

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Lord was a faithful Husband, Israel an unfaithful bride. Israel broke the Covenant with God. So through the Prophet God makes a horrible promise to Israel— He will send Babylon, a nation of pagans and unbelievers and idol-worshippers, to destroy Israel and take the people God chose into bondage.

Because they would not follow His ways, because they did not obey His Laws, He poured out upon them his burning anger. He handed them over as loot to the plunderer. The Land of Promise was taken away. The houses they built foreigners inhabited, the crops they planted pagans reaped. It is a reversal, a taking away, of God's great promises to His chosen people.

So it was with Israel. But so it is too, with all fallen men. God is faithful. Men are not. God is just. Men are devious. God is true. All men are liars. It is, as God says through Isaiah, “your first father sinned, your mediators have transgressed against Me.”

But is not only the Israelites of 2700 years ago that have sinned. You too have been unfaithful to God. For your every impure thought, every covetous impulse, every proud moment, every “white” lie, every angry word, has broken God's Law as surely as Israel broke it. And by your transgressions you have just as surely deserved God's wrath.

But in the midst of the fearful and terrible revelation God gave Isaiah to speak to Israel, in mercy God Promises a Savior. He says “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you

by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you... For I AM the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel your Savior.”

This salutary Promise comes in the midst of one of the Servant Songs of Isaiah, Promises of the Suffering Servant that will redeem all sinful men by His own suffering, by the shedding of His own Blood.

And as, in justice, God's wrath is rightly poured out upon you who sin, so also, in mercy and grace, is the Blood of the Messiah shed for you. His Name is Jesus, for He saves His people from their sins. And God through the Prophet Isaiah promises “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

The Holy One of Israel, Jesus Christ, is the Suffering Servant that paid the price for your sins. Believing in Him, your transgressions are blotted out, your sins forgotten by God. And as He has promised, when you pass through the waters He is with you.

He is with you because He is Immanuel. He is with you as you pass through the waters of Holy Baptism, where He fills you with His Spirit, where He forgives your sins, where He brings you to everlasting life.

He pours out upon you that saving Water, and His Spirit is poured out upon you. So you are the true Jacob, the Israel of God by faith in Jesus Christ, the people He has chosen. It is you that He formed in the womb, you that He helps, and you that He blesses. He is with you in times of trouble and distress.

He declares to be upright, to be Jeshurun, His beloved,  
declared righteous by faith in His Son.

As the Prophet foretold, Assyria did plunder Israel, and  
Babylon conquered Judah. Israel was taken captive. But God,  
in His mercy, freed them. He graciously returned them to the  
land of milk and honey, the good land He promised to them.

But to you He has promised a better land, an eternal land, even  
heaven itself. And as God's Son gives you His Body and  
Blood to eat and drink this day, you taste of that Paradise,  
which will soon be yours.

So fear not, you whom God has chosen, for He has given you  
His Spirit, and He has given you His blessing.

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy  
Ghost.