



“The LORD Takes Away & Creates Again”

Isaiah 3:1-4:6

October 2, 2022

This morning we open the Bible to a scene of total collapse. The pillars of society are being taken away so that things fall apart. The luxuries of life are being stripped away so that the wealthy weep and mourn. As one author pointed out, “As Isaiah peers into the kind of social disintegration that we all fear, he sees God there.”

The Lord is at work right there in the midst of it all. In fact, it is the work of the sovereign Lord bringing discipline upon His decadent people, who have become bold and brazen in their sin.

So let us prepare ourselves for the fact that what we are about to read is solemn in the extreme. It will unfold before us in three scenes: two scenes of devastating removal and one scene of tremendous provision.

First we will see the removal of societal stability in Chapter 3 and Verses 1 through 15. Then we will see the removal of conceited finery in the language of the text in Chapter 3 and Verses 15 through Chapter 4 and Verse 1. Then we will see the provision of glorious nobility in Chapter 4 and Verses 2 through 6.

We will understand that all the while God is moving in grace, leading His people to repentance. Yes, sometimes God will lead us into loss that feels catastrophic in order that He might enrich us with everlasting gain.

Let’s see how this unfolds as we read beginning in Isaiah Chapter 3 and Verse 1 all the way to Chapter 4 and Verse 6. Please follow along as I read.

**¹For behold, the Lord God of hosts
is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah
support and supply,
all support of bread,
and all support of water;
²the mighty man and the soldier,
the judge and the prophet,
the diviner and the elder,
³the captain of fifty
and the man of rank,
the counselor and the skillful magician
and the expert in charms.
⁴And I will make boys their princes,
and infants shall rule over them.**

**⁵And the people will oppress one another,
everyone his fellow
and every one his neighbor;
the youth will be insolent to the elder,
and the despised to the honorable.**

**⁶For a man will take hold of his brother
in the house of his father, saying:**

**“You have a cloak;
you shall be our leader,
and this heap of ruins
shall be under your rule;”**

⁷in that day he will speak out, saying:

**“I will not be a healer;
in my house there is neither bread nor cloak’
you shall not make me
leader of the people.”**

**⁸For Jerusalem has stumbled,
and Judah has fallen,
because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD,
defying his glorious presence.**

**⁹For the look on their faces bears witness against them;
they proclaim their sin like Sodom;
they do not hide it.**

Woe to them!

For they have brought evil on themselves.

**¹⁰Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them,
for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds.**

**¹¹Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him,
for what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him.**

**¹²My people—infants are their oppressors,
and women rule over them.**

**O my people, your guides mislead you
and they have swallowed up the course of your paths.**

**¹³The LORD has taken his place to contend;
he stands to judge peoples.**

**¹⁴The LORD will enter into judgment
with the elders and princes of his people;
“It is you who have devoured the vineyard,
the spoil of the poor is in your houses.**

**¹⁵What do you mean by cursing my people,
by grinding the face of the poor?”
declares the Lord GOD of hosts.**

¹⁶The LORD said:
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty
and walk with outstretched necks,
glancing wantonly with their eyes,
mincing along as they go,
tinkling with their feet,
¹⁷therefore the Lord will strike with a scab
the heads of the daughters of Zion,
and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.

¹⁸In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; ¹⁹the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; ²⁰the headdresses, the armllets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; ²¹the signet rings and the nose rings; ²²the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; ²³the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.

²⁴Instead of perfume there will be rottenness;
and instead of a belt, a rope;
and instead of well-set hair, baldness;
and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth;
and branding instead of beauty.

²⁵Your men shall fall by the sword
and your mighty men in battle.

²⁶And her gates shall lament and mourn;
empty, she shall sit on the ground.

4And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, “We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach.”

²In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. ³And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, ⁴when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. ⁵Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. ⁶There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

And because the Lord God of Hosts has spoken we say Amen. May God bless the reading of His Word.

Among the many talents that our dog Lydie has is thievery. She is a thieving Black Lab German Shepherd Mix. Any plate of food that goes unattended in the living room is at risk. Any food that is left over from dinner that is left on the counter or the stove, it might not be there when we go back into the kitchen. She is a thieving, thieving dog!

One time we were eating rotisserie chicken for dinner. It was the kind of chicken that you eat off the bone. Sure enough, Lydie sniffed her way to some leftovers. And I saw that slow, sneaky walk she does when she has laid hold of something and she doesn't want us to know about it, and she is trying to get away with it.

I saw it and I said, "Lydie-Lou! What do you have?" And she did not want to admit to anything. She tried to hide it. But upon further investigation, sure enough, there was a chicken leg buried in her mouth.

What would happen if I told Lydie that it was okay and to go ahead and eat it? Enjoy! What if she just went ahead and tried to grind that leg bone up in her mouth with the few remnants of meat, skin, tendons, and with a whole lot bones. What would have happened if she would have swallowed and ingested those shards, first going through her esophagus and then into her stomach? That would not be good for her, would it?

Being the mean, unreasonable, dogie master than I am, I said, "Lydie, release it!" She was like, no! She did not say no, but she said, "No!" She would not release it, so I took action to reach my hand into her jaws to remove the chicken bone, and Lydie did not like that one bit. She growled and threatened, but I prevailed because she was not going to swallow that bone.

I think there is a faint picture there of what was happening in Judah and Jerusalem in Isaiah's time. As we have read, the people became so unabashed and shameless in their idolatry in so many manifestations of their sins—in their sexual license and perversion, in their greed and in their willingness to inflict harm on other people to maintain the lifestyles that they wanted.

Israel was filled with idolatry and sin lodged in the jaws of the people of God. It was to the degree that their speech and their deeds were against the Lord, defying His glorious presence. Isaiah described all that was happening and that even their faces were bearing witness against Him.

They proclaimed their sin like Sodom. They did not try to hide it. We are not talking about things that they committed, knowing the guilt of it and trying to hide it. No, it was just flagrant and out in the open. They were proclaiming their sin. This is the exact opposite of confessing sin.

When you confess your sin, it is done in a spirit of contrition, seeking mercy and repentance from the Lord. But the proclamation of sin as described here Isaiah, it was like publicizing and parading the sin. This is what comes of a society of people who become authorities unto themselves; who decide in their own eyes what is right and what is wrong in spite of what the Creator of everything has revealed to be true and good and pure.

So we see throughout this portion of Scripture that the Lord was taking action to lead His people to repentance, so that the bone shards would not be ingested. We see in this text, as we see throughout Isaiah, the imagery of the Assyrian and the Babylonian invasions which caused society to unravel and which caused many, many people to come to humility and to repent and have their lives aligned with the good will of the Lord, finding forgiveness in His grace.

Brothers and sisters, let us take to heart that God's purging discipline can happen in the lives of His people today, in the lives of churches today, and even in nations when we find sin and idolatry attractive and try to hold on to it in defiance of God. He will take measures to lead us to repentance as we see Him doing here in this text.

So maybe it is a sexual ethic that the Creator of all things has forbidden and we decide to endorse, affirm, and even practice it. Maybe it is a so-called spirit of inclusiveness that wants to declare all forms of religion and worship to be equally valuable so that we begin to mock and deride the assertion that there is one true God, the Triune God, who has sent His Son to be the one and only Savior of the world. Yet such an idea is dismissed and rejected in the face of the glory of the holiness of God.

Maybe it is ill-gotten wealth and materialized greed, so that we are willing to trample others to get and to maintain what we want. There are so many ways that the spirit of idolatry can rise up and manifests itself in a people.

This happens in churches, so we must seek God for humility and grace so that we might be aligned with His will because the Lord has revealed to us that His eyes are holy, holy, holy. His eyes are so holy that He cannot look upon sin without bringing it to due judgment.

So we praise Him for the mercy that He pours out, bringing us into alignment with His good and perfect will, raising up new lives that are in accord with His holiness and love. Sin is much more serious than our fallen hearts want to acknowledge, so we need God to revive our hearts and gives us eyes to see.

Here in this portion of Scripture, we see two scenes of removal that prepares the way for another scene of eternal and everlasting gain. In Chapter 3 and Verse 1, we see that God said that He is taking away something from His people. We see that language used.

Then in Verse 13, God said again that He will take away something further. But then in Chapter 4 and Verses 2 through 6, in the gain section, God went on to say something that we don't expect. We might expect that He would say that He was going to give something back, but instead He said that He is going to create something new! It is glorious nobility that we are designed to live in, according to His perfect will.

That is our gain, and it is better than we can ever expect or imagine and is far better than we could ever deserve. And God knows how to enrich His people through loss, leading them to repentance, finding forgiveness for our many sins.

So let's glean from what Isaiah said to the people of God, first to Judah and then to the people of God all throughout the ages, because there is great relevance for us here. In all of this, the Lord is leading His people to repentance which is such a beautiful word, brothers and sisters. Having lives aligned with what the honorable, loving Creator of all things intends. Turning away from wickedness and evil to walk in the ways of the Lord.

To lead His people to repentance, first we find in this text that:

1. The Lord takes away societal stability (3:1-15)

That is all throughout the section that is contained in Chapter 3 and Verses 1 through 15. This section is surrounded by the Lord God of hosts. That phrase is in Verses 1 and 15. The prophet envisioned the powerful Lord taking something away from His people. What did the Lord take away? It says "support and supply."

This starts off by specifying bread and water. All supplies of bread and all supplies of water. Two and a half years ago, our society just about lost its collective mind when the toilet paper supply was exhausted. Imagine if the bread and water isles were emptied, understanding that bread is kind of the staple. People probably went for the meat and tri-tip prior to that. Could you imagine that sense of desperation that would rise up. What we see here is the picture of famine that ensued when foreign armies surrounded Jerusalem, putting it in a stranglehold.

Then God went on to explain why the meltdown accelerated. This is stated emphatically in Verses 2 through 4. It is because God was taking away any hint of competent leadership and replacing all with metaphorical boys and infants. Weak, wavering, shallow-minded boys and impulsive, whining, crying infants would rule the land, according to the Word of the Lord through Isaiah.

With this, society dissolves into chaos. The population begins to devour itself. Youth are rude and obnoxious toward the seniors of society. Sorted people are showering the honorable with insults.

Then we see that in their desperation, people started looking around for anybody, anyone, with the slightest indication of ability for leadership. One man says his brother has a cloak, so he approaches his brother and says, "Hey, you have the suit. Those are some nice threads. You have some food that is left in your cupboard, you must have some kind of management ability." Then the person who is being appealed to says, "I'm no healer. Don't look to me to lead the people." So there is a reluctance and unwillingness to shepherd.

So the warning here for every generation is this: one way God judges His people in their defiance is by depriving them of worthy or even competent leaders. This is the case in civil society. This can be the case in churches too. When the ways of God are disdained, leaders worthy of being called leaders will disappear and things will fall apart. The center no longer holds. Apostasy spreads.

God is at work in the midst of all of this, bringing His people to humility so that instead of having hearts hard and necks resisting the ways of the God who created everything, they will be humbled and brought back into alignment with His will and into His mercy and His grace.

In contrast to all of this don't we see depicted here, trustworthy leaders? Godly leaders. Leaders pursuing Christ-likeness of characters. Leaders pursuing strength in the Lord and humility of spirit are such a gift from God. It was God who gave the most important leaders of them—some prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastor-teachers, and elders and deacons.

One sign of revival among the people of God is a longing sense of desire for leaders and shepherds and teachers and pastors who will tell them the truth about God. Who will yearn that the Word of the Lord in all of its totality will be released upon the people of God like a life-giving fount. That people will long for leadership and the bold proclamation of the Word of God.

With that longing for strong, gracious leadership will come a growing sense of responsibility among the MEN of the church to guide the flock of the Living God. Among the MEN to step into the void, to step in and care for the people of God—to feed them and to shepherd them.

We praise God for all the ways in which He anoints the women and the sisters to be active in awesome ministry in the church, but let us understand that there is a way in which men are designed for leadership and when men are weak and passive and are reluctant to lead, it is to the harm of the church. But when men are filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, saying, "Who am I to go and lead the people of God, but He has given me an impulse to do so," what a gift from God.

Here we are forty-years into the history of Bethel Grace, let us pray that within the hearts of the men of the church fountains of grace will open up, saying, "Help me to lead however You call me to lead in the pattern and in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ." In the home. In the classroom. Around the elder table. Let's pray that leaders, by the work of the Spirit, will proliferate because we see the chaos that ensues when men become weak and passive. This is laid out before us here in this text.

In Verses 1 through 15, Isaiah saw loss for his generation. The loss of stability as real leaders disappeared and the people entered into anarchy. But in the second major section, we come to yet another scene of loss. This time God is taking something else away. We continue on in what is revealed to us through Isaiah:

The Lord leads His people to repentance. In order to do this:

2. The Lord takes away conceited finery (3:15-4:1)

This is what we see in what is written in Chapter 3 and Verses 15 through Chapter 4 and Verse 1.

I wonder if you noticed when we read through this text earlier, that the focus of attention moved to the women. It was hard to miss, wasn't it?

It was hard for me to miss when I was reading through Isaiah months ago in preparing for this series. I was asking the Lord how I was going to teach this! Well, I think I teach it with honesty and straightforwardness about what it says and what it means.

Many of the women of Jerusalem became obsessed with the trappings of cosmetic beauty and high-end fashion, super expensive clothing—all of the finery in the language of the text. As we take this in, let us understand that the desire to enhance the beauty of the human body and persona is not the main problem.

By the way, Isaiah would have been very familiar with another book in the Old Testament called the Song of Solomon, where many of the same accessories fall under the blessing and the smile of the Living God.

The problem here was the absurd arrogance of it all. Everything that was going on with the women mentioned here, it was all designed to attract public attention—the posture, the demeanor, the twinkling of the jewels, and the sway of the hips. Each of these women, they wanted all eyes on them. They were looking for attention.

When eyes were drawn to her face, the expression that you would find was a stuck-up expression of smug arrogance toward most, and seductiveness toward a few. Verses 16 through 18 are the heart of this entire section.

**¹⁶The LORD said:
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty**

That is not a word that we use too often. I don't use that word very much, except when I am reading it in Scripture. I have used some words that are synonyms of it that maybe you are more familiar with. They were arrogant, conceited. They were snobbish women, looking down on everybody else.

This is stated in full knowledge that there are also snobbish men who like to strut around like peacocks, thinking that they are better than everybody else. But here the attention is on the women of Jerusalem.

This is the issue. It says in Verses 18 through 21, that this is all flowed out of the arrogance that was taking root in their hearts. Reading Verses 16 through 18 again:

**¹⁶The LORD said:
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty
and walk with outstretched necks,
glancing wantonly with their eyes,
mincing along as they go,
tinkling with their feet,
¹⁷therefore the Lord will strike with a scab
the heads of the daughters of Zion,
and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts (foreheads (NASB), scalps (NIV)).**

18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescent

And Verses 18 through 21 go on to include an inventory of twenty-one fashion accessories, itemizing all of the luxury they were basking themselves in as a public display of the self. And God said, “I am going to take it all away,” much to the chagrin of Versace, Chanel, Prada and all the rest. Even the handbags? Yes, the handbags too.

Verse 17 is the most sensitive verse, isn't it? What is that saying? The Hebrew language translated *secret parts* is in fact very rare. Even this text doesn't specify what is being addressed, so I appreciate how the New American Standard and the New International Version of the Bible help us to understand this. The parallelism of the passage helps us to understand that this is speaking of perhaps their foreheads, maybe even their scalps as hair is lost.

Head coverings were the norm in Jewish society as they remain so in some part of the world today. So, the vision here is that the fashion queens of Jerusalem would not only lose their headbands, headdresses, and their head coverings, but they would lose their hair, possibly with the spread of some kind of infectious disease, because the language used here is also used for leprosy elsewhere in the Old Testament.

So the idea here is that there was a day of reckoning coming and on that day for these women, all of the cosmetics would be removed. The makeup would be removed. The big wigs would be removed. The super-expensive, flashy garments would be removed. All those things would be taken away. They would still have sackcloth garments.

But when all of that was taken away, the result would be the realization in the eyes of society that, “Oh, she is just like all the other women after all. She just had more money for cosmetics and expensive garments.” And the women who thought of themselves with such preeminence and advantage above the rest would be humbled.

This week I saw a picture of a chicken. This chicken was submerged in a small pail of water. When I think of a chicken, I think of a big old puffy creature. Well, that chicken with all of its feathers wet, was tiny! And for some reason, that picture keeps coming to mind with this. All puffed up and then suddenly, that's it?

The person puffed up seeking others to look at them, are just like everybody else and they thought themselves elevated above everybody else. That is what is being addressed here. At the heart of it, we have the sin of pride and conceit, which is not fitting the people of God—the men and women of God in the Lord.

In contrast to this, there is a deeper beauty that Jesus is presenting within the women of God; a secret beauty of a Christian woman. It is the persona radiant with the fruit of the Holy Spirit in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and all the rest. The kind and gracious spirit with eyes that look toward others more than trying to get all eyes on self.

This is how the women of God are adorned with beauty, and it is lovely. And a woman of God filled with God is beautiful whatever her age, whatever her features. She is sanctified and distinct in Christ Jesus the Lord.

There is a sense for men and women in which grooming ourselves in culturally appropriate ways shows respect for other people. Sisters, it is good for you to wear makeup. That is what we do, right? So to do that is just fine in ways that are in keeping with the basic patterns of culture and that are not designed to say, “Look at me in my superiority to her.”

It shows respect for people when you groom yourself. This is for the men too. I spend some time making sure that this goatee is trimmed up. I spend time washing and combing my hair in the morning. Actually what happens the older I get is that I spend less time brushing my hair and more time trying to get it properly placed.

God has given us these bodies. We want to take care of them, and we want to present them well. That is a good thing. But we must know where beauty truly comes from. It is a fount that comes from within. That is beauty.

I hope it is not wrong for a man to say this, but I have heard so many women say that they love this quote about wearing makeup. A pastor by the name of J. Vernon McGee said this about makeup, “If the barn needs painting, you paint the barn.” So we take care of ourselves and we groom ourselves and we present ourselves in a way that is going to be respectful toward the people that we are amidst. There is Christian maturity in that.

But there is a deeper beauty that we are pursuing. So with the help of God, let us repent of snobbery and walk in humility. There is an old song by the Red Hot Chili Peppers that I actually found was a cover for Stevie Wonder. But I love their song, “If you see me getting high, if see you me getting mighty, knock me down!” That is what the Lord is doing here, leading His people to the beauty of godliness and repentance.

So in this text, God’s people were having things taken away from them. God is doing it. God says He is doing it. So often, God is taking credit for things and we don’t want to ascribe Him credit for what He says He is doing. God is doing it. It says that twice in this passage of Scripture.

If you are reading through Isaiah, you will see that he says it a lot more—about the sovereignty of God over even the hard times in life. Nothing is outside the control of the good God who reigns over all. He either permissibly allows or sometimes He is at work even in the midst of collapse like we are seeing depicted here.

However, in the end, He is preparing a future beyond imagination. He is removing the nasty, gnarly chicken bones that we tend to gnaw on and enjoy. God is removing them, leading us to repentance. For each one who repents, hearing the call of saving grace, there is the vision of future beauty that outshines all of the tragedy that occur in this world.

To lead His people to repentance:

3. The Lord gives a vision of future nobility (4:2-6)

This is glorious. We see the dignity and the purity and the honor of the future that the Lord has in store. My understanding is that Isaiah Chapter 4 and Verses 2 through 6 is another presentation of the Millennial Kingdom.

Understand that heaven has phases. Right now the current form of heaven is called Paradise in the pages of Scripture. The souls of the people of God are there in a very human form. Conscious as human beings, yet without their bodies. They are in soul and spirit in the presence of the Lord.

Then the eternal state is the New Heavens and the New Earth. Someday God is going to re-create everything. That is the great everlasting age to come, but between current paradise and the everlasting age to come, the Bible depicts a period of time that some call the Millennium because Revelation Chapter 20 says that it will last a thousand years.

Some good Bible scholars that I love and appreciate think that is all symbolic, but I am among those who say that the Millennium is literal. One thousand years on this earth with the curse released as the sin of Adam and Eve is lifted. Christ reigning on a glorious golden age that is to come in the days ahead of us, beginning at His return—the Second Coming.

Here we are taken into this time that is to come, this time of great nobility, living and serving and worshiping and rejoicing and celebrating with our King. In Verses 2 through 6, we see the future focal point of that kingdom. We see the people of that kingdom and we see the environment that is being prepared, even that will be created.

The joy of it all is depicted by the canopy, a wedding canopy that is pictured in Verse 5.

²In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.

It starts with that which will be the focal point of the kingdom in Verse 2. The branch of the Lord is the title used in prophetic writing pointing to the Messiah—to Jesus, the Christ. He will be like a fresh, full, green, healthy branch coming from and growing out of the fallen stump of the line of David.

The two expressions in Verse 2 I understand to be parallel of one another. I see the Bible teaching that during the millennium that the earth is going to be prolific with agriculture. Do you remember how we talked about that recently, how the farmer's markets are going to be opening everywhere?

But what we have here is parallel expressions. The branch of the Lord in this verse and the fruit of the land of Israel are one and the same, for Christ was born of the land of Israel in the flesh. This is Jesus and the lofty language that is used is worthy of Him.

Christ will be the focal point of it all. In all of the absurd displays of human peacockery that is described earlier on, we will see the humble, glorious, loving Christ. He will be beautiful and glorious. He is the standard.

In contrast to all of the weak, wavering leaders, He will be the leader that we have always longed for. He will be the pride and honor of Israel. Jesus is going to be the focal point. High and lifted up. Right now He is at work in His church. right now, among us producing that true standard of beauty and that true strength of leadership. This is pointing to future glory, but He is giving us power to live in this now, so let's follow Him. He is the focal point.

Then we see the community of nobility when we look at what it says in Verses 3 and 4. All of the language is used to describe those He saves.

³And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem

With the word “holy” we enter into the spiritual and ethical nature of the population that God is producing. Those who are living in this city with the Messiah are going to be changed.

They are going to be transformed. As it says, the filth will be washed away. The bloodstains removed from the hands. His people are transformed.

⁴when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning

The method of His cleansing will be done to meet the demands of His good and glorious standard of judgment and righteousness, and His method of cleansing will meet the demands of His burning requirement of holiness.

This is a cleansing that no human process could accomplish. This is a cleansing that can be done and was done only by the work of the Messiah, who saw His hands covered in blood when He was nailed to the cross; when our shame and guilt was imputed to Him and He paid the just price before the holiness of God for our sins, that we might be purified and made clean in the sight of God by this majestic and miraculous blood—that we might be covered in the adornment of His righteousness.

So He will take the filth of the daughters of Jerusalem upon Himself because He loves them. He will take the greed and the violence of the men of Jerusalem upon Himself because He loves them. And He will forgive and transform them and will put repentance and new desires in their hearts, and new streams of living in their walk.

Christ Himself is beautifying His own bride, the church. Christ is preparing her for the wedding. And if you are here this morning and you have not come to faith in Jesus Christ, you have not confessed your sins, thinking you are the captain of your own ship, we all like sheep have gone our own way.

We have followed sinful pursuits, and if you are here, saying you have been walking with haughtiness and it is coming upon your heart with conviction—or if you know that you have done harm to people with words or with hands—the Lord is beckoning you and He is calling you to repentance and salvation, which comes through the work of Christ who lived a perfect life of goodness and love in your stead and who died on the cross for the sins of people like us. Turn to Jesus and trust in Him.

What we see is that His love is an eternal love. Christ has a chosen bride. Each individual that will comprise the wedding part has been “recorded for life in Jerusalem,” according to Verse 3.

This is so much more than a census registry. All throughout the pages of the Bible we read of the Lamb’s Book of Life. We heard about it in Philippians earlier. Euodia and Syntheche names were recorded in the Book of Life. John the Apostle had a lot to say about the Lamb’s Book of Life.

It seems here that Isaiah spoke of it first. According to Motzer, a man who has written about Isaiah, “Names are written in this book from an elective decision of the Lord, a divine purpose expressed in the writing of the names in the Book of Life.” What a glorious thing to come to faith in Jesus, understanding that God has written your name there.

With a people purged of any spot, cleansed of all their guilt and shame, God now produces an awesome environment for the millennial honeymoon.

⁵Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. ⁶There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

We see this continuity in the biblical story. Miraculous manifestations of ages past are prophesied for ages in the future. This kind of visible manifestation of the glory of God was there over the tabernacle at the time of Moses. The glory of God was there at the time of Solomon, when the temple was dedicated. Now Isaiah looked forward where God’s presence is going to be covering the whole site of Zion, over the land of Israel. His glorious supernatural presence will cover His people.

Over that glory is a giant canopy. A wedding canopy, hinting at our intimacy with God and the joy that we will have in celebration with Him when we will feel sheltered in His presence forevermore, as depicted in Verse 6. If we can make beautiful environments like this, how much more the Lord God who created the Himalayas will produce the wonderful environment for us to dwell in.

Ray Ortlund said, “A pen that exceeds mine is required to convey the beauty of this.” Me too.

Johathan Edwards wrote, “There the glorious God is manifested and shines forth in full glory, in beams of love. And there this glorious fountain forever flows forth in streams, yea, in rivers of love and delight. And these rivers swell, as it were to an ocean of love, in which the souls of the ransomed may bathe with the sweetest enjoyment and their hearts, as it were, be deluged with love!”

So in view of the nobility that God is preparing for His people, brothers and sisters in Christ, let me ask you this: what chicken bone of sin and idolatry are you gnawing on when God is preparing for us a twenty-course meal at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb? What do you need to release to the Lord, because it is not in keeping with the character of His kingdom?

He brings us to repentance because repentance is good and full of grace and it is fitting in view of the Christ we serve. Confess it. Release it. Live in the power of the kingdom now, according to the honor of the sons and daughters that you are in Christ. Let us bask together in His love.

Will you join me in prayer.