

"Thus He will sprinkle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand!" (Isaiah 52:15, NAS)

"So now He will startle many nations! Kings will be shocked speechless before Him; for they will now see a sight unheard of, and things never considered before now fill their thoughts!" (Isaiah 52:15, Passion version)

Good morning, Men of the Bible! Welcome to more of our study in Isaiah!

You'll remember how, in last week's lesson (on Isaiah 52:1-10), we saw how God had instructed the exiles residing in Babylon to "awake" (from their state of "spiritual drunkenness"), to recognize their new standing with Him (the Holy One of Israel), by "clothing themselves in the beautiful garments" which He would provide for them (symbolizing their status of holiness (which comes with salvation)! Then, to "rise up...shake off the dust...and loosen the chains around their neck" (chains which were "binding" them!)--and to return to Zion! For He had "redeemed" them from those who had "blasphemed His name all day long," and they were now "free to go," noting that there would come a day when His people would "know His name, and know that it was He who was speaking to them"!

And, on that day, MacArthur writes, "messengers will traverse the mountains surrounding Jerusalem to spread the good news of the return of redeemed Israel to the land"! Isaiah describes it in Isaiah 52:7, as a beautiful sight to behold! "How beautiful upon the mountains (he writes) are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "your God reigns!" And this will be followed by the joyful shout of the city watchman as he is joined by others in singing for joy as they see "the king returning in triumph from victory over His enemies"! (And, as was pointed out earlier, the apostle Paul would later refer to this passage, in Romans 10:14-17, in explaining what's necessary before a person can respond in faith to the message of the gospel of Christ: "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher"?)

But after completing last week's lesson, as Motyer notes, the readers of the book of Isaiah were still left with the all-important question, not yet specifically addressed by Isaiah--that being a revelation of exactly how God would remove the curse of His wrath for sin, and accomplish His plan of redemption for mankind!

And it's in light of that question that we entered into our lesson last night, on Isaiah 52:11-15!

It all begins with God reiterating His call for the exiles in Babylon to "get out of there"! Just like they had earlier made their exodus from Egypt! And they were told, as they prepared for, and made, their journey back to Jerusalem, "not to touch any unclean thing" and to "purify themselves" (speaking particularly for those "carrying the sacred vessels of the Lord" (which had been taken from the temple in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and which needed to be returned in order for them to restore their worship in Jerusalem)!

And they were also told that they didn't need to go "in haste, nor as fugitives" (as had been the case in Egypt, when they made their escape from Pharaoh), "for the Lord would go before them, and the God of Israel would be their rear guard"!

Then, in verses 13-15, Isaiah gives some preliminary insight into that all-important understanding of how God would accomplish redemption and provide a way of salvation, not just for Israel but for all the world! And, as we know, it would only come through the work of His "Suffering Servant"!

"Look!" "See!" "Behold!" (Depending on which translation you read!) "My Servant will prosper and succeed; He shall be high and lifted up and greatly exalted"! But, Isaiah notes, "His appearance will be marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (thus giving a preview of both His suffering and His exaltation)! And so we have our first real insights from the book of Isaiah on Christ, the Son of God, becoming the "Suffering Servant"!

And Isaiah notes that, as a result of all this, the whole world would be astonished at what was to come!

Verse 15 says He will "sprinkle many nations" (some versions say "sparkle" the nations, as the Greek word, "yazze" can be translated either way)! "Kings will be shocked speechless and in awe" (Isaiah referring, possibly, as McArthur notes, to "the Servant, in His disfigured state, performing a priestly work of cleaning" (with the shedding of His "blood of atonement" on the cross! Or possibly to the time when the once "lowly Servant"--"despised and rejected by man, and smitten and afflicted by God"--takes His throne and is unveiled in "power and great glory" (in a time yet to come)! All of which appropriately describes how we too, and all the people of the world need to respond (and be "startled"! And in "awe"!)) when hearing and reading, and coming to grips with the awesome account of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! And particularly as we move on to next week's lesson on Isaiah 53 which, Constable writes, "some expositors have called the holy of holies of Isaiah"!

"What more can He say, than for you He has said...!"

On to Isaiah 53!

Lowell