

How is all this to be? Simple.

*Seek the Lord while he may be found
call on him while he is near.*

This new covenant, is about turning to God

it is about repentance, and God's grace.

It about heavenly values, not earthly values

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts
neither are your ways my ways,"
declares the Lord.*

And then a comment about God's word.

When God speaks - things happen.

*so is my word that goes out from my mouth.
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire,
and achieve the purpose
for which I sent it.*

All Israel's efforts to be God's people - failed.

And they ended in Exile.

But now it is God's effort - he pays -

and it is bought, and delivered.

It is God's word - he speaks - and it is done.

So Isaiah is speaking of a new age

when the all-powerful God

accomplishes what he desires.

And what does he desire -

to show mercy on his people

He is a God of grace.

Isaiah promises great things to come.
This was not just about the return from Exile.

It all points to something even greater
The Lord himself will come
to fulfil his covenant promises
on behalf of himself, and his people.

He keeps both sides of the bargain.
He is the shopkeeper and the customer
The one who supplies - and the one who pays the bill

And this is what we will see in Jesus.

Both sides of the bargain

- Jesus - both Man and God
- Jesus - both victim and priest
- Jesus - both sin and righteousness
- Jesus - both dead and alive.
- Jesus - both Israel, and Israel's God.

We are so used to the ideas - that we miss them
but to Israel - this was amazing - unbelievable
that God himself
would become both parties to his covenant.
He takes our place - because we cannot keep our side.
And so, in himself, he will fulfil all that is required of us.

Jesus claimed to be both the giver of bread,
and the Bread itself.
He showed the Way to Life
because he was the Life and the Way.

Can you see the consistent pattern.

Still on this Bible Sunday theme of God's Word
in Luke 4 - Jesus' manifesto
he takes the Word of God (again from Isaiah)
and makes it true of himself
because he is that word.

He reads the word with authority
they already followed him to hear his teaching
and they knew in their souls that he spoke truth.

Now he proclaims it, and proves it,
he reads it, and does it
as he goes out and begins his ministry of power.

He claims authority, not just over Israel
but over every nation. All mankind.

He casts out demons and heals sickness
and proves his authority, not just over humanity
but in the spiritual realms also.

This is not just a great teacher and leader.
Not even just Lord of all the earth
He is Lord of all that is under the earth,
and he is Lord of all that is above the earth.

And one day, as in Isaiah 55
the nations, all humanity, will bow down.

And you saw it here first!
he is saying to the synagogue in his home town.

There is a sense in which God's word begins within his people.

The Old Testament is the history of Israel. It starts well before Israel, but it is their version of the history.

Because of Jesus, that collection of holy writings become the property of the church and gets taken out to other peoples. The nations. It is now our book too.

And of course, the wisdom it contains is not just for the church. It is wisdom - instruction for right living - the good news of God's grace - for every people. For all nations.

Easter was for the world. Not just for a few.

So God's word, is not just something we enjoy in the church.

It is about mission. How can we take the Way, the Truth, and the Life to those outside the community of faith.

By proclaiming it - but even that's not enough by demonstrating it - because it works in our lives.

We have to be Bible people - soaked in God's word full of powerful faith -
because we trust God's word.

It works for us.

We have to live that Proverbs stuff
the Way of Wisdom.

We have to live that Isaiah stuff
bringing release to the captives
and sight to the blind, etc.

We have to live and minister the Easter message
Forgiveness, and power over sin,
bringing healing and reconciliation
through the power of faith-filled prayer.

We can say
"Do you know there is something in the Bible
about this?"

"Would you like me to pray for you?"

"Have you tried trusting in God,
and doing it his way?"

This should be our conversation.

Not just the example of a good life.
But bringing the power of God into other's lives.

There have been some liberal theologians
who reckon the bible is myth.
So they have sought to "demythologise" the bible
by leaving out all the miracles and such.

I have heard of believing Christians
who demythologise the bible a different way -
by making it happen
so it is no longer myth, but fact today!

The Jews found Isaiah exciting
because they believed God would make it happen.

Jesus made the Bible exciting
because he made it happen.

Let's not just study the bible -
we must do that too

let's not just try to live the Bible -
we must do that too

let us bring it to life in other's lives.

Then we shall see people turning to God.
Then we shall see God's kingdom come.

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