

A New Vision? - Isaiah Ch.62

by

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rrcc

Jan 2012

TAKING CHRIST'S LOVE TO THE WORLD

“A NEW VISION?” ISAIAH CH.62

A series of messages on Isaiah entitled “**All Things New**” at RRCC began (1) with Kevin preaching on Ch.55 “A New Plan?” followed by (2) Gareth on Ch.58 “A New Way?” (3) Derrick on Ch.62 “A New Vision?” (4) Kevin on Ch.53 “A New Life?” (5) Richard on Ch.61 “A new Kingdom?” These messages can be heard via RRCC website, if you need help on this contact Graham Gordon. A Scripture verse that brings the whole series together is, “*and He that sat upon the throne said, **Behold, I make all things new***” (Rev.21:5). Isaiah repeatedly refers to new things (Isa.42:9; 62:2; 65:17; 66:22).

The following material is my study preparation work for preaching on chapter sixty two, which is determined by two considerations; (1) the content of the chapter and (2) the title of the message which is “A new Vision?”

You may come to this chapter and be as yet unfamiliar with its contents. I don't know whether you read the Bible chapter by chapter believing and attentive to hear the Lord speaking to you in the inspired text. However when you read through Isaiah you will have discovered that you have entered a sacred paradise of revelation, vision, encouragements, promises for life and the future. You will have met the Servant of the Lord and may have wondered for a while who He is but will have come to the conclusion that only One person could possibly fulfil the role marked out for the Servant. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Servant of Isaiah's Songs although there are significant times when Israel fulfils that role. Even king Cyrus of Babylon, the pagan king of a super power nation is the Lord's servant to “*perform all my pleasure*” (44:28-45:4, 13-14). We will not be looking at these Songs, except when Kevin turns to the Suffering Servant in Ch.53.

One of the primary purposes of Isaiah was to prepare the nation for the breakup of their land, their temple, its priesthood and sacrificial system. They believed that these core national institutions were inviolable being undergirded by God's promises and their own sacred history. The Babylonian conquest marked the end of their monarchy, the destruction of their homes and the loss of loved ones concluding in the humiliation of captivity and slavery in a foreign land. Stripped of so much they held dear they held on to their identity as Jews and preserved their sacred Scriptures and genealogies. The Old Testament probably reached a crucial

stage in its compilation during the period of Exile. Isaiah also gave theological explanation to these disturbing happenings and showed to them the compassionate heart of God despite His judgments on their nation. He also extended hope for an ultimate return from exile, describing their eventual journey home to their “desolated” land.

The church has taken many of these prophecies of God for His people to themselves. The Holy Spirit has applied these promises into the lives of the saints. The New Testament writers have taken prophecies from Isaiah that applied directly to Jesus’ life and ministry. He appropriated Isaiah’s prophesy, applying it to Himself (Isa.61:1-2 cf. Lk.4:18-19).

Richard will be preaching on Ch.61 under the heading: “A New Kingdom?” which is the final message of the series.

John Baptist also applied Isaiah’s prophecy to himself (Jn.1:23; Lk.3:4-6). The church has understood that the suffering Servant not only died for elect Israel but His death extended the election to all nations (Isa.65:1). The church has also seen in Isaiah the promise of Christ’s coming glory. Again, the New Testament writer John has done a cut and paste job on Isa.65:17 cf. Rev.21:1. He has appropriated Isaiah’s prophecy but not in full. How much would we lose if we did not return to base (the original source)? These verses are a wonderful example of authentic Isaianic prophecy,

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.”

- Kevin’s introductory message to the series is entitled: **“A new Plan?”** **Ch.55.** Kevin has a great gift of prophetic vision alongside a loving heart of exhortation and encouragement. People will begin to commit themselves and to give themselves sacrificially when they are inspired by a vision for the church, the gospel, justice and social action. His message is a launching

pad for the messages that follow. The inspirational vision must be implemented in vital action with tangible results. Kevin is the inspiration for this series.

- Gareth preached the second message in our series on **Ch. 58: “A New Way?”** – you *must* listen to a superb message! Gareth has a passion for community renewal which includes social action, social justice and the church in partnership with other churches to help meet the needs of the marginalized and disadvantaged in our neighbourhood. Note if his passions come through in his preaching.
- Derrick preached on Ch.62 on a “New Vision?” Kevin will preach again on Ch.53, the Suffering Servant and Richard will preach on his return from Australia on Ch.61 “A New Kingdom?” which will conclude the series.

A VISION FOR REPENTANCE IN THE LIGHT OF SIN’S CONSEQUENCES

Isaiah Ch.59

This chapter is not part of our series but is included as a bonus for you! Otherwise skip it and proceed to Ch.62 which was Derrick’s message. Ch.59 follows on from Gareth’s teaching. Against a background of sin that prevents God from hearing prayer and acting in salvation Isaiah begins Ch.59 by saying that despite God’s hiding His face and withholding His hand there is no question of His ability to act and His capacity to hear, *“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear”* (59:1). Sin also brings death to the conscience resulting in moral decay and injustice. True justice in human relations is a big issue for Isaiah (59:4, 8, 14, 16; 58:6-7, 9b-10 etc).

When the Quaker itinerant and social reformer John Woolman first brought the issue of slavery to Quaker landowners in the Southern States of America they

responded to his call for social justice for the Black Slaves by releasing them. ¹ The Puritan John Newton, following his conversion continued to Captain Slave ships for a number of years before he was deeply convicted of his sin. Justice is righteousness in action and is the outworking of God's holy nature. Justice is founded on the three primary attributes of God: holiness, truth and love/compassion. The true nature of sin is only discovered in relationship to the holiness of God; Israel faces repentance when they confess their sin before Him,

*"For our transgressions are multiplied before **You**, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them. In transgressing and lying against **the LORD**, and departing away from **our God**, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. (59:12-13 cf. Ps 51:4).*

ISAIAH'S VISION OF THE COMING OF THE REDEEMER TO ZION

Isaiah Ch.59:15^b-21

Tragically the nation did not repent before the LORD but the door was kept open for those who will *"turn from transgression in Jacob"* (v20). Against the backdrop of Israel's apostasy which was fully known by the LORD (vv15b-16a), the LORD acts to bring salvation with His own arm,

"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak" (59:16-17).

1 Woolman, John "A Journal of the Life, Gospel Labours, and Christian experiences of the Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, John Woolman" (William Phillips, London 1824).

Such passages lift you out of the sphere of man's sinfulness into the LORD'S immensity and His great salvation, but above all else Isaiah expresses so wonderfully the compassion of God towards His people. The first picture is of God as a mighty warrior whose *"own arm brought salvation for Him and His own righteousness sustained Him"* (v16). In a passage that anticipates the church engaged in spiritual warfare as in Eph. Ch.6 the warrior LORD *"puts on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head"* (v17). The fact that Christ is head of the church is not a title but an indication of His might as our Head, He says that He is now the *"Captain of the LORD'S host"* (Josh.5:14). The complete picture includes *"the garments of vengeance for clothing,"* Jesus did not put on these garments during His life among men, rather He chose a seamless garment that was ripped from Him at His crucifixion, for which the soldiers cast lots. When Christ returns he will come to execute God's awful vengeance on man's sin and rebellion. In executing judgment He will do it with divine zeal and might (v18). Isaiah is a prophet like all other prophets in the Old Testament who pronounce the judgments of God against Israel's sin and against that of other nations (Ch's 13-24). Jesus purposefully concluded His reading of Isaiah's prophecy (61:1-2) before its final conclusion.

Only Luke records Jesus' reading of this passage and His omission of the last half of the sentence, *"and the day of vengeance of our God"* (Lk.4:19 cf. Isa.63:4). This mandate for Jesus' mission was not to include judgment and clearly explains Jesus' actions and words demonstrated in the case of the woman taken in adultery (Jn.8:11). Jesus extended hope and forgiveness for returning sinners. The mighty warrior is also the gentle Saviour who strips Himself of His armour and becomes vulnerable in His incarnation and gains a reputation as the friend of sinners. At the heart of Isaiah's revelation of the Servant is Ch.53 that portrays Jesus as the suffering Servant who takes the sin of the world and dies for us and is raised in glory. Jesus suffered the wrath and vengeance of God against sin which is shown to us in Ch.53 and in this chapter the suffering of the Servant is linked directly with our sin (vv4-6, 10-12). The vengeance of God is the subject of Ch.63. Isaiah asks the question, *"Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like him that treads in the winepress?"* followed by the LORD'S answer,

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their

blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (63:2-4 cf.42:13). These verses link directly with Revelation 19:11-15).

- Kevin will be teaching from Ch.53 under the heading of **"A New Life?"**

Returning to Ch.59.19 triumphant LORD will match the enemy's hosts who come in like a flood, *"The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against Him"* (v19b). Hallelujah! No satanic power or power of man can match the power of the Spirit of the LORD! He is mighty on the behalf of His people (42:13). No other man in biblical history experienced the might of God as David. In Psalm 24 he anticipates the coming of the King to the holy city; he calls upon the great gates to lift up their heads and open wide for the King,

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory" (Ps.24:7-10).

David like Isaiah lifts the saints of God to exhilarating heights by his visions of the LORD. This gate described here through which the king enters is reminiscent of the gate described by Ezekiel in his vision of the temple and the coming of the glory of God into the house of the Lord (Ezek.43:1-6). Ezekiel had previously described the departure of the glory of the Lord (11:22, 23). The glory did not return to the second temple which was built by Nehemiah because God was waiting for the coming to earth of His Christ. John describes the glory of God associated with the person of Christ, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"* (Jn.1:14). Paul writes, *"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"* (Col.2:9). The incarnation caused no restraint or restriction to the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ's humanity. The glory of God returned following the exaltation of Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit to fill the house which is the body of Christ.

A second coming of Christ in glory is associated with this gate which is towards the east. Keen students of Scripture have noted the significance of the east in the positioning of the tabernacle whose only entry was facing the east. I believe this points us back to the first reference to the east. When Adam and Eve were thrown out of the Garden of Eden they departed in an easterly direction. Here we have a hint of the gospel and of returning sinners coming out of sin and the kingdom of darkness and returning from the east back to the house of the Lord. The first object to be seen through the door of the outer fence of the Tabernacle was the altar of sacrifice, representing the cross and the sacrifice of Jesus which speaks forgiveness and reconciliation through the blood of Christ God's sacrificial Lamb (Isa.53:7a; Gen.22:8; Ex.12:3; Jn.1:29).

The return of Jesus is graphically described by Zechariah, *"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south... and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with You"* (Zech.14:4-5; see also vv6-9).

These verses clearly describe the second coming of Jesus and those cataclysmic events that accompany His return (Mat.24:30). A whole lot of Scriptures click into place, especially Jesus' teaching on the "End Times" in Matt.Ch.24. Read other verses in this chapter and you are reading material that is reproduced in the Revelation. The gate way through which Jesus passed on His way to the crucifixion, is now sealed and many Christians believe it is this gate that will open its doors to the coming King (Ps.24:7). The route Jesus took carrying His cross is called the Via Dolorosa. Isa.Ch.59:20 declares that, *"The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, says the LORD."*

The final verse of this chapter is a reaffirmation of God's commitment to His covenant with Israel despite their unfaithfulness to Him, *"As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the LORD; My spirit that is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed, says the LORD, from henceforth and forever"* (59:21).

INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS ON ISAIAH CH.62

Firstly, we must fit this chapter into Isaiah's scheme of things. The book of Isaiah is divided up into three clear sections. I refer you to the excellent Notes that Dr. John Simkins prepared for his lectures at the CWP, you can access these via my website or you can contact Graham Gordon from RRCC. An outstanding scholar on Isaiah is Dr. Alec Motyer who has spent over 40 years studying this book.² I know him personally and his devotion breathes through his scholarship. Alec divides the book into 3 parts, (1) **The Book of the King (Isa.1-37)**; (2) **The Book of the Servant (Isa.38-55)** and (3) **The Book of the Anointed Conqueror (Isa.56-66)**. Such broad divisions are not particularly helpful unless you fill in all the details in those chapters.

As we explore chapter sixty two we will find leads that will take us backwards and forwards into the text of Isaiah. I recommend whenever your intention is to study scripture in depth that you read a book several times to get a grasp of the general outline and content. The few chapters that are addressed in our present series of messages belong to a section of Isaiah that runs from Ch.56 -Ch.66; except for Ch.53 and Ch.55. Chapter fifty three is a unique chapter in the Bible dealing with "The Suffering Servant" (include 52:12-53:13). Philip the evangelist interprets these sufferings as referring to Jesus (Acts 8:32-35). In a similar manner the words of Isaiah's prophecy in 61:1-3 are authenticated by Jesus as He reads them to the congregation in the synagogue at Nazareth and says, "*This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ear*" (Lk.4:21), referring these precise words of Isaiah to His own anointed ministry. Going back to Ch.56 which begins the final section of the book we find Jesus again taking the words of Isaiah and applying them to Himself and fixing their meaning. Commencing His last week of ministry in Jerusalem He takes up residence in the temple and proclaims, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer" (Mat.21:13) which is taken from Isa.56:7. Jesus not only

2 Motyer, Alec "The Prophecy of Isaiah" (Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1993); see also "Isaiah" in the Tyndale O.T. Commentaries (IVP 1999).

applies these Isaianic prophecies to Himself but at the same time He is authenticating Scripture, which is an important consideration when teaching on the subject of Biblical inspiration. The Isaiah reference adds *“a house of prayer for all nations.”* In this small section (vv6-8) Isaiah promises blessing to those who join Israel from outside and embrace the terms of the covenant; these proselytes are promised, *“joyfulness in My house of prayer”* (Isa.56:7).

In Ch.53 Isaiah concludes the chapter about the Suffering Servant with a further reference to prayer, *“he has poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors”* (v12). Jesus is our model of intercession. A further reference to prayer is found in chapter 59 which begins with unanswered prayer; put another way, it means that God says “no.” God’s ear is not deaf that it cannot hear, nor His hand shortened that it cannot save, but Israel’s sin has meant that God cannot save them, nor can he answer their prayers. God is amazed when He saw that there was no intercessor in Israel, *“And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him”* (Isa.59:16). This verse is paralleled in a later chapter, *“And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me”* (63:5). Man’s lethargy in prayer spurs God to independent action. When men are not right with God prayer is farthest from their reach.

You may be unfamiliar with biblical words like intercessor and watchman but words like these are the lingua franca of communicating spiritual ideas into our vernacular language of English. Sometimes biblical words are incorporated into our language but they require their biblical context to give them their true meaning. The children of God are not ashamed of the sacred language of Scripture despite how archaic it may sound because the world’s words cannot easily convey to us the spiritual content of God’s words. However, we must always keep before us Paul’s maxim that intelligibility is the foremost intention in our conversations with unbelievers, he says we must speak *“words easily understood”* (1Cor.14:9). Great preachers like Charles Finney would go out into the fields to talk to the farmers to familiarize themselves with their vocabulary and to appreciate their daily concerns and needs. Of course there were many pastors and ministers who said he was demeaning the pulpit by preaching in the common language of the people. George Whitefield grew

up in an Inn and was thoroughly conversant with the vocabulary of ordinary people. He was the greatest evangelist of all time. One cannot overestimate the impact of Christianity and particularly the Bible on our English language.

A further reference to prayer is found in Ch.64 which begins with a heart rending cry from the prophet for God to return to His people and to do His mighty works among them. Many intercessors have understood these verses to have a particular application to revival. I can recall Duncan Campbell, God's instrument in the Hebrides revival of 1949 preaching on this text. Kevin when he preached on Isa.Ch.59 referred to the misuse of the word awesome; certainly here the word awesome may be applied correctly. The great heart of the prophet cries out in strong groanings for God to come down in His awesome power among His people. Duncan Campbell talked about God taking the field and men exchanging the affairs of earth for the affairs of heaven. Revival is the answer to this kind of praying. Duncan describes an occasion in a house in the early hours of the morning when the Holy Spirit came down, the crockery on the dresser shook as the house was shaken by the power of God. Isaiah has this in mind when he described God coming down, "*When You did terrible things which we looked not for, You came down, the **mountains shook** at Your presence*" (v3). The intense presence of God resulting from revival praying caused men and women at that moment of God's outpouring to bow before God and to groan over their sinfulness. Isaiah battled throughout his ministry against apostasy and this is the climax to it. There is only one answer to lukewarmness in the church and that is heart rending prayer as shown by Isaiah the intercessor,

"Oh that You would rend the heavens, that You would come down, that the mountains might flow down at Your presence, as when the melting fire burns, the fire causes the waters to boil, to make Your name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your presence!

The coming of God among His people is also described by Isaiah, "*For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen, O God, beside You, what he has prepared for him that waits for Him*" (v4).

The final reference to prayer is found in the last chapter and has been interpreted in the context of revival praying. The imagery employed by Isaiah is that of a woman who brought forth her child before she travailed in pain. She brought forth a man child which links directly with Rev.12:5 and refers to Christ. The church travails in birth to bring forth the man child. The sparsity and scarcity of spiritual births in our churches shows the lack of genuine intercessors. Men of God like Spurgeon and Finney utilized intercessors who accompanied their ministry. While they preached their intercessors prayed for fruit to crown their labours. The following verse says, *“Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion **travailed**, she brought forth her children”* (66:8-9). The word “travail” has been correctly associated with Paul’s reference to travail in prayer, *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* (Rom.8:26). These unutterable groanings are only uttered by the travail of the Holy Spirit in intercession. Hannah experienced such praying and God answered her prayer by giving her the child she had prayed for. Prayer unlocks the power of God that directly impacts the lives of those who are not yet the children of God.

A NEW VISION FOR PRAYER

Isaiah Ch.62:1

Gathering up the references to prayer that I have given to you already chapter sixty two begins with the single intercessor’s prayer for Zion (v1-3) and is followed by an interceding company who are called “watchmen.” Jesus Christ, the Anointed One (61:1) is the lone intercessor. He always prayed alone although often others were present (Lk.9:18; 22:41). In contrast the prayers of the early church are always corporate prayers. Here the lone intercessor is followed by the company of intercessors called watchmen. He calls for silence, *“Keep silent”* which means to be still and to cease from activity and conversation. The Anointed One will in contrast give Himself to ceaseless conversation in prayer and ceaseless action. The focus of prayer is for Zion to possess the blessings of righteousness and salvation. The “daughter of Zion” is favoured by a **new name** and royal dignity, *“You will be a*

crowns.” You will not wear a crown; you will be a crown or diadem in the Lord’s hand. To be in His hand is to be kept by Him (49:16). To be a crown expresses the vocabulary of royalty and kingliness; this new status comes about because of my new relationship with Him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and points to His esteem and the fact that he raised me to His side thus showing I am of royal worth and dignity. Queen Esther comes to mind and the occasion when the king reached out his royal sceptre to her. We have not only been forgiven but also reconciled. The Father of the Prodigal not only forgave His Son but embraced and restored him to his status in the family. He gave a party to celebrate his return. Jesus did not only die for us as our Saviour but He is the King who loves us as His Bride, *“So the King will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him”* (Ps.45:11). In the Song of Songs, written by King Solomon the Bride says, *“While the king is at his table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance”* (S. of Songs 1:12).

The Anointed One is clothed for this task, not as the warrior King taking vengeance on sin but as the Bridegroom prepared for His Bride,

“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations” (61:10-11).

Isaiah began Ch.62 with ceaseless praying for Zion (Zion was the spiritual name for Jerusalem and takes us back to David’s psalms) until her, *“righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns”* (v1). The calling of Israel was to live before the nations of the world as a holy people enjoying the salvation of God and fulfilling the righteousness of the Law in their personal and national life. This involved living with your wife in a monogamous relationship (1Tim.3:2), maintaining just weights and measures (honesty in business dealings), keeping God’s Sabbath day holy and so on. Israel never fulfilled God’s will and purpose for them and judgment was imminent.

In the face of such apostasy Isaiah rises above what he knows to be the present condition of Israel and prophesies a future of hope and intimacy with God. God will delight in you. The prophet remains unbound by the pervading sin around him and declares the future in terms of God's delight in them. The purposes of God originate in Himself, His visions for His people are unsullied by human sinfulness. Because His will to choose and His visions of love originate in Himself they will inevitably be fulfilled by Him. Israel will be restored to her bridal relationship. Prophetic poetry and song can only germinate in a heart aflame with God's love. Such sublime and eloquent words originated in the loving heart, mind and imagination of Isaiah. The prophetic gift without the compassionate heart would be *"as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal"* (1Cor.13:1), and without the gift of prophesy the heart would be unable to articulate the message of the Lord. Without the prophetic gift we would have no Scripture.

A NEW VISION OF THE BRIDE

Isaiah Ch.62:2-5

Immediately following the introduction of the anointed Intercessor (Jesus is the anointed One - ch.42:1-9; 61:1) we hear His prayers for "her" righteousness to go forth as brightness and "her" salvation as a burning lamp (62:1). What the LORD does for Zion attracts the attention of the whole world. The nations shall behold her beauty, and the glory of her garments, *"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"* (Rev.19:8). The promise of a **new name** (v2) corresponds to a new nature. The carefully chosen name matches the particular character of the one so favoured by God. In Revelation the saints who conquer are given a new name, *"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"*(Rev.2:17b). The restoration of a bridal relationship is pictured in Hosea and results in a new vocabulary associated with the intimacy of marriage (Hos.3:16-17). In the Song of Songs the language of intimate marriage has been interpreted as the love of Christ and His bride the church (S. of Songs 2:8-10 etc.). The old disparaging name for Israel "Deserted" (by God) and her land "Forsaken" will be forgotten and replaced by new names: "Hephzibah" which means "My delight is in

her” and “Beulah” which means “married.” The new name marked a **new status** with God and new environment in the context of community and land. This was a new experience for Israel but had already been promised at the beginning of the nation (Ex.15:26; 19:4-5; Lev.26:3-13). The land which had been originally promised to Abraham was repeatedly described by Moses “as a land flowing with milk and honey” (Nu.13:27 etc.). Through disobedience they had forfeited their relationship with the Lord (Ex.4:22), their land had been decimated by invaders (the book of Judges is an example); the Northern Kingdom removed by the Assyrians and Judah is soon to experience the same fate at the hands of Babylon. Desolation sums up the state of every nation which does not own Jesus Christ as LORD. But Isaiah sees beyond this to new day when Israel restored to her relationship with God returns to her own land, led by her victorious and strong Shepherd the Lord GOD who will gently nourish the weak on this epic journey to their home land (Ex.49:9-11).

A NEW VISION FOR 24/7 WATCHMAN PRAYER

Isaiah Ch.62:6-7

In the second major section we are introduced by God to His appointed intercessors who will (1) intercede ceaselessly (lit.) “all the day and all the night” until the complete work of salvation and righteousness is accomplished. These chosen prayers are engaged in prayer with watchful urgency night and day, which we call 24/7 prayer. Prior to the advent of the Christ Child there were such intercessors in Israel and so there will be such intercessors prior to His Second Advent (Lk.2:36-38; Mat.24:42; 25:13; MK.13:33-37; Lk.21:36). They will pray (2) aloud, vocalizing the need, *never be silent*” (cf. v1a) and (3) they will pray effectively, “*you who call on the Name of the Lord.*” Prayer is also (4) diligent and disciplined, “*give Him no rest.*” Many prayers at this point of persistency fail because they do not know how to obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit and they are not experienced in this kind of praying. It is (5) urgent and pressing, many prayers in the Bible illustrate this kind of praying e. g. the prayer of Jacob in Gen.32:26, “*I will not let you go until you bless me.*” Charles Finney in his “Lectures on Revival” devotes three chapters of teaching to intercessory prayer, dealing with intercessory prayer and giving examples from revivals. Finally, prayer is (6) sustained, intercessors keep on praying until their

prayers are answered. Prayer brings tangible and specific results. The work of salvation and righteousness particularly were the focus for prayer and the restoration of Zion. God answers prayer, but part of that process is knowing His will. Prayer restores the church; Jerusalem is made *“the praise of the earth.”* When the church is restored the world is impacted.³

Moses introduced 24/7 ministering to the Lord in the Tabernacle (Ps 134:1-2; see also 1Chron.9:33). A further chapter in this 24/7 movement of prayer was initiated in Germany in 1772 in the Christian Community at Herrnhut under Count Zinzendorf. This prayer meeting began a few days after a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Community and continued for 100 years resulting in the first great missionary movement of the church in Europe. One in three of their congregation prepared for missionary service.

Today 24/7 praying is a challenge to the church and prayer Houses are being set up in cities. One of the most famous is the International House of prayer in Kansas (IHOP). In many countries Prayer Mountains are employed by the church for watchmen prayers. Isaiah says to the watchmen, *“ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth”* (v6, 7). Notice that they are given instructions and a clear objective before them. Persevering prayer must have a clear objective and definite promises to lay hold of; only then can the prayer of faith prevail.

An example of unceasing prayer is found in the early church on the occasion of Peter’s imprisonment, we read that “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him” (Acts 10:5). It was during the night that Peter was released by an angel from the prison; just suppose that the church had called off the prayer meeting until the next morning, would Peter have still been released from prison? Here 24/7 prayer was effective and accomplished its purpose. Isaiah exhorts the watchmen to give God no rest until Israel is restored and renewed. When the church is full of the glory of the Lord blessings will flow out from the church touching the nations of the world.

3 These points on prayer are adapted from Alec Motyer, “The Prophecy of Isaiah” p507.

A NEW VISION FOR THE WORKPLACE

Isaiah Ch.62:8-9

In the third and final section of the chapter (vv8-12) the LORD promises a reversal in their circumstances. People talk about the sovereignty of God in such a way that separates it from human behaviour. Sovereign Lord reigns in surrendered hearts. A lovely example of divine sovereignty in supernatural ordering of circumstances is given in Gen.Ch.24 where Abraham's old servant is sent on an errand to find a wife for Isaac. The responsibility is very great and the faithful servant petitions the Lord to prosper his way. This true story blends together perfectly the ordering of circumstances by the divine sovereignty and the compliance of the humble servant of Abraham. For me this is a perfect picture of how God wants things to work in our lives. I also see this in the little book of Ruth. Often God moves to fulfil His will despite us. God is so great and so large hearted. God is for us! He loves us and will move heaven and earth to fulfil His smiling providence and when providence does not smile upon us then like Job we will trust Him. Sounds fine but sometimes it is difficult to keep our heart tender and trusting. We live by multiple supplies of grace. We continue by the enabling and strengthening of the Holy Spirit.

Here the integrity of God is at stake – *“The Lord has sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of His strength, surely I will by no means give your corn to be meat for your enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink your wine for which you have laboured.”* (v8). The hand symbolizes his personal action and the arm is his personal power. The disapproval of God results in adversity. Loss of crops to an invader began soon after their settling in Canaan. The story of Gideon threshing corn at night time was an example of the extremity of people due to incursions into their territory. In terms of our own history we would look at the Viking invasions as an example of plunderers ravaging our land.

The children in Israel were brought up from childhood reciting the blessings and the curses. Blessings accompany those who keep God's Laws and order their lives accordingly. The disapproval of God is marked by labour that reaps little fruitfulness. The curse on the ground resulted from Adams sin. He now had to work

with labour and sweat for it to yield its fruit. Similarly, for the woman child birth would now be accompanied by pain. The prophet Haggai called Judah to repentance pointing to the folly of not putting God first, with the same results,

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the Lord. “You looked for much, but indeed it came too little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the Lord of hosts. “Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labour of your hands” (1:7-11).

The affairs of life change when the heart has its priorities sorted. Put God first by an unconditional surrender to Him of all that you are and all that you have. God will now work for you and cause your life to be blessed in service to Him and so you will be a blessing to others. Have you noticed the hand of God on people’s lives? The prosperity of God’s blessing is gathered together and comes to a head “in My holy courts.” All the harvest of gathered fruit is eaten and the feast which is the result of honest labour is accompanied by praising the LORD (v9). Surely we have come to know that the whole of life’s blessing come to their fruition in the Lord’s courts. Like David we love the Lord’s house and love to sit in His presence at His royal banquet. The LORD promises by an oath that their debilitating circumstances are about to change; what has happened in the past will be no more.

A NEW VISION FOR MISSION

Isaiah Ch.62:10-12Verse ten brings the chapter to an end on a high note of expectation. It is an instruction to go through the gate and prepare the way for the people. Graham Kendrick some years ago gave this verse a particular meaning. It became the manifesto for mission. By going out into the streets and singing the songs of Zion they were preparing the way for the King. They were showing to the world the joyful singing of God’s people, thus preparing hearts to receive the gospel. Graham understood the doorway to be that of the church. Churches usually

expect people to come through the door into the church, but this verse says, *“Go through, go through the gates!”* Jesus’ ministry gives credibility to this perception. The people of God *“build up, build up the highway;”* there is work to be done in the lives of those outside the gates to prepare the way for the entrance of the King into their hearts. Further action requires the removal of stones in the way and the lifting up of a banner. This banner represents the gospel proclamation and the raising of God’s standards in the lives of others. We, the children of God must be living life at the highest level of morality. Our lives must be a testimony to the unfurled banner of Christ’s love. The banner is a flag which has to be raised on the highest hill to proclaim in the battle that we are the victors! God says to His church *“Lift up the banner for the peoples!! (v10).*

Verse eleven continues with the LORD proclaiming to the ends of the world His love for *“the daughter of Zion.”* The LORD addresses His people with tenderness. Now is the hour of God’s visitation bringing to her salvation. She has been redeemed at a great price and she is adorned in rich garments of salvation (Hos.2:14-23; Rev.19:7-8). God travailed long for the hour of Christ’s incarnation which was the door to His attainment of full salvation for His people. Without doubt your salvation has arrived. The coming of Jesus to this earth was heralded by the angel host, welcomed by magi from the East making possible the salvation of God’s people Israel. Spiritual Israel shall be called *“The Holy People, the redeemed of the Lord.”*

CONCLUSION

There is a promise here for us that instead of being seen as the scum of the earth people will seek us out. Our new names will be *“Sought Out.”* Perhaps you feel that your present name could be *“Neglected”* or *“Unnoticed,”* or *“Unvalued.”* In that day men and women will seek you out to know the secret of your joy, for with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. People sought out Jesus, Nicodemus by night, the poor woman who touched His garment sought for His healing touch. When Jesus first sent out His twelve apostles he said to them, *“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. **Freely you have received, freely give*** (Mat.10:8). The Greek word for *“give”* comes from the word gift, so we could literally translate this word as *“giftwise”* thus putting the emphasis on the fact that

all we have to give we have received by way of gift from God. We have treasure in our sacks. Joseph said to his brother Simeon, *"Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks"* (Gen.43:23).

The church is not only God's depository of truth but God's dispensary for sick people. C. T. Studd called the church God's rescue shop within a yard of hell. We are the body of Christ and thus endowed with God's fulness and glory. When it was noised abroad that Jesus was in the house the crowds began to seek Him out. As watchmen we are to *"give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth"* (62:7) and as evangelists we are to *"Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people"* (62:10).

Derrick Harrison prepared this Bible study for a message at RRCC on Isaiah Ch.62. January 28th 2012. Since preaching I have spent more time in Isaiah and so my material has grown!

If you are still reading up to this point (you may be alone!) I suggest you now listen to message number three on Ch.62 in anticipation of Kevin preaching on Ch.53 and Richard on Ch.61).