

A THANKSGIVING DAY TO COME

Isaiah 12

Intro: Isaiah 12 actually is the conclusion of chapter 11. They both have to do with the time when the Lord shall reign upon the earth, and all creation will experience the effect of His coming. So, in order to get the background for chapter 12, or the context, I want to read chapter 11. The two chapters are tied together by the phrase, “In that day.” You will find it in 11:10 and 11, and then in our text, 12:1 and 4. And you will find this phrase eleven times from 2:11 to 7:23. In the whole prophecy, you will find it forty-three times, but only one of those is found in the latter part of the book (40-66), and that is in Isa. 52:6. And the emphasis in this expressions is upon *the day of the Lord*. It is not a twenty-four hour day, but a period of time. The passages which speak of *the day of the Lord* show that it will be either a very bad day, or a very good day. And so it seems that it combines the time of the Great Tribulation, the bad time, with the millennial reign of Christ, the best of times.

(Read Isa. 11:1-12:6.)

Chapter 12 is actually a psalm, a psalm to be sung during the millennial reign of our Lord, and most likely at the beginning of that reign. The singers are the redeemed of Israel.

It has a twofold division of three verses each. In the first stanza (vv. 1-3) the redeemed in what the Lord means to them. In the second and last stanza (vv. 4-6) it seems that the nation Israel is calling upon themselves to declare the works and glory of the Lord, the Messiah, to the Gentiles of the earth. This is *the day of thanksgiving* that is *to come*. This is the hymn of that day. The barriers between Judah and Israel no longer exist, and the united nation will praise the Lord as they have never praised Him before. And this praise will proclaim the Lord’s salvation to the ends of the earth.

It is not a long psalm, but a psalm does not have to be long to be powerfully convincing. In fact, the brevity of the Psalm seems to make it that much more powerful. And although the Psalm has to do with a yet future day, there are important lessons for all of us which we need today.

Now let us look at the Psalm. This song will be sung on earth, and it is the earthly counterpart of the heavenly singing that we learn about in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The work of the Lord in the hearts of people always is the foundation for praising the Lord in song.

I. THE FIRST STANZA (Isa. 12:1-3).

The first stanza, linking it with what we have been told in chapter 11, follows the return of the Lord, and the regathering of the elect of Israel from all of the nations where they have been scattered. The remnant, but a large remnant, is in the land once again—many, for the first time. The Tribulation is over, the Lord has returned, and His reign of peace has begun. And verse 1 indicates all of this.

Israel's initial response is one of praise, praise that will arise spontaneously from their hearts. There is no thought that the blessing is a work of their own, but that it is solely the work of the Lord Himself. And so to Him is all of the glory given.

“Though Thou was angry with me.” This is the way the redeemed will describe the judgments of God which have fallen upon the Jews especially during the Great Tribulation. But their praise is offered to the Lord because they can also say, “Thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.” And the comfort of God is that which we find especially in the latter part of Isaiah's prophecy, chapters 40-66. Cf. Isa. 40:1-2:

1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

This is the comfort of salvation.

If you think back to the time when the Israelites were slaves of the Egyptians, you will remember how slow the Egyptians were in recognizing that God was the One Who was bringing the plagues upon the land. But the redeemed of Israel, by the time the Lord comes, will know that the Lord has done this. Perhaps you have noticed in reading through the prophecy of Ezekiel, how often it is said, “And they shall know that I am the Lord.”

It has been the failure of nations, not only of Israel, but even of our own country, that they fail to see the hand of God in the judgments that come upon us. God will not be satisfied until all the world recognizes that He is sovereign over all!

In the second verse of the first stanza the redeemed have come to realize that “God is my salvation.” Perhaps this is stated in the singular to show the unity of the nation at this point. Throughout her history, Israel has been inclined to put her trust in friendly nations, not knowing that only

God can deliver them from the judgments which He has brought upon them. And this is where Israel will find her peace: "I will trust, and not be afraid."

And then midway through verse 2 a very interesting thing occurs. They sing, not a new song, but an old song. This part of the Psalm goes back to the time when the Lord had opened the Red Sea, and the children of Israel passed safely through to the other side. The Egyptians tried to follow them, but they were all destroyed. And it was there that the people sang for the first time,

1 Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

2 The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

3 The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name (Ex. 15:1-3).

I believe I am right in saying that the Name of the Lord that is used here, "the Lord Jehovah," actually, *Jah Jehovah*, is unique to the prophecy of Isaiah, and is found only twice in it: here, and in Isa. 26:3-4:

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

The order of those words, *strength*, *song*, and *salvation* is significant. We need to find our strength in the Lord first of all, then He becomes our song, and salvation, or deliverance, follows. That is why we need to pay particular attention to all that the Scriptures say about the strength, or the power, of the Lord. This is the most difficult lesson that we have to learn. We are all inclined to look for our strength in ourselves, or in others. But the Lord will continue to work with us until we learn that our strength is in the Lord. Cf. Phil. 4:13.

Verse 3 tells us what follows from what Israel had learned according to verses 1 and 2. Having found their joy in the Lord, that joy is maintained and made to grow as they continued to draw water from the wells of salvation. This ought to remind us of two NT passages, both in the Gospel of John. The first is John 4:13-14 where the Lord was speaking to the

Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. And He said this:

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:13-14).

And the second is this, found in John 7:37-39:

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

You see, the strength that we draw from the Lord for today, is not sufficient for tomorrow, or even for the rest of this day. We need to be drawing continually from the well of salvation, which brings us to the Word, where the Holy Spirit guides us into the truth concerning our Lord.

As we come to the end of the first stanza we must reflect on how long it will have taken the nation Israel to come to the place spiritually where they will be then. Many in Israel throughout her history have found their strength in the Lord, but they have definitely been a minority.

But now let us go on to the second stanza.

II. THE SECOND STANZA (Isa. 12:4-6).

Inevitably, and I repeat, inevitably, when we find our joy in the Lord, we find ourselves compelled to tell others about Him. That is the way it was with the apostles in the early church. Cf. Acts 4:19-20. That is the way it will be with us, and that will be the way it will be with the redeemed of Israel during the millennial reign of our Lord. They will not be forced to do; they will not be able to keep themselves quiet. It has from the very beginning been the purpose of God for Israel, not that they should keep the Gospel to themselves, but that they should spread the message of salvation to the nations of the earth. And not timidly, nor in fear, but with overflowing joy!

Notice that their joy is not in themselves, but in the Lord. He is the One they praise. He is the One on Whose Name they call (which is how people

are saved). It is His works as His works that are proclaimed, and His Name is the one that is exalted.

And notice from verse 5 how successfully the message is spread: “This is known in all the earth.” It is a message of joy which is expressed in song. The joy of the Lord is not only the strength of His people, but it is that joy which commends salvation to the nations of the earth. The world has its own sources of joy, but they are not to be compared with the joy that the people of God have access to in the Lord.

These verses are very important for us even today as we think of evangelizing our homeland, and of mission work throughout the world. Too often we are concerned about methods, and about the training of those who go out, but we pay practically no attention to where a person is in his or her relationship with the Lord. We need to rejoice in the Lord *always!* And it is that very joy in the Lord that will commend our message to a world which knows nothing of that joy which is unspeakable, “and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1:8).

The Psalm ends in verse 6 with an urgent command to continue to invoke the Name of the Lord. “The Holy One of Israel” is “great.” Franz Delitzsch said this about the greatness of our Lord:

He is great as the Giver of promises, and great in fulfilling them; great in grace, and great in judgment; great in all His saving acts which spread from Israel to all mankind (I, 294).

In the Psalm from which the latter part of verse 2 in our text is taken, we have this verse:

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Ex. 15:11).

So the Lord is both great and glorious in His holiness, and His people can never sufficiently praise Him or glorify His Name.

Concl: And so this is the prophecy of *A Thanksgiving Day to Come*. It is still ahead for Israel as a nation, but it is here for us today, not just on the fourth Thursday of November, but on every day of the week and all through every day. What blessings still await us as we learn what it means that the Lord is our strength and song and salvation! Then will the Gospel be proclaimed in all of its power and glory, and we even in these very evil days in which we live, will not only spread the message of our holy God and Savior, but we will have the joy of seeing others turn to Christ and finding in Him what they can find in no one else.