

A Hymn of Praise

Isaiah 12

Isaiah 12 - *“And in that day you will say: “O Lord, I will praise You; though You were angry with me. Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. ² Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid, ‘for Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.” ³ Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

⁴ And in that day you will say: “Praise the Lord, call upon His name. Declare His deeds among the peoples; make mention that His name is exalted. ⁵ Sing to the Lord, for He has done excellent things. This is known in all the earth.

⁶ Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!”

Background Notes

In Isaiah 6, we discussed the call and commission of the prophet Isaiah. Then in chapters 7 through 11, we studied a wonderful section of Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah and His earthly kingdom. In fact, in Isaiah 7 and 9 have two of the outstanding Messianic prophetic passages of Scripture.

Isaiah 7:14 - *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”*

Isaiah 9:6 - *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Moving on to Isaiah 11, we had a description of the Messiah’s wonderful future kingdom of peace and blessing. The description of the Messiah’s kingdom was in great contrast to the earthly kingdoms of Isaiah’s day. The kingdoms of Isaiah’s day came under God’s judgment - both the northern kingdom of Israel (Isaiah 9), and the entire Assyrian Empire (Isaiah 10).

In contrast, the Messiah’s kingdom would be a kingdom of righteousness and justice. It will be a kingdom of such peace that, *“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:6-9).*

Isaiah 11:4 & 9 make it clear that the coming kingdom of the Messiah is an *earthly* kingdom. The big question is, of course: When will this predicted earthly kingdom be realized? Is it present now? Is the predicted kingdom fulfilled now in the Church? If it is fulfilled in the Church, then all these very specific prophecies must be “spiritualized” (as we mentioned in our last talk). If these prophecies are being fulfilled presently in the Church, then the wolf, the lamb, the leopards and the goats must be interpreted as *figurative*. These animals dwelling peacefully together would then be figurative for “people of all different personalities and characteristics getting along together in the Church.” We don’t believe that spiritualizing these verses is the proper way to interpret Isaiah 11.

If you want to interpret this passage literally, you have two options:

Option 1 - Isaiah 11 is a literal description of the eternal state in the future. However, the rest of Scripture overwhelmingly indicates that in the eternal state, children won’t be playing by the holes of cobras and putting their hands into the dens of vipers, as is described in verse 8.

Option 2 - Isaiah 11 is a literal description of the literal kingdom that our Lord Jesus will set up on this earth in the future, when He returns in His second coming to this earth. I believe Option 2 is the proper way to interpret Isaiah 11.

According to Revelation 20, this earthly kingdom will last for a thousand years, and will merge with eternity. In this wonderful millennial kingdom of worldwide righteousness and peace, the wolf will literally lie down with the lamb, and snakes literally will not be harmful. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (v9). Nations will not be at war anymore, but will be submissive to the authority of Christ as King (v10). What a wonderful time that will be!

No wonder Isaiah 12 is a hymn of praise! It is a fitting conclusion to this section of Isaiah. There are two stanzas in this hymn of praise: verses 1-3 and verses 4-6.

Stanza 1 starts with verse 1: “*And in that day you will say: “O Lord, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.”*”

Stanza 2 starts with verse 4: “*And in that day you will say: ‘Praise the Lord, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the people; make mention that His name is exalted.’”*”

Stanza 1 closes with verse 3: “*Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”*”

And *Stanza 2* closes with verse 6: “*Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!”*”

Let's look at this hymn of praise at a little more detail in the doctrinal points.

Doctrinal Points

1. In *that day*, Israel's praise to the Lord will finally be realized.

We've mentioned before that the phrase "*in that day*," used by the prophets (and especially Isaiah) often refers to the End Times - either the judgments of the Tribulation period or the blessings of the Lord's millennial Kingdom. Here the future millennial kingdom of Christ is in view.

In verses 1, 3, 4 and 6, to whom does the word "*you*" refer? In the context, clearly the "*you*" is the Jewish people, or Israel. "The inhabitants of Zion" are the audience that Isaiah was addressing. The beginning of verse 6: "*Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion.*" They are the "Israel" in the last part of verse 6: "*For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!*"

So in context, the "*you*" is **Israel, not the Church**. The Church is **not** "the New Israel" (as is sometimes taught). The Church is the Body and Bride of Christ.

The Church has **not** replaced Israel. God still has a plan and program for the Jewish people. Right now, as God's people, the Jewish people have been **set aside only temporarily** - until they turn back to the Lord. Many Jews will come back to the Lord and accept Jesus as their Messiah before the Lord returns (see Romans 11).

Isaiah 12 is a hymn of praise that this future remnant of godly Jews will sing to the Lord when He returns. They will give thanks to the Lord that their many long years of experiencing God's heavy hand of discipline are over. Notice verse 1: "*Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.*"

Think of all the trials and tribulations that God has allowed the Jewish people to experience down through 2000 years of history, to cause them to turn back to the God of their salvation, and to the Messiah they once rejected.

In that coming day when the Lord returns, Israel will thank Him for His salvation, His strength, His comfort and His excellence. They will trust, and they will no longer have to fear anti-Semitism, pogroms, and death camps. They will be joyful, and they will praise the Lord in song. They will finally be the "light to the Gentiles" that the Lord always meant them to be, and they will tell forth to the nations the greatness of the Holy One of Israel in their midst!

Right now, Israel is only a secular state with Jews returning to the Land - but "*in that day*" a significant godly remnant will return to the **Lord**. In that day, Israel's praise to the Lord will finally be realized.

2. In *this* day, Israel's praise to the Lord can always be applied.

When properly interpreted in its context, Isaiah 12 is the praise of restored Israel in the future. But does this hymn of praise have any application for the Christian today? Yes, indeed it does. Although the correct *interpretation* sees this chapter as referring to Jewish people in the future, we can always find a present-day *application* from prophetic Scripture. As restored Israel will praise the Lord in the future for her salvation, strength, comfort, goodness, and excellence, so Christians can praise the Lord for all of these things now.

We can teach our children and grandchildren to sing God's praises because He is so good and He is so great. Isaiah 12:2 was one of the first verses I memorized as a child: "*I will trust and not be afraid!*"

And as Israel in the future will make the mighty deeds of the Lord known throughout the earth (v4-5), so we should now let the world know what God has done in providing salvation for anyone who will put their trust and faith in the salvation provided by Jesus Christ. In *this* day, Israel's future praise to the Lord can be applied to us.

Practical Application

Let's draw water from the wells of salvation

In John 4:10, the Lord referred to salvation as "living water." The living water that He provides is the only way the thirst of the soul can be quenched.

Here in Isaiah 12:3, we see that the spiritual thirst of Israel will be satisfied as they rejoice in God's wonderful salvation: "*Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*"

As a believer, is your spirit satisfied right now? Is your soul fulfilled – or is it thirsty? Maybe you know for sure that you're saved, but you must confess that you've been trying to find satisfaction and fulfillment in places or things other than in the Lord - perhaps in this world's broken cisterns. The empty wells or cisterns of this world can never satisfy the thirst of our souls!

We need to constantly remember and rethink and be deeply thankful for all that the Lord has done for us in saving us. And then, with joy, draw water from the wells of salvation!

Let's draw water from the wells of salvation!