

will have the LORD for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be over. Then all your people *will be* righteous; they will possess the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified. The smallest one will become a clan, and the least one a mighty nation. I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time” (Isaiah 60:19-22).

Ultimately, the great comfort witnessed, in our Haftarah this week, is that Israel will experience a future that is blessed by the fruits of righteousness. The Lord will be present in Israel’s life, and great unparalleled prosperity will come.

For Believers in Messiah Yeshua *today*, we acknowledge how He is the Light of the world (John 8:12). He also teaches His followers that they are also to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14), demonstrating good works to others, and removing all of the darkness of a sin-filled world. Being vessels that are filled with His presence, we each have the responsibility to convey the grace and mercy of God **to all who need it.**

As we seek to rest in these realities, we should be approaching the soon to come Fall feasts with humble, conciliatory hearts toward God and others. I pray that the Prophet Isaiah’s word gives each of you hope, as you seek to do your part to represent Him in this wicked and perverse generation—accomplishing some small role as He will fulfill His future promises to His people.

In the interim, as we await the completion of Isaiah’s prophecy, and the return of our Lord Yeshua—with wisdom and discernment let us fulfill our individual and corporate responsibilities! Let us know to reflect His light wherever He has us placed! May we know what our role is in His Kingdom, and be all that He has chosen us to be as the days of restoration proceed. This is an awesome task—and I am blessed to simply know that these promises even exist! May we be so fortunate as to see them come to fruition in our lifetimes!

Haftarah Nitzavim “Never Forsaken”

Isaiah 61:10-63:9

The end of the Torah cycle is nearing. In *Nitzavim* (Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20), Moses summarized his final plea to the people of Israel to choose life over death. This will come about by obeying the Lord and receiving His blessings, rather than receiving His curses for disobedience. It is always worth remembering that these final instructions were given not only to those preparing to enter into the Promised Land, but also all future generations who partake of the Biblical heritage and recognize the Lord God as their Creator:

“Now not with you alone am I making this covenant and this oath, but both with those who stand here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God and with those who are not with us here today” (Deuteronomy 29:14-15).

It is not only these final instructions from Moses which apply to us, but *also* the consoling words of the Prophet Isaiah. For the past six weeks, Isaiah’s messages have spoken about the eventual return of Israel to the Promised Land, and its corporate restoration to a right relationship with God. The seventh and final Haftarah of consolation, which we read this week, brings to closure the comforting reminder that the Lord will never forsake His people (Isaiah 62:4).

As our selection from the Book of Isaiah commences, the Prophet reminded his audience of the high position Israel had before all the other nations of the Earth. The analogy of a bridegroom to a bride reinforced the concept of an eternal covenant, despite a period of separation. We are reminded that God’s promises to Israel allowed Isaiah to speak forth how Israel will be brought into a significant position of future blessing and delight:

“I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate. You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. It will no longer be said to you, ‘Forsaken,’ nor to your land will it any longer be said, ‘Desolate’; but you will be called, ‘My delight is in her,’ and your land, ‘Married’; for the LORD delights in you, and *to Him* your land will be married. For *as* a young man marries a virgin, *so* your sons will marry you; and *as* the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, *so* your God will rejoice over you” (Isaiah 61:10-62:5).

The Lord promises to protect His people and the place that He has chosen to be special. Jerusalem is the focus of such praise, and God’s people are to be comforted greatly in seeing the picture of Jerusalem’s future glory—even those today, who see Jerusalem more as a cause of strife and contention in the world:

“On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The LORD has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm, ‘I will never again give your grain *as* food for your enemies; nor will foreigners drink your new wine for which you have labored.’ But those who garner it will eat it and praise the LORD; and those who gather it will drink it in the courts of My sanctuary. Go through, go

through the gates, clear the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, remove the stones, lift up a standard over the peoples. Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Lo, your salvation comes; behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.’ And they will call them, ‘The holy people, the redeemed of the LORD’; and you will be called, ‘Sought out, a city not forsaken’” (Isaiah 62:6-12).

Next, the scene slightly shifts as the emphasis moves to detailing the Lord’s work in redeeming His people. Notice that this is a physical redemption, where Israel’s enemies and the ungodly are judged. The Lord comes with might and strength and powerfully overcomes the enemies of Israel. Images of bloody warfare remind the reader that God’s wrath and vengeance will require a high price from those who oppose His will:

“Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength? It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.’ Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment. For the day of vengeance was in My heart, and My year of redemption has come. I looked, and there was no one to help, and I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; so My own arm brought salvation to Me, and My wrath upheld Me. I trod down the peoples in My anger and made them drunk in My wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth” (Isaiah 63:1-6).

Yet God is not One who judges without any mercy. Isaiah lauded the eternal mercies of the Holy One. The great attributes of His compassion and lovingkindness are epitomized in the strong declaration that He is indeed the Savior of His people:

“I shall make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has granted them according to His compassion and according to the abundance of His lovingkindnesses. For He said, ‘Surely, they are My people, sons who will not deal falsely.’ So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old” (Isaiah 63:7-9).

There is great comfort as the month of Elul prepares to come to a close, with the advent of the month of Tishri soon on the horizon. We will shortly be remembering *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah*, and a very serious time of spiritual reflection as the Ten Days of Awe lead us to *Yom Kippur*.

For sincere followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the culmination of Isaiah’s comforting words this week is almost like a crescendo in an orchestrated symphony, as the Day of Atonement approaches. For the past few weeks, times of *teshuvah* or returning to God, coupled with contrite reconciliation toward others,

dominate the thoughts and actions of many. Having these Isaiah passages to meditate upon are a great reminder that the Lord will fulfill His promises **as Savior of His people!**

I believe it would be beneficial for you to recollect all of the promises which are communicated throughout Isaiah chs. 40-66. As you do this, you might want to reconsider the opening verses of Deuteronomy 30, that in essence, bring these promises into a summary overview:

“So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live” (Deuteronomy 30:1-6).

We have two witnesses in Moses and Isaiah, who confirmed that the Lord is going to fulfill the purposes that He has predestined for His people. I consider it to be a great blessing to be able to witness elements of this beginning to take place at this very point in time! I am encouraged that more is going to happen as we move ahead and as the Messianic movement grows at the Father’s pace.

May we all take great comfort as we prepare to enter into the Fall feasts, knowing that they are all foreshadowing rehearsals of the great works of the Messiah!

Haftarah V'yeilekh “A Restoring God”

Hosea 14:2-10; Micah 7:18-20;
Joel 2:15-27

V'yeilekh (Deuteronomy 31:1-30) is one of the briefest Torah portions, where we see Moses’ in the final days of his life, and the Ancient Israelites preparing to end their desert sojourn. Moses was quite aware that crossing over the Jordan River and into the Promised Land was not for him, but rather for the generation—of those twenty and younger—which wandered in the wilderness and had been prepared by him: