

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE (THE ALARM CLOCK CHAPTER)

THEME:

The nation Israel has a place in the past and future purposes of God.

REMARKS:

The impression might wrongly be drawn from the last chapter (chapter 50) that God has set aside the nation Israel permanently. This chapter precludes any such thought or theory. Just as Israel has had a past, which was rooted in a very small beginning, just so today they are small and set aside. But this does not mean God has forsaken them.

Israel is like a train which has been put on a sidetrack while God brings the Church through on the main line, which is His present purpose with the world. The train on the siding is not wrecked and will be brought out at God's appointed time and routed to its eternal destiny. **"For the Lord shall comfort Zion."**

This chapter is like an alarm clock. Mark the places when the expressions occur like **"hearken to me"** and **"awake, awake"** (verses 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 17 and 21). God's time piece is not B-U-L-O-V-A or G-R-U-E-N, but I-S-R-A-E-L. In this chapter God turns on the alarm to awaken those who are asleep that they might know that the eternal morning is coming soon.

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light (Romans 13:11-12).

Has not a spiritual sleep and stupor seized upon the children of God in this day? Do we not need to hear the alarm clock?

OUTLINE:

1. **ORIGIN from Past History of the Nation Israel—Small and Lowly.** Verses 1-3
2. **OUTLOOK for the Future of the Nation Israel—Significant and Glorious.** Verses 4-16
3. **OUTLINE of Present Conditions of the Nation Israel—Sinful and Desolate.** Verses 17-23

COMMENT:

Verse 1—**Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.**

This is a call to every sincere heart in Israel that longs to be righteous and desires to know God. This is not limited to Israel but is a cosmic call to every heart.

This is a call to look at the beginning of the nation—and the race, for that matter. All believers know that they have been rescued from the sinking sand and miry clay. They have been lifted from the pit of death and hell.

Verse 2—**Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.**

This is a call to every pious Israelite to consider his beginning. Abraham and Sarah mark the beginning of the nation. Also God promised to make them a blessing to the world. The nation Israel failed, but God did not break His promise, as Christ came in fulfillment.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-2).

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, he saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Verse 3—**For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.**

Zion is Jerusalem, the center of the Land of Promise. The land will be restored, as well as the people to the land.

Verse 4—**Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.**

“**O my nation**” is Israel. This is a word of glorious anticipation for them.

Verse 5—**My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.**

“**Righteousness**” is Christ, he is made unto us “**righteousness.**” “**Isles**” means *coasts and speak of all the inhabited continents and islands.* “**Mine arm**” refers to Christ (read Isaiah 53:1).

Verse 6—**Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.**

“Lift up your eyes”—wake up.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (II Peter 3:10).

Will the new earth and new heavens precede or follow the Millennium?

Verse 7—**Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.**

This is a word of encouragement to the faithful remnant in any age.

Verse 8—**For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.**

We are on the victory side.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord (Romans 12:19).

Verse 9—**Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?**

Verse 10—**Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?**

“**Arm of the Lord**” refers to Christ and the salvation He wrought on the cross. This is clear from chapter 53. “**Rahab**” is Egypt, as verse 10 indicates.

Verse 11—**Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.**

This is another crystal-clear prophecy that declares the return of the redeemed Israelite back to the land, nothing in the past can adequately fulfill this prophecy.

Verse 12—I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

This is a continuation of the comfort stated first in Isaiah 40. They are the redeemed now, because since chapter 40 the suffering servant has been introduced. Fear of man will be taken away from them. As long as man stalks this earth uncontrolled in his sinful condition there is no freedom from fear.

Verse 13—And forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?

Since they had forgotten God, they feared man. Cromwell has been called the bravest man who ever lived. The explanation he gave is significant, “Fear God and you will not need to fear any man.”

Verse 14—The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.

Verse 15—But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The Lord of hosts is his name.

Verse 16—And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

God delivered Israel from Egypt that He might make them His people, he will perform miracles again that He might say, “**Thou art my people.**”

Verse 17—Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

This is another sound of alarm. This time it is to alert them to profit from their present distress. Even then they could make the judgment of God upon them a profitable experience if they learned the lesson of suffering.

This nation has suffered more than any other people. History teaches this and should encourage all of God’s people to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Verse 18—There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.

Unfortunately, Israel had not profited from her suffering and was wandering in the dark. There had been no deliverer among her sons.

Verse 19—**These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?**

Should not God's people today exercise a sympathy toward Israel? The Christian ought to be the best friend that a Jew has.

Verse 20—**Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God.**

The nation Israel bears the marks of the rebuke of the Lord.

Verse 21—**Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:**

God alerts them to come out of the spiritual stupor in which they are.

Verse 22—**Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:**

God has been pressing the cup of fury to their lips because of the rejection of Christ, but the day is coming when He will remove the cup.

Verse 23—**But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.**

The enemies of Israel will not escape the judgment of God. Every nation that has majored in anti-Semitism has fallen: Egypt, Persia, Rome, Spain, Belgium and Germany.

This chapter should alert the believers today that God will yet choose Israel and that the events in the Near East indicate that we are fast approaching the end times, although no specific prophecy is being fulfilled in this hour.

~ end of chapter 51 ~

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