

## ***FPFWC Christian Development***



## **The Prophets Proclaim God's Power**

June 2023

Summer Quarter

*June 3, 2023*

## **Lesson #1 – God Reigns**

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Isaiah 52:7-12

### **ICE BREAKER** –

1. What does God inspire in us when He helps us?

***Key Verse – “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”— Isaiah 52:7***

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In the ancient world, heralds traveled from the capital to smaller cities, reporting the decrees of the king or news of war and peace (example: Habakkuk 2:2). Isaiah 40 begins a large section (of which chapter 52, today’s lesson, is part) with the image of a herald announcing good news. And in some sense the entirety of chapters 40–55 could be seen as one single announcement by just such a person. For the ancient hearers of the contents of this text, the auditory was more important than the visual, particularly if they were unable to read. But the power of the announcement was present either way. So we might think of these verses as a sort of audio poster, an announcement depicting a new world in which the audience could imagine themselves taking part.

Isaiah 52 falls into five sections: verses 1–2, 3–6, 7–10, 11–12, and 13–15. Each of the first four sections invites exiled Israelites to return home because Babylon is about to fall to the Persians under Cyrus the Great (see Isaiah 44:28; 45:1, 13). The poems in these four sections personify Zion as a woman, and depict the period of exile as one of slumber for the ancient city. A rebuilt Jerusalem would welcome home her returning children. The holy and ethical acts to which the prophets had always called the people could be embraced anew as Jerusalem was given another chance to live up to her calling and potential.

### **LESSON COMMENTARY**

**52:7–10.** The prophet next proclaims God’s kingship over Israel. The beautiful feet of the messenger and the **good news** He proclaims to the people of Israel result in praise. The Septuagint and the NT translate the Hebrew phrase rendered **good news** as “gospel.” Therefore, the term “gospel” carries with it a royal nuance that is frequently overlooked. In the context of Isaiah, the royal nuance of the good news is certainly in mind as God is identified as the One who reigns.

The watchmen of the city are the first to see the Lord’s restoration of Jerusalem (v. 8). The joy of the watchmen will be matched by the **waste places of Jerusalem** because of the comfort and redemption that the Lord will finally bring to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's rejoicing will be preceded by the baring of God's **holy arm** (v. 10), which is a metaphor of His military power. Jerusalem did not rescue itself—her newfound salvation is the work of the Lord.

**52:11–12.** God's call for Israel to depart is likely a call for Israel to leave Babylon. The concern with purity is a statement against carrying foreign practices back to Jerusalem. When the Israelites leave Babylon, they must also leave behind the Babylonian practices. The Israelites need not leave Babylon in a rush or in secret since the Lord will guard them in the front and the rear, so there is no need to be fearful, since their return to Canaan would not be characterized as **haste** or flight (not **as fugitives**) (v. 12). Despite the call to leave Babylon, this should be viewed as a precursor to the events described throughout chaps. 51–52 which describe Israel's ultimate restoration at the end of days.

**LESSON NUGGET** – It's time to speak up and tell the world what God has done for His people. Paul applies this to the sharing of the gospel with the lost. (Romans 10:15)

***Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary***