

In Revelation 8:13, John saw an eagle who spoke in a loud voice and announced to the inhabitants of the earth, three great woes that were to come upon them—see 9:1-11:19.

In Revelation 14:6-11, John saw three angels, and heard them announce to the inhabitants of the earth three messages from God.



v.6,7 - ...flying in mid-air... He said in a loud voice...

Through the angel God appeals to humankind.

This is who God is – he is slow to anger.

His heart is that humankind reject the lies of Satan and respond to his Savior, Jesus Christ.

v.6 - ...he had the eternal gospel...

Why is the gospel described as being eternal?

Because it will never be replaced by something better.

Jesus is the way and the truth and the life, John 14:6.

Jesus made no apologies when he said the road that leads to life...



... is narrow, Matthew 7:14.

What is truly amazing... is that God has provided a road in Jesus Christ!

v.6b - ...to proclaim to those who live on the earth...

The gospel is for the world...because Jesus is the Savior of the world.

From the ascension of Jesus to his return, it is the will of God that his gospel be...



..."preached to all nations." Mark 13:10

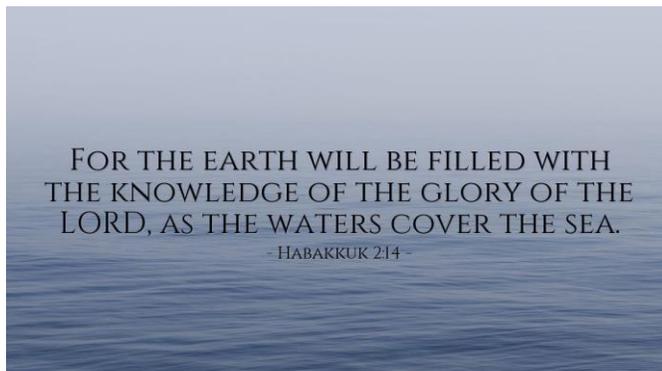
v.7 – Fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made...all things...

The use of the word "hour" tells us that God's judgment will be a specific and limited moment.... when God will make all things right.

Why was it mentioned that God is the Creator?

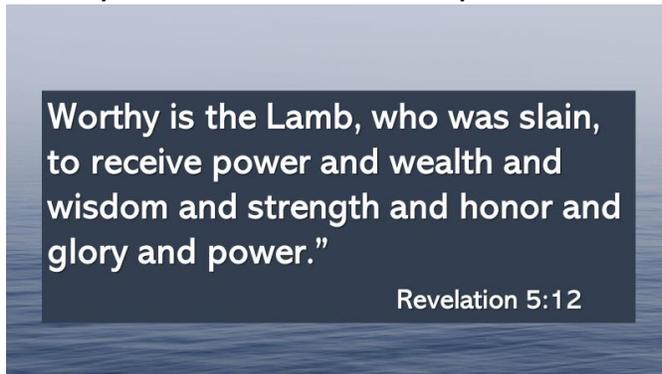
The same attributes by which God created all that is - the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water – will make all things right... all things new.

Through the prophet Habakkuk, God declared that when he ends the reign of evil and the time of darkness is no more... the new heaven and the new earth...



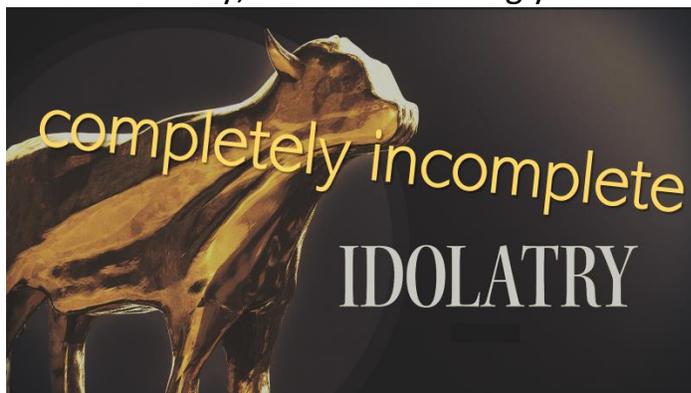
..."will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14

At that moment, it will be clear to everyone who Jesus is... that he alone is worthy...as Revelation 5:12 says...



...“to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and power.” Revelation 5:12

Simultaneously, it will be shockingly clear...



... how “completely incomplete” are the idols of humanity.

The sobering reality is that the God of Creation will hold all accountable – each of us will be “judged according to what we have done.” Revelation 20:13.

But until that final day... and the hour of judgment, this is God’s good news... the fallen sons and daughters of Adam and Eve are welcome to come home to him, to be reconciled to him by grace through faith in Christ alone.

This is why we read in the Scripture this repeated invitation... today if you hear his voice do not harden your heart, that is, don’t learn to ignore him. The moment you hear his voice... run to him and throw yourself upon his mercy and grace.



The angel is not speaking here of the literal city of Babylon.

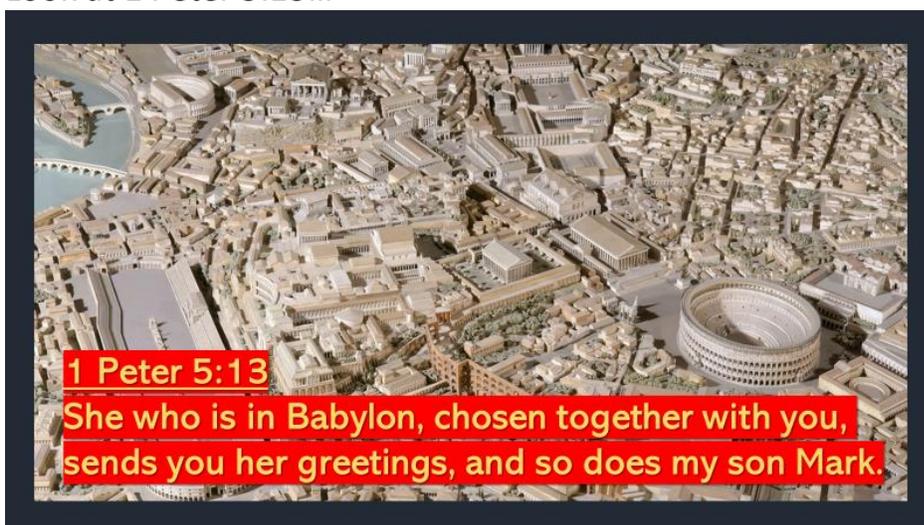


That city and empire fell in 539 BC.

Babylon the Great is a code name for any nation which is at enmity with God's purposes; that builds itself upon a foundation other than the triune God.

The original churches to whom John addressed the Revelation would have understood Babylon to be Rome.

Look at 1 Peter 5:13...



The angel spoke in the past tense – fallen!
Why did he do so... when what he described had not yet happened?
He spoke like this because from the perspective of heaven...the fall of Babylon,
the fall of the kingdoms of humanity... is a certainty.

Psalm 127:1 says...

**Unless the LORD builds the house,
its builders labor in vain.
Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the watchmen stand guard in vain.**

Psalm 127:1



Humankind cannot build an enduring existence... without God.
There is a fatal flaw within the human heart that given enough time will cause
everything we build to implode in upon itself.
This is humanity's history.

What is this fatal flaw?

From the perspective of heaven, the second angel identified but one root cause.
Idolatry...which is spiritual adultery... which is unfaithfulness to God... which is the
giving of one's soul and devotion to anything but God.

If it was possible to ask any one who has committed adultery – “how did that
work out for you?” ... I don't think anyone would answer, “Best decision I ever
made.”

It is the same for those who commit spiritual adultery.

The second angel warned it is a madness that leads not to life but ruin.



I remind you that the gospel of Jesus is both good news and bad news.

The good news... is that the triune God reveals himself to humanity in the creation, in the person of Jesus Christ, and in the words of the Bible.

The good news... is that the triune God reveals himself in order that everyone might know, not only that he exists, but might know his character - his love, his mercy, his grace, his beauty, his creativity, his wisdom, his purity, his power, his worthiness.

The good news... is that the triune God reveals himself in order that a person might respond to his love for them which was most vividly displayed at the cross of Jesus... and in perceiving such great love, choose to love him in return.

From the very beginning, it has been the will of God that all who love him would do so of their own volition.

God will not force anyone to love him; he will not compel a person to bind their life to his.

The vision John was shown, and the words spoken by the third angel leave no question... to reject Jesus is a choice a person may make... but it is a choice that carries with it disastrous consequences – it is a choice to assume responsibility for the debt of one's own sin.

Romans 6:23 – For the wages of sin is death...

...the death spoken of here is not only spiritual and physical, but eternal...

...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When Jesus offered his life in sacrifice, the Father placed upon him the sin of the world...your sin, my sin.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

When he breathed his last breath, Jesus experienced on our behalf the second death, in order that we might not.

The third angel announces that the life that follows death is a life that never ends. After death everyone will either live with God or apart from God.

The contrast between these two destinies could not be any starker.

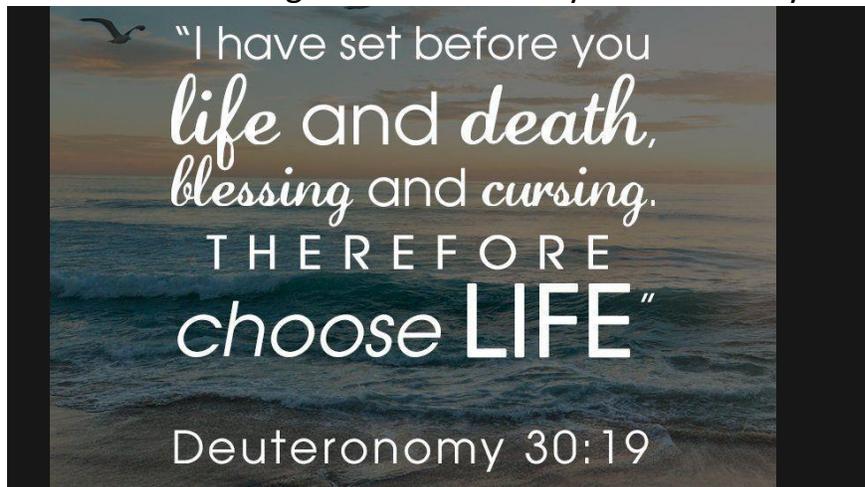
For those who reject Jesus and worship the beast:

- Torment

For those obey God's commands and remain faithful to Jesus:

- Rest

Created in the image of God humanity has the ability to choose.



The warning of the third angel was given to persuade one to change their mind and choose life, not death.

While the message of each of the three angels was spoken to the inhabitants of the earth, John connects their messages to those who follow Jesus.

Look at v.12..."This calls for patient endurance."



John didn't urge the people of God to just be patient. Nor did he urge them to just endure.

Those who would follow Jesus, those who, in the analogy of a race, cross the finish line, are those who "patiently endure."

We follow Jesus over the course of our lives, however long they may be and in whatever circumstances the Father permits.

Without question the grace of God is always enough for the people of God. This is what God himself told the apostle Paul – 2 Corinthians 12:9
"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

What was true for Paul is true for all of us.

But there is a time – every day... and there is a place – in every circumstance... for the follower of Jesus to appropriate the grace of God... in order that we might stand our ground in love, in trust and in faith of our Savior.

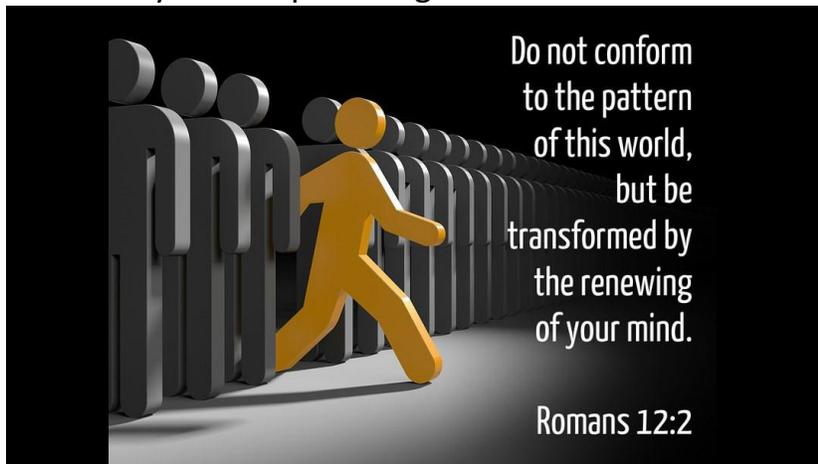
This present world is not our home.

The followers of Jesus are citizens of heaven.

We are different... not because of the clothes we wear or the food we eat or the houses we live in or the activities we do or don't do... we are different because we've been born of the Spirit and God makes his home in us.

We are different because we live by God's priorities.

This is why the Scripture urges us...



We are to resist the pressure to conform.

We are to welcome the Spirit's work of transformation which is realized from the inside out.

To patiently endure means we do today what God would have us do, and then we do it again tomorrow and the day after and the day after and the day after...



It is to follow Jesus as a child... if that is when your Christian life began... and then to keep following him as a teen and then as a young adult, a mid-adult and finally as a senior adult.

Following Jesus is never a phase that we grow out of.



In every season of our life, in the challenges, joys, disappointments and questions we face – the follower of Jesus is called to patiently endure.

The obedience God's Spirit is teaching us, the obedience that will transform our lives... is not a one-off but rather is that of a lifetime.
It is the same with faithfulness.

Can I say it again?

To patiently endure is to do today what God would have us do, and then to do it again tomorrow and the day after and the day after and the day after...

John heard the messages of three angels and then he heard a voice from heaven. Look at what that voice said, v13.

John was commanded to write down what he heard.

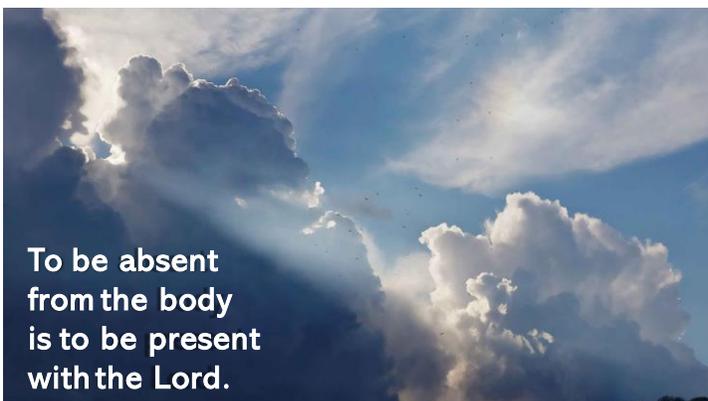
The point being made by the voice - "this is important."

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

Death is the consequence of sin.

How can there be blessing for those who die in the Lord?

Because...



To be absent from the body will be the moment when our faith becomes sight.

There is so much we don't know about death.
But our Savior who died in our place has taken the sting out of death.
To be absent from the body... is to be present with the Lord.
This will be the moment of joy beyond joy when we will be freed from the presence of sin within us.

The Spirit confirmed what the voice from heaven said, "Yes," and then added, "they will rest from their labors..."

Those who die in the Lord are not in torment.
They enter into God's rest, described in Hebrews 4 as a "sabbath-rest."

The reader has already had this rest described to them in Revelation 7:15-17:

Revelation 7:15-17

They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple, and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Does not your heart long for this?

The Spirit confirmed what the voice from heaven said, "Yes," and then added, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds will follow them."

What does this mean?

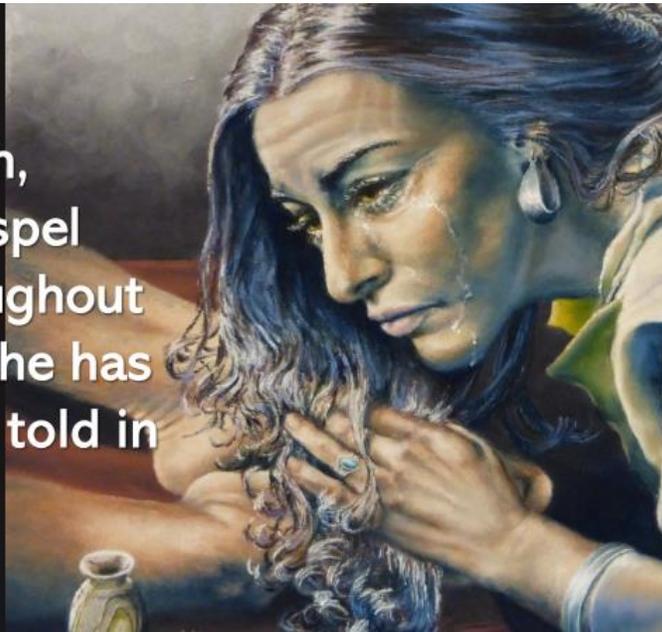
Do you remember the story of the woman who anointed Jesus at the home of Simon the Leper with very expensive perfume?

Do you remember how some at the dinner party were offended with her because she “wasted” a great fortune on “the feet” of Jesus?

Do you remember what Jesus said about this woman?

Matthew 26:13

**I tell you the truth,
wherever this gospel
is preached throughout
the world, what she has
done will also be told in
memory of her.”**



The ripple effect of this woman’s act of devotion and testimony that Jesus is worthy... continues to impact people to this very day.



But in the time of the new heaven and the new earth, the scope of what she did, the number of people impacted by her, who in turn went on to impact others, who in turn went to impact others, etc., etc., etc... will be revealed... and she will be rewarded by God.

Her deeds will follow her.

It is the same with all who follow Jesus.

Rarely do any of us realize the ways in which our lives and words impact others.
But God sees it all.
And when all things are made new, these stories of salvation will be told.

At that time, the praise of the redeemed will be to our God who took our little
and multiplied it.
Remember the story of the boy who gave his little to Jesus and 15,000 were fed?

And at that time, the praise of our God to the redeemed will be this –
**“Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things;
I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s
happiness!”**

Not only do the people of God patiently endure in trusting Jesus over a life time.
We also patiently endure in investing our lives for the sake of Jesus – giving our
time, our energies, our resources that his name and his salvation might be known
to those of our generation.

God is no man’s debtor.
Those who hope in the Lord will not be disappointed.
We will enter into his rest.
Our deeds will follow us and what we have done in this lifetime will be carried
forward into the time when all things will be made new.

**Listen to the word of the Lord.
Read Revelation 14:6-13**

The Blessing

**Galatians 6:18 – The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with
your spirit, brothers and sisters.**

We live in the tension between two ages—this age, and the age to come. This age is in large part marked by the triumph of evil, the oppression of the people of God, and futile suffering, but the age to come (the kingdom of God) is marked by the defeat of evil in all its form, the liberation of God’s people, and healing and peace. Those who follow Jesus have experienced the reality of the kingdom of God as a foretaste of what is to come when Jesus returns, yet we continue to live in this world, and so are constantly caught in the tension between the two. John expresses this succinctly at the beginning of his visionary prophetic letter that we call the Book of Revelation:

I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and **patient endurance** that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ([Rev 1.9](#))

John passes on the words of the risen Jesus to the different communities in the seven cities of Asia that he writes to, and this includes commendation to those in Ephesus and Smyrna for their ‘patient endurance’, which is embedded in exactly the same kind of language that we found Paul using to the Thessalonians: deeds, hard work, love and faith ([Rev 2.2, 2.19](#)). In the message to those in Philadelphia, their ‘patient endurance’ is also linked to suffering explicitly; because they have been formed in this, Jesus will keep them in the hour of trial that is coming. When we have experienced the wonders of life and fellowship in Christ, yet continue to live in a world where there is suffering, and in particular where we experience suffering, pressure and perhaps even direct opposition because, in walking by the Spirit ([Gal 5.25](#)) we are out of step with the world around us, then we need this quality of patient endurance. It is formed in us by the foretaste of the world to come, and is tested in us by the pressures of the world we live in.

One final use of this term is striking: patient endurance originates in the person of Jesus, and it is when we abide in him that this virtue is formed in us. Paul mentions this once:

May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance ([2 Thess 3.5](#))

But the writer to the Hebrews expands on this and makes it quite explicit:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with **perseverance** (patient endurance, *hypomone*) the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he **endured** (*hypomeno*) the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who **endured** (*hypomeno*) such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. ([Heb 12.1–3](#))

Gerhard Krodel writes, "The supreme threat to our world is not capitalism, socialism, secularism, communism or any other "ism" or lie, but God, coming to judge the world and every person in his righteousness." p.269.

Humanity underestimates the horror that sin is... and so reacts against the wrath of God that hates sin and will not make compromises with it or allow it to be present in the new heaven and earth.

The mantra of our day is...

"you do you,"

"you do what is right for you,"

"you do what makes you happy,"

"you live by your own truth,"

The gospel is offensive.

grates, it provokes, it can make a person angry to hear of a God who will place all our actions and words against his brilliant purity and hold us accountable for our sin.

The message of the third angel speaks of those who worship the beast and his image, those whose character is being formed choice by choice to be like that of the beast.

A person can choose not to love God.

A person can choose to love that which is completely incomplete.

But God warns there is no future for evil.

What the angel announced... had been announced long ago by God through the prophet Isaiah, about the actual empire of Babylon, 21:9...

...and through the prophet Jeremiah, 51:7-8...

In the Revelation, which uses symbolic language, Babylon is the capital of the beast and in every way is the opposite of Mount Zion.

Babylon was the capital of a mighty empire that had swallowed up the remaining Israelite tribes in 597 BC. It was a city that was the paradigm of wickedness, idolatry, immorality and sheer cruelty.

When this name, Babylon, is used in the Revelation, it is a symbol.

The original audience to whom this letter was first addressed would have been reminded of the prophet Isaiah and Jeremiah who lived through the capture of Jerusalem and the exile of its people.

We who are now 2700 years removed from this tragedy, we who have never experienced such horror and turmoil and chaos and brutality and destruction, struggle to understand how the people touched by this would have felt and how consumed by despair they would have been.

I am certain refugees who have come to Canada from Syria, from Afghanistan, from Sudan, to name but a few, have a better appreciation of what the Hebrew people experienced when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed everything precious and swallowed them up, moving them to his empire to serve his purposes.

The reference to Babylon points the reader back to the book of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

In the book of Isaiah, particularly chapters 40-55, God speaks to the exiles, who had lost hope.

To all appearances the gods of Babylon seemed to have defeated Yahweh. But through the prophet, God reminds his people of who he is and what he is planning to do.

He reminds his people he is the Creator of heaven and earth. Whenever God revives his people in a particular time and place... and brings times of refreshing to them, he always starts by reminding them who he is.

To the exiles, God assured them, he will rescue, he will re-establish his covenant with them and that he will renew the entire creation.

How did God tell the exiles he would do this?
Through an individual identified as “the servant.”
In the book of Isaiah there are four poems that speak of this servant.

Isaiah 42:1-9

The servant will rescue Israel and bring justice to the world.

Isaiah 49:1-7

The servant will reveal Yahweh to the nations.

Isaiah 50:4-9

The servant will listen to Yahweh and patiently suffer.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

The servant will die a shameful death as he bears the sins of his people, but he will be vindicated.

Woven throughout these four poems that speak of the servant, is the assurance from God that Babylon will be held accountable for what she has done.

God had severely disciplined his people for their sin.

The same wrath will come upon Babylon.

Before the fourth poem, is an announcement of good news – Isaiah 52:7-12.

What is the theme of this good news?

“Your God reigns!” 52:7

“Your God is coming back...visibly!” 52:8

“Your God will save!” 52:10

As God foretold through the prophet Isaiah, Babylon fell, and the exiles returned home.

As God had foretold through the prophet Isaiah... his servant, Jesus the Messiah came to Jerusalem and gave his life in sacrifice in order to save.

As God had foretold through the prophet Isaiah...he reigns, but in this present time, he does so in the midst of his enemies (Psalm 110:2), and his people do not yet see everything subject to him as one day it will be (Hebrews 2:8).