

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 117

June 27, 2021



King David in Prayer by Pieter de Grebber cir 1637

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

One-Hundred-Seventeen

THE EXHORTATION TO THE REMNANT

June 27, 2021

Daniel E. Woodhead

Isaiah 51:1–11

¹Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah: look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. ²Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him, and made him many. ³For Jehovah hath comforted Zion; he hath comforted all her waste places, and hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

⁴Attend unto me, O my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall go forth from me, and I will establish my justice for a light of the peoples. ⁵My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the peoples; the isles shall wait for me, and on mine arm shall they trust. ⁶Lift 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 for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

⁷Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye dismayed at their revilings. ⁸For 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 unto all generations.

⁹Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah; awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster? ¹⁰Is it not thou that driedst up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that madest the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? ¹¹And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (ASV, 1901).

BLESSINGS TO BE Poured OUT ON THE MILLENNIAL REMNANT

Isaiah 51:1–3

¹Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah: look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. ²Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for when he was but one I

called him, and I blessed him, and made him many. ³For Jehovah hath comforted Zion; he hath comforted all her waste places, and hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. (ASV, 1901).

Immediately after having declared the doom of the wicked, and challenged those that trust to their own righteousness, the Lord speaks to them that fear Him. He describes them as those that *follow after righteousness*. This is not the righteousness of fearful obedience to the law. This is the imputed righteousness of Christ. It is best described as that which consists of His active and passive obedience wherein He is the author and provider. This is the righteousness of faith, and it is that which brings salvation. These saved persons are now called to *hearken* to the Lord. They will be provided comfort in the coming Messianic Kingdom. The Promise of Future Blessing for Zion is found in the first three verses of this chapter. This comforting prophecy of Israel's destiny is directed toward the faithful of the nation, who addressed by the Lord when He says, "Listen to Me" as those who follow after Him. They cultivate God's will which is a manifestation of the imputed inward righteousness. They then obey God in an outward manifestation of that righteousness before others, and earnestly seek the Lord, striving to do His will in all things. They are the faithful remnant that made it through the Tribulation are saved by the Lord Christ, for life and salvation, which will result in membership in the Kingdom of God on the earth.

John 3:3

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (KJV).

The Messianic Kingdom is for those who seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; that seek Him where He may be found, in everything they want. *Look unto the rock* whence *ye are hewn*; which is in the next verse referencing Abraham; so, called, not so much for the strength of his faith, but for his old age. He was one-hundred years old when Isaac was born. At that time, he looked like a hard dry rock, from whom no child could be expected. However, in keeping with the metaphor, a large number of stones were hewn, or a race of men the Israelites came from him. *And to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged*; is a reference of the mother of the Jews, that is, to Sarah, Abraham's wife who was for a long-time barren. Her womb was shut up, but miraculously afterwards opened at her 90th year when she gave birth to Isaac. From whom as it were from a cistern, (a wife is sometimes compared, Proverbs 5:15, 18,) flowed the waters of Judah, which became the Jewish nation.

The promised son was born when Abraham was a hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety. Her womb and ovaries had been restored to give birth as well as her breasts to nurse. Sarah's name means "a princess", which signifies that many nobles would come from her. In Genesis 21:7, the Orthodox Jews see the use of the word "*children*" as opposed to a single child as significant. They reasoned that she because she could nurse many children with the generous amount of breast milk she produced, this would prove to the other princesses who came to see the boy that she actually gave birth herself rather than bringing home an abandoned child from the marketplace to claim as her child. The *Beresheith Rabbah* honoring Sarah expands on this concept:

Our mother Sarah was extremely modest. Said Abraham to her: “This is not a time for modesty, but uncover your breasts so that all may know that the Holy One, blessed be He, has begun to perform miracles.” She uncovered her breasts and the milk gushed forth as from two fountains, and noble ladies came and had their children suckled by her, saying, “We do not merit that our children should be suckled with the milk of that righteous woman.” The Rabbis said: Whoever came for the sake of heaven became God-fearing. (*Bereshit Rabbah*, 50: 9).

Sarah the cistern was the mother of the Jewish nation as was Abraham the earthly father. Because of their faith, God used them and out of that a large number of offspring proceeded from them, so also, she became fruitful and multiplied. *For I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him:* he was without sons when he was *called* out of Chaldea into another country, and also the only one of the family. Then because of his faith the Lord *blessed* him not only with flocks and herds, and gold and silver, but with a son in his old age, and so *increased* him. There sprung from him as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand by the sea-shore innumerable, (Hebrews 11:12).

Finally, because of the blessings that God gave to the faithful Abraham He implores the nation Israel to expect extraordinary blessings in the Messianic Kingdom. From the destruction of the final Babylonian invasion of 586 B.C. which prefigures the Tribulation He promises that He in the Kingdom will have *made her wilderness like Eden*. Judea is here represented as lying waste. The length that of the Babylonian captivity was seventy years. In that long a period Judea would have become a wilderness. Any country that was naturally as fertile as Judea, would in that time be overrun with briars, thorns, and underbrush. So, the perfection of the garden of Eden will be an example of what Israel will be like in the Messianic Kingdom. The deserts will be gone replaced by God’s Garden. The sorrow brought on by disobedience will be gone and only *joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody*.

OBEDIENCE, ORDER, JUSTICE AND BLESSINGS IN THE KINGDOM

Isaiah 51:4–6

⁴Attend unto me, O my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall go forth from me, and I will establish my justice for a light of the peoples. ⁵My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the peoples; the isles shall wait for me, and on mine arm shall they trust. ⁶Lift 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 for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Now the Lord’s the exhortation is made even more personal. Who are the people who pursue deliverance and seek the Lord? He says that they are *My people* and *My nation*. No matter what is past, no matter how they have sinned, if they are truly seeking God, He calls them His own. All His promises are theirs, these are God’s people

The reason why God's people should pay close attention to what He (and His Servant) are saying, is what He is about to do. He will be giving the *instruction*, that will then be reaching out to all the peoples of the world. Because of what God will do for the children of Abraham, all the world will come into his light, to experience his *just rule*. This will be the fair, equitable, and blessed governing of a world by its Creator according to the purposes for which it was created. This is not merely to pass judicial sentence upon, but to govern according to creation principles which is recognition and obedience to the Creator. This is what the prophet said earlier that the Servant would do (42:1–4; 49:6), and before that what the Messiah would do (9:6; 11:4; 16:4b–5; 55:3–5). Now it is God who does it. This gives the characteristic of the Servant/Messiah as Deity.

God is going to use His Servant to deliver the world from the ravages of sin. God's *salvation has already gone forth*. This is another "prophetic perfect" whereby the prophet sees the reality of what God is going to do so clearly that in His mind it is already done as He clearly states in the Hebrew perfect (completed) tense. Isaiah sees God's plan with clarity. The fulfillment of God's *righteousness*, his faithfulness to His own nature and promises that culminate in human *salvation*, is now all in place.

In words reminiscent of chapter 8:21–22, He calls on them to look to the *heavens* and *the earth*. These are the places where the children of this world look for guidance and hope such as the horoscope. There they find none, for the heavens are not eternal the solid earth is no more solid than an old garment eaten by moths. But even more disconcerting is the truth that we who live on the earth and under the heavens are not permanent either. If we are inclined to question the permanency of God's promises, what would we like to put in their place? Certainly nothing created. If we think creation is permanent (Psalm 148:3–6), it is as nothing compared to the permanence of what God in His righteousness does for the salvation of the people of the earth who look to Him in belief.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHOULD NOT FEAR THE UNSAVED

Isaiah 51:7–8

⁷Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye dismayed at their revilings. ⁸For 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 unto all generations (ASV, 1901).

This is a reiteration of the command to the righteous to *Hearken unto me*. It is God again speaking in the first person. He address the righteous and having His law in their hearts. His exhortation to "listen" will be followed by another divine promise. To put "My law in their hearts," is a phrase that validates the internalization of divine wisdom and truth, not just a mental affirmation of its existence. They have accepted the "instruction" from God as our guide to personal behavior and moral beliefs. A heart acknowledgment of these ideas is an emotional commitment to God, not just an awareness of a set of rules. That kind of devotion to God's way of thinking requires a personal relationship with God, which is the basis for a continual knowledge of his presence. These righteous people are not to fear reproachful things that people will say about them. Reproaches

and insults from the world are to be ignored for what they are, an ignorance of the Lord. The content of their statements are intended to cause fear, so their ideas will contradict the good things that God has promised and possibly threaten the safety and welfare of righteous people. We need to be prepared for a time of hardship and suffering because of our faith. We should not allow these terrifying words to undermine our belief and relationship with the truth of God.

The Lord describes them and their harmful statements to us as a garment that eaten by a moth. He says their judgement will be done secretly, slowly, surely, and at last completely, so that it becomes utterly good for nothing. This will be the manner that will be the ruin and destruction of the enemies of Christ and his people. Additionally, the worm shall eat them like wool, or as a woolen garment, which is most liable to be moth-eaten; for the moth and worm are much the same just different stages of their metamorphosis. This means that wicked unbelieving people will be destroyed by the vengeance of the Lord.

He closes this with a contrasting promise that “*my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation unto all generations.*” It will always be true, never go away and will be fulfilled exactly as He has promised.

GOD GIVES EXAMPLES OF HIS WORK AND PROMISES FULFILLED

Isaiah 51:9–11

⁹Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah; awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster? ¹⁰Is it not thou that driedst up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that madest the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? ¹¹And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (ASV, 1901).

Now comes a solemn and impassioned plea of those who were in exile in Babylon and to the future Tribulation that God would intercede in their behalf, as he did in behalf of His people when they were suffering in cruel bondage in Egypt.

O arm of the LORD. The *arm* is the instrument by which we execute any purpose. It is that by which the warrior engages in battle, and by which he wields the weapon to defeat his foes. The *arm* of JEHOVAH had seemed to the Israelites because of the length of the Babylonian captivity to slumber. For seventy years the oppressed and suffering people in bondage, feared that therefore, He must be asleep. God had not come forth to rescue them in their timing. He hears them now lifting the voice that He would intercede on their behalf as He had in former times, and save them from the calamities which they were enduring. When He did not immediately appear on the behalf of his people, they mistakenly thought Him asleep, though He never slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4), but always keeps a watchful eye over them. But now they call upon Him to *awake*; which is repeated, to show their fear of danger, and of their need of Him.

Awake, as in the ancient days. That is, in the time when the Jews were delivered from their bondage in the land of Egypt. *That hath cut Rahab.* That is, cut it in pieces, or destroyed it. It was that arm which wielded the sword of justice and of vengeance by which Rahab was cut in pieces. The word ‘Rahab’ here means Egypt. And *wounded the dragon.* The word here rendered dragon (Hebrew *tānnīn*) means properly any great fish or sea-monster; a serpent, a dragon or a crocodile. Here it means, most probably, the crocodile, which is emblematic of Egypt, because the Nile is rife with crocodiles. And as the sea monster is so unwieldy and formidable and unsightly, was a fair representation of the proud and cruel Pharaohs of Egypt. The king of Egypt is frequently compared with the crocodile (Psalm 34:13, 14; Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2). God likens Pharaoh to a “*great monster*”, or a sea monster in the Nile. The Hebrew word for “*monster*” is *tannin*, and refers to large reptiles, like crocodiles. The Nile crocodile can reach 16 ft. in length and weigh 1,653 lbs. They are opportunistic predators, very aggressive, and are capable of taking down almost any animal within its range. The Nile crocodile is an ambush predator that can wait for hours, days and even weeks for the suitable moment to attack. It is fitting that the Lord refers to Pharaoh with this comparison.

The Egyptians frequently depicted themselves as crocodiles because of their strength and ferocity. But, God says the He will “*put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales; and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, with all the fish of thy rivers which stick unto thy scales.*” The Egyptians considered all Pharaohs to be a god, and Pharaoh boasted that he created the Nile River. God said that he would then drag him as a fish out of the Nile with other fish attached to him and cast him into the desert (wilderness). God would defeat Egypt despite their strength and pride.

Here the sense is, that he had sorely wounded, *i.e.*, had greatly weakened the power of that cruel nation, which for strength was represented by the powerful and deadly crocodile, one of the most mighty of monsters. It was a pierced and wounded monster. God brought them to their knees when God gave them plagues, destroyed the firstborn in the Passover, and destroyed its army in the Red sea.

Is it not thou that driedst up the sea? Are you not still the same? The same arm that dried up the sea, and made a path for the Jewish people, was still able to intercede on their behalf and rescue them. *Which hath dried the sea.* The Red Sea when the children of Israel passed over (Exodus 14:21). This is the familiar illustration to which the Lord appeals, when He wishes to remind them of His love and deliverance for them in seriously national adverse circumstances.

For the ransomed to pass over. Those who had been ransomed from Egypt. The word rendered ‘ransomed’ is that which is commonly rendered ‘redeemed.’ He who had overcome all the obstacles in the way of their deliverance from Egypt, was able also to overcome all the obstacles in the way of their deliverance from Babylon; and that he who had thus interposed might be expected again to manifest his mercy, and save them again from the oppression of the Antichrist in the Tribulation. The *principle* is as applicable now as it was then. All God’s past interventions into time and space constitute a promise that He will still continue to care for His people, and will interpose on their behalf, and save them.

The custom of *singing* alluded to here on a journey back to the Promised Land after the Tribulation when they are gathered from the four corners of the earth (Matthew 24:31). The Jews will make

the journey with great exultation and joy. They will be cheered on their way by songs, expressing their gladness and praise for their final deliverance. This is also expressed in the Revelation.

Revelation 21:4–8

⁴and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. ⁵And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. ⁶And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. ⁷He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. ⁸But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death (ASV, 1901).

Next message: GOD'S CALL TO THE REMNANT, CONT.

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