

# THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

## PROPHECIES AGAINST ISRAEL: ISAIAH 7-12



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*A Scriptorium Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

Prophecies against Israel: Isaiah 7-12  
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## Introduction to *Isaiah 7-12*

Isaiah's ministry is primarily to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, but he begins with hard words against Israel, the northern kingdom.

Israel has rejected God, and now God will reject Israel. God will judge both Israel and Syria for their alliance against Judah, but Assyria is waiting in the wings to overwhelm them both. Judah also will be overrun by Sennacherib, but he will come under the judgment of God for his assault on Jerusalem.

God knows the people of Judah and Jerusalem will see these events come to pass, precisely as Isaiah foretold. And this should warn them to listen to Him as He calls them to repentance.

But God's last word to His people is not of wrath, but of restoration and salvation. A new Kingdom is coming, and a new King, the Branch, to bring never-ending peace to the people of God.

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## 1 Ask a Sign

*Pray Psalm 25.4, 5.*

Show me Your ways, O LORD;  
Teach me Your paths.  
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,  
For You *are* the God of my salvation;  
On You I wait all the day.

*Read Isaiah 7.*

*Reflect.*

1. Part 2 of the book of Isaiah (chapters 7-12) focuses on prophecies against Israel, the northern Kingdom. As we see in the opening verse of chapter 7, Israel is united with Assyria. What's so bad about that?

2. Isaiah speaks a word of comfort to King Ahaz, then invites him to seek a sign from the Lord, that he might know the Lord's Word is sure. Why do you suppose Ahaz declined? Why then did God go on and give him a sign anyway?

*Meditate.*

In Part 2 of Isaiah, we begin to see some of the mystery and wonder of the prophet's work. Our vision goes from immediate circumstances to events shortly to take place and, finally, to further off events involving a coming King and Kingdom of the Lord. Using a contemporary situation as his touchstone – Israel's soon demise – Isaiah will show the grace of God in sparing Jerusalem, using that as a token of the grace of God to come in a latter day (Is. 2.1ff) when the Kingdom of righteousness shall prevail on the earth (Is. 9.1-6).

King Ahaz was a wicked man, and God was bringing the armies of Israel and Syria against him in judgment (2 Chron. 28.1-8). While these nations would not prevail against Jerusalem (v. 1), they would inflict severe damage and death on Judah. Ultimately, Isaiah promises that God will bring both nations down, warning King Ahaz that he must believe this will happen, or he himself will be destroyed (vv. 6-9).

Commanded to ask a sign of God – as a demonstration of the reliability of Isaiah's prophesy concerning Israel and Syria (vv. 3-9) – Ahaz refuses, pretending to honor God (vv. 10-12). He cannot obey the Word of God even in this simple matter, and Isaiah is outraged (v. 13). Ahaz will lose a son in his war with Israel and Syria (Maaseiah); but God will give a son – first, to Isaiah and his wife (Is. 8.3, 4), then later, to an as-yet-unnamed virgin (v. 14). We can only imagine how, seeing this, Ahaz would have been greatly chided.

For his unbelief, Ahaz will lose a son; but God will graciously provide a son to His faithful prophet, and, later, a Son to the nation, a holy Son, Who will become their King and Redeemer (vv. 15, 16). But for now, Israel and Assyria are coming to wreak havoc and destruction on Ahaz (vv. 17-25).

God has a long vision for His people, and He is proclaiming it through His prophets. Isaiah's role is to demonstrate the faithfulness of God's Word for the long term by making prophecies concerning the immediate future that, when they come true, should have the effect of leading the people to trust in God and His Word, for the present and for the long term. Ahaz will die, a miserable reprobate, condemned by God. His successor, Hezekiah, will realize a measure of the promised blessing and restoration of the Lord, but only for a season.

*Prepare.*

1. What are you learning about how to read a prophet like Isaiah? How should his words to the people of his day guide us in applying his words in our day?
2. God used the nations of Israel and Syria to discipline His people in Judah and Jerusalem? What was He trying to accomplish with His people?
3. What are we learning about the role of the leaders in bringing the favor or judgment of God against His people? What does this suggest about how we select leaders for our churches today?

*Certainly one must have faith in the Scriptures as containing the divine mind, and thus one must proceed to the understanding of what is written in them. For one must go beyond the types and thus apprehend the truth of what has been shown to us. First one must believe in the Scriptures with the simple faith that they are "inspired by God and useful" and then go on to examine subtly and enquiringly the meaning contained in them. Basil the Great (330-379 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 7.197*

*Lord, give me grace to believe Your Word, so that in all my ways and paths I...*

*Pray Psalm 25.*

God can teach you the path He wants you to walk each day. Fear Him, submit to His Word, rest in His promises, and He will deliver you from all enemies, keep your soul in salvation, and guide you in His upright way.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 25** (*Festal Song: Revive Their Work, O Lord*)

I lift my soul to You; O Lord, in You I trust.

Let me not come to shame, nor let my foes o'er me exult.

All they who wait on You shall never come to shame;  
yet they to shame shall come who stand against Your holy Name.

Make me to know Your ways, teach me Your paths, O Lord!  
My Savior, all day long I wait and seek You in Your Word.

Remember mercy, Lord, and steadfast love to me!  
And all my sins before You let them not remembered be!

My sins have been of old, Your love is new each day;  
according to Your goodness, Lord, regard my sinful way.

Upright and good are You, You lead us in Your way;  
the humble You instruct in truth and guide him day by day.

The paths of God are all of love and faithfulness;  
all they who keep His covenant the Lord will surely bless.

For Your sake, Lord, forgive. All they who fear You, Lord,  
shall know Your blessings day by day and follow in Your Word.

Your friends are they who fear and seek Your holy face;  
Your covenant with them You share and save them by Your grace.

Be gracious, Lord, to me; my heart is weighed with woe.

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My troubles and affliction see; let my transgressions go.

Consider all my foes, who hate me all the day;  
and rescue my poor soul lest I should stumble in the way.

Preserve me in Your way, redeem Your people, Lord!  
We wait for You and refuge seek in Your own faithful Word.

## 2 The Promised Son

*Pray Psalm 46.1-3.*

God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear,  
Even though the earth be removed,  
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;  
*Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled,  
*Though* the mountains shake with its swelling.

*Read Isaiah 8.*

*Reflect.*

1. The birth of Isaiah's son signals that the judgment of God is nigh. Similarly, the birth of Immanuel (v. 8; cf. Is. 7.14 and Matt. 1.22, 23) also came with the judgment of God. In what way?
2. In the face of judgment, the faithful in the Lord will trust in His Word. All His Word. Why is the Word of God more reliable than the words and worldviews of men?

*Meditate.*

God was giving Ahaz and the people of Jerusalem a sign through the birth of Isaiah's son, whose name would be *Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty*. The threat posed by Israel and Syria would be removed by an even greater threat, that of Assyria. The Assyrians would subdue both Syria and Israel, then they would flood the land of Judah to the very gates of Jerusalem (vv. 4-8), before being shattered by the Lord (v. 9; cf. 2 Chron. 32).

No counsel of human wisdom or strategy can stand against the Lord (v. 10). He is *God Who Is with Us – Immanuel* (v. 8, cf. v. 10 and Is. 7.14). Although the people could not understand it in Isaiah's day, the birth of Isaiah's son is a sign also of another Son to be born, Whose Name will be called Immanuel, God with Us (Matt. 1.22, 23). We will receive more detail about this Child in Isaiah 9.

Isaiah's message to the faithful in Jerusalem is that they should stand firm on the Word of God, looking to and worshiping God, fearing Him rather than any earthly foes, and taking refuge in Him (vv. 11-17). Isaiah then points to the birth of his son (v. 18), using words of enormous prophetic significance (cf. Heb. 2.10-13), as the sign that God's Word will not fail.

We must not rely on the counsel of men, be they ever so charismatic or persuasive (v. 19). We must trust in the Word of God, for only there will we find the light of truth (v. 20). Those who trust in things and conditions will not trust in God, and they will dwell in the darkness of unbelief and judgment (vv. 21, 22).

This is not where we want to be found. Ever.

*Prepare.*

1. Explain the two ways the birth of Isaiah's son would serve as a sign. Does God still use signs today?
2. The temptation, when troubles come, is to think that safety, security, and agreeable conditions are what we should be seeking. Are these what matter most? Can we still know safety, peace, and joy apart from agreeable conditions? Explain.

3. What can distract us from trusting exclusively in God's Word? If we truly do trust His Word, what will be our practice of making use of that Word?

*How was it, then, one may say, that his name was not called Emmanuel but Jesus Christ? Because he did not say "you shall call" but "they shall call," that is, the multitude and the issue of events. For here he uses an event (i.e., God being "with us") as a name; and this is customary in Scripture, to substitute the events that take place for names. Therefore, to say, "they shall call" him "Emmanuel" means nothing else than that they shall see God among humanity. For he has always been among them, but never so manifestly. John Chrysostom (344-407 AD), *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew* 5.2*

*Lord, You have put the Name of Jesus on me – Christian! Help me to live so that Jesus...*

*Pray Psalm 46.*

No matter the troubles and challenges you may be facing, God is your present Help and Strength. Drink from the fountain of His Word, and let His Spirit flow with grace within and through you (Jn. 7.37-39). Be still before Him; commit your day to Him; and live each moment in the power of His presence.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 46** (*Chrysostom: We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought*)

God is our refuge and our strength; He is our help in times of need.  
Thus though the earth beneath us should change, the sea consume the mountain range;  
Waters may roar with raging speed; yet God will rescue us at length.

God's everlasting, joyous grace gladdens the city where He dwells.  
Safely in Him, we will not be moved; when morning dawns, His love will be proved.  
Fears and distresses Jesus dispels for His beloved, chosen race.

Kingdoms arise and rage and roar, threat'ning the earth with sore distress.  
Nations may fall, earth melt away, His Word is yet our hope and stay.  
God is among us, ever to bless; He is our stronghold evermore.

Come see the works of God's Right Hand! He breaks the nations of the earth,  
shatters their foolish weapons and pride, sets all their sinful strength aside.  
Them He will show His infinite worth as they before His judgment stand.

Rest in the Lord and be at peace, all who are mired in sore travail.  
Lift up our God, praise Jesus our Lord; proclaim to all the earth His Word!  
God is our stronghold, never to fail: thus may our hope and joy increase!

### 3 Coming King, Coming Judgment

*Pray Psalm 72:18, 19.*

Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel,  
Who only does wondrous things!  
And blessed *be* His glorious name forever!  
And let the whole earth be filled *with* His glory.  
Amen and Amen.

*Read Isaiah 9.*

*Reflect.*

1. This chapter divides into two parts. How would you summarize each?
2. Birth and death: These are the dominant themes. Who is to be born? Who is about to die?

*Meditate.*

Isaiah 9 deals with two themes. The first is *birth*. A Child is to be born, and with His birth, a Kingdom of peace which will endure forever (vv. 1-7). This is for the long term, however; in the short term, a people and a kingdom are about to die, having rejected the Lord and His ways (vv. 8-21). The Leader of the Kingdom which is to be born will bring the people into the favor and blessing of God and His peace. The leaders of the kingdom which is dying lead their people into rebellion, immorality, wickedness, and death (v. 16).

The fate of Israel provides a warning for the people of Judah and Jerusalem, a warning which they will not heed. The judgment of God against Israel is unrelenting, emphasized in the repetition of the phrase, "For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still" (vv. 12, 17, 21). God will make a complete *end* of the nation of Israel.

By contrast, the Kingdom which is to be born, ruled by the Child Who is God, will *never end* (v. 7). As zealous as God is to judge and punish His people, He will be zealous to establish His eternal Kingdom in the last days (Is. 2:1-4).

A death is coming, and it will be violent, terrible, and final.

But a birth is coming as well, and it will bring peace, safety, and eternal life.

*Prepare.*

1. How can you see that the Child to be born is to be God? What will be the purpose of His birth?
2. What is the *zeal of the LORD of hosts*? To what two objectives does He direct that zeal in this chapter? Should we be zealous like this as well? Explain.
3. In a time of judgment, wrath, decline, and dissolution, Isaiah holds forth a message of hope and peace. What does this suggest to us about sharing the Gospel with the people in our Personal Mission Field?

*Likewise Isaiah also says, "For unto us a child is born." But what is there unusual in this, unless he speaks of the Son of God? "To us is given be whose government is upon his shoulder." Now, what king is there who bears the ensign of his dominion upon his shoulder, and not rather upon his head as a diadem, or in his hand as a scepter, or else as a mark in some royal apparel? But the one new King of the new ages, Jesus Christ, carried on his shoulder both the power and the excellence of his new glory, even his*

*cross; so that, according to our former prophecy, he might thenceforth reign from the tree as Lord.* Tertullian (155-250 AD), *Against Marcion* 3.19

*Rule in my soul, Lord Jesus, for peace and joy, and for the power to...*

*Pray Psalm 72.*

David wrote this prayer (v. 20) for his son, Solomon, but it clearly has larger Messianic and Kingdom overtones. Use this psalm to pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 72** (*Martyrdom: Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*)

O give the King Your judgment, Lord, and righteousness Your Son;  
And let Him judge by Your good Word the need of every one.

Let now the mountains ring with peace, the hills in righteousness.  
Let justice rise, oppression cease, and all the needy bless.

Let nations fear You while the sun and moon endure on high;  
Refresh, renew us, every one, like sweet rain falling from the sky.

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures;  
Let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

And let the Righteous rule the earth, and let His foes bow low;  
Let nations praise His matchless worth, and all His bidding do.

The Lord the needy rescues when he cries to Him for grace;  
All they who suffer violence find mercy before His face.

Let Christ be praised and all the gold of Sheba be His right;  
Let blessings to His Name be told, and prayers made both day and night.

And let the earth abound with grain, let fields His fame proclaim;  
And may our King forever reign and nations bless His great Name.

Now bless the God of Israel Who wondrous works performs.  
And bless His Name, His glory tell both now and forever more!

## 4 The Arrogance of Assyria

*Pray Psalm 75.1.*

We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks!  
For Your wondrous works declare *that* Your name is near.

*Read Isaiah 10.*

*Reflect.*

1. Why was God upset with Assyria? Weren't the Assyrians only doing His will?
2. False teaching is a deadly trap for God's people. How can you see that from verses 1-4 (cf. Is. 9.16)?

*Meditate.*

Verses 1-4 of chapter 10 carry over from chapter 9, telling us of God's anger against the leaders of Israel, who had led the nation astray by false teaching (Is. 9.16). We get a glimpse at the nature of this false teaching: the promulgation of laws not in line with God's Law (v. 1); failure to seek justice for all members of the nation (v. 2); misappropriation of the assets of others (v. 2). The leaders of Israel (the northern kingdom) did all this, all the while claiming that they were within the bounds of truth to do so.

They were not. And God promised He would bring them to judgment for failing to proclaim and obey His Law, and for going beyond it by their own devices (vv. 3, 4).

The Assyrians would be the rod of God's chastisement, bringing both Samaria and Syria to captivity (vv.8-11). So far, so good. This is why God brought Sennacherib and his kingdom to power, to exercise judgment on those who rebelled against Him.

Sennacherib, however, exceeded his remit, turning his greedy and violent eyes toward Judah and Jerusalem (v. 11). But God would not allow it (v. 12). God despises arrogance, especially when men vaunt themselves above Him, failing to recognize His grace and gifts, and aspiring to be god instead of Him (vv. 13-15). God, the Light and Holy One of Israel, will bring the Assyrians down, like a burned field (v. 17), a wasted crop (v. 18), and a cleared forest (vv. 18, 19). When that happens, the faithful remnant taken away from Samaria and the northern kingdom will find their way to safety in Judah (vv. 20-23; cf. 2 Chron. 28.9ff), fleeing to the mountain of the Lord's house, a kind of foreshadowing of what Isaiah had prophesied for the last days in Isaiah 2.1-4.

God hates arrogance. Good to keep that in mind.

All this is for Judah and Jerusalem's sake. God calls on them not to fear the Assyrians (v. 24). Though Sennacherib will wreak havoc throughout the southern kingdom, God will stop him dead in his tracks (literally) at the gates of Jerusalem (vv. 25-32). God will cut down the haughty ones who do not rest in His Word and will (vv. 33, 34). Jerusalem, are you listening?

And what about us?

*Prepare.*

1. Why is arrogance such a terrible sin in the eyes of God?
2. What does God's using Assyria suggest about His sovereignty over all nations? Is this still true today? How

should this encourage or instruct us?

3. God never leaves Himself without a remnant. What are the characteristics of a remnant? If God were leaving Himself a remnant to escape His wrath today, would you be part of it? Explain.

*All sins must be avoided, to be sure, because all sins are contrary to God, but they vary in degree. The proud, for example, are God's enemies. "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." The devil is the prince of the proud. "Lest he be puffed up with pride," says holy Scripture, "and incur the condemnation passed on the devil," for everyone who glorifies himself in his heart is partner to the devil, who used to say, "By my own power I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am shrewd. I have moved the boundaries of peoples." ... All other failings deserve the mercy of the Lord because, in humility, they are submitted to the tribunal of God; pride alone, because it honors itself beyond its power, resists God. Jerome (347-420 AD), Homilies on the Psalms, Alternate Series, Psalm 93*

*Keep me from all pride and arrogance, O Lord, and let me instead...*

*Pray Psalm 75.*

Let the Lord search your heart, to root out and eradicate any haughtiness or sinful pride. Pray that He will exalt you in loving service today, so that He may be exalted in you.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 75** (*Galilee: Jesus Calls Us*)

We give thanks, Lord, we give thanks for Your all-glorious Name is near!  
Men Your wondrous works declare, Lord; let all living creatures hear!

When you choose the time of judgment, You will judge with equity.  
Then the earth and all within it by Your hand no more shall be.

Warn the boastful, warn the wicked: "Do not boast or raise your horn!  
Do not raise your boastful voices; do not speak with pride and scorn!"

Neither east nor west nor desert shall exalting bring to man.  
God is Judge, He puts one down and makes another one to stand.

For the cup of judgment foams in Jesus' sovereign, holy hand.  
He has mixed it and will pour it out on every wicked man.

As for me, I will declare it: Evermore to God be praise!  
He abases all the wicked, but His righteous ones He saves!

## 5 The Branch

*Pray Psalm 80.14-18.*

Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;  
Look down from heaven and see,  
And visit this vine  
And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,  
And the branch *that* You made strong for Yourself.  
It is burned with fire, it is cut down;  
They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.  
Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,  
Upon the son of man *whom* You made strong for Yourself.  
Then we will not turn back from You;  
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.

*Read Isaiah 11.*

*Reflect.*

1. How can you see that this prophecy of the coming Branch embraces two long-term stages of fulfillment?
2. How would you summarize the conditions that result from the coming of the Branch.

*Meditate.*

In this chapter, Isaiah pulls out the stops to project a vision of hope for the future. Israel is about to be carried away into captivity. Assyria will plunder most of Judah and only be stopped at the very gates of Jerusalem. Following a season of peace and renewal, worse will ensue, as the Babylonians will destroy the city and temple of God and carry the people away into captivity.

No wonder people didn't want to hear Isaiah's preaching. Did he have anything positive to say?

As it turns out, yes, he did. But not for the short-term. Chapter 11 presents a long-term scenario of hope, salvation, blessing, and peace which unfolds in two stages. The key to each stage's glorious hope is the coming of the Branch.

The Hebrew word for Branch (v. 1) is **נֹצֵר**, *netser*, and it is the presumed root of the word, *Nazareth*. Hence, Matthew's association of Jesus' hometown to this ancient prophecy (Matt. 2.23). When the Branch comes, He will be filled with the sevenfold Spirit of God (cf. Rev. 4.5). He comes to perform the will of God in righteousness, judgment, equity, and faithfulness (vv. 3-5). The result of His coming will be peace (vv. 6-8), like the peace that obtained in the garden of Eden prior to the fall of Adam and Eve. God's holy mountain – which will be chief of all the mountains of earth (Is. 2.1-4) – will be a place of safety, from which the knowledge of the glory of the Lord goes forth to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (v. 9).

The Root of Jesse, Who is the Branch, will raise a banner for all the nations, the banner of the Lord's salvation, and He will call forth His remnant from every nation on earth (vv. 10-15). Even the Gentiles will seek Him and the rest He offers (v. 10).

And a Highway (Jn. 14.6) will be established on earth by which all the remnant of God's people shall come out of whatever has held them captive in darkness and sin, to find rest in the promises and Kingdom of the Branch.

It's not too hard to see here the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and both the first flourishing of His Kingdom – in the last days – and the full and final flourishing of it in that time when “His resting place shall be glorious.”

These were words the faithful of Isaiah's day would cling to in hope, just as we should in our day.

*Prepare.*

1. How can you see that this prophecy speaks of the last days, the times in which we live?
2. How can you see that it points forward to days of greater peace and rejoicing beyond these last days?
3. These words were meant to give hope to the faithful remnant of Jerusalem, to sustain them through the seasons of trial to come. It should do the same for us. But how?

*The prophet Isaiah bears witness that our Redeemer had to be conceived in Nazareth when he says, “A nazareus will ascend from his root.” The term nazareus has the meaning of “flower” or “clean.” The Son of God made incarnate for us can properly be named by this term, both because he adopted the nature of a human being clean from all vices and because in him the font and origin of spiritual fruits came forth for all believers, since to them he both pointed out examples and granted the fruits of living properly and blessedly. The Venerable Bede (672-735 AD), *Homilies on the Gospels* 1.6*

*Thank You, Lord Jesus, for calling me to Yourself, for making a Way for me to the Father, and for...*

*Pray Psalm 80.*

Pray for revival, letting this psalm guide you to seek the renewing of that *vine* which has grown from the Branch that is Jesus.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 80** (*St. Theodulph: All Glory, Laud, and Honor*)

O God of grace, restore us, and shine on us Your face!  
O save us, Lord, work for us; renew us by Your grace!  
Give ear, O gracious Savior, Who leads us as Your flock:  
Stir up Your pow'r and favor, our King and Lord and Rock!

How long will You ignore all Your people's fervent prayer?  
Shall bitter tears fall ever? O Lord, renew Your care!  
Our neighbors mock and scorn us, they laugh at our distress;  
Renew, O Lord, and turn us, look down on us and bless!

You set us free from sin, Lord, and planted us in grace;  
We rooted in Your strong Word have spread from place to place.  
Our shadow covered mountains, our branches reached the sea;  
Your grace flowed like a fountain of life, abundantly.

Now You in wrath have spoken and bruised Your chosen vine.  
We languish, Lord, are broken by wrath, deserved, divine.  
Once more, Lord, hear our pleading; return and heal this vine!  
Look down on us, so needy, and show Your love divine!

Though we be burned and perish because of Your command,  
Revive us, Lord, and cherish this son of Your right hand.  
Then let us not return to our sinful, selfish ways,

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But call on You and learn to surround You with our praise.

## 6 An Agenda for “That Day”

*Pray Psalm 145.1-3.*

I will extol You, my God, O King;  
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.  
Every day I will bless You,  
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.  
Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised;  
And His greatness *is* unsearchable.

*Read Isaiah 12.*

*Reflect.*

1. The phrase “in that day” occurs twice in this chapter. To what does this refer?
2. Salvation is the major theme of this chapter. What are its effects?

*Meditate.*

The glorious promise outlined in chapter 11 leads Isaiah to a hymn of praise in verse 12. The focus of this verse is on “that day” – the day of salvation to which chapter 11 points. When the Branch of the Lord, the Root of Jesse, brings our salvation in the last days, the anger of the Lord is turned away, and we enter the “resting place” (Is. 11.10) of the Lord.

Then we will “with joy” “draw water from the wells of salvation” (v. 3). That is, the salvation of the Lord, when we have received it, will refresh and sustain us in joy. All the trials and wrath and failures of the past will have been put behind us. Before us lies the unending prospect of an ever-expanding great salvation, because God Himself is our salvation (v. 2), and we His people receive, embrace, and submit to Him as our God.

Our salvation is the water of life (Jn. 4.13, 14; 7.37-39), and those who are the beneficiaries of that great salvation pursue a simple but all-comprehending agenda.

First, they fill their days with praise to God, that His anger is past, His salvation has come, his strength avails us in all we do (v. 2), and He is great in our midst (v. 6).

Then, we proclaim Him and His wonders and deeds to the people around us (v. 4), until the knowledge of God and His exalted Name fills our world (v. 5).

They who know the salvation of the Lord are thus a people who worship Him continually and who bear witness to Him as often as they can. The more they are filled with the water of life from the wells of their salvation, the more they will overflow with praise and witness to the greatness of God Who has saved them. Nothing can make them afraid (v. 2), and the “excellent things” the Lord does in them (v. 5) will validate their witness.

So let us “Cry and shout...for great is the Holy One of Israel” in our midst!

*Prepare.*

1. In what ways is our salvation the water of life?
2. Isaiah sets forth a “last days” agenda for all who know this salvation. Is this your agenda?

3. How can Christians help one another to stay on the Lord's agenda for these last days?

*Jesus himself cried out in the Gospel, "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture says, 'rivers of living water will flow from his heart.' This," adds the evangelist, "he said of the Holy Spirit, whom those who believed in him were about to receive." Jesus also says elsewhere in the Gospel, "The one who drinks from the water that I shall give him will never thirst again, for the water that I will give him will become in him a font of water springing up to eternal life."*  
Jerome (347-420 AD), *Commentary on Isaiah 4.12.3*

*Thank You for my salvation, Lord! Fill me with the waters of life, and I will...*

*Pray Psalm 145.*

Linger over each exhortation to praise the Lord, and every reason for praise that David lists. Meditate on His many benefits and blessings, and praise Him accordingly. With whom will you share a word of praise today?

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 145** (*Brother James' Air: The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*)

I will extol You, God, my King, and ever praise Your Name!  
I bless You, Lord, for everything each day, and e'er the same!  
Great are You, Lord, my praise I bring; unsearchable Your fame!

To ev'ry generation we Your wondrous works shall tell.  
The splendor of Your majesty we contemplate full well.  
We speak of all Your mighty deeds and all Your greatness tell!

Then shall we all the glorious fame of Your great goodness sing –  
Your righteousness, Your gracious Name, Your mercy: praise we bring!  
Your steadfast love remains the same, mercy our covering.

Your works shall thank You; all Your saints shall bless and praise You, Lord.  
Your reign we bless without restraint; Your power fills our words.  
Our children we shall educate in all Your splendor, Lord.

Your Kingdom evermore shall be; You reign forever, Lord!  
Your works You do so faithfully, according to Your Word.  
The falling You uphold and the oppressed You rescue, Lord!

The eyes of all look up to You to meet our needs each day.  
Open Your hand, provide the food we need, O Lord, we pray!  
Kindness and righteousness You do, O Lord, in every way!

Be near to all who call on You; all those who fear You, bless.  
Preserve all those whose love is true; save us in our distress.  
Our mouths will speak with praise of You; Your holy Name we'll bless!

## 7 After Wrath, Salvation

*Pray Psalm 126.4.*

Bring back our captivity, O LORD,  
As the streams in the South.

*Review Isaiah chapters 7-12.*

*Reflect.*

1. The bulk of this section focused on judgment coming against the northern kingdom of Israel. Why was God upset with the people of Israel? How had they come to that state?
2. God intended Isaiah's prophecies concerning Israel and Syria as a warning to Judah and Jerusalem. Why did they need such a warning? Do we need this warning today?

*Meditate.*

Part 2 of the book of Isaiah (chapters 7-12) serves as a warning to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, to whom Isaiah was sent to proclaim the Word of the Lord. They would see these prophecies against Israel, Syria, and Assyria come to fulfillment in their lifetimes. They were supposed to infer that, since God's Word to those nations proved true, surely we should listen more carefully to His Word to us.

But they would not, and the result would be the judgment of God in the form of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian armies.

Israel was being judged because they had strayed from the Lord. They still gave lip-service to Him, but their leaders had turned them away from His Law, and they were pursuing pagan worship and ways. They wanted to be like the nations around them, rather than the holy people God had called them to be. In His covenant, God had warned the people against this, but they would not listen. Thus, His judgment would fall, just as He had promised.

Judah and Jerusalem: Are you listening? Are you paying attention to events? Do you see in yourself any of the crimes of the northern kingdom? Will you repent and return to the Lord, before He brings His judgment against you as well?

And what about us?

Laced through these chapters of warning and dread is the message of hope. A Child will be born. A Kingdom of eternal peace is coming. A remnant will be saved. The salvation of the Lord will come in that day, and then all will be joyous worship and bold witness to the excellencies and goodness of the Lord.

God's last word to His people is never one of wrath, but of hope and restoration.

*Prepare.*

1. Do you think God still judges His people today? In what ways? Why?
2. How should Isaiah's words of warning to Judah and Jerusalem speak to us today?
3. The gracious salvation Isaiah foresaw is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ. What is the nature of that salvation? What does it entail? How should we respond to having received such a great salvation?

*Certainly one must have faith in the Scriptures as containing the divine mind, and thus one must proceed to the understanding of what is written in them. For one must go beyond the types and thus apprehend the truth of what has been shown to us. First one must believe in the Scriptures with the simple faith that they are “inspired by God and useful” and then go on to examine subtly and enquiringly the meaning contained in them. Basil the Great (330-379 AD), *Commentary on Isaiah* 7.197*

*Your Word to Isaiah is living and powerful, Lord (Heb. 4.12); let it pierce the depths of my soul, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 126.*

In this psalm, the psalmist seeks revival even as he travails in tears. He calls on the Lord, and sows unto the harvest, because this, he knows, is what the Lord will bless. Pray this psalm to seek revival in our day.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 126** (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

When God restored our fortunes all,  
we were like those who sweetly dream.  
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,  
made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said,  
“The Lord has done great things for them!”  
Indeed, great things our God has done,  
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King!  
Let grace like flowing streams prevail.  
All they with tears of joy shall sing  
who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow  
and cast their seed on every hand,  
with joy shall reach their heav’nly home,  
and bring the harvest of their land.

*Prophecies against Israel: Isaiah 7-12*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Why does Isaiah begin his ministry to Judah and Jerusalem by preaching about Israel, the northern kingdom?
2. In what ways would the people of Judah and Jerusalem see the power of God vented against sin?
3. Does God hate sin only among unbelieving people, or does He hate it in us as well? Explain. How should this affect us?
4. What hope does Isaiah hold out for those who hear and believe the Word of God from him?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Isaiah 7-12? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.