

## A RIGHTEOUS NATION THAT KEEPS THE TRUTH

*Isaiah 26:2-4* 2 *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.*

In this verse we see a people that have come from a distance and as they approach the city they cry out that the gates of the city might be opened. Next we learn that the people approaching the city are a righteous nation that keeps the truth. Their desire is that they may enter into the city. Next we see they are a kept nation; who are in a state of perfect peace. Their mind, their purpose, their desire is stayed, rests completely upon God, because they trust in God. And then we hear a command trust in the Lord for He is the rock, the everlasting strength of the people of God.

Who are these people that approach the gates of the city? How have they become a "righteous nation"? What is involved in the status of these people, and how have they arrived at this status? And finally, why do they desire that men might trust in the Lord?

- A. Who are these people that approach the gates of the city? - *Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in*
1. First they are of course the remnant returning from captivity in Babylon
    - a. They are the redeemed of the Lord returning to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple
    - b. These are they who have responded in faith and repentance to the chastening of the Lord over the past 70 years
    - c. They return rejoicing in the mercies and grace of God
  2. This is also the Church, the Zion of God composed of all the redeemed of the Lord of all ages
    - a. They are a righteous people, that is a people that have been redeemed
    - b. They have a right standing with God
    - c. They are a people born of God therefore they are a people zealous for the things of God
- B. How have they become a "righteous nation"?
1. It is not that they have an inherent righteousness
    - a. They are those who were sinners by nature and sinners by choice
    - b. But they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ
    - c. God has granted them repentance and has given them faith
  2. These are those who have been chosen by God from all eternity unto salvation

*Eph 1:4* *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*

- a. These are those for whom Christ has died
- b. These are those for whom Christ shed His blood that they might be cleansed from all unrighteousness

*Eph 1:6-7* *To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*

- c. These are those who by trusting in Christ have the righteousness of God imputed to them

*Rom 4:23-25* *Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised for our justification.*

- d. Note that we should be *holy and without blame before Him in love*. (cf Eph. 1:4)

Calvin here writes: If any man wish to make use of this passage for upholding the merits of men, the answer is easy; for the Prophet **does not here describe the cause of salvation, or what men are by nature, but what God makes them by his grace**, and what kind of persons he wishes to be members of his Church.

3. It is then a people that have received righteousness from the King who reigns in Zion and who has prepared the city for His people.

*John 14:2* *I go to prepare a place for you.*

4. They will enter that Holy City, the New Jerusalem wherein nothing that defiles can enter
  - a. However it is a people that was defiled, but they will enter in for their defilement has been removed
  - b. And they have been made recipients of the Lord's righteousness.

- C. What is involved in the status of these people, and how have they arrived at this status? - *You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*
1. They are a "kept" people - *You will keep him in perfect peace.*
    - a. The fact that they designate themselves as a righteous people is not a mark of pride on their part but a mark of deepest humility
    - b. They are quick to acknowledge that they cannot say they have no sin. (cf 1Jn 1:9)
    - c. They are far from perfect therefore their boast is in the righteousness that comes from God
  2. Because they are trusting in God they have a perfect peace
    - a. Not a peace that the world can give
    - b. Rather it is a peace that is given us in Christ
      - (1) A awareness of the forgiveness of sin
      - (2) An awareness of the faithfulness of God
  3. The world cannot have peace with God
    - a. They are at war with God

*Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

- b. They are like the troubled sea, always in conflict with themselves, with others and with God

*Isa 57:20-21 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."*

4. On the other hand the people of God, the church, has been reconciled to God
  - a. No longer at enmity with God
  - b. We now desire God
  - c. By grace we now seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness
5. We have been given a new heart
  - a. We are kept by the power of God
  - b. Our minds have been renewed
  - c. We were at war with conscience, with the law and perfections of God, and with all the truths of religion.
6. Now by grace alone we love God and we love His law

CONCLUSION: Therefore they are called *the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in*

Being a kept people they will be the guardian, preserver, and custodian of faithfulness because their minds, their purpose their desire is stayed on God.

Mind here does not speak of manner of thinking but ones standing, ones purpose and desire  
 Being a kept people God keeps them faithful and true to His kingdom  
 They will have a love for Christ and His church - because He first loved us

*1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.*

They will have a love for truth - *the righteous nation which keeps the truth*

They will be faithful in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints - Jude 3

They will wage a good warfare

1 Tim 1:18-19 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

They will hold fast the pattern of sound words.

2 Tim 1:13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

You see I truly believe Isaiah here is talking about a people that will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness - My prayer is that we might be that people