

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH
THE DAY OF SALVATION:
ISAIAH 25-35



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Day of Salvation: Isaiah 25-35
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The Fellowship of Ailbe
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Introduction to *Isaiah 25-35*

Though judgment was imminent in Isaiah's day, he didn't want the people to lose sight of larger picture of God. The promises of God would not fail. A day of salvation was coming, together with a King and Kingdom ushered in by the Spirit of God.

Isaiah's teaching expands through these chapters so that he leads us to look beyond the immediate situation of Israel's fall and Judah's disobedience, to "that day" when God will do a mighty work to bring restoration and blessing to His people.

God's judgment is sure, just as He promised. But so is His joy. All who look to Him and shelter in His Word will find the joy and rest He has promising His people from the beginning.

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1 Song of Salvation

Pray Psalm 47.8, 9.

God reigns over the nations;
God sits on His holy throne.
The princes of the people have gathered together,
The people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth *belong* to God;
He is greatly exalted.

Read Isaiah 25, 26.

Reflect.

1. What “mountain” is referred to in Isaiah 25.6ff (cf. Is. 2.1-4)? What happens there?
2. As you read through these two chapters, make note of what they do who have come to know the salvation of the Lord (cf. 25.9; 26.1-6; 26.7-9)?

Meditate.

With the return to thinking about “that day” that comes in chapter 24, the prophet’s mood changes significantly. From threats of judgment and condemnations of sin, Isaiah turns to celebrate the promised salvation of the Lord, to which he pointed in chapter 24.

He praises God for His faithfulness and care for His remnant (25.1-5) – all those who waited on and trusted in Him (v. 9). Isaiah rejoices in the expanding of that remnant to include “all people” (vv. 6, 7) who confess God and have believed in His salvation. A great day is coming when even death will be defeated, and tears will be no more (v. 8). The mountain of the Lord’s house (Is. 2.1-4, cf. Is. 25.10ff) will overcome all its enemies and become a strong fortress among the nations.

Now (ch. 26) Isaiah prepares a song for “that day” (Is. 26.1) when the Lord begins to save His people. It is a song of mission (vv. 1-3), peace (v. 3), and victory (vv. 5, 6; 25.10-12), looking forward to the day when righteousness will prevail on the earth (vv. 7ff). The upright are those who desire the Lord, seek Him early, and obey His righteous commandments (v. 9).

God grants His grace to all people, though the wicked reject it (vv. 10, 11). But to those who trust in Him, God will grant them His peace and show them His grace as they rejoice in and obey Him (vv. 12-15). The people of God have known much trouble, but this was only the pangs of birth bringing to life the renewed blessings of the Lord (vv. 16-19). Those who were dead in their trespasses and sins have now become alive in the grace of God (v. 19; cf. Eph. 2.1-10), and they go forth like the morning dew to bring the refreshment of God’s salvation to the world (cf. Ps. 110.3).

Judgment is coming to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. But a day of salvation lies beyond that time of suffering and trial, and the people must look toward that day and be faithful to God, even as they prepare for the judgment which is to come (vv. 20, 21).

Prepare.

1. Our world is under the wrath of God at this moment (Rom. 1.18-32), and it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God (1 Pet. 4.17). We may have to endure a season of suffering and trial, but, following Isaiah’s prophecy, what can we look forward to beyond that?

2. Why do you suppose the prophet emphasized the importance of singing about the Lord's salvation? When should we sing about His salvation? Only when we're in a worship service?

3. Isaiah says we must *trust* in the Lord. What does that mean? How could you tell whether someone was trusting the Lord? How is trusting the Lord related to *desiring* Him (26.9)?

Having said that the Lord will reign in Zion and Jerusalem, Isaiah leads us to the mystical meaning of the passage. Thus Zion is interpreted as a high place that is good for surveillance, and Jerusalem is the vision of the world. In fact, the church of Christ combines both: it is high and visible from everywhere, and is, so to speak, located on the mountain. Cyril of Alexandria 375-444 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 25.6-7

Lord, I have plenty of reasons to sing Your praise throughout the day, especially as I think of...

Pray Psalm 47.

Jesus is exalted in glory and reigning at the Father's right hand. Rejoice in the promises outlined in this psalm, and pray that today you will be able to share the salvation of the Lord with someone in your Personal Mission Field.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 47 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

O clap your hands, you peoples all; with joy to God your songs intone!
Shout out to Him, and on Him call, He is the mighty, sovereign One!

High is the Lord, O, fear His Name! He rules, a King o'er all the earth.
Nations and peoples He has tamed, the heritage of His holy worth.

God has ascended with a shout, the Lord with sound of trumpet bold!
Sing praise to Him, let praise ring out! Let praise through all the world be told!

God is the King of all the earth: Sing praise to Him with glorious psalms!
He rules the nations by His worth, and on His throne receives their alms.

Princes of peoples gather all to Abraham and to our God.
Exalt the Lord, and on Him call – the earth is His, so praise our God!

2 Strands of a Single Cord

Pray Psalm 80.3-7.

Restore us, O God;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!
O LORD God of hosts,
How long will You be angry
Against the prayer of Your people?
You have fed them with the bread of tears,
And given them tears to drink in great measure.
You have made us a strife to our neighbors,
And our enemies laugh among themselves.
Restore us, O God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

Read Isaiah 27, 28.

Reflect.

1. Three themes are interwoven in these two chapters. Can you identify them?
2. God will be a crown, a diadem, and a cornerstone for His people “in that day.” To what do these refer?

Meditate.

These two chapters, like many other chapters throughout the books of the prophets, provide a concise summary of the message of the prophets and of Isaiah. Three themes emerge, and they wrap around and through one another like a strand with three cords.

First is the promise of hope and restoration. God promises to renew His vineyard and its abundant fruitfulness, so much so, that the nations will want to come and take root in it. The restored vine of the Lord’s people will bear abundant fruit to fill the earth (27.2-6). This is the promise for “that day” when the Lord puts away sin and brings forgiveness and renewal to His people. Then His people will be gathered together to worship and serve Him (27.12, 13), and God will be a crown of glory for His people and the strength they need to prevail against all their foes (28.5, 6). A Cornerstone will be set in Zion for the building of a new temple unto the Lord, and He will be the benchmark against and upon which everyone either rises or falls (28.16-19).

Second is the announcement of coming judgment, both upon Israel and the nations in the short term, and on the enemies of God in the long term, including the ancient serpent (27.1). God will strike Israel and her neighbors in the short term, although He will leave a remnant of His people for the promised restoration (27.7-12). Israel is judged for pride and self-indulgence in the present (28.1-4). All the good work God gave them to do has become disgusting to the Lord (28.7-9). Israel has rejected the instruction and counsel of the Lord (28.11-13). God will surely judge His people for their sins, and all people and nations in the day of “His awesome work,” “His act, His unusual act” – the act of redemption (28.20, 21).

Finally, the call to repentance comes to those who will hear (27.5, 6; 28.9-14; 23-26). All who receive the prophet’s message, and who look to God and are taught by Him, shall persevere through judgment to the promise of fruitfulness in the days to come. They have God’s Word on it (28.23-28).

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These two chapters summarize Isaiah's message and help us to keep the whole of His prophecy in mind, so that we can think clearly about how it applies to us, and what we should do (Rom. 15.4).

Prepare.

1. What does God promise to His vine? Who is that vine today? Is the vine fulfilling what God spoke of it?
2. Meditate on Isaiah 29.9-13. What counsel is there for you here in how you ought to learn God's will? What promise accompanies this?
3. Meditate on Isaiah 29.23-29. We can learn wisdom from God by carefully observing His work in creation. How can you see that in these verses? What does this suggest about your own growth in the Lord?

So the Lord says through Isaiah: "Behold, I lay a stone for a foundation in Zion." This means Christ as the foundation of the church. For Christ is the object of faith to all; but the church is as it were the outward form of justice; it is the common right of all. Ambrose of Milan (333-397 AD), Duties of the Clergy 1.29

You are my Crown, my Diadem, my Cornerstone, and my Glory, Lord, and I am Your vine. Help me to...

Pray Psalm 80.

The psalmist appeals to God for a return of the days of Israel's great fruitfulness. What would that look like in our day? Pray that God will begin to restore His people, and ask Him to bring forth specific fruit in your own life today.

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

3 Lip Service

Pray Psalm 79.8, 9.

Oh, do not remember former iniquities against us!
Let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us,
For we have been brought very low.
Help us, O God of our salvation,
For the glory of Your name;
And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins,
For Your name's sake!

Read Isaiah 29.

Reflect.

1. The people of Judah and Jerusalem kept their feasts and religious services “year to year”. But they came under the judgment of God. Why?
2. The chief sin of the people of God had to do with their relationship to His Word. How had they gone wrong?

Meditate.

Lest there be doubt in anyone's mind about the immediate future of Jerusalem and Judah, Isaiah lays it out plain, and it's not pretty (vv. 1-8). The “Lion of God” (Ariel) will be trampled to the dust in “heaviness and sorrow” (v. 2), as a multitude of nations visits the woe of God upon His people.

The reason is simple: The people have scorned the Word of God (vv. 9-16). The people kept up their traditional worship of God (v. 13), but that's all it was – tradition. They may have been very sincere and diligent about their feasts, sacrifices, alms, and other rituals, but there was no heart in it, for to the people of Jerusalem and Judah, the Word of God was a closed book (vv. 11, 12). They had turned from God's revelation to their own best ideas about how to keep their city and traditions (vv. 15, 16), but God would bring even that “wisdom” to an end (v. 14).

Let the reader beware.

Yet a day of restoration is promised “in that day” (vv. 17-24), when the deaf shall hear, and the eyes of the blind will be open, and the humble will rejoice in the Lord. The poor will be blessed, and sinners and all iniquity will be rooted out from the people. All shame will be removed when God accomplishes His great work of restoration (v. 22), and the people will hallow God's Name and fear Him, so that their understanding of sound doctrine returns, and they are redeemed (vv. 23, 24).

God disciplines us when we neglect or turn away from His Word; but by that same Word He promises to renew us when we humble ourselves, admit our blindness and poverty, embrace the work He has done for us in Jesus, and return to Him in worship and obedience.

Prepare.

1. Why do we ever set aside God's Word to do something other than what He has revealed as the way of life?
2. Do we still need our ears and eyes to be opened to the revelation of God? Explain.
3. What does it mean to “hallow” the Name of the Lord (cf. Matt. 6.9)? How is this related to fearing Him?

To living humbly before Him? What is promised to those who hallow the Name of the Lord?

According to what the prophet says, "This people honors me with their lips, though their hearts are far from me." To them the Holy Spirit exclaims, "But to the wicked person God says, 'Why do you recite my statutes and profess my covenant with your mouth?' " It is as if he were saying it does you no good to praise God. It is profitable for those who live well to praise him, but if you praise him and do not abandon your sins, it avails nothing. Caesarius of Arles (470-543 AD), Sermon 133.4

Let all my service to You be from the heart, Lord, so that I...

Pray Psalm 79.

Pray for our brothers and sisters who are persecuted in various places, and that the Lord would deliver us from our sins and complacency. Pray for revival and for a greater experience of the Lord's salvation, and give Him thanks and praise for all His goodness.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 79 (*Passion Chorale: O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*)

O God the nations all Your inheritance have spoiled!
Your City have they ruined, Your temple they have soiled!
Your servants' bodies all to the birds of heav'n are thrown;
The flesh of all Your faithful the jaws of beasts now own.

The blood of faithful servants like water flows around;
And none are there Your saints to commit into the ground.
Our neighbors mock and scorn us: How long, O Lord, how long?
How long will You be angry and scorn our mournful song?

Pour out, O Lord, Your wrath on all who deny Your Name;
Who trust You not nor seek You, bring down to deepest shame!
For they have with great rancor Your precious saints devoured;
Lay waste their habitation at this late dreadful hour.

Why should the nations mock and say, "Where now is their God?"
Let there be known among them harsh vengeance for our blood!
Hear, Lord, our groans and sighing; preserve us by Your pow'r.
For we are fairly dying each day and hour by hour.

Reproach those who reproach us with judgment sevenfold!
Let thanks and praise to You by Your precious flock be told.
We are Your sheep, O Savior, we thank You all our days.
Look on us with Your favor as we declare Your praise.

4 So Much for the Smooth Way

Pray Psalm 146.1, 2.

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

While I live I will praise the LORD;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Read Isaiah 30, 31.

Reflect.

1. When challenges confront you, or when difficulties arise or dangers threaten, where do you first turn? Where did the people of Judah and Jerusalem turn when they observed the rising threat of Assyria?

2. God promised a coming day of restoration for His people. How much did that promise encompass? How were they to prepare for this day?

Meditate.

In Isaiah's day, Assyria was the bully casting his covetous eye on Jerusalem. He was big and bad, as the people of the northern kingdom had learned during the early days of Isaiah's ministry. And he would come to the very gates of Jerusalem, making frightening demands and offering empty promises to a faithless people.

The temptation for the shepherds of Jerusalem was to seek out a bigger bully to rescue them. Egypt would do (30.1-7; 31.1-3), or so they believed.

But God would have none of it. He had sent prophets to His people, telling them what they needed to do to avert disaster, but they refused to hear them (30.10; 31.6). They wanted a "smooth" path, not one that required them to learn God's Law and obey it. By seeking alternatives to their dilemma, other than what God revealed through His prophets, the people "despised" the Word of God and trusted in the arm of flesh, which could never deliver them (30.12-14). They preferred to rest in the strength of Egypt rather than in the promises of God, and that would be their undoing, not under the tyranny of Assyria, which God would judge (30.27-33; 31.7-9), but under that of Babylon.

And yet, God continued to promise His people a day of rest and restoration (30.18-26; 31.4, 5), in which they would prosper and flourish in all His promises, and be strengthened against all their enemies by the deliverance of God.

Prepare.

1. Meditate on Isaiah 30.18-26 and 31.4, 5. How great was the promised salvation and restoration of God? How should this lead us to think about our great salvation (Heb. 2.3)?

2. Are you ever tempted to trust in things or people, rather than in the promises of God's Word? How can we keep God's Word in focus when difficulties and trials arise, so that we do not "despise" it like the people of Jerusalem did?

3. How can believers encourage and help one another not to despise the Word of the Lord, but to trust and rest in it? What are the great challenges facing us in this endeavor?

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He has seen us sinning and has borne with it. He who forbade us to sin before we did it does not stop waiting to pardon us even after we have sinned. The one we have rejected is calling us. Gregory the Great (540-604 AD), Forty Gospel Homilies 34

Let me not despise Your Word, O my God, but help me always to...

Pray Psalm 146.

What challenges are you facing today? What opportunities for being a witness to Jesus might present themselves? Seek the Lord and trust only in Him, that He may give you eyes to see and boldness to live for Him.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 146 (*Hallelujah! What a Savior: Man of Sorrows*)

Praise the Lord, my soul, give praise! While I live, His Name I'll raise,
and exalt Him all my days – God forever reigns in Zion!

Trust we not in prince or man – no salvation's in their hand.
Death shall take them, breath and plans – God forever reigns in Zion!

Blessed are they whose hope resides in the Lord, Christ at His side.
By Him heav'n and earth abide – God forever reigns in Zion!

He is faithful evermore; He gives justice to the poor,
Feeds the hungry from His store – God forever reigns in Zion!

Jesus sets the pris'ner free, heals blind eyes that they may see,
lifts those burdened painfully – God forever reigns in Zion!

He the righteous loves the best; wand'ers in His grace are blessed;
Needy ones in Him find rest – God forever reigns in Zion!

But the wicked who defame His eternal blessed Name,
Them He brings to ruin and shame – God forever reigns in Zion!

5 When the Spirit Comes

Pray Psalm 51.1-4.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin *is* always before me.
Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done *this* evil in Your sight—
That You may be found just when You speak,
And blameless when You judge.

Read Isaiah 32, 33.

Reflect.

1. Judgment will abide on the nation of Israel (both Israel in the north and Judah in the south) *until* God acts decisively to bring the promise of restoration. What will that restoration entail, and what event triggers it?
2. Meanwhile, what are the people of God supposed to do?

Meditate.

These two chapters strike me as belonging together in communicating an important element of God's promised restoration. We note that they begin and end with the mention of a King (32.1-8; 33.17-24; I think the NKJV translators should have capitalized King in each passage, not just the last). This is an *inclusio*, which is a literary device used for emphasis (a passage begins and ends in the same place, wrapping everything within it into that focal point).

The promise of restoration comes after the Lord judges His people. It will be realized under the reign of a King who rules in righteousness and beauty, in a Kingdom of justice, peace, illumination, witness, rest, and bounty. Central to this coming to pass is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, which is mentioned in the middle of these two chapters (32.15-20). The coming King is our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit brings His Kingdom to earth, and to His people (Dan. 7.13-18).

When this Kingdom comes, the blessings of God's covenant will abound. Sin will be illuminated so that it might be replaced by justice (32.5-8). God's faithful people will know His blessings and peace, even though trials may come upon them from time to time (32.15-19).

But first judgment must come. In the face of impending judgment, prayers of lamentation and longing are in order (32.9-14; 33.1-9), and with these, the call to repentance and righteousness before the Lord (33.10-16). The blessings of God are available now, even as judgment approaches, to those who faithfully sow His Word and work His field (32.20), which is what we see Isaiah doing, and what we are called to do as witnesses for Christ (Acts 1.8; cf. Matt. 13.24-30, 36-43).

The kings of Jerusalem will fail the people of God as surely as the kings of Israel failed His people there. They should not expect to know deliverance through yet another earthly king. But a King is coming, and bringing a reign of righteousness, peace, and joy in God's Spirit. This was Isaiah's consolation hope. It is our reality. Are

we making the most of it?

Prepare.

1. Summarize the conditions that attend the coming of the King and the Spirit of God. How do these apply to us?
2. The blessings of God come to those who sow, even as judgment approaches. What are the implications of this for you?
3. God is described as *exalted* both as He blesses His people (33.5, 6) and as He judges sinners (33.10-14). Why is this so?

Accordingly, like a perfect man learned in the law and made firm in the gospel, accept the faith of both Testaments, for, as we read today, "Blessed is he who sows upon every water, where the ox and the donkey tread," that is, who sows upon the people who follow the teaching of both Testaments. This is the ploughman's ox, wearing the yoke of the law, of which the law says, "You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out your corn," for this ox has the horns of holy Scripture. But in the Gospel the Lord, representing the people of the Gentiles, mounts the colt of a donkey. Ambrose of Milan (333-397 AD), Letter 68 (9.64.9)

Fill me with Your Spirit, Lord, and I will turn from my sin and take up the work of sowing, so that...

Pray Psalm 51.

Linger in this familiar psalm, and let the Spirit of God search your soul, to bring to light any sins. Confess and repent of your sins, and call upon God to fill you with His Spirit, and with all the blessings that attend that filling.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 51.1-13 (*Passion Chorale: O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*)

Be gracious to me, Savior, according to Your love!
According to Your mercy, my sins, my sins remove!
O wash me, precious Savior, and cleanse me from all sin;
Look on me with Your favor, and cause my grief to end.

Against You only, Savior, have I become unclean;
Thus just the condemnation which You pronounce on me.
Lord, I was born to sinning, while You seek truth within;
To wisdom my heart winning, release me from my sin!

In Jesus' blood and mercy, Lord, cleanse my evil heart!
Let me washed, cleansed, renewed be and pure in whole and part.
Bring joy again and gladness; look not upon my sin.
Deliver me from sadness; renew me yet again!

Create in me a clean heart, renew me from within!
Take not Your Spirit from me because of all my sin.
Salvation's joy restore, Lord, and keep me in Your hand;
Thus shall I tell Your strong Word to sinners in the land.

6 Judgment and Joy

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O wash me, precious Savior, and cleanse me from all sin;
Look on me with Your favor, and cause my grief to end.

Against You only, Savior, have I become unclean;
Thus just the condemnation which You pronounce on me.
Lord, I was born to sinning, while You seek truth within;
To wisdom my heart winning, release me from my sin!

In Jesus' blood and mercy, Lord, cleanse my evil heart!
Let me washed, cleansed, renewed be and pure in whole and part.
Bring joy again and gladness; look not upon my sin.
Deliver me from sadness; renew me yet again!

Create in me a clean heart, renew me from within!
Take not Your Spirit from me because of all my sin.
Salvation's joy restore, Lord, and keep me in Your hand;
Thus shall I tell Your strong Word to sinners in the land.

7 Interlude and Preparation

Pray Psalm 81.1, 2.

Sing aloud to God our strength;
Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob.
Raise a song and strike the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the lute.

Review Isaiah chapters 25-35.

Reflect.

1. As you quickly review these chapters, how would be the best way to describe the overall mood or tone?
2. What seems to be the most important point Isaiah is communicating in these chapters?

Meditate.

Chapters 25-35 of the book of Isaiah are something of an interlude before the next section. That is, they recap themes and moods from what has come before (in chapters 7-24), and they lay the foundation for what will come in the rest of the book.

We see the same themes of judgment and restoration, wrath and salvation, that we saw in chapters 1-24, but here they are condensed, as if to reiterate in more summary manner the message of what God is about to do. This is what Isaiah is saying, in effect, “Let me recap what I’ve proclaimed thus far.”

At the same time, the promise of salvation and restoration to God’s faithful remnant is repeated and given some greater clarity and further historical extension, all the way to a time when the Spirit of God will be given, and beyond that, even to the end of the age.

Isaiah will have more to say on all these subjects. But in the next section, chapters 36-39, we return to a more historical narrative of events, which will include Isaiah’s reporting on several earlier prophecies which by then will have come to fulfillment. This section will also lead into the beginning of Jerusalem’s dealings with Babylon. This section validates God’s Word against Assyria, and reminds the people in Isaiah’s day of what God had spoken through him about Babylon.

Prepare.

1. Why do you suppose God felt like He needed to repeat, albeit in summary manner, the prophetic words Isaiah had spoken in chapters 7-24? Do you suppose we need to hear the Word of God over and over? Why?
2. The focus on salvation sharpens in this section, especially in chapter 35. Why do you suppose God felt the need to say more about this?
3. What’s your primary takeaway from Isaiah 23-35?

Isaiah...brings them back to the Law, in which God frequently declares that he will take care of his people, and that he will punish the wicked and reprobate. Moses having long ago spoken in this manner, the Prophet says that there is no reason why it should be difficult to believe what he foretells, since he brings forward nothing new, but only confirms now what Moses declared and testified. John Calvin (1509-1564 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 34

Help me, Lord, to keep Your promises before my mind, that I might always...

Pray Psalm 81.

Pray for the Church in the world today, and your own church. Let these words guide you to intercede for believers everywhere, that we might have willing and obedient hearts, to know the blessing and salvation of the Lord.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 81 (*St. Petersburg: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*)

O sing for joy to Jesus our strength; to Jacob's great God shout joyfully at length!
And strike the drum, and offer a song; all instruments, your glad music prolong.
"O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

Let every kind of instrument play to celebrate God's deliverance today.
It is His statute and His command to worship and praise all over the land.
"O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

Declare His mercy, tell of His grace; our enemies flee the look of His face.
In mighty deeds strong witness He gave, and powerfully did His chosen ones save.
"O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

God set us free from bondage to sin and graciously brought us near Him again;
He rescued us whenever we cried and often our faltering confidence tried:
"O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

"Let no false gods among you be found; but scatter their altars over the ground.
Pursue not wealth, nor leisure nor fame, but worship the Savior's glorious Name:
O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

For You are God, Your Name is the Lord, who faithfully keeps His covenant Word,
Who rescued us from bondage and pride; our mouths He would fill, we open them wide.
"O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

"My people would not listen to Me, but hardened their hearts most hideously;
I cursed them for their hard-hearted ways to wander in darkness all of their days:
O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

Now let us all abandon our ways and listen to God, and offer Him praise!
Our foes He will so quickly subdue, extending His hand to save and renew.
"O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

Then even those despising the Lord would falsely obey and follow His Word;
In vain they seem to follow His way, yet judgment awaits on God's chosen day.
"O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

The finest foods for us He will buy, and furnish us an abundant supply;
How sweet our lives can be in the Lord, when only we heed His glorious Word.
"O Israel, hear, admonished now be; My people, repent, return to Me!"

The Day of Salvation: Isaiah 25-35

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Isaiah keeps returning to the same themes, over and over again. Why? What does this suggest about the our need?
2. How would you describe the picture of God's salvation and restoration that emerges in these chapters? Is this your experience of our great salvation?
3. Why does God judge people? Is it just for Him to do so? Why?
4. The salvation God promises in this section comes according to His Word, by His Spirit, and within the context of a Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. How does this help us in thinking about our lives as believers? Our witness for the Lord?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Isaiah 25-35? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.