

# Book of Isaiah



## Chapter 35

*Theme: The blessings of the Millennium,  
a picture of the Kingdom*

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## Chapter 35

1–10 Redemption of all things. Jesus used these images from Isaiah to reveal that the Messianic age had dawned.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter and the last are one vision.

To properly understand the full import of the chapter it is important to see the context and the order of placement of the chapters. The order of the material in Isaiah is often a revelation in itself. Superficial treatment of the book by commentators who already doubt the unity of the book is behind the conclusions that there is random placement of the chapters. The doubters say it is because there are a number of writers and editors of the finished book of Isaiah as we have it. However when the purpose of the placement is seen then these chapters not only are in the right place but the placement itself is a kind of revelation.

Actually the chapters seem to be out of place since the chapters 28 to 33 are previews of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem sent by Sennacherib and 36 to 39 are historical narratives that describe the history of the siege and related incidents. Thus the order seems to be broken by the inclusion of what some think is a diatribe against Edom or Idumea as it is called in chapter 34.

Understanding the placement will help in seeing the reason for the placement and what message the chapters were designed to give to the perceptive reader.

The content of the two chapters describe material extending from the present (Isaiah's present) to the final completion of God's dealing with the Remnant Nation (Zion). The preceding chapter (33) completes the series of visions (found in 28 - 33) on the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Assyrian armies. These (34 - 35) two chapters are visions which see all of Zion's enemies destroyed (chap 34) and the future introduction and exaltation of Zion (chap 35).

There are therefore two great historical "object lessons" which presage and prepare the faithful for the patient wait for the promised future destruction of all the enemies of Zion and the ultimate victory of Zion. The first object lesson is the complete destruction of the Assyrian armies and salvation of Jerusalem followed by her prosperity in Isaiah's generation. This was predicted before the fact in great detail in chapters 28 - 33. The four historical chapters (36 to 39) which follow these two are included to confirm that all that was predicted was completely fulfilled; and therefore what stretches far out into the future (what is contained in 34 and 35) will be fulfilled as well.

The second object lesson for the faithful dweller in Zion (the demise of Idumea) is at once both a future and a past confirmation of the truth of the promises of God. That is that Zion's enemies will ultimately all be destroyed as well as the ultimate victory of Zion.

Chapter 34 promises the defeat of Zion's enemies--all of them--right up to the end of the world. But to illustrate and confirm the sureness of this victory of Zion over all enemies being fulfilled Edom is presented as the historical object lesson. This lesson of God's dealing with Edom is for the future and will demonstrate how all the enemies of Zion will suffer extinction forever. Thus chapter 34 is primarily a prophecy of the fall of Idumea but as all the enemies of

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<sup>1</sup> NIV First Century Study Bible

Zion are ment for extinction Idumea is depicted here to confirm the truth that all God's enemies will eventually fall.

To those who believed (trusted in Zion) from Isaiah's writing, for over 700 years Edom still existed as a formidable kingdom. Six hundren years from this writing Edom with its capitol at Petra was still able to frustrate the expansion of an expanding Rome. When Pompey in about 60 BCE was consolodating the whole of the East under the Roman government Edom was able to resist and remain independent. At the same time The Jewish nation was brought under Roman government control. See the resistance of Petra Josephus Wars 8:1

Those who trusted in Zion's coming knew that as long as Edom remained a strong nation Zion would not appear. But with the disappearance of Edom .... Actually Edom was "phased out" during the same historical period that the church of Christ was being phased in. Its decline historically actually mirrors the growth of the Christian Church. So that by the time the period that historians call "The Triumph of Christianity" had arrived Edom ended its long decline and had become the "habitation of wild animals" and has so remained to this day. As for confirmation we have had almost 2000 years of observing a place on the planet that formerly was inhabited and supported one of the ancient world's foremost kingdoms in wealth and wisdom but which has remained uninhabited for almost two millennia.

It isn't necessary to describe the current continuing condition of the former Edomite kingdom or its capitol. Anyone who has visited Petra and marvelled at its former glories will agree that in this chapter Isaiah described perfectly the condition and situation it has gone through from age to age, from generation to generation, it has been the habitation of wild animals only. No one has lived there and no one goes there for social or economic intercourse common to cities except a steady stream of tourists (mostly Christian pilgrims) among whom the knowing ones are awed by the coincidence of Isaiah 34 and Edom's continual example of what God will do to the enemies of Zion. For other prophets' prophecies of Edom see the Commentary introduction to Ezekiel chapter 35.<sup>2</sup>

As we come to this chapter, we can thank God that the War of Armageddon is not the end of all things. Chapter 35 is a poetic gem. There is a high sense of poetic justice in this chapter which concludes the section on judgment. The fires of judgment have now burned out, and the sword of justice is sheathed. The evening of earth-trouble is ended, and the morning of millennial delights has come. This section closes on the high plane of peace, having been through suffering to peace, through the night to the dawn, through judgment to salvation, through tears to joy in the morning.

The calm of this chapter is in contrast to the storms of judgments of the previous chapter and even those that preceded it. We can say with the writer of the Song of Solomon, the winter is past, and the flowers appear on the earth (see Song 2:11, 12).<sup>3</sup>

Two songs: "We have reached the Land of corn and wine" that is the Beulah land of Zion. and "We are marching to Zion" illustrate the continued dual situation of those who "dwell in Zion." They show that we both possess by faith and we look forward by faith to the perfected condition that God has promised. He has not only promised but he has confirmed the promises by previewing events that are on the "march" toward that happy land.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

In chapters 1-34, Isaiah has delivered a message of judgment on all nations, including Israel and Judah, for rejecting God. Although there have been glimpses of relief and restoration for the remnant of faithful believers, the climate of wrath, fury, judgment, and destruction has prevailed. Now Isaiah breaks through with a vision of beauty and encouragement. God is just as thorough in his mercy as he is severe in his judgment. God's complete moral perfection is revealed by his hatred of all sin, and this leads to judgment. This same moral perfection is revealed in his love for all he has created. This leads to mercy for those who have sinned but who have sincerely loved Jesus and put their trust in him.

This chapter is a beautiful picture of the final Kingdom in which God will establish his justice and destroy all evil. This is the world the redeemed can anticipate after the judgment when creation itself will rejoice in God. Chapter 34 spoke of great distress when God will judge all people for their actions. Chapter 35 pictures the days when life will be peaceful at last and everything will be made right. Carmel and Sharon were regions of thick vegetation and fertile soil. They were symbols of productivity and plenty.<sup>5</sup>

The description in this chapter of the land and the people is a highlight of the first half of the book. This is the desired millennial state for which the nation has longed since God first promised it to Abraham. This is the state that mankind constantly longs for—a utopia in which peace and fertility prevail. This condition will not come, however, till after God's judgment on the world (chap. 34). This emphasis in Isaiah rules out postmillennialism, which teaches that the world will get increasingly better thus bringing in the kingdom which will be followed by the Messiah's return. The amillennial teaching that there will be no earthly kingdom at all because the Old Testament promises to Israel are being fulfilled in the church today is also foreign to Isaiah's thought. Isaiah taught that the Lord will regather believing Israel, Abraham's physical descendants, and will establish God's long-awaited kingdom on earth. That promised restoration is not being fulfilled in the church today in any sense.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to the preceding chapter, this one is full of joy and rejoicing. There God turned the world into a desert; here He transforms that desert into a garden. The order of events is significant because they rule out postmillennialism, which teaches that the world will get increasingly better—until the utopia (Millennium) described in this chapter comes about—following which Messiah will return to the earth. Genesis 12:3, one of the original promises to Abraham, even suggests the order explained in Isaiah 34 and 35: cursing followed by blessing, both on a universal scale. References to "be glad" and "gladness" begin and end the poem, forming an inclusio. "Shout of joy," "shout for joy," and "joyful shouting" appear at the beginning (v. 2), middle (v. 6), and end (v. 10). The structure is chiasmic, centering on hope (vv. 5-6). However, Isaiah tantalized his readers by offering images that create questions in their minds that only further reading can answer. The chapter increasingly builds to an intellectual resolution and an emotional climax in the last verse.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>6</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>7</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.**

First we see that the material earth will be restored and the curse of sin lifted. This is the body of the earth. We are informed today that the deserts of the world are being enlarged each year; they are not being reduced in size. Drought and soil erosion are hastening this process. Today pollution is filling the earth. All of this will be reversed for the Millennium. The smog will be lifted, and the curse of sin will be removed. The familiar and beautiful statement, "the desert shall... blossom as the rose" is an apt and happy picture of the earth's future. If you are familiar with the great desert area of the southwestern section of our country, you will be impressed with this statement. This outline was written while we were crossing the southeast section of Colorado where the drought has been so severe and where the vast grasslands have been eroded by sandstorms. During the Millennium all of this will be reversed.<sup>8</sup>

"Glad" The announcement of the glorious age which will follow the calamities that are predicted in the short term for Jerusalem is repeated again in this chapter to give encouragement to the nation that God has a wonderful future planned for them. Therefore the siege of Jerusalem which was just then imminent and which has been the subject of the greater part of the preceding five chapters is seen here in its proper perspective. It will not be the end of the nation. They will survive and go on to greater glory. Isaiah has repeated this theme a number of times and the assurance has been given historically already to Hezekiah when he was miraculously recovered from his illness. See chapter 38:6.<sup>9</sup>

**1-2** In the Millennium the parched land will become rich agricultural land (cf. 32:15). The dry areas of the nation will become fertile (figuratively expressed as being glad) and will blossom. Apparently God will bring about climatic changes that will result in more rain in those areas. Lebanon... Carmel, and Sharon, which were becoming barren (see 33:9 and comments there), will once again become fruitful areas of agriculture. People in those areas will see the Lord's glory, that is, they will see the fruitfulness that comes because of righteousness; they will see Him who will be dwelling in their midst as King (cf. comments on 33:17).<sup>10</sup>

**<sup>2</sup>It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.**

Poetic idioms from Chapter 33 on positive side, restoration.<sup>11</sup>

Lebanon was known for its great cedars; Carmel for its beauty; and Sharon for its fertility. They will be more blessed when the glory and the excellency of God are manifest.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

<sup>10</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>11</sup> Chuck Missler Notes on Isaiah, [khouse.org](http://khouse.org)

<sup>12</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

Paul tells us that creation is groaning and travailing in pain (see Rom. 8:22), while in the Millennium all creation will rejoice.<sup>13</sup>

The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose: After the judgment on the nations described in Isaiah 34, God will bring a beautiful restoration.

This was true in the immediate term, when Judah was restored after the invasion of the Assyrians was turned back. It is true in the longer term, when modern day Israel has turned the wilderness and the wasteland into productive farms, and truly has made the desert . . . blossom as the rose. It will be true in the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy, when God restores the ecology of the world after the end of the great tribulation and the battle of Armageddon (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Romans 8:19-22 says: The earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Nature is waiting for the transformation that will come when the Messiah reigns and believers are glorified.<sup>14</sup>

### **<sup>3</sup>Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.**

Verses 3-6 command strength and courage in view of the coming of God with vengeance and recompense to save (Isa. 35:4), heal the people (Isa. 35:5-6), and restore normal conditions to the earth (Isa. 35:1-2,6-7).<sup>15</sup>

The bodies of men will be renewed, as will the psychological part of man. Creation is waiting for us to get our new bodies.<sup>16</sup>

Strengthen the weak hands: In similar circumstances some 750 years later The apostle Paul quoted these words to encourage those who were growing weary and threatening to drop out of the line of March toward the heavenly city. Just so the initial hearers of these words need the encouragement and the announcement of the real trials that will face all on the journey to heavenly Jerusalem. For all of us there will be weak moments of doubt because the way is hard and the journey long. It will be necessary to be revived along the way. Thus is the purpose of these chapters made clear.<sup>17</sup>

**3-4** Isaiah now spoke again to the people in his day. He encouraged the believing remnant to live according to God's covenantal stipulations. They should encourage the depressed (those with

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<sup>13</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.study-light.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

<sup>15</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>16</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

feeble hands), the terrified (those whose knees... give way), and the fearful, for God in divine retribution will... save (deliver) them.<sup>18</sup>

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees: The coming judgment would be enough to make the hands of anyone weak, and knees of anyone feeble. But in light of the glorious restoration God will bring from that time, it is no time to have weak hands or feeble knees! Get strong and get going!

We use our hands to work with; those with weak hands are not working for the LORD as they should. We use our knees both to progress with and to pray with. Those with feeble knees are not progressing with the LORD and praying as they should.

Hebrews 12:12 quotes this verse from Isaiah to make the point that even in a time of chastening from the LORD, we should take strength and courage in the LORD, knowing that it is His Fatherly love and care that has allowed and directed the chastening. It's time to get strong in the LORD and move on!

But the passage both here in Isaiah and Hebrews 12 indicates that there are some among God's people who indeed have weak hands and feeble knees. What is the cause of it? If we are not making progress in our walk with Jesus, fault can surely be found with weak hands and feeble knees.<sup>19</sup>

**<sup>4</sup>Say to them *that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.***

Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear . . . He will come and save you." In our present trials, we need the strong hope of the LORD to overcome our fearful hearts. Our fearful hearts are not hoped by a vain, vague optimism; they are helped by the assured confidence that He will come and save.<sup>20</sup>

**<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.**

This reveals the coming to earth of God the Father, at the second coming of Jesus Christ (Dan. 7:9,22; Zech. 14:5; Tit. 2:13).<sup>21</sup>

In the midst of the storm of judgment, God's people can rejoice because they will know that God will come and save them. The church has the added hope and joy of never experiencing the Great Tribulation period.<sup>22</sup>

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened: When God's salvation comes, miraculous power comes with it. It is a miracle for the blind to see, for the deaf to hear, for the lame to run, and for the mute to speak. But when He will come and save you, He does it with miraculous power!

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<sup>18</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

<sup>21</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>22</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

When John the Baptist was in prison, he became discouraged, and to wonder if Jesus really was the Messiah he had proclaimed Him to be. When John's disciples brought this question to Jesus, He replied: Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me. (Matthew 11:4-6). If Jesus didn't use the exact words of Isaiah 35, he certainly used the idea. Jesus, the Messiah, and come to bring God's salvation, and that would be accompanied with miraculous power.<sup>23</sup>

**5-7** Changes will occur in the people and the land. Because of God's healing power (cf. 33:24) those who are blind will see, those who are deaf will hear (cf. 32:3; 42:7) those who are lame will leap (cf. 33:23), and those who cannot talk will shout. The Messiah will bring this about. The land will change from dryness to a well-watered condition (cf. 35:1-2; 41:18; 43:19-20; 44:3-4). Water will be plentiful, helping grass... reeds, and papyrus... grow, all of which require much water. Though some interpreters take these statements as figurative of spiritual blessings, it seems preferable to take them as literal statements, especially in view of the covenant promises (Deut. 28:1-14). With the Lord living among His people and with righteousness being practiced by them, the Lord will provide physical healing and agricultural fecundity.<sup>24</sup>

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened: When God's salvation comes, miraculous power comes with it. It is a miracle for the blind to see, for the deaf to hear, for the lame to run, and for the mute to speak. But when He will come and save you, He does it with miraculous power!

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**<sup>6</sup>Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.**

Hart - like a deer.

For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert: When God's salvation comes, miraculous provision comes with it. What was dry and useless before becomes well watered and fruitful.

Jesus said He would bring this kind of beautiful provision in the lives of His people: "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive. (John 7:38-39)

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

<sup>24</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

There is no reason for a Christian to endure a “dry time,” not when the miraculous power of Jesus Christ to provide is present.<sup>26</sup>

**6-10:** The return to Zion is portrayed as a new exodus, a major theme in Deutero-Isaiah: Like the Israelites fleeing slavery in Egypt, the returning exiles will receive water and protection in the desert as they go to the land of Israel.<sup>27</sup>

**<sup>7</sup>And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.**

The parched ground shall become a pool: “The word translated parched ground actually means mirage, air reflection, an atmospheric phenomenon frequently seen in Eastern deserts which is caused by the reflection of the hot rays of the sun . . . Now the prophet brings the glad tiding that what used to be a mere semblance and an illusion will one day become a glorious reality.” (Bultema)<sup>28</sup>

**<sup>8</sup>And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.**

High-way = the way of God, the way of holiness. “They that walk in the Way.”<sup>29</sup>

[highway shall be there, and a way] A highway will be built from Egypt through Palestine to Assyria and all people will use it, going up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord and keep the feast of tabernacles (Isa. 2:2-4; 11:16; 19:23-25; 66:19-21; Zech. 14:16-21).

[The way of holiness] This term does not prove the highway to be a way of life or an experience of holiness as some would have us believe. It is so-called because of its being used by people going up to Jerusalem to worship God in spirit and in truth, and because it will be limited to the redeemed (Isa. 35:8-10).

[the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein] The wayfaring men (travelers), though fools, will not miss the way.<sup>30</sup>

'No one unclean:' Since God would personally accompany the exiles (v. 4), they would have to be in a state of ritual purity.<sup>31</sup>

**8-10** Righteous pilgrims will once again travel to Jerusalem. They will go on a highway known as the Way of Holiness, for it will lead to God's city where His ways will be followed. It will not be traveled by the unclean or wicked fools. No ferocious animals will hinder the travel of the

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

<sup>27</sup> Jewish Study Bible

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

<sup>29</sup> Chuck Missler Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>30</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>31</sup> Jewish Study Bible

redeemed on that highway. In the millennial kingdom God's people will once again be involved in certain aspects of Old Testament formal worship (Zech. 14:16-19; Ezek. 40-44). Since righteousness and a desire to do the will of God will be esteemed, the people will willingly follow His instructions for worship. Also the redeemed will be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:24-28). The ransomed of the Lord will have everlasting joy, with no sorrow, for they will realize what God has done for them. They will rejoice that He will have saved them from destruction and brought them to peace and prosperity, in fulfillment of His promises.<sup>32</sup>

**A Highway of Holiness:** Today, we take good roads for granted. But in the ancient world, a good road - a highway - was an amazing blessing for travel, progress, and business. Isaiah announces that in the ministry of the Messiah, there will be a wonderful highway, a road, known as the Highway of Holiness.

The Hebrew word for highway indicates what our English word literally says: "a high-way." It speaks of a raised road, lifted above the ground. It is a high, glorious road to travel on!

The construction of this Highway of Holiness was the greatest engineering feat ever accomplished. "Engineering has done much to tunnel mountains, and bridge abysses; but the greatest triumph of engineering is that which made a way from sin to holiness, from death to life, from condemnation to perfection. Who could make a road over the mountains of our iniquities but Almighty God? None but the Lord of love would have wished it; none but the God of wisdom could have devised it; none but the God of power could have carried it out." (Spurgeon)

The unclean shall not pass over it: This highway isn't for everyone. It has a "toll booth," but you can't make it on this highway by paying your way. You are only allowed on this highway if you are cleansed by the great work of the Messiah.

Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray: When we stick on God's Highway of Holiness, even though His work in us isn't complete yet - we may still be in some ways a fool - yet we are safe because we are on His highway! There are guardrails on the dangerous curves, and He keeps us from falling off as He develops the wisdom and maturity in us that will also keep us on the highway.<sup>33</sup>

**<sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*:**

No lion shall be there: As we stay on God's Highway of Holiness, we are protected from the attacks of the lion. Though your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8), that lion has never yet devoured anyone who stayed on the road. The promise is sure, no lion shall be there! It shall not be found there!<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

**<sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

[return, and come to Zion] This refers to the return of all Israel to their own land, fulfilling Isa. 11:10-12; 66:19-21; Ezek. 37; Mt. 24:31. Then, the ransomed and redeemed will continually travel on this highway year after year to worship (Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 14:16-21).

[sorrow and sighing shall flee away] Sorrow (grief, regret) and sighing (disappointment) will always flee when one returns to God; then, instead of these there will be singing, joy and gladness.<sup>35</sup>

Can you think of anything nicer than this? This not only includes Israel, but it will include the redeemed who enter the Millennium upon the earth. In Zechariah 14:16-17 we read, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."

We can say with that old Puritan, Richard Baxter, "Hasten, O Saviour, the time of Thy return. Delay not, lest the living give up their hope. Delay not, lest earth shall grow like hell, and Thy Church shall be crumbled to dust. O hasten, that great resurrection day, when the graves that received but rottenness, and retain but dust, shall return Thee glorious stars and suns. Thy desolate Bride saith, Come. The whole creation saith, Come, even so come, Lord Jesus. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God." Thus ends the first major division of the Book of Isaiah with all the blessing of the Millennium.<sup>36</sup>

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing: We use this Highway of Holiness to come to where God lives and reigns - Zion - and we come there with singing. God can put a song in our heart as we travel on His Highway of Holiness!

The ransomed of the LORD: The word ransomed is related to the word goel, and refers to the one who has been rescued by the goel - the kinsman-redeemer.

With everlasting joy on their heads . . . and sorrow and sighing shall flee away: We can know some of this now, but we aren't at our destination on the Highway of Holiness yet. But when we arrive there, God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

Using the pictures of this chapter, it is as if we come to God barren, dry, blind, deaf, weak, and crippled. Then the miraculous power of Jesus comes to change us, heal us, and provide for us. That isn't the end of God's work though; He then goes on to make a Highway of Holiness that the transformed man can walk on. The highway would be helpful to one who was barren, dry, blind, deaf, weak, and crippled; but when the highway is provided for the one who is healed and provided for as we are in Jesus, the blessing is even more amazing.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>36</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-35.html>

Gladness and joy: This is the final end that is confirmed by the rest of the prophetic events that have been fulfilled. If Edom came to her end and is a perpetual witness from generation to generation then the exaltation of Zion over all her enemies is assured to the faithful. It will find its completion but it is necessary to exercise patience until the Plan of God unfolds.

### **Historic Interlude (35:10)**

We have come to the second major division of the Book of Isaiah. This section is unlike that which precedes it and that which follows it. This section leaves the high plateau of prophecy and drops down to the record of history. Even the form of language changes from poetry to prose. The first section dealt with the government of God and the method by which God judges. In the last section we will see the grace of God -- salvation instead of judgment. Between these two sections is this historic interlude of four brief chapters. Why are they wedged in between the two major sections of this book? This is a reasonable question which requires investigation and rewards the honest inquirer. There are several significant factors which are worthy of mention.

1. Sacred and secular history are not the same. F. C. Jennings, in his fine work, *Studies in Isaiah*, says, "Divine history is never merely history, never simply a true account of past events." This means that there are great spiritual truths couched in sacred history that are seen only by the eye of faith. The Holy Spirit must teach us the divine purpose in recording spiritual history. I want to note several suggested reasons for this:

a. These incidents might seem trite to the average historian who records great world movements, but events that concerned God's people were important according to the standards of heaven.

b. These chapters note the transfer of power from Assyria to Babylon. Babylon was the first great world empire and was the real menace to God's people. Babylon was to begin the period designated by our Lord as "...the times of the Gentiles..." (Luke 21:24).

c. This section is a record of a son of David who was beset by enemies and who went down to the verge of death, but was delivered and continued to reign. In this he foreshadows the great Son of David who was also beset by enemies, was delivered to death, but was raised from the dead, and who is coming again to reign. Hezekiah was only a man who walked in the ways of David, another weak man. Hezekiah lived to play the fool. Our Lord was greater than David, and as the crucified and risen Son of God, He is made unto us "...wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Cor. 1:30). There are other great spiritual truths which are noted in the chapter outlines.

2. The second significant factor in this historic section is that these particular events are recorded three times in Scripture -- 2Kings 18-19, 2Chronicles 29-30, and here in Isaiah. The fact that the Holy Spirit saw fit to record them three times is in itself a matter of great importance. The records are not identical but are similar. Some scholars think that Isaiah is the author of all three, or at least also of the one in the Book of Kings. Surely the Spirit of God has some special truth for us here which should cause us not to hurry over these events as if they were of no great moment.

3. Three significant and stupendous miracles are recorded in this brief section:

- a. The death angel slays 185,000 Assyrians (Isa. 37:36-38).
- b. The sun retreats ten degrees on the sundial of Ahaz (Isa. 38:7-8).
- c. God heals Hezekiah and extends his life fifteen years (Isa. 38:1-5).

4. This section opens with Assyria and closes with Babylon. There are two important letters which Hezekiah received:

a. The first was from Assyria, which Hezekiah took directly to God in prayer. God answered his prayer and delivered His people (Isa. 37:14-20).

b. The second letter was from the king of Babylon, which flattered Hezekiah and which he did not take to the Lord in prayer. As a result, it led to the undoing of Judah (Isa. 39:1-8).

Chapter 36 tells about King Hezekiah and the invasion of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Chapter 37 tells about King Hezekiah's prayer and the destruction of the Assyrian hosts. Chapter 38 records King Hezekiah's sickness, prayer, and healing. Chapter 39 finds King Hezekiah playing the fool.<sup>38</sup>

Verse 10 not only climaxes chapter 35, but also the whole section of Isaiah dealing with God's sovereignty over the nations (chs. 13—35).

"Chs. 7—12 posed a question: 'Is God Sovereign of the nations?' Can God deliver from an Assyria? Or is he just one more of the gods, waiting to be gobbled up by a bigger god? In short, can God be trusted? Chs. 13—35 have sought to answer that question in four main sections: chs. 13—23; 24—27; 28—33; 34—35. In the first, God's lordship over each of the nations is asserted. In the second, it is shown that God is not merely the reactor to the nations, but is in fact the sovereign Actor on the world's stage. In the third, the superiority of God's counsel over that of the merely human leaders is shown. Finally, the last two chapters show the ultimate results of the two courses of action, with ch. 35 ending at exactly the same point as chs. 11—12, with the promise that God can, and will, redeem. He may be trusted. However, the issue remains: is this merely abstraction or can it become concrete reality? Ahaz had proved that the nations cannot be trusted. But what of God? Can his trustworthiness be demonstrated or only asserted? Must his promises for the distant future be clung to blindly or can an earnest of their reality be experienced now? This is what chs. 36—39 are about."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>39</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>