

## HANDOUT (INTRO) – THE MOUNTAINS AND HILLS MADE LOW

I had some questions last week about the comments I made about John the Baptist's mission. I had said that the prophecy in Luke 3:5-6 "Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. (6) And all people will see God's salvation" was referring to end-time events and therefore the mission to "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him" was an ongoing call to all of us.

The question was "How did I know that this was a prophecy of end-time events?" The answer is in the Scripture passage that Luke was quoting. It is a quote from Isaiah 40:3-5. The book of Isaiah is a mix of historical narrative, prophecies about specific nations and various end-time prophecies. The section beginning in Isaiah 40 is at the end of the historical narrative. It forms the beginning of a very long prophecy that stretches from Isaiah 40 through the end of the book.

It is a prophecy that speaks of the return of the remnant of Israel from Babylon under Cyrus the Great and tells of the first coming of the Messiah and His torture and death for our sins. But all this is done in the context of God's plan for the end-time – His ultimate plan for Israel.

It opens with the summary of the end-time plan, and throughout the prophecy it speaks repeatedly of the end-time events:

1. The Lord will gather His people from all corners of heaven and earth and bring them to Zion.
2. The glory of the Lord will be seen by all mankind together.
3. The nations will be gathered together for judgment.
4. The Messiah will come and establish His government on earth.
5. No one unclean will be allowed to enter Jerusalem.
6. The lifespan of the Lord's people will be such that someone 100 yrs old will be considered young.
7. The old heaven and earth will pass away.

Here are some highlights of that prophecy:

**Isa 40:3-5 NIV** A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. (5) And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

**Isa 41:11,14-16 NIV** "All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish... (14) Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. (15) "See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff. (16) ... But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

**Isa 42:1 NIV** "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

**Isa 42:6-7 NIV** "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, (7) to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

**Isa 42:13,15-16 NIV** The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies. ...**(15)** I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. **(16)** I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

**Isa 43:1,5-7 NIV** But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ...**(5)** Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. **(6)** I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth— **(7)** everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

**Isa 43:18-19 NIV** "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. **(19)** See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

**Isa 43:25 NIV** "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

**Isa 51:4-6 NIV** "Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. **(5)** My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. ... **(6)** Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

**Isa 52:1 NIV** Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendor, O Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again.

**Isa 52:13-15 NIV** See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. **(14)** Just as there were many who were appalled at him— his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness— **(15)** so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

**Isa 53:3-5 NIV** He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. **(4)** Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. **(5)** But he was pierced

for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

**Isa 59:20 NIV** "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD.

**Isa 60:11-12 NIV** Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations— their kings led in triumphal procession. **(12)** For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined.

**Isa 60:19-22 NIV** The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. **(20)** Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. **(21)** Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor. **(22)** The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly."

**Isa 61:1-3 NIV** The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, **(2)** to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor ... *(Note: Jesus stopped here in His announcement of His ministry during His first coming)*

*(This part is to be fulfilled at His second coming)*...and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, **(3)** and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

**Isa 65:17-20 NIV** "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. **(18)** But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. **(19)** I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. **(20)** "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

**Isa 65:25 NIV** The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

**Isa 66:22-24 NIV** "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. **...(24)** "And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind."