

ISAIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 61 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw the darkness of the Tribulation Period as God pours out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world. And out of that darkness we see the light of God burst forth and dispel that darkness as the Lord returns and sets up His Kingdom on this earth. We call this period of time the Millennial Kingdom or the Kingdom Age where Jesus will rule and reign from the throne in Jerusalem as He promised the Jewish people!

And from the Kingdom Age we moved to the Eternal State where God creates a new Heavens and a new Earth with a new Jerusalem where He will rule and reign for eternity. It is at this point the curse is removed.

Now as we move into Isaiah chapter 61 tonight we are going to see Isaiah speak of both the First and Second Coming of the Messiah, of Jesus. The problem for some and for the prophets who wrote of these things is that in the same passage both the First and Second Coming of Jesus are mentioned and there looks like there is no separation, but there is as we will see.

It is like looking at two mountains, one in front of the other and it appears that they are right next to each other. And with the information you have at that time you came to the best conclusion that you could. But as you climb to the top of one of those mountains, you see the truth of the matter. You are able to see that there is a long distance between the two, many miles. In other words, they are not right next to each other.

That is what we will see here this evening. And as much as it was difficult for these prophets to see the difference, we now have the New Testament that is like a light that opens up some of the darkness that was hidden in the Old Testament writings.

Now in saying that there should be great joy in our lives knowing what God has done and is doing and will do in our lives and in this world. That is the character of the Church; we should be filled with the joy of the Lord. We are told in Luke 2:10-11 as the angel spoke to the Shepherds out in the field, “**. . . ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’**”

That joy is found in the Messiah, in Jesus and thus, as a people, as a Church, we should have great joy because we have Jesus! Martyn Lloyd Jones put it like this in regards to a joyful church,

As we face the modern world with all its trouble and turmoil and with all its difficulties and sadness, nothing is more important than that we who call ourselves Christians, and who claim the Name of Christ, should be representing our faith in such a way before others as to give them the impression that here is the solution, here is the answer. In a world where everything has gone so sadly astray, we should be standing out as men and women apart, people characterized by a fundamental joy and certainty in spite of conditions, in spite of adversity.

- Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*, p. 23

We as believers are not to go around and say, “Don’t worry, be happy!” What we can say is this, “Jesus loves you this I know, because the Bible tells me so! And that sadness, that anxiousness, that depression you have He can turn to joy if you come to Him and receive the forgiveness of sins that is only found in Him!” Peter put it like this in I Peter 1:6-9, **“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls.”**

That is what the Lord has for this world, that **“joy inexpressible and full of glory”** that is only found in Him, He is the gift! So with that as our background, let’s begin reading in Isaiah chapter 61 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

ISAIAH 61**VERSES 1-3**

1. First of all we need to understand that this is speaking of the Messiah, it is speaking of Jesus. Now some may want to argue that point but that is foolish because when Jesus began His earthly ministry we are told in Luke 4:14-20, **“Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.”** Jesus quoted these words from Isaiah!

Please understand that the Jews recognized this portion of Isaiah that Jesus was reading through as a Messianic prophecy. What is also interesting is that this is the place where they were reading from that day, not a coincidence. And as Jesus was reading this to them and they were all looking to Him to expound on what He was reading to them, imparting to them some words of wisdom you might say, we are told in Luke 4:21, **“And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’”**

What was the point that Jesus was making? He was telling them that He is the fulfillment of these words spoken by Isaiah, He is the Messiah! He spoke the good news to those who were living in sin with no way out. He came to heal or bind up those who were broken hearted. That is they were broken over their sinful condition, recognizing they could do nothing about their sinful condition.

And Jesus is telling them not to worry; He can touch them and heal them. He came to set them free from the captivity of sin they were in. His life set into motion the Year of the Lord or that period of time we know as the Age of Grace which has been going on for some 2,000 years now! It is speaking of the Gospel of Grace and that should bring to us great joy! We have been set free in Christ and the work that Jesus began continues on today, may we share that Good News, the Gospel with others for as Paul said, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel (good news) of Christ, for it is God’s power working unto salvation [for deliverance from eternal death] to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender and firm reliance, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”**

2. Now in reading from Luke the words of Jesus as He quoted Isaiah, did you notice anything that was missing from the quote? Jesus left off, **“And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn.”** Jesus stopped right in the middle of the sentence He was reading, He didn’t complete it. Why would He do that?

Keep in mind that when Jesus came the first time He came as a Lamb to take away the sins of the world. Man was condemned in sin with no way out and God did not send Jesus to condemn man but to save Him, the Age of Grace! Remember what Jesus said in John 3:17 says **“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

When Jesus came down the Mount of Olives He rode a donkey, and when a King would ride into town on a donkey you would not need to fear, for he was coming in peace and not in vengeance or to conquer. It is tough to conquer a land on a donkey! Heehaw! But when Jesus comes again He comes as the Lion from the tribe of Judah riding on a white horse. When a King comes riding in on a white horse he was coming to conquer, not in peace. Jesus is coming a second time to pour out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world.

Interestingly enough the period of God’s grace is illustrated by being called the **“year of the LORD”** while God’s wrath is spoken of as **“the day of vengeance.”** Now this is not a literal day being spoken of but it is speaking of the seven-year Tribulation Period where God’s wrath is being poured out upon a Christ rejecting world.

Then, as God’s wrath is completed at the end of those seven years, when He returns, He will comfort those who mourn as He returns to set up His Kingdom and righteousness will flow throughout the land. God’s grace always outshines His wrath, a year verses a day!

3. Another point that we need to deal with is the Trinity, and even though that word is not used in the Scriptures, the concept is seen throughout. The person speaking in these verses is the Messiah, Jesus. **“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me.”** Isaiah 61:1a. We also see in that first verse of Isaiah chapter 61 that the One who has anointed Jesus for the Ministry is God the Father! And we also see in that first verse that the Spirit of God is upon Jesus. One God manifested in three distinct persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit!

VERSE 4

1. Isaiah is speaking about the ruins that will be rebuilt and the reason there is such destruction is because of the Tribulation Period. You see, not only will Jerusalem be destroyed during the Tribulation Period but the whole earth will be affected and in ruin.

Jesus said of this time in Matthew 24:21-22, **“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”** And you can read in the book of Revelation of the devastation that takes place. But now we are moving into the Kingdom Age and the land will be restored, and it will be built again as will Jerusalem where our Lord will rule and reign from.

2. Now how does this apply to our own lives, to us today? Think about lives that have been destroyed by sin. Bob Dylan had a song called, “Everything is Broken” and this is part of that song,

Broken bottles, broken plates, broken switches, broken gates,
Broken dishes, broken parts, streets are filled with broken hearts.
Broken words never meant to be spoken, everything is broken.

It does sound like the days we are living in and the reality, this is what sin does, it destroys lives, breaks them. And what God wants His people to do is to restore and rebuild things that are broken and ruined, lives that have been destroyed by sin. How is that done? By bringing them to the Savior, by bringing them to Jesus!

Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 5:18-19, **“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”**

And Paul goes on to say that we are ambassadors for Christ, we are His representatives in this world and we go out with the idea of reconciling people back to God and that can only be done through Jesus! He heals the brokenhearted; He sets free those who are captive. Destroyed lives can be made new in Jesus!

VERSES 5-6

1. The children of Israel were to be priests and in that role they were to bring people to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That is what we are told in Exodus 19:5-6, **“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”**

The problem was that they kept people from God by the Laws they made. They also kept people from God; Gentiles because they saw God as only for the Jews unless you took up the Jewish faith, you followed the Law of Moses.

Now here's the interesting thing. The Jews, in a sense, have been put on hold by God and God is dealing with the Gentiles who have been adopted into the family of God by faith. Paul put it like this in Romans 4:16, **“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.”**

What's the point then? Since God has placed the Jews on hold for a time, God is using the Gentiles to shine for Him, to bring people to Him and thus, He has made us a kingdom of priests. In Revelation 1:5-6 we are told, **“and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

Now is this speaking of the Kingdom Age or here and now? I think it is talking about now. Peter makes that point in I Peter 2:9-10, **“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”** So we are a priesthood in the sense of bringing God to the people and people to God!

Now in the Kingdom Age I also see us as priests for we are told in Revelation 5:9-10, **“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.’”** We will be servants of the Most High God in the Kingdom Age!

2. Now what about the Jewish people? They too will serve the Lord; they will be a royal priesthood in the Kingdom Age as they turn to their Messiah, to Jesus! As Isaiah has told us,

“But you shall be named the Priests of the LORD, . . .”

VERSE 7

1. The Lord is speaking of the Law of the firstborn, in that the firstborn would get a double portion of the family inheritance; he would receive the birthright and the blessings. And God is saying that He will give His people, Israel, a double portion of blessings in the Kingdom. As Isaiah 35:10 says **“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”** You see, the Jews would experience twice as much joy and blessing as they return to the land of Israel from their Babylonian captivity but even more in the Kingdom Age!

VERSE 8

1. Notice what God loves and what God hates and yes, God does hate things. First of all we are told that God loves justice, and that just makes sense. But He hates injustice, which also makes sense. And we can understand how the unsaved world commits all kinds of evil but I don't think that is what Isaiah is speaking about.

When Isaiah speaks of the burnt offerings he is speaking to the Jewish people, and like so many “religious” people today, they adorn themselves with religious activity and yet their actions are wicked, their hearts are far from God! Do you really think God will be pleased with this and accept it? Not at all is He pleased with it, nor will He accept it!

What about Christians or those that call themselves Christians who rip others off in business, those who rip the people of God off. Do you really think God will be pleased with this and accept it? Not at all is He pleased with it, nor will He accept it!

And what about us, does this speak to us as well? You bet it does! You see, it is easy to fall prey to evil things and thus, we need to listen to the Lord, look to Him or as the Lord speaks through Isaiah and tells us, “**I will direct their work in truth.**” That is what we need to do, allow the Lord to direct our work our lives in *TRUTH!*

2. The end of verse 8 speaks of this everlasting covenant that God will make with His people and He has made. It is the new covenant that brings forth the forgiveness of our sins and it is found in the blood of Christ. And for those that think the Jews have been excluded from this covenant because they have rejected their Messiah, think again.

In Jeremiah chapter 31 we read beginning in verse 31, **“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name): If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the LORD: ‘If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD.’”** Jeremiah 31:31-37.

In other words, if the sun stops shining, if man can measure out the heavens, then God will cast off Israel. But the sun will continue to shine. Now some would like to argue that the Jewish people have forfeited their relationship with God because they put to death the Messiah! First of all Jesus freely gave His life so we may live but remember what Jeremiah said and if God has forsaken the Jewish people, cut them off, then we would wake up in the morning and the sun would be gone! Has that happened? Of course not and thus, God has not forsaken His people, the Jews! And in regards to the heavens, man continues to try to measure the heavens and it keeps getting bigger. Thus, God will not forsake the Jews; He has not cast off Israel!

And that should bring to us great comfort because this covenant with the Jews was an everlasting one and if God could negate this everlasting covenant, then He could negate the one He has made with us! He hasn't and He won't!

VERSE 9

1. We just spoke of this everlasting covenant and now we see the blessings that will come from that everlasting covenant. The Jews will not be hated any longer, those that see them will acknowledge them and they will know that that Lord is with them!

The problem today is that most of the nation of Israel rejects Jesus as their Messiah and we see the hatred towards the Jewish people growing, just like the Bible tells us will happen. And this hatred towards the Jews will grow in intensity throughout the Tribulation Period and will reach its zenith just prior to the Lord's return. I believe that the nation of Israel as a whole will turn to the Lord during the last half of the seven-year Tribulation Period.

It is at the end of the Tribulation Period that the Lord will return and establish His Kingdom here on earth and the Jews will no longer be under the “**times of the Gentiles**” or under Gentile bondage and persecution as Luke 21:24 tells us.

VERSES 10-11

1. When we think of joy we tend to think of material things, physical things that we obtain or purchase. But that is not what Isaiah is speaking of. Nor is Isaiah speaking of the blessing itself. The focus here is the Lord, that is where true joy is found and apart from Him that joy will wax and wane!

Remember Paul’s letter to the Philippians, written while he was in prison. Not much to be joyful about and yet Paul said in Philippians 4:4, “**Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!**” In fact, this whole letter or epistle has been called “The Epistle of Joy!” Paul’s joy was in the Lord and that did not change even though his situations and circumstances did! May we not forget that!

2. Then Isaiah speaks of what the Lord has done for us, not what we have done, but what He has done! What has He done? He has, “**. . . clothed me with the garments of salvation . . . covered me with the robe of righteousness . . .**” You can’t earn salvation, your life is not righteous and thus, our only hope is the Lord and He has done these things for us! You see, the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness are obtained by faith in Christ.

Paul, in Philippians chapter 3 is contrasting all he had obtained in the flesh with all he has in Christ and he tells us beginning in verse 4, **“though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”** Philippians 3:4-9. You see, you can’t earn it, it can’t be bought, all you can do is receive it by faith in Jesus Christ!

3. Then Isaiah speaks of us being a bride prepared to meet her bridegroom. We see this come to pass in Revelation 19:7-8 where we read, **“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”** We are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and because of that we can come and partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb!

4. As we read of these things that God is going to do and we look at this world and see how wicked it is, we may be discouraged. God is in control; don't be discouraged because He has already told us that before the dawn rises it will be the darkest! Thus, before the Lord returns and pierces this darkness, it is going to get very black out in this world, the heart of man is evil and his thoughts will be upon evil!

And here is the wonderful news. The Lord will triumph. His work will be completed. As Jesus comes to set up His Kingdom here on this earth we will see righteousness and praise spring forth throughout the land! Thus, not only will we see the material benefits and physical improvements upon this earth but we also see the spiritual blessings.

5. But what about us now? Paul put it like this in Hebrews 13:20-21, **“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”**

Notice that it is the Lord working in our lives and the power that was used to raise Jesus from the dead is the power that God will use in our lives to make us complete or to prepare us, make us ready for His use. You see, it is not to do our own thing, but to do His will, to please Him for we were created for His good pleasure. Yes God will restore this earth one day when He returns, but He is working in our lives here and now if we will allow Him!

ISAIAH 62**VERSES 1-3**

1. Keep in mind that when Isaiah spoke these words the Southern Kingdom of Judah was not in captivity yet, but they were spiritually corrupt, wicked! And Isaiah is speaking of their coming captivity like it already happened because it is that sure and how the Lord will not leave them there, He will bring them out from their captivity. He is not going to rest until Jerusalem is restored and is shining forth righteousness!

Ultimately this is looking on ahead to the Kingdom Age. You see, there is no peace in Jerusalem today because they reject the Prince of Peace Jesus Christ. But one day all Israel shall be saved and righteousness will flow from Jerusalem throughout the whole earth because Jesus is ruling and reigning from Mount Zion, from Jerusalem and the Jews will come to Him, the One in whom they have pierced and receive Him as their Lord and Savior. Thus, as the Gentile nations look upon the Jews they will be seen as the crowning glory of the whole earth.

2. Here in verse 2 we are told that God is going to give to them a new name in the Kingdom Age. What that new name is I don't know but God will reveal it to them in the Kingdom!

In saying that did you know that the Lord will give to us a new name in the Kingdom Age as well? It will be a name that will reflect our character. No more, "Joey 'too tall' Guglielmo"! Remember how God changed the name of Jacob, which means, "heal-catcher" to Israel or "governed by God."

The Lord is going to do the same for each of us. In the letter that Jesus wrote to the church in Pergamos, found in the book of Revelation, He said to them, **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”** Revelation 2:17. So God has a new name for us that is specific to us, He knows us that well and loves us that much!

VERSES 4-5

1. The Jewish people felt forsaken and the land was desolate and thus, they took on those names. The reality is that God did not forsake them but they turned from the Lord and that brought desolation to their lives and to the land!

But notice what the Lord does here. You are no longer going to be called **“Forsaken”** and **“Desolate”** but God is going to give them a new name. Hephzibah means, “My delight is in her” and Beulah means, “Married.” In other words, in the midst of this loneliness and desolation the Jewish people will come back to the Lord and they will see His great love for them, a love of a husband for his wife! In other words God will delight in His people and the land will be restored and kept by Him.

We see God’s love for His people in Zephaniah 3:17 where we are told, **“The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”** God loves His people more than they will ever know and the ultimate example of that love is seen in the cross!

And that love that God has for the Jewish people, He has for us. God rejoices over us as well. Can you believe that? I don't think we fully comprehend how much God really loves us. Paul, in Ephesians chapter 3 wanted these believers to understand God's love as fully as they could. He said beginning in verse 17, **“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”** Ephesians 3:17-19.

The richness of God's love I don't think we will fully understand until we see Him face-to-face but we can get a glimpse of it as we look at the cross!

So let's look at the cross and see how God's love is multidimensional, His love for us pointed in four directions.

- **WIDTH** - The width speaks of the world, that God's love is wide enough to include every person if they would receive Him as their Lord and Savior. In John 3:16-17 Jesus said, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”** His arms are outstretched for all!
- **LENGTH** - God's love is long enough to last through all of eternity, it will never end, it will last forever! It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 13:4-8a, **“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails . . .”**
- **DEPTH** - God's love is so deep that it can reach down to the worst sinner and rescue him, save him. Remember the thief on the cross next to Jesus, a murderer, many would look at that man today and say that he could never be saved and yet he cried out to Jesus to forgive him and Jesus said to this man, **“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”** Luke 23:43. Folks, thank God that His love is so deep that it can save sinners; it can save you and me! Paul said in Romans 5:8, **“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

- **HEIGHT** - God's love is high enough to take us to heaven, we won't fall short for He will bring us to the very throne of God, not because we are so good, but because He is so good and loves us that much. Again, as Jesus said in Luke 23:43, "**Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.**"

We can never fully understand the richness of God's love for us but every time we look to the cross we do get a glimpse of it. It is as Paul tells us in Romans 5:5, "**Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**" Don't put a cover over your life, but allow His love to be poured out into it for then you can allow that love to flow from your life to touch the lives of others. Don't see yourself as "**Forsaken**" and "**Desolate**" but as "**Hephzibah**" and "**Beulah**" or God delights in each of us and we are married to Him and He will never abandon us or leave us! Remember, "**So shall your God rejoice over you.**"

VERSES 6-9

1. What is lacking in the church today? It is one word, ***DISCERNMENT!*** In other words, there is no watchman; we let everyone and every idea come into the church without bringing it before the Lord and His Word. Keep in mind that the watchmen guarded the city by keeping watch on the walls of the city day and night. We need to keep watch and warn the people of false and dangerous doctrine that is trying to come into the church and in many places has already come into the church.

2. Also, I believe God is saying to us that we, as watchmen, are to be praying for the peace of Jerusalem as Psalm 122:6-9 says, **“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces.’ For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, ‘Peace be within you.’ Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good.”**

We should keep praying for God’s people until God brings to pass all He desires for His people. Pray until it is all accomplished and God sets up His Kingdom. It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:9-10, **“In this manner, therefore, pray: our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** Pray that God’s Kingdom will come and understand this, one day those prayers will be answered and God’s Kingdom will be established on this earth. The Jewish people will return to their God!

3. And the Lord is telling His people that they will not be laboring for nothing anymore! No longer will they plant, care for and harvest their crops, only to have the enemy come in and take it away from them.

Remember the story of Gideon in Judges chapter 6 where we are told, **“Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.”** Judges 6:11.

Why was Gideon hiding in the winepress threshing his wheat? Because he was afraid that the Midianites would come in and take it away from him, so he was trying to protect himself. You see, you never thresh wheat in a winepress, for it was low on the mountain and there was no wind to blow away the chaff as you were threshing the wheat. But if he went up high on the mountain to do it they would see him and they would steal it from him. And God is saying that in the Kingdom Age they will not have to fear any longer for they will enjoy the fruits of their labor.

4. As we serve the Lord we also need to remember that our labor is not in vain. Paul put it like this in I Corinthians 15:58, **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”** God knows what you are doing and He will accomplish what He desires in the work we are doing for Him. So don't be discouraged, be steadfast, be immovable, and continue on in the work of the Lord!

VERSE 10

1. Prepare the way for the Lord is coming! Raise the banner, let the people know the things that are about to take place. Now people read that and they only think of His First Coming, but I don't see it that way. We too are to be preparing the way for the Lord's return. We are to remove those obstacles that are keeping people away from God, like the religious practices and teachings. We are to prepare the people for the return of the Lord and the way that is done is the same way it was done when the Lord came the first time, ***“Repent of your sins and come to Jesus as your Lord and Savior!”*** Today we want to forget the repenting and just have people come to Jesus but that is foolish. Why go to a doctor if you are not sick or why come to the Savior if you are not a sinner? Prepare the way and let people see Jesus; don't let the garbage of this world block their view of Him!

VERSES 11-12

1. Yes, during the Tribulation Period things will look very black for Israel. But the Lord is saying not to lose hope, He is coming back to revive and restore His people. No longer will they feel forsaken. No longer will they be persecuted. They will be honored in the Kingdom Age!

2. People today see God as good and He is but what they are thinking about the goodness of God is wrong. You see, what they mean by that is God will accept anything and everything I am doing, He is good, He will not harm me. That is not true, God is good but He is not safe. I realize that may disturb some of you but let me explain it like this.

Some of you may have read the C. S. Lewis book, “The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe.” This is a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Beaver and Lucy in the story.

“Is – is he a man?” asked Lucy.

“Aslan a man!” said Mr. Beaver sternly. . . . “Aslan is a lion – the Lion, the great Lion.”

“Is he – quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“That you will, dearie, and no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver, “if there’s any who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”

“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy.

“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver. “Don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ’Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

- C. S. Lewis, The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe

God is good, but He is also just, fair, righteous and thus, sin must be dealt with and if you don’t receive the pardon that Jesus has given to you, then you will die in your sins and you are not safe. Our safety is found in Christ because God can accept us for the simple reason that our debt for our sin was paid in full by Jesus!

3. Let me close this evening with these words from Zechariah as he begins with the final battle against the Lord and His anointed and he ends with the setting up of the Kingdom and God’s people dwelling safely once again.

Beginning in verse 1 of Zechariah chapter 14 we read, **“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You. It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the LORD - neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light. And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be - ‘The LORD is one,’ and His name one. All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin’s Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananeel to the king’s winepresses. The people shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”**

Zechariah 14:1-11.

The Lord is coming back, may we prepare the people for His return! And remember what we opened up with, what the Lord has for us and this world, that “**joy inexpressible and full of glory**” that is only found in Him, He is the gift!