

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #20

Isaiah 12:1-6

I want to begin with a story that was first told to me by Bob Windon, which later he was able to track down and verify in print. It is a story about Ira Sankey the great music leader for D. L. Moody. In 1876, Mr. Sankey was traveling on a steamboat up the Delaware River on Christmas Eve. There were several people on board making the same trip and some of them recognized Ira Sankey and asked him if he would sing a song for them. Sankey stood for a moment, silently praying and thinking about what song to sing and then, instead of singing a Christmas song, he started singing "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us." Every heart was moved. At the end of the song, a rough, tough-looking man stepped up and asked Sankey this question: "Did you ever serve in the Union Army?" Sankey said, "Yes, in the spring of 1860." The man said, "Can you remember if you were doing picket duty on a bright moonlight night in 1862?" Sankey said, "Yes." The man said, "I was serving in the Confederate Army and when I saw you standing at your post I said to myself, 'That fellow will never get away from here alive.' I raised my musket and took aim, completely hidden, while you walked in full moonlight. At that instant you began to sing, just as a moment ago... Savior, like a shepherd lead us. The music touched my heart. I took my finger off the trigger. 'I'll wait until the end of the song,' I said to myself. 'I can't miss him, and I can shoot him afterwards.' I could hear every word perfectly and how the memories came to my heart. I began to think of my childhood and my mother. She loved God. She had sung that song to me many times. But she died too soon; otherwise I think my life might have been different. At the end of the song, I could not raise my musket again. It was impossible for me to take aim, though you still stood in the bright moonlight, a perfect target. My arm dropped to my side and I cannot tell you all the things I thought at that time. My heart was smitten, but I didn't know what to do. Just now, when you were to sing and stood quietly praying, I recognized you. I have wandered far and wide since that other occasion. I have never found that Shepherd. Please help me find a cure for my sick soul." Ira Sankey was deeply moved and he threw his arms around the man who had been his enemy, and on that Christmas Eve night in 1876, two former soldiers rejoiced because they both were right with God.

Now I want to take us back to that night when both were soldiers. Can you imagine the response you would have gotten if you would have walked up to these two soldiers and said, "Fifteen years from now, you will both be hugging each other and crying and fellowshiping together and rejoicing because you are both right with God." As amazing as that message would have been, it is what happened.

I want you to imagine for a moment that you take a trip to Israel and you travel all through a land that has been ravaged by war. You travel through Jerusalem, and as you go you start saying this to all the Jewish people - "In just a few short years, you will be singing praises to God in this land and you will be joyful and happy and you will be the place most blessed by God in the entire world. All the people in the world will love you and esteem you. As amazing as that message may be, it is what is going to happen and that is exactly what Isaiah says right here.

Isaiah actually says this to Judah when things looked very bleak for her. Life was not good.

Since we began our journey through Isaiah, we have seen several severe predictions concerning how bad things will be for Israel. For example in Isaiah 3:1, God says He will remove from Jerusalem and Judah the whole supply of bread and water. That is about as desperate as it can get.

But when we come to **chapters 11-12**, the doom and gloom are gone. In these chapters, Isaiah reveals some amazing things and makes some unbelievable predictions. **What we find here is that Israel is in the land and she is worshipping and praising God and she is joyous and happy and blessed and the whole world sees it and knows it.** Isaiah 12 is, as Dr. J. Vernon McGee said, “a jewel” for Israel. **The kind of worship described in this chapter and the reasons for it is the kind Israel has dreamed about.** She is in her land, she is in Jerusalem and she is at peace and she is rejoicing and praising God.

As we saw last time, what is described in chapter 11 is mind-boggling, but no more so than what you see here in **chapter 12.** **Chapter 11 is like reading about an Israeli historical fairytale and chapter 12 is like reading about a worshipful fairytale.** When you actually look through Israel’s history right up until today and then you analyze what is described in these verses, it is an incredible dream-come-true. What we have described in these verses is a time when Israel is in the Millennium with Jesus Christ reigning in Jerusalem and life and worship are happy, joyful and God-glorifying.

THERE WILL COME A DAY WHEN ALL ISRAEL WILL JOYOUSLY LIVE IN HER LAND AND PRAISE AND WORSHIP GOD FOR HIS GREAT SALVATION AND HIS DELIVERING POWER AND BLESSINGS, AND THAT DAY WILL BE WHEN JESUS CHRIST IS PHYSICALLY LIVING IN JERUSALEM.

Now there are some marvelous applications we may make to this and one of them is this - **Both Israel’s joy and our joy is not found in our present circumstances; it is found in our future.** Present circumstances for God’s people may look bleak, but God’s people don’t look at the present; they look to the future and the future is very bright.

Now the text breaks down quite nicely into two main stanzas, both of which begin in Hebrew with these words: “Then you will say **on that day.**” Now the specific day that is being referred to is the day when all the things of chapters 10 and 11 are done. God’s anger against Israel is over, the Tribulation is done and the faithful remnant of Israel is in the land and Jesus Christ is reigning. In that day, here is what you will literally physically see and audibly hear in Israel. Now these same things are things that the N.T. Grace Age believer may say and see now.

STANZA #1 – What Israel will say and do in regard to God. 12:1-3

There is coming a day when Israel, as a nation, is going to praise and worship God. The Promised Land will be filled with the blessings and presence of God and Jerusalem will be full of joy and blessings.

Praise Acknowledgment #1 - There will come a day when Israel will give thanks to God.

12:1

Now the first thing that we may notice is that this thanks to God will be given in the context of admitting something about God's "anger." The Hebrew word used for anger here is one that refers to a very emotional anger which is very fierce in which God's nostrils are actually flaring (*The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 60).

This is important to see because before Israel will give thanks to God, she will acknowledge that He has every right to be fiercely angry with her as a nation. She will acknowledge that He had every right to have His nostrils flaring against her.

May I say to us this day, before we can live in a thankful way before God, we must admit the same thing. We must admit that God has every right to be ferociously angry with us because of our sin and rebellion against Him. You will not ever give thanks to God until you admit this. Once Israel has admitted that God has every right to be ferociously angry with her, specifically for what she did to His Son and her Messiah, then she will be able to thank God for two reasons:

(Reason #1) - Because God's anger will be turned away from Israel. **12:1a**

The Hebrew verb "turned away" is a verb which means God turns away from something and then returns or turns back to something else, with the idea of restoring it and blessing it (*Ibid.*, pp. 996-999).

God is presently angry with Israel because she has turned away from Him and has refused to turn back to Him. She has profaned His name and has continued to reject Him and has pursued the sins of her forefathers. When God sent His own Son and Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, she killed Him. He has every right to be ferociously angry with her. He is angry with her right now, and what has happened in Israel ever since the days of Isaiah proves it. But the time is coming when God will turn away from His anger and turn back to Israel again with the sole purpose of restoring her and blessing her. He will forgive her and bless her and when that happens the nation Israel will once again rejoice and thank Him.

(Reason #2) - Because God will comfort Israel. **12:1b**

The verb "comfort" is in the Piel stem in Hebrew, which means that this is an eager activity and pursuit of God (*Gesenius Hebrew Grammar*, p. 141). This is a beautiful word because what this means is that God is going to give His full attention to comforting and consoling Israel. He is going to breathe after her and Personally bless her.

Israel as a nation will be thanking God for these marvelous actions of God. She will not stop thanking Him. God will be focused on Israel and will eagerly comfort her and bless her.

Praise Acknowledgment #2 - There will come a day when Israel will acknowledge her salvation is from God and her trust is in God. **12:2**

God is Israel's salvation and she is praising Him that He is her salvation, strength and song.

There have been a couple of rare times in Israel's history when she has acknowledged that her salvation was from God and sang praises to God because of it.

- 1) She acknowledged it when God had delivered Israel when God parted the sea and delivered her in Moses' day (Exodus 15:2).
- 2) She acknowledged it after the second temple had been rebuilt in Jerusalem during Ezra and Nehemiah's day (Nehemiah 9).

It will be sung again when Jesus Christ reigns as King in Jerusalem. When Israel actually praises God, sin will be gone nationally and individually. **I want you to carefully observe that Israel is not saying God provided salvation, but that He is salvation. Salvation is a Person.** It is not a program, a system, a religion, a ritual or liturgy. Salvation is the Person, who was born of a virgin, who is none other than Jesus Christ.

Now the salvation that is being referred to here is both physical and spiritual salvation. It refers to the salvation that delivers Israel and brings her to her land with all of the blessings of God and it refers to the fact that her sins are gone in the mind of God and she as a nation is whiter than snow.

Israel to this point does not believe salvation is from God. She believes it is up to her. It is the same for many regarding their spiritual salvation. Believe it or not, but it is very difficult to get people to acknowledge that salvation is totally and completely from God. They think it is up to them. Now look carefully at the realities that exist for one who realizes God is their salvation:

(Reality #1) - One has total trust in God.

(Reality #2) - One has no fear of anything.

(Reality #3) - One has God's strength in everything.

Listen, if you do not trust totally and only in Jesus Christ for your salvation, then you have plenty to fear. You have no certainty or strength to your hope. There is no one so strong that they can save you from your sins. There is no one so strong that they can deliver Israel to her land. Only One may do that and that One is Jesus Christ.

Praise Acknowledgment #3 - There will come a day when Israel will joyously drink water from the fountain of God. **12:3**

God will not only fully save Israel, but He will also fully satisfy Israel.

The noun “water” is plural in Hebrew, which is a plural of excellence. What that means is that the full and sufficient blessings of God will flow from these springs. Israel’s deliverance and salvation means she will drink to a full, excellent level from the blessings of God.

When Israel was under Moses, she drank from springs provided for her by God in the Sinai desert (Exodus 17:1-7). It was a time when God was doing direct things for Israel. That time is coming again. God will do blessed things for Israel. He will pour out His refreshing blessings on her.

In Scripture the “springs” not only speak of physical water, which is certainly true, but also the springs of blessings which flow from God. During the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ, Israel will joyously draw all the water and blessings of God from the Son of God. This will be a joyous thing.

Just imagine telling people in Israel, this is what you will eventually sing. This is how you will eventually worship in your own land. You will be joyful, not miserable. You will be thankful, not doubtful.

STANZA #2 – What Israel will say and do in regard to the nations. **12:4-6**

Here is something in my view even more amazing - Israel will be evangelizing the world for God. In fact, in my opinion, here is what real missionary preaching and evangelism ought to be.

Israel will call on each other to testify to the whole world of the greatness of God and of the greatness of Jesus Christ.

(Message #1) - She will tell all people to give thanks to God. **12:4a**

In the context the thanks is due to the fact that God has graciously provided salvation.

(Message #2) - She will tell all people to call on His name. **12:4b**

If you desire salvation, you must personally call on His name for it.

(Message #3) - She will tell all people about God’s deeds. **12:4c**

There will be plenty of amazing deeds to talk about during the Millennium. The whole story of Israel will be an amazing story.

But here is an extremely important point - evangelism is about telling of the mighty deeds and works of God, not about the good works and deeds of you.

(Message #4) - She will make all people remember and exalt God's name. **12:4d**

This is a big task, to inform people that salvation is about exalting God, not man, not religion, not a denomination; it is about exalting God. There will come a day when Israel will be the most God-exalting nation on the face of this earth and she will promote exalting Jesus Christ.

(Message #5) - She will challenge all people to sing praises to God. **12:5**

Israel will be leading a worldwide praise service about all of the majestic and glorious things He has done. She will lead the world in testifying of all the excellent works of God.

God will renovate the entire world. He will regather Israel and make her the nation of God.

(Message #6) - She will cry and shout about the greatness of Jesus Christ. **12:6**

Think of what is described in **verse 6**. The nation Israel will have a passion to cry out and shout for joy in the land of Israel because Jesus Christ is there reigning in all of His glory. She will shout this truth out.

Think of what we are seeing here. We are talking about Israel. We are talking about the Middle East. We are talking about this becoming the evangelistic headquarters of the world. It certainly will take Almighty God to pull this off.

Parting Thoughts:

- 1) Salvation is found only by totally trusting in Jesus Christ. He is your salvation hope and He is your salvation strength.
- 2) When you have experienced salvation, you should be joyful about it.
- 3) When you have experienced salvation, you should tell others about it, but keep the emphasis on God's greatness and God's power.