

The King is Coming!

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

I believe the Bible to be the true word of God without error. The Bible contains exactly what God has given to us. It has been given to us for our instruction, to provide encouragement and hope that helps us to endure all things by remaining faithful to God. **Romans 15:4 (TLB) ⁴ *These things that were written in the Scriptures so long ago are to teach us patience and to encourage us so that we will look forward expectantly to the time when God will conquer sin and death. Romans 15:4 (MSG) ⁴ Even if it was written in Scripture long ago, you can be sure it's written for us. God wants the combination of his steady, constant calling and warm, personal counsel in Scripture to come to characterize us, keeping us alert for whatever he will do next.*** The Bible contains facts that the non-believer cannot accept. 1. The God of the Bible is the only God that there is. 2. Jesus is the only Savior from sin and being in a relationship with Him is the only way to be saved. 3. God can work supernatural miracles including creating the heavens and the earth, bring about a worldwide flood, part the waters of the red sea, heal sicknesses, raise the dead, have an army of angels to protect the believers, and is one day coming again to judge everyone who has ever lived. 4. A brand new heaven and earth God will create, sin and evil will be no more, and God's people will live with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all eternity. 5. Those who rejected the Savior will be placed where their lives will be lived without the Presence of God as God grants them what they deep down wished for, life without God. That in a nutshell is the Christian faith.

In Isaiah 6 we read of when he was caught up into God's Throne Room. God's holiness overwhelmed him as did Isaiah's utter sinfulness. God redeemed Isaiah as Isaiah experienced complete forgiveness of sins due to Jesus' death on the cross. Jesus had yet to go to the cross but the blessing of the cross covers the Old Testament saints as it does us. What Isaiah saw of

God, heard from God, the total experience changed him forever. He foretold the first coming of Jesus and also foretold the second coming. He saw it all.

Isaiah saw the final judgment that will come to those who rejected God's salvation. We read this in Isaiah 34. Isaiah saw the heavenly future to come to those God had granted the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. We read this in today's passage of Isaiah 35. Both themes come up time and time again in the entire book of Isaiah.

If I was alive at the time of the Titanic and knew the fate of the ship, I would have done everything to keep that ship from sailing full speed ahead. I would have warned everyone of what was to come. To be silent would have been cruel. I am certain a lot of people would have still boarded the ship, but I would be thrilled by those who chose to stay safe on the land.

Something worse than an iceberg is coming for certain in the future. It is my constant prayer that everyone in my listening will be ready for that day. As Christians, we have nothing to fear about that day for Jesus bore the judgment we deserve on the cross. We will not sink at all. We will be lifted into the air to meet with the Lord and those who have gone before us. It will be a great day. Not so for those who reject the call of God on their lives. God will grant them what they wished, what they willed, to be separated from God forever.

Advent is the season of the church year we make sure we are ready for the day of the Lord's coming for He is coming soon, very soon. We have been called by God to enter the ark. In the ark we will be safe forever. The ark stands for living our lives in Christ. In Christ we are always safe and unsinkable.

This week I received a phone call that was rather painful for me. At the same time, I was writing this sermon. The call could have caused me to sink, swirling downward into a pit. I literally read the words of this sermon. Yes, the news was bad, but as I live my life with my eyes on Jesus, as I live in the Ark, I do not have to drown in the sea of sadness and disappointment. God has a plan and God will bring good out of this as I stay in the Ark, living in Christ. Life's

hardships need not sink us or drown us. Faith in Christ makes all the difference in the world. It is impossible for God to turn against you for God is always for you 100% of the time because your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Commentator Raymond Ortlund Junior writes this about Isaiah. "Isaiah leads us now to the point of personal decision. He has been showing us God and ourselves with new clarity. What has Isaiah told us about God? God is our most loyal ally in the struggle of life, [or as Bob Yarbrough says, we have the right Man on our side, Jesus]. He has made promises to us. He has proven Himself already. He deserves to be trusted. What has Isaiah told us about ourselves? We barely trust God. God is faithful, but we are guarded. We need to make up our minds. Are we going to live by faith in God or by faith in ourselves (Isaiah-God Saves Sinners, pg. 195)?

Isaiah chapters 34 and 35 take us out to the end of time where eternity begins (pg.196). It is my conviction that if we do not know how things end, we would lose hope in the present. Knowing the future and the victory that we have in Christ can fill us with joy and peace now because of that great joy and peace to come in the future. Some of that can fill us now as we live by faith in Christ. The things of this world will not improve but what we have to look forward to can never be taken away from us. This means life is always worth living in Jesus Christ, the source of hope.

In these two chapters we see the world order deconstructed (34:11,12) human existence renewed (35:1-2), God's people no longer hindered by sin (35:5-6), all tears wiped away from their eyes (35:10).

Before I move forward, please know that the gift of salvation given to you is not a once and for all experience. Jesus is our constant Savior. He is always saving us out of the circumstances that this life throws at us. Yes, we get knocked down and Jesus is right there to pick us up and make us stronger in the faith. He is our constant Savior, our eternal rescuer.

I find this quote to be quite liberating from a highly respected scholar. "It is not abusive to tell people about the judgement of God. God wants everyone to know because without the context of judgment, we don't appreciate or understand salvation" (ibid .198). The day is coming sooner than we think. God's wrath has been stored up and will explode upon the world like that of a dam that bursts. The entire earth will be no more. Presently God is being patient with human sin and evil, more patient than any of us would be. God's patience will have an end. The Lord has already set the day of his coming and God will vindicate the faith of everyone who trusts in Him (34:8).

Isaiah foresaw the blessings that will be ours at the second coming of Jesus. After explaining the judgment to come of those who rejected Jesus in chapter 34, he boldly tells us what is coming our way, to the ones God has saved by grace through faith in chapter 35. Since you trusted God, the desert will be transformed into a luscious garden and all by the grace of God. Every turmoil you experienced here will be greeted by heavenly bliss there with new bodies that will be able to contain heavenly joy. Our bodies now can only experience a taste of that heavenly joy, a sip of it so to speak but then we will be able to experience the fullness of God and every good desire you have ever had will be more than fulfilled. Every mouth will be singing and shouting praises to God, even those who while in church never moved their lips. Joy is what pervades Isaiah 35 (ibid 200), for our salvation in Christ delights in God's glory and majesty.

Isaiah 35:3-7 (NLT2) ³ With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands, and encourage those who have weak knees. ⁴ Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you." ⁵ And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. ⁶ The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland. ⁷ The

parched ground will become a pool, and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land.

Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish where desert jackals once lived.

Examining what the future holds for you brings to you much needed encouragement, instruction, and hope in why we ought to endure faithfully in the present. Every act done unto God will be honored. God's great goodness is what puts the thrill into life (ibid.201). There is more for us in Christ than we have yet apprehended – always. Isaiah is calling us to create an atmosphere of expectancy, because God is coming to us with fullness of salvation (ibid 201). God will bring us home singing.

Isaiah 35:10 (NLT2) ¹⁰ Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return.

They will enter Jerusalem singing, crowned with everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be filled with joy and gladness.

I have some concluding comments about judgement. What is not said will be left for next year's Advent season of preparation and readiness to meet Jesus in the air. I find these truths about the final judgment quite helpful and yes, even positive. The fact that there is a judgment to come, separating the Christians from those who rejected Jesus' offer of salvation means:

1. It stresses our accountability and gives to us the certainty that justice will triumph over all wrongs which we experience here. 2. **Knowing we are accountable gives dignity to the humblest of action.** 3. **Knowing that all wrongs will be righted brings calmness and assurance to those in the thick of the battle.** 4. **This doctrine gives meaning to life.** **History is not cyclic like a treadmill. The final judgment means history is moving toward a goal.** 5. **Judgment protects the idea of the triumph of God and of good. It is unthinkable that the present conflict between good and evil should last for eternity.** 6. **Judgment means that evil will be disposed of authoritatively, decisively, finally.** 7. **Judgment means that in the end God's will will be done perfectly** (Thoughts taken from a book decades ago, a book I no longer have nor remember the author).