

In That Day...Salvation!
Isaiah 4:2-6

Before the reading, we'll pray. Please join me in prayer. Father in heaven, we do pray that you would speak to us from your word, and that we would be given ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand and to obey. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Isaiah 4, verses 2 to 6, or from verse 2 to the end of the chapter. Isaiah 4, verse 2:

“²In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. ³And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, ⁴when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. ⁵Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. ⁶There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.” Amen.

“In that day”—just turn back and let's hear some more about “that day” in the book of Isaiah. Go back to chapter 2, verses 11 and 12. “¹¹The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. ¹²For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low.”

In Isaiah chapter 3, let's look at verses 6 and 7. “⁶For a man will take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying: ‘You have a cloak; you shall be our leader, and this heap of ruins shall be under your rule’; ⁷in that day he will speak out, saying: ‘I will not be a healer; in my house there is neither bread nor cloak; you shall not make me leader of the people.’ ⁸For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the Lord, defying his glorious presence.”

Move to verse 18 of chapter 3: Now if you remember from last week, the prophecy against the women of Judah—“¹⁸In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; ¹⁹the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; ²⁰the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; ²¹the signet rings and nose rings; ²²the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; ²³the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils. ²⁴Instead of perfume there will be rotteness; and instead of a belt, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty. ²⁵Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in battle. ²⁶And her gates shall lament and mourn; empty, she shall sit on the ground.” Isaiah 4” “¹And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, “We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach.”

That day. That day. Thus far, that day has been a day of judgment. Thus far, Isaiah has spoken of that day as something to be feared, something to make us tremble. In that day, God will judge evil. And in that day, the proud and the mighty, who think they can stand against God and that they can establish their own identity by their own goodness, and by their own nature, and by their power, will be made low.

It's a day of destruction, and God's holy city will fall. And God's holy people will be taken off into slavery. And the women of the city will be unclean and shamed—naked, sold into slavery, so desperate that they would happily have seven women to one man in that day. It must be a terrible day. It must be an awesome day, and I mean awesome in the fearful sense—that kind of awe that makes you tremble.

But then, verse 2: “In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.” In that day of judgment, my friends—salvation. In that day of cursing—blessing. In that day where God withdraws everything from the land—fruit, beauty, glory, joy. In that day! In that day! From the writings of Isaiah, and from the writings of many other prophets, it would appear that we can't actually divide God's judgment from God's salvation—that God is judging and saving. And on the last day, He will judge and He will save.

Even now, God is judging and saving. People are being called into His kingdom. People are being called into salvation. People are being cleansed and separated from their sins, and being given the gift of life in Jesus Christ—rich now, in this day.

And even at the same time, there are those being handed over, to use the phrase we looked at in the book of Romans—handed over to their sins, hardened in their conscience, rejected, pushed away. They're not in the kingdom. And according to the word of God, they're not going to be in the kingdom.

Don't get judgmental yourselves. We can't judge. What do I mean? We don't know who's going to be saved, and we don't know who's going to be lifted out of the sewer. We don't know who's going to be called into the kingdom. This is God's business, it's God's prerogative, it's something that He has reserved for Himself. Jesus says in John chapter 3, “The wind blows where it wishes.” He's speaking of the Holy Spirit granting life. The wind blows where it wishes. The life of God goes where God sends it—to those to whom He sends it.

You've only got to look at the history of the church to see the people who have been saved and the sins that they have been saved from. Death camp guards, saved; prostitutes, saved; murderers, saved; thieves, saved; homosexuals, saved. Never forget Paul's line in First Corinthians chapter 6: “Such were some of you.” And gives a listing of some fairly heinous sins—homosexuality and thievery and murder. “Such were some of you,” and yet they're saved.

It's not for us to assume even now and say, as we see someone in sin, “Blimey, they're conscience must be hard. They must be deep into it.”—It's not for us to assume that God will not get for Himself great glory by drawing them into the kingdom, by cleansing them, by washing them clean, by granting them life. That's not for us to know.

But what we do know is that on the day of the Lord, judgment and salvation are the two sides of the same coin. God is revealing His glory in judgment, and God is revealing His glory in salvation. And He will be glorified. The world, all of creation, all of humanity, all of the sentient heavenly beings will see the justice and the goodness of God.

I was just thinking about this this morning. God did not break His own law in saving humanity. He fulfilled it. He did not forgive us our sins in a way that makes Him less than good, or less than God. He forgave us our sins on a legal basis, the legal basis being that somebody, a Man, has paid the price for mankind's sins. He fulfilled His own will on a legal basis.

This is one of the great comforts of our Christian faith, my friends. You see, Satan can't say to God, "The way you did it? That's not fair." He can't come complaining and say, "You say you're good. You say you're against sin. You say you'll judge sin, and yet—there you go, you've let sinners come into your kingdom."

He can't make that accusation, because God can say, "I have judged sin, and I am judging sin, and I will judge sin. And with regards to the sinners that came into the kingdom, I judged a Man, and His name was Jesus—Jesus of Nazareth. I passed my judgment upon that Man, and He was innocent. I poured out my wrath upon that innocent Man. I poured it out upon Him, and He accepted it instead of His people, in the place of His family. He took it. He accepted all my anger, and I poured out my judgment upon Him. Therefore, all who are hiding in Him have already been judged, and my holiness, my goodness, my nature as God, my law as God, has not been in any way compromised. I am still pure, holy, and righteous, even though I have saved and forgiven sinners." In that day. In that day, the glory of God will be revealed.

Now as I look at verse 2, I've got to be honest, I'm so tempted to start flying forward through the prophets to pick up that word, that phrase, "the branch of the Lord." The branch could be the sprout—the sprout, the branch, the regrowth. The picture is a stump—nothing but a stump. But then comes the rains, and then from the stump comes new life, comes the sprout. The branch. Isaiah speaks more of it, in Isaiah chapter 11, for example. Jeremiah speaks of it. But I don't want to rush forward, because what's happening is Isaiah is starting to reveal to us some strands of colour that he's weaving into the picture that we're going to get of the Messiah.

So if we want to pick up the strands of colour that he's weaving into the picture, we actually need to be going backwards. I love the way that when you want to find the meaning of Scripture, you've got to go back into the Bible. You go deeper into Scripture, and you find what is being taught to you clarified, and it gives even greater clarity, greater understanding from what comes before Isaiah prophesied.

You see, the problem is, if I rushed to Jeremiah, Jeremiah prophesied after Isaiah, and so Jeremiah is building upon what Isaiah has already revealed. Now that's good, and Lord willing, as we work our way through this book, we're going to get to what Jeremiah has to say. But Isaiah here is picking up something from the past.

So let's have a look and work it out, what it is that he's picking up. I want you to turn in your Bibles to Second Samuel, chapter 23. Now in this section of Second Samuel, we're getting near to the end of the life of King David, and we're getting some summary statements about David, about the administration of his kingdom, and also from David. Second Samuel chapter 22 is basically a psalm of praise that David made when he was delivered from those who persecuted him, delivered from King Saul. He was established on the throne. But I want to look at what's recorded as the last words of David.

Second Samuel chapter 23, starting at verse 1: ¹Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel: ²“The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me; his word is on my tongue. ³The God of Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has said to me: When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, ⁴he dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

⁵“For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire? ⁶But worthless men are all like thorns that are thrown away, for they cannot be taken with the hand; ⁷but the man who touches them arms himself with iron and the shaft of a spear, and they are utterly consumed with fire.”

What I want us to look particularly at is verse 5. “For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure.” Now what was the covenant? Remember when David sought to build a temple, he got a word from the prophet Nathan. First of all Nathan said, “Go ahead and build it. God is with you.” But then Nathan went away, received a different word, and came straight back to David and said, “I'm sorry. I got that a bit wrong. There's a different word coming your way, and here it is: You won't get to build the temple, but one of your sons will. And God is going to establish in you an everlasting kingdom, a kingdom that will never end. And one of your sons will receive an eternal kingdom, an eternal throne.” That's the covenant that David speaks of here.

Why have I turned to look particularly at verse 5, where it says, “For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?” Literally, “Will he not cause to sprout, will he not cause to branch.” The same root word that we see in Isaiah chapter 4, verse 2. “For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For will he not cause to” sprout or branch “all my help and my desire?” Will not God give life?

So there's David, speaking of this picture of the way this covenant that God has made with him is going to work through his family. Though it would appear that the stump is dead, though it would appear one day that the stump is being cut off down to the ground and there's nothing there, God's going to send the rain. Life is going to come. A sprout is going to come. The stump will never be killed—that's the promise that David's speaking of, and that's the thought that Isaiah has grasped hold of and worked here into what we call chapter 4, verse 2.

Also turn to Psalm 132, from verse 1. It says, ¹Remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, ²how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, ³I

will not enter my house or get into my bed, ⁴ I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, ⁵ until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.” Now we’ll drop further down into this Psalm—verses 13 to 18: “¹³ For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place: ¹⁴ ‘This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. ¹⁵ I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread. ¹⁶ Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. ¹⁷ There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. ¹⁸ His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine.’”

I think I hardly need to point out to you the similarities between what we just read in Psalm 132 and what we’re looking at this morning in chapter 4 of Isaiah. Isaiah speaks of a glorious and beautiful Jerusalem. All who remain in it will be holy, cleansed from their bloodstains. The Lord will be over Mount Zion, just as He was over His people in the Exodus—this pillar of cloud and fire, shade by day, light by night, refuge from the storm and from the rain. And here’s David, and you see that particular word: “I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine.”

In that day. In that day, the sprout of the Lord, from the family of David according to God’s covenant with David, shall be beautiful and glorious. And the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honour of the survivors of Israel. The survivors? The survivors of Israel, and he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem. Just turn back in the book of Isaiah to chapter 1, verse 9: “If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.” Survivors—a remnant, a remnant of God’s grace.

Now flick back to Isaiah chapter 4. A remnant of God’s grace, and they’ll be called holy. “He who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy.” Now I’ve said to you before that on its surface, bare reading, Isaiah is speaking to the people of Judah, and he’s saying to them, You’ve broken covenant with God. You will be judged. You will be taken into captivity. Then you will be returned. Jerusalem will be rebuilt.

Of course, that’s part of what’s being said here. When the people returned from the Babylonian captivity, those who returned, they never took up idol worship again. They never worshipped Baal or Ashtoreth or Moloch. They never passed their children through the fire again. They never did any of those things that were abominable to God.

But we’ve got to be honest. Isaiah is speaking of something a bit more marvelous and fantastic than what happened when the people returned from Babylon, because when the people returned from Babylon, although the offspring of David got to be made the governor in Jerusalem, he was installed as the governor by a Babylonian king. There was no king from David’s line. There was no anointed one from David’s line. There had not yet been a branch, or a sprout, as Isaiah had prophesied. It was good that they returned to Jerusalem, for that’s where the Messiah was to come. And it was good that the temple was built, for that’s where the Messiah was to come. And it was good because in Christ the presence of God was going to bless that temple. And He was going to judge it, and He was going to commit it to destruction.

But the prophecy of Isaiah, I'm saying, was not just fulfilled in the return of the people to the promised land. There was more. More was required, more was promised, because there's no evidence—or think about it this way: How could we say that the bloodstains of the people were removed? We're looking at John, and John the Baptist. What did he say about Jesus? "The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"—Who takes away sins. And so until the sprout came to the city, until the sprout, the branch of the Lord came to Jerusalem, they were still in their sins. Sins had not been taken away.

And so Isaiah's prophecy was hanging, awaiting fulfillment. There had been partial fulfillment: The people had returned; worship was once again established on Mount Zion; the temple was operating; the sacrifices were being made. And we know there were godly people in the city. Think especially of the gospel of Luke. People are awaiting the Messiah. They were awaiting the sprout. They were believing in the promises of God, and were justified in their faith, awaiting the coming of God's Holy One—this remnant, a remnant left in Jerusalem and in Zion.

Now I am suggesting and telling you that Mount Zion today is the church. The city of God today is the church. It is the saved. I'm not telling you that Mount Zion, prophetically, is the present day land of Israel—and I don't hate Israel, and I've got nothing against Israel. It seems to me to be the only country in the Middle East where I would want to be.

But I'm not saying to you that what is happening in Israel today is in any way a prophetic fulfillment of Scripture, other than the fact that God, by His providence, will bring about His will throughout the whole earth, and by His providence at this moment, His will is that there's a nation called Israel in the Middle East today.

"The Lord shall have washed away," verse 4 chapter 4 of Isaiah, "the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning." Remember how we closed last week as we looked at God's curses—God's judgment, through Isaiah, falling upon the women of Jerusalem? He was saying that they were vain, that they were flirtatious, that they were overtly sexual in their behavior, and that God's judgment would fall upon them. And he said that there would be rotteness instead of perfume, and baldness instead of beautiful hair. Well now look at what God is saying to the daughters of Zion: They'll be cleansed of their bloodstains, cleansed of their uncleanness. By what? "By a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning." The spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning.

John the Baptist spoke of one who would baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire. And last week as we looked at the gospel of John, we saw that that idea of being baptized in the Spirit was connected to the idea of having your sins washed away and removed. This fire would refine, it would cleanse, it would purify. There will be destruction.

I was also led to think of Second Peter, how at the end Peter speaks of the coming day of fire that will destroy all that is vain—this coming day of judgment. But God's people will be purified. The judgment that destroys is the judgment that preserves and purifies for the people who are the people of God. The Lord shall wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion. Their names are being recorded.

We find that idea of names being recorded all over the Scripture. There's a book of life in the book of Revelation. Moses, in Exodus chapter 32, when he prayed, he prayed, "Blot my name out from your book if you're going to destroy this people. I would rather I was destroyed than them." And God said, "No, I'll destroy whom I'll destroy." But Moses spoke of a book in which people were recorded as being the people of God, and were recorded as being saved. We find it also in Psalm 69 and Psalm 87—this idea of God making a permanent, eternal record of the people whom He will save.

Isaiah 4, verse 5: ⁵ Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. ⁶ There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain."

Let's trace that idea out a little bit. Turn if you will to the book of Exodus, chapter 13. We'll just look at verses 21 and 22. Now we're at the start of the exodus. The people have escaped from Egypt, and this glory cloud is now over them. Verse 21: ²¹ And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people."

So you see Isaiah has picked up a picture from the book of Exodus. Now when I say Isaiah, I mean the Holy Spirit—you know, Isaiah speaking and moved along by the Holy Spirit, speaking the words of God. But I always like to say the Scripture didn't fall out of thin air. It's based in history. It's based in real things that really happened. And Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, and almost everything else in the Old Testament is a commentary upon and an explanation of and building up upon the things that Moses wrote.

So Isaiah goes back to the book of Exodus and now he talks about how, over this place called Mount Zion, there will be the sign of God's presence, the confirmation of God's saving love. God will be with His people, sheltering His people. It's a beautiful picture. We're in the middle of summer here and it's pretty hot, but think of the Middle Eastern, desert-type picture: a cloud shading you by day. It's a blessing to be in the shade when you're stuck in the desert heat. A cloud by day.

Move forward in Exodus to chapter 14, and there we look at verses 19 to 25. Now we're here at the Red Sea, and I want you to just see something. Verse 19: ¹⁹ Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night." Now this is the pursuit towards the Red Sea.

Verse 21: ²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴ And in the morning watch the

Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, ²⁵ clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, ‘Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.’”

What do I want you to see? This cloud, this pillar, is the presence of God. It’s been spelled out to us back in verse 19. “Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.” It’s not coincidence. This angel of the Lord is the angel of Yahweh. He is the presence of God. He is God with His people.

Just go back down to verse 24: “And in the morning watch the Lord,” or, –In the morning watch *Yahweh*—“in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic.” This cloud over the people is the very presence of God—the very presence of God with His people.

Now what’s Isaiah’s promise here? ⁵ “Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. ⁶ There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.” The promise is the presence of God—the presence of God over all of God’s people assembled, the presence of God amongst God’s people.

The promise is that there will be another exodus. There will be an exodus, another rescue—another rescue mission, another redeeming of God’s people. God sent Moses down to Pharaoh, and what was His message? “Israel is my firstborn. Let them go out that they may worship.” And that’s the beginning of the battle that leads to the exodus.

Turn in the New Testament to the gospel of Luke, chapter 9. Start at verse 28: ²⁸ “Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. ³⁰ And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

We’ll stop there, and I just want to ask you, Do you know the word behind “departure”? Exodus. His “exodus,” which He will accomplish at Jerusalem. The work of our Lord in redeeming a people into the kingdom of God, into the presence of God, is called an exodus by Moses and Elijah. There was an exodus. Moses led the people out of Egypt. But there is a greater exodus. It’s the type, and the exodus that Jesus accomplished as He leads His people out of slavery to sin, that is *the* exodus—the exodus setting us free from slavery to sin—Egypt.

We were slaves, and now we are free. We were the Pharaoh’s servants. We were of the enemy camp. We were servants of the Devil himself. We were enemies with God. And Christ accomplished an exodus. He led us out of that land of slavery into the promised land, into the kingdom of God. This is accomplished through the cleansing away of the bloodstains of guilt.

The picture here is the picture of God rescuing His church, God rescuing His people, God saving His elect in that day. In that day. In that day of judgment. In that day of judgment, salvation. In that day of judgment, the glory of God is revealed. As I've said before, there's two pictures, two things that Isaiah constantly tells us: There will be judgment. There will be salvation.

And we've picked up now some of the threads, or some of the colours that Isaiah is weaving into his picture of the one who is coming. It gets more and more detailed. The circumstances of His coming, the family from which He will come, the blessing of the abiding of the Holy Spirit upon Him. He's a servant who will suffer. He's a sufferer who will reign. He's a king. Isaiah is reaching forward towards the revealing of God's holy King—a King from the line of David; the branch, or the sprout; the regrowth, when it appeared that things were dead; the life that is given; the gift of God.

As I said, it's hard for me not to want to rush forward and say more about this, because this is the most glorious and exciting news. This is the gospel in the Old Testament, my friends. This is the promise of God. This is where God can speak to His people at any time. He can speak to His people from the Old Testament, He speaks to His people from the New Testament.

This is where it becomes so important that we understand the concept of one people in Christ—one people, one people under God's covenantal blessing, one people who can take hold of God's word and store it up in their heart. We must understand that God has been preparing salvation for His people from time eternal—from time eternal. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit covenanted together to save a people for God from time eternal, from time without measure. And they will not be denied.

We're not nearly at the end of Isaiah's predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem. We're not nearly at the end of Isaiah's denouncing of their sins. We're nowhere the end of it. But my friends, we're not nearly at the end of his promises of salvation. We're not nearly at the end of his promises of a coming Saviour. We're not nearly, or anywhere near the end of his promises of God's covenant blessings falling upon God's people. Always, always in the world, God has His people. Always, God has His remnant. Always, God is saving His people.

We go through the fires. Turn to First Peter, chapter 1. Start reading at verse 6: “⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Tested by fire, my friends. A faith tested and purified by fire. A fire that destroys the enemies of God is the fire that purified the people of God.

We'll keep reading: “⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹²It was revealed to them that they

were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

Who was Isaiah writing for? “The prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

Isaiah was speaking to the people of Judah. He was. But he was speaking to us. He was speaking to the Israel of God. Speaking to us. Why? Because we’ve all been folded into one. The Old Testament believing faithful community has become the church. The church has become the believing faithful community. We’ve become the children of Abraham. The children of Abraham have become the children of God through Christ—all folded into one great covenant family.

And these words were spoken for who? They were spoken for us. And it says that Isaiah, the prophets, were inquiring about what they were writing about—what personal time was indicated when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. And it was told to them, It’s not for you. It’s for the people of God. It’s coming. It’s in the future. It’s for us.

Peter preaches the gospel from the Old Testament. That’s what we need to understand, and we often forget that. When the apostles started to preach, and they opened their Bibles, what they opened was somewhere from Genesis to Malachi. They opened somewhere in the Old Testament, and they preached the gospel from the Old Testament.

And when Jesus, for example in the gospel of Luke, spoke to the two people on the road to Emmaus, it says He taught them from Moses to the prophets about the Christ who was to come. In other words, He taught them the gospel from the Old Testament. And here we are in the book of Isaiah, and we’re finding rich gospel promises—promises of cleansing, and purification, and the blessing of the presence of God.

And what is the kingdom of God? What are your blessings, my friend? When I say to you, What are the best things about having been converted, having been brought into the kingdom, what would you say? My sins are forgiven. I’ve been granted new life. I’m being sanctified. I can see that I’m changing. I know that I’m not perfect, I know that I’m not what I ought to be, but I also know that I’m on the way. And furthermore, I know the presence of God. I know God is with me. I know that God is with me in all that I do. Isaiah’s promises are gospel promises—promises for us, the people of God. It’s exciting. It’s joyous. It’s a blessing.

The law and the gospel will go forth from the mountain of the Lord. We found that back in Isaiah chapter 2, remember? The law and the word, the law and the gospel will go forth. Judgment, salvation. Judgment, blessing. Conviction, blessing.

Who receives these words? We don't know. But if ever you meet someone who's convicted and under a burden of sin, well, they just might be ready soil for the seed of the word, because it's God who brings people to Himself through His promises. And we should be strong in the word of the Lord so that we can share these promises of God. God promised through the prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before Christ came, that we could be cleansed, purified, separated from our sins, and live in the very presence of God, day by day, never to depart from us. Let's close in prayer.

Father in heaven, we do thank you and praise you for this word, for your promises through the prophet Isaiah. Father, I pray that you would help us to take hold of, and to understand, and to live upon your word. Lord, I pray that you would grant us faith and love and obedience. In Jesus' name. Amen.