

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him (the messenger!) who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'! (Isaiah 52:7)

In last week's lesson on Isaiah 51, we saw how God instructed "those who pursue righteousness and seek Him"--speaking of the "ransomed of the Lord," the remnant of those Israelites returning (or about to return)- from exile in Babylon, to "listen (closely!), and pay attention, and give ear" to some important things He had to say to them! And He told them first of all to "look back," (in remembrance) of Abraham, their father, whom He had called, and to Sarah, who gave birth to them in pain"! Noting how He had blessed them and multiplied their descendants, and how, through Abraham, all the families of the earth would be blessed"! Then to "look forward" (in faith!) to the time when He would "make the wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord"...and when "His salvation would go forth...and He would judge the nations"! And, finally, to look even further into the future, to the day (still to come!) when "the sky will vanish like smoke and the earth will wear out as a garment"! (And, according to II Peter 3:18, when God will create a new heaven and a new earth"!)

Meanwhile, He said they were "not to fear the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings (which He implied were sure to come!), for "the moth would eat them like a garment...but His righteousness would be forever, and His salvation to all generations"!

So "rouse yourselves, O Jerusalem (He charged!), you who have drunk the cup of God's wrath...for the Lord, who contends for His people, will take the cup of reeling, the chalice of His anger, and put it into the hand of your tormentors"!

And so, with the "cup of wrath" removed, and the promise of Eden restored, we see what Constable describes as the "mark for the transition of His chosen people from peril to promise"! Thus setting the scene for our lesson last night on Isaiah 52!

It all begins with God calling for Zion to "awake," to recognize their new standing with the Holy One of Israel, and to respond by "clothing themselves in beautiful garments," which the Lord would provide for them (symbolizing their new status of holiness, which comes with salvation)! And calling for the "once captive" Jerusalem to "shake off the dust" (of their humiliation) and to "rise up and "loosen the chains around their necks" (which "bind" them)! Thus freeing themselves from bondage and, as Colossians 3:9-10 says, to be renewed, as people of God, by "putting off the old, and putting on the new"!

For thus says the Lord, "You were sold by your oppressors "without cause--those who have "continually blasphemed My name all day long," but now you have been freely redeemed ("without money")--and My people "will know My name"!

And so, just as God once "redeemed" Israel from Egyptian and Assyrian oppression, so now He delivers them from Babylon!

But, as Motyer notes, Isaiah, in verses 7-10 "takes them (and us!) beyond their understanding of the Lord's victorious act in delivering His people from Babylon to catch a glimpse of something so much greater--God's future triumphant homecoming to Zion--and His redemptive plan for all the world!

And what a scene it is (or will be!), as all the world will see the "beautiful feet of the messenger on the mountain, announcing peace, and bringing good news of salvation, and saying to Zion, 'your God reigns'! Causing the watchmen on the wall, and all the people of Jerusalem, to join together in singing for joy as they witness, and "see clearly" (as MacArthur describes it!), "the royal entourage, with the

divine king, returning triumph over their enemies"! And, as Isaiah 52:10, says, "with all the world seeing the salvation of the Lord"!

But, as we come to the conclusion of this lesson, as Motyer notes, there's an important question that hasn't as yet been answered in Isaiah's account! And that is to reveal exactly how God would remove the curse of God's wrath, and accomplish redemption for mankind! And with that, the scene, and the drama, is set for our lessons to come (in the rest of Isaiah 52 and, most vividly, in Isaiah 53! And the unveiling of the greatest story ever told! Bringing good news that needs to be shared!

Indeed, "How beautiful are the feet of the one who brings the good news. who announces salvation...!

Our God reigns!

Lowell