

# Touchstones of God's Economy

## Isaiah (2)

Isaiah can be divided into two major sections, which correspond to the Old and New Testaments. The first thirty-nine chapters correspond to the Old Testament, and the latter twenty-seven chapters to the New Testament. In the last issue of *Affirmation & Critique* we saw that the first section has three main subsections, the contents of which may be designated by three words: *salvation*, *judgment*, and *dealing*. *Salvation* covers God's work with mankind in general (chs. 1—12), *judgment*, His work with the nations (chs. 13—23), and *dealing*, His work with His chosen people Israel (chs. 24—35). Therefore, these three sections correspond to the entire Old Testament.

Following a short historical parenthesis in chapters 36 through 39, the fourth and final section of the book, chapters 40 through 66, corresponds to the New Testament. This section can be designated by the word *Servant*. Its subject is Christ as the Servant of Jehovah and the salvation brought in by Him issuing in the restoration of all things and consummating in the new heavens and new earth. The first section of Isaiah, like the Old Testament, concerns God's work in the old creation to bring forth Christ as the centrality and universality of His economy. In chapter 40 Christ is revealed as the Servant of Jehovah to carry out God's work in His new creation for the fulfillment of His heart's desire and His eternal purpose.

This section begins with Jehovah's word of comfort spoken to the heart of His people Israel. This is the announcing of the gospel of the new creation, first through John the Baptist and then through Christ. In fact, the entire portion of Isaiah's prophecy from chapter 40 onward may be regarded as Jehovah's word of comfort to Israel. From chapter 41 until the end of the book, the Servant of Jehovah is revealed both in type and in plain words of prophecy. Isaiah also speaks concerning the full salvation that Christ will bring to Israel and to the nations in the new covenant. In the closing chapters of the book, the prophet speaks concerning Christ's second coming, when He will save Israel, judge the nations, and bring in the restoration of all things in the millennium (64:1-5; 66:22-24; 65:18-25). After this there will be new heavens and a new earth, with the New Jerusalem as the center (v. 17; 66:22-24; cf. 65:18-25). From its content it is evident that this section corresponds to

the New Testament. Hence, the book of Isaiah is a reflection of the entire Bible.<sup>1</sup>

### Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, Announced

Isaiah 40:1-2 says,

Comfort, oh, comfort My people, / Says your God. /  
Speak unto the heart of Jerusalem, / And cry out to her, /  
That her warfare has finished, / That the penalty for her  
iniquity has been accepted; / For she has received from  
the hand of Jehovah double / For all her sins.

God's speaking to the heart indicates that His word is concerned with the inner man, not with the outer man. Verse 3 continues, "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." This verse is a prophecy concerning the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:3); therefore, to make clear "the way of Jehovah" is to make clear the way of Jesus, who is the New Testament Jehovah. The name *Jesus*, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, means "Jehovah the Savior" or "the salvation of Jehovah." Hence, Jesus is not only a man. He is Jehovah, and He is Jehovah becoming His people's salvation. Moreover, the way of Jesus is a highway for our God, further indicating that Jesus is our God.

In Isaiah 40 the word of comfort spoken to the heart of Jerusalem is actually the announcing of the gospel (cf. 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19). The first thing announced is the coming of John the Baptist. His ministry prepared for the way of Jesus by touching the condition of man's heart. This is described in Isaiah 40:4, which says, "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." John's appearing was immediately followed by the appearing of Christ, described in verse 5: "Then the glory of Jehovah will be revealed, / And all flesh will see it together, / Because the mouth of Jehovah has spoken." The glory of Jehovah is the center of the gospel for the new creation. Second Corinthians 4:4-6 reveals that when men hear the gospel, they are illuminated with the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, and God further shines in their hearts

to illuminate the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Thus, the revealing of the glory of Jehovah is the revealing of Christ, who is the effulgence of God's glory (Heb. 1:3). This effulgence is like the shining of the sun (Luke 1:78-79). When Christ appeared, the glory of Jehovah was revealed and was seen by those who were seeking God and who believed in Christ (like those in Matthew 17:1-2, 5; John 1:14; Luke 2:25-32; and 2 Peter 1:16-18). To those on whom Christ has shined, Christ is the glory of God and the hope of glory within (Col. 1:27).

**I**saiah 40:9 tells us of the glad tidings that need to be proclaimed loudly from the heights: "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 is the revealing of the Lord Jehovah, the appearing of the very God as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior, in His becoming a man through incarnation (Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14). Such a word—Behold your God!—is the glad tidings.

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### The Source, Qualification, and Commission of Christ, the Servant of Jehovah

Isaiah 42:1 begins, "Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, / My chosen One in whom My soul delights." Isaiah 42 and 49, which both reveal that Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, is the covenant for God's chosen people Israel and a light for the Gentile nations (42:6; 49:8, 6), commend the Servant of Jehovah by His source, His qualification, and His commission.

Verse 1 of chapter 42 continues, "I have put My Spirit upon Him, / And He will bring forth justice to the nations." In Matthew 3:16 God put His Spirit upon Jesus. Jehovah's Spirit is Jehovah Himself. Hence, His putting His Spirit upon Jesus means that He gave Himself to Jesus, and that Jehovah and Jesus, His Servant, are one. In this we see that the source of Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is His divinity, His deity.

Whereas Christ's source is His divinity, His qualification is in His humanity. Isaiah 42:2-3 says, "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." The Gospel of Matthew quotes verses 1 through 3 in the context of the Pharisees' rejection of the

Lord Jesus (12:15-21). In His ministry the Lord did not strive with others, and He did not promote Himself. He did not seek to make Himself known to people in the streets. Because of the Jews' rejection, the Servant of Jehovah would turn to the Gentiles (vv. 15, 18). These verses reveal the kindness in the Lord's humanity. The bruised reed and the burning flax both refer to the Lord's people, as a footnote on Matthew 12:20 in the Recovery Version explains:

The Jews were accustomed to making flutes of reeds. When a reed was bruised, they broke it. Also, they made torches out of flax, which can burn oil. When the oil ran out, the flax smoked and they quenched it. Some of the Lord's people are like a bruised reed, which cannot give a musical sound; others are like smoking flax, which cannot produce a shining light. Yet the Lord will not break the bruised ones or quench the smoking ones. (Note 1)

**T**he commission of the Servant of Jehovah is manifold: He is to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring Jacob back to Jehovah so that Israel would be gathered to Him (Isa. 49:5-6). He is to be a covenant of the people, that

is, of Israel (42:6; 49:8). He is to restore the land (v. 8). He is to be a light for the nations (42:6; 49:6), and He is to bring forth justice for salvation in truth to the nations (42:1, 3; 49:6). He is to open the eyes of the blind so that they may see the divine and spiritual things concerning God's eternal economy (42:7; Luke 4:18; Acts 26:18). Finally, He is to bring the prisoner out from the prison, those who dwell in darkness out from the prison house, so that they may be released from the dark kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Isa. 42:7; Col. 1:12-13). His raising us up, His being a covenant for our eternal security, His giving Himself to us as our portion for our inheritance, His shining for the imparting of His divine life, His accomplishing righteousness for our salvation in truth, His opening the eyes of our understanding for receiving the revelation of His economy, and His releasing us from bondage under Satan's power into the kingdom of His Son are all aspects of His excellent commission.

### Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, as the Covenant for the People and the Light for the Nations

Isaiah 42:6 says, "I am Jehovah; I have called You in righteousness; / I have held You by the hand; / I have kept You and I have given You / As a covenant for the people, as a light for the nations." As a covenant for the people and a light for the nations, the Servant of Jehovah, Christ,

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serves God by becoming the full salvation of God that extends to the ends of the earth: "I will also set You as a light of the nations / That You may be My salvation unto the ends of the earth" (49:6).

**T**he two terms *covenant* and *light* unveil the riches of God's complete salvation for humankind, as fully revealed in the New Testament. A covenant is a legal agreement between God and His people. God gave the law as such a covenant, but in Jeremiah 31:31-34 He said that He would establish a new covenant with His people because His people could not fulfill the old covenant. Contained in this new covenant are the promises that God made to His people. In the new covenant, God promises to impart His law into His people's inward parts and write it upon their hearts; that He would be their God, and they His people; that all would know Him inwardly, not by being taught outwardly but by the spontaneous, automatic function of the law of life within them; and that He would forgive their iniquity and not remember their sin anymore.

A covenant's promises are binding on the maker of the covenant; they must be fulfilled so that the covenanting will not be shown to be unrighteous. Since God's righteousness is at stake in the new covenant, and righteousness is the foundation of His throne (Psa. 89:14), His covenant is immensely powerful and secure. God's promises are guaranteed by God's faithfulness, which is great, but they are even more secure for His people because these promises have become a covenant that is guaranteed by His righteousness. Christ as the Servant of Jehovah died to shed His blood in order that through His redeeming death, according to God's righteousness, He might enact the new covenant. His blood is now the blood of the covenant guaranteeing that God must fulfill its promises for us according to His righteousness. Not only so, but His death accomplished all the promises contained in the covenant. Hence, the covenant has become a testament, a will, in which all the promises have been accomplished and are now bequests to us. When God sees the blood, He is bound by His righteousness to fulfill His covenant with all its promises.

Furthermore, Christ rose from the dead and has ascended to the right hand of God, where, as the living and perpetual High Priest, He is the surety of a better covenant (Heb. 7:22). Moreover, in His resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit to be the reality of all the bequests of the new testament, and He is also the Mediator, the Executor, to carry out the new testament according to God's righteousness (8:6; 9:15; 12:24). By His ministry He executes all the bequests of the new testament, of which He Himself is the reality, into us for our enjoyment. Christ, who is the embodiment of God with all His riches, has been consummated through His incarnation,

death, and resurrection to be the all-inclusive, life-giving, indwelling, and consummated Spirit, who has entered into our spirit and has become one spirit with us (Col. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17). Now as a covenant, Christ is the surety, and the Spirit is the pledge, to guarantee that God embodied in Christ is the inheritance to His people (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:17; Acts 26:18). Thus Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, is the new covenant as the new testament.

Christ has been called by Jehovah to be the light of the nations (Matt. 4:12-16). In the revelation of the New Testament, the purpose of Christ being the light is not only for the sake of enlightenment, the dispelling of darkness, great though the need of this is. According to John 1:4, in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. Christ is the light of life that not only shines over the world and enlightens every man (v. 9) but also enlivens man for regeneration in order that man may be born anew of the divine life (vv. 12-13). As the marvelous, divine light, He opens the eyes of the blind and delivers God's chosen people out of the darkness of death, that is, out of Satan's dominion, into God's kingdom of life and light (Isa. 42:7; Luke 4:18; John 9:14; 1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12-13).

**T**he covenant for the people and the light for the nations are for God's complete salvation for His people. God's full salvation is based upon His righteousness and consummated in His life (Rom. 5:17, 21). Through God's justification based upon His righteousness, we are qualified to receive God's life so that we may experience all the stages of God's organic salvation, beginning with regeneration, continuing through sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, building up, and consummating in glorification (1:16-17; 5:18; Titus 3:7). Christ as the covenant and as the light for life is the composition of God's full salvation. In His death Christ as the covenant satisfied God's righteousness for our justification; this is the base of God's salvation. In His resurrection He as the light imparts life; this is the consummation of God's salvation. The ultimate consummation of God's salvation will be the New Jerusalem. This consummate sign of God's work throughout all ages is a matter of God's life, as seen in the throne of God and of the Lamb, from which flows a river of water of life with the tree of life on either side (Rev. 22:1-2). However, the city of life is built on the foundation of righteousness, which is seen in the layers of precious stones as the foundations of the city's wall (21:14, 19-20). The colors of these foundations have the appearance of a rainbow, signifying God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant (Gen. 9:8-17).

God has given Christ as the covenant to us to be the base of His complete salvation, according to God's righteousness. God has given Christ as the light to the nations so

that He might be God's salvation to all the world (Matt. 4:16; Luke 2:30-32). This light is God's light of life (John 8:12), which is the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16), the incorruptible life (2 Tim. 1:10), the eternal life, the life that is really life (1 Tim. 6:12, 19) and that becomes God's salvation to us in His righteousness (Rom. 5:10, 17). This life gives us the authority to be God's children, the heirs of God in His life, with the right to inherit God with all His riches as our eternal inheritance (John 1:12; Rom. 8:17; Acts 26:18). Such a life of light grows in us continually, issuing in the church life today, in which we walk as children of light and grow up into Christ the Head in all things for the Body, which issues in the New Jerusalem in eternity (Eph. 5:8; Rev. 21—22).

### Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, Typified

In Isaiah 41 through 66, Jehovah calls three different parties to be His servant: Cyrus king of Persia, Israel His people, and Isaiah the prophet (41:2, 8; 49:1-6). The following three passages in Isaiah serve as examples:

Concerning Cyrus, verses 1 through 4 of chapter 45 say,

Thus says Jehovah to His anointed, / To Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, / To subdue the nations before him; / And I will loosen the loins of kings; / To open before him double doors / So that the gates will not be shut: / I will go before you / And make level the rough places; / I will shatter the doors of bronze / And cut through the bars of iron, / And give to you the treasures of darkness / And the hidden riches of secret places, / That you may know that I am Jehovah, who calls you by your name, / The God of Israel. / For the sake of My servant, Jacob, / And Israel, My chosen one, / I have also called you by your name; / I have surnamed you, although you do not know Me.

Concerning Israel, verses 1 through 4 of chapter 44 say,

Now hear, O Jacob, My servant, / And Israel, whom I have chosen. / Thus says Jehovah your Maker / And the One who formed you from the womb, who will help you, / Do not fear, O Jacob, My servant, / And Jeshurun whom I have chosen, / For I will pour water upon the thirsty land, / And streams upon the dry ground; / I will pour out My Spirit upon your seed, / And My blessing upon your offspring. / They will spring up among the grass, / Like poplars beside the flowing streams of water.

Concerning the prophet Isaiah, verses 4 through 9 of chapter 50 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. / I gave my back to those who strike me / And my cheeks to those who pluck out the hair; / I did not hide my face / From humiliation and spitting. / The Lord Jehovah helps me; / Therefore I have not been dishonored; / Therefore I have set my face like a flint, / And I know that I will not be put to shame. / The One who justifies me is near; who will contend with me? / Let us stand up together! / Who is my adversary in judgment? / Let him come near to me. / Indeed, the Lord Jehovah helps me, / Who is the one who condemns me? / Indeed, they will all wear out like a garment; / The moth will consume them.

It seems strange that God chose a king who was from the east; Israel, who at that time was in a very low condition; and the prophet Isaiah all to typify His

Servant. However, the hidden purpose in the prophecy of Isaiah is to reveal God's economy, which is to have a people so that Christ as the embodiment of God can be fully expressed. By chapter 40 in the prophecy of Isaiah, Christ is expressed as God's centrality and universality to such an extent that these three parties—Cyrus the Gentile king, the pitiful Israel, and Isaiah—became one with Christ so that God could have His corporate expression. Everyone who is one with Christ, including the New Testament believers, is a type of Christ, who is the Servant of God, and such persons are also servants of God because they are a part of Christ. All other persons have been put aside by God, including King Hezekiah (chs. 36—39), and have thus been terminated. Those who are one with Christ become a great corporate Christ, who is the same as the individual Christ in being the testimony and servant of God (1 Cor. 12:12; Col. 3:10-11).

Cyrus, Israel, and Isaiah all acted in accord with God's heart: they served to release God's people, to build up God's house, and to build up God's kingdom, signified by the city of Jerusalem. Hence, they all typify Christ as God's Servant (Luke 4:18; Matt. 16:18-19). All who are in Christ and who are one with Christ to release God's people and to build up His house and His kingdom are servants of God.

IN HIS RESURRECTION CHRIST BECAME  
THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT TO BE THE REALITY  
OF ALL THE BEQUESTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,  
AND HE IS ALSO THE MEDIATOR, THE EXECUTOR,  
TO CARRY OUT THE NEW TESTAMENT  
ACCORDING TO GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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## The Prosperity of Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, in God's Good Pleasure

Isaiah 52:13 to the end of chapter 53 reveals the prosperity of the Servant of Jehovah in accomplishing God's good pleasure. This is a unique portion not only in the book of Isaiah but in the entire Old Testament in that it bears the character and flavor of the New Testament. Here, as the Servant of Jehovah, Christ is revealed not in the Old Testament economy but in the New Testament economy, that is, as God who became a man, who died and resurrected, and who became the life-giving Spirit to enter into His elect and dwell in them as the indwelling Spirit. Although the prophets preached this gospel according to the New Testament economy, no one believed their report (53:1). Until today, the household of Israel has not believed. On the day of Christ's second coming, all Israel will repent (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7). At that time they will confess the contents of Isaiah 53, and this chapter will be full of taste to them.

Verse 13 of chapter 52 says, "Indeed, My Servant will act wisely and will prosper; / He will be exalted and lifted up and very high." From the first day that He came out to minister on this earth, the Lord Jesus acted wisely and prospered in God's good pleasure (Matt. 11:19); indeed, "the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53:10). God's good pleasure was first that the Son would go to the cross and die for God's chosen people (Matt. 26:39; Heb. 10:5-10) and then that He would rise from the dead to regenerate God's chosen and redeemed people to be God's sons (1 Pet. 1:3; John 20:17). This is the wisdom by which Christ as the Servant of Jehovah acted wisely, and it is revealed in detail in the report that follows in Isaiah 53. Furthermore, since His ascension Jesus has been acting prudently and wisely on the earth, and He has prospered in whatever He has done.

Chapter 53 contains the prophets' report and Jehovah's revelation concerning Christ. Verses 1 through 3 reveal that He was God ("the arm of Jehovah") incarnated to be our Savior, who lived a lowly and sorrowful human life that fully qualified Him to be the Redeemer and the Savior to save fallen men from Satan, sin, death, and self:

Who has believed our report? / And to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed? / For He grew up like a tender plant before Him, / And like a root out of dry ground. / He has no attracting form nor majesty that we should look upon Him, / Nor beautiful appearance that we should desire Him. / He was despised and forsaken of men, / A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; / And like one from whom men hide their faces, / He was despised; and we did not esteem Him.

In this report of the prophets and the revelation of Jehovah, Christ is further revealed in verses 4 through 10 as the crucified Redeemer, who sacrificed Himself for our trespasses (our sin) to accomplish Jehovah's eternal redemption so that the believers in Christ may be redeemed, that is, forgiven of sins, justified, and reconciled to God (Heb. 9:12; Acts 10:43; 13:39; Rom. 5:10):

Surely He has borne our sicknesses, / And carried our sorrows; / Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, / Smitten of God and afflicted. / But 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. / He was oppressed, and it was He who was afflicted, / Yet He did not open His mouth; / Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter / And like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers, / So He did not open His mouth. / By oppression and by judgment He was taken away; / And as for His generation, who among them had the thought / That He was cut off out of the land of the living / For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? / And they assigned His grave with the wicked, / But with a rich man in His death, / Although He had done no violence, / Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. / But Jehovah was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief. / When He makes Himself an offering for sin.

In the latter part of verse 10 through verse 11, the prophets' report and the revelation of Jehovah reveal Christ in resurrection:

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.

The seed here is a corporate seed, the church as the Body of Christ. All the believers are many grains, which have been produced by the death of Christ as the one grain and by His reproductive resurrection (John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3). Together, the believers comprise the church as the Body of Christ. 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. Furthermore, today Christ is extending His days by living in His believers, who as His Body are His extension (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:22-23).

The fruit of the travail of Christ's soul implies all the

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items produced in His resurrection, including the life-giving Spirit, the Firstborn from the dead, the firstborn Son of God, all the believers regenerated in His resurrection, the corporate Christ as the many grains, a corporate seed, and all the members of the new man (1 Cor. 15:45; Col. 1:18; Acts 13:33; 1 Pet. 1:3; John 12:24; Gal. 3:29; Col. 3:10-11). Christ will also make the many righteous not merely objectively, by justifying us through His death, but also subjectively, by living in us as the resurrection life and by our living Him (Rom. 5:18-19; Phil. 3:9).

**F**inally, the prophets' report and the revelation of Jehovah in the first part of Isaiah 53:12 reveals Christ in His ascension: "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* here refer to God. In Christ's ascension God divided to Christ a portion with God as the great One, and Christ divided the spoil with God as the strong One. *Spoil* indicates that a war was fought. On the cross and in His resurrection Christ fought the battle, gained the victory, and took the spoil from Satan (Eph. 4:8). As the ascended Victor, Christ shared the spoil of His victory with God, the Great and the Strong (Psa. 68:18). Then Christ gave the spoil to the church as gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:8, 11-12). This is for the accomplishing of the pleasure of Jehovah, which will prosper in Christ's hand according to God's desire and plan (Isa. 53:10).

### **Christ, the Servant of Jehovah, Being an Eternal Covenant to Israel, the Sure Mercies Shown to David**

In the book of Isaiah, God always considers that He is our salvation as living water (cf. 12:2-3). The record concerning Christ's redemption in chapter 53 is followed in chapter 55 by the invitation to come to the waters and drink, and the call is like that at the end of the Bible (Rev. 22:17). Isaiah 55:1-2 says,

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, / And you who have no money; / Come, buy and eat; / Yes, come, buy wine and milk / Without money and without price. / Why do you spend money for what is not bread, / And the result of your labor for what does not satisfy? / Hear Me attentively, and eat what is good, / And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

The waters here, like those in Revelation 22:17, are the redeeming God, the very God who accomplished redemption for us through His incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection.

These waters are both the eternal covenant and the sure mercies shown to David revealed in Isaiah 53:3: "Incline your ear and come to Me; / Hear, so that your soul may live; / And I will make an eternal covenant with you, /

Even the sure mercies shown to David." As the eternal covenant to Israel, the sure mercies shown to David, Christ is the center of the divine provisions to Israel. In Acts 13:34 Paul interprets the sure mercies as "the holy things of David, the faithful things," and in verse 35 he indicates that these things are Christ Himself in resurrection. Paul's interpretation is confirmed by verse 4 of Isaiah 55: "Indeed, I have given Him as a Witness to the peoples, / A Leader and a Commander to the peoples." 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, who embodies God's grace, became the sure mercies. Through these mercies we are now in a proper position that can match God and receive Him as grace (Eph. 2:4). 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 to us.

**T**he resurrected Christ as the sure mercies shown by God has become the base of His justification to His believers (Acts 13:34-39; Rom. 4:25). Based on such a justification in the resurrection of Christ, the believers can be sanctified by enjoying Christ, the Son of David, as God's sure mercies, that is, as the Holy One who did not see corruption (Matt. 1:1; Acts 13:35). In this chapter of Isaiah we also see the way to enjoy Christ, the Son of David, as God's sure mercies. We need to come to Him as the living water and drink of Him. And how shall we drink of the Lord? The way is to call upon Him: "Seek Jehovah while He may be found; / Call upon Him while He is near" (v. 6).

In the latter section of Isaiah, Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is revealed in the announcing of the gospel; in the commendation of the Servant by His source, qualification, and commission; in being the covenant for God's people and the light for the nations; in being typified by King Cyrus, God's people Israel, and Isaiah the prophet; in His prosperity in God's good pleasure; and in being God's covenant to Israel for their eternal security, the sure mercies of David. What a rich, marvelous, and all-inclusive revelation of Christ!

*by Jim Batten*

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup>The commentary on the verses quoted in this article draws extensively on the footnotes in the Recovery Version.

### **Works Cited**

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