
“Hope Of The Coastlands”

ISALAH 51:1-8

NOVEMBER 30, 2025

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At A Glance

Isaiah 51:1–8 calls God’s people to remember their origins, lift their eyes above their circumstances, and anchor their hope in His unfailing righteousness. Through Abraham, through the promise of restoration, and through the global reach of God’s salvation, the Lord proves that nothing can stop His redemptive purposes. In a world that is passing away, those who hope in the Lord will endure forever.

Introduction

There are moments when God speaks into the darkest seasons of His people’s lives—not with whispers of wishful thinking, but with promises rooted in His unshakable character. Isaiah 51 is one of those moments. Israel sat in the ruins of defeat, staring at a world that looked nothing like what God had promised—yet into that despair, the Lord thundered, “My righteousness draws near...My salvation has gone out...My salvation will be forever.”

This chapter invites God’s people—then and now—to lift their eyes from the rubble, remember where they came from, and put their hope in the God who revives barren ground, restores broken nations, reaches the farthest coastlands, and keeps His people forever. In a world wearing thin like an old garment, Isaiah 51 announces a salvation that will never fade.

Isaiah 51:5-6

My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.

Remember Who You Are & What I’ve Done

Verse 1 “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Remember who you are, where you’ve come from, your ancestors. Specifically, verse 2 Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him.

Israel, look to the father of the nation, the one through whom the promise to be a multitude came. Abraham was **but one** when the **Lord called him**. He was one man, *“and him as good as dead”* *Hebrews 11:12* being 75 years old when the promise of an offspring came (cf. Genesis 12:1-2), 100 by the time Isaac was born. (cf. Genesis 21:5, Romans 4:19)

Now Isaiah is calling Israel to see that God has in fact kept His promise! The whole nation came from the child born to a 100-year-old man and his 90-year-old wife, Sarah! Israel, don't you see what God has done?! And because of what He *has* done, what He *will* do?

He Will Multiply Joy & Gladness

Verse 3 For the Lord comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

Isaiah was speaking of Judah under Babylonian captivity. The promised land laid waste. The temple, destroyed. Jerusalem, sacked. Walls broken down. But God promised to restore life! To restore hope!

Eden represented perfection; life in abundance. Humanity thriving under God's hand of provision and protection. God walked with them in the **garden**. Now, displaced from their home, God is lifting the eyes of His people to behold the glory of a new Jerusalem, a new garden.

Whereas now there is weeping and sorrow of defeat, soon **joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.**

A Light To The Peoples

Verse 4 "Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.

What a tragic sentence to read. Why should the God who created them, the God who called them, the God who delivered them even need to say this? **Give attention to me, my people?** Is it not because they had given their attention to anything but Him? Is it not that the people whom He called **my nation** had whored themselves on every high hill and under every green tree? (cf. Jeremiah 2:20)

It is not right that people fail to give God their ear. Not then and not now. But God always steps in to rescue because He is full of mercy. Though they had ignored Him before, there will be a time when God will cause **a law to go out**. The Law of Moses had already been issued.

The Law has the power to reveal our sin, but not the power to save us from it. A new law must go out. It must be God's own **justice** to serve as **a light to the peoples**.

The Coastlands Hope For Me

Verse 5 My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.

In the words of their beloved king, David, "There is none who does good." (cf. Psalm 53:1) Paul says it plainly, "*None is righteous, no not one.*" *Romans 3:10* Thus, we rely upon God's **righteousness**, not ours. His righteousness is the source His **salvation**. It is His deliverance, His rescue. We rely upon His righteousness, not ours, for salvation.

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness," Isaiah 61:10

He **draws near** those whom He makes righteous. "*And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*" *Romans 8:30* To be glorified is to be in the presence of God forevermore.

Not only will His righteousness draw His people near, but His **arms of judgment** will also make all things right. This is a welcome word to those being oppressed and persecuted, like the Jews in Babylon, forcefully removed from the promised land.

The **coastlands hope for me**. **Coastlands** in Hebrew is an interesting word. The word is **'iyyim**, meaning *far-off maritime lands*. To Isaiah's original audience, these places were: unknown, unreachable, at the far edges of the map, the Gentiles. So, the "coastlands" are a poetic way of saying, **"The farthest peoples on earth—utterly pagan, utterly distant—will wait for the salvation of the Lord."**

This is God promising a **global** salvation, not just a Jewish one. Every time the term "coastlands" appears in this part of Isaiah, the point is the same: **The Messiah's salvation reaches the ends of the earth. The nations—even those farthest away—will hope in Him.**

This is why Paul quotes Isaiah 51:4 to justify his turning to take the gospel to the Gentiles. *"I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."* Acts 13:47

"And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48 **The coastlands hope for me!**

Hope, Paul says in Romans 5, does not disappoint us. As long as we have hope, we can endure hardship. As long as we believe there is something on the other side, we can endure just about anything. The people hoped in the future deliverance from Babylon. We, the coastlands, hope in the future deliverance of the Church from the powers of this age.

Everlasting Salvation

We also hope in a new heaven and a new earth. **Verse 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.**

Consider, now, the power of God to make everything we see, feel, taste, touch, & smell disappear in an instant, like **smoke**, like **fabric**. It's nothing to Him. Behold the power of the one whose arms will judge the living and the dead.

All will stand before this righteous and powerful God and give account of our lives. (cf. Romans 14:12) But those who hope in the Lord have no reason to fear, whether in this life or the life to come, His **salvation will be forever**.

Further, God's **righteousness will never be dismayed** because we will become like Him for we will see Him as He is. John wrote, *"...we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."* 1 John 3:2 and Paul also wrote, *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."* 2 Corinthians 3:18

Salvation To All Generations

Verses 7-8 "Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. 8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool, but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations."

The Lord is speaking to those **who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law**. One of my favorite verses about conversion, salvation, comes from Jeremiah, also quoted in Hebrews, *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,"* Hebrews 10:16

His message is to not fear **the reproach of man**. In the words of Jesus, *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."* Matthew 10:28

If you hope in God, you have no reason to fear hell because Jesus has already taken your punishment upon Himself. *“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.”* 1 John 4:18

Although everything in this world will be consumed, God’s salvation, His **righteousness**, will be forever, and His **salvation to all generations**.

What an encouraging word to a generation who would face incredible defeat and enter into foreign captivity. They must have felt all was lost, all was hopeless. But God, hundreds of years before it happened, sent His word through His prophet Isaiah to offer hope. Hope to those who know righteousness. Hope to those in whose heart is God’s law. Hope to people who would come to Him by faith.

There was an initial fulfillment of this prophesy for Judah in 538BC when they first began to migrate back to Jerusalem. But they did not see its ultimate fulfillment. The truth is we still await the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. We, like they, hope for a deliverance we have not yet received. We hope for a new world, a new Eden, a new Jerusalem. A new heaven and earth. This is the first point of application today.

1. If God can make a great nation from one barren couple, then He can revive a barren land into a new Eden. (v. 1-3)

From one man, who was as good as dead as it relates to reproduction, God made a great nation. How much more so can God multiply gladness and thanksgiving in the land He makes new?

You and I may not be held captive by Babylon, but the New Testament calls us “aliens and strangers” (cf. 1 Peter 2:11) in a foreign land. In many ways we are not welcome here. We are not at home here. Jesus warns us, in fact, about getting too comfortable and being too liked by the world. It is for this reason that you and I hope in something not yet realized – a new heaven and a new earth. A place with Jesus forever, a place He revealed to John:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’” Revelation 21:1-4

Just as Israel in their Exodus hoped in a place prepared for them, Christians, we too hope in a place prepared for us. Jesus promised, *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”* John 14:3

We, the coastlands, hope for a place.

2. God’s salvation is going out to the nations. (v. 4-6)

God was prophesying through Isaiah not just Israel restored, **but the nations redeemed. People from all nations, all walks, all tribes, all languages hope in the Lord. We are the coastlands. Those once far off have been brought near.**

Jesus left His disciples with a promise, a command, and a warning order.

The promise: *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* Matthew 24:14

The command: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* Matthew 28:19-20

There is only one command here, and it is not go. Go is that's what's called an aorist passive. The better way to say it is "as you go," or "wherever you go." The only command is "make disciples of all nations." Wherever you go, multiply disciples.

Finally, the warning order: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* Acts 1:8

The heart of God, the mission of Jesus, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit is that the gospel would go to the coastlands – the farthest places and the hardest to reach. When the last one is reached, the end will come.

This is our calling. Take the gospel wherever we go. Wherever we are, that's where we take the gospel. We seek the Lord's opportunities to share it. We don't set the gospel on the shelf of international missions or leave it to cross-cultural missionaries. We take the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever we go. And we try to get to the **coastlands** all around us, because...

The coastlands hope for Him.

3. All who hope in the Lord will endure for eternity.

Isaiah said in verses 7 & 8, **you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law...my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.**

Our salvation will be everlasting and it will never end. We will dwell with God and He with us. We will be like Him as He is, clothed in His righteousness, saved forever.

Peter wrote to exiled Christians, "...*He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*" 1 Peter 1:3–5

No matter what happens in this life, one thing is certain, your eternal inheritance is "kept in heaven for you" and you "are being guarded through faith for your salvation in the last time." That's a double-guarantee. Both you and your inheritance are secure forever. Nothing and no one can take it from you. What Jesus offers you, no man can strip away.

And it's available to any and all who have in the words of Paul, "...*put on the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" 1 Thessalonians 5:8–9

Beloved, *the coastlands hope for eternity!*