

In the first portion of this chapter, the captives of Babylon were to be encouraged that God can do great things that seem impossible to man. He can bring a great nation out of an elderly couple (51:1-2). He can make barren places bloom like Eden (51:3). He can be a light to this dark world (51:4). He can make sinners righteous and give them eternal salvation (51:6-8). The future captives were told to quit fearing man and trust in the Savior who delivered them from Egypt, who stretched out the heavens, and who laid the foundations of the earth (51:12-13). God promised to bring them back to Jerusalem with great joy while providing their needs (51:11, 14). The Servant who is hidden in the hand of God created all things and delivered them from Egypt would raise up a king to deliver the captives and declared those captives would still be His own people (51:15-16). There are many rich parallels in that passage to our life in Christ.

The first "awake" came in verse 9. It was to the "arm of the Lord," who is Jesus (53:1).

Of course He does not sleep (Psalm 121:4). It is a call to Jesus arise to display His delivering power and bring the future captives out of Babylon. We could compare it to the ministry of Jesus in our spiritual deliverance from sin. That is predicted in the next passage, the fourth Suffering Servant Song. In it we are told the arm of the Lord was pierced for our transgressions (53:5).

Our passage today begins with the second call to "awake," or we could also translate it "to arise."¹⁷ *Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering.* Isaiah 51:17 This time the ones who are to arise are the people of Judah in captivity. They will have suffered as a consequence of their sins. God will see to it that they reap what they sowed to the full extent of the wrath His justice requires. Though Babylon would be the instrument of wrath, it was God who uses them as a bowl of wrath delivering justice upon Judah (Psalm 75:8). Judah is to arise and prepare to return to their homeland with lessons learned from the consequences of idolatry. After the discipline of the Lord, we are not to wallow in self-pity. We are to arise and take the lesson we learned into a renewed commitment to be faithful.

¹⁸ *There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up.* ¹⁹ *These two things have happened to you— who will console you?— devastation and destruction, famine and sword; who will comfort you?* ²⁰ *Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God.* Isaiah 51:18-20 Once again we have the evidence that this portion of Isaiah was written the same time as the first portion and not generations later. God is describing through Isaiah the devastation that would take place before and during the time that the people of Judah would go into captivity and the eventual return.

Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 53:1 (ESV)

¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

Commented [PW2]: Psalm 121:4 (ESV)

⁴ Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Commented [PW3]: Isaiah 53:5 (ESV)

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Commented [PW4]: Psalm 75:8 (ESV)

⁸ For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.

You might ask how he could describe their return and then jump back to the defeat that made them captives. God sees it all at once. In describing the wrath they would drink to the full, God predicted the initial wrath which would be the worst part, the devastation that would take place during the conquest of Jerusalem (Lamentations 2:11-12). The city they loved and longed for would lay in ruins. Their sons and daughters would perish by famine during the siege or in the battle. Their idolatry would take a heavy toll. It was their sins that separated them from God causing Him to lift His hand of protection (59:2). **When we insist on evil, we must realize that we are insisting on moving away from God. When we do so, we move out from under His protection.** We open ourselves up to the consequences of our sins. His wrath upon sin is often the natural consequences from our behavior. We sometimes ask God why He would allow our present condition without realizing it was our behavior that put us in that condition.

God has asked, "Who will comfort you?" He then becomes the comforter by saying He will take the cup of staggering from their hand (40:1; 51:12). ²¹ *Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine:* ²² *Thus says your Lord, the LORD, your God who pleads the cause of his people: "Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; the bowl of my wrath you shall drink no more;* Isaiah 51:21-22 One day they would no longer have to drink from the cup of His wrath. Judah's days of discipline would be numbered. Jeremiah the prophet predicted those days would number seventy years (Jeremiah 25:11). It is God alone who can remove His wrath. This is true for every life. **The good news is that Jesus removed from us the cup of God's just wrath** upon our sins and poured it out upon the cross (John 3:36).

God declares He will take the bowl of wrath out of the hands of Judah and put it in the hands of their tormentors. ²³ *and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, 'Bow down, that we may pass over'; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over."* Isaiah 51:23 One way ancient kings used to humiliate their enemies was to have them lay down in the streets and walk over their backs. Judah had suffered great humiliation, but now Babylon was about to experience what they had done to others.

I want us to look beyond the details of what was predicted, even beyond what happened when we came to Christ, and see God's final outpouring of wrath upon Babylon the Great (Revelation 16:19). She represents the world that refuses the grace and mercy of God and insists on rejecting His love. She has humiliated and persecuted the people of God throughout time (Revelation 17:6). At times God has used the wrath of this world's systems to get the people of God to return to Him. Just because God used the world to serve His purposes does not mean He does not hold it accountable.

The wrath in the book of Revelation is described as being poured out of seven bowls, just like the bowl mentioned here (Revelation 16:1). It will be poured out on a world

Commented [PW5]: Lamentations 2:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ My eyes are spent with weeping; my stomach churns; my bile is poured out to the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, because infants and babies faint in the streets of the city.

¹² They cry to their mothers, "Where is bread and wine?" as they faint like a wounded man in the streets of the city, as their life is poured out on their mothers' bosom.

Commented [PW6]: Isaiah 59:2 (ESV)

² but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Commented [PW7]: Isaiah 40:1 (ESV)

¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Commented [PW8]: Isaiah 51:12 (ESV)

¹² "I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass,

Commented [PW9]: Jeremiah 25:11 (ESV)

¹¹ This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Commented [PW10]: John 3:36 (ESV)

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Commented [PW11]: Revelation 16:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

Commented [PW12]: Revelation 17:6 (ESV)

⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.

Commented [PW13]: Revelation 16:1 (ESV)

¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

that has rejected God's gracious gift of salvation and gone their own way. Those who have humiliated and persecuted God's children will one day face the awakened arm of the Lord in the form of the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16).

Chapter 52 begins with the third call to awake, or arise. First Jesus was to arise and deliver the captives from Babylon. Secondly the people of Judah were arise to return with joy to their homeland. Now the call to arise goes out to all who will come to know Jesus as their Savior, the Jerusalem of God. *¹ Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean.* Isaiah 52:1 This third call is an introduction to the forth Suffering Servant song. Its superlative language tells us this is not only about previous restorations of Israelites to their land, but is the ultimate return of lost souls to the Servant Savior. Let me relate it phrase by phrase. While the previous "Awake" or "arise" have lessons for us, the third one is specifically for us today.

"Arise! Arise!" When we are wallowing in sin we are like the cursed serpent who ended up on his belly in the dirt because of his rebellion (Genesis 3:14). We can only arise out of the dust when we are enabled to end our rebellion by the grace of our Redeemer. "Put on your strength." The Lord is my strength (Exodus 15:2). "Put on your beautiful garments." It is a repetition. The Lord is my beautiful garments and my strength. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 13:8). The only ones clothed in righteousness are those who have put on the Lord Jesus! "Jerusalem, holy city," is the city of peace, those who are made holy by what Jesus has done and thus have peace with God (Romans 5:1). Every pain we deal with is from the uncircumcised hearts and unclean minds of man, redeemed or otherwise. The day will come when we will be set free from the persecution of this world and having to deal with fallen man's sin. Hallelujah!

This call to arise, to awake, will go out to the bodies of all who have died in Christ and those who remain on the earth (1Thessalonians 4:16-17). We will put on our heavenly bodies and we will soar into His presence. O come Lord Jesus! *² Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.* Isaiah 52:2 In contrast to the Babylonians who were taken off their thrones and made to sit in the dust, and then made to wear the yoke of hard labor (47:1-2), the people of Judah would rise from the dust to sit on thrones and be freed from slave labor. But this passage is speaking of much more than that partial fulfillment. It is of us shedding these frames of dust and rising to be seated with Christ in heavenly realms (Psalm 103:14). The bondage of the flesh, our sinful nature, will be eliminated. Transformed to the image of Christ, we will become His holy bride.

³ For thus says the LORD: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money."⁴ For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. Isaiah 52:3-4 Those who played a role in shaping the nation through affliction were not paid to do so.

Commented [PW14]: Revelation 6:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,

Commented [PW15]: Genesis 3:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

Commented [PW16]: Exodus 15:2 (ESV)

² The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Commented [PW17]: Romans 13:8 (ESV)

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Commented [PW18]: Romans 5:1 (ESV)

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Commented [PW19]: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Commented [PW20]: Isaiah 47:1-2 (ESV)

¹ Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate.

² Take the millstones and grind flour, put off your veil, strip off your robe, uncover your legs, pass through the rivers.

Commented [PW21]: Psalm 103:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

God moved them to do His will without cost. God would move the Persians to liberate them without being paid. God moves kingdoms for the salvation of His people. He uses the difficulties of life to shape and refine us.

⁵ Now therefore what have I here," declares the LORD, "seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail," declares the LORD, "and continually all the day my name is despised. ⁶ Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am." Isaiah 52:5-6 What is the result of the sins of Israel and their captivity? The rulers of Israel wail a lament. The nations despise Israel's God. But the byproduct of this discipline of captivity is that God's people come to know His name. That is that they come to know He is holy and jealous (Exodus 34:14). He will have no other God's before Him. His desires for us to be entirely His are for our good and for righteousness to be revealed in the earth. So, when He returns them from captivity without price, the world should take note that He alone is God. To make known His name is to reveal His nature. "Here I am!" He says. A day was coming when the One who is speaking to the heart of man through the prophet Isaiah would be right in front of them. He would reveal Himself.

Jesus nearly quoted the end of this verse to the woman at the well. She had said that she knew the Messiah was coming. Jesus said to her, "I am he, the One speaking to you." (Interlinear Translation of John 4:26) As the incarnate Word of God, Jesus revealed the nature of God. The people of God know the nature of God because of the life and words of Jesus. When Jesus comes again and finishes the work He started in us, we will know Him even as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12). The world will no longer despise His name because of our failures, but will love or hate Him for who He is.

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Isaiah 52:7 For those in captivity this would mean they would return to Jerusalem. Paul the apostle applied this verse to those who proclaim Christ (Romans 10:15). In the ancient world a runner would bring the city the news of a victory in battle (2 Samuel 18:24-27). The evangelist brings the good news of Jesus' victory over death and hell, giving us peace with God. What news of happiness that is, that we will not drink from the bowl of God's wrath. He publishes salvation and says to the people of God that our God reigns. He will not be defeated. His purposes will prevail. In this dark and fallen world, there is a bright light of hope. Those who share the good news of Jesus shine that light.

⁸ The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion. ⁹ Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. Isaiah 52:8-9 Are you watching for Him? Our King returns victorious from battle. When did the Lord leave Jerusalem? Ezekiel said the Spirit of God

Commented [PW22]: Exodus 34:14 (ESV)
¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),

Commented [PW23]: John 4:26 (ESV)
²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

Commented [PW24]: 1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV)
¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

Commented [PW25]: Romans 10:15 (ESV)
¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

Commented [PW26]: 2 Samuel 18:24-27 (ESV)
²⁴ Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he saw a man running alone.
²⁵ The watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, there is news in his mouth." And he drew nearer and nearer.
²⁶ The watchman saw another man running. And the watchman called to the gate and said, "See, another man running alone!" The king said, "He also brings news."
²⁷ The watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "He is a good man and comes with good news."

departed from Jerusalem when they went into captivity (Ezekiel 10:18-19). This looks forward to a day when His manifest presence returns, only this time He is seen eye to eye. It is the Lord coming suddenly to His Temple (Malachi 3:1). He came through the womb of Mary to redeem His people (Matthew 20:28). But the passage may also be referring to the Second Coming and the joy of His Millennial reign. He will be physically present then as well (Isaiah 24:23). The ultimate comforting of the people of God is not merely the return to the Promised Land, but the wiping of every tear from our eyes (Revelation 7:17). Imagine the joyful messengers that go around the world declaring Jesus reigns over the whole earth.

¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Isaiah 52:10 The holy arm of the Lord is Jesus, and the world has seen Him in the gospels and in His people. Everyone's eyes will behold Him at the Second Coming (Revelation 1:7). The word for "salvation" here is "Yeshua," the name of our Savior. I don't know if we will have video news feeds then, but imagine a newscaster saying, "We interrupt this program to bring you a message from the King of kings!"

¹¹ Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD. Isaiah 52:11 This was God's call for the priests who carried the vessels of the Temple to be ready to return them to Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul tell us it also applies to us (2 Corinthians 6:17). We are priest as well. We come out of Babylon the Great by walking with the Lord. We are to separate ourselves from the activities of the world that defile our souls. Since Christ has purified us by His blood, we are to live holy lives. We have become God's vessels dedicated to His service in this eternal temple of living stones.

¹² For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight, for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. Isaiah 52:12 The captives of Babylon would not be fleeing, they would have the approval of King Cyrus. The Lord went before them and was there rear guard, just as Ezra testified (Ezra 8:22-23). It was like the cloud that went before them in the Exodus and stood between them and the Egyptian army. As we come out of Babylon the Great, this world's evil influence, the Lord goes before us and is our rearguard as well. **God directs history to give us spiritual parallels.** We don't flee this world and hide in a monastery. We are in the world but not of the world (John 17:6, 14). The Lord surrounds us with His presence and empowers us to be witnesses to a world in darkness (Isaiah 43:13).

The first call to arise is to Jesus to rescue His people from captivity. The second was to the people of Judah in captivity to prepare to be delivered. This third call to arise was to the captives as well, but it is filled with implications of a greater deliverance. The mysterious way in which God would make all this possible is foretold in the fourth and final Suffering Servant Song. Awake people of God, and be prepared to rise!

Commented [PW27]: Ezekiel 10:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim.
¹⁹ And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth before my eyes as they went out, with the wheels beside them. And they stood at the entrance of the east gate of the house of the LORD, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them.

Commented [PW28]: Malachi 3:1 (ESV)

¹ "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

Commented [PW29]: Matthew 20:28 (ESV)

²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Commented [PW30]: Isaiah 24:23 (ESV)

²³ Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.

Commented [PW31]: Revelation 7:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Commented [PW32]: Revelation 1:7 (ESV)

⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

Commented [PW33]: 2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

Commented [PW34]: Ezra 8:22-23 (ESV)

²² For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him."
²³ So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

Commented [PW35]: John 17:6 (ESV)

⁶ "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Commented [PW36]: John 17:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Commented [PW37]: Isaiah 41:13 (ESV)

¹³ For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

Questions

- 1 To whom is the first "arise" given?
- 2 To whom is the second "arise" given?
- 3 What comfort did the captives receive?
- 4 What does the wrath on Babylon foreshadow?
- 5 To whom is the third "arise" given?
- 6 Review the meaning of 52:1.
- 7 What is the ultimate shaking ourselves of the dust?
- 8 How is the name of the Lord revealed to us?
- 9 How did Jesus use 52:6?
- 10 Who has beautiful feet? Why?