

Scriptures: Isa 1:3,9; 7:3, 10:22; 37:31-32; 40:27-31; Isa 42:1-4; 53:10, 61:1-2; 61:3; Isa 62:6-7; 65:8-9; 66:1-2; Rom 11:5

- I. Isaiah named his son “a remnant shall return”
 - a. The owner and the master’s crib – The LORD said, unlike the ox and the donkey, Israel has forsaking me. They don’t consider me. (Isa 1:3,9)
 - i. The warning of Moses and Joshua (De 28:15,25; De 30:1-3; Jos 23:16)
 - ii. At Elijah’s time, the king of Israel worshiped Bale and persecuted God’s people. But God kept 7000 who had not bent their knees to Bale. (1Kin 19:14,18)
 - iii. At Isaiah’s time, the heart of Judah rebelled against God, and had forsaking God. (1:5) There was no justice to the orphans and widows and the oppressed. (1:17)
 - b. Shear-Jashub - In Chap 7, Isaiah expressed sorrow and hope in naming his son. And the LORD noticed that. (v 3)
 - i. In Chap 10 he foresaw Assyria invasion and said the remnant shall return to the mighty God. (v.20,22) Not Jerusalem, but mighty God!
 - c. The remnant shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. - In Chap 37
 - i. This is the LORD’s word to king Hezekiah concerning future recovery. You must take root. It happed before. It has not happened for a long time. It must happen if you want a recovery. (v 30-32)
 - ii. Note that the LORD was addressing the remnant of the house of Judah.
 - d. Those who walked with God grieved for the going was hard - My way is hid from the LORD – (40:27-31)
 - i. The LORD said He never was tired or weary. He knew.
 - ii. And those who wait upon Him will gain new strength. They will mount up like eagle. They will run and not tire, walk and not faint.
 - e. Behold My Servant! – In Chap 42, Jehovah introduced His anointed Servant. (v 1-4, 6-7)
 - i. Grace, truth, light, covenant, liberty
 - ii. The Servant is the Lamb, the Sin-offering. He has descendants (seed) (53:10)
 - iii. In Chap 61, the Servant declared His mission. (61:1-3)
 - f. Those who mourn in Zion – The Servant started to point to Zion and those who cared.
 1. Those who mourn in Zion I will make them oaks of righteousness
 - g. Watchmen upon the wall – Chap 62, they were set by the anointed Servant of God. They never ceased to pray for Jerusalem (v 1, 6-7)
 - i. Though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us – In Chap 63 the remnant grieved over past failures and cleaved to God’s love, Chap 63 (v 15-17)

- h. New wine found in the cluster – In Chap 65, Jehovah considers His servants (multiple) as new wine in the cluster, for which He destroys not the whole vineyard. (v 8-9)
 - i. Where is the place of my rest? – In Chap 66, Lord Jehovah found His rest among the remnant, who is poor and of contrite spirit, who tremble at His word. (v 1-2)
- II. Examples of the remnant
- a. The remnant of Jacob in the nations – dew of Jehovah and lion in the forest. Micah 5:7
 - b. Daniel as a young exile kept himself holy for God. He repented for his people and prayed for the return, for God’s righteousness and glory (Dan 1, Dan 9:1-3, 7, 13,16, 19)
- III. The overcomers and bondservants in the New Testament
- a. Apostle Paul saw “even at the present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom 11:5)
 - b. Apostle John saw the Lord calling overcomers to heed what the Spirit says to the churches and to respond. (Rev 2-3)
 - c. Apostle John saw himself and the brethren who received the Revelation as fellow bondservants having the testimony of Jesus. (Rev 1:1-2, 19:10)
- IV. Value of the remnant to God
- a. They know their Master and the Master’s crib.
 - b. God found them caring for His will, while the majority did not care.
 - c. God entrusted His recovery work to them (Isa 37:30), not to those who did not care.
 - d. God expected them to bear His testimony in Jerusalem (Isa 37:32) and in foreign lands. (Mic 5:7-8) He could not expect others.
 - e. God could make them His bondservants after the fashion of His anointed Servant. He could not expect others.
 - f. God could find in them a place of His rest, which He could not find among others.

Scriptures: Isa 42:1-7; Matt 20:28; 1Cor 11:23a

- I. God through Isaiah reveal His Son in plain words for the first time, whom He will send from heaven to be the life, the light, the Servant, and the love for men.
 - a. He is the heavenly life - born of the virgin, to be Immanuel (7:14)
 - b. He is the heavenly light - shining on those sitting in the shadow of darkness and death. His name will be called wonderful, counselor, God almighty, Father eternal, and prince of peace (9:2, 6-7)
 - c. He is the heavenly Servant - Behold my Servant! (42:1-3)
 - d. He is the heavenly love - He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities. (53:4-5)
 - e. This life, light, Servant, and love comes from heaven and is heavenly, is entirely different from those of the earth.
 - i. He comes to lead us – the seed (descendent in 53:10), the watchmen (62:6), the servants (65:8)
 - ii. He leads us from earth to heaven – As is the heavenly man, so are those who are heavenly. (1Cor 15:48)
- II. Israel failed to be God’s servant
 - a. The Lord Jehovah changed Jacob’s name to “Israel”: prince with God (Gen 32:26-28)
 - i. But Jacob’s descendants did not live up to the name. “Israel does not acknowledge us.” (Isa 63:16)
 - b. God wanted Israel to be His servant. “You, Israel, are My servant.” (Isa 41:8)
 - i. But Israel failed to be His servant. “Who is blind, but My servant; or deaf as My messenger whom I send.” (Isa 42:19)
 - c. Later, Lord Jehovah would raise another servant to replace Israel, saying: “You are my Servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” (Isa 49:3)
- III. Lord Jehovah introduced His anointed Servant, the unique Servant who would one day come. (Isa 42:1-7) This Servant is:
 - a. Anointed - Whom I uphold, My elect and My delight, (v.1)
 - i. I have put My Spirit upon Him, (v.1)
 - b. Truth - He will bring forth justice to the nations, (v.1)
 - i. He is not discouraged until He establishes justice in truth in the earth, (v.4)
 - c. Grace - He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. (v.2)
 - i. A bruised reed He will not break. And smoking flax He will not quench. (v.3)
 - d. Covenant, light, liberty
 - i. I will give you as covenant to the people, as light to the nations. (v. 6)
 - ii. To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison. (v. 7)

- e. In God's sight this ideal Servant is to be the pattern and leader of all true servants.
 - i. These servants start to appear in Chapter 61, and again in Chap 62, 65, 66
- IV. Some 700 years later, this God's anointed Servant came to earth, Lord Jesus, word becoming flesh
- a. Spirit of God –
 - i. God's Spirit is given to Him without measure. (John 3:34)
 - ii. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9)
 - b. Grace and truth - Word becoming flesh, tabernacled among men, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)
 - i. Grace - Lord Jesus mentioned the bruised reed and the smoking flax early, in Matt 12:18, when He healed a man with withered hand on Sabbath. Twice He said, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Matt 9:13, 12:7). To us today, bruised reed means crushed or discouraged inside, smoking flax means fainting or losing heart inside. Two stories:
 - 1. A young man gave me a dried leaf on which he wrote -“压伤的芦苇他必不折断”
 - 2. “Ted, you need some gospel”
 - ii. Truth - The world knows not the truth, and mocks at it. Pilate asked, “What is truth?” But Jesus said, “I come to bear witness to the truth.” “I am the truth.”
 - 1. Jesus came that we may know the truth, the truth God has always wanted to tell men.
 - 2. Because of Jesus, we love God's truth and have confidence in it. We treasure it more and more as we grow in the Lord.
 - c. Covenant - The mediator of a better covenant. (Heb 8:6)
 - i. Isaiah 42:6 went deeper. The covenant is a person: He is the promise, the content, the interpretation, and the power that enables us to fulfill.
 - d. Light – Life is in Him, and the life is the light of man. (John 1:4)
 - i. It is the great light that people walking in darkness have seen; those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death have seen. (Isa 9:2)
 - ii. This light is the child born unto us, the son given to us on whose shoulder was the government of God. His name is called wonderful, counselor, God almighty, Father eternal, and prince of peace. There is no end to the increase of His government. (Isa 9:6-7)
 - e. Liberty - Jesus set us free from bondage of sin, of weakness and of blindness
 - i. The women caught in adultery in John 8: 4-5
 - 1. I do not condemn you either. Go, and sin no more. (John 8:11)
 - ii. The woman bound by an unending flow of blood for 12 years. (Luke 8:43)
 - 1. -- spent all livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any.
 - iii. The man who was born blind. (John 9)
 - 1. Jesus restored his sight. The first 7 verses about the physical sight, all the rest of the chapter about the inner spiritual sight.
 - 2. Apostle Paul prayed in Eph 1:18 that “the eyes of your heart are enlightened that you may know ---“

- V. The LORD introduced His anointed Servant to be a pattern and leader of all His servants
 - a. Who can appreciate Him and follow Him? Those who
 - i. Love God and care about His will: what He thinks, feels, and wants
 - ii. Are humble in heart to know there is nothing good in me,
 - iii. Have a contrite spirit to allow God's spirit freedom to teach me and guide me.
 - iv. The remnant in the OT and the overcomers in the NT went on to be God's bondservants.
 - b. His message ought to become the message of His many servants: here including grace, truth, covenant, light, and liberty.
 - i. Just as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matt 20:28)
 - ii. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you .. (1Cor 11:23a)

Scriptures: Isa 61:1-3; Isa 62:1,6-7; Isa 65:8-9, 13-14

- I. God's purpose is Zion
 - a. Lord Jehovah says, I have anointed my King upon Zion, the hill of my holiness (Ps 2:6)
 - i. David wrote in Psalm 132:13, "For Jehovah has chosen Zion. He has desired it for His dwelling place."
 - b. In God's sight, Zion is also the condition His people should be.
 - i. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like ---, as the dew of mount Herman descended on the mountains of Zion; for there has Jehovah commanded the blessing, life forever more. (Ps 133)
 - c. God's purpose is for Jerusalem to be like Zion. (Isa 60:14-15)
 - i. At Isaiah's time, the spiritual condition of Jerusalem was desolate. (Isa 1:1-15)
 - ii. He saw God's redeemer would come to Zion, to them that turned from transgressions in Jacob. That God's glory would be seen on the city. (Isa 59:20; 60:2). --- They shall call you the city of Jehovah, Zion of the holy one of Israel. (Isa 60:14)
 - iii. Although you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through you, I will make you an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations. (Isa 60:15)
- II. The anointed Servant declares His mission in Isa 61:1-3.
 - a. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. (v. 1)
 - i. To preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken hearted,
 - ii. To proclaim liberty to the captives, and open the prison to those who are bound.
 - iii. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD and day of vengeance of God (v.2)
 - b. To console those who mourn in Zion (v. 3)
 - i. To give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness
 - ii. That they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.
 - iii. The anointed Servant directs our attention to Zion and to God's glory (Isa 61:3b)
 1. He does not promise beauty, oil of joy, and garment of praise to those who do not mourn for Zion, who do not care for God's dwelling place.

2. The oaks of righteousness are planted of God. His seed and life is in them.
 3. They exist for God's glory. They grow taller, year after year. When others see them from afar, they say this is Zion, and give glory to God.
 - iv. That righteousness is the righteousness of God. Not something of men.
 1. I searched, and found my righteousness was like a filthy rag, just as Isaiah said. Any unselfish acts or thoughts indeed came from God.
- III. The anointed Servant sets up watchmen on the wall of Jerusalem
- a. For Zion's sake the Servant Himself will not hold peace, will not rest. (Isa 62:1)
 - b. His watchmen shall not hold their peace day or night. (62:6-7)
 - i. He told them who mention the LORD not to keep silent, and to give the LORD no rest, until He establishes, until He makes Jerusalem a praise on the earth.
 - c. Do we feel His heartbeat for Zion? Do we see His sense of urgency? Are we willing to be His watchmen, not to rest and not to let God rest until He makes His church, His people, a worthy testimony to His glory, a praise on the earth?
- IV. My servants are like new wine found in the cluster (Isa 65:8-9, 13-14)
- a. As new wine is found in the clusters, and it is said, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it", so will I do for my servants' sake, that I may not destroy them all. (v. 8)
 - b. I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah a possessor of My mountains; and my elect shall possess it, and My servants shall dwell there. (v. 9)
 - c. These servants of the Lord do not live for themselves. They live and work and are a blessing so that the whole may be preserved. They are a minority. They are the remnant. They are the bondservants.
 - i. What a blessing to the church!
 - ii. What a fragrance to God!
 - iii. What a meaningful life to ourselves and to others around us!
 - d. His burden for Zion, for Jerusalem, and for God's testimony ought to become the burden of His many servants.
- V. Oaks of righteousness, watchmen, new wine in the cluster
- a. 2700 years ago, God gave Isaiah these 3 pictures of Zion, to express the church He and His anointed Servant had always wanted.
 - b. 700 years afterwards, the anointed Servant came, Jesus Christ. He showed men the way, the truth, and the life needed to accomplish this purpose of God.
 - c. The 70 years after His departure to heaven, His apostles expressed fully and completely the words in the heart of Lord Jesus for us.
 - d. Today, should we lay down our selves and rise up to follow Jesus? And should we by His grace, use diligence to be His oaks of righteousness, His watchmen, and His new wine?

Scriptures: Dan 1:8, 2:22-23; Micah 5:7-8; Dan 9:1-3, 5-7, 16,19; Rom 11:5; Rev 2:5-7; 12:11, 14:4

I. History of the exile and the return

The story of captivity and return encompasses a large part of the Old Testament. It started with the end of Solomon, when Israel divided itself in two. The north, called Israel, never had a king that followed the LORD Jehovah. The south, called Judah, had kings who were faithful to the LORD and kings who went astray. The remnant grieved over the spiritual desolation of their time, but saw a glorious purpose of God bigger than their lives. They loved the LORD, and treasured His purpose. From generations of apathy, declension, failure and desolation they sought to come back, to return to live for the righteousness and glory of God. The north was taken by Assyria in 722 BC, never to return. In the south, Jerusalem was subdued by Babylon in 606 BC and sacked in 586 BC. The remnant of Judah returned in 536 BC, and subsequently in 458 BC and 445 BC.

- a. When Jerusalem was invaded in 606 BC, Daniel and others were exiled to Babylon. It began generations of shame and misery for God's people.
- b. Daniel in captivity lived a life separated to God. He and his 3 friends cleaved to God in heaven while they lived in a hostile environment year after year.
 - i. They knew their master and the master's crib. They honored their master, and came to Him as their only resource for supply. (Dan 1:8,12,15)
 - ii. From the very beginning, when Daniel inquired, God revealed to him secret things unknowable to men. (Dan 2:19,22)
 - iii. Daniel maintained daily fellowship with God through prayer. (Dan 6:10) And he read God's word as he could get hold of. (Dan 9:2)
 - iv. Paul said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ; tribulations or distress or persecutions, or famine ---- in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us. (Rom 8:35-36)
- c. King Nebuchadnezzar and later King Darius learned to respect Daniel and his God. Their respect grew with time; they esteemed Daniel way above any wise man from their own country.
 - i. Micah foresaw the remnant in foreign lands: "the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as dew from Jehovah, as showers upon the grass,..as lion in the forest." Mic 5:7-8.
- d. Daniel prayed with windows open to Jerusalem 3 times a day. (Dan 6)
 - i. He could not forget that God's will was at Jerusalem.
 - ii. Men threw him in the lions' den. The LORD sent an angle to shut the lions' mouths. (Dan 6:22). Darius told the whole kingdom to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel, for He is the living God. (Dan 6:26)
- e. After almost 70 years Daniel read and understood God's word to Jeremiah that He would bring them back at the 70th year. He came to the LORD in prayer (Dan 9:1-3).
 - i. He felt he and his people owed God a confession, which was long overdue.

II. Daniel's prayer (Dan 9:1-19)

He confessed to God sins of his generation and of previous generations. And he appealed to God to restore His own city and His own people to the righteousness and glory that He had always wanted them to be. The prayer expressed the deepest repentance of the remnant and their highest hope for God's purpose and glory.

- a. LORD you were right in bringing this disaster to us. We, and our fathers have sinned against you. (9:7,14)
 - i. Daniel expressed a deep repentance: What Moses forewarned has happened to us because we have sinned and rebelled against You for a long time.
 1. Whether we sinned or our forefathers sinned against You, it is Your heart that was wounded, and Your testimony that was compromised.
 - ii. We are to blame, not Nebuchadnezzar, not even the idols.
- b. According to Your righteousness, let Your anger and fury be turned away from Your City Jerusalem, Your holy mountain, and from the shame of Your people. (Dan 9:16). For Jerusalem and your people are rightfully Yours. You owned them and had high expectation for them.
 - i. "I will make you an eternal excellence and joy of generations." (Isa 60:15b)
 - ii. "--- whom I have created for My glory. -- to show forth My praise." (Isa 43:7, 21)
- c. "Cause your face to shine upon your sanctuary that is desolate." (9:17).
 - i. Here is jealousy for God's purpose. Daniel appealed to the LORD to restore His right and the glory of His city and people, despite past failures and shame.
- d. The prayers of Ezra and Nehemiah expressed the same spirit.

III. The last return: Joy of the LORD is your strength (Ne 8:10b) [This part was skipped for lack of time.]

After the wall was finished (in 52 days, after one and half centuries of desolation) people wanted to hear and understand the books of the law. When they heard and understood, they wept. For they now saw what Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah had seen: God's righteousness and love. They repented in tears.

- a. "The joy of the LORD is your strength." The LORD was looking for a place of His rest, and He looks to him who is humble and contrite in spirit. (Isa 66:1-2) Here in Neh 8 He found His joy.
- b. There had not been a feast-of-booth like this (NIV) since Joshua, 1000 years ago.
- c. This is a glorious history, not of the temple, nor of the walls, but of the hearts and the spirit of the remnant: Daniel, Zerubbabel, Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, Nehemiah, those who built the wall, those who gathered in front of the temple, and more.
 - i. The LORD could point to them and tell His enemy: They are my victory!

- IV. The spirit of the remnant continued in the New Testament
- a. Paul saw the remnant continuing from Elijah and 7000 into the New Testament time. “Even at the present time there is a remnant according to election of grace.” (Rom 11:3-5)
 - b. Overcomers
 - i. Lord Jesus: The ruler of the world is coming; he has nothing in me. (John 14:30) Be of good courage, I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)
 - ii. Paul: We are more than conquerors. (Rom 8:37)
 - iii. John in Revelation:
 1. Repent; hear what the Spirit says to the churches; and overcome (Rev 2,3).
 2. I will make those of the synagogue of Satan to come and worship before your feet, and know that I have loved you. - Philadelphia (Rev 3:9)
 3. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. (Rev 14:4)
 - c. Bondservants
 - i. Writers of the epistles call themselves the Lord’s bondservants. See Peter (2Pet 1:1), James (James 1:1), Paul (Rom 1:1, Phi 1:1, Titus 1:1)
 1. This is their own testimony of their own lives.
 - ii. The book of revelation is the revelation of the Lord written to “My bondservants” though “My bond-servant John”. (Rev 1:1)
 - iii. The angel said to John, “...I am your fellow bond-servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.” (Rev 19:10)
 - iv. Jesus said, “Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be our servant, and whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. Just as the son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matt 20:26-28)