

The fullness of salvation

Isaiah prophesies the coming of the Messiah to bring salvation. He is concerned about the salvation of nations (Israel first and then all nations) but knows that this salvation will come through one man. Isaiah chapter 1 shows that sin has social (v15-17), environmental (v19-20) and political (v23) consequences. The root of sin is a broken relationship with God (v2-4), which leads to broken relationships at all other levels. Salvation is 'putting things right' and reversing the effects of sin, bringing healing at all levels: individual, societal and political. Salvation is, therefore, the restoration of the earth and its people to the glory and joy that God intended from the beginning. The Bible contains a number of pictures of this glory that is to come (Isaiah 11:1-9; 25:1-8; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Revelation 21).

The Kingdom of God

The fullness of salvation is expressed as the good news of the coming of the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is to be found wherever God reigns – in people's hearts, relationships, systems and structures. It was prophesied in the Old Testament and brought about by Jesus.

- The Kingdom has come but we wait for its fulfilment (Mark 1:15).
- The Kingdom will put things right, bring redemption and reconciliation (Colossians 1:20, 2 Corinthians 5:19) and is good news to the poor (Luke 4:18-19).
- There will be opposition to the Kingdom because it is in conflict with the current world.

The good news of the Kingdom

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus explains his mission by quoting from Isaiah 61: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour' (Luke 4:18-19). This good news is the fullness of salvation and includes:

- reconciliation with God – the call to repent and believe is for individuals to come back to God and live in peace with him and each other
- freedom from oppression, which includes political as well as individual liberation (as in the Exodus from Egypt), because Jesus has brought all powers under his control
- personal and collective blessing from God
- good news for the poor – salvation is particularly good news for the poor because God values them as much as he values everyone else. This is different from the world's attitude towards them, which often makes them feel like secondary citizens. The Kingdom of God turns the world's values the right way round.

This focus of good news for the poor is at the heart of Tearfund's mission.

Source: *ROOTS 1: Understanding advocacy*, Tearfund 2002, page 70