

Isaiah 66:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

Analysis

Rhetorical questions express astonishment at rapid fulfillment: "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?" The Hebrew *ka'zot* (such a thing) and *ka'leh* (such things) emphasize the unprecedented nature of what follows. The questions build—can earth bring forth in one day? Can a nation be born at once? These seem impossible. Then comes the answer: "for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Using birth imagery, God promises that Zion's travail (the Hebrew *chalah* suggests labor pains) immediately produces birth. No extended labor—immediate delivery. From a Reformed perspective, this prophesies the rapid expansion of God's kingdom. At Pentecost, 3,000 were added in one day (Acts 2:41). The church grew explosively throughout Acts. What seemed impossible—a nation born instantly—occurred as the Spirit birthed the church. This illustrates sovereign grace's power to accomplish in moments what humans couldn't achieve in years.

Historical Context

The post-exilic community struggled with slow, difficult rebuilding. God promised miraculous reversal—instantaneous fulfillment when His time came. Pentecost began fulfillment: the Spirit birthed the church in power, adding thousands rapidly

(Acts 2:41, 4:4, 5:14, 6:7). Throughout church history, revivals have demonstrated this principle—seasons when God works with unusual power, accomplishing in days what took years before. Complete fulfillment awaits Christ's return when the full number of the elect is instantaneously gathered and transformed (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Pentecost demonstrate a 'nation being born at once'?
2. What does this teach about the power of sovereign grace to accomplish the impossible?
3. How should this promise affect our expectations regarding God's timing and methods in kingdom work?

Interlinear Text

מִי	שָׁמַע עַ	מִי קָזָאת	בְּרָאָה	כִּא לָהּ
H4310	Who hath heard	H2063	H4310	such a thing who hath seen
	H8085			H7200
כִּי לָהּ	אָרֶץ	וּמִי וּמִן	יְלִדָּה	
be made to bring forth	such things Shall the earth	day	in one	be born
H2342	H776	H3117	H259	H3205
גַּוְיִם	כִּי	כִּי לָהּ	גַּם	
or shall a nation	at once	in one	be made to bring forth	for as soon as
H1471	H6471	H259	H2342	H1571
בְּנִיַּתְהָ				
be born	Zion	H853	her children	
H3205	H6726		H1121	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 64:4 (Parallel theme): For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (Parallel theme): But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

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