

Isaiah 35:1-10  
The Blessings of God's Coming

Before we read our text this morning, I want to remind you of a few things about Isaiah and the Book in the OT which he wrote:

**Reminders:**

Portions of Isaiah's prophecy are quoted in the NT more than any other OT prophet.

Isaiah prophesied much about the Messiah and the coming of God's kingdom. He prophesied under the inspiration of the HS – so his prophecy is stamped with the approval and authority of God himself; his prophecy is the Word of the Lord.

His name, Isaiah, means, *Yahweh is salvation*.

Salvation, is in fact, the great theme of his prophecy.

As in most of the OT prophets, we learn much about Yahweh himself, his nature, his character, his attributes – what he is like as a person and as God. We learn about his will, his holiness, his uncompromising displeasure with the sin of his people, as well as the promises of a great servant who would come to deliver God's people.

For these reasons and because we are commanded to do so in the NT, we should study Isaiah and learn from him all of these marvelous truths; we should learn about the great Messiah and about his coming kingdom, and we should take joy in God's great deliverance and salvation of his people.

It's no wonder that even today some Christian parents name their sons "Isaiah," which means "Yahweh is salvation," for this is the hope of the gospel: that God does what we cannot do – he saves us from our sins by his gracious mercy given through his Son Jesus Christ.

This morning I'm going to take a somewhat different approach to this text than I usually do. I want to bring you, the listeners, into this chapter. I want to put more of the weight of learning the content of this chapter on your shoulders. I want to guide you in becoming learners of God's Word. I want to help you discover the great truths in this chapter of Isaiah.

To accomplish this goal I have seven (7) questions I am going to ask you about this chapter. Those 7 questions are on your handout. Feel free to jot down your answers to these questions as we go along.

Here are the 7 questions. Let's consider them for a few moments before we read the text. I am calling these...

**"Study to Learn" Questions on Isaiah 35**

1. What is the key verse of this chapter?
2. What will God do when he comes?
3. Who will benefit from God's coming?
4. In what way will the beneficiaries of God's coming enter Zion?
5. What is the scripture referring to when it says "your God will come" in verse 4?
6. What is the "big idea" or the "main idea" of this chapter?
7. What effect should the Lord's coming(s) have on us?

So, as I read the text, please begin to look for the answers to these questions as we hear Isaiah 35.

The desert<sup>(A)</sup> and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.<sup>(B)</sup>

Like the crocus,<sup>(C)</sup> <sup>2</sup> it will burst into bloom;  
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.<sup>(D)</sup>

The glory of Lebanon<sup>(E)</sup> will be given to it,  
the splendor of Carmel<sup>(F)</sup> and Sharon;<sup>(G)</sup>  
they will see the glory<sup>(H)</sup> of the LORD,  
the splendor of our God.<sup>(I)</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the feeble hands,  
steady the knees<sup>(J)</sup> that give way;  
<sup>4</sup> say<sup>(K)</sup> to those with fearful hearts,<sup>(L)</sup>

"Be strong, do not fear;<sup>(M)</sup>  
your God will come,<sup>(N)</sup>  
he will come with vengeance;<sup>(O)</sup>  
with divine retribution

he will come to save<sup>(P)</sup> you."  
<sup>5</sup> Then will the eyes of the blind be opened<sup>(Q)</sup>  
and the ears of the deaf<sup>(R)</sup> unstopped.

<sup>6</sup> Then will the lame<sup>(S)</sup> leap like a deer,<sup>(T)</sup>  
and the mute tongue<sup>(U)</sup> shout for joy.<sup>(V)</sup>

Water will gush forth in the wilderness  
and streams<sup>(W)</sup> in the desert.

<sup>7</sup> The burning sand will become a pool,  
the thirsty ground<sup>(X)</sup> bubbling springs.<sup>(Y)</sup>  
In the haunts where jackals<sup>(Z)</sup> once lay,  
grass and reeds<sup>(AA)</sup> and papyrus will grow.

<sup>8</sup> And a highway<sup>(AB)</sup> will be there;  
 it will be called the Way of Holiness;<sup>(AC)</sup>  
 it will be for those who walk on that Way.  
 The unclean<sup>(AD)</sup> will not journey on it;  
 wicked fools will not go about on it.  
<sup>9</sup> No lion<sup>(AE)</sup> will be there,  
 nor any ravenous beast;<sup>(AF)</sup>  
 they will not be found there.  
 But only the redeemed<sup>(AG)</sup> will walk there,  
<sup>10</sup> and those the LORD has rescued<sup>(AH)</sup> will return.  
 They will enter Zion with singing;<sup>(AI)</sup>  
 everlasting joy<sup>(AJ)</sup> will crown their heads.  
 Gladness<sup>(AK)</sup> and joy will overtake them,  
 and sorrow and sighing will flee away.<sup>(AL)</sup>

Let's pray together and ask God's blessing on our study today:

"Heavenly Father, our gracious God, we have read this portion of Isaiah and we have these questions before us. Guide us by your Spirit so we can learn your Word today, learn its content, so that we can become more knowledgeable Christians: Christians who know more of your Word, who know more about you and your kingdom, and who grow into more mature Christians. We pray in Jesus' precious name. Amen."

### 1. What is the key verse of this chapter?

Since the chapter divisions in the text of the Bible were added later, they are not always reliable guides as to the organization and structure of a text of Scripture. But chapter 35 of Isaiah is a unified thought and, I believe, contains a key verse that captures the theme of the whole chapter. This is verse 4:

<sup>4</sup> say<sup>(K)</sup> to those with fearful hearts,<sup>(L)</sup>  
 "Be strong, do not fear;<sup>(M)</sup>  
 your God will come,<sup>(N)</sup>  
 he will come with vengeance;<sup>(O)</sup>  
 with divine retribution  
 he will come to save<sup>(P)</sup> you."

Verses 1-3 talk about how the deserts and dry places of the earth will blossom forth with vegetation – Isaiah says that the plants themselves will burst forth in praise.

The point here seems to be that creation itself will burst forth in joy when something happens. What will the catalyst be that will inspire even the deserts and its plants to rejoice? The answer is found a little further on, but we see it in verse 4 – all this happens when God comes to earth.

<sup>4</sup> say<sup>(K)</sup> to those with fearful hearts,<sup>(L)</sup>  
 “Be strong, do not fear;<sup>(M)</sup>  
 your God will come,  
 he will come with vengeance;<sup>(O)</sup>  
 with divine retribution  
 he will come to save<sup>(P)</sup> you.”

Now look at verses 5-7. These verse talk about what will happen when God comes. Verses 5 and 6 begin with the word “Then.” So when God comes, then something will happen. These verses talk about the acts of healing that will occur. And they talk about how nature will be affected – specifically the dry deserts will have water and plants and cops will spring forth from the ground.

And as we go on to verse 8 it says, “And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of holiness.’ So question is, where is the “there”? Where is the place where this highway will be? From verse 4 we have to conclude that it is in the place where God comes to.

Notice also that this highway is not jsgt for anybody and everybody. It is a special highway, the “Way of Holiness.” The “unclean” and the “wicked” will not be allowed on this Highway.

Notice in verse 9 that this place where God comes to is a place of safety – there will be no wild and threatening wild animals that could attack people.

And is a place where the “redeemed” and “ransomed” people will be. Verse 10 gives the name of this place, it is “Zion.” What is Zion? In scripture, Zion is the place where God dwells, and it is often spoken of as the place where God dwells with his people.

So verses 8-10 talk about what will happen when God comes: people will be affected positively with healing and so forth, and nature will be affected very positively. And in this place that God comes to, as we see in verse 10, there will be singing and joy – it is a place of worship. And for those worshippers all sorrow and sighing will be no more. It is a place of perfect happiness.

So all these blessings to both people and the natural order will take place when? Verse 4 tells us, “when God comes.”

So I’m trying to build a case for us to show why I believe that verse 4 is the key verse in this chapter. Verses 1-3 build up to the coming of God and verses 5-8 tell us the results of God’s coming. So verse 4 is the key verse, the pivotal verse, in this chapter of Isaiah.

Verse 4 seems to be the heart of this chapter – indeed, of the whole Book of Isaiah:

[Say to those who have an anxious heart,  
 “Be strong; fear not!  
<sup>(A)</sup>Behold, your God  
 will come with vengeance,  
 with the recompense of God.  
 He will come and save you.” ESV

Say to those with <sup>(A)</sup>anxious heart,  
 “Take courage, fear not.  
 Behold, your God will come *with* <sup>(B)</sup>vengeance;  
 The <sup>(C)</sup>recompense of God will come,  
 But He will <sup>(D)</sup>save you.” NASB]

Look at the great theme of verse 4: it is *the coming of God*. Notice that the purpose of his coming is specific here: he comes with vengeance and with divine retribution. So the Lord’s coming is to bring justice and to punish evil doers. This is not good news for those people who love evil and who reject God.

But look at what else the text says about God’s coming: “he will come to save you.” What is the second great purpose of God’s coming? It is not only to bring judgment on the wicked, but to save his people.

Having considered the key verse in this chapter, let’s look at the second question in our 7 questions:

## **2. What will God do when he comes?**

We’ve already touched on the answer to this question. When God comes nature will be revived and revitalized, and people will be healed. These are what I might call the physical effects of his coming on nature and on people.

But look at the latter half of verse 4. It speaks of two great spiritual works of God in regards to people: he will come in judgment on the wicked and he will come in salvation for his people. So his coming will bring terror for one group of people, and joy for the other group of people.

Not much detail is given in this chapter as to specific ways in which evil people will be punished by God, but much more information is given as to the results of God’s coming on the holy people, the redeemed and ransomed people. Verse 10 presents us with a joyful crowd of singing worshippers.

To summarize, we could say that when God comes there are these results:

1. Nature is revitalized.
2. God’s people are saved, healed, and encouraged.
3. The wicked are judged.

These are the things God will do when he comes. Consider the kind of God this must be. He hates wickedness and loves to bring healing, salvation, and blessing to his people. He restores his creation from the curses which are the result of the sin of mankind. He brings healing from the ravages of sin that affect our human bodies. So he is the God of life, of healing, of restoration – but he does not wink at evil, he must, in fact, bring strict judgment on evil.

Having considered the second question, “what will God do when he comes?” let us consider the third question:

### **3. Who will benefit from God’s coming?**

Again, we have already pretty much answered this question. First of all, let’s consider who will not benefit from God’s coming? Verse 8 says that the unclean and wicked will not be allowed on the Highway of Holiness. But the ones who will be allowed to walk on this road are (verses 9 & 10) the redeemed and ransomed people. So who are these people?

To answer this question we should first consider the whole OT system of offering sacrifices in order to worship Yahweh, in order to be able to approach him, in order to be able in some way to deal with the tremendously crucial issue of human sin. In the OT worship rituals innocent animals were presented to God because of human sin. The innocent animals suffered death and their blood was accepted as a temporary payment for sin. The animals were a substitute for the sinful people. God accepted the death of these animals in place of the death of his sinful people.

But this was only a stop-gap measure until a more permanent solution could be provided by God. The permanent solution to the problem of human sin is found in God’s provision of his Son as the substitutionary sacrifice for the debt we owe God for our sins. Jesus Christ paid the ransom price that we owed God for our sins. He redeemed us, he purchased us, by the price of his own shed blood on Calvary’s cross.

So, these people who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ are the ones who will benefit from God’s coming. Those who have not been redeemed will have to answer to God directly for their own sins and pay the price of everlasting punishment.

### **4. In what way will the beneficiaries of God’s coming enter Zion?**

We have already seen the answer to this question. When God comes he will save his people. He will redeem them and ransom them. He will, in other words, pay the debt they owe God for their sin. And so, because they know from what great destruction and punishment God has saved them, and because he has

come to rescue them and save them and be their God, they will enter Zion, the dwelling place of God, with great joy, with singing and gladness.

So the coming of God brings salvation and joy to the people of God. They enter his presence with thanksgiving and worship. What does the future hold for the people whom God comes to save and redeem? As the apostle Peter says, they experience joy unspeakable and full of glory.

### **5. What is the scripture referring to when it says “your God will come” in verse 4?**

1<sup>st</sup> Principle: we understand the coming of God to refer to the Messiah’s coming:  
 God in the flesh  
 God, in person of Christ, do works of good and blessing among people

There are 3 possibilities:

Christ’s 1<sup>st</sup> Coming

Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming

Both Christ’s 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Comings

#### **Christ’s 1<sup>st</sup> Coming**

1. Christ said that Isa. 61 is fulfilled in his ministry  
 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,<sup>(V)</sup>  
 because he has anointed me  
 to proclaim good news<sup>(W)</sup> to the poor.  
 He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
 and recovery of sight for the blind,  
 to set the oppressed free,  
<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

This passage is closely related to several other scriptures in Isaiah including Isa. 35:5-6 which speak of the healing of the blind, the deaf and the lame.

2. Jesus told the followers of John the Baptist that his works were evidence that he was the Messiah who was doing the healing miracles as Isa. 35 and 61 prophesied.

3. John 5:36 – Jesus works among the people testify that he was the predicted Messiah.

I have testimony weightier than that of John.<sup>(A)</sup> For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing<sup>(B)</sup>—testify that the Father has sent me.<sup>(C)</sup>

**John 9:6-7** – After saying this, he spit<sup>(A)</sup> on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. <sup>7</sup> “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam”<sup>(B)</sup> (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

## **Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming**

**Jesus said he would return in judgment:**

**Matt. 16:27** - <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man<sup>(A)</sup> is going to come<sup>(B)</sup> in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.<sup>(C)</sup>

**Rev. 19** – <sup>11</sup> I saw heaven standing open<sup>(AG)</sup> and there before me was a white horse, whose rider<sup>(AH)</sup> is called Faithful and True.<sup>(AI)</sup> With justice he judges and wages war.<sup>(AJ)</sup> <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like blazing fire,<sup>(AK)</sup> and on his head are many crowns.<sup>(AL)</sup> He has a name written on him<sup>(AM)</sup> that no one knows but he himself.<sup>(AN)</sup> <sup>13</sup> He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood,<sup>(AO)</sup> and his name is the Word of God.<sup>(AP)</sup> <sup>14</sup> The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen,<sup>(AQ)</sup> white<sup>(AR)</sup> and clean. <sup>15</sup> Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword<sup>(AS)</sup> with which to strike down<sup>(AT)</sup> the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.”<sup>[a](AU)</sup> He treads the winepress<sup>(AV)</sup> of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:<sup>(AW)</sup>

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Christ return to complete Isa. 35’s prophecy:

**Rev. 21:1-4** - Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”<sup>[a](A)</sup> for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,<sup>(B)</sup> and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City,<sup>(C)</sup> the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,<sup>(D)</sup> prepared as a bride<sup>(E)</sup> beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them.<sup>(F)</sup> They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.<sup>(G)</sup> <sup>4</sup> ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes.<sup>(H)</sup> There will be no more death,<sup>[b](I)</sup> or mourning or crying or pain,<sup>(J)</sup> for the old order of things has passed away.”

**He will return to save, heal, and comfort his people; to be with them.**

**Their final blessedness, free from pain and sadness, etc. awaits the future. Therefore, the state of perfect wholeness in body, soul and mind awaits the future.**



**Both Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Comings therefore are predicted here.**

**The "already; not yet" idea of the coming of God's kingdom.**

**6. What is the "big idea" or the "main idea" of this chapter?**

**God will return to bring judgment on the wicked and salvation to his people.**

**7. What effect should the Lord's coming(s) have on us?**

**1<sup>st</sup> coming enabled us to be redeemed.  
To enter joyful worship now.  
To walk the Highway of Holiness now**

**2<sup>nd</sup> coming is going to happen  
Therefore, Isa. 35:3: Strengthen the feeble hands,  
steady the knees<sup>(A)</sup> that give way;**

Anticipate the Joy; look forward to it.

**Isa. 35:4 -**  
say<sup>(A)</sup> to those with fearful hearts,<sup>(B)</sup>  
"Be strong, do not fear;<sup>(C)</sup>  
your God will come,<sup>(D)</sup>  
he will come with vengeance;<sup>(E)</sup>  
with divine retribution  
he will come to save<sup>(F)</sup> you."

***The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the hope of the church***

**Jo. 14:3 - I will come back<sup>(A)</sup> and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.<sup>(B)</sup>**

**Acts 1:11 - This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back<sup>(B)</sup> in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."**

**1 Cor. 1:7 - Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift<sup>(A)</sup> as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.**

**1 Thess 4:17 - <sup>6</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven,<sup>(A)</sup> with a loud command...**

**Rev. 1:7** - “Look, he is coming with the clouds,”<sup>[a](A)</sup>  
and “every eye will see him,

### **APPLICATIONS:**

#### **1.**

“ [In the NT...] ...salvation is not a matter that concerns only the destiny of the individual soul. It includes the entire course of human history and human kind as a whole. The coming of Christ is a definitive event for all people; it means either salvation or judgment. Furthermore, salvation is not merely an individual matter; it concerns the whole people of God and includes the transformation of the entire physical order.

“This redemption is altogether the work of God. The coming of Christ is a cosmic event in which God, who visited men and women in the historical Jesus will visit them again in the glorified Christ. The goal of redemption is nothing less than the establishment of God’s rule in the world...” p. 602, George Eldon Ladd, NT Theology.

Rev. 22:20 - <sup>20</sup> He who testifies to these things<sup>(A)</sup> says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”<sup>(B)</sup> Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Let us be sure we are connected with him in his first coming by repenting of our sins and placing our faith in him as Lord and Savior

Having done that, let us serve him now, worship him, and anticipate with gladness and joy his 2<sup>nd</sup> coming to completely fulfill the promises of Isa. 35.

By Jeff Gregory, Pastor  
Good Shepherd Community Church  
Dallas, TX

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent, Dec. 15, 2013