

A Small Remnant with a Great Voice

Isa 24:11-16 The mirth of the land is gone. In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction. When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, it shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the Lord they shall cry aloud from the sea. Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, the name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!" Why then is the mirth that has been removed immediately replaced with great joy? Without

Reading from Isaiah we need to be mindful that there is what we may refer to as a two pronged message. One is addressed to the Israel of Isaiah's day which although I designate as Israel, but one must always be mindful that the Kingdom of Israel was at that time divided into two kingdoms, the northern kingdom called Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Now it is in the southern kingdom of Judah where we would find the lineage of David, but I am going to refer to both kingdoms as the Israel of God. I do this for ease of our understanding.

It is proper to understand that the message to Israel in Isaiah's day was is that they will be carried away into captivity. At the same time they are made aware that a remnant will return, but it has become quite evident that the kingdom as under David will no longer continue as an earthly kingdom with a king upon the throne of David. But it also become clear that there is the promise made to a remnant of a coming future king, a king whose reign will be glorious in honor and power. And one becomes aware that this Kingdom will be different from all other Kingdoms. It will be over all the earth, it will be an eternal Kingdom and it will include not only the believing Jews but also it will include Gentiles. Now although this truth is clearly stated here in Isaiah, Paul speaks of it as a mystery, a mystery because the Holy Spirit had not yet revealed it as He would in time to the Apostle. Let's let Paul himself explain it to us, as it explained it in Ephesians 3:1-6, "*For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles — if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), **which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets**: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.*" So our advantage this morning is that we are looking back to Isaiah with the revealed truth as given to us in the New Testament Scripture.

So not only will we see the hope Isaiah gave to the Jews of his day but also the hope as it extends to us in our day. I want to consider it then under these two headings, the song and the joy removed; the song and the joy restored.

A. The song and the joy removed

1. It was God's plan and purpose to remove the earthly kingdom of David
 - a. To the believing Jew of Isaiah's day it would be most hurtful
 - b. The description of their grief is recorded for us in the Psalms

Ps 137:1-4 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. we hung our harps upon the willows in the midst of it.

2. There is a certain comfort given here to the Jews that a remnant will return to the land.

Jer 29:10-11 For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

3. Daniel while in captivity refers to this hope in his prayer.

Dan 9:1-2 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans — in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

4. Thus that part of the promise was fulfilled in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah
 - a. We read in Ezra that at the laying of the foundation of the temple they lifted up their voice in praise.

Ezra 3:11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel."

- b. This is but a remnant, but a remnant will return.

Isa 10:21-22 The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them will return;

- c. But the fullness of the joy and the comfort could not be known until it would be revealed to the Apostles after the ascension of our Lord.

B. A greater part of the promise was yet future - the song and the joy will be restored.

Isa 24:14-16 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the Lord they shall cry aloud from the sea. Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, the name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!"

1. The thankful praise of God will be lifted up "from the ends of the earth".
 - a. This clearly speaks of a kingdom of God that will cover the whole earth
 - b. This clearly speaks of a day in which the Gentiles over all the earth will look to God for their salvation
2. Even at the time of our Lord's ascension this was not understood. By the apostles themselves - *Acts 1:6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*
 - a. It was an earthly kingdom the Jews of Jesus day that even the believing Jews still hoped for
 - b. Herein we understand the mystery was revealed but not clearly understood
 - c. There are still many today that are looking to an earthly kingdom as the hope of present day Israel.
3. The purpose of the church is to magnify the Lord - *they shall sing; for the majesty of the Lord*
 - a. From the sea - that is beyond Jerusalem beyond Judah
 - b. From the dawning of the light the gospel was sent westward out of Zion the message has gone forth
 - c. Jesus said to the church you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:3
 - d. What is the chief purpose of man? - glorify God
 - e. What is the chief purpose of the church? - glorify God
4. The church today may be but a small number but it speaks with a voice so loud it has been heard over all the earth. - from the coastlands of the sea
5. The promise given here is that this remnant will utter a voice so loud that it will be heard in the most distant countries.
 - a. The message of the church carries great weight for it proclaims not its wisdom, but God's revealed truth.
 - b. The church must not be silent.
 - c. We need to be like the apostles of our Lord when forbidden to speak in Jesus name. - Acts 4:18-20 -What was their answer, "*We cannot help but speak of the things we have seen and heard.*"
 - d. Giving praise to God is a marvelous means of witness before the world
 - e. The world does not want to hear your witness for Christ but they need to hear it

It has been said, "to want nothing but this world is to end up with nothing but want."

CONCLUSION: What Isaiah is saying is that the praise of God will be heard the world over - *From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!"*

As noted, it may be a small number

It may be but a small remnant of mankind

Think of it - you are part of that number this morning

As you lifted up your voice in praise you were part of a chosen number

Be ready to express your thanks to God for His grace and mercy each day

What we are made to understand here is that the Lord can in a moment restore his Church, make it most flourishing; or as it were, create it out of nothing;

So be faithful to let your voice be heard, be faithful to proclaim "glory to the righteous" acknowledging that our righteousness is but the imputed righteousness of our Redeemer