

has as its subject the accomplishment predicted through the going forth of God's message of salvation.

At the same time we must carefully note exactly what result is predicted. "It shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The objection is sometimes raised to premillennialism that it underestimates the Power of the Gospel to convert the world. It should be noted that nowhere either in the Old or New Testament is it declared that the Gospel will convert the world. That certainly is not the case in this verse. God declares that His Word will not return to Him void but will accomplish what He pleases. That is to say, His Gospel is going to win to Him all the redeemed, out of every nation and tongue, and no earthly power can stop this result. God has never declared it to be His will that the entire world be conquered by the Gospel in this age. The complete conquest of the earth is to be effected at Christ's coming by the other means described in Isaiah 11 and in Revelation 19.

After the declaration in verses 10-11 of the certainty of the carrying out of God's plan, we find in verses 12-13 a beautiful figurative statement of the results of His mercy. As God's people depart from sin and go forth into newness of life, the very mountains and hills before them are pictured as breaking forth into singing, and the trees of the field are imagined as clapping their hands with joy. All nature seems to rejoice in the regeneration of those who are saved through the mercy of Christ. In the hearts of the redeemed thorns and briars spring up no longer; their place is filled with the shade of the fir tree and the beauty of the myrtle tree. The character which is implanted becomes "to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." The unanswerable argument for the truth of the Scripture and the reality of the Gospel is found in the changed lives it produces.

From any viewpoint Isaiah 55:12 is clearly figurative. It is the present writer's opinion that verse 13 is also figurative. Upon this, however, I would not altogether insist. It is not impossible that it looks on to some extent beyond the redemption described in the previous verses to that time when the outworking of God's redemption is to be made evident in the removal of the curse from the entire earth, since such passages as Romans 8:19-23 show that a time is coming