

Isaiah 52:1-6

1. Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendor, O Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again. 2 Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, O Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, O captive Daughter of Zion. 3 For this is what the LORD says: "You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed." 4 For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them. 5 "And now what do I have here?" declares the LORD. "For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock, declares the LORD. "And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. 6 Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I."

What is a saint

SAINTS: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

I. Need strength, splendor, safety

A. Strength needed

1. In Babylon
2. Now
3. Given by promises of God

B. Splendor and safety

1. Spiritual splendor in Babylon
2. Spiritual safety in Babylon
3. Spiritual splendor now and forever
4. Spiritual safety now and forever

II. Need freedom and redemption

A. In Babylon

1. In dust and chains
2. God redeems without money

B. Now

1. We are in dust and chains
2. We are worth nothing
3. God buys us back
4. Jesus' action redeems
5. Jesus presence frees
6. Future perfect freedom and redemption

III. Have oppression, ridicule and knowledge

A. Oppression & ridicule

1. History lesson
2. "For nothing"- except blasphemy
3. Ridicule for us and God

B. Knowledge

1. Judah knew God
2. We know Promise Keeper
3. Knowledge will be perfect

Recap

IA1 The people of Judah in Isaiah's day needed strength. They had been deported to Babylon. As time passed they became more and more acclimated to Babylon. They became less and less connected with Judah and Jerusalem. They become more and more immersed in what was going on around them. Less and less interested in their relationship with the Lord. They needed strength if they were going to continue to have any relationship with the Lord at all. 1. "Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength." They had no such strength in themselves. Where would they get that strength? The Lord would have to provide them with the strength.

2 The people of God, we, need strength today. As time passes we become more and more acclimated to life in the here and now. We become less and less connected with the spiritual side of life. We become more and more immersed in what is going on in our lives. Less and less interested in our relationship with the Lord. We need strength if we are going to continue to have any relationship with the Lord at all. We have no such strength in ourselves. Where do we get that strength? The Lord has to provide us with that strength.

3 How does the Lord provide us with spiritual strength to keep on trusting that Jesus died to wash away our sins, lived a holy life to cover us with His holiness, and rose from the dead so that we can live forever so that we continue to have a relationship with the Lord? Through His words and promises. His promise that in the future we God's saints won't have to fight against godlessness and unbelief. His promise that in the future there will be no more sin and unbelief. God's promise that in the future we His saints will be triumphant over sin and unbelief gives us the strength to keep fighting sin and unbelief in the present.

B1 The people of Judah in Isaiah's day needed splendor. They had lost everything when they were taken captive. Their country, their city, their assets, and their clothes. God here reminds them that they can put on clothes of splendor anywhere, anytime. {1} "Put on your garments of splendor, O Jerusalem, the holy city." Their real clothes of splendor were spiritual.

2 The people of Judah in Isaiah's time needed spiritual safety. In captivity they had lost their temple, their status as God's separate people, & their worship of the one true God. God points them to a time when they won't be all mixed together with unbelievers and the ungodly. {1} "The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again." A time of spiritual safety.

3 The people of God, we, today need garments of splendor. No matter how hard we try we can't produce the garments of splendor that God demands which would make us acceptable to Him. We are sinners and don't produce righteousness. God covers us with the splendor of Jesus. He give us the holiness which Jesus produced for us as our Substitute. That makes us saints, holy people right now. In the future when we are with the Lord, we won't need Jesus' holiness applied to us anymore. We will be righteous personally. We will continue to be saints.

4 The people of God, we, today need spiritual safety. We are surrounded by people who oppose God's standard of truth and holiness, or try to mix in falsehood and error with God's standard of truth and holiness. God's promise that there will be a day when "the uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again," gives us the strength to not allow ourselves to be influenced by them in the present. God's promise means that we can be confident that when we are with the Lord we will be completely separated from all those who oppose God's standard of truth and holiness. We will continue to be saints, but we will be triumphant.

IIA1 {2}“Shake off your dust.” It was customary for mourners or sorrowful sinners to sit in the dust indicating humility, sorrow and repentance. {2}“Free yourself from the chains on your neck.” They were not literally in chains. But they were not free to do as they pleased. Could they free themselves from their chains so that they could shake off the dust of their sorrow? No.

2 So God says, {3}“You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed.” Though Judah was God’s special people, God allowed Babylon to come and take Judah captive free of charge. Why did God allow this? They had abandoned Him. They had buried themselves in idolatry and sin. They were worthless to God like that. So, He didn’t require any payment from Babylon for taking them into captivity. But God also says, {3} “and without money you will be redeemed.” God would deliver Judah out of captivity. He wouldn’t pay any money to Cyrus to free Judah. He would just cause things to happen in the Babylonian empire that would cause Cyrus the Persian to allow them to go back to Judah.

B1 The people of God, we, are all spiritually in the dust. Sinners all, we, if honest with ourselves, have to humbly and sorrowfully acknowledge that our sins have disrupted our relationship with God. Then there are the chains. Chained to our own sinful selfishness. Chained to our own addictions. Chained to the devil. No freedom. Can we free ourselves from the chains so that we can shake off the dust of our sorrow? No.

2 “You were sold for nothing.” What am I worth as a human being? David reminds us that we are sinful human beings at the time of our conception. Paul reminds us that we are the proper objects of God’s anger because of our sinfulness. What are we worth as sinful human beings? Nothing.

3 And yet God considers us worth enough to buy us back so that we might belong to Him once more. Viewed from the perspective of God’s love, we are worth a lot to Him. But He didn’t use money to redeem us. Quoting Luther: “Jesus redeemed us not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent sufferings, and death.”

4 God reminds in the text we are “redeemed without money.” Jesus’ action redeemed us. Jesus’ death bought us back from the guilt of our sins. Jesus’ suffering death and hell for us bought us back from the threat of that punishment. Jesus’ perfect life lived for us bought us back from our lack of self-produced holiness. Jesus’ resurrection bought us back from an eternity apart from the Lord. We have been redeemed by the work of Jesus. Because of the work of Jesus we are God’s people, holy in His sight, saints.

5 What about the chains? We are freed from them too. Jesus lives in us. He gives us the ability to love which frees us from the chains of our selfishness. Jesus lives in us. His presence controls us instead of our addictions. Jesus lives in us. The devil is evicted. Freedom. A gift from Jesus. Because of Jesus we rule over the opposition. We sit enthroned. That’s what being a triumphant saint means.

6 When Jesus takes us to Himself, we will be bought back from, perfectly and forever freed from the guilt and spiritual dust sitting caused by our sins. When Jesus takes us to Himself, we will be bought back from, perfectly and forever freed from the control of our own selfishness, our addictions, and the devil. When Jesus takes us to Himself, we will be bought back from, perfectly and forever freed from all the consequences of sin which overwhelm our world. With Jesus we will sit enthroned. That what being a triumphant saint means.

IIIA1 In verse 4 God gives us a history lesson: “At first my people went down to Egypt to live.” Joseph invited his extended family to come to Egypt to avoid the famine. They became slaves for 400 years. {4} “Lately, Assyria has oppressed them.” The nation of Israel was deported by Assyria and disappeared. 5 “And now what do I have here? My people have been taken away for nothing.” Babylon deported Judah.

2 The phrase “for nothing” is interesting. God didn’t get anything positive out of the captivity. It was for nothing. It was intended to bring Judah to repentance. Not much of that. God did get something from the captivity of Judah. 5 “Those who rule them mock. And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed.” It probably sounded like this: Well, would you look at Judah and the people of Jerusalem. Those are the folks who claim to be God’s special people who have God’s special protection. Look at them now. Captives. What kind of a God do they have to whom they are supposed to be so special? Must not be a God at all if he allows this to happen.

3 Sound familiar? You are such a pious Christian. But look at your life. You are not especially blessed. You are poor. What kind of God do you have who lets you be poor? You get sick just like everybody else. What kind of protection is your God giving you? You struggle with relationships just like everybody else. What kind of a god doesn’t pull strings to make things work out better? Must not be any god at all if he allows this stuff to happen. Ridicule. Comes with the territory when you are a saint, a child of God.

B1 6 “Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I.” Isaiah reminded the people of Judah of the promises of God. Even though they were in captivity, yet on a day appointed by God, they would be reminded of His name, His reputation as a promise keeper. God would deliver them. Then they would remember every promise that He made. Then they would have the confidence that He keeps every promise that He makes. And it all happened exactly that way.

2 6 “Therefore my people will know my name;” We know God’s reputation. It is the reputation of a promise keeper. He promised release from captivity in Egypt. It happened. He promised release from captivity in Babylon. It happened. He promised the Savior would come into this world. It happened. He promised the Savior would die and rise. It happened. That’s God’s reputation, a promise keeper. “Therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I.”

3 We are God’s people. Saints. We know God’s reputation. But there is a day appointed when that knowledge gets reinforced in perfection. “Come to me and I will give you rest.” We come to Him now and receive forgiveness and eternal life. We will come to Him on that day and grasp eternal life fully. “Cast all your anxiety on me.” So we do that now. But on that day our perfect knowledge of Him will remove all our anxieties. We will be saints triumphant.

Conc Saints past and present. People who need strength, splendor, safety, freedom and redemption. People who have oppression, ridicule and knowledge. Saints future. People who have strength, splendor, safety, freedom, redemption and knowledge. But no oppression or ridicule. Saints triumphant. LORD Jesus, thank You for making me a saint. I look forward to being triumphant.