

Series: Isaiah

Title: Peace like a River, Righteousness as Waves

Text: **Isaiah 48: 16-22**

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The simplest way I could figure out to show you Christ in this text is this way. As I read our text to you, first I will tell you what took place in what we will refer to as the “historical fulfillment”. Then I will tell you how it pictures Christ and the spiritual fulfillment. We will read each portion twice.

Verses 16-17. Historically, Isaiah was sent of God to declare God’s word to Israel.

Isaiah 48: 16: Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me. 17: Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that*thou shouldst go.

Now spiritually, see Isaiah as a type of Christ. So as we read verses 16-17 again, this time, hear Christ speaking to Jerusalem when Christ walked this earth. And here Christ speaking to us here this hour.

Isaiah 48: 16: Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me. 17: Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that*thou shouldst go.

Verses 18-19: historically Israel was in bondage in Babylon. God turned them over to that bondage because they would not heed his commands. He tells them what they forfeited.

Isaiah 48: 18: O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: 19: Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.

Spiritually, in the day Christ walked this earth, Israel was in spiritual bondage, moreso than they were in bondage to Rome. All they had to do was to heed Christ’s command to believe on the Lord Jesus who the Father has sent. But they would not. You remember toward the end of his ministry, Christ said:

Matthew 23: 37: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38: Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Now read verse 18-19 again hearing Christ speak.

Isaiah 48: 18: O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: 19: Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.

Verse 20. Historically, when Cyrus redeemed Israel from Babylonian captivity, he sent messengers to give the decree throughout the ends of the earth for the remnant to come out.

Isaiah 48: 20: Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it *evento* the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

Spiritually, after Christ accomplished his work of redemption at Calvary, he sent forth his apostles to call his elect remnant among them to leave Jerusalem, which had become spiritual Babylon. Christ sent his preachers not just to the Jews but to the Gentiles—to the ends of the earth—to sing of the good news of Christ's accomplished redemption of his spiritual Jacob. Now read verses 20 again hearing God's charge to his gospel preachers and his call for his elect to come out of the spiritual Babylon which is false religion and every false way.

Isaiah 48: 20: Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it *evento* the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

Verse 21. Historically, after Cyrus delivered the remnant out of Babylon, the Lord provided the kings highway, the Lord provided all provisions, so the remnant that left Babylon travelled along safely till each one entered safely back into Jerusalem.

Isaiah 48: 21: And they thirsted not *when* he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

Spiritually, after Christ ascended to the Father and sent forth his apostles to preach the good news, from his throne in glory Christ brings each one out, providing all provision for them, just as he continues to provide for us today, and as he calls out his elect into Christ our King—Christ our Highway. All his redeemed are travelling to, and shall arrive safely in, heavenly Jerusalem because Christ is providing all for us along the way.

Isaiah 48: 21: And they thirsted not *when* he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

Lastly verse 22. Historically, this speaks of the sad state of those who refused Cyrus's decree, choosing instead to remain in Babylon and serve their gods. Spiritually it speaks of those who heeded not the call of the gospel but remained in Jerusalem and of those in our day who choose to remain in spiritual Babylon which is false religion and every false way.

Isaiah 48: 22: *There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.*

Now let see a few things from each portion of this passage.

I. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS GOD THE SAVIOR

His command is for you to draw near and hear his word—v16: **Come ye near unto me, hear ye this.** The gospel call goes out to all. It is the general call. If any will not come it is not because the Lord has not issued the call. It will be because sinners will not come near unto Christ and hear this.

Christ has spoken openly for all to hear—**V16: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.** Christ has not spoken in secret. Christ has been speaking from the beginning—from the beginning of time—**from the time that it was, there am I**—Christ was speaking through Isaiah in the day Isaiah delivered this word. Christ existed before his incarnation. He existed as the Word and Son of God from all eternity. He was with God his Father from everlasting. He was by him, and brought up with him, and lay in his bosom from the “**the time that it was.**” But now, in the end of the world, Christ has come in the flesh and spoken openly in the earth—**v16:...and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.**

Hebrews 1: 1: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2: Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

John 8: 42: Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 18:20: Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

This is Christ’s gospel to us—

- He is God--**v17: Thus saith the LORD.** When you read in scripture capital LORD is means Jehovah God. Jesus Christ is Jehovah Jesus—the GodMan. Everything he accomplished as the righteous Son of man is eternal because Christ is the eternal Son of God.
- He is the redeemer of a particular people—v17:**THY Redeemer.** **Isaiah 53: 8** says, “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of MY PEOPLE was he stricken.” Christ being the Redeemer means he did it. Christ successfully, fully, freely, forever redeemed his people from the curse of the law. He purchased each one with his own blood and Christ shall lose none of his purchased possession.

- He is the Holy One of his spiritual, elect Israel called out from among Jew and Gentile—**v17: The Holy One of Israel**. Christ sprang out of Israel. He came to save the elect who are the Israel of God (**Matt. 1:21**). He is the “Holy One”, who knew no sin, therefore is the only one fit to be our Redeemer and Savior (**II Cor. 5: 21**). He is the Holy One who makes us Holy by creating us a new in holiness and robing us in his righteousness and holiness.
- He teaches us and leads his children in the profitable way—**v17: I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way thatthou shouldest go**. The Lord only teaches us that which is profitable. If you learn the gospel of grace it will be because he taught you through his gospel. The Lord only leads us in the way that is best for us. He is the Way. Christ leads each of his redeemed in the way of truth, in the way faith, in the way of grace which is the way each of his elect shall go.

Note: I said to you that this is the general call of the gospel, but this call is effectual when he teaches you in the heart. And he shall teach each of his elect in the heart and we shall hear. This word is specifically to you who he has called by his grace. Have you heard him? Can you draw near? Praise him if you can for he alone is to be praised for working this miracle of grace in you.

II. GOD OUR SAVIOR IS THE TENDER, LOVING SAVIOR.

To you who regard God as hard, who refuse to draw near, hear what he says—**v18: O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!** His commandments are not grievous. **1 John 3: 23** says, “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.” His doctrine is of grace freely given. Grace to the underserving. Grace to sinners who cannot save themselves. Salvation is of the Lord by his grace.

All who perish shall do so, not because the fault lies in God but because the fault lies in the sinner. Our Lord said of those in Jerusalem, “I would have gathered you—and YE WOULD NOT!” The will that men have by nature is not a will to draw near and believe on him. It is a will NOT TO BELIEVE ON HIM—YE WOULD NOT! Those who keep boasting of their will need to answer this question, “Why then will you not believe on him?” The reason is you are not willing—YE WILL NOT. And if you are honest with yourself then you will admit that you cannot make yourself willing. That ought to make you at least cry for mercy for him to make you willing. And even if you are able to do so you will find that it was Christ working in you that gave you the willingness to cry for that mercy. The enmity, the disgust, the rejecting, the bitterness, the unrest, the hardness of heart is all of man, out man’s own breast. But never imagine that the true and living God takes pleasure in the death of the wicked. And for us who believe him, by his grace, we learn that when God corrects us for our sins, he takes no pleasure in it.

Ezekiel 33: 11: Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

God never says he “delights in vengeance.” Judgment is called his “strange work.” But it is written “He delighteth in mercy.” (Micah 7: 18) While he walked this earth, every needy sinner who came to him seeking mercy found mercy. Those who came for mercy to be healed, he healed. The Lord is that Father who runs out to greet and kiss the returning prodigal. The Redeemer is he who washed the feet of his disciples. Jesus Christ is God our Savior the tender, loving, merciful Savior.

Our God delights in peace and righteousness—v18:...**then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.**

I love a river. My favorite place to go when I was teenager was to the river. I loved to be on the river at night, to stop the engine, turn out the light and just float and listen to “drum” under the water. The river was the most peaceful place on earth to me. Even now when Melinda and I are travelling and we cross a river I almost always look up and down that river.

Those who believe on Christ have peace like a river. Reconciliation wrought for us by Christ laying down his life for us is “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.”

Romans 5:1: Therefore being justified, by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus.

Psalms 85:10: Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and **peace** have kissed *each other*.

Isaiah 32: 17: And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

The Holy Spirit has washed us inwardly, renewed us in regeneration. Now the believer has peace which our Lord Jesus Christ made by the blood of his cross which has sealed the believers acceptance forever with the Father. Perfect peace is peace that can never be changed between my satisfied God and this child he has saved by his grace. In the midst of all of this world’s tribulation Christ Jesus says, ‘My peace I give to you.’

- Peace like a river ever flowing that can’t be dried up.
- Peace like a river for its steadiness.
- Peace like a river for its refreshing.

In the darkness, Christ is my Light. In the deep, underneath are the everlasting arms. In the storm, Christ voice says, “Peace be still. And there is peace.” In sickness, Christ is my health. Whatever the providence, my times are in his hands.

The believer has righteousness as the waves of the sea. Where did the water in the sea come from? It came from God and likewise the righteousness of his people—**their righteousness is OF ME, saith the LORD.** (Is 554: 17) How long have the waves of the sea been coming one after another?—his righteousness is **everlasting righteousness.** (Ps 119: 142) The overwhelming power of the waves of the sea is unstoppable.

Likewise, nothing is more powerful than the LORD our Righteousness! None are powerful enough to lay anything to the charge of God's elect since Christ put away our sin. (Rom 8: 33)

Spurgeon said, "I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity, but Christ is "that holy thing" which is born of the Virgin, and the holiness of Christ's birth takes away the unholiness of my nativity....I committed sins in my childhood, sins against my parents; but Jesus Christ was a child full of the Spirit. Christ's childish perfection is imputed to me, and hides my childish sins....I have had heart-sins; but Christ had heart-virtues....I have had sins in worship; but Christ purged the temple, and served the Father in perfection, in Spirit and in truth....I have the sins of a servant, Christ has the virtues of a servant."

His obedience has been made my obedience. And by his blood our sins and iniquities he remembers no more. (Heb 10: 17) Those born of his Spirit have been made the righteousness of God in Christ through faith in him. (2 Cor 5: 21)

Our Savior has made us fruitful—**v19: Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof.** The whole family in heaven and earth is ours and we are being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. (Eph 3: 15; Php 1: 11)

Our name shall not be cut off because it is Christ's name—**v19: his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.** A man may build up his name in this earth. He may come to God in his many wonderful works which were done in man's own name. But such a man and his name will be cut off forever. But those who take Christ's name by his grace through faith shall never have our name cut off because our name is Christ's name and the name of Christ shall not be cut off forever. (Note: "his name" in Jer 23: 6 is the name wherewith "she" shall be called in Jer 33: 16)

III. THE LORD JESUS COMMANDS US TO GO FORTH DECLARING WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR US.

We declare that our salvation from spiritual Babylon is by his effectual call of grace—**v20: Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans.** Sinner do you hear him this morning? Those who hear come out of spiritual Babylon and flee from the harlot to Christ in heavenly Jerusalem.

Revelation 18:4: And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

We declare our full complete redemption has been accomplished by Christ our Redeemer alone—**v20: with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.**

We declare to the ends of the earth what we have lacked. Believer, have you have lacked anything since Christ called you by his grace?—**v21: And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts.** This world is a desert, but he leadeth his dear children along and we lack nothing!

John 4:14: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

We declare that it is our Redeemer who continually gives us this Water of Life from Christ our Rock and provides all necessary things for us in this earth—**v21:he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.** Christ is our Rock. He causes the water of life to flow to us because Christ clave the rock when he willingly he gave his back to the smitters, when he willingly gave his body to bear our sins, when he willingly gave his blood to justify us. And the waters gushed out—life, pardon, righteousness, peace with our God.

But what a sad word to those who will not submit to Christ in faith—**v22: There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.** Let history teach us: Those who remained in Babylon perished with Babylon, those who remained in Jerusalem perished with Jerusalem and those who refuse to come out of spiritual Babylon the harlot—who judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life—shall perish with her!

May God give each of us grace to heed Christ's command—**Come ye near unto me, hear ye this.** Believe on Christ and thou shalt be saved!

Amen!