

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Chapter 35

Theme: A remnant returned from Babylon with God's blessings that extended to times of the Messiah.

Outline:

- 1-2 Reversal of Fortune for Judah
- 3-4 Encouragement to the Jews
- 5-7 Blessings Reaching to Messiah
- 8-10 Highway of Holiness to Zion

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah 25.

Related Links:

- A. *Exposition of Isaiah 11* ... <http://letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-11.pdf>.
- B. *Exposition of Isaiah 25* ... <https://letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-25.pdf>.

Introduction:

- A. Setting the context is important in any book or chapter of the Bible, but especially obscure chapters.
 - 1. Words missing here that would be helpful to rightly apply this chapter: *ensign, Son, anointing, Child, root, David, Messiah, Gentiles, nations, virgin, Spirit, people, Branch, reign, etc.*
 - 2. Isaiah 34 is Nebuchadnezzar's war against Edom and area nations but extended to the N.T. and beyond to fulfill Edom's perpetual desolation, so why restrict Isaiah 35 to Cyrus's initiating action.
 - 3. Isaiah 24 and 25 are very similar to 34 and 35, and chapter 25 extends all the way to the Messiah.
 - 4. Isaiah 35:4 has a *salvation*, which is fulfilled more completely by far in Christ than anything else.
 - 5. Isaiah 35:6 has *waters breaking out*, which by cross-reference included the Spirit (Ezek 36:24-30).
 - 6. Isaiah 35:8 has a *highway of holiness*, which connects it to Messiah (Is 11:16; 19:23; 40:3; 62:10).
 - 7. Isaiah 35:10 has *everlasting joy without sorrow or sighing*, which is seen in N.T. times and heaven.
 - 8. Isaiah chapters 36-39 are clearly by comparison historical information like Kings and Chronicles, inserted like an addendum which makes the chapter following 35 to be chapter 40! Yes! Messiah!
 - 9. The ransomed of the LORD returned to rebuild Zion, but they looked to its glory (Haggai 2:6-9).
- B. We could make every verse and word Jesus ... or even Jesus in the 21st century ... but we should not.
- C. We could make every verse and word recovery from Babylon to Jerusalem, but they do not fit as well.
- D. Therefore, we see recovery from Babylon by the previous chapter building to Christ and gospel times.

***** *Reversal of Fortune for Judah – Verses 1-2* *****

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

- A. In full opposition to the previous chapter of judgment, God's favors would also come.
 - 1. An inhabitable, productive, prosperous land – Edom – was reduced to wild animals.
 - 2. A desolated wilderness due to Assyria and Babylonian ravages would prosper again.

- B. The chapter division creates separation here not inspired and that may complicate study.
- C. The wilderness, solitary place, desert must be Judah by context of persons (Is 35:3-4).
 - 1. Edom would be utterly destroyed without inhabitant, so it cannot be the land here.
 - 2. Edom was turned from an inhabited and prosperous land to a wilderness and desert.
 - 3. But Judah, which after Assyria and Babylon, looked like a wilderness, would rejoice.
 - 4. The land of Judah would be glad for the wild animals and birds taking over Idumea.
 - 5. The land of Judah would rejoice and blossom as the rose under God's special favor.
 - 6. The wilderness, solitary place, and desert would see the glory and excellency of God.
 - 7. This cannot be the wilderness, solitary place, desert of Edom, for it was not blessed.
- D. The context is Nebuchadnezzar's blast against nations; this is the return from Babylon.
 - 1. Chapter 34 by content and comparison to Jeremiah and Ezekiel is the Chaldean king.
 - 2. God left the land of Judah to lie at rest for 70 years, but then He blessed it even more.
 - 3. Cyrus the Persian, introduced shortly, would initiate this glorious renewal of Judah.

2 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.

- A. The land of Judah would blossom abundantly no matter how desert-like it had become.
- B. While land does not rejoice with joy and singing, the inhabitants of blessed land do so.
- C. Judah would look like three places known for great fertility and productivity in Canaan.
- D. They – the people of the revived land – shall see God's glory and excellency in blessing.

***** Encouragement to the Jews – Verses 3-4 *****

3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

- A. First, the captivity of the Jews in Babylon was terrible, knowing what Edom had done.
- B. Second, their return from Babylon to Judah was an intimidating, overwhelming project.
 - 1. The land of Judah and city of Jerusalem had been left desolate for 70 years of disuse.
 - 2. God had to send two prophets – Haggai and Zechariah – to cheer them (Ezra 6:14).
- C. Every Christian faces difficult challenges that might overwhelm, but God will provide.
 - 1. The words, not necessarily quoted, are the right response to chastening (Heb 12:12).
 - 2. We do such encouraging to ourselves and also to our brethren around us, as follows.

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

- A. God's preachers and all believers should encourage one another by God's prophecies.

1. Isaiah 34 clearly described the vengeance God had promised on inveterate enemies.
 2. Thoughts of ever returning to Jerusalem would consider Edom with an upper hand.
- B. The prophecies of God, like those here, are to comfort the people of God with promises.
1. God had told Moses and Joshua He would give them Canaan, but only two believed.
 2. The martyrs, knowing prophecies of Rome's beast, could and did exhort one another.

***** Blessings Reaching to Messiah – Verses 5-7 *****

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

- A. God's salvation would go beyond agricultural revival all the way to Messiah's ministry.
1. He literally fulfilled the four miracles listed here and in the next verse in the N.T.
 2. He figuratively and spiritually fulfilled them as well by His gifts of life and light.
- B. This verse could be figurative of revival under Ezra and Nehemiah, but there is more.
1. This verse is followed by a verse that says too much to be mere H2O busting loose.
 2. The passage is building toward a highway of holiness best fulfilled in the gospel era.
 3. After Hezekiah's history inserted (Isaiah 36-39), gospel comfort is next (Is 40:1-3).
- C. The *then* here says a lot, for after returning and rebuilding, they looked ahead to Jesus.

6 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.

- A. The *then* here says a lot, for after returning and rebuilding, all looked ahead to Jesus.
1. He literally fulfilled the four miracles listed here and in the next verse in the N.T.
 2. He figuratively and spiritually fulfilled them as well by His gifts of life and light.
- B. This verse could be figurative of revival under Ezra and Nehemiah, but there is more.
1. This verse includes a prophecy that says too much to be mere H2O busting loose.
 2. The passage is building toward a highway of holiness best fulfilled in the gospel era.
 3. After Hezekiah's history inserted (Isaiah 36-39), gospel comfort is next (Is 40:1-3).
- C. The basis, cause, or source of this drastic change in Judah would be due to new water.
1. Wilderness is wilderness for its lack of water; deserts usually do not have streams.
 2. What water came about between Cyrus and the gospel era that did all these things?
 3. Jesus said the Spirit fulfilled some prophecies of water (John 3:5; 4:10-15; 7:37-39).
 4. God changed the hearts of the remnant and gave them His Spirit (Ezekiel 36:24-30).
 5. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and then all believers were given the Spirit.

7 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.

- A. The basis, cause, or source of the described change in Judah would be due to new water.
 - 1. Wilderness is wilderness for its lack of water; deserts usually do not have streams.
 - 2. What water came about between Cyrus and the gospel era that did all these things?
 - 3. Jesus said the Spirit fulfilled some prophecies of water (John 3:5; 4:10-15; 7:37-39).
 - 4. God changed the hearts of the remnant and gave them His Spirit (Ezekiel 36:24-30).
 - 5. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and then all believers were given the Spirit.
- B. The terms here repeat a simple theme – water would be where it had not been before.
- C. Did God also fulfil these words in some respects by agricultural restoration? Of course.

***** Highway of Holiness to Zion – Verses 8-10 *****

8 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.

- A. This is a key verse, for it introduces a topic prophesied elsewhere beyond a mere return.
 - 1. This is much more than a new interstate with signs calling it, *The Way of Holiness*.
 - 2. A highway was foretold earlier much more than back from Babylon (Is 11:10-16).
 - 3. It was again prophesied of a spiritual return apart from mere geography (Is 19:23).
 - 4. We cannot neglect the next prophecy, leaping chapters 36-39, of a highway (Is 40:3).
 - 5. Isaiah will mention this highway again being a gospel way for Gentiles (Is 62:10).
- B. The holiness of Moses' system of religion was far inferior to the holiness of Messiah's.
- C. What destination and its way denies the unclean – Christ (Mat 7:13-14,21-23; 22:8-14)?
- D. For whom was the highway to Christ designed and prepared? The context (Is 35:5-6).
- E. Simple Christians, the base, foolish, or poor, would not miss it (I Cor 1:26-29; Jas 2:5).

9 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:

- A. The gospel path to Christ and His eternal kingdom has no enemies to stop them short.
- B. The family of God shall dwell in peace and move toward heaven in peace without lions.
- C. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, Isaiah foretold earlier (Is 11:9).

10 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.

- A. This verse was fulfilled in a literal way by the souls redeemed by Cyrus that returned.
 - 1. When Cyrus gave the word, there were many that chose to move the 900 miles home.
 - 2. They came back to earthly Zion with songs and joy and received even more by God.
- B. However, the greater fulfillment of these words will be shown in Isaiah's second half.
 - 1. Those that came to spiritual Zion would obtain the fullest sense of the words here.
 - 2. Everlasting joy and sorrow and sighing fleeing away both reach far beyond Canaan.