

The OT begins with a covenant God who is righteous (God is good, everything he created was 'good' in the six days of creation). After the infiltration of sin and the resulting devastation, God initiates a plan to restore his creation which begins with a special relationship with one people: Israel. As a righteous God, he pledges (covenantal) loyalty to them and demonstrates his character as good and just: "For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice, the upright will see his face" (Ps 11:7, cf Ps 50:6). (Jesus does the same with us in the new covenant cut with his blood and body).

As part of the covenant, Israel is called to be righteous as well, faithful to God and his law, but also just and good in the world. Israel (and now God's chosen people - that's us, the body of Christ) is meant to:

- be a light to other nations
- be a model of a new humanity that does right
- seeks justice
- defends the oppressed
- cares for the orphans
- and advocates for the poor widows (Isaiah 1:17)

Israel tries to fulfil this destiny (e.g., 2 Samuel 8:15), but by and large Israel struggles and sins and misses this calling. For example, in Isaiah, Israel is described as a vineyard tended by the Lord. But when he examines it, he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry (Isa.5:7).

So, the gospel of God is both a promise to, firstly, restore the whole world, and also a promise to restore his people who minister to that world.

Isaiah promises a new leader - the one who is named "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa.9:6). God establishes a good government of peace for His people upholding justice and righteousness from this time onward and forevermore (Isa.9:7).

But when would all this happen? And how? These are the questions that many Jews had in the years just before the birth of Jesus.

Read: 1 Peter 2:8-14

Pray for leaders in authority (those in government), that they will be righteous leaders who will punish those who do wrong and honour those who do right.

Let's Declare: For we are chosen people. a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's very own possession in Christ. Together, we can show others the goodness of God, for he called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.