

# Joy in Zion

Isaiah 52

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**BIG BEND  
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## **Isaiah 52:1-12 – The LORD brings back Zion (NIV)**

*Awake, awake, Zion, clothe yourself with strength!*

*Put on your garments of splendor, Jerusalem, the holy city.*

*The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again.*

<sup>2</sup> *Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, Jerusalem.*

*Free yourself from the chains on your neck, Daughter Zion, now a captive.* <sup>3</sup> *For this is what the Lord says: “You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed.”* <sup>4</sup> *For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them.*

<sup>5</sup> *“And now what do I have here?” declares the Lord. “For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock,” declares the Lord. “And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed.*

<sup>6</sup> *Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I.”* <sup>7</sup> *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation,*

*who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”* <sup>8</sup> *Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy.*

*When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes.* <sup>9</sup> *Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.* <sup>10</sup> *The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.* <sup>11</sup> *Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the articles of the Lord’s house.*

<sup>12</sup> *But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the Lord will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.*

## **v1 – Why does God want Israel to awake?**

*Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion:* The first *Awake, awake!* asked the LORD to put on strength (Isaiah 51:9). The second *Awake, awake!* asked Jerusalem to remember the LORD’s judgments and promises. Now, the third *Awake, awake!* tells Zion to put on strength in light of the first two awakenings.

## **Why should Israel put on their garments of splendor?**

Jerusalem could put on clothes of beauty and glory because the time of judgment was over. This shows that this passage has ultimate fulfillment in the very last days.

## **How is it the *uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again?***

During the Millennial Kingdom, Israel as a nation will recognize Jesus as Messiah. Apparently acknowledging this will be a requirement for going there. We also saw this to be the case for the Millennial Kingdom temple...

Ezekiel 44:9 – *Thus says the Lord God: “No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.”*

## **v2 – Why would Israel free themselves from the chains on their neck?**

The Millennial Kingdom would be freedom for Israel.

Luke 21:24 – *Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled* Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay (Daniel 2:31–45) represents successive Gentile kingdoms that will dominate until Christ returns and establishes His reign.

## **How is Israel being trampled on by the Gentiles today?**

Pressure is put on them by the U.N. and the nations of the world. Antisemitism has manifested itself today in opposition to Israel. The temple mount in the heart of Jerusalem is managed by Jordan and has an Islamic Mosque.

## **How will Israel be trampled on by the Gentiles even when they have a temple during the Tribulation?**

The Antichrist will be instrumental in allowing Israel to have a temple on the temple mount with a treaty which will no-doubt have strings attached. Of course, the Antichrist will desecrate the temple at the mid-point of the Tribulation Jesus referred to as the Abomination of Desolation and then he will seek to kill as many Jews as he can.

### **What purpose does God have for the times of the Gentiles?**

Romans 11:25 – *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

There was a consequence for Israel rejecting her Messiah. But God used it to facilitate the spread of the gospel throughout the whole world...

Acts 15:14 – *God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.*

One theme of Romans 11 is that, when the Jewish people rejected Christ, they were temporarily cut off from the blessings of a relationship with God. As a result, the gospel was given to the Gentiles, and they gladly received it.

- This partial hardening of heart for Israel doesn't preclude individual Jews from being saved, but it prevents the nation from accepting Christ as Messiah until His plans are finished.
- When the time is right, God will restore the entire nation, and they will come to faith in Him once again, ending "the times of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 17:7; 62:11–12; Romans 11:26).

### **v3 – How did Israel sell themselves for nothing?**

Tragically, Jerusalem went after other gods like someone selling themselves for nothing. Yet, they would be blessed by being redeemed without money. God's mercy answered to their tragic sin.

### **What does it mean that Israel would be redeemed without money?**

This doesn't mean that their redemption wouldn't cost anything. The end of Isaiah 52 begins to describe the great cost of redemption, but it is a cost paid by another.

### **v4-5 – How will those who rule over Israel mock them?**

God looks down and sees how the nations have oppressed His people. Egypt held them in captivity. The Assyrian oppressed them, and the Babylonians took them away for nothing, and ruled cruelly over them. Worse than how they treated God's people was their disrespect for the LORD Himself, whom they blasphemed continually every day.

### **v6 – What would be the result of God allowing Israel to be oppressed by the Gentiles?**

*Therefore My people shall know My name:* God will glorify Himself; first, among His own people. It is almost as if God said, "I can abide with My name being blasphemed continually every day among the nations. Just let it be known and praised among My people."

### **What will God's people know about Him?**

*Therefore they shall know in that day that I am He who speaks:* God's people know that He has revealed important truths to us. There will come a day when Israel will know that as well, indeed all the world will realize that God has spoken to us.

### **v7 – Who are the beautiful?**

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news:* Isaiah prophesies of the beautiful feet of those who bring the Gospel — the good news.

### **What do the feet represent here?**

The feet speak of activity, motion, and progress, and those who are active and moving in the work of preaching the gospel have beautiful...feet.

### **What is the peace that will be proclaimed by the good news?**

The peace is peace with God... the good news is that Jesus made that possible by paying our sin penalty.

### **How is salvation connected to the reign of God?**

Where God reigns, salvation reigns. What a marvelous declaration — Our God reigns.

### **v8 – Who will shout for joy when the Lord returns to Zion?**

The watchmen who were anticipating the coming of the Messiah. According to Ezekiel, the prophets were the leading 'watchmen' for the nation.

### **v9 – Who else should have joy and why?**

The *ruins of Jerusalem*, those who've experienced the oppression of the times of the Gentiles will rejoice when they see their deliverance by the Messiah.

### **v10 – How is it the Lord has made bare His holy arm?**

The thought beginning at Isaiah 51:9 (*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD!*) is completed. The LORD has shown His strength, the strength of His holy arm. No wonder it is a time for joy and singing.

- The expression made bare his holy arm is a Hebrew idiom derived from rolling up long, loose sleeves before starting to work. The arm being bared was symbolic of any mighty undertaking or initiative.
- God does not make His saving strength known just for those who are immediately rescued. He also does it as a witness and a testimony to others, so they can see the salvation of our God.

### **What is the ultimate baring of the Arm of the Lord?**

Jesus coming to reveal the Father to us and pay the penalty for our sin. That was also the ultimate redemption of Israel as well as the Gentiles.

### **How is it the arm of the Lord will be bared *in the sight of all the nations*?**

All the nations would see His work... in the redemption of Israel and in our personal redemption in His work on the cross. But this was only limited to the spiritually discerning... those with a relationship to Him. Jesus will be revealed to all the world at the end of the Tribulation.

### **How is it *all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God*?**

The ends of the earth were those furthest from God and is a reference to the Gentile world. That is happening with the church taking the gospel everywhere but again this is limited to the children of God. All the world will see the salvation of God when Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation. All nations will have representatives who have not yielded to the Antichrist and will experience their rescue from his tyranny.

### **v11 – From where should Israel depart?**

This has both a near and a distant application. It was intended for the Babylonian captives; but also, for those gathered to the Lord in the time of His return. The call to separate from Babylon — both literal and spiritual — is a call to purity, for those who bear the vessels of the LORD.

2 Timothy 2:20-21 – *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*

### **Should we separate ourselves from the world?**

Our closest relationships should only be with fellow children of God...

2 Corinthians 6:14 – *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

But this doesn't mean that we should be completely separate from unbelievers... how else can unbelievers come to know the Lord? We are in the world, but not of the world (John 17:14-16).

### **v12 – Why shouldn't Israel leave in haste or go in flight?**

When the salvation of the LORD comes — both in its near and its ultimate fulfillment — there is a sense of peace in the glorious work of the LORD, not a striving in haste or by flight.

### **Why then would Jesus tell those in Judea to leave immediately at the abomination of desolation?**

**(Matthew 24:15-18)**

Leaving immediately and going in haste are two different things. You can leave quickly but not be in a panic in your going. It sure looks like the Lord had this occasion in mind because, *the God of Israel will be your rear guard...*

Revelation 12:15-16 – *So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.*

### **Isaiah 52:13-15 – Salvation to many Nations (NIV)**

<sup>13</sup> *See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.* <sup>14</sup> *Just as there were many who were appalled at him— his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness—* <sup>15</sup> *so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.*

### **v13 – Who is my Servant?**

This is a reference to Messiah Jesus. This passage, through the end of Isaiah 53, has in focus the Servant of the LORD. This is the Servant previously spoken of in Isaiah 42:1, and Isaiah 49:3 and 6.

### **When will the Messiah be raised and lifted up and highly exalted?**

This declares the victory of the Messiah when He will triumph in His coming to establish the Millennial Kingdom. Before any of His suffering is announced, His glorious triumph is assured.

### **How can people miss that this is talking about Jesus?**

When we make up our minds about who Jesus is, it's easy to become blind and deaf to the plain, simple message of the word of God. Put away your pre-conceived notions and your cultural Jesus. Let the word of God tell you who He is.

### **v14 – What does *there were many who were appalled at him refer to*?**

The religious leaders of Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah. They did not expect the Messiah to come from such humble beginnings. They did not expect the Messiah to be God in the flesh. They also expected the Messiah to deliver Israel from the tyranny of Rome. And they were all salvation-by-works oriented so His message of salvation

being a free gift by the grace of God challenged the power they had over people.

John 1:17 – *For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*

### **If Jesus preached grace, why didn't He ever mention the word grace?**

The word grace appears just four times in the gospels and not once does Jesus say it. In contrast, the word law appears hundreds of times, often in connection with Jesus' preaching. Jesus may not have said it, but he showed it...

### **How did the incarnation of Christ show salvation by grace?**

Luke 2:10-11, 14 – *Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord... Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.*

You cannot have the Lord and be anything other than highly favored. He is a magnet to his own favor.

### **How did Jesus proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord teach grace.**

Luke 4:18-19 – *The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*

(quoting Isaiah 61:1-2)

We were bound due to sin but in knowing the Truth we are free indeed. That sounds like grace to me.

### **How did Jesus' parables teach grace?**

Matthew 13:44-45 – *The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for pearls of great price; it is like a treasure hidden in a field.*

The parables weren't morality tales for there was no catch or lesson to be learned. The lost coin did nothing to be found. The lost sheep did not rescue itself. The prodigal did not deserve to be received as a son.

- Without saying the word grace, Jesus left lasting impressions of unmerited favor.

### **How did Jesus showing (and preaching) unconditional forgiveness teach grace?**

Matthew 9:2 – *Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."*

When preaching to those under the law, Jesus made forgiveness conditional. But on the street, Jesus revealed a forgiveness that is unconditional.

- The cross is the dividing line of history and the crossroads of two covenants.

- Before the cross it was, "*Forgive and you will be forgiven.*" But speaking of what would happen as a result of the cross, Jesus also said, "*every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men*" (Matt 12:31). Unconditional forgiveness is one of the most liberating manifestations of grace.

### **How did Jesus preaching faith teach salvation by grace?**

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

The old covenant required about a hundred chapters to list all the things you need to do if you were to have any hope of impressing God, but here in the new, you just have to believe.

### **Back to Isaiah 52:14... What is this referring to that He was disfigured and marred beyond human likeness?**

This speaks of the cruel and vicious beating Jesus endured at the hands of His enemies. Jesus was beaten so badly on His face that He hardly looked like a man. The result was so shocking that many were astonished when they saw Jesus.

Luke 22:63-64 – *Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?"*

### **v15 – What does it mean, so shall He sprinkle many nations?**

Sprinkling is often associated with cleansing from sin in the Old Testament (Exodus 24:8, Leviticus 3:8, Numbers 19:21, Ezekiel 36:25). Here, the promise is that the work of the Messiah will bring cleansing to many nations.

- The Messiah is more than just Israel's Messiah. His saving, cleansing work will extend far beyond Israel to many nations.

### **What does it mean that kings shall shut their mouths at Him?**

His glory and great work will stop every word. When kings spoke against Him before, it was in blindness, but upon His actual revelation *they will understand.*

### **What applications come to mind from our discussion?**

- We are in the times of the Gentiles, but the time of Israel (Jacob's Trouble) is coming soon.
- Those who proclaim the good news of Christ are beautiful... be beautiful!
- Jesus demonstrated grace during His ministry... we should go and do likewise.
- Jesus didn't just redeem Israel, He paid the sin debt of all who trust in Him.