has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away.”* This is a reference to Exodus 21 - *the Law of the Bond Slave*. Today, slavery is seen as barbaric, de-humanizing,

and racist - but not so in ancient Israel. It was an alternative to bankruptcy.

If I didn't have the money to pay my debt I could become a slave to my creditor - work off what I owed.

On occasion a slave found he was treated to a better life in his master's house than he could forge on his own. Thus, he became a "love slave" or "bond slave."

In the NT, both Paul and John, used this picture, and referred to themselves as "bond servants of Jesus."

Every one who follows Jesus discovers that life in His house is far better than anything we could achieve on our own. He treats us with such grace and bounty.

We all should be happy to be the slaves of Jesus.

And Jesus Himself was a bond slave of His Father. He declares, *“The Lord God has opened My ear...”*

When a slave agreed to be a love slave, his master would take him to the doorpost of his home, and drive a metal awl through his earlobe into the door frame.

The slave was nailing himself to his master’s house. He wore an earring as a sign of his commitment.

This is how Jesus describes Himself. In fact, Jesus did more than put His ear to the post to prove His love for God - His whole body was pierced for God’s glory.

Jesus also speaks in verse 6, *“I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.”* There’s an old riddle. Question: *“What is the only thing in heaven that’s man-made?”* The answer, *“The scars of our Lord Jesus.”* It’s true.

And here Isaiah prophesies details about Jesus' crucifixion before crucifixion had even been invented...

His body was beaten... The Roman Scourgers striped his torso with lacerations. Their whips dug deep into the muscle. His back became ground round.

Both Jews and Romans spit in His face.

But there's a detail here not even mentioned in the Gospels, *"I gave... My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard..."* The executioners literally ripped His beard from off His face, probably pulling off skin with it.

When my kids were small I wore a beard, and I can remember them sticking their fingers in it and grabbing hold and yanking. *Wow, just their childish pulling hurt.*

I can't imagine my beard being ripped from my face, yet that's exactly what Isaiah says they did to Jesus.

When you study the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus you run across an interesting phenomena. At first glance, the eyewitnesses didn't recognize Him.

Mary thought He was the gardener... Thomas had to touch His scars... When Jesus ate breakfast with the disciples on the beach, we're told, "Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "who are you?" - knowing that it was the Lord." Apparently, they were tempted to ask.

On the Road to Emmaus, the two disciples who walked with Jesus, didn't recognize Him. We're not told why, but Scripture says their "eyes were restrained."

Admittedly, a lot of factors caused the disciples to do a double take... For one, they didn't expect to see Him.

But I believe a big part of the explanation for their reticence was the disfigurement He suffered before and at His crucifixion. Isaiah 52:14 reads, “His visage was marred more than any man.” A literal translation reads, “He was no longer recognizable as a man.”

We know the post-resurrection body of Jesus contained scars from the wounds that He suffered.

Thomas asked to see the scars in His hands and feet - but there were also scars in His brow from the crown of thorns, and on His back from the scourging.

*And if His beard was plucked out, why wouldn't there be scars on His face?* I think Jesus was beaten beyond recognition. To the point of no longer looking human.

His face was swollen like a boxer who'd gone 15 rounds, or the victim of an automobile accident who's face had gone through the

windshield. If there had been a funeral I think it would've been closed casket.

And here's a provocative thought. If His scars were visible shortly after His resurrection, *why would it be different now, or when we first see Him?* I believe some of us will be in for a shock. Rather than a handsome profile, we'll look into a face that's severely disfigured.

In Revelation 5 John is looking for someone who's worthy to open the scroll and take title of the Earth.

When he finds no one, he starts to weep.

That's when an angel comforts him, “Do not weep. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals...” Then John describes, “I looked and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as though

it had been slain...” John sees Jesus, but *“as though He’d been slain”* - still bearing the scars of crucifixion.

I have an old friend who wrote a song entitled *“The Eternal Reminder.”* He tackles this idea from the perspective of a believer who died and went to heaven.

It goes like this, *“I cried in glee, no more will there be any trace of sorrow or of pain”* but my Savior shook His head and said *“Some things remain.”* He showed to me His hands and feet, how badly they were scarred; and then I knew as never before, how much I owed my Lord. Now the pain and struggles known on earth are gone forevermore, save the only scars that will not fade *are on my precious Lord.”* This is why I believe our first glimpse of Jesus might be shocking, startling.



We might even recoil in horror, but once we process it, our *astonishment* will turn into *appreciation*, and we'll love Him all the more for what it cost Him to save us!

Verse 7, “For the Lord God will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.

He is near who justifies Me; who will contend with Me? Let us stand together. Who is My adversary? Let him come near Me. Surely the Lord God will help Me; who is he who will condemn Me? Indeed they will all grow old like a garment; the moth will eat them up.”

Picture Jesus on the cross, His face was like flint! Flint is a hard stone used to sharpen tools, and create friction. Isaiah is saying beneath the mass of bloody, torn tissue Jesus had a look of determination.

Though He went to the cross to *bear our shame*, He was never *put to shame*. He kept His dignity, poise, and purpose. He knew the Father was in control - that He'd be justified in the end and His adversaries would be judged. *His body hung from the tree, but never did Jesus hang His head!* Ironically, Jesus died a death intended to shame, mock, and humiliate - *with honor*.

I love Hebrews 12:2, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Notice, Jesus endured... *“despising the shame.”*

And in so doing, He teaches us how to cope with persecution and shameful treatment. Endure it with dignity and poise - never forgetting, God is in control.

Verse 10, “Who among you fears the Lord? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God.” It’s trust that turns on the lights. We need to fear God and rely on the Lord.

“Look, all you who kindle a fire, who encircle yourselves with sparks: walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled - this you shall have from My hand: you shall lie down in torment.” He’s addressing those who trust in themselves - who “*walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled...*” They’re being warned of God’s torment.

Here’s a person who wants to serve God, *but in his or her own way*. They want a religion of convenience and accommodation - not repentance and faith.

Torment awaits them. They need to fear the Lord!

Chapter 51, “Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the Lord: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug.” God tells the Jews, like a chiseled out rock, look to the cliff where you originated.

“Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him.” Nearly all of God’s dealings with the Jews were predicated on His covenant with Abraham.

He promised Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation, they would occupy the land from the Euphrates to the Nile, and through an heir of Abraham salvation would be offered to all mankind.

Today, Israel is full of atheists and agnostics, *and God will judge all men individually*. But collectively, as a nation, God isn’t through

with Israel. He's made an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his family.

Verse 3, “For the Lord will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.” In many ways the fulfillment of this prophecy has already begun in Israel. Deserts have become gardens filled with joy!

The Israelis are a happy people. You get the sense that because of the threats around them, they know that life is tenuous. They should enjoy it while they can.

And this also needs to be our attitude as Christians.

In light of eternity, *life is short*. Enjoy it. Make the most of it. It's sad when you see a sullen Christian who looks like he or she has been baptized in pickle juice.

Life is fleeting. It's too brief to be spent with a sad face - or to feel guilty when you laugh. Dance a little. Sing a little. Joke a little. Having fun is not unspiritual.

“Listen to Me, My people; and give ear to Me, O My nation: for law will proceed from Me, and I will make My justice rest as a light of the peoples. My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands will wait upon Me, and on My arm they will trust.” Isaiah predicts the “*coastlands*” or far away continents will trust in God's salvation. That's certainly been fulfilled.

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth

will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished.” Planets and people will come and go, but God’s righteousness *“will never be abolished.”*

Notice Isaiah says, *“the earth will grow old...”* This is happening today! Like a cheap sweater Planet Earth is growing old. It’s wearing out. Holes are appearing.

Did you know that the fluorocarbons emitted into the atmosphere take 50 years to reach the ozone layer where they damage the planet’s solar protection? That means the harm done to the Earth today is a result of pre-1965 emissions. The fluorocarbons that have been release since, haven’t even reached the atmosphere.

The earth is growing old. Holes are appearing in the upper reaches of the atmosphere... In contrast, God's salvation is forever. His grace never, ever runs out.

Verse 7, "Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law: do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults."

It seems this verse is for members of the New Covenant God made in Christ - that He would write His law on our hearts and implant it in our nature - so that our basic impulses will be love for God and for others. We know the heart of God's righteousness - it's love!

"For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation." The insults and mockery



of evil men are like the old coat in our closet - it'll be eaten by moths.

One day their reproach will be judged. What is right in God's sight will remain - generation to generation.

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.” Isaiah prophesied in 700 BC - 2700 years ago.

But here he delves into what was called antiquity even in Isaiah's day. He goes back further into history.

Verse 9, “Are You not the arm that cut Rahab apart, and wounded the serpent?” “*Rahab*” means “proud one.” It was an ancient name for Egypt. This verse may refer to Israel's exodus. But here “*Rahab*” seems to be a “*serpent*.” Could this be another name for “*Leviathan that twisted serpent*” we read about in Isaiah 27?

Recall there's a battle raging in the universe between God and the serpent. The OT calls him "Rahab" and "Leviathan." In the NT he's identified in Revelation 12 as "the great dragon... the serpent of old... the Devil."

This is how Satan first appeared in the Garden of Eden - as a *serpent with legs* or in essence *a dragon*.

Job 26 speaks of creation as an episode in this conflict. "By His Spirit (God) adorned the heavens; His hand pierced the fleeing serpent." Psalm 74 describes another skirmish at Israel's crossing of the Red Sea...

Psalm 74:13, "You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness..."

Apparently, the serpent of old attacked Israel as the nation passed through the Red Sea, and God *“broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces...”* As Isaiah 50 puts it, God *“cut Rahab apart and wounded the serpent.”*

But here’s where Psalm 74 gets bizarre.

After God broke Leviathan in pieces, He *“gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.”* God feeds the serpent piecemeal to Israel in the wilderness.

*And what did the Israelites eat daily during the forty years they wandered in the wilderness? “Manna.”*

The word *“manna”* is best translated *“what is it?”* Apparently, it wasn’t a typical, recognizable entree.

Here’s the question, was the *“manna”* sea serpent meat? I’ve joked that the *“manna”* was *Angel’s food cake*, but would *Devil’s food cake* be more accurate?

It's ironic, Leviathan tries to destroy Israel, but God turns the tables. Satan gets *beaten* and then *eaten*. God chops up the sea serpent and uses the pieces to sustain Israel in the desert. *God gets the last laugh...*

Ancient Mesopotamian folklore spoke of God and the sea serpent in a showdown - *the serpent is cut into pieces and given to God's people as food*. The story sounds strange to our ears, but it was common in the writings of antiquity. Psalm 89:10 is a related passage.

If nothing else, this gives us real *food for thought*.

Verse 10 continues to speak of God “**Are You not the One who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that made the depths of the sea a road for the redeemed to cross over? So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing,**

with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

Isaiah speaks of a road in the sea that allows God’s people to return to Zion. This is a passage that’s been fulfilled in our day. It reminds us of the post-WW2 flotillas that brought European Jews into Haifa, Israel.

Isaiah’s point... God is able to deliver His people.

“I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, and of the son of a man who will be made like grass?

And you forget the Lord your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; you have feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, when he has prepared to destroy. And where is the fury of the oppressor?”

“The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed, that he should not die in the pit, and that his bread should not fail. But I am the Lord your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared - the Lord of hosts is His name. And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, that I may plant the heavens, lay the foundations of the earth, and say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’”

Here’s a glimpse into God’s thinking, He speaks of His three great achievements... *planting the heavens, laying the earth’s foundations...* so far no surprises.

These are impressive entries on God’s resume.

But right up there with the creation of the heavens and earth, God takes pride in saying to Zion, ‘*You are My people.*’ Creating a people for Himself is just as important to God as structuring the universe. He loves Israel. He also loves the Church. God created

the heavens and earth in six days. He's been working for 6000 years to create a people He can call His own.

Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; you have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, and drained it out.” There's a time when God's people need to take a stand. God has judged Jerusalem, now He calls on the Jews to awake from their spiritual stupor.

But here's a problem. If the Jews do stand up for God who will lead them? Verse 18, “There is no one to guide her among all the sons she has brought forth; nor is there any who takes her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up.” It's sad, God can call on His people to move - *revive their hearts* - but if there's no leadership where will the movement take them?

Every great spiritual awakening has involved bold and godly leadership. Men stepped up - took God's people by the hand - and provided biblical guidance.

“These two things have come to you; who will be sorry for you? - desolation and destruction, famine and sword - by whom will I comfort you? Your sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, like an antelope in a net; they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of your God.” Israel's leaders had gone to the head of the street to lead, but were trapped in their own sin - like an antelope in a net - they were useless.

AW Tozer once wrote, “We desperately need men who can see through the mist - Christian leaders with prophetic vision. Unless they come soon it will be too late for this generation.” There's still a need for godly leaders. Men who are free from sin and ready to lead.



Verse 21, “Therefore please hear this, you afflicted, and drunk but not with wine.” He’s speaking to those who’ve been drunk with fear and worry and unbelief.

“Thus says your Lord, the Lord and your God, Who pleads the cause of His people: “See, I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of My fury; you shall no longer drink it. But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you, who have said to you, ‘Lie down, that we may walk over you.’ And you have laid your body like the ground, and as the street, for those who walk over.” The days of Israel being trampled will one day be over. No longer will they drink the cup of judgment. It’ll be given to their oppressors.

Chapter 52 looks forward to that future deliverance and ultimately to the day Jesus returns and delivers all God's creation from the effects of our sin and rebellion.

Verse 1, "Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For the uncircumcised and the unclean shall no longer come to you." Gentile warriors who've invaded and judged Jerusalem will be gone for good.

God's people will put off sackcloth and ashes - and dress in gorgeous garments, robes of righteousness.

"Shake yourself from the dust, arise; sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!" This was certainly a word to the Jews who returned from Babylon and rebuilt Jerusalem. They loosed their bonds of captivity.

But since 70 AD Jerusalem has again been trampled by the Gentiles. Gentile occupation will reach a climax when the Antichrist will set up His throne in the holy city. This passage also has implications for the future.

The final battle - the Battle of Armageddon - will be fought over Jerusalem. The Bible teaches that Jesus will return to Earth and liberate the city a final time.

“For thus says the Lord: “You have sold yourselves for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.” *If not with money; then with what?* How about the blood of a sacrifice - the blood of Jesus Christ!

“For thus says the Lord God: “My people went down at first into Egypt to dwell there; then the Assyrian oppressed them without

**cause.”** Here’s an amazing insight that we get no where else in Scripture...

Egyptologists tell us there were periods of foreign occupation in Egypt’s history. In fact, after Joseph died, the Assyrians occupied Egypt for nearly 400 years.

Exodus speaks of a Pharaoh that **“knew not Joseph.”** Joseph had occupied a top position in the court of Egypt, but since he wasn’t Egyptian the new Pharaoh was ignorant of Joseph. He was an Assyrian.

This explains Exodus 1:9. Remember the reason all the male Hebrew infants were to be drowned in the Nile? They rulers said, **“The people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we.”** The Israelites constituted a larger minority than the ruling foreigners. It’s interesting, Isaiah tells us what Exodus leaves out.

“Now therefore, what have I here,” says the Lord, “That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them make them wail,” says the Lord, “And My name is blasphemed continually every day.”

Again, Isaiah is speaking of the exile in Babylon.

“Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am He who speaks: ‘Behold, it is I.’” In other words, Almighty God is about to do a deed so miraculous that it will distinguish Him.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”

We live in a day when messages travel instantly over fiber optics, and satellites, and wi-fi - but in ancient times messages were delivered by individuals on foot.

And the recipients of those messages appreciated the messenger. *“How beautiful... are the feet... who bring good news.”* This was the reaction of the Jews to the messengers who came with news of Babylon’s fall.

And this is the passage quoted in Romans 10:15; yet Paul applies it to the person who shares the Gospel.

How beautiful are the feet of the messenger who brings the good news of Jesus! *The only person who’s ever told me I had beautiful feet was the Apostle Paul!*

*But it’s true!* As far as God is concerned anyone who is a messenger of the Gospel has *fashionable feet!*

Remember, "There's only one thing better than going to heaven, and that's taking someone with you!"

Verse 8, "Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord brings back Zion.

Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem! For the Lord has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations..." In other words, God rolled up His shirtsleeve and revealed His bulging bicep. Don't underestimate His strength!

"And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." He is mighty to save. Today, God uses His strength not to *fight or build or even rule*, but to save!

Verse 11, “Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord. For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.” Remember the treasures from Solomon’s Temple that King Nebuchadnezzar brought to Babylon.

These were the vessels Belshazzar desecrated at his drunken orgy - the night Babel fell to the Persians.

Ezra 1 tells us one of the Persian King Cyrus’ first decrees was to return the Temple vessels to the Jews.

Here God gives instructions and promises protection to those Jews who’ll transport them back to Jerusalem.

It’s interesting, in the NT you and I are the Temple of God - and His Spirit has adorned our lives with certain gifts and treasures.



Part of Christ's redemptive plan is to restore to us all that Satan has stolen from our lives.

Remember Job, he got back double all he'd lost.

But this didn't happen in the OT until a change occurred on the throne... And it won't happen for us until a similar transition occurs. You and I need to step down from running our lives, and let Jesus rule.

Only when Christ is on the throne will He restore the stolen treasures - the *gifts, talents, reputation, and joy*.

And there's one more lesson here. Once the stolen treasures are retrieved don't be in a hurry to restore them all immediately. Don't rush and act hastily.

Take your time. Let the Lord *go before you and be your rear guard*. Hurry and you'll make some mistakes.

*Slow down... don't get ahead of God... don't lose focus... don't compromise... God is in control, not us!*

Verse 13, “Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.” I’m sure you’re aware that the chapter and verse divisions in your Bible were not in the originals. They’ve been added.

The biblical text is inspired by God, but the chapters and verses are man-made. The Bible was divided into chapters in 1227 by Stephen Langton. The verses were added by French printer, Robert Stephanus, in 1551. The first English Bible containing

both chapters and verses was the Geneva Bible published in 1560.

Certainly, these divisions are extremely convenient and helpful. Can you imagine trying to locate a favorite passage without the help of chapter and verse?

But there are places where the divisions break up the text awkwardly. One such place is in Isaiah 52.

In my opinion, Chapter 52 should end with verse 12, and Chapter 53 should begin with verse 13. That's how I'm going to approach it. Next time we'll study the last three verses of Chapter 52, along with Chapter 53.