



Preaching Through The Bible, Michael Eaton

Isaiah

Creator and Saviour (51:1-16)

Part 71

1. Salvation is an act of God's mighty power

• Isaiah addresses the remnant

• They must consider the difficulty of salvation – like carving a rock

2. Salvation has apparently small beginnings but large results

• Gods' plans are great

• Salvation will lead to restoration – Garden of Eden

3. God's new Jerusalem will be the source of worldwide blessing

• This salvation will reach all nations – it will last longer than the universe

The prophet has spoken of the Servant's task and of his certain effectiveness¹. He has pointed us to a depressed Zion encouraged by a powerful Saviour². Now we have: the salvation itself³; and the Arm of the Lord who brings that salvation⁴.

1. Salvation is an act of God's mighty power. Isaiah addresses the remnant. They are to consider the origin of the promise of salvation.

*1'Listen to me, you who seek righteousness and who seek Yahweh:
Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; 2look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth.'*

Salvation goes back to Abraham. They must consider the difficulty of salvation. God's work of bringing salvation is like carving material from a rock. It is a work of powerful extraction, like stone being carved out of a quarry.

2. Salvation has apparently small beginnings but large results. When Abraham was brought to faith it seemed a very minor event in the story of the world.

'For when I called him he was but one, but I blessed him and made him many.'

And they must consider the greatness of what God plans to do.

3'For Yahweh will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of Yahweh. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.'

Eventually salvation will result in the restoration which will resemble the Garden of Eden.

3. God's new Jerusalem will be the source of worldwide blessing.

*4'Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation:
For the law will go out from me; I will establish my justice as a light to the nations.
5My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arms will bring justice to the nations.
The islands will wait for me and wait in hope for my arm.
6Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die in like manner.
But my salvation will last for ever, my righteousness will not be shattered.'*

11 49:1-13
12 49:14-50:11
13 51:1-52:12
14 52:13-55:13

All nations will be reached with this salvation. It is more long-lasting than the universe.

4. If God's plan is as great as Isaiah says, then God's people need have no fear

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⁷Hear me, you who know righteousness, a people in whose heart is my law. Do not fear the reproach of men or be shattered by their insults. ⁸For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will eat them like wool. But my righteousness will last for ever, my salvation through all generations.'

• God's people should pray!

Anything God does will be opposed by evil forces but God's people need have no fears. However, what they should do is pray!

5. The promise of God is fulfilled as God's people pray

5. The promise of God is fulfilled as God's people pray. Isaiah himself prays for the fulfilment of what he has predicted. God moves slowly. Sometimes it seems as if God is asleep. At such a time we call upon God to rouse himself and come to fulfil his word.

⁹Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength, O arm of Yahweh; awake, as in days gone by, as in generations of old.

• Isaiah prays for the fulfilment of his predictions

• We are encouraged to pray

We are encouraged to pray as we remember what God has done before.

Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, who pierced that dragon through?

• Isaiah uses picture of 'Rahab' to describe God's power – God will destroy opposition

'Rahab' was a sea-monster in Babylonian mythology. Isaiah does not recognize any truth in the story but he uses the picture as a way of describing God's power. If there is any dragon-like opposition around God will destroy it.

¹⁰Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over? ¹¹The ransomed of Yahweh will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. They will attain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing will have fled away.

• God's people will leave every kind of bondage and be brought into His new Jerusalem

• A 'panoramic' promise

Isaiah uses the language of the exodus. As God redeemed his people before bringing them to a land of promise, so he will do it again in a greater way. His people will leave every kind of bondage and be personally brought into God's new Jerusalem where sorrows and sufferings will eventually be brought to an end. The promise is 'panoramic'; it includes in one vision what the New Testament calls the new heavens and new earth.

So again Isaiah calls for total fearlessness

So again Isaiah calls for total fearlessness. God himself will be their strength.

¹²I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you are gripped by fear of men who keep dying? You fear the sons of men, who are appointed to be but grass, ¹³and yet you have forgotten Yahweh your Maker, who stretched out the heavens

• God will be their strength

*and laid the foundations of the earth.
And you live in constant terror every day
because of the wrath of the oppressor,
who gets ready to destroy.
But where is the wrath of the oppressor?
¹⁴The cowering people will soon be set free;
they will not die as people doomed to the pit,
nor will they lack bread.
¹⁵As for me, I am Yahweh your God,
who churns up the sea so that its waves roar –
Yahweh Almighty is his name.
¹⁶I have put my words in your mouth
and covered you with the shadow of my hand –
to set the heavens in place,
to lay the foundations of the earth,
and to say to Zion, “You are my people.”*

• The experience of salvation should include fearlessness

• God is totally committed to His people

The experience of salvation should include fearlessness. Any opposition from men is hardly worth considering. God is the Creator. He controls even the mighty oceans. And he – as such a God – is totally committed to his people.