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Restoration Images



Isaiah: A Topical Look At Isaiah - Steve Gregg

In "Restoration Images," Steve Gregg explores the various ways in which the concept of God's restoration of the destroyed is portrayed through imagery in the Book of Isaiah. He notes the use of language to suggest a fixed entity or person being restored, such as in the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. The speaker also delves into the spiritual implications of restoration, citing references to a strong city with spiritual walls and a new Jerusalem inhabited by believers. Gregg concludes by discussing the restoration of the sick person or sinner through God's healing and sacrifice.

Transcript

In the Book of Isaiah, there's a number of ways in which the concept of God restoring that which is destroyed is portrayed to us in imagery, various kinds of imagery. Now, we have seen passages in our earlier lectures that have spoken of the destruction of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Old Testament order, the Old Testament system. And we've seen that most of those passages go beyond that to talk about a new system, a new order, a new Jerusalem, and so forth.

This can be seen either in terms of replacement or in terms of restoration. When we talked about the remnant in our last session, I pointed out that both ways of viewing it are correct in their own way. There's a sense in which the Church in the New Covenant has replaced the old.

There's a sense in which the Church in the New Covenant is a restoration or a fulfillment after the destruction of the old form. There's a new form of the same thing. The remnant has continuity.

The remnant of the faithful in the Old Testament are simply those that spilled into the New Covenant age as the Church. And you can see it as a replacement, but also you can see it as a continuum there, that God from the very beginning has always had his people. And as he has defined them, they have always been those who wait upon him, those who tremble at his word, those who are of faith.

And so, in a sense, there's a continuation. Now, we've seen that, at least I've commented

in some of the passages we've talked about, that a new Jerusalem replaces the old Jerusalem, a new Israel, the old Israel, a new covenant, the old covenant, and so forth. There are passages in Isaiah where this transition is described not so much in replacement as in restoration.

There's prophecies of destruction and desolation. And then we read of God restoring. And this is where those of a more dispensational inclination would see something of the restoration of the nation of Israel, because what is destroyed prior to restoration is apparently Jerusalem and Israel.

And then the language talks about rebuilding. The language talks about restoration, fixing it, undoing the damage. And so forth.

And that language itself may suggest that the very same persons, the very same entity that was destroyed is now fixed and restored. But I believe that we will find the imagery speaks of restoration somewhat figuratively. It's not so much that the same Jerusalem that is destroyed is later fixed and it's the same old Jerusalem that's now been rebuilt, but rather the purposes of God that have appeared to have experienced destruction and an end by the fall of the old system.

Those purposes are resurrected, as it were, in a new form, in a new order, a new Jerusalem. And the language is of restoration. Now, one of the ways in which this is portrayed in Isaiah repeatedly is with reference to the city and in particularly city walls.

Now, in biblical times, most cities were walled cities. One of the main features of ordinary cities in biblical times was their defense was walls. They had walls around them.

Walled cities were normative. There were villages that were unwalled, but they were constantly invaded. The cities that had tenacity that endured through many invasions were those that had big, strong walls.

And the idea of the walls of a city being broken down was simply an emblem of the city being destroyed, being overrun. Walls didn't usually break down by themselves. Of course, something like an earthquake, a natural disaster could destroy the wall, but usually the breaking down of walls was done by invading armies who would pummel the walls with catapults or with battering rams or something.

And therefore, to speak of the destruction of a city sometimes is spoken of as the breaking down of its walls. Likewise, the restoration of a city or the restoration of that which was ruins is described in terms of the rebuilding of walls. Now, we know that this happened literally.

In 586 BC, the city of Jerusalem was broken down. Its walls were broken down and broken through by the Babylonians. In later years, when Nehemiah brought back the third wave of returning exiles, his principal concern was to rebuild the walls of the city.

Zerubbabel had already brought back some core population from Babylon back to Jerusalem, so it became a city. Ezra had come back and restored much of the religious practice. Under Zerubbabel, actually, the temple had been rebuilt.

But in Nehemiah's day, the walls had not been restored. Or if they had been restored, they had been broken down again. There are different theories about that.

Nehemiah receives in Persia a messenger from Jerusalem who says the walls of the city are burned down and broken down and so forth. Some believe they had been rebuilt and had been broken down by the Samaritans and the people who opposed them. Others feel like they simply had never been rebuilt.

But under Nehemiah, the walls of the city were rebuilt and the city's fortress character was restored. And that, of course, happened literally, physically, historically. And Isaiah does talk about the Babylonian captivity.

He also does talk about the restoration from Babylon. In fact, he indicates that Cyrus, who was the one who released the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, would, in a sense, allow their walls and their temple to be rebuilt. And so there are times when Isaiah, no doubt, is speaking about the physical restoration of the city of Jerusalem after the captivity.

But as I have suggested earlier, even those passages are not necessarily exhausted. The meaning is not exhausted by recognition of the physical fulfillment. This is often a type of something spiritual.

And there are definitely places in Isaiah which talk about the breaking down of walls and the restoration, rebuilding of walls, which are not talking about the physical walls of the physical city. As we pointed out before, there is a city referred to in Isaiah that has walls called salvation. We read that in Isaiah 26, verse 1, where it says, God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.

So, a city whose walls are salvation is a spiritual city with spiritual walls, obviously. In Isaiah chapter 60, we find another reference to that city. The verse I just mentioned was 26.1, but in chapter 60, verse 18, it says, And your gates, praise.

Now, a city whose gates are praise and whose wall is salvation is spiritual. And so we will find that there are, throughout Isaiah, references to the restoration of broken down walls. Sometimes referring to the actual restoration of the city of Jerusalem, depending on context.

Sometimes in context that I was talking about the New Testament era and the Messianic kingdom, and simply portraying the idea that the destruction of the old Jerusalem is, in a sense, replaced by a restored, newly built spiritual Jerusalem. And the imagery is of walls being built. First of all, I'd like to show you some of the passages in Isaiah that predict

the destruction of the city walls.

In Isaiah chapter 5, verses 5 and 6. This is in that parable of the vineyard that we've seen a number of times. We've read these verses, but I've not previously called attention to this particular feature. Isaiah 5, verses 5 and 6 says, Now please let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard.

He tells us in chapter 7 that his vineyard is the house of Israel and the men of Judah. I'll tell you what I'll do to my vineyard. I'll take away its hedge and it shall be burned and break down its wall and it shall be trampled down.

I will lay it waste. It shall not be pruned nor dug, etc., etc. Now, we've looked at this under some of the other imagery that we've studied, but notice that one of the things he said he would do to Jerusalem, or to Judah, to his vineyard, was break down its walls.

It was part of the destruction of the city, that its walls were destroyed. In chapter 6, when Isaiah is commissioned to prophesy against his people, he says, How long am I going to be prophesying doom and gloom to these people? It says in verse 11, Then I said, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitants, the houses are without a man, and the land is utterly desolate. Now, the cities laid waste and the land is desolate is a picture of the destruction of the cities and the city walls and so forth of the land.

Now, the fulfillment of this particular prophecy, at least its initial fulfillment, is the Assyrian invasion of the cities of Judah, which, as we pointed out before, after Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and its capital, Samaria. Some years later, about 20 years later, they came against Judah. And they pretty much wiped out the land of Judah as well, including all of its cities except Jerusalem.

Some of those cities were walled cities. And so this destruction of the cities would be a reference to Isaiah's ministry. He's going to keep preaching gloom until the fulfillment of his predictions, which would be in the wasting of Judah by the Assyrians.

But as we have mentioned before, these destructions are prototypes and figures and foreshadowings of an ultimate judgment on Jerusalem, which God knew would eventually happen. And we can see, for example, from verse 13 here, there's a reference to the remnant, the holy seed. And we talked before about how that is taken up in the New Testament as a picture of those Jews who were saved out of the old system into the new.

In chapter 22 of Isaiah, this is in that section of Isaiah, which we call the burdens against the nations, chapters 13 through 23, most of the chapters being against non-Jewish nations, Gentile nations. Yet one chapter is about Jerusalem, and that is chapter 22. And in verse 5, it says, Isaiah 22, 5, Now, the valley of vision is a reference to Jerusalem, and it's quite clear that this is so from the context of the prophecy.

And it indicates that the walls will be broken down. This could be a reference, possibly, to the Babylonian. But it's early in Isaiah for that.

Isaiah hasn't really much talked about the Babylonian captivity at this early stage in his book. He mostly does that after chapter 39. But it's possible it's referring to that.

It's also possible that it's looking further ahead than that to the walls being destroyed by the Romans or simply, figuratively, to the destruction of the old system altogether with the emblem of the system going down is that all the walls of Jerusalem are broken down. Jesus said not one stone will be left standing on another as a mark of God's judgment upon it. In the same chapter, verses 8 through 10, Isaiah 22, 8 through 10, he removed the protection of Judah, just as he said he would in chapter 5. I'm going to take down the hedge from my vineyard.

I'm going to let it be trampled down. So here it is in other language. He removed the protection of Judah.

You looked in that day to the armor of the house of the forest, which was a fortress David had built. You also saw the damage to the city of David, that it was great. And you gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

You numbered the houses of Jerusalem and the houses you broke down to fortify the wall. Talking about an invasion that is so destructive of the walls that people actually break down their own houses to get materials to rebuild the wall in desperate attempt to keep the invaders from coming in. They actually dismantle their own homes inside the city in order to use the materials to try to patch up the wall as the invaders are breaking through.

In chapter 24, which we've looked at many times, verse 12, it says, In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction. So here we've seen a number of places in Isaiah that talk about the gate or the wall or the city being destroyed, desolated, brought down. But there are also passages that speak of a new city with new walls.

One of those passages is one we looked at first in this lecture. I mentioned it in passing, Isaiah 26, verse 1, where it says that in that day the song will be sung in the land of Judah. We have a strong city.

God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. And in the context, this is after the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, because it says in chapter 25, verse 2, You have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more. It will never be rebuilt.

Now, the city that has come down is never going to be restored. But there is a city that has replaced it, and that is the one that has salvation for walls. In chapter 49 of Isaiah, verses 16 and 17, it says, See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands.

Your walls are continually before me. Your sons shall make haste. Your destroyers and those who laid you waste shall go away from you.

Now, it sounds like he is talking to the city of Jerusalem, the natural city. Those who laid it waste will someday be called off. He is going to call off his dogs and give Jerusalem a reprieve.

And their walls will be continually before him. However, I believe that in the context of the whole book of Isaiah, we are to understand that when God is finished with natural Jerusalem, it will never be rebuilt. But the walls that will be continually before him are the spiritual walls.

Now, if this sounds like an unnatural way to take the words, I would remind you that there are many things that the Old Testament says are continual, that are perpetual, that are forever, including, for example, the ordinance of circumcision, which God told Abraham in Genesis 17 would be observed by God's people throughout all generations forever. Solomon's temple, when he dedicated it, God told him, I will live in this house forever. God told the Levites that they would be priests forever.

The Sabbath was an ordinance to be kept forever throughout all generations. The land of Israel was to belong to the Jews forever. Many of these things, which do not exist anymore, or which the New Testament indicates are passé and no longer true in the sense they used to be in the Old Testament, were said originally to be forever.

And they are, but not in their original form. The natural temple, the natural Levites, the natural circumcision, the natural Sabbath, the natural land, all those things are passé now. The New Testament does not affirm any of them to be continuous, but all of them have a spiritual counterpart, and do continue in principle, but in a spiritual mode different from that before.

There is a spiritual circumcision, there is a spiritual temple, there is a spiritual priesthood, there is a spiritual Sabbath, there is a spiritual land, promised land. These things all are in fact eternal, but not in their original mode. Likewise, when God says to Jerusalem, your walls are continually before me, that does not mean that the natural walls of Jerusalem must forever be protected by God.

But when the natural walls go down, they are replaced in God's economy with the spiritual city and its spiritual walls of salvation, which are permanent and eternal. That's how, at least I understand this passage. And in verse 19, the same chapter, Isaiah 49, 19, your waste and desolate places and the land of your destruction will even now be too small for the inhabitants and those who swallowed you up will be far away.

We've dealt with this verse and the context following before, and I mentioned that I understand this to be in the new covenant, the new Jerusalem will be inhabited by

foreigners. That is, the church will be made up of Gentiles as well as Jews, so that the land, the original land of the original Israel will be too small to accommodate all those of the spiritual Israel that God will bring in. And this land is a land of destruction, but he's going to restore the population, but only in spiritual terms, with Gentiles and spiritual Israelites coming in.

In chapter 56 and verse 5, it says, this is after it talks about the son of the foreigner and the eunuch who, under the old covenant, would be excluded from God's temple. This is a prophecy about the new covenant, where those who were excluded under the old covenant will not be excluded in the new. He says, even to them, in verse 5, I will give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than the sons and daughters.

I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. Now, those who keep covenant with God in the new covenant receive a place in his house and in his walls. Now, that expression, in my house and in my walls, if we didn't know better, could simply mean living inside the house, surrounded by the walls.

If I said, I will invite you into my house, I'll give you a place in my house and in my walls, you would think I meant inside the house. But in the New Testament we read that it's actually stones in the wall. Within his walls, not enclosed by his walls, so much as in the wall, components from which the wall is built.

We see this, for example, in 1 Peter 2, where this is made plainer than in some other passages. 1 Peter 2, verse 5. 1 Peter 2, verse 5 says, You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Now, he says, we are like living stones being built together into a spiritual house.

In Ephesians chapter 2, verses 20 through 22. Ephesians 2, verses 20 to the end of the chapter, which is 22. It says of us Christians that we have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Now, Peter and Paul both have this idea that we are being built together, like stones in a wall into a house, a habitation of God. We are like living stones being built up into a spiritual house. Now, spiritually speaking, God has definitely given all those who keep covenant with him a place in his house, a place in his wall.

But not in the sense of living inside the house, but God is the one who lives inside the house. We are the house. We are the wall, in a sense.

We are the stones from which the wall is constructed. Yes, twelve foundations. Yeah, in Revelation 21 it mentions the city's twelve foundations have the names of the twelve

apostles of the Lamb.

And I take that as a cross-reference to what we just saw in Ephesians. Yeah, the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. That is, I think, a valid cross-referencing there.

So God says in Isaiah 56, 5, to those who come to him through the new covenant, that he'll give them within his house and within his walls a place and a name. So there is a building. A building of walls.

These walls, however, are being built up out of spiritual stones, and therefore are spiritual walls, living stones. It's a figure, of course. We're not literally being built physically on top of each other, but the idea is that the walls and the house of God, in his ultimate purposes, is not a house made with hands out of real stones, but a habitation of God, a city of God built out of people, made up of his people.

In chapter 58 of Isaiah, Isaiah 58, verse 12, describing the effects if people would turn from their iniquity and their oppression rather than just fasting from food. That chapter 58 of Isaiah is about God's fast, the fast that he chooses as opposed to the one they chose. He said if they meet the conditions of what he really is looking for, he says in verse 12, those from among you shall build the old waste places, and you shall raise up the foundations of many generations, and you shall be called the repairer of the breach, meaning the breach in the wall, the wall that's been broken through, you'll repair that wall, and the restorer of streets to dwell in, or paths to dwell in, the King James says.

The building of a street or a highway has been already looked at by us in Isaiah, frequently mentioned. The repair of the breach in the wall or wall builders is another thing here. Raising up the foundations of many generations and the old waste places, this imagery of restoring the waste city and building again its streets and its walls is, I think, to be understood spiritually.

Paul said that he and Apollos and others in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 were like builders on God's building. In 1 Corinthians chapter 3, he says in verse 9, for we are God's fellow workers, in the context we means Apollos and I. In the earlier verses he's talking about the relative ministries of himself and Apollos. He said he planted seed, Apollos watered it, and God gave the increase.

He says, for we are God's fellow workers, you, the church, are God's field. That's where Paul planted and Apollos watered, in God's field. And you are God's building.

Now, the idea of the church being God's field and God's building are two metaphors. Verse 9, there is a transition from his... What Paul's trying to do here is try to speak of the relative significance of his labor and Apollos' labor because the Corinthians were divided. Some were saying, I'm of Paul, and some were saying, I'm of Apollos.

And he was saying, listen, you're not of Paul, you're not of Apollos, you're of Christ, and Apollos and Paul are just co-workers on the same project, the same church, the same building, the same field. Seen as a field, I got there first and planted the seeds. I left and Apollos came afterwards, and his workers liked watering the seeds, and God's the one who grew the church.

Seen as a building, he says in verse 10, according to the grace of God which was given me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed of how he builds on it. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now, if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, or wood, hay, and straw, each one's work will become manifest, for the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test each one's work. Going down to verse 16, do you not know that you, collectively plural, are the temple, singular, of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? Now, the church is God's building, he says in verse 9, and not just a building, but a temple building. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

He sees himself and Apollos as builders. According to the grace of God given him, he's been like a wise master builder. He came in and laid the slab.

He laid the foundation. Another builder, Apollos, comes in and he builds on it. Just like in the imagery of a field, Paul planted the seeds, Apollos watered them, Paul laid the foundation of the building, Apollos and others come and build on it.

It's quite clear that the builders here are those who are ministering, those who are building the church, those who are laborers in God's field. This would be people like Paul, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, missionaries, people who are in public ministry, people who are winning souls and discipling them, those who are giving shape and structure to the spiritual temple. Now, we're all stones, we're all living stones, but there are some people who are builders, too.

And that is what Paul says he and Apollos and others were. And he's talking, of course, of the spiritual house. So, in Isaiah 58, it talks about you shall build the old ways places, you shall raise up the foundations of many generations, and you'll be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets, the dweller in the picture, as rebuilding a city or a house, a city in this case.

And I think in the imagery of the New Testament it suggests spiritually building up the church. In Isaiah chapter 60, a chapter which I take to be completely about the church, though it's in the imagery of the spiritual Jerusalem, it says in verse 10, Isaiah 60, verse 10, the sons of foreigners, that's Gentiles, shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you, for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. Now, here it talks about God striking Jerusalem but now having mercy on Jerusalem,

restoring.

But Jerusalem is restored in a different form than it was destroyed. It was destroyed as a physical city, restored as a spiritual city. Even if someone would point to the restoration of the physical city today in Israel, it is not the case that it is rebuilt by Gentiles.

It is the spiritual Jerusalem that is built up largely by Gentiles. Now, Paul and Apollos were Jews, and all the early foundation layers were Jews. But in our day and age, certainly among those in ministry, in the mission field, those doing evangelism, those pastoring the churches and making disciples, they are mainly not Jews.

I mean, there are Jews, but the vast majority are sons of foreigners. They are Gentiles. And this is talking about how the church, the spiritual city, will be built, surprisingly, not entirely by Jews, but by Gentiles as well.

In the same chapter, verse 18, says, we read this earlier, violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders, but you shall call your walls salvation and your gates praise. And the very next chapter, Isaiah 61, and verse 4. Now, by the way, I would hope by now, because of the many times we've looked at it, both Isaiah 60 and Isaiah 61 would be kind of familiar numbers. There should be some, you know, Isaiah 53, everyone knows what Isaiah 53 is.

There should be some other numbers becoming very familiar to you by now, like chapter 11. And chapter 61 is another one, because it opens with those verses, which Jesus read in the synagogue and said they were fulfilled in their hearing. He's obviously talking about the effects of His first coming, and that effect we know to be the church and the new covenant.

And right after it talks about the remnant, those who mourn in Zion in verse 3, being the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified, it changes the metaphor in verse 4, and says, and they shall rebuild the old ruins, and shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations. So, these kinds of passages, which as you can see, there's a number of them in Isaiah, talk about destruction, especially of city walls, and restoration, rebuilding the waste places, rebuilding the walls, repairing the breaches, restoring the streets, laying again the foundations, and a new city that has walls of salvation, a spiritual city made up of living stones, as the New Testament tells us. This idea is something you'll run across easily ten to a dozen times, as you read through the book of Isaiah.

It's a recurring theme. And the general idea, of course, is a picture of restoring something. Something is destroyed, and it's restored.

Jerusalem was destroyed as an earthly city, but it was restored as a spiritual entity. And that is what all these things, I think, are saying to us. Now, we will not look at some other

passages that we have already looked at.

That's why we won't look at them now. We've already looked at some other passages that convey the idea of restoration. That is those passages that talk about the vineyard being laid waste and turning into a place of briars and thorns and becoming a wilderness, because we saw that many passages in Isaiah threatened that Israel would become a wilderness, but also talk about a time when God would open streams in the wilderness and pools in the wilderness and rivers in the desert and blossoming and budding and becoming fruitful and becoming like a forest and so forth.

And we observed that more than once, actually, in those verses. We won't do it again. But that, too, is another way in which restoration is described.

The physical city is made a wasteland, but spiritually speaking, there's a restoration in the form of the spirit being poured out on the dry wilderness, on him that is thirsty, and spiritual fruitfulness being the result. One other way, or two, actually, there's a couple more ways, I think, in Isaiah, where the idea of restoration, destruction and restoration are seen. One is in terms of the old heaven and old earth being replaced by the new heaven and the new earth.

This is mostly seen in the latter part of Isaiah in the Book of Comfort. And there's a number of times when God speaks of creating a new heaven and new earth, although only a couple of times does He use that exact language. There are other places where the language is closed.

It begins with God saying in chapter 42 that He's going to do a new thing without specifying too much what it is. In Isaiah 42, verse 9 says, Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things, I declare, before they spring forth, I tell you of them. Now, it doesn't tell us what new things He has in mind here.

Not at this place it doesn't. But there may be a hint of it when you look back at the context and how that paragraph that ends with verse 9 begins with verse 5, which says, Thus says the Lord God, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it. Now, God goes on and tells other things He does too, but it begins by talking about how God created the heavens and the earth.

And at the very end of that paragraph He says, The former things have come to pass, now I'm telling you some new things that are going to spring forth. Now, He doesn't specifically say new heavens and new earth. Not here.

But later He does. What He does point out is He has in the past done such things as create the heavens and the earth, and He's got something new. Not very clearly specified in this early passage, but in the next chapter, chapter 43, there's another reference to the new thing that He's going to do.

But this doesn't describe so much a new heaven and new earth in any clear way. It says in verse 18, Do not remember the former things nor consider the things of old. Verse 18, 43, 18, in the next verse, Behold, I will do a new thing.

Now it shall spring forth. Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Now, here we go.

We've got the new thing that God's going to do in both places. Now, in the case of chapter 43, verse 18 and 19, we have looked at enough other passages in Isaiah to know that that highway in the desert and the rivers in the desert are both images He uses of the spiritual transformation that occurred with the coming of the new covenant. He's talking about the church age, the new covenant reality.

And He uses the imagery of a highway in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, both of which we've looked at many times before. Therefore, we know that the new thing that He refers to in verse 19 is the new covenant. And when He says in verse 18, Don't remember the former things, that would be the former covenant.

When God causes the new covenant realities to spring forth, the old are passe. They should not be brought to mind, not to be remembered. By the way, let me give you a cross-reference in Jeremiah for this.

In Jeremiah chapter 3, maybe start reading at verse 14 through 16. Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord. This is Jeremiah 3, 14, 15, and 16.

Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord, for I am married to you. I will take you one from a city and two from a family and bring you to Zion. This is about the spiritual Zion.

It's talking about taking them one by one rather than en masse. The remnant are selected. And I will give you shepherds according to my heart who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

This would be, first of all, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and the shepherds that He gives in the church, the teachers who will feed with knowledge and understanding, as they should, unlike the shepherds of Israel. Verse 16, Then it shall come to pass when you are multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, says the Lord, that they will say no more. The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, the principal emblem of the Old Covenant, was the Ark.

But that won't be so anymore. They will say no more, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore.

In other words, the Old Covenant, symbolized by the Ark, is no more. Why? Well, as Jeremiah makes clear later on in his book, because there's a new covenant. The new

covenant makes the old one old and obsolete and not to be remembered anymore.

So it's parallel to, I think, Isaiah 43, verses 18 and 19. Do not remember the former things. Don't consider the things of old.

I'm going to do a new thing. Which new thing is the new covenant? And the thing not to be remembered is the former covenant, the Old Covenant. So retaining the trappings of Judaism and of Old Covenantism is inappropriate once God has brought the new covenant in.

Now that being so, we've seen two verses where God talks about a new thing. The second one we looked at was just now in chapter 43, verse 19, clearly about the new covenant. That would suggest that the new thing in the previous chapter was probably also the new covenant.

In chapter 42, although I suggested that there may be a hint there of a new heavens and new earth, if there is, then the new heavens and new earth would be in a sense a figure of the new covenant. Because it says, I do new things. They shall spring forth.

Even before they spring forth, I tell you of them. Now, there's some hint here, I believe, that the new covenant and the new heavens and new earth are identified with each other. There's more to suggest this later on.

In chapter 48, Isaiah chapter 48, verses 6 and 7, it says, You have heard, see all this, and will you not declare it? I have made you hear new things from this time, even hidden things that you did not know them. They are created now and not from the beginning. And before this day you have not heard them lest you should say, of course I knew them.

Now, notice, he says new things. We've already read about new things in chapter 42 and 43. God's got new things up His sleeve.

He says in verse 7, They are created now and not from the beginning. Probably in the beginning, meaning back in Genesis 1, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. But these are a new creation.

These are created fresh. This new thing is like a whole new universe God is creating, in a sense. A new creation.

If you look at Isaiah 51, verse 16, He says, And I will put My words in your mouth. I have covered you with the shadow of My hand that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth and say to Zion, You are My people. Now, Zion is the people of God.

Zion is the church. But He says, I have basically put My words in your mouth and protected you so that I could accomplish something which He describes as laying the

foundations, plant the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth. Now, why would He have to look forward to that? He's already done that back in Genesis 1, 1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Now He's talking about laying the foundations of what? A new earth? The term new earth is not used here. But it is later. But the point being it would apparently be a new earth and a new heavens that are in view here.

But literal or figurative? Again, we have here the language of a new thing God wants to do. It doesn't say new thing, but it talks about Him intending to plant the heavens and establish a new earth. It's hinted at here very strongly.

We actually get the language of new heaven and new earth in chapter 65, verse 17. Isaiah 65, verse 17. He says, For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Now notice that linkage of thoughts again. Here's a new thing. The old is not to be remembered.

In previous passages, where He said, I'm doing a new thing, don't remember the old thing. He was talking about the old covenant and the new covenant. He likened it to a new thing that would be created new, not from the beginning.

He talked about planting a new heavens, new earth, though He hadn't used the word new in that passage we looked at last, but this one does. I create a new heavens, new earth, don't remember the old ones. The older passage.

Now, I would say, in looking at the development of this thought, the new thing, planting the heavens, laying the foundations of an earth, a new heaven, new earth, and in so many of those cases, specifically saying, don't remember the past, don't remember the old one. This new one replaces it. Most of those passages have clear indicators.

He's talking about the new covenant. A passage like this one, by itself doesn't give such a clear indication, but I think there may be a strong reason to believe that when you connect the thoughts, as you follow the thread of thought, as we are from the earliest to the later references, that the idea of a new heaven, new earth is simply development of those earlier pieces of the puzzle, and may be a reference to the new covenant replacing the old covenant. Now, in chapter 66, and verse 22, chapter 66, 22 says, for as the new heavens and the new earth which I make shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your descendants and your name remain.

Now, these two places, Isaiah 65, 17, and Isaiah 66, 22, are the only two places in the Old Testament that we find the expression new heavens and new earth. The entire teaching of the Old Testament on the new heaven and new earth, if we would restrict it to those places where those actual words are used, are limited to those two verses,

Isaiah 65, 17, and Isaiah 66, 22. Now, I say that because Peter talks about we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and new earth, which seems like he's probably looking back at these passages since he says according to his promise.

That's in 2 Peter 3, 13. 2 Peter 3, 13. Now, there is some basis for a bit of perplexity and confusion, perhaps, over the fulfillment of this new heavens and new earth.

Now, there is evidence that the new heaven and new earth is identified with the coming of the new covenant. It's like a whole new creation. And Paul himself says this in 2 Corinthians 5, 17.

2 Corinthians 5, 17. He says, If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away.

Behold, all things have become new. So that the Christian experience is the new creation. Furthermore, we have looked in the past at Revelation 21, the picture of the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem there.

I have tried to point out to you how many things in that description point in the direction of the church. I will not recount them now because of our time limitations, but I have tried to point out that the description of the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21 is a description of the church. It is adorned as a bride.

It is the Lamb's wife. Verses 9 and 10 tell us. This new Jerusalem is situated in the new heavens and the new earth according to verse 1. He says, And I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.

Also, there is no more sea than I, John, saw the holy sea, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, adorned to her husband. And verse 5 says, Then he who sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. Now, it doesn't say I make all new things, but I make all things new.

That wording is significant perhaps. If I make all new things, it might mean he literally scrapped everything old and he made all brand new things. But if he says, I make all things new, it may mean that he renews the things that were old.

There's a renewal, there's a restoration that takes place. Now, the language of Revelation 21.5 connects to my mind, interestingly, with that of Paul in the verse we quoted a moment ago, 2 Corinthians 5.17. Because here in Revelation he says, Behold, I make all things new. Paul said, All things have become new.

If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have been made new.

So, Paul does seem to spiritualize this new heavens and new earth, this new creation,

and apply it to the church. Now, in 2 Peter, where he speaks of the new heaven and new earth, there are those who believe that Peter wants to be spiritualized also. Of all the passages in the New Testament about such subject matter, and there aren't really very many, the one in 2 Peter is the hardest one for me to spiritualize.

In fact, it is mostly based on 2 Peter that I expect an actual physical new heavens and new earth when Jesus returns. But there are those who say that even 2 Peter doesn't give us grounds to look for that. Peter says in 2 Peter 3.10, But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat.

Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. So, we've got the heavens passing away and the earth being burned up. Verse 11, Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Now, here we see Peter talking about the destruction of the heavens and the earth. It sounds like the end of the universe. And it's replacement by new heavens and new earth.

He associates this transformation with what he calls in verse 10, the day of the Lord. And in verse 12, the day of God. I am of the opinion that the day of the Lord is a reference to the second coming of Christ.

And that being so, this would make this a physical, probably physical destruction of the heavens and the earth to be effected when Jesus returns. And then, of course, upon his return, he creates the new heavens and the new earth. The degree to which my belief of this understanding rests upon my upbringing, I cannot say.

I have always been raised to see it this way. And like anybody else, I'm slow to change, even if I see hints of something else. There are those who would say that the day of the Lord here and the day of God is not a reference to the second coming of Christ.

But as would appear to be the case in Malachi, the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and in Acts chapter 2, quoting Joel chapter 2, the terrible day of the Lord, both of those passages, the one in Malachi and the one in Joel, appear to have their fulfillment in 70 A.D., the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, that this day of the Lord in Peter might also be that event. In which case, the heavens and the earth that dissolve and burn up are literally the temple in the city of Jerusalem that was burned up. And that our sights are set not on that Jerusalem, but on another Jerusalem, on another heavens and earth, another creation.

Not the creation that came into being at Sinai, of the old covenant, but the creation that came into being at the cross of the new covenant, of which every believer, Paul says, is a part of that new creation. Now, I bring this up only because it strikes me... First of all, there are intelligent people who believe this way. I have a very hard time going this far.

And the reason... I'll tell you the reason why. I used to think I had a great number of passages in the Bible that told me about a new heavens and a new earth that would be created when Jesus comes back. One by one, a lot of these began to kind of bite the dust.

I mean, looking at Revelation 21 more closely and seeing it as a probable description of the church. Looking at the passages in Isaiah where he talks about the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. And that in a context which I now am compelled by its very nature to see as a reference to the church.

Seeing that the new heavens and the new earth, the new creation in Isaiah, is an upshot of the new thing that God would do and the former thing to be forgotten. And that apparently being when he opens the rivers in the desert and builds a highway and so forth, all of which pertain to the church age in other passages of Isaiah, it would appear. One by one, the passages upon which I have based my belief in a new heaven and a new earth have sort of gone by the boards.

And it's frankly uncomfortable. I'm still in transition. Maybe I shouldn't say that because that suggests I'm going to go all the way.

And that's the direction I'm moving. I will say this, that the second Peter passage and the assumption that the day of the Lord is the second coming of Christ is to my mind the remaining passage that gives me reason to believe that there is an eschatological fulfillment of the new heavens and the new earth. And that there will be a literal new heaven and new earth when Jesus returns.

If, however, this passage too is about the destruction of Jerusalem, that takes the last vestige of information out of the Bible on a future new heaven and new earth and makes the whole thing the establishment of the church under the new covenant. I myself am not comfortable going that far. And maybe the reason is because it leaves me with nothing in terms of light as to what form things will take after Jesus comes back.

I certainly believe in the second coming of Christ. And for much of my life I figured when he comes back he'll set up a millennial kingdom here on earth and then he'll destroy this heaven and earth and make a new heavens and new earth. Eventually I chucked the millennium idea and just went straight to the new heavens and the new earth and the coming of the Lord based on this passage in second Peter primarily.

And of course if I were to lose this passage as a proof of that then it would not destroy

the blessed hope it would just make it totally a matter of mystery. Totally a matter of mystery. What form do things take? What does exist after Jesus comes back? Those who take all of this about having their fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem and just the establishment of the new covenant and nothing more and see nothing eschatological in it at all I think they just understand it to mean that the heavens and the earth are just going to go on the physical heavens and earth go on forever and ever.

Human society go on forever and ever. We all of course live a limited lifetime and when we die we go to heaven or hell and that our eternal joy will be in heaven. And while we are in heaven for all eternity there will be more and more generations of people on earth but then when does the second coming of Christ fit in there? I must confess that I am still unwilling at this point in my journey to release a literal understanding of second Peter chapter three.

There are those I have encountered who have released it and they have no expectation of a physical new heavens and new earth at the coming of Christ. I still hold to it. And you know that's where I stand at this time.

But I'll tell you how I harmonize that with all these other places which seem to spiritualize it. And that is that I believe there is a world to come. I believe there is an age to come.

A new creation physically but that those of us who have come into the new covenant have already embraced the realities of it spiritually. For example in the new heavens and new earth we will have resurrection bodies. Resurrected bodies that are incapable of dying.

This is taught frequently in the scripture. We will be raised immortal. We will be raised glorified.

We are going to have new bodies presumably to live on the new earth. And we will be physically immortal. That will be a physical reality when Jesus comes back and makes the new creation physically.

However, we are already immortal spiritually. We already participate in this deathless thing in the spirit. We will never die.

Jesus said whoever believes in me or whoever hears my words and believes in him that sent me shall never perish. He shall never die. He'll never come into condemnation because he's passed from death unto life.

He said in John chapter 11 I am the resurrection of life. If he that believes in me shall never die. And whosoever is dead or whoever believes in me is dead shall live again.

And whoever lives shall never die. There is a spiritual sense in which we already have an

experience of the new creation. It will be physically manifested at the coming of Christ when we are resurrected in actually immortal bodies.

But we already have come spiritually into that reality. And it's as if the new creation has already broken into the experience of the believer spiritually but will be a universal cosmic physical reality when Jesus comes to set everything right and restore the paradise that was lost in Adam and Eve. Let me give you a verse that I frequently think of and use to establish this dual fulfillment.

You know, the spiritual now the physical later. In Hebrews chapter 6 the writer is describing in several descriptive terms the believer. In the context he is describing a believer who then falls away but prior to falling away they are a believer.

And one of the things that is a trait of these people in verse 5 it says they have tasted of the good word of God and of the powers of the age to come. That is the age to come is still yet to come but we have already tasted of the powers, the dynamics the spiritual realities of the age to come have already become part of our spiritual experience. That age is in fact yet to come when Jesus returns but we've already begun to participate in it at one level in the spirit.

Now I could be wrong about that. If I am wrong it is in the direction of looking for a physical new heavens, new earth not in identifying our own experience as Christians, as a new creation. If there is no double fulfillment then the one fulfillment that has to be surrendered I think is the physical heavens and earth but I still hold out for a double on that point.

I just... you know, maybe it's my traditional upbringing or something but I just see Peter's words as saying we're looking for a literal new heavens and new earth. Whether I'll still hold that view ten years from now God only knows. Now we've seen then that a number of ways restoration, the concept of restoration is developed in Isaiah.

We've looked at three ways. One is that of the destruction of the walls of a city and the restoration, the rebuilding of walls and rebuilding of a city. We've seen, although we looked at it more in detail at a different time the restoration in terms of a place made a wilderness and then later made fruitful again.

We've now seen even the idea of the end of the old creation and its replacement by a new creation. And what I've suggested, in each case that the fulfillment, the restoration is in the church. Now there's one other image of restoration that Isaiah uses and that is the restoration of health to that which is sick and dying.

The beginning of this in Isaiah is in the first chapter. I need to turn to another page in my notes to find all the references to this. There's quite a lot of them actually.

Okay. In Isaiah chapter 1, verses 5 and 6 very early on in our series I pointed this out to

you. Now is the time to look at it again more closely.

Isaiah 1, verses 5 and 6 says, Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick. The whole heart faints.

From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed or bound up or soothed with ointment. Now the description here is of course of a national condition but the language is a portrayal of an individual man from head to foot.

Sick, sore, beaten oozing running sores untreated and unhealed. But obviously right from the beginning Isaiah introduces the idea that the nation is like a very sick person who desperately needs care and healing attention from a physician. Now as far as what the sickness is there are two possibilities if we study this strain of teaching throughout the Prophets because Isaiah is not alone in speaking figuratively of sickness and of healing.

But in the Prophets there are two possibilities for what this sickness represents. If you look at Jeremiah chapter 8 and verse 15 it says, We looked for peace but no good came and for a time of health and there was trouble. Now in the parallelism in the contrast here we were looking for peace but what we got was no good.

What we were looking for was health but what we got was presumably sickness but the sickness here is trouble. Health here would be freedom from trouble. We were looking for freedom from trouble but we got trouble.

Trouble in this case would be affliction would be oppression from their enemies and seen also in terms of a judgment from God. God's afflicting them by the hands of Gentile nations was the affliction and the trouble that they had though they were hoping for health they instead experienced obviously sickness. In Jeremiah 14 and verse 19 we see a recurrence of this very same refrain.

At the end of Jeremiah 14 and 19 it says, We looked for peace and there was no good. We looked for a time of healing and there was trouble. Here the sickness or the absence of healing the opposite of healing is trouble, affliction, judgment from God.

Also chapter 15 of Isaiah Isaiah chapter 15 and verse 18 says, Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable which refuses to be healed? Will you surely be to me like an unreliable stream as waters that fail? This is Jeremiah's complaint to God that he perhaps in the person speaking as a representative of the nation as a whole says he's got an incurable wound. But he's talking about affliction. That's Jeremiah 15 and 18.

So we can see that sometimes the prophets speak figuratively of affliction from their enemies seen as the hand of God judging them as the woundedness and so forth. Isaiah chapter 1 that we looked at would appear to be speaking in those terms because it begins, Why will you be stricken again? The wounds, the running sores appear not to be

the result of some plague or sickness in the natural sense but of having taken a beating having been laid open with a rod and that is figuratively the judgment God has brought upon them. However, we need to be open to another meaning of the sickness because the prophets also speak of sin and departing from God and backsliding as a condition from which Israel needed to be healed.

This would be not so much seen as sickness as a physical affliction that has come upon them as much as a moral condition that needs to be remedied and that moral condition is their departure from God and their alienation from God. In Jeremiah 3 and we're talking about Jeremiah here verse 22 He says, Return you backsliding children and I will heal your backslidings. Backsliding is a moral condition.

Jeremiah actually has that statement more than once in his book. We won't bother to look at the other occasions but Hosea also uses the same language. In Hosea chapter 14 Hosea is right after Daniel so it's one of the easier minor prophets to find also one of the longer ones.

Hosea chapter 14 and verse 4 speaking of what God would do for in the new covenant He says, I will heal their backsliding. Now healing here is figurative for healing their wanderings their strays and it's interesting that we've seen both in Jeremiah a reference to them needing to be healed and seeking health from their affliction but also from their backsliding. It's possible that both these images are intended to be mixed together because their backsliding they've walked into trouble.

By walking away from God they've walked into the propeller of the airplane. They just have walked into disaster by their wrong choices. And they are smarting for it.

They are hurting for it. The consequence of their sin is hurtful. But that's because the infection of sin is what caused it in the first place.

And it may be that we are not expected to divide this up or to see this as two separate alternatives but rather that the sickness of the nation is a moral sickness that has brought about physical pain through affliction as a judgment upon them. Now this idea is carried through the book of Isaiah and other prophets especially Jeremiah in a number of passages. We saw in Isaiah chapter 1 those verses say that nobody has bound up your wounds.

Nobody has cured you. No one has even mollified it with ointment. There's been no relief offered.

No physician has attended you in any way. Likewise in Isaiah chapter 3 in destroying how the Assyrians will devastate Judah and Jerusalem it says in verse 5 and 6 Isaiah 3 verses 5 and 6 and following The people will be oppressed everyone by another and everyone by his neighbor. A child will be insulated toward the elder and the base toward

the honorable.

When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father saying you have clothing you be our ruler and let these ruins be under your hand in that day he shall protest saying I cannot cure your ills for in my house is neither food nor clothing do not make me a ruler of this people for Jerusalem stumbled and Judah is fallen because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord to provoke the eyes of his glory. Now the nation is in such trouble that no one wants to take charge no one wants the responsibility of trying to pull it out of its disaster. It's too big a job and everyone's going to be begging someone else to do it.

Your own brother you've got your own clothes you're better off than most of us how about you be the ruler saying hey not me thanks I can't cure your ills. And the King James says I will not be your healer. A ruler is in this case one who is needed to cure the ills of the sickness of the nation to pull it out of its condition to restore its health.

And Isaiah describes a condition where no one has done that no one wants to do that. There is no healer. In Jeremiah 6.14 turning to that other prophet it talks about how the leaders of Israel in his day, the leaders of Judah in his day have failed very badly to play the healer.

In Jeremiah 6.14 well 13 and 14 says because from the least of them even to the greatest of them this is 6.13 of Jeremiah because from the least of them even to the greatest of them everyone is given to covetousness and from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely they have healed also the hurt of my people slightly saying peace, peace when there is no peace in other words they put a band-aid on something much more that needs much more radical treatment than that. They have slightly healed they have made people not feel the pain so much by predicting giving them false hope really peace, peace but there is no peace they are predicting that things will get better but they are not going to get better because the people are in rebellion against God and the sickness and the affliction are going to only increase but they have put a band-aid on it and healed it slightly the leaders have failed to be healers in the ultimate sense in chapter 8 of Jeremiah also Jeremiah chapter 8 and in verse 11 it says the same thing about the leaders in fact it is the same refrain they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying peace, peace when there is no peace if you look over at Jeremiah 30 verses 12 and 13 for thus says the Lord your affliction is incurable your wound is severe there is no one to plead your cause that you may be bound up you have no healing medicines so in Jeremiah as in Isaiah it says the nation is sick real sick and there is no one there there is no one to heal them however both Isaiah and Jeremiah point out later on that God is himself the one who can heal and restore and we will see for example Isaiah chapter 30 Isaiah this time and chapter 30 verse 26 says moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun the light of the sun will be sevenfold as the light of seven days in the day that the Lord of hosts binds up the bruise of his

people and heals the stroke of their wound in chapter 1 no one had bound them up no one had healed them but there is a day predicted in which God will bind up their bruise and heal the stroke of their wound Isaiah again chapter 57 verses 18 and 19 Isaiah 57 verses 18 and 19 I have seen his ways and I will heal him I will also lead him and restore comforts to him and to his mourners I create the fruit of the lips peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near says the Lord I will heal him the restoration of peace the restoration from affliction is said to be healing him restoring comforts to him ok so God is the one who promises to be the healer likewise elsewhere in the prophets for example in Jeremiah 30 and verse 17 after Jeremiah has said basically there is no healing for you Jeremiah 30 verse 12 is where we read your affliction is incurable in verse 13 there is no one to plead your cause that you may be bound up you have no healing medicines yet later in verse 17 Jeremiah 30 and verse 17 for I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds says the Lord because they have called you an outcast saying this is Zion no one seeks her God says they thought you were over they thought they destroyed you but I will heal you no one is there to heal you he says in verse 13 but he says I will heal you in verse 17 ok he doesn't describe quite how at that point also in Jeremiah 33 and verse 6 Jeremiah 33 verse 6 says behold I will bring it health and healing that is Jerusalem and I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth now you can see that in all these places healing has nothing to do with physical sickness of individuals it has to do with the nation's condition being sick afflicted judged sinful backslidden but God talks about healing their backslidings delivering them from their incurable wound also in Hosea chapter 6 Hosea chapter 6 verse 1 says come and let us return to the Lord for he has torn but he will heal us he has stricken but he will bind us up certainly this is a good summary verse of the whole concept in Isaiah God has stricken them they are wounded they are broken he has bruised them but he will heal he will bind them up so in all these places Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea all of whom talk about the sickness of the nation and their need for healing they identify God as the one who will himself provide healing because of the absence of anyone else who can do so now in Isaiah it becomes clear that the one who does the healing the means by which God brings healing is the Messiah Jesus when he comes the first time if you look at Isaiah chapter 53 this chapter we will have to deal with as a whole later on but we will just look at one verse in it right now Isaiah 53 verse 5 says but he was wounded for our transgressions meaning Jesus he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement for our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed now you know as well as I do that many Christians understand that last line to be a reference to physical healing and they would say that just as in Jesus death on the cross he purchased our salvation so also at the whipping post when he received stripes across his back he purchased our healing from sickness and they base it largely upon this verse by his stripes we are healed but they this is the fruit of careless reading of the prophetic writings there are many reasons to know that this is not talking about God through Jesus purchasing physical healing for individual Christians of physical sicknesses for one thing we have seen that the entire book of Isaiah has frequently spoken of the need for

healing and the sickness and it has never been a reference to individuals being sick furthermore even the structure of verse 5 itself proves this because we are familiar with the parallelism of Hebrew poetry and how the same thing is said twice or three times or more in parallel parts if you will notice this verse 5 it says he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the parallelism there is quite plain wounded and bruised are parallel thoughts transgressions and iniquities are parallel thoughts then the next two members of the sentence or of the verse the chastisement now chastisement usually means a discipline a beating usually in the scripture offered to a rebellious slave or a rebellious child chastisement usually with a rod the chastisement for our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed now notice the stripes would be laid by a whip or a rod and correspond in the parallelism there to the chastisement he has received the stripes stripes and chastisement are parallel thoughts and healed then is parallel to our peace the chastisement for our peace now in a number of the verses we looked at in both Isaiah and Jeremiah we saw that we looked for peace or we looked for health but there was no peace, there was trouble peace meaning a deliverance from the affliction is the healing that is sought our peace with God in particular is what is necessary because there is no peace Isaiah says for the wicked and this chastisement for our peace with God is what is the picture his stripes have accomplished it we are healed the nation because of its backsliding and alienation from God was sick and God said I will heal but here it makes it very plain it is by the beating up of the Messiah that this is accomplished but what is accomplished is a healing that is not a reference at all to physical healing but to the same kind of healing that Isaiah has been talking about all the way through now we have a quotation in the New Testament of this verse and it is always nice to be able to have one of those to help us understand what the verse might mean if you look at it it is only one time quoted in the New Testament that is 1 Peter chapter 2 and the last four verses of 1 Peter 2 are simply a rehash and restatement of several verses in Isaiah 53 in fact there is an exact quote from Isaiah 53 in 1 Peter 2 who committed no sin nor was guile found in his mouth that is a quote from Isaiah 53 but the remainder of the chapter here the last three verses though there is not direct quotes are just replete with allusions to the same passage Isaiah 53 and it says when he was reviled he did not revile in return when he suffered he did not threaten but committed himself to him who judges righteously who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to sins should live for righteousness by whose stripes you were healed for you were like sheep going astray but you have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls now the reference to bearing our sins in his own body and we were like sheep going astray is a reference to Isaiah 53 6 Isaiah 53 6 says all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all our sins have been laid on him he bore our sins in his body we were like sheep going astray so here in this short passage in 1 Peter he actually quotes verbatim Isaiah 53 9 in verse 22 he alludes twice to Isaiah 53 6 and he quotes or strongly alludes to Isaiah 53 5 with whose stripes we were healed and he takes those thoughts and he links

them in this way the death of Jesus has accomplished something for us he took our sins on his body he has accomplished our healing in this manner for we were going astray but we have now returned what has been healed then? our strain, our backsliding he says by his stripes you have been healed for you were sick but how does he describe the sickness? you were like sheep going astray backsliding, wandering from God and he has healed that he has turned us around he has fixed that, he has restored fellowship he has restored peace with God that is the healing that is predicted in Isaiah that is how Peter applies it that agrees with the general consistent usage of the motif throughout Isaiah Jeremiah and Hosea all of which use this same imagery as we have seen a few other passages in Isaiah and then we will be done with this subject Isaiah 33 verse 24 Isaiah 33 24 this is the close of a passage that is about the kingdom age you can see that in verses 20-24 we basically have a kingdom age passage look upon Zion the city of our appointed feast, your eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that will not be taken down, none of its stakes will be removed verse 21, a place of broad rivers and streams, verse 22 for the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver the Lord is our king, he will save us all of this is a reference to the messianic kingdom and in verse 24 it says and the inhabitant will not say I am sick why? because they have no diseases? no, because the people who dwell in it will be forgiven, their iniquity the sickness is related to their iniquity, God heals them by forgiving them Isaiah 61.1, maybe we may not have time to go beyond this one verse I don't know, we got a little time on the clock it looks like Isaiah 61.1 already you know what Isaiah 61.1 is it says the spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor he has sent me to heal the broken hearted the King James says to bind up the broken hearted, either way is fine because in chapter 1 it says you are full of wounds no one has bound them up so whether it's heal or bound up it's a physician applying the necessary things to fix the sickness now there is certainly no reason to think that the sickness that is being healed here by the Messiah is anything other than the sickness that Isaiah has been talking about all the way through by his stripes you are healed but what is the condition that he is binding up, that he is healing a spiritual condition, the broken hearted he is healing the broken hearted it's a spiritual condition not physical that he is talking about now in none of these comments I'm making am I trying to take away anything from the healing power of God or from God's role even in our own day as a healer of disease, I believe in God I believe he is a healer I believe that he heals sicknesses today as he always has what I don't believe however is that these passages in Isaiah are talking about that I believe they are talking about something consistently all the way through which is the alienation of the nation from God resulting in chastisement and oppression and affliction which is their sickness and God healing that through sending Jesus to die to bear their iniquities and restore fellowship and so there are a number of references to that here, it says in Malachi chapter 4 and verse 2 speaking of the first coming of Jesus I believe Malachi 4.2 says then shall the son S-U-N of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, now Jesus of course when he came did heal physical sicknesses but I believe that he did so as an emblem of him being the healer

who would heal the nation's real woes when Jesus cast out demons he said it was an emblem of something more cosmic than that, something bigger than that, it was a picture of him, it proved that he had bound the strong man by casting out demons and delivering people as individuals he was demonstrating that he had done something more universal, he had in fact accomplished a victory of immense proportions over the strong man Satan likewise when he healed the sick I believe that he did so out of compassion for them but he also did so as a sign that he was the healer, he was the one who would heal, remember when John the Baptist sent messengers and Jesus said well go tell them what you see, the blind have sight restored, the deaf are hearing, the lame are walking, referring back to Isaiah 35 now Isaiah 35 in fact said he would do those things and Jesus physically did them but that is not to say that that exhausts the meaning of it, the nation that's spiritually blind, the nation that's spiritually deaf that's spiritually lame is spiritually healed by the ministry of Jesus by what he accomplished at the cross so don't be confused by the fact that Jesus actually did heal and still does heal physical sicknesses and then try to apply all these promises about healing to that, he does that he does heal but when he does it's more of a individualized, personalized demonstration of the bigger thing that he is the healer that was promised he especially heals the spiritual sicknesses, when Jesus by the way healed the man who was paralyzed and lowered through the roof you remember they first said your sins are forgiven and when they murmured that he claimed to have the right to forgive sins as well so that you might know that I have in fact the power to forgive sins I'll heal him for you, that's the harder thing that will demonstrate that I can do the thing that you can't see the healing of that man physically was a demonstration that Jesus was in fact authorized to heal the man spiritually to forgive his sins he probably would have healed the man anyway but the context of his healing him said so that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the man take up your bed and walk that Jesus can heal sickness in the spirit was demonstrated by the fact that he could heal physical sickness as well so the physical healings of Jesus are not insignificant with reference to these passages but they might be seen as a as an individualized personalized specific cases where he is demonstrating through an actual sign that he is the one who is the healer but the healing which is more significant is that which benefits people eternally not just for the remainder of their brief lifetime and that is a spiritual one that's about as far as we have time to go on this subject so we've seen that the idea of restoration takes several forms the restoration of a broken down city the restoration of the heavens and the earth, the restoration of a wilderness into a lush watered place and the restoration of a sick person into a well person all of those different motifs have one thing in common something that has been damaged is being restored and all of them I think have their fulfillment in Christ in what he has accomplished when he came