

## New Things *God's Great Plan*

*"Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you." (Isaiah 42:9).*

God showed Isaiah the history and activities of nations in his day. He also revealed future events and people. Some events would occur in Isaiah's time, some within 200 years, and some beginning 700 years later. Most of the first 39 chapters of Isaiah are about the nations and what would happen to them. Some passages concern the promised seed of (Genesis 3:15, 12:3). From Isaiah 40 onward, the oracles concern God's Great Plan to save His people, first physically, then spiritually, through an "anointed one." The first anointed one or appointed one is Cyrus, king of Persia (Isaiah 44 and 45), who delivered Israel from slavery in Babylon. The second, the Messiah (Isaiah 41 to 56), would deliver people in all nations from the power of death and Satan. In all of Isaiah's writings about history and the future, there is an interaction between those under the Law of Moses and those outside the Law. At times, that interaction was about God's plan of salvation.

As the conquest of Canaan began, a Canaanite woman, Rahab, assisted the Israelite spies that Joshua sent to help plan the attack on Jericho (Joshua 2). After the destruction of Jericho, Rahab married Salmon, who was a direct descendant of Judah. (Matthew 1:5) states that *"Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab,"* showing that she is an ancestor of Jesus. The Hebrew writer lists her as one of the faithful. *"By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace"* (Hebrews 11:31). She believed that the God of Israel is the only God because of what He did to Egypt and the care He provides for His people (Joshua 2:9-11).

In the Book of Ruth, we are introduced to a Moabite woman, widowed and childless but taught about God by her mother-in-law. Ruth, like Rahab, was from an idolatrous people who were enemies of Israel, but she learned to Love God and His people. She followed Her mother-in-law into Israel and obeyed the Law of Moses and the customs of Israel. Many consider the Book of Ruth a love story. However, it gives an example of non-Hebrew peoples, by learning and following God's will, obtaining His mercy and grace. After exploring all the Law's requirements, Ruth married Boaz, a near kinsman of her dead husband. Not only does this provide a home for Ruth and her mother-in-law, but an heir for her late husband's inheritance and another foreign ancestor for the promised Savior, as the genealogy suggests. *"Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David the king"* (Matthew 1:5-6).

The Old Testament picture of how the foreigner would be brought into the kingdom is unclear. The tradition of the Jews of Jesus day required a confession of why one would want to place themselves under the Law. Then the male proselyte was required to comply with circumcision, immersion, and offer a sacrifice. The general understanding for women was that they would comply with the provisions of The Law and wed. However, Moses and the prophets taught that Messiah would call those "far off" who would come to God in The Kingdom. *"Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD. "Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD ... Those who are far off will come and build the temple of the LORD" (Zechariah 6:12-15). All nations will come to His call (Isaiah 60:1-4).*

Israelite rabbis taught that foreigners would enter the Messiah's Kingdom through the medium of Moses Law. No one, before Acts 2, taught that it would be through the death of God's Son. They did not understand passages like, *"For **the kingdom is the LORD'S And He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, Even he who cannot keep his soul alive. Posterity will serve Him; It will be told of the Lord to the coming generation. They will come and will declare His righteousness To a people who will be born, that He***

**has performed it** (Psalms 22:28-31). *"The glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken"* (Isaiah 40:5).

Moses and the prophets pointed to two prophets who would come in time. One to herald the arrival of the Savior and the other, **a New Prophet** and Law Giver. Through Isaiah, God said, *"A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God ... Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together" (Isaiah 40:3-5).* And God through Moses said. *"I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him"* (Deuteronomy 18:17-18).