

Isaiah OT651  
Professor Russel Mack  
Jay Harper

What is one new thing you learned or idea to which you were exposed?

One of the new things I learned was the paradox of God's judgment. How can something that is seemingly bad be good for not just an individual or a nation? According to John Walton, "In the ancient Near Eastern cultures humans existed to care for the gods (Great Symbiosis), while Jehovah wanted to have a relationship with his people."<sup>1</sup> However, in Genesis 17:4-8 God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his seed. The promise is to make him fruitful and gave his seed to the land of Canaan. What is so interesting about this covenant is that it is not dependent upon Israel's faithfulness but the faithfulness of Jehovah to keep his promises. So, this covenant is unilateral in the sense that God in his sovereignty to fulfill his promise is unwavering. Even though God fulfills his part a covenant is still a contract between two individuals or entities. If rules or agreements are broken, then consequences result in terminating that covenant. Deuteronomy 28: 1-14 speaks of all the blessings that will come upon Israel if they would observe and do all that God has commanded. However, Deuteronomy 28: 15-68 reveals Israel's disobedience and devastating consequences. Because Israel broke her covenant agreements it resulted in a curse. She was removed from her land, scattered, and lost her peace and prosperity. G Von. Rad says, "Deuteronomy sees in these events something like a divine liquidation of the whole history of salvation brought about by Yahweh, that is to say, a termination of that road on which, according to the word of Yahweh, already referred to in Deuteronomy 17:16, no return would ever be made."<sup>2</sup>

Here's what is so paradoxical; How can God's judgment be good and not bad? John Oswalt states: "God had

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<sup>1</sup> John H, Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*: (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2006), 102.

<sup>2</sup> G Von Rad, *Deuteronomy Old Testament Library* (London: SCM 1966), 176

them from a nation of slaves to become one of the significant empires in the ancient world. They had God's law, God's temple, God's city, and God's land. How it must have stung when Isaiah said that they were not God's favorites but his enemies."<sup>3</sup> But judgment is never the last word. Dr. Donaldson writes, "The hardening part of Israel which makes the gentile mission possible has a definite point of closure. It will only last "until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in" a termination point is clearly marked by the Parousia of Christ and the salvation of "all Israel" (Romans 11:25-27).<sup>4</sup> A good parent that disciplines his child is never to hurt the child, but correction is for the child's good. Proverbs 3:11-12 says, "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." Again, Oswalt states: "He will use those fires to restore to Israel the kind of leadership they once knew in order that Jerusalem could indeed fulfill God's intention for it and become "the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City" (Isa. 1:26).<sup>5</sup> Yet one must remember that good news is only available to those who are willing to turn back to God.

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<sup>3</sup> John, N, Oswalt, *The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah*, (Grand, Rapids, MI) Zondervan 2003

<sup>4</sup> Terence, L Donaldson, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Article, 112 no 1 Spr-1993, 87

<sup>5</sup> John, N, Oswalt, *The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah*, (Grand, Rapids, MI) Zondervan 2003