

Series: Isaiah
Title: Break Forth Into Joy
Text: Isaiah 52: 9-12
Date: July 7, 2013
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

In Isaiah 52, verse 8 ends, “when the LORD shall bring again Zion.” Verse 9 begins, “Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem.”

When God sent Cyrus and redeemed Judah out of Babylonian captivity and began to bring them back to Jerusalem it was cause for great joy and singing together. It is described in:

Psalm 126:1: «A Song of degrees.» When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. 2: Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

The gospel is a call to happiness. If God’s message was a call to sorrow then we might expect that men would refuse to listen. But it is a call to great joy. It is a call to “Come and find joy and rest; come and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Our Redeemer says in verse 9, “Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem.” You and I who God has called are “waste places of Jerusalem.”

- Like the inanimate stone walls and buildings which lay wasted and ruined in Jerusalem, every sinner God saves was a waste place of Jerusalem—dead in sins.
- The literal walls were wasted by the king of Babylon—we were wasted by Satan’s deception in the garden.
- The literal waste places were wasted because civil and religious heads in Jerusalem turned from God to their way—we were wasted because Adam, our first Head, turned from God to his way.
- The literal waste places had to be built up by another—we had to be built up by another, EVEN Christ Jesus our “living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Pet 2: 4-5)
- What kind of spiritual sacrifices? Our God says, “Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem:”

Proposition: Believers are commanded to break forth into joy, to depart from spiritual Babylon, and to do so in the calm assurance of faith.

I. OUR FIRST REASON FOR JOY AND SINGING IS—v9: “the Lord hath comforted his people.”

No Comfort in Will Worship

Is there anything comforting about the message preached by will workers? What comfort is there in a message that tells a heavy laden, enslaved, powerless sinner that God has done all that he can do, now he must free himself by his will and by his works? The armenians’ god really cannot save! They even say he can’t!

What comfort is there in the message that motivates by threats of punishment? A message that lays a hot whip on the naked back is not comfort. Those are miserable comforters who watch with a Pharisaical eye to find fault, to expose and cast blame. That is not comfort it is more taskmasters making our lives bitter with hard bondage.

The Comforting Message

I have the message of comfort! You who are wearied with laboring and are heavy laden, I have good news from the true and living God! Mine is not a message giving you more things that YOU must do! The message God has sent me to declare is the good news that, “The Lord hath!”

The Lord Hath Comforted His People (v9)

- He hath—heard our cry by reason of our slave masters
- He hath—shined the light of his countenance upon us; he has made manifest his everlasting love; he has fulfilled his exceeding great and precious promises to his people.
- The Lord hath comforted his people!

He Hath Redeemed Jerusalem (v9)

- He hath—God has come to where we are; he hath—Christ has taken the place of each and every one of God’s people, those of us who could not save ourselves, those of us who were too desperately ruined in our sins to even lift Satan’s chains, much less break his iron bars.
- He hath—Christ has walked perfectly under the law as our representative
- He hath—Christ has taken the sin of his people upon himself.
- He hath—Christ was wounded for our transgressions
- He hath—Christ was bruised for our iniquities
- He hath—the chastisement of our peace was upon him
- He hath— Christ has died the death his people owed to justice.
- And with his stripes we are healed! (Isaiah 53:5)
- He hath—He hath redeemed Jerusalem!

Are there any citizens of that heavenly city here? How do I know preacher? Are you bound by your own sins? Are you sick of yourself and your sin? Are you desperate for deliverance? Is this good news making your heart overjoyed, is it making you to say, “I am like them that dream. My mouth is filled with laughter. It sounds too good to be true!” If so my charge from holy God is this:

Isaiah 40: 1: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.

Application: For every believer, we are no longer under the wrath of God, no longer under the curse of the law. There is now no more condemnation. The believer is no longer the captives of sin and Satan. We are no longer the prisoners of law and justice. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. (v9)

II. SECONDLY, WE HAVE REASON TO JOY AND SING BECAUSE—v10: The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

The LORD Hath Made Bare His Holy Arm

Our God rules all things by the arm of sovereign, omnipotent power.

Daniels 4:35: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

But his holy arm is more powerful than that! His HOLY arm is the power and wisdom of God manifest in the salvation of his particular people. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm.

The redemption of his people was a holy work. He was upholding his holy name. He was upholding his holy law. He was upholding his holy justice. It took a holy arm to uphold so much holiness. That is why God the Father sent forth his holy Arm, his holy Son, Christ Jesus.

There is as much justice as there is mercy being manifest in the salvation of a sinner by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Mercy is, indeed, on full display but so is justice on full display. His justice against sin and his great love wherewith he loved us must be in harmony according to his holy character. This is why he made bare his holy arm.

The more I consider the doctrine of substitution, the more I marvel at the wisdom of God to devise a way that he might be just and yet justify sinners like us. A universal atonement which atones for everybody in general and for nobody in particular is weak on wisdom and totally absent of the power of holy justice! Atonement made equally for Judas and for John bears no holy arm at all. It only bares the weakness of depraved minds that vainly imagine such a powerless scheme!

But a substitution for a particular people! Christ vicariously bearing the wrath of God on behalf of his particular people! That is his holy arm which gives me rest, which calms my conscience with regard to the righteous demands of the law of God because the bleeding wounds of the incarnate God have made righteousness and peace to kiss each other. This is how God can save sinners and yet be perfectly holy. Because the Lord Jesus Christ took the sins of his people, bore the holy stroke of justice, and being the appointed Head of all believers, vindicated in his own person the inflexible justice of God.

There is the Man who has kept the whole law of God, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, there is the Man who has paid the wages of death and lives to tell about it! And all whom he represented are now “accepted in the Beloved,” because of what Jesus Christ has finished!

Psalm 98: 1: «A Psalm.» O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. 2: The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. 3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

All Shall See

“This thing was not done in a corner.” (Acts 26: 26) But as verse 10 says, “in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” By God sending his messenger upon the mountains to each and every one of his lost, elect child, no matter where they are in the “ends of the earth” “shall see the salvation of our God.” Those who seemed to be most desolate shall share in his joy and those who least expect it shall break forth into singing—like men who dream.

Application: This very fact, ought to make every believer eager to see this gospel go as far and wide as we can send it! God shall not lose one—no matter how far, at which end of the earth they are hidden—he shall find them and bring them home!

And as for those who will not come out of Babylon—they too shall see the salvation of God and on judgment day:

Philippians 2: 10: At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

III. THIRDLY, THE LORD COMMANDS US WHO BELIEVE TO DEPART FROM BABYLON NO LESS THAN FOUR TIMES—V11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

Depart from Babylon

Babylon, that city of proud, unclean idolaters, opposed to God and his people, is an emblem of this ungodly world, along with its free will, man-exalting, works religion. (Revelation 18: 2-4) Paul quoted verse 11 in 2 Corinthians 6.

2 Corinthians 6: 14: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15: And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16: And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17: Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18: And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

We are not to be like monks and nuns. We have to live in the world and do business in the world. We must conform to the world's laws. Paul said to the Corinthians,

I Corinthians 5: 9: I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

Still, we must remember that by divine election, by accomplished redemption and by sanctification of the Holy Spirit, our triune God has separated us from this world unto himself. Our Redeemer says,

John 15:19: If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

So the Lord will have his saints to be separate from this world: from its principles and its pleasures. And separate from its various forms of works religion: when he says "touch no unclean thing" it means bring none of her man-exalting abominations out with you, do not pretend you even approve of their worship, and have no more fellowship with false religion whatsoever. I am thankful for those first men the Lord used during the reformation—but they brought many of the impurities of the church of Rome out with them.

Be Ye Clean

The Lord says to his child, "be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD." Every child of God, washed in the blood of the Lamb, washed in regeneration by the Holy Spirit is "clean every whit", our Savior said that. (Jn 13: 10) Christ said,

John 15: 3: Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4: Abide in me, and I in you.

We were defiled but by the grace of God,

1 Corinthians 6: 11:...but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

We still have sin in our flesh and we still commit sin but washed in the blood of Christ, justified by his righteousness, every born again child of God is wholly and entirely clean in the sight of God. All our sins are pardoned. We are perfectly righteous before God, perfectly clean by his word, by the sentence of justification and absolution pronounced on us by God.

So the Lord says, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." When they went out of Babylon they literally took back to Jerusalem, the vessels of the Lord which the king of Babylon had stolen. But for his saints: we bear the treasure of gospel riches. Therefore, we are to be clean from the defilement of false doctrine and of the sins of

this world. This separation is unto God: for a closer union and fellowship with Christ and with his people, our brethren:

Hebrews 13: 12: Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13: Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14: For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Our love for the saints of God, our desire to be with the Lord's people, rather than the people of this world, declares to all men that we are Christ's disciples.

John 13: 35: By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Application: When I was a new believer, I had more worldly friends my age than believers my age. So I was around unbelievers more. It fed my old man and constantly vexed my inward man. I wouldn't recommend it to any new believer! But the Lord continued to separate me—literally he moved me away—and inwardly gave me more desire for Christ and his people. So I found myself desiring to be with his people more and more. It was far better because “iron sharpeneth iron” while “evil communications corrupt good manners.”

Believers want and need to be with believers: we have the same motive—the love of Christ constraineth us; we operate under the same rule—faith which works by love; we speak the same language: the language of heavenly Jerusalem. A believer just cannot be comfortable with this world.

IV. LASTLY, THE LORD COMMANDS HIS PEOPLE TO FOLLOW HIM IN FAITH—v12: For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight!

We just saw that the Lord spoke for us to depart, depart, to go out. But here he says we are not to do so in a hasty manner, by flight, running frantically as if we are afraid that somehow the enemy shall overcome us. Unbelief is usually hasty.

Isaiah 51: 14: The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. 15: But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name.

Calm Assurance of Faith

Therefore our God calls on us to calmly, deliberately, depart from all falsehood in faith: “knowing whom we have believed and [being] persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day.” (2 Timothy 1: 12)

For the LORD our God promises to keep all those who follow him in faith—v12: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel *will be* your rereward. “The Lord will go before you!” He says,

Isaiah 45:2: I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: 3: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

“And the God of Israel will be your rear-ward.” It means “he will gather up those who fall behind!”

Isaiah 40: 11: [Christ] shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

So having heard all these things what shall we do?

1) Let us break forth into joy and sing together

2) Let us depart and break ties from Babylon once and for all--2 Corinthians 7: 1: Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

3) Let us do so in the calm assurance of faith that our covenant-keeping God is before us and behind us and shall lose none of his own.

Amen!