

The Gospel of God Prophesied in the Book of Isaiah

by Ed Marks

When the resurrected Christ visited and walked with the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, “beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He explained to them clearly in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27). Later, when the resurrected Christ appeared to the apostles and those with them, He said, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all the things written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me must be fulfilled” (v. 44). “Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures” (v. 45). These verses show that Christ is the center, content, and reality of the Old Testament, including all the prophets, one of whom was Isaiah. The Gospel of John tells us, “Isaiah...saw His glory and spoke concerning Him” (12:41).

The book of Isaiah may be considered the “fifth gospel,” the gospel of God with Christ as its centrality and universality, revealing the salvation of Jehovah through the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, ascended, and coming Christ (cf. 9:6; 53:1-12; 40:10). The Gospels are the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but the book of Isaiah may also be considered a gospel. A simple reading of Isaiah will surely cause one to worship the Lord and love Him more. Although this book was written approximately seven hundred years before Christ was born, it contains details of Christ’s life, work, and person and even includes details of the Christian life and service in Christ that build up the Body of Christ.

The Word of the Lord That We Hear Becoming the Vision That We See, and the Vision That We See Becoming the Burden That We Receive and Bear

We need the Lord to open our eyes to see the vision that Isaiah saw, the word that Isaiah saw, and the burden that

Isaiah saw concerning the gospel of God’s eternal economy. Isaiah 1:1 says, “The vision of Isaiah...which he saw”; 2:1 says, “The word which Isaiah...saw”; and 13:1 says, “The burden...which Isaiah...saw.” In one sense, we may say that *vision*, *word*, and *burden* are synonymous terms; however, they are also distinct, having a particular meaning, and share an organic interrelationship that we must see and experience in the way that Isaiah did. The word of the Lord that we hear becomes the vision that we see, and the vision that we see becomes the burden that we receive and bear. We should pray, “Lord, open our ears to hear Your speaking.” When we hear the word of the Lord, this word becomes the vision that we see. This vision from the Lord is His burden for His people, and His burden becomes our burden by revelation.

Our Life Depending on the Lord’s Words, and Our Work Depending on His Commands

Our life depends on the Lord’s words, and our work depends on His commands. The central point of our prayers should be our longing for the Lord’s speaking. We can see the importance of the Lord’s speaking to us in the light of Ephesians 5:25-27. Verse 25 says, “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” This refers to God’s judicial redemption. Verse 27 says, “That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.” This refers to the presentation of the bride.

We thus have judicial redemption in verse 25 and bride-presentation in verse 27. In between there is verse 26, which says, “That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word.” This refers to God’s organic salvation. Thus, verse 25 speaks of

judicial redemption; verse 26, of organic salvation; and verse 27, of bride-presentation. Organic salvation, which is the preparation of the bride, takes place through the words that the Lord speaks to us. He sanctifies and cleanses the church, the bride, by the washing of the water in the *rhema* (Gk.), the instant word that is spoken to us personally. This is not simply the *logos* (Gk.), the written word, but the *rhema*, the instant, present, living word spoken to us by the Lord personally and directly. It is by our being washed with the water in His living word to us that He prepares us to be His bride. Thus, we should have a continual prayer within us: "Lord, speak to me."

The first thing that Samuel learned to say to the Lord was, "Speak, for Your servant is listening" (1 Sam. 3:10). Before Samuel knew Jehovah and before the word of Jehovah had been revealed to him (v. 7), the Lord called, "Samuel," three times (vv. 4, 6, 8). Samuel did not know that it was the Lord, so each time he went to Eli and said, "Here I am" (vv. 4-8). At that time the word of the Lord was rare, and Eli had become quite dull; therefore, the first two times Eli told the boy Samuel that he had not called him and told him to go back and lie down. The third time Eli realized and perceived that this was the Lord calling the young boy, so he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if He calls you, you shall say, Speak, O Jehovah; for Your servant is listening" (v. 9). This became the governing prayer and spirit of Samuel's life with the Lord. We too should have this prayer within us: "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening."

What We See Being Based on the Lord's Speaking to Us

What we see is based on the Lord's speaking to us. In spiritual things seeing depends on hearing. In Revelation 1:10 John said, "I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet." Then he said in verses 12 and 13, "I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man." John heard the Lord's voice and then saw the vision of the golden lampstands with the Son of Man walking in the midst of the lampstands. This shows that in spiritual things seeing is based upon hearing. Isaiah 6:9-10 says,

He said, Go and say to this people, / Hear indeed, but do not perceive; / And see indeed, but do not understand. / Make the heart of this people numb; / Dull their ears, / And seal their eyes; / Lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, / And their heart perceive and return, and they are healed.

These verses show that if our ears are dull and cannot hear, then we cannot see.

The Lord Wanting to Open Our Ears to Hear His Voice So That We May See Things according to His Economy

The Lord always wants to open our ears to hear His voice so that we may see things according to His economy (Job 33:14-16; Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6). Since this is the Lord's desire, we need to pray, "Lord, open my ears to hear Your voice." Isaiah 50:4-5 says,

The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one. / The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back.

These verses describe the Lord Jesus in His human living. The Father woke Him up morning by morning and opened His ears so that He could hear as an instructed one and speak as an instructed one to sustain the weary with a word. Exodus 21:6 is related to this: "His master shall bring him to God and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever." This verse also depicts Christ as the Slave-Savior, who has His ears opened to hear the Father's commands for His service. We also need to be identified with Him to have our ears opened in the same way. When our ears are opened by the Lord morning by morning, we can hear and speak as His disciples, His instructed ones, and we can carry out His wishes and desires as His slaves.

The Dull Ears Needing to Be Circumcised

The dull ears need to be circumcised (Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51). We need to pray, "Lord, circumcise my ears. I want the flesh to be cut off from my being. I do not want to have dull ears." "The circumcision that is the putting off of the body of the flesh was not made with hands; it was accomplished by the death of Christ, and it is applied, executed, and carried out by the powerful Spirit" (Recovery Version, Col. 2:11, note 2). "They who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts" (Gal. 5:24). We need to crucify the flesh in order to be circumcised in our ears so that we will not have dull ears. We always want to have an ear to hear what the Spirit is speaking to the churches (Rev. 2:7).

The Ears of the Sinners Needing to Be Cleansed with the Redeeming Blood and Anointed with the Spirit

To serve the Lord as priests, we must have ears that are cleansed with the redeeming blood (Exo. 29:20; Lev. 8:23-24). The sinners' ears need to be cleansed with the redeeming blood and anointed with the Spirit (14:14,

17, 28). As part of the cleansing of the leper, the priest needed to apply the blood of the trespass offering to the leper's right earlobe, right thumb, and right big toe (v. 14). The priest also had to apply oil to the leper's right earlobe, right thumb, and right big toe (v. 17). This shows that as sinners, we need our hearing to first be cleansed by the blood and then anointed with the Spirit so that we can hear the speaking of God. We need to confess that many times our hearing is wrong. We often hear the wrong things, so we need our ears to be cleansed and anointed. We should limit the things that we hear to the word of God and the good news of Christ. We hear the word of God with our ears. Then with our hands, signified by the thumb, we do the will of God, and with our feet, signified by the big toe, we walk in the way of God. This indicates that our hearing determines what we do and how we walk. Hearing the word of the Lord is a great thing.

The Lord's Burden Being That Which Weighs on His Heart in a Particular Way for His People to Live and Serve in the Reality of His Eternal Economy

When we speak about the Lord's burden, we are referring to that which weighs on His heart. The Lord's burden is that which is weighing on His heart in a particular way for His people to live and serve in the reality of His eternal economy. It is not simply His general heart's desire but a particular burden. The Lord's burden, what weighs on His heart, must become our burden. The visions the prophets received were the burdens they received. The visions in Zechariah, for example, were "the burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel" (12:1).

Without a burden there is no ministry of the word and no prophesying for the building up of the church (Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 14:4, 31). Without a burden, all our activity will be dead and ineffective; with a burden, we will be living and flourishing. In Malachi 3:14 God accused the priests of speaking against Him by their saying, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge and have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?" The priests at Malachi's time had no burden to serve God, and they were not at all happy about serving Him, even to the extent that they served Him mournfully out of mere duty and with no fresh burden from Him. If we serve according to mere obligation instead of serving with a burden, such service will cause us to lose the Lord's presence.

We all need to hear the Lord's word, see the Lord's vision, and receive His burden. Then we need to release the Lord's burden, His vision, with express words—special, fresh, and vivid words of the Lord's utterances, His oracles, which convey divine revelation (Ezek. 1:3; 1 Pet. 4:11). In particular, we need to hear the words that Isaiah

spoke, see the vision that he saw, and receive and impart his burden to others concerning the gospel of God.

The Book of Isaiah Revealing the Processed Christ for the Accomplishment of His Economy

The book of Isaiah reveals Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God coming out of eternity into time and with His divinity into humanity to pass through the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension for the accomplishment of God's economy to produce and build up the church as the Body of Christ and to usher in the kingdom age, consummating in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth.

Isaiah Revealing the Forerunner of Christ, Preparing the Way for Christ

Isaiah reveals the forerunner of Christ, John the baptizer, preparing the way for Christ (40:1-5; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23). Isaiah 40:3 through 5 says,

*We all need to hear
the words that Isaiah spoke,
and receive and impart his burden
to others concerning
the gospel of God.*

The voice of one who cries / In the wilderness: Make clear / The way of Jehovah; / Make straight in the desert / A highway for our God. / Every valley will be lifted up, / And every mountain and hill will be made low, / And the crooked places will become straight, / And the rough places, a broad plain. / Then the glory of Jehovah will be revealed, / And all flesh will see it together, / Because the mouth of Jehovah has spoken.

This shows that through our repentance, every part and avenue of our inner being, our heart, can be straightened out by the Lord, so that He can come into us as the reality of the kingdom of the heavens.

Isaiah Revealing the Conception and Birth of Christ as the Embodiment of the Triune God

Isaiah reveals the conception and birth of Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God (7:14; 9:6-7). Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel." This speaks of the

conception and birth of Christ. Isaiah 9:6 says, “A child is born to us, / A Son is given to us; / And the government / Is upon His shoulder; / And His name will be called / Wonderful Counselor, / Mighty God, / Eternal Father, / Prince of Peace.” This verse indicates that the government is upon the Lord’s shoulder. Thus, when we serve the Lord, nothing should be upon our shoulders. The responsibility for all that He wants us to do in His government, His kingdom, should remain on His shoulder. Moreover, the little child who was born to us from Mary’s womb and the Son who was given to us by God is designated *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace*.

Isaiah Revealing the Human Living of Christ

Isaiah reveals the human living of Christ (7:14-15; 40:9; 53:2-3; 61:1-2; 9:2; 49:5; 42:1-4; 11:1-2). The sign of Immanuel, the birth of Christ, is mentioned in 7:14, and then verse 15 speaks of His human living, saying that He will eat butter and honey all the days of His life so that He may know how to refuse the evil and choose the good (ASV, 1901). In His human living, Christ “ate butter and honey.” Butter signifies the richest grace, and honey signifies the sweetest love. By enjoying the richest grace of the Father and the sweetest love of the Father, Christ was able to reject everything other than the perfect will of God. To Him, the only “good” was the perfect and well-pleasing will of God (Rom. 12:2); everything else was evil. It is the same with us. As we allow this God-man to live through us, we enjoy the richest grace and the sweetest love so that we can have the power to refuse the evil and choose what is good, the perfect will of God, at all times.

Isaiah 40:9 says, “Go up to a high mountain, / O Zion, who brings glad tidings; / Lift up your voice with power, / O Jerusalem, who brings glad tidings; / Lift it up, Do not be afraid. / Say to the cities of Judah, / Behold your God!” This verse is speaking concerning the God-man Jesus. It says to lift up our voice with power and declare, “Behold, your God!” Hallelujah! Our God is a man! Our God is the God-man, Jesus.

In His human living, the Lord proclaimed the jubilee (Luke 4:18-19). Isaiah 61:1-2 says,

The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, / Because Jehovah has anointed Me / To bring good news to the afflicted; / He has sent Me to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted, / To proclaim liberty to the captives, / And the opening of the eyes to those who are bound; / To proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah.

There is only one person in this universe who can bind up the wounds of a broken heart, and that is our precious Lord Jesus.

Isaiah 42:1-4 says,

Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, / My chosen One in whom My soul delights; / I have put My Spirit upon Him, / And He will bring forth justice to the nations. / He will not cry out, nor lift up His voice, / Nor make His voice heard in the street. / A bruised reed He will not break; / And a dimly burning flax He will not extinguish; / He will bring forth justice in truth. / He will not faint, nor will He be discouraged, / Until He has established justice in the earth; / And the coastlands will wait for His instruction.

There is One in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22) who is never discouraged, and “a bruised reed He will not break.” Reeds were used to make musical instruments, but if a reed was bruised, it would just be broken and thrown away. Often we are like bruised reeds that are not harmonious. We are instruments that produce a discordant sound. We cannot seem to make “beautiful music” like we should, but the Lord would not break us. He keeps us, He heals us, He restores us, and He uses us—the bruised reeds—so that He can make us sound out and express the beautiful music of His praise and love that matches the Song of Songs. “And a dimly burning flax He will not extinguish.” When a torch of flax has been burning too long, it becomes smoky. Sometimes we are like burning flax that has become old. When we allow negative things to come into our lives, we become a source of smoke without any light. Some may want to “extinguish” us, but the Lord would never extinguish us. The Lord does not extinguish the dimly burning flax. Instead, He trims us so that we can burn brighter and brighter with the light of the Triune God.

Isaiah Revealing the Crucifixion of Christ

Isaiah reveals the crucifixion of Christ (53:4-10, 12). Verses 5 and 6 say,

He was wounded because of our transgressions; / He was crushed because of our iniquities; / The chastening for our peace was upon Him, / And by His stripes we have been healed. / We all like sheep have gone astray; / Each of us has turned to his own way, / And Jehovah has caused the iniquity of us all / To fall on Him.

Verse 12 says, “He alone bore the sin of many / And interceded for the transgressors.” While the Lord Jesus was dying on the cross, He said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). It is truly remarkable that this was prophesied and spoken by Isaiah approximately seven hundred years before the Lord’s birth.

Isaiah Revealing the Resurrection of Christ

Isaiah reveals the resurrection of Christ (53:10-11).

Verses 10 and 11 say,

He will see a seed, He will extend His days, / And the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand. / He will see the fruit of the travail of His soul, / And He will be satisfied; / By the knowledge of Him, the righteous One, My Servant, will make the many righteous, / And He will bear their iniquities.

This corporate seed is the church as the Body of Christ in resurrection. Extend His days means that He extends His days by living in the believers. He is living in us this very moment; thus, He is extending His days in resurrection. "The fruit of the travail of His soul" was also produced in and through Christ's resurrection. This fruit includes His becoming the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), His becoming the designated and firstborn Son of God among many brothers (Rom. 1:3-4; 8:29), and His producing the regenerated members of the Body of Christ (1 Pet. 1:3).

Isaiah Revealing the Ascension of Christ

Isaiah reveals the ascension of Christ (52:13; 53:12). Isaiah 52:13 says, "Indeed, My Servant will act wisely and will prosper; / He will be exalted and lifted up and very high." Our Christ is exalted; He is lifted up and very high. Isaiah 53:12 says, "Therefore I will divide to Him a portion with the Great, / And He will divide the spoil with the Strong." The Great and the Strong refer to God. When Christ ascended to the heavens, He took some spoil. We had been Satan's captives, but the Lord conquered Satan, and now we are His captives, His spoil gained through His victory. In His ascension He presented us to the Father, and the Father presented us back to Him. Then He gave the believers as gifts to the church for its building up (Psa. 68:18; Eph. 4:8, 11-12).

Isaiah Revealing the Second Coming of Christ

Isaiah reveals the second coming of Christ (40:10; 64:1). Isaiah 40:10 says, "Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty One, / And His arm will rule for Him. / Behold, His reward is with Him, / And His recompense before Him," and 64:1 says, "Oh that You would rend the heavens, that You would come down— / That the mountains would shake at Your presence."

Isaiah Revealing the Coming Kingdom of Christ

Isaiah reveals the coming kingdom of Christ in the principle of restoration (2:2-5; 11:6-9; 35:1-10; 30:26). This is the millennial kingdom in which "nation will not lift up sword against nation, / Nor will they learn war anymore" (2:4). Then Isaiah says, "House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah" (v. 5). We do not have to

wait for the millennial kingdom to walk in the light of Jehovah, for we have the foretaste today.

Isaiah 35 speaks of the coming kingdom. Verses 1 and 2 say,

The wilderness and the desert will be glad; / And the desert will exult and blossom / Like the rose. / It will blossom and blossom, / And even exult with exultation and a ringing shout. / The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, / The splendor of Carmel and Sharon; / They will see the glory of Jehovah, / The splendor of our God.

Hebrews 6:5 says that today we have a foretaste of the powers of the age to come. If today your hands are weak and your knees are shaking, the Lord's speaking will "strengthen the weak hands, / And confirm the shaking knees" (Isa. 35:3).

Say to those who are of anxious heart, / Be strong; fear not; / Indeed your God / Will come with vengeance, /

*When we serve the Lord,
nothing should be upon our shoulders.
The responsibility for all that He
wants us to do in His government,
His kingdom, should remain
on His shoulder.*

With the recompense of God; / He will come and save you. / Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, / And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. (vv. 4-5)

Today we can have a foretaste of this. We need to pray, "Lord, open my eyes. Lord, unstop my ears to hear Your speaking." Verse 6 says, "Then the lame will leap like a hart, / And the tongue of the dumb will give a ringing shout; / For water will break forth in the wilderness, / And streams in the desert." We should not be dumb; we should give a ringing shout of praise. When we praise the Lord, living water will break forth from our innermost being and living streams in the desert of our circumstances.

Isaiah Revealing the Eternal New Creation of Christ

Isaiah 65:17 reveals the eternal new creation of Christ. This verse says, "I am now creating new heavens / And a new earth, / And the former things will not be remembered, / Nor will they come up in the heart." This matches Paul's word in 2 Corinthians 5:17, which reveals

that as the church, we are God's new creation: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new." The ultimate manifestation of the new creation will be the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1-2).

Isaiah Revealing the Wonderful Person of Christ

Isaiah reveals the wonderful person of Christ. Throughout the history of the church, many things concerning Christ have become lost, corrupted, and damaged. Therefore, God desires to have a recovery in which there is a restoration, or return, to a normal condition after damage or a loss has been incurred. God desires to have a recovery that is purely and wholly of the person of Christ, where Christ is everything to us. God wants a recovery where Christ is revealed in us, Christ lives in us, and Christ is being formed in us; where we are pursuing Christ, gaining Christ, enjoying Christ, and being filled with Christ; and where we love Christ supremely. Isaiah reveals many precious items concerning what Christ is to us in His wonderful person.

(1) Christ is the incarnated Savior, the crucified Redeemer, the resurrected Life-giver, the ascended Victor, and the coming King (9:6; 53:5, 10-12; 40:10). He was incarnated to be Jesus, whose name means "Jehovah the Savior," in order to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). He saves us not only from the guilt of sin by the cleansing of His precious blood but also from the power of sin by the operating of His law of life (Rom. 8:2). As the crucified Redeemer, He died not only as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world but also as the grain of wheat to release His life into us to make us the many grains, His many brothers, as His duplication (John 1:29; 12:24; Rom. 8:29). As the resurrected Life-giver, He is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), the One who gives life to our spirit for our regeneration, to our soul for our transformation, and to our body for our glorification. As the ascended Victor, He has the victory over Satan, sin, and death. As the coming King, He will return to set up His kingdom on earth. Then the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

(2) Christ is the light of Jehovah (Isa. 2:5; 9:1-2; 49:6). Isaiah 2:5 says, "House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah." Verses 1 and 2 of chapter 9 say,

Gloom does not remain in the place where there was anguish: formerly He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali contemptibly, but afterward He treats the way of the sea, across the Jordan, with glory, Galilee of the nations. / The people who walked in the darkness / Have seen a great light; / Upon those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death / Light has shined.

"The new King's ministry for the kingdom of the heavens began not with earthly power but with heavenly light, which was the King Himself as the light of life shining in the shadow of death" (Recovery Version, Matt. 4:16, note 1).

(3) Christ is the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth (Isa. 4:2). Through His incarnation Christ is a new development of Jehovah God. As the Triune God, He branched Himself out from and with His divinity into humanity. As the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth, He came as a man of flesh, coming forth from the earth to express the divine attributes in His human virtues.

(4) Christ is the King, Jehovah of hosts (6:1-8). Verse 1 says, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple." Isaiah saw this vision, and he said, "Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts" (v. 5). After Isaiah had this experience of seeing the King, of seeing who he himself was—a man of unclean lips in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and of being purged with an ember from the altar of Christ's redemption (vv. 6-7), the voice of the Lord said, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us?" And Isaiah said, "Here am I; send me" (v. 8). This should also be our response to our King's calling us to preach the gospel of God to the whole inhabited earth.

(5) Christ is Immanuel, meaning God with us (7:14; 8:8, 10; 40:9; Matt. 1:23). Isaiah 7:14 says, "Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel." The Spirit, as the presence of the Triune God, is the practical Immanuel. Isaiah 8:8 refers to the land of Immanuel, saying, "The spreading out of its wings / Will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel." Today our spirit is the land of Immanuel. Christ as the Spirit Himself is with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16). Hence, our spirit is the land of Immanuel. He is with our spirit, and He is with us in all our gatherings (Matt. 18:20). Whenever two saints come together, actually there are three, because the Lord is in their midst. The Lord is with us in our gatherings, and He is with us all the days as we go out to disciple the nations (28:19-20).

(6) Christ is Wonderful (Isa. 9:6). In the book of Judges, before Samson was born, Manoah, Samson's father, did not know that he was speaking with the Angel of Jehovah. "Then Manoah said to the Angel of Jehovah, What is Your name, so that when Your words come to pass, we may honor You? And the Angel of Jehovah said to him, Why do you ask about My name, since it is wonderful?"

(13:16-18). The name of Christ is Wonderful. That His name is Wonderful means that He is incomprehensible.

In Genesis 18 when the Lord told Abraham that Sarah would conceive and have a son, Sarah laughed (vv. 10-12). “Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old? Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah?” (vv. 13-14). The Hebrew word for “too marvelous” here is the same word translated as “wonderful.” Who is Christ? Christ is “too marvelous.” We have a person living within us who is too marvelous. This is like the manna in the wilderness in Exodus 16. When the manna first covered the ground like the dew and “the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, What is it?” (v. 15). The word *manna* means “What is it?” Do you know who Christ is? Christ is “What is it?” We can understand many things in the natural realm, but we cannot fathom who Christ is without divine revelation. Christ is the mystery of God (Col. 2:2), and He is a wondrous mystery to man. When man is confronted with Christ, his response is “What is it?” He is too marvelous!

(7) Christ is our Counselor (Isa. 9:6). As “the Spirit of counsel,” He dwells in our spirit (11:2; Rom. 8:16). We need to seek His counsel in all things. Joshua 9:14 says that the children of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites because “they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah.” The way to honor the Lord and to give Him the first place in all things is to seek His counsel in all things. He is the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Col. 2:3). Thus, we can be like Solomon in asking the Lord to give us Himself as wisdom and knowledge for going out and coming in before His people (2 Chron. 1:10). This means that He becomes the means and the way for us to contact and minister Christ to every kind of person in every kind of circumstance and situation (Col. 1:28).

(8) Christ is the Mighty God and the Eternal Father (Isa. 9:6). Furthermore, He is *to us* for our personal and subjective experience. He is “a child...born *to us*” as the Mighty God. He is “a Son...given *to us*” as the Eternal Father. When Philip asked the Lord to show the disciples the Father, the Lord responded by saying,

Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how is it that you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? (John 14:9-10)

In John 10:30 the Lord declared, “I and the Father are one.”

(9) Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). As the Lord of

peace, He Himself can give us peace continually in every way (2 Thes. 3:16). The mind set on the spirit is not only life but also peace (Rom. 8:6). Paul says that if we bring everything to the Lord in our prayer and petition to Him with thanksgiving, He will become the peace of God in our inner being, guarding our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6-7). He shines upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, and He guides our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:79).

(10) Christ is our sanctuary, our dwelling place (Isa. 8:14). To take Christ as our dwelling place is the highest and fullest experience of Him. “O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations” (Psa. 90:1). He is our dwelling place, our abode, and we are His dwelling place, His abode. If we abide in Him, He will abide in us (John 15:5). The practical way to abide in Him, to remain in Him, and be freed from the power of sin is to abide in His word. “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free...If therefore the Son sets you free, you shall

*God desires to have a recovery
that is purely and wholly
of the person of Christ, and
Isaiah reveals many precious items
concerning what Christ is to us
in His wonderful person.*

be free indeed” (8:31-32, 36). “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you” (15:7).

(11) Christ is the branch from the roots of Jesse, the father of David (Isa. 11:1-9).

Then a sprout will come forth from the stump of Jesse, /
And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. / And the
Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him, / The Spirit of wis-
dom and understanding, / The Spirit of counsel and
might / The Spirit of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah. /
He will delight in the fear of Jehovah. (vv. 1-3)

Here we have seven items—the Spirit of Jehovah, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah. This is the sevenfold intensified Spirit (Rev. 1:4; 4:5; 5:6). We need to be filled with such a Spirit day by day. In His human living, Christ was filled with the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah. No man ever feared God the Father as much as Jesus did. To

fear God is to have a reverence for God, an awe of God, and a holy respect and regard for Him. To be filled with the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah is to have a fear of offending God. We should have a spirit of not wanting to offend Him, a spirit of revering and honoring Him.

(12) Christ is a banner to the peoples and a standard to the nations (Isa. 11:10-16). As a banner, He provides description, explanation, instruction, and designation. Whenever there is something going on in the church due to the Lord's reviving work (Hab. 3:2), Christ is our banner to describe, explain, instruct, and designate what is going on in the church. He is not only our banner—He is also the standard. A standard is for calling and gathering people and for drawing, attracting, and collecting people.

(13) Christ is our strength and our song, the springs of salvation, and the salvation of Jehovah (Isa. 12:2-6). We can draw living water out of Christ as the springs of salvation by giving thanks to Him, praising Him, calling upon Him, declaring His doings among the people, and making mention that His name is exalted. We can also drink of Him by singing to Him for His majestic deeds and by always rejoicing in Him. It is in this way that the joy of the Lord becomes our strength (Neh. 8:10).

(14) Christ as our King is our eternal rock and our Savior, Defender, and Teacher (Isa. 16:5; 24:23; 26:3-4; 17:10; 30:29; 19:20; 30:20-21). He is our refuge as our eternal rock. He is our Savior to save us by regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, and glorification. He is our Defender to defend us against all the accusations of Satan. He is also our Teacher. Isaiah 30:20 through 21 says,

Though the Lord has given you / The bread of adversity
and the water of oppression, / Your Teacher will no longer
hide Himself in a corner, / But your eyes will see your
Teacher. / And your ears will hear a word behind you, say-
ing, / This is the way, walk in it, / When you turn to the
right or turn to the left.

(15) Christ is the Steward in the house of God, the One who has the key of the house of David (22:15, 20-24; Rev. 3:7). The house of David, typifying the church as the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15), includes all the treasures of the house of David, typifying the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). The key of the house of David is for opening all the treasures of the house of God, which are all the riches of Christ for our enjoyment. The Lord referred to this key as "the key of knowledge," the key to knowing Christ in a real and subjective way as the true God, as the reality of all the types in the Old Testament, and as the way into God's heavenly kingdom (Luke 11:52). As the greater David, who has the key of David, Christ builds up the church not only as the house of God

but also as the kingdom of God for God's dominion. The key of David opens up the entire universe for God's economy and for His move to bring in His dominion (cf. Matt. 16:18-19). The fact that Christ has the key of David signifies that He is the center of God's economy.

(16) Christ is a peg, a nail, driven into a sure place (Isa. 22:23). When Christ ascended to the height, He was driven as a peg, a nail, into the third heaven, and because the Father is in the third heaven, we can say that in His ascension, Christ as a man was driven as a peg into God. "They will hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all the smallest vessels, from the bowls to all the jars" (v. 24).

In this verse *glory* is in apposition with both *the offspring and the issue* and *vessels*. Thus, the glory of the Father's house that hangs on Christ as the peg is the children of God as the offspring and the issue (descendants) of God, and these children of God are the vessels of Christ, who hang on Him in order to contain Him and to minister Him to others. The children of God as the offspring and the issue are glory in the house of God, and they are also the vessels (Recovery Version, Isa. 22:24, note 1).

The bowls and jars typify the different ways and means for us to partake of Christ in His riches. Bowls, or cups, are small vessels to contain water, typifying the Spirit of Christ (John 7:37-39), and jars, or pitchers, are large vessels to contain wine, typifying the divine life (Matt. 9:17 and note 1). This signifies that in the house of God all His children are vessels to contain His Spirit as water to quench people's thirst and His life as wine to cheer people unto rejoicing. All the riches of the bountiful supply for the enjoyment of God's children are hanging on Christ as the peg, the holder (Note 2).

(17) Christ is our crown of glory and our diadem of beauty (Isa. 28:5, ASV, 1901). A crown is like a hat or turban, whereas the diadem is the headband as the most beautiful, glorious part of the crown (cf. Exo. 28:36-39; 29:6). In Paul's experience, he had Christ as a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty. He magnified Christ in his body to such an extent that even some in Caesar's household were converted (Phil. 1:20; 4:22). When we live Christ for His magnification by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Christ becomes our expression, our "holy garments," to be our glory and our beauty (1:19-21; Exo. 28:2). To have Christ as our glory means to express Christ's divinity with the divine attributes. To have Christ as our beauty means to express Christ's humanity with the human virtues. We need to continually behold the beauty of the Lord in the house of the Lord so that we may be transformed from glory to glory, beautified by the Lord, to become His beautiful bride and the house of His beauty with Him as our crown of glory

and our diadem of beauty (Psa. 27:4; 2 Cor. 3:16, 18; Eph. 5:26-27; Isa. 60:7, 9, 13, 19).

(18) Christ is the foundation and cornerstone of God's building (28:16). Christ as the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4), the foundation stone (1 Cor. 3:11), the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6-7), and the topstone (Zech. 4:6-7) is constituting us with His stone nature to make us living stones for His spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5), His building. On Christ as the unique foundation, God's building is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, and we are being built into a dwelling place of God in spirit (Matt. 16:16-18; Eph. 2:21-22). We need to enjoy Christ as the cornerstone so that we may be joined together in Him. Our Savior, Jesus, saves us and joins us into God's building (Psa. 118:22-24). Christ as the cornerstone is the unique salvation to sinners, and it is in His unique name under heaven, a name despised and rejected by the Jewish leaders but honored and exalted by God, that sinners must be saved not only from sin but also to participate in God's building (Acts 4:10-12; Phil. 2:9-11; Matt. 1:21; 21:42).

(19) Christ is a refuge from the wind, a covering from the tempest, streams of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land (Isa. 32:2). Christ is a refuge from the wind, and we can trust in Him at all times and pour out our heart before Him (Psa. 62:2-8). He is a covering from the tempest. John 6:16-21 depicts the disciples traversing a stormy sea. In the midst of this tempestuous storm, they saw the Lord walking on the sea. "They were willing to take Him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going" (v. 21). This shows that the Lord, as a covering from the tempest, can overrule and walk on all the troubling waves of human life, and all the troubles are under His feet. Furthermore, we need to take the Lord into the "boat" of our human living so that we may enjoy peace with Him on our journey through the course of our life. The Lord is also streams of water in a dry place. We should not look to anything in our "dry" environment to satisfy, supply, comfort, or encourage us, but we should look inwardly to the Lord as the divine stream to be our unique source of satisfaction, supply, comfort, and encouragement. We can drink of Him as the One who is never discouraged (Isa. 42:4; John 4:13-14). As the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land, He is our strength, our refuge, our hiding place, our protection, our covering, and our safeguard (Deut. 32:15, 18; 2 Sam. 22:47; Psa. 95:1; 62:7; 94:22; 1 Cor. 10:4). Because this wasted land is a desert full of heat, there is the need of a shadow, which functions like today's air conditioner (Isa. 4:6). "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High / Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty" (Psa. 91:1).

(20) Christ is our Judge, our Lawmaker, and our King to save us (Isa. 33:22). The kingdom of God is Christ Himself

as the three sections of the divine government—judicial, legislative, and executive (Luke 17:21). As our Judge, He judges all the things in our being that do not match His righteous being, His holy nature, and His glorious expression. As our Lawmaker, He imparts the law of life into the inward parts of our being. As our King, He fills us with His ruling presence to bring us under His headship and authority. Christ is within the church today to rule within His believers and organically save them, making them His overcomers, who together in Him will become a smiting stone to crush the totality of human government and become the kingdom of God to fill the whole earth (Rom. 14:17; Dan. 2:34-35, 44).

(21) Christ is the arm of Jehovah (Isa. 53:1). This means that He is the power and strength of Jehovah. Christ as the arm of Jehovah is a root out of dry ground with the power to live in any kind of environment for His magnification (v. 2; Phil. 4:13). He is also a grain of wheat with the power to live under any kind of limitation for His propagation (John 12:24, 37-43). Like the loving seeker in the Song of

*Christ is the Steward
in the house of God, the One who
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to open all the treasures of the
house of God, which are all the riches
of Christ for our enjoyment.*

Songs, we need to pray that the Lord would set us permanently as a seal on His heart of love and indelibly as a seal on His arm of power (8:6). Our love for the Lord is the basic factor, element, and essence of our having the Lord as our power and authority for feeding and shepherding His people (John 21:15-17). This labor of love is according to His operation of power within us (Col. 1:29). All our hopes are in the Lord's keeping love and holding power as the arm of Jehovah. Whether we can endure to the end of our Christian life does not depend on our own endurance but on the Lord's preserving power. He is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that operates in us (Eph. 3:20).

(22) Christ is our Husband (Isa. 54:5-7). Verse 5 says, "Your Maker is your Husband; / Jehovah of hosts is His name." The entire Bible is a divine romance, a record of how God courts and eventually marries His chosen people (Gen. 2:21-24; S. S. 1:2-4; Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 2:2; 3:1, 14; 31:32; Ezek. 16:8; 23:5; Hosea 2:7, 19; Matt. 9:15; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9-10; 22:17). Christ is our Bridegroom, and we are His bride (John 3:29). Paul's ministry,

the New Testament ministry, betroths us to Christ as our unique Husband and stirs us up to love Him with the best love (2 Cor. 11:2). Christ is the Husband of the church, loving the church and giving Himself up for her in the past, sanctifying the church by the washing of the water in the word in the present, and presenting the church to Himself glorious in the future (Eph. 5:25-27). Eventually, Christ with His overcoming bride will reign in the manifestation of the kingdom for a thousand years (Rev. 19:7-9; 20:4). Then every believer will be fully united, mingled, and incorporated with Christ to be His wife forever and ever (21:2).

(23) Christ is a man of sorrows in His humanity to be our Redeemer (Isa. 53:3). Great is the mystery of godliness, which is God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). In this great mystery there is the mystery of Christ being a man of sorrows in His humanity. F. B. Meyer says that the mystery of sorrow is within this mystery of our suffering Savior:

The *mystery of sorrow*...When love beholds its objects eluding its embrace—their love turning cold, their souls poisoned by misunderstanding and misrepresentation, their lives engulfed by eddies from which it would save them if it could, but they refuse its aid—then there is sorrow; as rain meeting a blast of frosty air will turn to snow, and fall in white flakes.

We need go no further for the reason why Jesus sorrowed as He did. It could not have been otherwise. Men could not be loved by Him without causing Him infinite pain. Hast thou not wounded Him, crucified Him, wrung his heart, just because thou wert not able to appreciate the delicacy and sensitiveness of the heart which was pouring out its stores for thee with prodigal lavishness? Throughout the ages He has come to his own, and they have barred the door to his entrance; He has desired to gather them, as a hen her chicks, but they have refused Him; He has come into his garden to gather the precious fruit and spices that would refresh his soul, but He has found the wall in ruins, and the choice stores rifled; slights, where there should have been tenderness; rebuffs, where He looked for a welcome; put to open shame, instead of in the inner shrine of esteem and love. Surely this will account for this mystery of sorrow. (127-128)

In answering one of His disciples' questions, the Lord asked them another rhetorical question: "How is it that it is written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be counted as nothing?" (Mark 9:12).

(24) Christ is the sure mercies shown to David (Isa. 55:3). Note 2 on verse 3 in the Recovery Version says,

In Acts 13:34 Paul interprets the sure mercies as "the

holy things of David, the faithful things," and in v. 35 there, he indicates that these things are Christ Himself in resurrection...Paul's interpretation is confirmed by v. 4 in this chapter [Isa. 55]. Christ was incarnated to bring God as grace to us (John 1:14, 16-17), and He was crucified and resurrected to become the sure mercies to us in resurrection. Because our situation was miserable and could not match God's grace, Christ, the embodiment of God's grace, became the sure mercies, and through these mercies we are now in the proper position to match God and receive Him as grace...In Christ as the sure mercies, God reaches us in His grace to be our enjoyment. Christ is both the sure mercies and the eternal covenant that guarantees these mercies.

As the sure mercies of God, the resurrected Christ became the base of God's justification to His believers (Acts 13:34-39; Rom. 4:25). Based on such a justification in Christ's resurrection, the believers can be sanctified by enjoying Christ, the son of David (Matt. 1:1), as God's sure mercies, i.e., as the Holy One who did not see corruption (Acts 13:35).

(25) Christ is a Witness, a Leader, and a Commander to the peoples (Isa. 55:4). He is the faithful and true Witness of God, the testimony, explanation, description, and definition of God (Rev. 1:5; 3:14). He is our Leader, and as those who are being led by Him to put to death the practices of the body, we are the sons of God (Rom. 8:13-14). He is our Commander, our General. We have been conquered by Him through His resurrection and ascension, and now He is leading us in His triumphal procession. "Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place" (2 Cor. 2:14).

(26) Christ is our refuge, our land, and our holy mountain (Isa. 57:13).

To take refuge in the Lord is to enter into Him and stay in Him to enjoy Him. When we stay in the Lord, taking Him as our refuge, we enjoy Him, and eventually we will inherit Him as the land and possess Him as our high mountain. (Recovery Version, v. 13, note 1)

(27) Christ is the Angel of Jehovah, the Angel of His presence (63:9). Note 1 of verse 9 in the Recovery Version says,

[The Angel of His presence] is Christ as the Angel of Jehovah. The expression *the Angel of His presence* indicates that this very angel is the presence of Jehovah. Christ as the Angel of Jehovah was always present with Israel in their sufferings, from Exo. 3 through Isa. 63 to Zech. 1. *The Anointed of Jehovah* (cf. Isa. 61:1-3) is a sweet term to God's people, but *the Angel of His presence*

is a term applied mainly toward the enemies of God's people. It is the Angel of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus as the presence of the Triune God, who will come to defeat Antichrist and his armies at Armageddon (63:1-6).

Reading all these items of what Christ is to us should cause us to love Him more. He is truly wonderful!

Isaiah Speaking of God's Building as the Goal of God

Isaiah speaks of God's building as the goal of God. The church with its ultimate manifestation, the New Jerusalem (typified by the temple), is the house of Jehovah's beauty (60:7; 1 Cor. 3:9, 12; Rev. 21:3, 18-22). This is because Jehovah is our beauty, and He dwells in us, making us the house of Jehovah's beauty by dispensing Himself into us. The following verses from Isaiah reveal this:

"I will beautify the house of My beauty." (60:7)

"Jehovah your God / ...The Holy One of Israel...He has beautified you." (v. 9)

"To beautify the place of My sanctuary; / And I will make the place for My feet glorious." (v. 13)

"Jehovah will be an eternal light to you, / And your God your beauty." (v. 19)

As the New Jerusalem, we will enjoy Christ, the God of beauty, as the eternal light (vv. 19-20; Rev. 21:23; 22:5). In the restoration God in Christ will be our glory and beauty, and we will be Christ's glory and beauty; thus, God and His chosen people will be glorified and beautified in mutuality (Isa. 60:21; 61:3; Eph. 3:21; cf. Exo. 28:2). In Isaiah 60:21 the Lord said, "Then all your people will be righteous; / They will possess the land forever, / The branch of My planting, / The work of My hands, / That I may be beautified." He beautifies us so that He may be beautified. This will be accomplished by the divine dispensing through Christ as the Redeemer and the Savior putting Himself, as the life-giving Spirit and the word, into God's people (59:21; Eph. 5:26-27; cf. S. S. 1:10-11).

In Psalm 27:4 David says, "One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple." As we behold His beauty, we are infused with Him and with His desire so that we can inquire of Him, asking Him to accomplish His purpose. Outside of God, we have no beauty; our God, who is in our spirit, is our beauty. The tabernacle in the Old Testament had no beauty on the outside. The outermost layer was made of porpoise skins

(Exo. 26:14), but when you entered into the tabernacle, everything was golden and beautiful. We may experience this in the church life. On the outside the church may not look that beautiful, but when you enter into the intrinsic essence of the church life, the house of God, you can see Christ as the God of beauty in all the saints.

The house of God as His dwelling place is the mingling and the mutual abode of God and man (Isa. 57:15; 66:1-2; John 14:2, 20, 23; 15:4; 1 John 4:13). Isaiah 57:15 says,

Thus says the high and exalted One, / Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: / I will dwell in the high and holy place, / And with the contrite and lowly of spirit, / To revive the spirit of the lowly / And to revive the heart of the contrite.

We need to pray, "Lord, make me a person who is contrite and lowly of spirit." Then Isaiah 66:1 and 2 say,

The Lord makes His dwelling place with the one who is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at His word. We are His dwelling place, His home, and He is our dwelling place, our home.

Thus says Jehovah, / Heaven is My throne, / And the earth the footstool for My feet. / Where then is the house that you will build for Me, / And where is the place of My rest? / For all these things My hand has made, / And so all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.

The Lord makes His dwelling place with the one who is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at His word. We are His dwelling place, His home, and He is our dwelling place, our home.

Isaiah Speaking of the Enjoyment of Christ for God's Building

Isaiah speaks of the enjoyment of Christ for God's building in the following points:

(1) To enjoy Christ we need to see both a revelation of our fallen condition and the revelation of Christ in glory (1:18; 57:20-21; 64:6-8; 6:1-7). The Lord said, "Come

now and let us reason together, / Says Jehovah. / Though your sins are like scarlet, / They will be as white as snow; / Though they are as red as crimson, / They will be like wool" (1:18). Isaiah 57:20-21 says, "The wicked are like the tossed sea, / For it cannot be calm, / And its waters toss up mire and mud. / There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked." When we are not enjoying the Lord, what we are tossing up out of our being is mire and mud. The footnote on verse 20 in the Recovery Version says, "The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord (cf. 55:1-2). They do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him. In the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this." The most wicked thing in God's eyes is for us not to enjoy Him (cf. Jer. 2:13). In our fallen state, we may do many things, even outwardly serving the Lord. But we may not come to the Lord to contact Him and to enjoy Him. This is the most evil thing in God's eyes. Let us all give ourselves to enjoy the Lord.

(2) We need to keep our heart turned to the Lord to be saved from hypocrisy (Isa. 29:13; 45:22). We need to pray, "Lord, save me from hypocrisy. I want to turn my heart to You. I want You to be my reality. Save me from living one way publicly in the church meetings and living another way privately outside the meetings. Lord, save me from being a hypocrite." Isaiah 29:13 says, "The Lord said, / Because this people draws near with their mouth, / And with their lips they honor Me, / Yet they remove their heart far from Me." The Lord quoted this in Matthew 15:8. It is possible for us to honor the Lord with our lips, but our heart is far away from Him; therefore, we need to keep our heart turned to Him in order to be saved from all kinds of hypocrisy.

(3) We need to be infused with the Lord as our life power and multiplied strength (Isa. 40:28-31; 12:2-4). In Isaiah 40:28 and 29 the Lord through Isaiah says,

Do you not know, / Or have you not heard, / That the eternal God, Jehovah, / The Creator of the ends of the earth, / Does not faint and does not become weary? / There is no searching out of His understanding. / He gives power to the faint, / And to those who have no vigor He multiplies strength.

When we feel faint, we can say, "Lord, be my power." When we have no vigor, we can say, "Lord, multiply Your strength in me." Verses 30 and 31 say,

Although youths will faint and become weary, / And young men will collapse exhausted; / Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles; / They will run and will not faint; / They will walk and will not become weary.

To wait on Jehovah is to look expectantly for Him and to gaze on Him. To wait on Jehovah means that we terminate ourselves, that we stop ourselves with our living and our activities and take God in Christ as our life, our person, and our replacement. As we look away to Him, we sprout wings like eagles to soar far above every earthly frustration.

(4) We need to seek Jehovah and return to Him and His word as the rain and snow for the renewing of our mind with His thoughts and ways (55:6-13). The word of God is like the rain watering us and like the snow killing all the germs in our being. Verses 8 and 9 say, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, / And your ways are not My ways, declares Jehovah. / For as the heavens are higher than the earth, / So My ways are higher than your ways, / And My thoughts higher than your thoughts." How do His ways and thoughts get into us? Verse 10 says, "Just as the rain comes down / And the snow from heaven, / And does not return there, / Until it waters the earth / And makes it bear and sprout forth, / That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater." The rain and snow of the word bring down with them God's thoughts and ways from the heavens. *The earth, the sower, and the eater* all refer to us, the believers. The rain and the snow of the word water our inner being with God's thoughts and ways. His word then becomes seed for us to sow into others and bread for us to eat so that we may feed others with the bread of His word. Verse 11 continues, "So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; / It will not return to Me vainly, / But it will accomplish what I delight in, / And it will prosper in the matter to which I have sent it." His word accomplishes what He delights in. We have to believe that His word is accomplishing what He delights in even now, in each one of us personally and in all of us corporately.

(5) We need to have a contrite and lowly spirit (57:15; 66:2). A contrite spirit is a penitent spirit, and a lowly spirit is a spirit of meekness. When we have a contrite and lowly spirit, we become the man to whom God looks for His purpose and the man in whom God makes His home.

(6) We need to trust in the name of Jehovah and rely on our God. Isaiah 50:10 and 11 say,

Who among you fears Jehovah; / Who hears the voice of His servant; / Who walks in darkness / And has no light? / Let him trust in the name of Jehovah, / And rely on his God. / Indeed, all of you who kindle a fire, / Who surround yourselves with firebrands, / Walk into the light of your fire / And into the firebrands which you have lit. / You will have this from My hand: / You will lie down in torment.

If we have no light, we should not "light our own firebrands"

and walk in the light of “our own fire.” We should not try to manufacture our own light. We should simply trust in the name of Jehovah and rely on our God, and eventually His light will come to us.

(7) We need to enjoy the Lord as the depths of God by loving Him with Him as our love. In Isaiah 49:15 and 16 Jehovah says, “Can a woman forget her nursing child, / That she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? / Even though they may forget, / Yet I will not forget you. / Indeed, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands.” Isaiah 64:4 says, “From of old, men have not heard, / Nor perceived with the ear, / Neither has eye seen a God besides You, / Who acts for him who waits for Him.” Paul quotes this in 1 Corinthians 2:9, where he says, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man’s heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” When we love the Lord, we can enjoy Him as the depths of God (v. 10).

Isaiah Speaking of Our Service in Christ for God’s Building

Isaiah speaks of our service in Christ for God’s building in the following ways:

(1) We need to be watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, making the church a house of prayer. Isaiah 62:6 and 7 say,

Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, / I have appointed watchmen; / All day and all night / They will never keep silent. / You who remind Jehovah, / Do not be dumb; / And do not give Him quiet / Until He establishes / And until He makes Jerusalem / A praise in the earth.

Isaiah 56:7 says,

Even these will I cause to come to My holy mountain / And to rejoice in My house of prayer; / Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable upon My altar; / For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.

The Lord wants all of us to be watchmen on the walls of the church to watch for the enemy and to prevent the enemy from invading God’s kingdom. The walls signify separation and protection. Our duty and service is to be watchmen, and the way that we watch is by praying. We need to pray, even mentioning one another’s names before the Lord in prayer. In Ephesians 1:15 and 16 Paul testifies, “I...do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” When we mention someone’s name to the Lord, we give the Lord a way to dispense Himself into that person in order to protect that one. According to Isaiah and the Lord’s speaking in the Gospels, the church should be a house of prayer (Matt.

21:13). May the Lord make every local church a house of prayer.

(2) We need to be one with Christ as His disciples in order to speak and hear as instructed ones. Isaiah 50:4 and 5 say,

The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one. / The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back.

Our tongue needs to be instructed in speaking to others and in dispensing Christ into them. Every believer is a disciple, a learner. We need to be one with Christ so that our ear would be disciplined to hear Christ morning by morning and our tongue would be disciplined to dispense Christ. We need to hear His speaking, and then we need to speak Him into others.

His word accomplishes what He delights in. We have to believe that His word is accomplishing what He delights in even now, in each one of us personally and in all of us corporately.

(3) We need to be one with Christ to proclaim the jubilee of grace. Isaiah 61:1 and 2 say,

The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, / Because Jehovah has anointed Me / To bring good news to the afflicted; / He has sent Me to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted, / To proclaim liberty to the captives, / And the opening of the eyes to those who are bound; / To proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah / And the day of vengeance of our God; / To comfort all who mourn.

When we bring Christ to others, He heals the brokenhearted. Sooner or later every person will experience a broken heart. Only Christ can heal the brokenhearted, and He does this by making His home in their heart, by dispensing Himself as life into their heart. Moreover, He proclaims the gospel to the poor, opens the eyes of the blind, and releases the captives in order to bring everyone into the enjoyment of Christ as their good land. This is the jubilee of grace.

(4) We need to be one with Christ as nursing mothers to

shepherd God's people. Isaiah 66:12 and 13 say,

Thus says Jehovah, / I now am extending to her / Peace like a river, / And the glory of the nations / Like an overflowing stream; / And you will nurse, you will be carried on the hip, / And you will be bounced on the knees. / As one whom his mother comforts, / So will I comfort you; / And you will be comforted in Jerusalem.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 Paul says,

We were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us.

We all need to be one with God as nursing mothers to shepherd His people. A little child is very precious to his mother. The Lord will never forget us or give us up. He comforts us as a mother comforts her child by carrying us on the hip and by bouncing us on the knees. This shows the Lord's loving care and shepherding.

In the book of Isaiah, God's love toward Israel is exercised as a Father (1:2-3; 63:16; 64:8), as a nursing Mother (66:12-13), and as a Husband (54:5). This three-fold love also applies to the church as the real Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). God's love in Christ for His people is the essence of the gospel of God prophesied in Isaiah. Isaiah prophesied concerning the details of Christ's processes and many marvelous and variegated aspects of His person. He also spoke concerning God's building as the goal of God, the enjoyment of Christ for God's building, and our service in Christ for God's building. This is the vision, the word, and the burden that Isaiah saw concerning the gospel of God's eternal economy. **AFC**

Works Cited

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Footnotes from the Recovery Version of the Bible

"But Jehovah was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief. / When He makes Himself an offering for sin, / He will see a **seed**, He will extend His days, / And the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand.

He will see the **fruit** of the travail of His soul, / And He will be satisfied; / By the knowledge of Him, the righteous One, My Servant, will make the / many righteous, / And He will bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:10-11).

seed: Verses 10b-11 refer to Christ in His resurrection. The seed here, a corporate seed, is the church as the Body of Christ, comprising all the believers produced as the many grains by the death of Christ as the one grain and by His reproductive resurrection (John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3). Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is the resurrected Life-giver, the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6, 17), to produce a seed for the building up of His Body as His continuation for Jehovah's pleasure and for Christ's satisfaction.

fruit: The fruit of the travail of Christ's soul implies all the items produced in and through Christ's resurrection, as follows: (1) As the processed One, the last Adam, Christ became the life-giving Spirit as the reality of the pneumatic Christ for His propagation through life-imparting (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17); (2) as the preeminent One, the One who has the first place in all things, Christ became the Firstborn from the dead for the germinating of God's new creation and for Christ to be Head of the Body (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5a); (3) as the God-man, Christ was begotten of God in His humanity (Acts 13:33) to be the firstborn Son of God in both the divine and human natures, to be a model for conforming many sons to His image (Rom. 8:29b); (4) as the resurrection life (John 11:25), Christ regenerated all His believers (1 Pet. 1:3), making them His brothers and the many sons of God (Heb. 2:10a, 11b-12; Rom. 8:29b; John 20:17), who are the members of God's household to be God's kingdom (Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10) and God's precious inheritance (Eph. 1:11); (5) as the one grain of wheat, Christ became the many grains (John 12:24), who are His increase (John 3:30) and the components of His Body, i.e., the one bread, the church (1 Cor. 10:17; Eph. 1:22-23); (6) through His life-releasing death and with His life-imparting resurrection, Christ produced a corporate seed as the issue of the travail of His soul, which seed He saw in His resurrection and was satisfied (vv. 10c-11b; cf. Gal. 3:29); and (7) as the life of the believers, the resurrected Christ is all the members and in all the members of the new man (Col. 3:10-11).