

Come to the Covenant Kingdom  
Isaiah 49:7-13

September 4, 2011

A. Introduction

1. returning to Isaiah<sup>A</sup>
  
2. verses 1 to 7 of this chapter<sup>B</sup>

B. This Christ is Our Salvation Covenant

49:8a

1. favourable time ... day of salvation<sup>C</sup>
  
2. the word covenant<sup>D</sup>
  
3. the new covenant in His blood<sup>E</sup>

C. Words of Comfort

49:8b-12

1. the promise of Messiah was a covenant
  
2. God would bring them back to their land (8b-11)
  
3. God's people will return (12)

D. A Greater Return is Foretold

1. from a greater bondage<sup>F</sup>
  
2. there remains a further return for God's people<sup>G</sup>

E. Conclusion – can you join in this praise?

49:13

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<sup>A</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:2

<sup>B</sup> Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 1:16, John 1:14, Matthew 15:24, 1 Peter 1:10-11, Philippians 2:10-11

<sup>C</sup> Isaiah 61:1-3, Luke 4:16-21

<sup>D</sup> Hebrews 9:11-20, Ezekiel 20:37, Genesis 22:18

<sup>E</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:25, John 3:16

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<sup>F</sup> Romans 6:16-18, John 8:31-36

<sup>G</sup> Matthew 26:29, Luke 13:29

A. Introduction

1. This morning we resume teaching through Isaiah
  - a. from which we took a break during the summer months.
  - b. Isaiah is a book of prophecy; a great prophetic book
  - c. our interest is not in speculating of the future – I shall leave that to those clever men who are foolish enough to do so
  - d. our interest in this book is to proclaim Jesus Christ, to preach the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation
  - e. as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:2, 'For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.'
  - f. for there is truly no other message that matters
  
2. When we broke off from teaching Isaiah in June
  - a. we were looking at the first 7 verses of this chapter
  - b. our title was 'Messiah, Suffering Servant'
  - c. here we have Messiah Himself speaking through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, and the LORD – God the Father – answers Messiah – God the Son – also through Isaiah
  - d. Messiah, that is Christ, is described in no uncertain terms
    - (A) v. 1: He is the One called – named – before His birth
      - (1) 'Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins'
      - (2) Emmanuel, for He is 'God with us'
    - (B) v. 2: He is the One whose mouth is like a sharp sword – the Living Word of God – as described in Hebrews 4:12 and Revelation 1:16, a two-edged sword able 'to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart'
    - (C) v. 3: He is the True Israel, the one revealing the glory of God's only begotten to His disciples, John 1:14
    - (D) v. 5: He came to bring back to God the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel,' Matthew 15:24
    - (E) v. 6: But He also came to be 'a light of the nations' – the only source of salvation for all mankind
  - e. this chapter, as often is the case in prophecy, blends the promises of the first and second comings of Messiah – even as described in 1 Peter 1:10-11, 'As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.'

(A) so in verse 7

- (1) Messiah is first described as 'the despised One' – the one condemned to death on the cross by the so-called justice of Jew and Gentile alike
- (2) but also as the One who will receive the worship even of kings and princes – partially the case even now – but one day, as Philippians 2:10-11 says, '... at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'
- (3) because Messiah – Jesus Christ – is the Chosen One, the Elect, of the faithful, Holy One of Israel

B. This Christ is Our Salvation Covenant . . . . . 49:8a

1. In this verse

- a. the expressions 'a favourable time' and 'day of salvation'
- b. are in parallel, referring to the same thing; the OT often uses such parallel expressions, the repetition of an idea, in order to clarify the meaning of a statement
- c. when Christ's ministry began, Luke 4:16-21 says, '... He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "**the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.**" And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."'
- d. the favourable time, the day of salvation, took place, then, during the first coming of Messiah, in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth – it was then that He was given by God 'for a covenant of the people'

2. the word covenant as used in the OT and the NT

- a. can have several meanings in the human sphere
  - (A) it is used of agreements between men or nations
  - (B) treaties the terms of which are either negotiated by the two parties, or imposed by one on the other
  - (C) it is also used of a will or testament – and Hebrews 9:11-20 uses this aspect to show that Christ's death is what made the new covenant valid
- b. in the spiritual sphere, however, the terms of the covenants are always set by God as part of His Sovereign power

- (A) this is made very clear in such verses as Ezekiel 20:37, when God says, 'I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant'
  - (B) it is God initiates his covenants in His grace
  - (C) it is God who carries out the covenantal promises which may either be dependent upon man keeping the terms of the covenant, or they may be absolute
- c. the covenantal promise to Abraham, 'In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.' (Genesis 22:18) is absolute and was put into effect in history when Christ was given on the cross as our salvation covenant: He is our peace treaty with God.
3. earlier we celebrated the Lord's Supper, the memorial left to us by the Lord Jesus Christ – Messiah – to remember His death until He returns to earth to reign
- a. we recalled His words, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' (1 Corinthians 11:25b)
  - b. the expression used in the OT in establishing a covenant is literally 'to cut a covenant' because a covenant, whether between two men or between God and man, was ratified and sealed by the offering and partaking of a sacrifice
  - c. when God gave His Son, John 3:16, for man's salvation; when God gave Messiah 'for a covenant of the people' – He gave Jesus as a sacrifice to put this covenant into effect

C. Words of Comfort . . . . . 49:8b-12

1. The promise of Messiah was a covenant
  - a. that was to have meaning even then to the people of Judah
  - b. they were facing a future of exile as a nation into the land of Babylon; the land of Israel be left empty and desolate
  - c. God is making a covenant – a solemn agreement with His people – in giving Messiah to them; one day He will be born in that same land of Israel – so it was not to be left empty and desolate forever
  - d. so this covenant was an assurance from God that the exile into Babylon of God's people was not to be permanent
2. God would bring them back to their land
  - a. v. 8: to restore the land, ... inherit the desolate heritages' – once again the land of Israel's promised inheritance was to be indwelt by Israel
  - b. v. 9a: 'those who are bound' – prisoners – are commanded 'Go forth' – they are to be released from captivity

- c. in vv. 9b-10, the picture changes to a pastoral scene
  - (A) the way for their return is to be provided for, and led by, the Shepherd of Israel
  - (B) God will clear their pathway so well that 'Along the roads they will feed, And their pasture *will be* on all bare heights.' – they need take no side routes along the way
  - (C) their Shepherd will provide food and water, all the while protecting them from the heat of the journey
  - (D) in Hebrew there is a specific word that means 'to lead to a watering place' – a word describing a shepherd's occupation – and that is the word used here: 'in guiding to the water, He, *the Shepherd will bring them to bubbling springs of water*' – not to a stagnant pond but to clear, cool water – God does nothing by halves!
- d. in verse 11 the picture changes to road making
  - (A) Ontario's summer signs are up 'under construction'
  - (B) the road reports each morning tell of the various exits and entrances that are closed on the 400 and 401
  - (C) well, God will remove all the obstacles to the return of His people from captivity; the mountains are made into a road; washed out places repaired on the highway

3. so God's people will return home

- a. verse 12: 'Behold, these will come from afar; And lo, these *will come* from the north and from the west, And these from the land of Sinim.'
  - (A) where the land of Sinim is no one knows
  - (B) some have, with some good reason, said China
  - (C) others, Aswan in the south of Egypt
  - (D) but the point is that they will come even from afar
  - (E) and from every direction
- b. yet, even as you read these verses, it becomes clear that the return of the exiles in Babylon to the Land of Israel falls far short of what is foretold in these verses

D. A Greater Return is Foretold

- 1. first of all, Christ was given to release from a greater bondage
  - a. that is the bondage of sin described Romans 6:16-18, 'Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?* But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin,

you became slaves of righteousness.'

- b. it was thus that Jesus could speak these words in John 8:31-36, 'So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, "You will become free?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.'"
- c. it is to this salvation and return to God that Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd leads and protects the people of God

2. but even so, there remains a further return for God's people

- a. when He gave us as His disciples the memorial we shared this morning, He also said, 'But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.' (Matthew 26:29)
- b. while the Church of Jesus Christ is the kingdom of God in this present world and time, there is an aspect of that kingdom which is yet future – we do not diminish the importance of either if we handle the Scriptures aright
- c. in words echoing this passage, the Lord Jesus speaks of the calling of the world-wide dispersion of God's people to Himself and to His kingdom in the day of judgement, Luke 13:29, 'And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline *at the table* in the kingdom of God.' – to which we eagerly look forward

E. Conclusion . . . . . 49:13

- 1. our passage concludes with these words, 'Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people And will have compassion on His afflicted.'
- a. the whole creation is called upon to praise God for the great salvation which He provides
- b. Christians readily join in that chorus of the redeemed
- c. can you join in with a full heart? ... make your peace this morning with the God of all peace through the peace covenant that is in His Son, the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of my favourite commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870

EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan

Volume 6, Isaiah, by Geoffrey W. Grogan, Principal, Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, Scotland;

EGT – The Expositor’s Greek Testament, Philippians by H. A. A. Kennedy, Hodder & Stoughton, 1903

EJY – The Book of Isaiah by Edward J. Young; © 1965; Wm. B. Eerdmans

K&D – Commentary on the Old Testament, by Keil & Delitzsch; Volume 7, Isaiah, by Franz Delitzsch

Kerux – The sermon and illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick to be found at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com).