

Isaiah Chapters 51-52a Summary - John Karmelich

Title: Why God picked Israel to be His chosen people, and what that means for us Christians!

As my regulars know I've been spending time pondering why God chose "this or that" for His plans for humanity. God could have just appeared on earth with a big "floor show" as say I am God deal with it! Instead, God picked Abraham and Sarah, a woman way past her childbearing years, to begin the nation of Israel through that couple. God allowed Israel to suffer horribly since it began in slavery in Egypt up to and past the Holocaust as obvious examples. Despite all that, Israel is nation today and the only one in history to be scattered and become a nation again. I realize that is old news to us Christians. Let me continue:

The reason I'm getting into all this, is because this section of Isaiah focuses on Israel as an entity. This is a reminder that God has a great destiny for Israel as an entity, despite all their suffering through most of history. Isaiah was told by God the Babylonians (who were a small city in his day) would be a great empire and take Israel into captivity. In effect, God's saying through Isaiah, "This isn't how your nation will end!" The point to the Israelites is despite the horror they suffered (kicked out of their land) God is not through with them as an entity. As I like stating, if Jesus will rule the world from Israel one day, as the Bible predicts there MUST be an Israel in existence for that to happen!

All that leads to you and me as Christians. My point is: God did not get us this far to abandon us now! When we stop and think about low points in our life and that we're still alive, it should remind us God's not through with us. When we study this passage about God's eternal plans for Israel as an entity, it's a great reminder for us that whatever we're dealing with, God has a great destiny for all who trust in Him through this life. That's this text in a nutshell.

So why do a chapter and a half in this lesson? Because the second half of Chapter 52, and all of 53 is a great description of what it requires for God to redeem us. Until I discuss the next lesson, it's necessary to remind ourselves why God cares so much for those trusting in Him and why He goes through all this trouble. I pondered, why does Isaiah jump from discussing Israel as an entity to the key point in history of Jesus paying for our sins? I suspect it is a reminder to the Israelites God has an eternity destiny plan for them as well as all mankind! OK then, as I like saying, time for the details!

We last left with Isaiah declaring that the Israelites are still God's people despite all their sins and since they suffer so much for their sins (e.g., Babylon Captivity). I should state that I never believed that the German Holocaust was any sort of punishment by God. It was evil "reigning" and had to be overcome! Bottom line, Isaiah is lecturing the Israelites to obey God as they are still His people despite all they've been through.

That leads perfectly to Chapter 52. It opens with God through Isaiah lecturing the Israelites. In essence the request is for Israelites to consider their history. Their nation in effect began with an old couple that God allowed to have a son, (Abraham and Sarah to Issac). By the time God "wiped out Egypt" as proof He's not to be messed with, the Israelites left Egypt to start a nation in the Promised Land. I always did argue the land of Israel is literally theirs as long as it's His will. To me, "entering the Promised Land" is about developing a close relationship with God! So why lecture Israel on their history? It's a lecture on not being afraid of whatever life throws at us! Verse 7 has a reminder the world as we know it will end one day, but our salvation is eternal!

This leads Isaiah back to the idea of taking comfort that they (Israelites) are God's chosen! Yes, they'll suffer through history, based on demonic attacks to overturn God's plans for the world! As I taught my daughter when she was young, God allows such attacks to show that by our trust in God, we can win in any such attacks in the long run! In fact, Verse 15 is a reminder that God allows such attacks (using the analogy of allowing sea waves to do damage). In short, God is going to win in the end, so all this text's here to encourage Israelites and people to "bet on the winning horse".

The last few verses of Chapter 51 talk about how Israel has become weak. It may refer to the when the Babylon Captivity occurred (About 100 years after Isaiah), but it was a time they were out of that land, so again it's about God giving comfort during difficult times. The essential idea is God will lead those He called to be with Him forever even through whatever tough situations we deal with in this life. It is a message of hope through our problems. In Verse 22 it says, "my wrath you shall drink no more"! Yes the Israelites did suffer throughout history after that but again the comfort is that God Himself will pay the price for our sins (key topic of next lesson), and again there's a happy ending coming for all who do trust in God, not only in the next life, but also for Israel as an entity, as Jesus WILL rule from there, so there has to be a "there" to rule from!

Again, all of this is about telling the Israelites to have comfort. "The good news is coming!" Remember when Isaiah wrote this the northern part of Israel was already taken into captivity (Assyrian Empire) as the southern part will be in captivity soon after Isaiah wrote this. It would be like stating I realize life is looking bad right now, but we need to take comfort. We "bet on the winning horse" and no matter how bad things may look now, God will win, and we win by our trust in Him!

In the next part of Chapter 52, God (through Isaiah) is encouraging His people to return to the land. A message obviously to those in captivity (or soon to be) when Isaiah wrote this. So why don't religious Jews all move to Israel today? Lots of reasons, but one is the USA among other places provides peace until it's time for them to return there when Jesus rules! Bottom line, the message is for Israel for their encouragement to trust God even when life is difficult. It is also a reminder to Christians during tough moment in our life that "this too shall pass".

The big question is why does God through Isaiah chose this spot in the book to transitions to telling us about the coming of the Messiah, as the rest of Chapter 52 and all of Chapter 53 does! God desires His people (yes Israel) to take comfort by trusting in Him. In other words, we do not trust in our ability for keeping His rituals, we trust that God Himself takes care of our salvation. Good works are about being a good witness for Him after salvation! In effect, that's why we get a message to Israel to take comfort despite all of the struggles at that moment in history.

The message for us Christians is whatever struggles we're facing, God wants us to take comfort that it's not "the end". Just as the Babylonian Captivity nor even the European Holocaust were the end! I know that was a horrible tragedy but God wants us to realize He still has a plan for His people as He will rule from the land of Israel one day. First the price for sin must be dealt with, and that's the key point of the next lesson. In the meantime, we need to be reminded that the Israelites are still God's chosen, and they have a destiny as an entity just as the church has a destiny as an entity. I'm not saying one is saved just for being Jewish! Salvation is only by our trust in what Jesus did for us. My point is Israel is the place where Jesus will rule from, and that means Israel as an entity must exist as a Jewish state. Until then, I am positive what God calls us Christians to do, be a witness for Him in this life!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on one of the links below. It is still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for

you reading this. The rest of this email is links to questions you may have. If you're new here, realize you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!