

Our Great Cause for Song

Isa 26:1-6 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength. For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust. The foot shall tread it down — the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy."

What is most interesting about chapter 26 of Isaiah is that it is clearly written to the elect of Isaiah's day especially to those who will be taken away into captivity and while in captivity come to an attitude of repentance and faith. God here is giving comfort and promise to a people that could well lose their faith were it not for the promise of God that a remnant will return, and even a more glorious and greater promise that at one place having referred to the kingdom of Judah as a forest in complete devastation yet out of that ravaged forest from one seemingly dead tree trunk a branch would come forth, remembering, that as we have been looking into Isaiah we have been considering the clear teaching of the Christ and the Church in Isaiah. I would have us note then that once again this passage is not only giving promise and hope to Israel of that day but also the promise and hope of a coming King who will sit upon the throne of David forever as we read in Isaiah 9:6,7 "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever."

Let us consider this passage under these headings. 1.) The promise and hope given to the church in Isaiah's day, 2) The hope and promise given to the church at day of Messiah's first advent and during its time upon the earth, and 3) The hope and promise give to all the church at the last great day when our Lord shall come in the glory of God and His angels.

A. The promise and hope given to the church in Isaiah's day. - *In that day shall a song be sung.*

1. Soon Israel will be carried away into captivity God once again gives comfort and promise to His church through the Prophet Isaiah
2. Now I purposely refer to the elect of God here in the O T as the "church" to emphasize the fact that the believers of the Old Testament and the New Testament are the one and same body of believers.
 - a. There is good ground for this for we find them called the church in the New Testament.
 - b. Stephen in his witness before the council before his martyrdom calls the children of Israel in the wilderness the "church".

Acts 7:37-38 - This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.' This is he who was in the church in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers.

- c. Paul refers to the believers of the Old Testament as being of one and the same body with the Gentile believers in the New Testament.

*Eph 2:11-14 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh — who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands — that **at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one.***

- d. Speaking to the Gentile believers at the church in Rome Paul expressly states that they are of the seed of Abraham

*Rom 4:16-18 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, **who is the father of us all (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations")** in the presence of Him whom he believed — God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."*

3. God here is promising that after the return of the church from captivity He will defend the by His power and watch care.
 - a. Although they will not have wall or ramparts surrounding them God will defend and protect
 - b. Assuring them that no enemy will thwart the covenant promise of God
 - c. Therefore they will have good cause to take up their harps once again (cf Ps 137:4)
 - d. Once again I find myself in agreement with Calvin who here states:

I do not think that it was composed solely that, when they had been delivered, they might give thanks to God, but that even during their captivity, though they were like dead men, (Ezekiel 37:1,) they might strengthen their hearts with this confidence, and might also train up their children in this expectation, and hand down these promises, as it were, to posterity.

4. This give to us good instruction as parents and teachers
 - a. As pastors and elders we must encourage the church to trust in God's faithfulness even in troubled times.
 - (1) The church will know conflict

John 16:33 In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

- (2) That today although the church is troubled on every side our assurance, comfort and hope is both present and future

Rom 5:1-5 Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint.

2 Cor 4:8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken.

Titus 2:13 "... looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

- b. As parents we are to train our children to trust in God at all times
 - (1) That they might have confidence in the promises of God
 - (2) That they might expect God to hear them as He has heard and kept the church in the past
 - (3) Letting them know that this rest upon the promises of Holy Scripture

Ps 34:15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.

Rom 8:37-39 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

5. The church though weak in the eyes of the world is strong in the strength of Her God. - *We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.*
 - a. It was not long after these promises that believers saw Jerusalem destroyed and the temple thrown down.
 - b. But by these words a full restoration of Jerusalem and the people is promised.
 - c. God will preserve them during captivity and bring them back to their land.

CONCLUSION: This morning we look back at history and we know God kept His elect in safety - Three Hebrews in the fiery furnace - We have Daniel in the lions' den

Finally we have that prayer of Daniel as the 70 years are coming to a close - "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. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications." (Dan 9:1-3)

We hear in that prayer from the confidence of faith the expectation of the church in the restoration of Jerusalem. Let us hold that same confidence in our God this morning that God will keep us safe 'til He comes again.