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Isaiah - Isaiah Redemption



Isaiah - Steve Gregg

The book of Isaiah is a rare example of Old Testament literature that remains wholly relevant to Christians today, says biblical scholar Steve Gregg. Its themes of redemption and salvation through Christ are intertwined with the story of Exodus and the Babylonian exile, offering valuable insight into the history of God's people. Gregg delves into specific verses from Isaiah, highlighting their importance both to the apostles in the New Testament and to modern readers seeking spiritual guidance.

Transcript

In the notes that I gave you in our previous lecture, we have a section at the bottom, not yet brought up, and when we were talking about the arm of the Lord, I mentioned that the arm of the Lord is sort of initially a generic reference to God's strength, but his active reaching out and doing something through his strength, his intervention, in other words, and that the arm of the Lord is initially seen in its function as a judgment. On wicked nations, God stretches out his hand, his arm comes down upon them, and they suffer affliction or defeat, conquest, possibly even annihilation or extinction. But in other passages in Isaiah, there's another aspect of this.

In God bringing judgment on the wicked, he's not just doing it because he's got a grudge against them, per se. No doubt he has a grudge against all men, and he doesn't specifically, proactively go out and judge all nations just because they're there, but he judges these nations in order to save his people. The judgments recorded are judgments upon those nations that are threatening and afflicting his people so that his arm is the means of deliverance or salvation.

His mighty arm judging the enemies of God's people is his mighty arm saving his people, and so the aspect of judgment and the aspect of salvation are mingled. And I mentioned that there are some passages there where the arm of the Lord appears to be almost a direct reference to Jesus, if not a direct reference to Jesus himself, as it were, the personification. Having said that, we realize then that we're talking about God using war or using military victory as his means of redeeming his people.

And the motif of redemption is found frequently in Isaiah and in different ways, but redemption literally means to buy back, to acquire back something that you've lost, and to do so at some cost. For example, if you're in financial straits and you go to the pawn shop and you pawn your wedding ring, and you get cash for it, and you pay your bills, but you want that ring back. And so when you're able to do so, you go back and you redeem it, you buy it back, you pay whatever price the shop is charging for it.

You might even pay, probably pay more for it than you got for it, but you get it back at a cost to yourself. It was something that was once yours, it has escaped you, and you get it back at some cost. That's what the word redeem means.

That's a normal, ordinary, economical word. It's also used in scripture of God redeeming his people, redeeming them from Egypt, redeeming them from Babylon. These are images that Isaiah uses of redemption, but they serve as a type and a shadow of God redeeming the world, which was once his, but fell through Adam and Eve into sin so that God seems to have lost something.

He seems to have lost humanity, but he sends Jesus to redeem. And so, of course, we find the word redemption used in the New Testament in that sense, the sense that Jesus came and died to redeem us by his blood. The price he paid to acquire that which God had lost, Jesus reacquired through a great expense.

So Peter says in 1 Peter 1.18 that you are not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but by the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. So we've been redeemed. And that idea of Christ redeeming us is not at all absent from Isaiah, but it comes in as do many of these messianic themes on the coattails, as it were, of reference to things more immediate in Isaiah's time.

God redeeming Israel from immediate problems. Bondage. You know, siege and things like that.

So that the idea of redemption, it comes up a lot. But ultimately, it even the temporal redemptions or the historic Old Testament examples of redemption simply serve as a type and a shadow of that which we find in Christ. Christ is the fulfillment of all things Old Testament, not only the fulfillment of law and prophets, but also of types and shadows.

And so there's hardly hardly a page in the Old Testament that I think the apostles, if they were teaching on it, could not find some relevance to Jesus Christ, whether it's reading Leviticus about the sacrificial system. And seeing that as a type of Christ or reading a prophetic passage about the Messiah or about, for that matter, the history of the Exodus or many other things in the Old Testament. They all point in one way or another to Jesus in Psalm 40, which is attributed to Jesus in the New Testament.

David is speaking in Psalm 40, but the New Testament quotes him as being Jesus speaking. Psalm 40, verses six through eight in that passage quoted in Hebrews 10. Jesus is quoted as saying in the volume of the book, it is written of me.

And it would seem to mean in the whole of the scriptures, the Old Testament scriptures, it's about Jesus. When Jesus rose from the dead and appeared incognito to the two men on the road to Emmaus before they recognized him. It says he began with Moses and went through all the scriptures, expounding all the things that were written of him.

I suppose all the things is a hyperbole because I don't see how on a walk of a couple of miles, there'd be enough time to expound everything. But no doubt in the broadest sense saying, you know, these things are talking about the Messiah. These things are talking about the Messiah.

And the suggestion is that no matter where you look in the Old Testament, there's something there that's talking about him. And so also these redemptions all point forward to the ultimate redemption acquired by Christ, as we shall see. Now, one of the motifs in Isaiah that speaks of redemption does so in the context of reminiscing about the Exodus.

Images of God delivering Israel from Egypt through the Red Sea and rescuing them from the bondage that they had endured for so long in Egypt are part of the imagery that Isaiah uses. Of course, he's not predicting the Exodus. He's writing much later than the Exodus, but he's remembering it and indicating that it has relevance to the future salvation.

In that it is a typological relevance. We're going to see more on this actually even in our next lecture, but we'll look at this as one of the ways in which right now the idea of redemption is brought up in Isaiah. And let me turn your attention, if I might, to Luke chapter 9 before we go into the passages in Isaiah.

In Luke chapter 9, verses 30 and 31, we're reading about the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus and three of his disciples are up there praying, and it says in verse 30, Behold, two men talked with him who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his decease, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. In the Greek of Luke, the original language Luke wrote in, that word decease is the word exodus, a word that even in Luke's time would suggest the Exodus of the Old Testament.

The Greek word exodus had been adopted by the Septuagint 285 years before Christ. The Jewish scholars of Alexandria who produced the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, had used the word exodus as the title of the second book of Moses, just as we have it. The name exodus in our Bible comes from the Septuagint.

It's a Greek word. It means going out. And so when Luke used this term, they were

talking to Jesus about the Exodus that he was going to accomplish.

It's very clear that there was Moses who had been God's instrument in the Exodus in the Old Testament. They're talking to Jesus about another exodus, and this was not going to be accomplished by Moses, but by Jesus himself in Jerusalem. Well, what could that be referring to? Obviously, it's referring to his death and resurrection.

The Exodus of the Old Testament was God redeeming his people out of Egypt, and that's language that the Old Testament uses a great deal, and as does Isaiah. But it is a picture of God redeeming people through the Exodus that Jesus accomplished in Jerusalem. Just so we'd see outside of Isaiah some of this imagery, look at Exodus itself, chapter 15.

The purpose of looking at these verses right now is to show that the Exodus is referred to in the Bible as God redeeming his people, or buying them back for himself. They had been his people before they went into Egypt. They were Abraham and Isaac and Jacob's family when they went into Egypt.

But then they became captured by the Egyptians and enslaved, and God bought them back out of slavery for himself. And in Exodus chapter 15 and verse 13, this is the song that's being sung by Moses and the people of Israel after they were delivered. It says, you in your mercy have led forth the people whom you have redeemed.

You have guided them in your strength to your holy habitation. So it's referring to them having been led safely through the Red Sea and seeing the end of their pursuers there, and finding themselves for the first time in centuries free again. And they say they've been redeemed, as it were, as a slave could be redeemed by his relatives out of slavery.

So God had redeemed Israel in the Exodus, just so you'll be familiar that the language of redemption is applied in the scripture outside of Isaiah to the event of the Exodus. In Exodus chapter 15 and verse 13, it's also in Psalm 106. These are only two of many examples that could be found in the Old Testament.

Psalm 106, verses 9 through 11, it says, he rebuked the Red Sea also and it dried up. He led them through the depths as through the wilderness. He saved them from the hand of him who hated him, meaning Pharaoh, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

The waters covered their enemies. There was not one of them, that is of the Egyptians, left. A recollection of the Exodus, it says he redeemed them from the hand of their enemies, of those who hate him.

So this idea of redemption among the Jews in the Old Testament would most often call to mind the Exodus. If you spoke to the average Jew, at least before the Babylonian exile, about how God is a redeemer, they would have nothing in their mind about that except the Exodus. However, later on, of course, God redeemed them out of Babylon, and so the return of the exiles from Babylon becomes another picture of redemption.

In Isaiah 43, verses 2 and 3, this, I believe, is a passage that in its first application would be seen as God redeeming Israel from Babylon, but again, having words and phrases that are intended to convey a greater, fuller redemption, which would come eventually through the Messiah. In verses 2 and 3, it says in Isaiah 43, when you pass through the waters, I will be with you. And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

Remember, Israel passed through the waters of the Red Sea to escape from Egypt, and passed through the River Jordan. God dried up the River Jordan also for them to pass from the wilderness into the Promised Land. So this is harking back to those events.

When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. I wonder, although I wouldn't be confident about this, whether this might foreshadow what happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they were in Babylon, and subjected to the fire furnace, they found that the fires did not burn them. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Sheba in your place, since you were precious in my sight. Now, God has redeemed them, and in the Exodus, He gave Egypt as the ransom. I mentioned that redemption requires acquiring something at a price.

What price did God pay in order to get Israel out of Egypt? Egypt was the price He paid. He destroyed Egypt. Now, Egypt, you might say, well, why would that cost God anything? Well, God loves all people.

God wants all people to be His people. It was through Abraham's seed that all the nations of the earth should be blessed. However, this was one nation He had to dispense with.

He would have preferred it had Egypt been a godly nation, but they were not, and therefore He dumped them and took them out. And this was the price that was paid for the redemption of Israel from their slavery there. In the same chapter, in verses 16 and 17, it says, Thus says the Lord who makes a way in the sea and a path through the mighty waters, who brings forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the power.

They shall lie down together. They shall not rise. They are extinguished.

They are quenched like a wick. These chariots, of course, are reminiscent of the chariots of the Egyptians following Israel through the dried path in the Red Sea, but not making it quite across because the sea came back upon them and drowned them and quenched them like a wick. So He is reminding them of the Exodus.

But why? Why bring this up? Because He brings these up as reminders that He is the Redeemer. He is the one who has redeemed Israel out of Egypt, and He intends to redeem them out of Babylon in a similar way. And, of course, the redemption of Israel out of Egypt is a picture of New Testament salvation.

Likewise, the redemption out of Babylon is a picture of New Testament salvation. In fact, the two are very much alike in their significance. Now, the return of the exiles from Babylon is also spoken of in Scripture, not only in Isaiah, but elsewhere, as God redeeming His people, this time from Babylon.

As He redeemed them from Egypt, He also redeems them from the Babylonian exile. In Psalm 107, that's what is in view. A psalmist, probably writing after the exile, says in verse 2, Now, this does not refer to the Exodus, because all the people of God came out of one place, Egypt, which, from the standpoint of Israel, would be the south.

But He didn't redeem anyone from the east or west or north. This is not the redemption of God's people from Egypt. It is something else.

Now, Jeremiah frequently talked about God redeeming the Jews out of the Babylonian exile. Isaiah did, too. And they spoke of that as God drawing Israel back from all the lands to which the Lord had driven them.

Why all the lands? Because Babylon wasn't just one country in those days. Babylon was an empire. It had annexed just about every small country around it.

The Babylonian Empire was many countries under one umbrella. And so, when they took captives, they didn't just take them back to Mesopotamia, to the city of Babylon. They distributed them through all the lands of the region.

So, the return of the exiles is described as God bringing them back from all the lands. And here, the redeemed of the Lord are said to have been gathered out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. And they have been redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

So, this idea of redemption, again, is a political rescue, a wholesale rescue of the people of God from a national bondage. But both of these instances in Israel's history foreshadow the redemption of God's people through Christ. And this is brought out very clearly in the New Testament as well.

But in Isaiah 48, 17, Isaiah says, Now, I imagine most of my class here know this, but some may not. You see the word LORD in all capital letters. In the Hebrew, the name Yahweh stands behind that particular English rendering.

The word LORD in the Bible doesn't always translate the word Yahweh. Sometimes it translates the word Adonai. But when it does, it's not in all capital English letters.

When you've got LORD in all capitals, that's the translators telling you they're not translating their Adonai, but they're translating Yahweh. So, it's kind of important because Yahweh is a very important name for God. And it is the name that most of the time in the Old Testament, the word LORD is going to have all caps translating that

name.

But he says here in chapter 48, verse 17, Now, in this context, he is talking about Israel in Babylon. And he calls himself their Redeemer. Just as he was their Redeemer when they came out of Egypt in Exodus, once again, he redeems them from their present situation.

But you can hardly separate in these passages the idea of bringing them back from Babylon from the idea of Jesus coming and saving us too. Because in the mind of the Holy Spirit, and therefore in the mind of the prophet, these two are mixed as like a lock and a key, or one mechanism. So, God's redemption from Babylon is of a piece with his redemptive activity in general and his redemption par excellence, of course, through Christ.

And so the Holy Spirit mixes this idea into many passages. In chapter 49 of Isaiah, verses 24 through 26, it says, Now, in this case, the mighty is Babylon. The captives are Judah, the Jews, who will be delivered through the agency of Cyrus.

Who will allow them to escape and go back to their own land. That's the context. He says, The mighty one of Jacob.

Again, the redemption idea. I'm your Redeemer. In what sense? Well, I'm going to take you away from your captors.

I'm going to deliver Israel from Babylon. So, the idea of redemption associated with the Exodus in some places, associated with the deliverance from Babylon in other places, and combined in some passages. For example, in Isaiah 27, verses 12 through 13.

Isaiah 27, 12 says, The river here would be the Euphrates. And actually, from Euphrates to the brook of Egypt is shorthand for the boundaries of Israel. The Lord will thresh, which means he'll separate the wheat from the chaff.

From the channel of the river to the brook of Egypt. And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. So it shall be in that day, that the great trumpet will be blown, and they will come who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

There seemed to be, in this case, a reference of calling the Jews back from Babylon. But also, I believe that there is some echoing of the Exodus motif here. In Isaiah 48, we find, I think, the two mentioned together, or mixed together.

In Isaiah 48, verses 20 through 21, it says, That's rather clear. Proclaim this, utter it even to the end of the earth. Say, the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob, and they did not thirst when he led them through the deserts.

He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them. He also split the rock, and waters gushed out. Now, obviously, these latter allusions are to things that happened to the children of Israel as a result of the Exodus.

They were in the wilderness, and God, you know, didn't let them die in the desert. He fed them with manna, and he brought water from the rock. This is obviously referring back to the book of Exodus, and the event of the Exodus, and its aftermath.

And yet, it's in the context of flee from Babylon. Obviously, the two events are kind of mixed together. The one is spoken of in imagery, reminiscent of the other.

And now we come to those passages in Isaiah that actually talk about God redeeming his people. But now, it is not about Babylon. Or if it is, it is only barely about redeeming from Babylon, but primarily about the redemption in Christ.

If Babylon is in view at all, it is only as a type. In Isaiah 59, verses 20 and 21, it says, The Redeemer, there's that theme of the redemption, The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob, says the Lord. As for me, says the Lord, this is my covenant with them.

My spirit, who is upon you, and my words, which I put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants, says the Lord, from this time and forevermore. Now, when God says, my words will not depart from your mouth, it almost sounds like he's saying you won't speak them. But that's not the imagery.

It's as what God said to Joshua in chapter 1. He says, this law shall not depart from your mouth means it shall always be in your mouth. It shall never vacate your mouth. It shall always reside there.

And imagery that seems peculiar to us. But the idea here is there is a new covenant of the spirit in verse 21. This is my covenant with them.

My spirit, who is upon you, and my words will not depart from you. The spirit is not given until Pentecost. And the covenant in view is, of course, the new covenant.

And therefore, Paul is quite within his rights in quoting verse 20 as being about now. Now, a lot of people don't think he is talking about now. In Romans chapter 11, Paul is saying something about how God fulfills his promise to Israel.

And the majority of the teachers I hear seem to think Paul is saying something different than what I find him to be saying. Because Romans 11 is the closing segment of a discussion that begins two chapters earlier. So that Romans 9 through 11 is an unbroken discussion of one subject.

And that subject is introduced at the beginning of chapter 9 about Israel. Paul begins in the first five verses of Romans 9 saying, My heart is broken over my people Israel. I could wish myself a curse from Christ if it would cause them to be saved.

Obviously, the first five verses he is emphasizing the fact, My people Israel, my flesh and blood, my country, they are not saved. But Paul realizes this raises a question in the mind of his readers that it might not raise in ours so much. We live at the end of 2,000 years of church history where we are kind of used to the idea that most Jews are not Christians.

Judaism is a separate and rival religion. And so we might not think it immediately as his readers of his day would. Wait a minute.

Why aren't the Jews saved? Isn't that strange that they are not saved? See, to us it is not so strange because we are used to it after 2,000 years. Most of the Jews are simply not followers of Christ. But in the first century it seemed very much like they should be.

If indeed Christ is the fulfillment of the promises God made to Israel that he would come and save them, why aren't they saved? Seems like they should be. Didn't God say that Israel would be saved? In fact, it was Isaiah that said this most clearly, that Israel would be saved in the Lord. If I can quickly find that.

I think it is in Isaiah 45. I don't believe I have it in my notes here. Ah well.

Maybe someone else will find it. Maybe we will just not find it right now. We will run across it later going through Isaiah.

But Israel will be saved in the Lord is actually the phrase. It is from Isaiah chapter 40 something. I thought it was 42.

But it looks like it is not. So the point is there are many references in the Old Testament. Certainly the whole theme of the messianic deliverer implies that Israel will be saved by the Messiah.

And what Paul raises as a conundrum in chapter 9 of Romans is they are not. The Jews are not saved. I wish they were.

I would give up my own salvation if it would save them, Paul said. Of course, entirely hypothetically you can't do that. But he raises the conundrum and then he answers it.

Now the question of how he answers it is one that is disputed among Christians. Some Christians think that to the question, why haven't the Jews gotten saved? Or the question, why is it that Israel has not been saved? The Messiah has come but Israel has not been saved. What is the explanation? The dispensational view is this.

Well, true, Israel has not been saved yet. It has been postponed. Someday at the end of

the world, just before Jesus comes back, then they will be saved.

So the dispensational thought about this is, true, Israel has not been saved. God's promises have not come true yet. But be patient.

Someday in the future, God will fulfill his promise to Israel to save them. And in the end, the nation of Israel will turn to Christ and be saved. That's the dispensational understanding of what Paul argues.

The problem is Paul doesn't argue that way. In fact, he argues it entirely differently. He says, the promises to Israel have been fulfilled.

He doesn't say they've been postponed until later. He says, ah, you're not seeing it rightly. In fact, it's not as if the word of God has failed to come true.

It has come true. This is his statement in Romans 9.6. He said, but it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. The word of God, he means, is the promises God made to save Israel.

Have these failed to come true? No, they have not failed to come true. It's not that he has failed to fulfill this promise. He's saying he has in fact fulfilled the promise.

But Paul then explains, but they are not all Israel who are of Israel. So the question is, did not God make a promise in the Old Testament that the Messiah would save Israel? Why aren't Israel saved? Paul says they are. But not all are Israel who are of Israel.

If you are looking at the unsaved Jews and saying God has failed to save Israel, you're making a mistake. You're thinking they're Israel. Not all who are of Israel, the nation, are Israel that God made those promises about.

There's a remnant. And Paul goes on to argue throughout this section. There's a remnant.

And it was the remnant that was to be saved. He says it without ambiguity later in the same chapter. In verse 27, where he in fact quotes Isaiah, chapter 10.

And in Romans 9, 27, he says, Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. So if the Old Testament teaches that Israel will be saved, Paul says, ah, yeah, but it also says only the remnant will be saved. Those who will not be saved may be such a multitude like the sands of the seashore.

The Jews, the children of Israel who are not saved, are a multitude. But the promise of salvation to Israel is only to the remnant of Israel who will be saved. And Paul is saying there is in fact that remnant saved to this day.

Jesus did come and save that remnant. And you can see Paul saying that in chapter 11. Where he says in verse 1 of chapter 11, I say then, has God cast away his people? He says, certainly not, for I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin.

God has not cast away his people whom he foreknew. Now, it's amazing how people can get this wrong. When the words are as clear and unambiguous as I think they could be asked to be.

The dispensational view takes this first question, has God cast away his people? And they say, you see, Paul here affirms that there is a future for Israel. Really? Does he? Has God cast away his people? They think Paul means permanently. Has God cast them away permanently? No, he's got something in mind for them later.

That's what the dispensationalism does. See, dispensationalists take the whole discussion of Romans 9-11 and make it different than what Paul's actual argument is. Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 is God promised to save Israel through the Messiah and he has fulfilled his promise.

But he only meant the remnant. He never meant the whole nation. Only the remnant will be saved, Isaiah said.

And that is how we're to understand Israel. Not all who are of Israel are Israel. The ones that God promised to save.

There's a remnant within Israel that is saved to this day and therefore his words have not failed to come true. Paul makes no reference here to a postponement of fulfillment, a failure of fulfillment for the time being that will later be turned around in the end times. Paul is not speaking about eschatology.

He's talking about Israelology. He's teaching the doctrine of Israel, not the doctrine of the future. And the doctrine of Israel is Israel does not mean all the Jews.

Israel means the faithful remnant. And has God promised to save that remnant? He has. Has he done it? He has.

Who do you think those people were on the day of Pentecost? Those 3,000. They were the remnant of Israel. And likewise as the gospel continued to be preached in Israel alone for a long time, the remnant of Israel was gathered in.

God saved them. The Messiah has saved Israel, the remnant. It's just that he's now added some Gentiles to their number.

And later in Romans 11, he points this out under the figure of the olive tree. The olive tree is Israel. Some of the Jews don't belong there.

Because of unbelief, they've been cut off. They're not part of Israel. But Gentiles who do believe have been added on.

So Israel now is believing Jews and believing Gentiles. Or what we would, of course, call the church. That is Israel.

But in Romans 11, Paul does not say, has God permanently cast off his people? Certainly not. He says, has God cast off his people at all? No. Not even temporarily he hasn't cast off his people.

And his answer in verse 2 of Romans 11 is he has not cast off his people whom he foreknew. Now that whom he foreknew is an important qualifier. Paul has used that phrase in chapter 8. In Romans 8, 29.

Whom he did foreknow. He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son. And whom he predestinated, he called.

And whom he called, he justified. And whom he justified, he glorified. In other words, the Christians.

The Christians are the ones that God foreknew. Paul says, has God cast off his people? Well, you may think his people are the nation of Israel. No.

His people are the ones that he foreknew. The believers within Israel and outside of the national Israel, they are the true Israel. God has never cast off his believers.

Not even temporarily. He's done nothing of the sort. And look what he says at the end of verse 1. I'm a Jew.

Well, what's that got to do with anything? Everything. It's the whole answer to the question, has God cast off his people? Has God cast off all the Jews? No, not the ones he foreknew. I'm an example.

I'm a Jew. And he didn't cast me off. Now, how could Paul's statement, I'm a Jew, I'm of Israel, how could that in any way contribute to an argument that God has in fact cast off the nation of Israel, but will later bring them in? If that's what Paul is teaching.

If Paul's doctrine was God has cast off Israel, but in the future will bring them in, what does him being a Jew have to do with anything relevant to that? But if what Paul is saying is God has saved the elect of Israel, and I'm an example. It makes his point. You see, his point has nothing to do about postponement of the promises later to be fulfilled in the future.

It has to affect that God has fulfilled his promises in Christ. He has done everything he said he would do for Israel. And of course, we have to understand Israel means the remnant.

Paul says, I'm one of those. And he goes on to say in verse 2, or do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah? How he pleads with God against Israel saying, Lord, they've killed your prophets, they've torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life. But what does the divine response to him say? I have reserved for myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

Verse 5, even so then, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. That is Paul's answer to why aren't the Jews saved? He says they are. There is a remnant.

Not future, at this present time. Paul's not talking about eschatology. He's talking about this present time.

He's saying God has not failed to fulfill his promise. Israel has to be redefined if you're going to understand what is meant by Israel. It's not all who are of Israel.

It's the remnant in Israel. And at this present time, not later, at this present time, God has reserved a remnant just as he did in Elijah's day. And Paul says, I'm one of them.

Case closed. God has fulfilled his promise. And then he gives the example of the olive tree.

And at the end of the example of the olive tree, he says this in verse 25, Romans 11, 25. For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that hardening, in part, has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. So all Israel will be saved.

As it is written, the deliverer will come out of Zion, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins. Obviously, the quotation of the verse in Isaiah that we springboarded from to get over into Romans.

Paul quotes this verse in Isaiah 59, verses 20 through 21. And he says, this is a verse that predicts what he's talking about in verses 25 and 26. What is that? Now there again, we have a difference between the dispensationalists and the non-dispensationalists, because the dispensationalist has decided that the salvation of Israel is in the future.

That God has not saved Israel, that God has not, he has postponed that, and the day will come when Israel, that is, those who are of Israel, the nation, that they'll be saved. And so with that as their presupposition, they read verse 25 this way. See if it reads this way when Paul wrote it.

They read it like this. For I do not want you, I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion. That temporary hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of Gentiles be coming, and then all Israel will be saved.

This is how I was taught to read these two verses. Not hardening in part, but temporary hardening. Not so all Israel will be saved, but then all Israel will be saved.

You notice these verses are read as if they're giving a chronology of events. A temporary situation has set in, but not forever. Once the Gentiles have come in, then Israel will get saved.

And this is the way these verses are taught by the vast majority of preachers today. But is that what it says? Paul says nothing about temporary. The hardening of Israel is not said to be temporary.

He said it is hardening in part. But what does in part mean? It means part of the nation of Israel was hardened. The other part wasn't.

He does not say that those who were hardened are going to be unhardened someday. After all, Paul is talking about situations in his own time. The Jews who were hardened in his day, many of them died hardened.

They're not going to get unhardened. They're dead. He's not speaking eschatologically.

You see, he actually makes this point in verse 7 of the same chapter. Earlier, in verse 7, he says, He means the nation of Israel has not obtained what it seeks, but the elect, that is the remnant, have obtained it. The rest were hardened.

He's not talking about some future thing. He's saying this is the way things stand. There is the nation of Israel.

The elect within the nation have obtained salvation. The rest have not. They were hardened.

So when he says in verse 25, hardening in part has happened to the nation of Israel, it means part of them were hardened and part of them were not. There is no implication of a change. But you might think there is when he says until.

Because until sounds like maybe this is a temporary situation. But not always. Until means this will prevail until some end point.

What is the end point? When the fullness of the Gentiles are going to come in. Okay, when is that? For all we know, that is when Jesus comes back. That is once the last Gentile has gotten saved, if Jesus comes back at that moment, that's the end.

It does not mean that the situation with the nation of Israel is going to change necessarily, but that is going to prevail all the way until the end. It's a permanent situation. And in the meantime, what's God doing? He's gathering in the Gentiles.

Some Jews too, by the way. There's Jews being saved all the time. In Israel right now,

there's Jews being converted to Christ every day.

And in America, there are many Jews who are converted. But in general, part of the nation is to this day, and as far as we know, will remain hardened. There have been 50 generations of Jews since Paul's time.

Those who were hardened mostly died hardened. This is not a temporary hardening for them. It's permanent.

But Paul says this condition of partial hardening of the nation continues while God goes about His business of bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles. Then verse 26 says, And so, he does not say, and then, as if, okay, this is a later development now, all Israel will be saved. Like, okay, once the Gentiles will come in, then God's going to save the Jews like He promised in the Old Testament.

No, He doesn't say, then. He says, so. The word in Greek means thus, or in this way.

It even means that in English. So means like this. In this way, all Israel will be saved.

What does that mean? What way? He's summarizing what He said in the previous verses. And before 25, what was He saying? He's saying there's this olive tree. It's called Israel.

Some of the branches have been broken off because of unbelief. Other branches are now added, who are Gentiles, who are added because of their belief. In this way, God's saving all Israel.

Not just the Jewish part. The Gentile part, too. The fullness of the Gentiles being come in is part of the process of all Israel being saved.

Because that fullness of the Gentiles who come in is also being grafted into Israel. And in that way, God is fulfilling the promise that Israel will be saved. It's just not Jewish.

It's multinational. Abraham's seed will bless every family on the face of the earth. All the nations will be blessed in him.

The children of Abraham are not Jewish exclusively. Paul said in Galatians chapter 3, Those who are of faith are the children of Abraham. I'm of faith.

In Galatians, I think it's 3:28, Paul says, If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed. And the heirs according to the promise. I'm Christ's, then I'm Abraham's seed.

I'm in. I'm not a Jew. But I'm in Israel.

And that's because I'm a Gentile who got grafted into that olive tree which is Israel. Now you might say, Steve, you're just presupposing that the olive tree represents Israel. No,

I'm getting that from the Bible.

In Jeremiah 11.16 Jeremiah 11.16 Jeremiah says to Israel, You were called the green olive tree. And your branches have been broken off. He's talking about being carried off into Babylon.

But Israel or Judah is called the green olive tree. With branches broken off. Paul picks up that image and says, yeah, there's branches broken off because they don't believe in Jesus.

And you've been grafted in. Into what? The olive tree. Which is what? Israel.

Israel is therefore, as I said earlier, defined by being in the covenant. Being faithful to the covenant. Being a disciple of Jesus.

Through faith. So, Paul then quotes, to make his point, Isaiah. In the passage we were looking at, Isaiah 59, 20-21.

Which is about the new covenant. Which is about now. Not some eschatological future.

So, the redemption that is mentioned. In verse 20 of Isaiah 59. The redeemer will come to Zion.

And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob. Is the redemption from sin through Christ. That's what Paul quotes it to refer to.

Being redeemed into the church. Redeemed into the body of Christ. I never was in Egypt or Babylon.

I haven't been redeemed from those places. But coming into Christ, I had to be redeemed out of the world. Out of the bondage to sin.

And so, that redemption is in view. In Isaiah 52, 3. Isaiah 52, 3. God says, for thus says the Lord, you have sold yourself for nothing. And you shall be redeemed without money.

Redemption in this case, in the primary context. Seems to be a reference to rescue from Babylon. But certainly, the idea of being redeemed without money.

Has its antitype in Christ. And Peter, of course, says almost exactly those very words. In 1 Peter 1, verse 18.

You were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold. But with the precious blood of Christ. Same thought, of course.

You were redeemed without money. But not without cost. In Isaiah 52, 9. It says, break forth into joy.

Sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem. For the Lord has comforted his people. And he has redeemed Jerusalem.

Now, this context. As you can see, simply by looking before and after it. Is about the present age.

And the time of Jesus and since. Because immediately after that. We have the messianic prophecy that begins in Isaiah 52, 13.

And runs all the way through Isaiah 53. But immediately before this verse, we have verse 7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news. Paul quotes this in Romans as being about the preaching of the gospel today.

So, the passage in Isaiah is about Christ's salvation. And the gospel being preached in the present age. And it's in that context.

Break forth into joy. Sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem. That would be the spiritual Jerusalem, of course.

The church. For it says, the Lord has comforted his people. And has redeemed Jerusalem.

We are the redeemed Jerusalem. That is the time frame of this passage in Isaiah. According to New Testament citations of it.

Now, in Isaiah 61. Verses 1 and 2. We read, 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. To proclaim liberty to the captives. The opening of prison to those who are bound.

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Jesus, we know, quoted these verses in Luke chapter 4. And said, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. But having noticed that.

Look at chapter 43. I should point out, by the way, the last part of verse 2. And the day of vengeance of our God. We've had reference to that previously.

And where we saw it before was in chapter 63. Verse 4. Where Jesus apparently is seen with blood splattered over his robes. And they say, where did this blood come from? Why do your robes look so red? He says, because I've been trampling on my enemies.

He says in verse 4, because the day of vengeance is in my heart. The year of my redeemed has come. Now the acceptable year of the Lord.

Is linked with the days of the vengeance of our God. Both in Isaiah 61, 2. And Isaiah 63, 4. The year of the redeemed, the acceptable year of the Lord. Jesus said has come now.

It is fulfilled in your hearing. Obviously it's talking about the present age of salvation. Is the acceptable year of the Lord.

But linked with that is the day of vengeance of our God. Which as we pointed out from Luke chapter 21. Jesus said that when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies.

In 87 he said these are the days of vengeance. That all things written may be fulfilled. So the day of the vengeance of our God appears to be a reference to.

The collapse of the old order in Jerusalem. Synced more or less with the introduction of the new order. Overlapping somewhat because Jesus introduced the new order.

40 years before the old one collapsed. But nonetheless that transition period is in view with these statements. But you know this is talking about redemption.

Redemption of God's people from sin. But also at the cost. Just as Egypt was given as a ransom for Israel in the first Exodus.

Old Jerusalem was given as a ransom for the rescue of his people. Who were persecuted thereby in the new. Many times we lose sight of the fact that Jerusalem.

The old Jerusalem was the first and foremost persecutor of the church. Until 70 AD. It's true Nero prior to that persecuted Christians in Rome.

More or less seeking a scapegoat. Because of the charges that were brought against him in the public. That he had set Rome on fire.

Which he probably did. In order to defray the opprobrium of the public. He said no the Christians did it.

And so he persecuted the Christians for a few years. To prove that he really believed it. And that was Roman persecution.

But it was not. They weren't really persecuted for Christ's sake. They were persecuted because they were an unpopular minority in the society.

And it was only later emperors that persecuted Christians. Because they wouldn't bow the knee to the Caesar. In other words for religious reasons.

But until AD 70. The primary persecutor of the church was Jerusalem. And the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

According to Jesus in Matthew 23. Was the judgment of God on them for the shedding the blood of apostles and prophets. And the book of Revelation seems to echo that thought.

So just as Egypt was the persecutor of Israel. And God gave Egypt as a ransom to

redeem Israel. So Jerusalem was the persecutor of the church.

It's the Sanhedrin. The rulers of Jerusalem had Jesus crucified. And Stephen Stone the first martyr.

And sent Saul out to persecute Christians far and wide. And when he got saved they sent people out to persecute him. The enemy of the church was not originally Rome or the pagans.

It was apostate Jerusalem. And the fall of Jerusalem was the end of that situation. Just like the fall of Egypt at the Exodus.

Was the deliverance and the beginning of a new order in the Old Testament. So the idea of God's redemption. Is a recurring theme in Isaiah.

Sometimes linked with the idea of the Exodus. Sometimes linked with the idea of rescue from Babylon. Sometimes the ideas are mixed because they are seen as.

Almost Siamese twins. Two of the same. Two peas in the pod.

And both are then morphed into a greater redemption. From a greater enemy. Which is sin.

And so Jesus comes to save his people from their sins. And that function of the Messiah. Is referred to God redeeming his people.

Yet a third time. Alright well we're closing with that.