

Is. 52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

This verse emphasizes that the prophet is speaking of a future time. Never has it been true that the uncircumcised and the unclean have been kept out of Jerusalem. Isaiah is a poet and is equating Zion's future strength to beautiful garments. The word for *strength* in the Hebrew states, "strength in various applications (force, security, majesty, praise)." That is why *strength* (singular) is equated to *garments* (plural). What makes Zion/Jerusalem the holy city? The fact that this is the place on earth with which God has chosen to identify His name.

1Kings 11:36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

Is. 52:2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

Evidently, before Jerusalem is in a position to put on beautiful garments of strength, she will have been in captivity. I believe this is a reference to the rule of Antichrist. Once the LORD destroys the Antichrist and assumes the throne of David the nation of Israel will finally experience blessing and peace forever—but not until then.

Is. 52:3 For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

As I read several translations of this verse, I thought the KJV and the Darby really had the right idea. God didn't sell His people to their captors; He gave them over to them for judgment. They are the ones who sold themselves by their rejection of God and by turning to false gods and other nations for their protection. When Israel is redeemed by God and restored to a position of fellowship, it will be because they have turned back to Him in faith and repentance. The Lord made it very clear that He would not return until His people wanted Him to.

Luke 13:34-35 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Is. 52:4 For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

Both the Egyptians and the Assyrians were the main oppressors of Israel before the Babylonian captivity. In recent years I heard a teaching by Chuck Missler

that cast an interesting possibility regarding this scripture. A quote from one of the articles on his website states: "Much has been speculated about the specific Pharaoh in this book. Stephen gives us a clue when he notes that, 'Another king arose who knew not Joseph.' The Greek term used was *heteros*, another of a different kind, not *allos*, another of the same kind. This Pharaoh was of a different race and dynasty. (Josephus also makes mention of this fact, who describes "the crown being come to another family.") It seems that he was the Assyrian of Isaiah 52:4."

This would seem to make a bit more sense to me in reference to the phrase "oppressed them without cause." This Pharaoh had no cause to oppress the Jews. They had been invited to Egypt during the famine and had been given the land they occupied. The only reason the Hebrews were placed in bondage was because of Pharaoh's fear that they would turn on him—not because of anything they had done to him or his country. When the Assyrian empire, on the other hand, conquered the northern tribes and took them into captivity, it was for cause—God's judgment upon His rebellious people.

Considering the context of reference to a future time, I can't help but make a comparison between "the Assyrian" and the Antichrist. The Antichrist, too, will oppress God's people without cause. Considering Antiochus Epiphanes as the main type of the Antichrist, I wouldn't be surprised if he also turned out to be an Assyrian. Assyria was absorbed by Rome, so he would, therefore, also be Roman. He would also have to be Jewish for them to accept him as their Messiah. This identification is based on place of birth as well as ethnicity.

The 70th week of Daniel is a time intended to bring Israel back into relationship with the Lord—one that they will never again reject; it will bring in everlasting righteousness.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, **and to bring in everlasting righteousness**, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

The wrath of God that will be poured out upon planet earth during this time is directed toward His enemies, the wicked, and the unbelieving. It is not directed toward the nation of Israel.

Isaiah 13:9 & 11 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it....And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

Is. 52:5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

Because of the context I believe this is a reference to future times. Again, the phrase “for nought” stands out. The Babylonian captivity happened for a reason, for cause, as a judgment from God upon His people for disobedience and for neglecting the sabbatical years for the land.

2Chronicles 36:20-21 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

In the last 3.5 years of his rule, the Antichrist is going to declare war on God’s people “for nought,” for no good reason. His sole motivation will be hate.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

We know that the Antichrist will be blatant in blaspheming the name of God

Revelation 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Usually, as the leaders go, so go their followers.

Is. 52:6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

“therefore” – When the events happen that He has foretold.

The day is coming when the nation of Israel, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, will recognize God as LORD and Jesus, His Son, as Messiah and King. This is the time that is spoken of by the prophet Zechariah.

Zechariah 12:8-10 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Is. 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

How many times have I heard this verse used in mission conferences! And it is so true. The sad thing is that we children of God are so hesitant to share the good news, the gospel of salvation through Jesus. We are so afraid of offending someone or turning them away. I am trying to learn to become bolder and not to worry about what the person may think of me or how they might respond negatively. The important thing is to share the truth of God's Word and trust the LORD to work through the Holy Spirit. We are not responsible for the outcome; we are responsible to share what we know and possess. They can't respond if they don't hear.

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

It is going to be especially great news for those who turn to God in faith during the tribulation period—especially the Jews. They will be able to look at His Word and see that everything is happening according to His Word. They will finally start seeing clearly after having been blind so long to the truth of scripture. In that time, which will be the worst ever to impact this earth and its inhabitants, God's Word will provide hope, strength and comfort.

The Hebrew for the word *peace* encompasses much: "safe, i.e. (figuratively) well, happy, friendly; also (abstractly) welfare, i.e. health, prosperity, peace."

Is. 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

The Hebrew for *watchmen* indicates one who is "leaning forward," looking with expectation. Who are these watchmen? In a coming chapter we are told that they have been specifically placed in position by God and are constantly entreating Him to "make Jerusalem a praise throughout the earth." These are verses that I quote often when I pray. It is a time that I am anticipating with great joy because I know that means that I will be with the Lord and He will be on His throne in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 62:6-7 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Is. 52:9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

This will be the response of the watchmen to the coming of the King. Their message will be one of great joy and cause for great celebration. Jerusalem will be a waste when He comes, but that will soon change. The Lord is going to bring great blessing and prosperity when He comes (as Isaiah will describe in more detail in upcoming chapters).

Is. 52:10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

In previous study we have found that the *arm* is a symbol of one's strength and power. Making it bare would be a word picture of displaying this strength and power for all to see. The fact that His arm is described as holy gives understanding that the judgment executed in His strength and power is righteous and according to God's purposes.

When Christ returns as King "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." This makes me think of the verses in Romans that express the longing of creation for this time.

Romans 8:21-23 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Is. 52:11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

Is. 52:12 For ye 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 rereward.

"go ye out of the midst of her" – The first question in my mind was regarding "her." To whom did it refer? It seems to reference "the earth" in the previous verse. Although many Jews have decided to make their home in the nation of Israel since 1948, there are still many millions dispersed throughout the nations of the earth. We read in chapter 49 how the LORD would cause the Gentiles to facilitate the return of His people to their land. Just as the LORD went before and behind them to ensure their safety and provision during the Exodus, He will again do so in the future.

"rereward" = the rear guard

"the vessels of the Lord" – This would seem to be a reference to the items used in the Temple. Many commentators seem to think this chapter is referencing the deliverance from Babylonian captivity, but for the reasons cited in previous comments I do not believe this is the case. These two verses would certainly seem to apply to that time, since they left Babylon with the permission of Cyrus and were taking with them many of the temple vessels. I know that the Temple Institute in Jerusalem is preparing even now for the establishment of the new temple and that most of the items required for service have been made. It makes me wonder if many of these will be spirited out of Jerusalem during the time of the Antichrist's fury and desecration. The future will one day reveal the truth. I will continue to seek the teaching of the Spirit regarding the meaning of this scripture.

Is. 52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

These verses begin a very powerful and terrible, but beautiful section of scripture. The prophet introduces this section with a statement of the victorious results of the sacrifice that Christ, the Messiah, (“my servant”) would make by obediently coming to earth as a man, living a sinless life, and laying down His life in death to provide the gift of salvation for man—despite the fact that He would be rejected and treated shamefully.

Christ will be exalted and extolled as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Revelation 19:11-16 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

It is no wonder in my mind that the Jewish people had a hard time rectifying the suffering Messiah with the conquering King. It’s really the same problem that people have today—expectations and lack of understanding. They cannot see with spiritual eyes because they have rejected The Truth. On the one hand, we want to blame God for everything and hold Him accountable to our expectations while rejecting Him as LORD and His Word as true. We have placed ourselves in the position of king and Him in the position of servant. Until we are humbled in our hearts and brokenhearted for our sin, we will never be able to experience His healing and understand His truth.

LORD, I pray for understanding and enlightenment as I enter into this most holy section of scripture.

Is. 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

“astonied” = to stun (or intransitively, grow numb), i.e. devastate or (figuratively) stupefy (both usually in a passive sense):—make amazed, wonder
“stupefy” = To make stupid; to make dull; **to blunt the faculty of perception or understanding** in; to deprive of sensibility.

The flow of thought is difficult to follow. From declaring the exaltation of His servant as King, the LORD jumps right in to describing His humiliation. This verse is a reference to the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. I thought the Hebrew for the word *astounded* allowed for the various responses of those who were witnesses to these events.

- Many were *stunned*; including those who witnessed the results of the savage beating that He endured and those who had heard Him teach and believed Him to be the Messiah that they expected to deliver them from the Romans and reign as King.
- Many were devastated—His mother and close followers
- Many were *stupefied*—especially His disciples who hadn't understood all of His teachings, including the pointed ones in which He shared with Him His death, burial and resurrection.

Luke 18:31-34 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. **And they understood none of these things:** and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

- Many were amazed; like the soldier who realized that the events of nature that happened in response to His death testified that this was the Son of God.

Mark 15:39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

The last two phrases of this verse emphasize that He endured a beating that was worse than any other man on earth has suffered. He was completely disfigured (from the Hebrew for *marred*). I believe this means that He was unrecognizable.

Chuck Missler goes on to make application to His conversation with the two disciples on the Emmaus Road (They didn't recognize Him.), His appearance to the disciples in the upper room (They were terrified.), to Mary Magdalene (She didn't recognize Him.), and to the disciples (They didn't recognize Him at first; they were fishing; He was on shore.).

Is. 52:15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.

“sprinkle” = to spirt, i.e. besprinkle (especially in expiation)

“expiation” = The act of making satisfaction or atonement for any crime or fault; the extinguishing of guilt by suffering or penalty.

Through His suffering, He will provide atonement for the sins of many nations. Those who come to understand this will be *astounded* in return at such unconditional love. They will be left speechless.

The last half of this verse is a bit hard. Paul referenced this section in his letter to the Romans. He seems to be using it as one of his motivations to keep going into places where the name of Christ would not be known.

Romans 15:20-21 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

After glancing at several commentaries, I think Paul gives us the most understanding of the meaning. It is obvious that God had especially privileged the Jews to receive His words of truth through the prophets. They knew a Messiah was coming even though they didn't understand that His coming would be in two parts. They knew that they were to serve as an instrument of blessing to all nations of the earth according to God's promise to Abraham.

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

After the death and resurrection of Christ and the formation of the church, the gospel began to circulate to those who had never heard the teachings of scripture. How would they "see" the truth? Through the lives of believers. They would be encouraged to consider truths never heard before because of the testimony of men and women of faith.