



• A new Jerusalem

God's people are like a bride¹. They are like a fertile mother²³. And they are like a city! Isaiah now proceeds to describe a new Jerusalem that comes into being because of the sin-bearing work of the Servant of God.

1 49:18

2 49:20

3 54:1

1. The people of God are like a city surrounded by enemies

1. The people of God are like a city surrounded by enemies. We must remember that the major towns of the ancient world were generally protected from their enemies by surrounding protective walls. The people of God are the same. Outside of the people of God are enemies of various kinds: wickedness, alien philosophies, painful situations that life brings to us. By nature we are 'lashed by storms'. There are also storms within – doubt, weakness, anxiety – and at times we are 'not comforted'. Yet God has the answer for his people. Neither violent storms from outside nor distresses within will bring her down, for God will be the builder of his people.

• God will be the builder of His people – protecting from both violent storms and distress

¹¹O afflicted one, lashed by storms, and not comforted, behold, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires.

¹²I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones.'

2. Despite the surrounding storms the city is safe and beautiful

2. Despite the surrounding storms the city is safe and beautiful. It has protecting walls, and 'battlements' that hold the walls firm. Its builder and maker is God. Its beauty will be its holiness and purity.

3. Its inhabitants are a well-instructed people

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¹³All your sons will be taught by Yahweh, and great will be your children's peace.'

They are full of understanding, and full of practical skill in the way they live. At present many Christians seem to be gullible and extraordinarily ignorant! We live in days where there has been a reaction against 'Bible-teaching'. It is understandable. A generation ago there was such little hunger for the Holy Spirit and so much coldness, it is not surprising there should come a reaction to the deadness of some of the churches (and the coldness of 'the scientific method' in the world!). A generation has arisen which is more ignorant of the Word of God than ever before. But it will not last for ever! God's promise for his 'new Jerusalem' is, 'All your sons will be taught by Yahweh'. Every believer is 'taught by God'¹ because no one comes to faith without the inner working of God in his or her life. But Isaiah promises more! The entire city of God is to become a well-instructed people, no longer tossed to and fro by every wind and wave of doctrine.

• No longer tossed to and fro by every new doctrine

1 see John 6:45

4. Its inhabitants are at peace

4. Its inhabitants are at peace. The very name Jeru-salem seems to mean 'city of peace', and so it will be. God's people will become a people of **shalom**, all-round peace and security in God

5. It is established in righteousness

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¹⁴In righteousness you will be established.'

• The Servant of God 'justifies' all His people

It has a covering-righteousness because the Servant of God 'justifies' all his people. 'By his knowledge the righteous one, my servant, will provide righteousness for many, seeing that he himself will bear their iniquities'¹. Initially their righteousness is a 'covering' righteousness, based upon the sin-bearing work of the Servant of God, the Saviour. But then the righteousness

1 53:11

of God also becomes an inner power. The new Jerusalem has righteousness of life as its inner power and governing principle.

6. It is released from every kind of tyranny

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'Get far away from tyranny, for you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; for it will not come near you.'

• Attacks on the city will not be divine chastening

Attacks will come on the city, but the attacks will be totally alien rather than a matter of divine chastening. Israel had experienced the attacks of God upon it. It was God himself who directly raised up the Assyrians and later the Babylonians to be the chastisers of his people. But eventually such pagan domination will cease. There will still be opposition but the opposition will not be the mark of the displeasure of God. Days of exile to pagan lands will be finished for ever.

• Pagan domination will cease

¹⁵'Look, someone will surely attack you, but it will not be my doing. Whoever attacks you will surrender to you.'

• Eventually the enemies of God's people will be defeated and even won over

Eventually the enemy of God's people will have to admit defeat. The people of God need have no fear. The weapons used against them were made by a blacksmith, but the blacksmith was created by God, and all that he is and all that he makes is within God's control. So great will be the victory that enemies will be completely overcome and even won over to the side of God's people.

¹⁶'See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work'

• Weapons are made by the blacksmith whom God created – God is in control

The enemy is allowed by God who is its Creator. His weapons will not succeed. Back behind every kind of faith is faith in God as Creator. Because he created everything he necessarily can control everything but he has full and intimate knowledge of all that went into its very existence. A creator knows more fully than anyone else what is the thing he created. Blacksmiths may fashion weapons against God's city, but God was the one who made the blacksmith in the first place! God knows him better than he knows himself.

'And it is I who have created the destroyer to work havoc. ¹⁷No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of Yahweh, and this is their righteousness from me' – it is an oracle of Yahweh.

• The new Jerusalem will be safe because of righteousness, wholly from God Himself

The new Jerusalem will be safe because they have a righteousness wholly from God himself.