

Isaiah OT651-Essay
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The one new thing I learned that is old but was brought home in a new way is that God loves the world. In Isaiah 56:1-8 God's eternal plan is to *gather still others* besides those already gathered. In the beginning, God's macro plan was for the whole world (Adam and Eve-Gen. 2). Because of sin, man's thoughts, and heart were wicked continually and God destroyed the whole world except for eight souls. Noah and his family replenished the earth again but instead of subduing the earth, his descendants decided to build a city and make a name for themselves (Gen. 11:1-10). God had promised not to destroy the world again (Gen. 9:8-17) so now his plan shifts from *macro* to *micro*. The focus has now become one man and one nation that God will use to reach the world. Abraham believes in God and God makes a covenant or contract with Abraham that is irrevocable. A covenant is a contract that legally binds two individuals or partners. Glen Arches says, "A biblical, theological covenant denotes a gracious undertaking entered into by God for the benefit and blessing of man, specifically of those men who by faith receive the promises and commit themselves to the obligations that this undertaking involves."¹ This covenant is unconditional, and God is the author and initiator of this promise so God himself will bring it to pass. Even though this covenant is unconditional it still has rules and agreements. When the rules

¹ Gleason L. Archer, "Covenant," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. by Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984) p. 276

and agreements were broken, consequences resulted. Israel broke her covenant agreements which resulted in a curse. She was removed from her land, scattered, and lost her peace and prosperity. Oswalt states: "Instead of being a light to the nations, drawing them to the God of Israel, the Israelites were being sucked into the generalized, syncretistic paganism of the nations".² Oswalt goes on to say, "Judaism cut itself off from the surrounding world, making a fetish of its purity before God."³ In other words, they reveled in their Jewish heritage only to isolate themselves from the world to which God wanted them to be a witness. Even the early church had to be convinced that the gospel was not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles (Acts. 10:9-16). Is it possible that God called Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles because unlike Peter he was not influenced by what his Jewish brothers thought about mixing with non-Jews? God's mission for the church today is still the same mission he had for Israel because he says in John 10:16: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Do we exclude people because they don't look like us, they don't dress like us, or they don't sound like us? Revelation 5:9 says, "And they sang a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The Bible says every kindred, tongue,

² John N. Oswalt, "The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah, Grand Rapids, MI 2003 p. 609

³ Oswalt p. 609

people, and nation. The song “We are family” by Sister Sledge reminds me that the blood of Jesus Christ has made us brothers and sisters and like Christ, we should weep over those who are lost. When the *prodigal son* returned home the father said: ““for this, my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry” (Luke. 15:24).