

in many a period since. The nation seems to be sunk in unbelief and to have turned away from God. In many quarters mere formalism displaces any true carrying out of God's commands. The outward acts pretend to do God's will while the heart is at enmity toward Him. Is it possible that a nation will be born in a day? "Yes," the Lord says. What He has begun, He will complete. What He has promised, He will fulfill. This wonderful thing is going to come to pass. As soon as Zion travails she will bring forth her children.

This mention of bringing forth children refers, of course, to the spiritual rather than the physical realm. It does not mean that a great number of people who did not previously exist will suddenly come into being. It refers to spiritual birth rather than physical birth. It describes the sudden entrance of a great number of people into the family of God. A similar figure was used in chapter 54:1 which says, "more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife." No one would think of interpreting that statement as a blessing upon immorality. It is a figure expressing the idea that those who had seemed to be outside the center of God's favor would become for a time the source of a great number of spiritual births. That passage, like Isaiah 65:1, foretold the event which Paul described in Romans 11:17 as the grafting in of wild branches into an olive tree, and the breaking off of some of its natural branches. Our present passage describes the event which Paul predicts in the succeeding verses of Romans 11. God will graft the natural branches into their own olive tree again (v. 23). "And so all Israel shall be saved" (v. 25). The spiritual rebirth of all Israel is here in view. A nation will be born into Christ's kingdom in a day.

Kingdom Joys

Verses 10-14 tell of God's great blessings to His people in the wonderful day that is yet to come. Jerusalem will be a source of wonderful joy; the glory of the Gentiles will come in; a people will be comforted in Jerusalem. This is a picture of what will follow the conversion of the Jews, a picture of the wonderful time when Christ will reign in glory in Jerusalem and peace and joy will cover the whole earth.