

“Redemption of the Land”
Isaiah 62:6-12

May 13, 2012

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^B 2 Chronicles 36:21

^C Isaiah 56:10, Jeremiah 6:17, Ezekiel 3:17, Acts 20:28

^D Jeremiah 29:12, Luke 11:5-8

^E Psalm 144:8

^F Isaiah 40:2, 11:9, Hebrews 12:22-23

^G Isaiah 48:20

A. Introduction

1. Jubilee

- a. Jubel is the Hebrew word for a ram's horn, taken perhaps from the proper name Jubal, inventor of musical instruments (Genesis 4:21)
 - (A) a Jubel was the horn that was sounded on the day of atonement in the tenth day of the seventh month in the fiftieth year
 - (B) that is, after seven sevens, or sabbaths, of years, called the jubilee
 - (C) from this word come the English words, jubilant and jubilation
- b. these were favourite words of the African-American slaves in the days prior to the Emancipation
 - (A) Julia Ward Howe, an abolitionist, wrote "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" in November 1861, 7 months after the Civil War began
 - (1) one verse uses that word so meaningful to the slaves
He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never sound retreat,
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgement seat;
O be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant my feet!
Our God is marching on.
 - (B) this use of the word has continued to this day in this context
 - (1) Jubilee Day is celebrated by the NAACP every January 1st
 - (2) it is a remembrance of the signing on January 1st, 1863, of the Emancipation Proclamation
 - (3) why is this such a meaningful word in that context?
- c. We made reference to the answer in our message a few weeks ago
 - (A) the year of jubilee is described, for example, in Leviticus 25:10, 'You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.'
 - (1) when an Israelite fell into debt, he could sell his property to pay it; but if really great, he could be forced to sell himself
 - (2) but such sales of property or self were not to be final
 - (a) every seven years there was a year of release when such slaves were freed

- (b) and, in the 50th year, the land would be redeemed too, and returned to its proper owner
- (B) so Jubilee was to celebrate not only the freeing of those enslaved, but the return of their possessions, their land

2. the Land and the Earth

- a. because of sin, sin which had defiled the promised land as well as its people, Israel went into captivity, and the land went as payment of their debt into the hands of their conquerors
- b. as summarised in 2 Chronicles 36:21, *'... to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.'*
- c. there being ten instead of seven sabbaths of years; some see in seven the number of completion, and in ten, that of a new beginning
- d. in any case, the return to the land after the captivity was a jubilee in every sense; freed from slavery, their possession was restored
- e. but just as in Hebrew the same word is used both for the land as is used for the earth, so the jubilee is a picture of a far greater return from slavery, a far greater restoration – that of the earth
 - (A) of mankind from the slavery to sin
 - (B) of the earth from the curse resulting from sin
- f. this is the redemption of the land, and of the earth, of which Isaiah is speaking in our text today as well as other places; let's first consider

B. The Watchmen of Zion 62:6-7

- 1. Their appointment (v 6a) – *'On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent. ...'*
 - a. who they are?
 - (A) in the OT, the word is used, of course in a literal sense of those guards who were at the gates and on the walls on the lookout for any approaching enemy in order to give warning to those within
 - (1) from thence it came to be used in a spiritual sense
 - (2) int the temple service Levites were appointed to keep constant watch day and night
 - (3) Isaiah has already used watchman in a spiritual sense in Isaiah 56:10 of Israel's watchmen being

blind, as he describes the false shepherds of Israel, their false prophets

(4) Jeremiah 6:17 uses it to describe those whom God sent to warn the people of Judah of God's coming judgement

(5) and God tells Ezekiel directly, '[Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.](#)' (Ezekiel 3:17)

(6) the spiritual watchmen of the OT were the prophets of God

(B) in the NT

(1) the same idea is found in the word, episkopos, which is translated as bishop, or, more literally as 'overseer'

(2) here is how Paul addressed the elders of the Ephesian church, '[Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd \(i.e., to pastor\) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.](#)' (Acts 20:28)

(3) so then, the leaders – apostles, elders, presbyters, pastors, bishops; the names vary with their actual roles – whom God the Holy Spirit appoints over the church are the watchmen

b. who appoints them?

(A) having determined who they are, this becomes clear

(B) only God can appoint these through His Holy Spirit

(C) any ordination by man is only a recognition of God's ordination

2. Their responsibility (vv 6b-7) – '[... watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves; And give Him no rest until He establishes And makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.](#)'

a. in some translations, the words of the original are weakened to '[who make mention](#)' or '[who remember](#)', but the Hebrew is actually quite startling: the watchmen are '[those causing Yahweh to remember](#)' or, '[Yahweh's remembrancers](#)'

(A) in the Oriental courts the remembrancer was there to remind the king of His appointments and responsibilities

(B) so, of course, this is one of those cases where human terms are applied to God, for indeed He has no need of being reminded

(C) and yet that is the very thing that God is asking His watchmen to do: in effect God is saying, 'keep

reminding me of these things!

(D) in fact, 'do not rest in keeping me from rest until I do them'

(E) now that is startling, is it not?

b. but prayer, when you think about it, is startling

(A) the sovereign God who is in charge says to His followers, 'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.' (Jeremiah 29:12) – sovereign God listens to puny man

(B) Jesus himself taught us that we should pray this way

(1) He used as an example the widow who kept pestering the unjust judge until he took up her cause

(2) after giving the model, or "Lord's", prayer, in Luke 11:5-8 He gave this example, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs."

(3) Jesus advised us to unceasing prayer until God answers

c. so, the responsibility given to the watchmen is 'keep watching and praying until God answers by restoring Jerusalem, redeeming Zion'

C. The Redemption of Zion 62:8-9

1. Its promise (v 8a) – 'The Lord has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm'

a. God does so by a right-handed oath; as used in the courts

(A) An oath is either a statement of fact or a promise calling upon something or someone that the oath maker considers sacred, usually God, as a witness to the binding nature of the promise or the truth of the statement of fact. ...

(B) The essence of a divine oath is an invocation of divine agency to be a guarantor of the oath taker's own honesty and integrity in the matter under question. By implication, this invokes divine displeasure if the oath taker fails in their sworn duties.

(C) It is customary to raise the right hand ... with the left hand upon the Scriptures...^{-{2}}.

(D) the practices goes back to ancient Israel: for example, 'Whose mouths speak deceit, And whose right

hand is a right hand of falsehood.' (Psalms 144:8); God, however, speaks the truth.

b. by His arm

(A) this oath is backed up by His strong arm

(B) the power of God ensures the keeping of the promises of God

2. Its effect (vv 8b-9) – The Lord has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm, 'I will never again give your grain as food for your enemies; Nor will foreigners drink your new wine for which you have laboured.' But those who garner it will eat it and praise the Lord; And those who gather it will drink it in the courts of My sanctuary.

a. the first effect of God's promise is cessation of judgement

(A) in Israel's history, there is one specific judgement in view

(1) this has been the theme in the last part of Isaiah

(2) namely, that Judah should follow Israel into captivity

(3) to the empire once under Assyria but now under Babylon

(4) their land falling possession to the enemy nations round about

(5) a judgement for the sin of Israel and Judah in turning away from Yahweh, the one true God, to the idols of the nations

(6) but when that empire came under the control of the Medes and the Persians, Cyrus gave permission for Jews to return back to Canaan land and take up their lives there again

(B) however, there has been another judgement upon this earth

(1) it began when man and woman first disobeyed God's orders

(2) this brought about the rebellion of man against God that has persisted ever since

(3) so that we live on an earth that has been cursed by sin

(a) this is seen in the furies of nature

(b) it is seen in the pain of labour in gardening, in childbirth

(c) it is seen in the hateful acts of man against man

(4) and this judgement, we are promised, is going to end

(5) for that rebellion of man against God will cease

(6) with the earth returned to man for its original purpose

b. the second effect is the blessing of justification

(A) so then when Israel returned from Babylon

- (1) it was accounted by God that they were forgiven
- (2) that is Isaiah's message of comfort: 'Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the Lord's hand Double for all her sins.' (Isaiah 40:2)
- (3) yet though she returned under Cyrus, the land of Canaan neither then, nor ever since, has been her full possession – and certainly far from the peace promised in Isaiah 11:9, 'They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.'
- (4) so Israel still looks forward to the fulfilment of the promise

(B) in one sense the promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ

- (1) with Him also comes forgiveness of sin to the believer, those returning to God who '... have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven,...' (Hebrews 12:22-23)
- (2) through the Holy Spirit, these fruits of salvation are enjoyed
- (3) this even effects the earth upon which we live, fallen as it is

Heav'n above is softer blue, Earth around a sweeter green:
 Something lives in ev'ry hue Christless eyes have never seen!
 Birds with gladder songs o'erflow, Flow'rs with deeper beauties shine
 Since I know, as now I know, I am His and He is mine.^{-{3}}

- (4) but God's people still look forward to an earth whence sin has departed, and the Lord and His Christ shall reign for ever

(C) there is then a preparation needed for

D. The Peopling of Zion 62:10-12

- 1. Their return (v 10) – 'Go through, go through the gates, Clear the way for the people; Build up, build up the highway, Remove the stones, lift up a standard over the peoples.'
- a. there is a very clear message to the Jews of the exile that they are to leave Babylon when the time comes
 - (A) 'Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! Declare with the sound of joyful shouting, proclaim this, Send it out to the end of the earth; Say, 'The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob.'" (Isaiah

48:20)

- (B) many, however did not, and Jewish colonies existed in that land even long after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus – it was an attractive place to live and business was good there
 - (C) Babylon throughout Scripture represents the world system in which we live, Satan’s domain of darkness
 - (D) and the call for Israel was to leave it, with those in the vanguard clearing the way for those who should follow
- b. In like fashion, the believer in Jesus Christ is called
- (A) to be living in the world, but not part of it
 - (B) he or she is, as John Bunyan put it in his allegorical book, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, to leave the city of destruction – Babylon – and head for the heavenly city
 - (C) along the way believers are to prepare the way for those who follow, just as those who have preceded us have done for us
 - (D) in this we await the return of Jesus Christ, who is our and ...
2. Their salvation (v 11) – **Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Lo, your salvation comes; Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.’**
- a. when you stop and think about – even as you examine this verse closely – you discover that salvation is not simply an event
 - (A) in the case of the Jews, deliverance from a foreign oppressor
 - (B) or, more deeply for all man, deliverance from sin’s guilt
 - (C) but rather salvation is a Person
 - (D) **‘Behold, your salvation is come’** – what is the proof?
 - (E) **‘Behold, His reward is with Him’** – it is when the Lord comes that salvation has arrived; the Saviour is the bearer of salvation
 - b. the was true of the first coming of Jesus Christ – by His life, death and resurrection He saved us from sin’s guilt and penalty
 - c. it is doubly true of Christ’s second coming – at His return judging and removing sin and its effects from those who are His people
 - d. these are those who are then fit to people heavenly Zion; as seen in

3. Their character (v 12) – *And they will call them, 'The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD'; And you will be called, 'Sought out, a city not forsaken.'*

a. for a short time, after the return from captivity, the earthly Jerusalem was again inhabited

(A) God had demonstrated that the Jews were a holy people

(B) not that they were righteous, but rather a holy people; a people set apart by God to prove that He alone is God; a people from whom would come the righteous and holy One to save the world

b. even so, for a time they occupied an eminently desirable situation

(A) they possessed in part their land – a married land – Beulah Land

(B) but, there remained yet a rest for the people of God

(C) one that is sought out by many, as Stites^{4}. wrote

*I've reached the land of corn and wine, and all its riches freely mine,
Here shines undimmed one blissful day, For all my night has passed away.
O Beulah Land, sweet Beulah Land, As on thy highest mount I stand,
I look away across the sea, Where mansions are prepared for me,
And view the shining glory shore, My heaven, my home forevermore!*

E. Conclusion – for those who come to Christ, who find forgiveness of sin in Him, there is a heaven to be enjoyed in walking with Him here and now (even in the midst of the difficulties of this world) and a heaven to which we look forward, when we are with him in a land redeemed from this world's sin and sorrow. For both our closing hymn gives praise to God.

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AV Authorized (King James) Version

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

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;

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 & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site,

www.holwick.com.

2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath>

3. *I Am His and He Is Mine*, by George Wade Robinson (1836-1877)

4. *Beulah Land*, by Edgar Page Stites (1836-1921) written in 1875 or 1876