

Called By A New Name

Suppose we lived in Isaiah's day. What outward factors and conditions would contribute to our comfort and peace? What circumstances might indicate temporal blessing and prosperity? Living in a fortified and gated city, perhaps, protected by armed guards. Fertile fields close by with fruitful vineyards to provide supplies of food and wine. An honourable reputation, strong, local alliances and proven friends affording a sense of national and regional stability. Long life, good health and large families that bode well for the future.

Spiritual blessings

By such representative images the prophet anticipates the gospel age and comfort and peace of a spiritual kind. He foresees spiritual blessings given to the church which describe its privileges under the Messiah's rule. Isaiah's purpose is to encourage God's remnant people to remain faithful to the divine promises and await their fulfilment in Christ. Zion and Jerusalem are names for God's elect people and represent the church. Isaiah tells us he must speak of these things. Neither he nor other prophets and preachers of God's grace can be silent until Christ's salvation is fully revealed.

A new name

Isaiah informs his age that in the days of the Messiah God's people will have a new name. This may be the name 'the church' into which New Testament believers were gathered or 'Christians' after the One we follow, or perhaps, it refers to our adoption, 'that we should be called the sons of God'. There are many names, old and new, by which the redeemed of the Lord, Christ's Bride, is known. Whatever this name is, it given by the Lord indicating His personal interest and involvement with His people. Whatever it is, it is a new name for a new creation.

In whom the Lord delights

Hephzibah means 'my delight is in her' and Beulah means 'married'. This signifies that the Lord Jesus delights in His espoused Bride. The Old Testament remnant often felt desolate and forsaken but Isaiah reaffirms the Lord's faithfulness. The Lord delights in His people and glories in all those He has justified and made holy. According to the terms of the everlasting covenant Christ has adorned His Bride with ornaments of beauty, and cleansed and covered her in pure white garments of righteousness. The Lord Jesus delights in His betrothed and joyfully anticipates His wedding day when He will present her to Himself.

The power of the gospel

Christ's watchmen in the city of Zion are gospel preachers. The bread and wine are spiritual gifts and graces bestowed by the Lord to sustain and refresh His church. God's powerful right hand, being 'the arm of his strength', will ensure the divine purpose of conversion is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit. All for whom Christ died will be gathered by gospel preaching. The open gates of the city speak of access and the flow of believers into the kingdom of God. Those gates are still open.

A standard held high

A highway shall be there. This is a well signposted road, cleared of stones and easy to travel. This may be understood of true gospel preaching and of lifting up Christ as a standard, or ensign, to whom needy sinners are directed to come. Isaiah has spoken previously of this highway, saying, 'an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein'.

A message declared

It is Christ's voice that is heard speaking when the gospel is preached. His is a call gratefully received and obeyed by all those effectually enabled by the Holy Spirit. This call goes forth through all the world according to the apostolic commission of the Lord Jesus Christ. God's servants do not 'offer' salvation based on freewill. They declare the coming of the Lord Jesus for His people with saving power. 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.'

Holy of the Lord

The Lord's people gathered under the gospel shall be known as 'the holy people' by those who understand and discern God's justifying work. They are 'the redeemed of the Lord' being the objects of Christ's saving work. They shall be called 'sought out' because God the Holy Spirit seeks them out from the ends of the earth, from the pit of sin and the ruins of Adam's fall. They are a city not forsaken because they are forever secure in the palm of God's hand and shielded with His love.

Looking and listening

Isaiah sets forth the gospel in clear terms. Using references to righteousness and holiness, redemption and salvation he builds upon earlier revelations of the Messiah. He expands the vision and firms up the view of Christ for these Old Testament saints. By passages like these 'all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem' were prepared and informed of what to expect from Christ's coming. They possessed 'the faith of God's elect' and waited patiently for Jesus Christ that they might hear their new name.

Amen

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