

"Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion, put on your beautiful garment, O Jerusalem, the Holy city;

For the uncircumcised and the unclean shall no longer come to you.

Shake yourself from the dust, arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem;

Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck.

O captive daughter of Zion.

For thus says the Lord: You have sold yourselves for nothing,

And you shall be redeemed without money"

ISA 52:1-3, New KJV

Revealed here is Isaiah's sad and pitiful vision of what the church had become. (Keep in mind that Zion is more than ancient Israel; it is also the redeemed of the Lord in this midnight hour.) Listen to his horrible description of the state of God's people:

- The daughter of Zion, a once pure and beautiful woman who gave birth to many sons, lay like a slave in the dust, abused by the uncircumcised and the unclean.
- Her garments were torn and filthy, and she was howling in despair, clutching at the chain that choked her neck.
- She pleaded for 3 things: (1) to be set free quickly; (2) not to die in slavery; and (3) not to be cut off from her spiritual food (Isaiah 51:18).
- Her enemies stood by, mocking and blaspheming God - taunting her that her God had no power to set her free from slavery.
- Two terrible things had to come upon her: first, no one was sorry

Awake and Shake!

for her; second, no one could comfort her. Her own sons had *"fainted and lay... like a wild bull in a net."* According to Isaiah, she was absolutely alone, with no help in sight: *"There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up."* (ISA 51:18).

- In her hand was a cup of trembling! There she lay in her disgrace, trampled in the dust by the enemy, who walked over her at will. The one who had borne the vessels of the Lord was now polluted and unclean.
- In her pitiful slavery, her unsatisfied hunger, her helpless condition, she had fallen into a stupor. Her sensibilities were gone. Lethargy gripped her soul. She was so mentally confused she could only lie in the dust, stunned and defenseless.

The tragedy of it all is that this poor, enslaved daughter of Zion had sold herself into slavery FOR NOTHING! No satanic slave-trader had captured her and carried her away against her will. She had not been overcome by some great, unseen power. She had sold herself into slavery - FOR NOTHING! Listen to the somber words of Isaiah: *"You have sold yourself for nought..."* (ISA 52:3).

Now let's get down to business. Who is Isaiah really talking about? Who is this slave daughter who

has been chained like an animal and is being so disgracefully treated?

THE CAPTIVE DAUGHTER OF ZION IS ANY AND ALL WHO NUMBER THEMSELVES AMONG THE REDEEMED, YET LIVE IN SIN.

This pitiful creature is the believer who is chained to a secret sin. It is the one who brings reproach on God's house by living a double life. It is the adulterer who takes a break from his sin to cover the altar with tears. It is the man or woman who has won many souls to Christ but whose spiritual life is being drained by lust. It is all who are chained by an unforsaken sin, face down in the dust of despair, writhing with guilt, and walked upon by the enemy who gets them to indulge at his will and whim.

There can be no true deliverance from the binding chain of sin until we see ourselves as that daughter of Zion - in the dust, chained, trampled on, slowly sinking into a spiritual stupor. We must look at this vision of Isaiah and cry out, "O God, that is a picture of me! I'm bound! The devil has been walking all over me. I'm unclean - my pure robe has been splattered and torn, and no one has been able to show me how to get free!"

Through the prophet Isaiah God tells us exactly why we can't get free - why we do not get deliverance from our besetting sins: "You

have sold yourself for nought!" Brother, sister, isn't it time to take an honest look at that one ruling passion, that one sin that still enslaves us, that one sin we keep going back to, time after time?

Most Christians, ministers included, could become mighty and great in God, except for ONE remaining, unforsaken sin. A tragic example is David Berg, founder of the Children of God. He began as our Teen Challenge associate in Huntington Beach, California. He was a powerful teacher and preacher. He had charisma and a good knowledge of God's Word. At first he was dedicated: he wept for lost souls; he preached the gospel faithfully. But David Berg (who later changed his name to Moses Berg) had a secret lust raging in his heart. It finally erupted in incest with his seven-year-old daughter. It drove him to abandon his wife of many years and cohabit with a long string of young women. He became demon-possessed. His guiding demon, Abraham, directed him to start what he called "flirty evangelism" - another name for prostitution. He ended up leading over 6,000 innocent girls into prostitution. Today he produces and distributes horrible pornographic cassettes. He has confessed to being haunted night and day by demons of lust. Now totally demon-possessed, he is never satisfied. He has tried adultery, homosexuality, sadomasochism, incest. His craving is insatiable.

May this heartbreaking story serve as a somber warning to all of us! We must take an honest, God-fearing look at our sin and admit the truth: "I am getting nothing out of this! This slavery, this continual indulgence, is adding nothing to me. It's a bad deal all the way around!"

How deceived we become by our sin. What good does it do us? What possible benefit is there? A few moments or hours of pleasure? But at what price? Sleepless nights; unbearable guilt; a devastating physical toll on our bodies; the fear and horror of grieving a loving Lord; the chilling realization that we may become hooked, insensitive, and end up in a stupor - unable to get free!

Compare the pleasure your sin gives you with all the pain it costs you. You end up with **nothing** on the plus side. Until this truth touches your soul, you will never find deliverance. The prophet Isaiah spoke for God Himself: "You are enduring this slavery for absolutely nothing. It is all in vain. You are selling out worse than cheap - for nothing!"

You are on the road to victory when you can wake up to the truth that your sin is not worth it. The way of sin is a senseless, useless dead-end. Don't blame Satan for your predicament. He cannot sell what he does not own, so he is not the one who sells us for nothing. We do it to ourselves.

When the Bible speaks of "selling out for nothing," it implies the loss of everything. It suggests that to go on indulging will eventually cost you all you have now. The daughter of Zion lost everything: her reputation, her purity, her family, her hopes, her future, her communion with God. What a truth to face and deal with - "My sin adds nothing to me. I'm selling out for nothing. And, on top of all that, if I continue in my sin it will take everything I have. It adds nothing - and takes all!"

The Hebrew word for **nought** is **chinnam**, which means: "Devoid of all reason or cause" or "to bend or stoop low to an inferior to favor him; to deal favorably with an inferior."

Some time back a minister friend confided in me, "My marriage is a prison. My wife doesn't understand me; we have no communication. I have to get out of this relationship if I'm ever going to find happiness! I've met a beautiful young lady who is spiritual, kind, and understanding. She meets my every need and fulfills me completely." This man divorced his wife, forsook his two lovely daughters, and married the younger woman. The decision cost him his ministry. Not long afterwards, his new marriage turned to total bitterness and dissolved. He is now all alone, selling insurance. He grieves over the memory of his lovely family and his once flourishing ministry. He sold out for nothing - and was left with nothing.

Please keep in mind that the polluted daughter of Zion, lying chained and broken in dust, is not Jezebel or a child of the devil. Rather, she is one who "...swore by the name of the LORD, and made mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness." - one who "...called (herself) of the holy city, and who trusted in the God of Israel." (ISA 48:1,2).

Think of it! Could God be seeing us in such a light when we persist in our sinful obstinance? "Yes, you are still My child. I will always love you, but you are dealing treacherously with Me! You have closed your ears and stiffened your neck. You have become that slave daughter, chained and groveling in the dust..."

Do you hear His words ringing in your ears: "...be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD." (ISA 52:11)? Do you see what you have come to - how low, how unclean, how hardened, blinded, bewildered, and close to falling into a drunken-like stupor?

There is a Way Out of Sin - and a Way Into Total Deliverance

Before we are ready for deliverance, two things must happen: We must admit we are that unclean, chained slave; and we must acknowledge the utter worthlessness of our sin. **Then** we are ready to be delivered. Isaiah 52 is really all about the deliverance of this pitiful, captive daughter of Zion. It is a picture of our deliverance from the power of sin. In this chapter we have God's answer to all our bondage, all our besetting sins, all our slavery. We begin with this:

I. GOD LOVES EVEN HIS MOST DISOBEDIENT CHILDREN - AND HE IS SET NOT ON CONDEMNING THEM, BUT DELIVERING THEM.

Listen to the loving words of our Father as He comes to redeem His captive daughter of Zion: "*Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments...*" (ISA 52:1). There is no rebuke here, no condemnation, no retraction of His love and mercy. God never forgets or abandons His hurting, enslaved child. When the afflicted daughter

of Zion cried out, "...*The LORD hath forsaken me,*" God responded: "*Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*" (ISA 49:14-16).

How alone we feel in our personal struggles to wrench ourselves free from all besetting sin. How often we think God has shut us out in anger and left us to battle the enemy in us all alone. We think He is bent on wrath and judgment. But we have God's word to the contrary! We are given a profound and glorious promise: "*I will not forget thee... thy walls are continually before me...*"

The word for **walls** here is **chowmah**, which literally means "joined to a wall." Do you understand what this signifies? God is telling us He is joined to us in our captivity. The walls closing in on us are His walls, too. He feels what we feel. In New Testament language, He is "...*touched with the feelings of our infirmities...*" (HEB 4:15).

All through the Word we see God joining Himself to the struggles of His disobedient servants. It is one of the most comforting and encouraging pictures we have of His care.

Consider Jacob - a very disobedient child of God. He was an anointed servant whose sins brought him and his family to rock bottom. It was at Bethel God appeared to Him supernaturally. It was here he saw a ladder reaching into heaven and angels ascending and descending. He saw the Lord and heard Him speak audibly: "...*I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*" (GEN 28:15).

God joined Himself to Jacob, His enslaved son, and pledged He would never be dissuaded from fulfilling His Word to keep him. "*And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How*

dreadful (awesome) is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (GEN 28:16,17).

Twenty long years went by following this marvelous experience - years of trial and sorrow. But God was always joined to Jacob. After leaving Bethel, Jacob had settled down in apathy, having forgotten the glory of his night with the Lord. He had become cold, backslidden, lustful. Again God appeared and spoke to him: "*I am the God of Beth-el, where thou amointedest the pillar, and where thou vowedest a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return...*" (GEN 31:13). This was God saying: "Remember how I touched you. Remember all your promises to Me. Go back to the altar - back to Bethel."

Instead, Jacob settled down in Shechem (Genesis 33). In Hebrew, **Shechem** means two things: "going back" and "a place of burdens." At Shechem he got into all kinds of trouble. His house was dishonored: one of his daughters was raped and his sons committed murder. What horrible burdens! Yet not once did he relate his troubles to being out of God's will - to being in the wrong place because of disobedience.

Had we been there, how we would have straightened Jacob out! "Sir, you are in this mess because of the disobedience of your heart. You have disobeyed God! Look at the shame and sorrow you have brought on yourself and your family!" How differently our patient God handled Jacob. Not a single word was spoken to him about Shechem or about being out of God's will. Not a word about all the pollution, murder, and uncleanness. No reproof. No guilt trip. No condemnation.

Instead, God showed Jacob a positive way to deliverance and freedom. "*Arise, go up to Beth-el...*" (GEN 35:1). He had every right to scold him: "Why did you ignore My instructions? Why are you so disobedient, so weak? Why do you refuse to listen and obey?" But He didn't. He simply said, "Get up and go to Bethel." In other words, "You know what to do. Go back to the altar - back to your first love."

This time Jacob responded. He got rid of all his idols, gathered up his family, and went back to Bethel. There he was restored, and God was joined to him until the victory was won. We, too, are called to lay down all our idols, put on new garments, and get back to the altar of repentance.

Jacob is not the only example of God's persistent faithfulness to His children. Consider Peter's restoration after his grievous sin. What could possibly be worse than denying our Lord? Poor, stumbling, failing, cowardly Peter out in the boat, trying to soothe his troubled conscience. On the shore was the One he had denied. Jesus did not condemn him. He built a fire, cooked some fish, and called to Peter. "*Come and dine.*" Without hesitating, Peter jumped out of the boat to go to Him. He did not think to say to the others with him, "I'm too ashamed for what I've done. I don't deserve His love so soon. Someone else go." The heart of Jesus had not changed toward Peter. He wanted first to feed him, to satisfy his personal hunger. How touching. It was not, "Come and be judged," rather, "Come and dine - feast with me."

Jesus calls us, "Come and dine"

Beloved Christian, have you failed the Lord? Have you done despite to the grace of God? Have you been living like a slave in the dirt? Are you afraid of God's wrath? Are you in turmoil because you think God wants revenge? Then look at the Savior's example here: "*Come and dine.*"

After the Lord fed Peter, He lovingly showed him the root of his problem. It was as though Jesus said to him, "Peter, I delight in your fellowship. I've already forgiven you. I have no guilt to put on you. But I am concerned about you. I want to make your deliverance complete. Let me show you the root of your sin. "*So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter... lovest thou me more than these?*" (JN 21:15).

This was the axe being laid to the root. Peter's real problem all along had been pride. Before he fell, Peter had thought of himself as someone especially holy, pious, strong in wisdom and full of char-

acter. Remember his boast: Though all others fail - not I!" He genuinely believed he loved the Lord more than any of the other disciples. He considered himself a bit more sober, more sincere, more zealous, more concerned with God's kingdom.

It is in such a circumstance that God allows sin to serve His holy purpose. He will let a Christian's pride be severely tested by overwhelming temptations. Human pride gives us a false boldness in the face of testing. "This can't hurt me," we say. "I'm above doing such things. No problem." When our confidence is in ourselves rather than in our Lord, we are bound to fall. Peter fell - deep and hard! Worse than all the others.

Believe it or not, Peter was closest to victory that moment after he failed, walking those Judean hills, weeping in remorse and humility, saying to himself, "Oh, yes, I'm the great Peter - the rock. I was the holy man of God who thought he could do no wrong! Purer, holier than all my peers. Now look at me - I've committed a sin blacker and uglier than the sins of all the prostitutes I've won to Christ!"

God had gotten to the root! Now Peter could quit trusting himself and get on with the business of feeding God's sheep. In this time of testing Christ had joined Himself to Peter and stood with him behind his walls, and in pure love and mercy had won him back.

What message does the Lord want to deliver to His captive daughter of Zion? Revenge? Wrath? Judgment? No! He will add no sorrow to that broken-hearted, howling, hurting woman lying in the dust. Rather, He chooses to comfort her with these words:

"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" ISA 52:7

There, people of God, is our message to all the bruised, broken, captive children of the Lord. *"Thy watchman shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again*

Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem" (ISA 52:8,9).

Poor, captive daughter - wake up! You are still loved. You sold yourself for nothing; you will be redeemed at no cost to yourself - freely - by grace alone. What good news! Your chains will fall off. You will again sing and shout for joy. You will be given a new robe. You will be restored. God is bringing you back as a bride for His Son.

II. THE CAPTIVE DAUGHTER OF ZION WILL NEVER BE DELIVERED UNTIL SHE HERSELF TAKES DOMINION IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

The enslaved daughter of Zion must shake herself, rise from the filth, cast off the chains, and take her rightful place, seated with Christ in the heavenlies. *"Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion"* (ISA 52:2).

Awake, shake, and put on His strength. **Strength** here in Hebrew is **owz**, meaning "self boldness," with an impudence that suggests a lion rising up to roar, shaking its mane, and stirring to reveal strength.

This sinful, enslaved daughter is greatly loved by her Lord. But she will die as a slave unless she herself does something about her condition. There is every indication that the chain is not locked. There is no invisible power holding her down. She is free at any time to walk away from her slavery, put on a beautiful garment of holiness, and return to her rightful place with Christ on the throne. God pleads with His enslaved children, "Wake up to your responsibility! Shake off all those false ideas that you can't walk away from your sin!" God never asks us to do the impossible. Would He tell us to put off a chain that was locked or unbroken and impossible to escape from? Would He tell us to get up and get out of the filth if we had no power or strength to do it? God says we are free - sin has no dominion over us! If we stay in bondage to a

besetting sin, it is simply because we refuse to get up and walk away.

Don't say, "I'm helpless. I have no power or will to resist." That's simply not true. You have all God's power and all of heaven's forces at your disposal. The revealed arm of the Lord is within you. Here is the truth - and you must face it:

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." 2.PET 1:3

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us..." EPH 3:20

Get Up, Walk Away From Sin - and Into Joy

The redeemed of the Lord must return and abandon all idols before there can be any rejoicing. *"Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon her head..."* (ISA 52:11).

God said, "You went down in your strength to Egypt. You sold yourself for nothing. Now shake yourself, rise up, and return. *"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her..."* (ISA 51:11). This is the key to victory - and it cannot be avoided! I am responsible, by the power of God in me, to walk away from my sin. No excuses. No putting it off. I must move! I must return!

This is the point of death - the death of the cross. Christ has gone before me; He broke the power of sin. I cannot reckon myself dead, resurrected, and ascended until I cross over to obedience. The breakthrough into the glory, into the joyful singing, into healing and restoration, comes only after I make a final decision to leave all my idols and go after Christ. *"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God..."* (1.THESS 1:9).

Are you waiting for someone to wake you up - to shake you and pull you miraculously out of the

dust? God did not take Israel out of Egypt on angel's wings. He weakened their enemies - took away all of Pharoh's power and authority - then told them to get up and walk out! It was not so much God making them strong as it was God making all their enemies weak. At the Cross, Christ stripped Satan of his power over believers. His heel bruised the serpent's head. We were made free - it is up to us to appropriate that freedom and walk!

The daughter of Zion belongs in the heavenlies, seated with Christ in a robe of holiness. What is the greatest hindrance to her freedom? It is not the devil. It is not the chain that holds her. It is something almost unbelievable. **She has been held in her slavery because she has been waiting for someone else to lift her up - dust her off - remove the chains - and dress her.**

That is why so many Christians will never be delivered from their chains. They are waiting for someone to lay hands on them and cast out their weakness. They want God to supernaturally lift them out of their bondage, with no effort on their part. You can pray all you want to, "Lord, set me free! Break off my chains! Get me out of this horrible pit." But nothing will change until you wake up, stir yourself, rise up, and walk away from your sin!

Your chain has no demon holding it. The Lord stands ready, holding out to you a beautiful garment of purity. All He asks of you is this: "Get up! Shake yourself! Walk away free - it's within your spiritual strength. Come and take your place beside Me in the heavenlies. Come back and be healed. Come and rejoice, sing, be reconciled."

III. THE BREAKTHROUGH TO FULL DELIVERANCE COMES THE MOMENT WE WAKE UP TO WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST!

God is saying to us, "Wake up - to your strength." Take another look at the captive daughter. How will she be set free? Simply by a revelation of who she is. Nothing else. She will be free the moment she STIRS UP THE GIFTS that are in her. She is lying there, bleeding, hurting, in chains - when a voice from heaven comes: "Wake up, child. You are strong in the Lord. You can walk away!" Don't tell me you are just a weak little lamb. You are a lamb with a lion's nature, a lion's roar, a lion's power and strength. No wonder satan flees. Picture a legion of demons approaching one of these power-endued lambs. "Watch out! One of them can put a thousand of us to flight. Ten of them can chase ten thousand of us."

STIR UP THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT! You were given power over all the power of the enemy. This is the tragedy of those Christians who continue to

live victimized by sin: They are blinded to the power and strength in them. Satan would have them see themselves like Samson - stripped and shorn of all power and strength because of some compromise. That is Old Testament theology. This is the lie that keeps so many Christians in bondage. They see their lusts leading them about as though they were blind, helpless servants.

Not so! You may be right now in the clutches of a binding sin, but if you repent and trust Him fully, you are still mighty in Holy Ghost power and strength. Oh, that the church of Jesus Christ could hear and understand what God is saying through Isaiah -

"Wake up! Use the strength you have!

Get up out of the dust! You are redeemed!

No more uncircumcised or unclean persons will touch my holy things!

Shake yourself from your weakness and apathy!

Remember who I am - Remember who you are!

Get up, and be seated by faith in the victory of the heavenlies!

You need not be chained another hour!

You have been freed - Take your freedom!"

David Wilkerson

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