

## UNIT 2A: OLD TESTAMENT

### 39: Return, Restoration, Rebuilding and Reform

The political circumstances that made possible the restoration of Judah's exiles in Babylon arose from changes in governance in Babylon. King Cyrus of Persia was the agent of change. His relatively unopposed entry into Babylon followed a decisive victory against a politically enfeebled Babylonia at the battle of Opis on the Tigris River in 539 B.C. The irony and tragedy of this for Babylon was that it had originally supported and encouraged Cyrus in his insurrection against his Medean overlords. Now the superior tactician and military commander had prevailed. Cyrus was more than this, however, being arguably one of the most enlightened rulers of this period in human history. He allowed many repressed religious groups free expression with restorative justice. He abolished slave labour in the Empire. He facilitated the return to their respective countries of many deported peoples whom the Babylonians, like the Assyrians before them, had forced into Exile. Amongst these people, of course, were the Judeans; and their prophet at the time was the anonymous poet/prophet of the second section of the book of Isaiah in chapters 40 to 55.

#### **Isaiah Chapters 40 to 55: Deliverance from Exile and the Return to Jerusalem**

That Isaiah of Jerusalem did not write the second and third (Chs. 40 to 66) sections of the book ascribed to his name is clear from the content and context of the oracles. The later prophet certainly did belong to that school of disciples first or proto-Isaiah had inaugurated and, therefore, saw no reason to claim authorship for himself. Our modern understandings of authorship simply do not apply to antiquity. Prophets and their disciple legatees were not sharply distinguished, if at all. So, in respect of context, we may observe that the relevant and quoted political events occur some 160 or more years later than the time of proto-Isaiah when the Exiles were facing the immediate prospect of a joyous return to Judah under King Cyrus' benign policies. Cyrus, explicitly mentioned in 44:28 and 45:1, is even hailed as "Yahweh's shepherd"!

The headline for this message of salvation is set out in the prologue, chapter 40. God Himself is coming into the desert to restore his people (v. 3). *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: „Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the paths of our God.“*” Immediately we recognize these words on the lips of the Forerunner, John the Baptist (John 1:23) and that most appropriately, because by the time of Christ, Judaism was certainly reinterpreting these verses in a futurist messianic sense. In its original context, of course, the reference was to the return from Exile. The dependability of this promise is seen by second or deuterio-Isaiah as resting not on the flesh that perishes but upon the eternal Word of God, (40:8). God who is transcendent to everything created works out his purpose in and through human history. The restoration of Judah to Jerusalem is certain, but the promise is couched not in terms of classical Davidic covenant theology but in the light of a new Exodus with the formulations that are appropriate to that theme, (40:9-11). This message is taken up again in 50:9-11. (Notice how the Septuagint leaves out the primitive pre-Yahwist reference to the ancient dragon of the deep).

The remainder of the chapter 40 is a magnificent poetic description of God’s transcendent being and creative power in history, a monotheism that mocks the sterile and lifeless character of idols made by human hands (also: - 42:5-17; 43:8-13; 44:6-8, 21-23; 44:24-45:13, 48). The Creator knows the condition and circumstances of all; He is the liberator and restorer, that is the Redeemer, of his people. Deuterio-Isaiah goes further than this, however, much more so than any other prophet up to his time. The redemption of God will be extended through a restored Judah to the Gentiles (42:5-9, 45:23) and in this he picks up the promise made by God to Abraham that all the nations will be blessed on account of his progeny and faith (Genesis 12:1-3). The message of salvation is indeed addressed to all the earth: “Turn to me, and you shall be saved, you who are from the end of the earth. I am God, and there is no other.” (45:22)

There remains a singular and most important issue in the interpretation of deuterio-

Isaiah and this concerns the identity and mission of the Suffering Servant within God's plan of salvation, (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). Sometimes this mysterious figure is identified with Israel collectively, while sometimes this anonymous individual will suffer on behalf of all for their salvation. Bernhard Anderson's tabulation is most instructive in this regard (See Bibliography):

**The Servant of the Lord**

THE SERVANT ISRAEL	THE ANONYMOUS SERVANT
<i>Likenesses:</i>	
1. Chosen by Yahweh 41:8-9; 45:4; 43:10; 44:1; 49:7	1. Chosen by Yahweh 42:1
2. Formed by Yahweh in the womb 44:2; 44:21, 24	2. Formed by Yahweh in the womb 49:1, 5
3. Upheld and comforted by Yahweh 41:10; cf. 42:6	3. Upheld and comforted by Yahweh 42:1
4. Hid in the shadow of Yahweh's hand 51:16	4. Hid in the shadow of Yahweh's hand 49:2
5. Endowed with Yahweh's spirit 44:3	5. Spirit-endowed 42:1
6. Honored by Yahweh 43:4	6. Honored by Yahweh 49:5
7. A light to the nations 42:6; cf. 51:4	7. A light to the nations 49:6
8. Gives torah and justice to the nations 51:4-8; cf. 42:21, 24	8. Gives torah to the nations, establishes justice 42:4
9. Yahweh glorified in Israel 44:23	9. Yahweh glorified in the Servant 53:10c; cf. 49:3
<i>Differences:</i>	
1. Israel despairs 40:27; 41:8-10; 49:14, etc.	1. The Servant is undiscouraged 42:4; 50:7-9 ( <i>But see 49:4</i> )
2. Israel is rebellious, sinful 48:4; cf. 43:27	2. The Servant is not rebellious but faithful 50:5; 53:4-6, 12
3. Israel is blind and deaf 42:18-25	3. The Servant is attentive, responsive 50:4-5
4. Israel suffers unwillingly, seeks 51:21-23, etc.	4. The Servant suffers patiently, willingly 50:6; 53:4-9 ( <i>Notice 50:7-9</i> )
5. Israel suffers for her own sins 42:24-25; 43:22-28; 47:6; 50:1	5. The Servant innocently suffers for the sins of others chap. 53
6. Israel is to be redeemed 43:1-7, etc.	6. The Servant's mission is to redeem Israel 49:5

The conceptual alternation between the Servant as Israel and the Servant as an anonymous individual is hardly exceptional in the Scriptures. The personification also occurs in the first two verses of Hosea 11 and elsewhere in Isaiah in relation to Abraham (51:1-2). In the instance of the Suffering Servant we may note that the Servant-as-individual is a more idealized portrayal of someone who will be the subject rather than the object of salvation.

Perhaps this is why Christianity has always found in the image of the Suffering Servant, and particularly in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the person of the Messiah, Jesus. Indeed the unrealized dimension of Isaiah's prophecy was fleshed out later in precisely these terms by the Dead Sea community at Qumran albeit if not elsewhere (or indeed since) in Judaism.

### **Isaiah Chapters 56 to 66: Future Hopes for Israel and Humanity**

The closing section of Isaiah: trito-Isaiah consists of chapters 56 to 66 and reflects the work of the disciples of deutero-Isaiah who prophesied after the return of the exiles and upon the rebuilding of the Temple in 520-515 B.C. These oracles lack the poetic quality of the earlier work and concern the difficulties experienced by those charged with rebuilding the nation back home. Nonetheless, certain passages especially in chapters 60 to 62, reflect the hope for a community renewed by the Spirit with a divine vocation open to the whole world. Jesus Himself quotes Isaiah 61:1-2 as the mandate for his messianic work in Luke 4:16-21. Clearly, the restored community in Jerusalem had maintained a deeper and broader vision of the kingdom that might be supposed by any "locking-in" to a particular time and place. This can be seen as the beginnings of an apocalyptic genre where God almost erupts into history and creates something utterly new and discontinuous from the historical process hitherto, invariably through a time of conflict and trial. This is especially evident in Isaiah 65:17-19 with its prophecy of the creation of new heavens and a new earth; a theme taken up in Revelation 21:1. There was a parallel tendency to move into apocalyptic in Ezekiel who prophesied earlier in the 6th century concerning the new Jerusalem Temple that would renew and irrigate the earth, (Ezekiel 40-48, Cf. also Revelation 21, 22).

### **2 Esdras: Rebuilding the Temple and Renewing the Community**

The texts that cover the history and theology of Judah upon the return of the exiles from 538 B.C. to 410 B.C. are to be found in 2 Ezra (alt. 2 Esdras; M: Ezra) and Nehemiah. Originally these two books were on the same scroll and it was only St. Jerome who separated them. Moreover, 2 Ezra repeats the closing history of 2 Chronicles; and we know that the Chronicler historian and the authors of Ezra and Nehemiah belong to the same post-Exilic school.

Additionally, the Septuagint alone has 1 Ezra (alt. 1 Esdras) which contains parts of 2 Chronicles, Ezra's memoirs and Nehemiah. The Jewish historian Josephus preferred 1 Ezra over 2 Ezra/Nehemiah. From the opening verse situating the time as "the first year of Cyrus king of Persia" through the later support of King Artaxerxes (7:11 f.), the intertwining of political events and religious responses is evident, as the community is renewed, both architecturally and spiritually.

### **The Slow Return and New Prophets**

We must not suppose that there was a mass return to Judah or that it happened in one swift move. Many having settled in Babylon were reluctant to return and it took a number of generations for any substantive numbers to resettle. However, a small community was soon established in Jerusalem. The first governor of Judah, Sheshbazzar, a "prince of Judah" may have been of Davidic lineage and he laid the foundation of the new and second Temple (2 Ezra 5:16). It was his successor, the governor Zerubbabel, a descendant of King Jehoiakim (1 Chronicles 3:19) and the High Priest Joshua who, with the inspiration of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, supervised the actual rebuilding, which began in earnest in 520 B.C. This was after a long period of delays occasioned by disturbances within the indigenous population who had not left during the exile and opposition from the Samaritans in the north whose help in rebuilding the Temple Zerubbabel had spurned. Haggai's prophecies urged the people toward a vision of a Temple even more glorious than that of Solomon to which all nations would bring their treasures (Haggai 2:1-9). Zechariah spoke in like manner with further promises of a messianic future king, referred to here as "the Branch" (Zechariah 3:8, 6:12-13). The Temple was completed in 515 B.C. Notwithstanding the prophecies of Haggai, it was such an inferior building to that of Solomon the old men who remembered the former building from their youth broke down and wept (2 Ezra 3:12-13). Zerubbabel mysteriously disappears from the scene at this point and leadership now vests in the High Priest Joshua and the Temple establishment. Although the Temple remained the centre of Israel's worship, it was from this time that the synagogues started to develop across Palestine, possibly in the light of the new and forthcoming emphasis on the democratized study of the Torah.

The 70 years that now follow from the completion of the Temple to the time of Nehemiah in Jerusalem in 445 B.C. are covered by the prophets Obadiah, Malachi and Joel. The prophecy of Obadiah against Edom refers to a people who had annexed part of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. He writes before the Arab Nabatean tribes conquered this territory in the 4th century B.C., but otherwise the prophecy is difficult to date. Malachi, generally recognized as the last of the Old Testament prophets, is writing shortly before Nehemiah's appearance in Jerusalem. He prophesied against the religious apathy of the people and their shallow materialistic philosophy which would not give God his due. His answer though seems to have been limited to exhortation to making worthy offerings and tithes (Malachi 3:7-12), yet he also prophesies as Isaiah had earlier (Isaiah 40:3) of the messenger who would prepare the way for the coming of Yahweh to his Temple as "refiner and purifier" (Malachi 3:1-4).

Joel prophesies in the post exilic period, but the date is not certain. Israel is facing hardship and famine as a result of one of the recurring plague of locusts that afflict the Middle East. Joel summons the people to fast and repent and then prophesies majestically that in the great and coming Day of Yahweh, the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh (2:28-29). The Church, of course, sees this prophesy as fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). The language of these prophecies is increasingly futurist and apocalyptic.

In 458 B.C. "Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven" (2 Ezra 7:12, 21) is instructed to accompany a second caravan of exiles back to Judah in order to implement religious laws and reforms according to local and historic traditions for the greater good of Ezra's own people and the Persian Empire. Upon arrival, Ezra set about the unpopular policy of banning intermarriage with foreigners through a newly installed religious court. Moreover, he forcibly broke up existing unions, (2 Ezra 10:2-5). In this he was restoring a tradition going back to Moses in order to preserve the integrity of Israel as a chosen people set apart for Yahweh. He then began a process of religious reform to embed finally and forever the Torah in the hearts and minds of the people; and in this he largely succeeded. He used "the book

of the Torah of Moses” (Nehemiah 8:1) which we may suppose to be the Pentateuch. This “book” was read in its entirety from a specially constructed raised pulpit from early morning until noon, the Levites giving the meaning as it was read, (Nehemiah 8:1-8). From this time we see the Levites taking specific responsibility for the teaching of the Torah, as the Zadokite priests served in the Temple. The Feast of Tabernacles was then celebrated, and all in the context of a 7 day festival in which the Torah was further expounded. At the end came a solemn act of covenant renewal (Nehemiah 9) in which the people confessed their sins in their historical context, and Ezra offered his prayers on their behalf. Finally, the covenant was formally renewed (Nehemiah 9:38) and signed by the peoples’ representatives (including Nehemiah, the Governor) with the people themselves taking an oath to “walk in God’s Torah which was given by Moses the servant of God” (Nehemiah 10:29). Ezra’s reform is strikingly familiar to that of Josiah’s before him and essentially reinforces the Mosaic traditions and ordinances of the Exodus and the Sinaitic covenant as articulated by the Deuteronomist and the Priestly tradition. Although the Jews shared with the Samaritans this emphasis on the Pentateuch it was from this time that the rift between the two traditions began to widen with the Samaritans building their own Temple on the top of Mount Gerizim, perhaps in the middle of the fourth century.

### **Nehemiah and the Battle for Physical Safety and Spiritual Renewal**

It is appropriate to conclude with a short assessment of Nehemiah’s contribution to the religious and national life of Israel under his two terms of governorship in the latter part of the 5th century. His physical projects mainly focused on making sure that Jerusalem could withstand external attack as he rebuilt the walls even in the teeth of Sanballat the Samaritan’s continuous attempts to frustrate that project. He then took Ezra’s social and religious reforms and systematically extended and enforced them. Syncretism had always been a problem in Israel so Nehemiah implemented policies to make the idea of being “Jewish” much more sharply focused and exclusive. In addition to reinforcing the ban on intermarriage he made birth the crucial test of religious identity by enrolling all citizens according to genealogy (Nehemiah 7:5-69).

## **The Future and Universalist Orientation of Judaism . . . and of Christianity**

The Judaism that emerged from these reforms together with those of Ezra has the characteristic shape of Judaism at the time of Christ, albeit in embryonic form. The emphasis on walking according to the Torah (halakha) as distinct from the Torah in narrative form (hagada) develops from this time. The social and religious exclusivity of Judaism had, of course, its unattractive aspect, yet this exclusivity did strengthen Jewish resistance under the Maccabees against incursions of pagan Greek idolatry. Moreover, despite a huge growth in religious law and casuistry in the rabbinical schools, the Jews never lost sight of the future and universalist orientation of their faith, this being largely preserved and articulated in the expansion of apocalyptic literature and its eschatological expectation of the coming Day of the Lord, whose meaning was to be set out so clearly in the New Testament .

The most radical expression of this apocalyptic tradition was developed by the Essene sect, a quasi-monastic community at Qumran by the Dead Sea, who would have nothing to do with the Temple but who prepared themselves for the final showdown between God and Satan at the end of the world. Into this diverse and dynamic religious milieu, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, walked. The non-Messianic Judaism that survived in dispersion after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D, was, however, that of the synagogue, a rabbinical variety of Judaism whose ultimate religious expression was in large measure shaped by Ezra and Nehemiah some 500 years before. In many ways, they were the architects of a Judaism that has survived to the present day, but which our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ did so much to overhaul for the sake of all peoples and their salvation.

As St. Paul stressed in his Epistle to the Ephesians, Chapter 2, verse 20, the Church was to be “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.” Origen reflected that “these are fitting words to cite against those who would divide the Godhead and think that the prophets belong to one God and apostles to another.” Indeed, as the fourth century scholar Ambrosiaster—a name given by Erasmus to the Biblical



scholar who was once thought to have been St. Ambrose—said of Ephesians 2.20: “This means that the household of God is built upon both the old and new covenants. For what the apostles preached had been foretold by the prophets.”<sup>1</sup> The vision of the prophets of the Old Testament was to be implemented by the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, through the Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> These quotations from the Church Fathers are drawn from *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VIII, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, edited by Mark J. Edwards (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), p. 143.

## A Template for the Orthodox Interpretation of Biblical Texts

In accordance with the proposal of Fr. Theodore G. Stylianopoulos that Orthodox biblical interpretation ought to have a 3 level approach, the following template is offered for preachers, teachers, bible study leaders, catechists and students of the Scriptures generally:<sup>1</sup>

### Isaiah 54:2-5, 17b; 55:4-9; 56:6-8; 65:9, 13-15—Seeking Servants of the Lord

Level	Process	In Tradition / Fathers (Theoria)	Applicable Now (Praxis)
<b>Exegetical</b>	<b>Historical / Contextual</b>  <i>(using the full range of critical tools)</i>	Although 2nd Isaiah (chapters 40-55) contains 19 references to “the servant” meaning either Israel or the Messiah, the singular word “servant” does not appear after chapter 53. 3rd Isaiah focuses on those who are “servants” of the Lord, or as set out in 54:17b, “There is an inheritance [or heritage] to them that serve the Lord.” Nine references to “servants” in Isaiah 54-65 emphasize discipleship and identifying and blessing people and communities that truly serve the Lord.	3rd Isaiah (chapters 56-66) set out blessings that will come to those who serve the Lord in ancient times or now. Thus Isaiah is not only setting out the renewal of Israel and the coming of the Messiah, but the blessing that will be bestowed on all of those who follow the Lord at present or in the future.
	<b>Allegorical / Typological</b>  <i>(as derived from Tradition)</i>	Theodoret of Cyrus sees “the pins” or “pegs” (M:) of the Church as prophets, apostles and martyrs (54:2-3). Both “strangers that attach themselves to the Lord” (i.e. Gentiles) (56:6) and Jews are invited to “seek ye the Lord, and when you find Him call upon Him, since “my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations” (56:7).	The Lord tells the people “My plans are not like your plans, nor are your ways like My ways (55:8). This tradition of relying on God, not self-help analysis, is a key to living today under the sovereign reign of God.
<b>Interpretative</b>	<b>Spiritual / Ethical</b>	Consider this assertion: “I God [am] the first and to all futurity, I AM” (41:4). This echoes God’s response to Moses: “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14). The 4th century Antioch bishop Theodoret of Cyrus interprets this passage as: “The One who gave the Old Testament, he [Isaiah] says, is not different from the One who established the New: the divine nature is one, always the same and unchanging.” Thus Isaiah (and Theodoret) are bringing forward God’s presence into the future, as in Revelations 1:17 when God places his	The urging in Isaiah 54:2 to “enlarge the place of your tent, and of your curtains” is expanded in 54:3 to “spread out to the right and to the left and your offspring will inherit the nations . . .” or as alternative Septuagint (LXX) translation has it: “your seed shall inherit the Gentiles. . .” This is an explicit statement for

		<p>right hand on St. John and tells him, “I am the first and the last.” The English word “I AM WHO I AM” is a translation of the Hebrew word that is pronounced <i>Yahweh</i>. This is the verb “to be” which is translated as “He is” or “He will be” in the third person. As a modern Biblical commentary states: “When God speaks of Himself He says, “I AM,” and when we speak of Him we say, “He is.” 2nd Isaiah, with its delineation of the nature of the Messiah, is setting out how God will be forever. Thus 2<sup>nd</sup> Isaiah is linking God’s self-identification to both Moses and St. John, to the past and to the future.</p>	<p>Gentiles, at the time of 2nd Isaiah and the future, that “it is the Lord that made you . . . and He that redeemed you, He is the God of Israel, and shall be called so by the whole earth” (54:5). Thus, even before Messiah has appeared on earth those who are not Israelites (or later Jews) are given a promise that Messiah has come for them, too, even though he is “the God of Israel.”</p>
	<p><b>Personal / Social</b></p>	<p>When bringing the Tradition of the Fathers to Biblical interpretation, the perspective of the Orthodox historian and theologian, Jaroslav Pelikan is helpful in that “Tradition [has the] capacity to develop while still maintaining its identify and continuity” (p. 58 of <i>The Vindication of Tradition</i>, Yale University Press, 1984). When balancing “Tradition and insight,” we do not make “a standing broad jump, which begins at the line of where we are now; it is a running broad jump through where we have been to where we go next” (p. 81). Pelikan’s opening dedication from Goethe’s <i>Faust</i> is linked to interpreting history, but is equally applicable to interpreting the Bible: “What you have as heritage, Take now as task; For thus you will make it your own!”</p>	<p>In approaching a Biblical passage, three key perspectives can be integrated: personal insights, the views of Church Fathers and modern Biblical commentaries. Three questions should be asked: How do I, with prayer, interpret this passage? How do Church Fathers view it? And what do theologians and modern commentaries offer? Church Fathers should be considered in the context of contemporary insights and issues for that is their own hermeneutic.</p>
<p><b>Transformative</b></p>	<p><b>The Call to Holiness</b></p>	<p>2nd and 3rd Isaiah issue three distinct calls to holiness—first, to the people of Israel (41:8), then to prepare for “My Servant,” the Messiah (42:1), and finally for both Jews and Gentiles to be “joyful in my house of prayer . . . for all the nations” (56:7 LXX) or “for all the peoples” [M:].</p>	<p>“The offspring of the Lord” are blessed in 1st Isaiah (22:24), 2nd Isaiah (44:3; 45:25; 48:19; 53:10) and 3rd Isaiah (61:9; 65:23). We too are blessed if we pray and serve the Lord.</p>

	<p><b>The Call to Witness</b></p>	<p>In <i>Jesus the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible</i> (New York: Paulist Press, 2006) Father Eugen J. Pentiuć traces how “the pre-existence of the Messiah, his place and role within the bosom of the Godhead” moves to “His repeated manifestations in the world before the great coming” (p. 90). Father Pentiuć sets out the many passages in 2nd Isaiah and elsewhere in the Old Testament which foresaw the suffering, death and resurrection of Messiah (pp. 139-185). In the Old Testament, Messiah, as the “anointed agent of God . . . moves only gradually to the forefront of the scriptural narrative . . . [and in the New Testament] his persona and role culminate in the resurrection and ascension of Christ” (p. 41). Slowly and steadily, the Old Testament traces the coming of Messiah into the world, followed in the New Testament by His life in the world as Jesus Christ, and His resurrection and ascension. Thus, viewing the Old and New Testaments as a unity, Christ becomes the agent that transforms humanity itself into witnesses to the glory of God.</p>	<p>Father Pentiuć’s approach to 2nd Isaiah can inspire each of us to become, gradually over time, servants of God—the witnesses, called for in 3rd Isaiah to pray and serve the Lord in all of time, and at all times in our own lives. Isaiah 55:4, “I have made him a testimony among the Gentiles [or nations], “a witness to the peoples” (M:) is a path for us, too. “The path through salvation history which leads fallen humanity back into communion with God is guided by the manifestations of the preexistent Messiah, and especially by the life and Ministry of Christ” (p. xiii). We can each be transformed by that Life.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> In “*The New Testament, An Orthodox Perspective, Volume 1: Scripture, Tradition, Hermeneutics,*” (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1997, Ch. 7), Fr. Theodore sets out three levels serving a sound Orthodox hermeneutical process. These are: **1. Exegetical** - using all critical, contextual, textual and literary methods to determine “the level of understanding of the biblical text in its historical context of literary form and conceptuality ...” (p. 190). **2. Interpretative** – evaluating means derived from the exegetical stage as applicable contextually to the reader’s contemporary issues and concerns (p. 197). **3. Transformative** – experiencing life changing practical applications of insights derived from the previous two stages. In ALL of these three levels, the Orthodox context must be the Church as the locus of divine revelation and inspiration. Here the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth as manifested in the biblical text, the teachings of the Fathers and the liturgical context. In Ch. 4, p. 115 f. Fr. Theodore explains the historical and spiritual exegetical approaches which, following the Fathers, must be applied throughout. Classically these have concerned the Antiochian emphasis on the “literal” or historical approach and the Alexandrian emphasis on the allegorical and typological interpretations that reveal the inter-connectedness of all Scripture in Tradition at deeper levels of understanding.

Isaiah 54:2-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

- 2 "Enlarge the place of your tent,  
And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings;  
Do not spare;  
Lengthen your cords,  
And strengthen your stakes.
- 3 For you shall expand to the right and to the left,  
And your descendants will inherit the nations,  
And make the desolate cities inhabited.
- 4 "Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;  
Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;  
For you will forget the shame of your youth,  
And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.
- 5 For your Maker *is* your husband,  
The LORD of hosts *is* His name;  
And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel;  
He is called the God of the whole earth.

Isaiah 54:17 New King James Version (NKJV)

- 17 No weapon formed against you shall prosper,  
And every tongue *which* rises against you in judgment  
You shall condemn.  
This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD,  
And their righteousness *is* from Me,"  
Says the LORD.

Isaiah 55:4-9 New King James Version (NKJV)

- 4 Indeed I have given him *as* a witness to the people,  
A leader and commander for the people.
- 5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know,  
And nations *who* do not know you shall run to you,  
Because of the LORD your God,  
And the Holy One of Israel;  
For He has glorified you.”
- 6 Seek the LORD while He may be found,  
Call upon Him while He is near.
- 7 Let the wicked forsake his way,  
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
Let him return to the LORD,  
And He will have mercy on him;  
And to our God,  
For He will abundantly pardon.
- 8 “For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,  
Nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the LORD.
- 9 “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are My ways higher than your ways,  
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 56:6-8 New King James Version (NKJV)

- 6 “Also the sons of the foreigner  
Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him,  
And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—  
Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,  
And holds fast My covenant—
- 7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,  
And make them joyful in My house of prayer.  
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices  
*Will be* accepted on My altar;  
For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”
- 8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says,  
“Yet I will gather to him  
*Others* besides those who are gathered to him.”

## Isaiah 65:9 New King James Version (NKJV)

9 I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,  
And from Judah an heir of My mountains;  
My elect shall inherit it,  
And My servants shall dwell there.

## Isaiah 65:13-15 New King James Version (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

“Behold, My servants shall eat,  
But you shall be hungry;  
Behold, My servants shall drink,  
But you shall be thirsty;  
Behold, My servants shall rejoice,  
But you shall be ashamed;

<sup>14</sup> Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart,  
But you shall cry for sorrow of heart,  
And wail for grief of spirit.

<sup>15</sup> You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen;  
For the Lord GOD will slay you,  
And call His servants by another name;

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### New King James Version (NKJV)

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