

## Isaiah 10:33-12:6

### Overview

One can associate 10:33-34 with either the preceding or the following context.

- Thematically, it repeats ideas from the judgment on Assyria announced in 10:15-19. In this case, you would take these two paragraphs as an *inclusio* surrounding two about the restoration of Israel and Judah.
- However, the disjunctive construction at 10:33 (“Behold, the Lord ...”) is a much stronger break than the *waw*-consecutive at 11:1, encouraging us to explore whether these two verses might be an introduction to the next section rather than a conclusion to what goes before.
- And in fact, they offer a beautiful contrast with the imagery in 11:1, between the felled glory of Assyria and the shoot out of Jesse. This is reinforced when we realize that “stem” in 11:1 carries the sense of “stump.” Compare ch. 9, where a true light replaces the false light of apostate Israel. In both cases, the hope centers in a Child.

So we take 10:33-11:9 as describing the coming of a new order, under a king from the stump of Jesse. 10:33-34 are part of what follows, not what goes before, but the similarity with what goes before is an example of a linked keyword transition (Parunak, JBL 102 (1983), 525-548).

The repetition of the phrase “in that day” in 11:10-12:6 introduces four statements of what life will be like under the new king.

- The first two describe those over whom he rules: the gentiles (11:10), and the remnant of Israel (11:11-16).
- The next two describe what his people say. The first of these two paragraphs (12:1-3) describes the believer's own expression of devotion, first to the Lord and then to others. In the second (12:4-6), he encourages others to worship the Lord.

### 10:33-11:9, The True Bough Replaces the False One

Isaiah has already introduced us to his metaphor of people as plants:

- It is central to the parable of the vineyard in ch. 5.
- In 9:14, 17, the young warriors are described as the lofty branch (כִּפְּהַ) of a palm tree, and the fatherless and widows as rushes in the marsh.
- A forest represents a nation in 9:18 (Ephraim) and 10:18, 19 (Assyria).
- In 10:19, individual trees are mentioned, probably representing the soldiers of the army.

This metaphor forms the basis for a major contrast in the next section.

### **10:33-34, The Destruction of the False Bough**

Assyria was sent forth as the Lord's woodsman (10:15, "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it?"). In 37:24, Isaiah uses the image to describe Assyria's proud confidence:

By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.

The image is appropriate. The problem with Israel was pride and haughtiness (ch. 2), and the Assyrian cut them down.

Now the judgment on Assyria is described in the same terms. Now Assyria is viewed as a forest, as in 10:18-19. Compare the expanded imagery in Ezek 31:3ff, "behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon." This forest will be cut clear. The woodsman in this case is described as "the terrifying one" (v. 33) and "the mighty one" (v. 34).

Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem is also described in terms of destroying a tree (Ezek 17), and the metaphor here probably goes beyond Assyria to include Babylon.

**10:33 Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough [פאריק].**--Probably not referring to a specific branch, but to a generic action. When you're cutting timber, if you just fell the trees, the branches of the first ones toppled form a tangled mess that hinders access to those that remain standing. First you cut off the branches, and then the trunk can fall cleanly. The Lord will do bough-lopping, clearing off the branches of a tree in preparation for felling it.

**with terror:**--Isaiah is the dominant user of the verb underlying this word. The verb is first applied to God in the strongly messianic Ps 89:8 (ET 7), "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints." The word here is universally understood as abstract, but in parallel with v. 34 "a mighty one," we might take it as an indirect reference to the one who causes the terror. Compare the participial use of the same root in 8:13,

Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your **dread**.

Both of these remind us of "the anointing" of 10:27, because of which the Assyrian's yoke will be destroyed. A terrifying one will move through the forest, lopping off the branches from the trees.

**and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.**--Once the branches are gone, the trunks can be felled. The first and second clauses may be understood as metaphor and the corresponding reality, in keeping with Isaiah's common practice of interpreting his figures. The systematic felling of tall trees represents the humbling of arrogant people.

**34 And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.**--Once more he emphasizes the implement, first figuratively ("with iron"), then more literally ("by a mighty one"). David used this term to describe God's name in Psa 8:2, 10 (ET 1, 9), and it is a divine epithet in Ps 76:5 (ET 4); 93:4; Isa 33:21. In parallel with "the terrible one" in v. 33, it describes the one who levels the mighty forest.

## **11:1-9, The Emergence of the True Bough**

Assyria was God's woodsman, cutting down the proud trees of Israel and Judah. Now that the Lord has humbled Assyria, he turns his attention back to the clearcut wastes of his chosen land.

Recall the broad expanses of the Upper Peninsula, once thick forest, but clear-cut in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and now fields of massive rotting stumps. This is the image from which the next verses grow.

### **1, His Origin**

The imagery of v. 1 couples two ideas together: the coming of the promised ruler, and life after death. Once we recognize these two ideas here, they explain a curious turn of phrase in other OT prophets, and help us understand Paul's first extensive recorded words in the NT. Once we have reviewed these texts, we'll return to discuss why the association between these two ideas is so important.

#### ***Isaiah's Text***

**11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem [stump] of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow [bear fruit] out of his roots:**--The words "stem" and "root" recur together in Job 14:8, which gives a good summary of the principle involved here.

7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. 8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; 9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

Sometimes you will see a small shoot springing up from the stump of a felled tree. Isaiah invokes this image with respect to the royal family. Consider first the stump, then the shoot.

In 9:8-10:32, the focus has been on the northern kingdom and its coming invasion by Assyria. Judah has gotten off rather lightly, as we saw in comparing 10:20-23 with 10:24-32. The Assyrian campaigns marked the end of the Northern Kingdom and Hoshea's rule, but did not disrupt the Davidic throne in Jerusalem.

Now Isaiah envisions Jesse's line as cut off as well. If the family is a tree, all that is left is a stump and the roots under it. His vision now encompasses the coming judgment under Babylon. We should not be surprised at this extension of his vision. He is, after all, based in the southern kingdom, while his contemporary Hosea labored in the north. His condemnation of the North is not meant to comfort the South with their moral superiority, but to warn them that sin must bring God's judgment. Chapter 3 has already described vividly the destruction of Judaeon society, the loss of both the powerful leaders and the pampered ladies. The reference to the stump of Jesse brings us back to this sober anticipation.

The fall of Jerusalem is no more the end of the story than was the fall of Samaria. A new shoot may spring out of the stump of a felled tree, and Isaiah now draws on this image to look ahead to the coming of Messiah. If the description of the stump summarizes ch. 3, the shoot recalls 4:2,

In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth

shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

### ***The Promotion and Resurrection of David Elsewhere in the OT***

It is interesting that the coming king is described as coming, not from David, but from Jesse. He is not just David's son, but David's restoration. There is a hint here of an idea that other prophets make explicit, when they call the coming king "David":

Hos 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, **and David their king**; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

Eze 37:24, 25 And **David my servant** shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and **my servant David** shall be their prince for ever.

Notice especially the language in Jer 30:9 and Ezek 34:23.

Jer 30:9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, **and David their king**, whom **I will raise up** unto them.

Eze 34:23 And **I will set up [raise up]** one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even **my servant David**; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

Here God promises to "raise up" David. The verb might mean simply (as it often does) to promote someone, to bring him into a prominent position. But the LXX translation (ανιστημι) is also used frequently in the NT to describe the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. And indeed, when a prophet four hundred years after David's death promises that God will "raise up" David as king in the future, it seems inescapable that the term is being used in a double sense. In fact, the reason that these passages describe the Messiah as David rather than as David's son may be to force us to wrestle with the relation between these two ideas, of **resurrection** from the dead and **promotion** to rule.

This is the very relation that we see in the image of the Messiah as springing from the stump of Jesse. The one who comes to rule over all the earth springs out of the stump of a fallen tree. Resurrection and promotion are inextricably bound together.

### ***The Promotion and Resurrection of Messiah in the NT***

Paul develops this pun between promotion and resurrection at some length in his sermon at Antioch of Pisidia, recorded in Acts 13:16-41. This is the first major text we have from the man who went on to write 30% of the NT, more than any other author. So it is an important reflection of his thought. It falls into three sections:

1. vv. 17-31, a historical summary of the promotion and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah
2. vv. 32-37, evidence that this promotion and resurrection was predicted in the OT
3. vv. 38-41, the implications of his promotion and resurrection for Paul's hearers (and readers)

The Greek verb ανιστημι can be used to describe either promotion or resurrection. Curiously, there is

another verb with the same bivalence, *εγειρω*. Paul makes the pun with *εγειρω* in his historical summary, and then with *ανιστημι* (the one used in the LXX of Jer 30:9 and Ezek 34:23) in giving the scriptural evidence.

### Historical Summary, Acts 13:17-31

The verb used in this section is *εγειρω*.

The summary of his **promotion**, in 17-25, places him in the line of Israel's historical rulers. He names four: the judges collectively (20), Saul (21), David (22), and Jesus (23).

Starting with the judges is important, because it emphasizes that one of the key functions of a ruler is to judge, to be the arbiter of righteous conduct. Throughout the OT it is the ruler's responsibility to protect the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger, and to punish the wicked—and failure on these points was one of the main reasons for the captivities.

It is interesting that the judges and Saul are said to be “given” to the people, while David and Jesus are “raised up,” or exalted. Clearly, Paul thinks more highly of the latter two than of the former ones, which were simply office-holders. We see this by the special terms of approval that Paul attaches to the latter two:

- David is set forth as the object of God's search, particularly aligned with his will.
- Jesus is the object of a special forerunner, John the Baptist.

The summary of his **resurrection**, in 26-30, recounts how the Jewish rulers rejected his authority, even to the extent of conspiring with the Romans to have him killed. His resurrection (v. 30) is God's check-mate to their rejection of his chosen one. Notably, Paul describes it using the same verb that described the promotion of David and Jesus in vv. 22, 23.<sup>1</sup> God has raised him up as king, and proves it by raising him up from the dead.

### Scriptural Foundation, Acts 13:32-37

Now Paul switches to the other verb, the one used in the Jer 30:9 and Ezek 34:23, *ανιστημι*. Like *εγειρω*, it can mean either “promote” or “raise from the dead,” but has the added impact of being the verb from which the standard noun “resurrection” *αναστασις* is derived.

The scriptural foundation for Jesus' **promotion** (vv. 32-33) is Ps 2:7. Strike the word “again” in v. 33. The promise to which Paul is referring is the promise that God would send the Messiah to rule over his people, embodied in the Davidic covenant of 2 Sam 7 and echoed throughout Isaiah.

Vv. 34-37 go on to present the scriptural foundation for the Lord's **resurrection**, from Isa 55:3 (promising him the sure mercies of David) and Ps 16:10 (defining those mercies as protection from corruption). Here, he follows Peter's argument on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

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<sup>1</sup> The textual authorities are divided on whether we should read *εγειρω* (the verb from v. 22) or *αγω* in v. 23. All modern critics prefer *αγω*, including Hodges-Farstadt and Robinson-Pierpont, but the MT is divided. The existence of the *ανιστημι* pun in vv. 32-37 and the OT prophets, and the internal parallel between the historical summary and scriptural evidence in this passage, make it intrinsically likely that Paul is exploring the same pun here.

Though the verb is different, again Paul forces us to consider promotion and resurrection as different sides of the same coin, by punning on a verb that can describe them both.

### **Implications, Acts 13:38-41**

Paul draws two implications from this history of promotion and resurrection.

First (vv. 38-39), he reminds his hearers (and us) that the death of the Messiah was not just an emblem of injustice, but the means of redeeming his people. v. 28 emphasizes that there was no human justification for his death. The rest of the NT explains that he died in our place, as our substitute, bearing the wrath of God so that we might be spared. His resurrection is the proof that the price of our sin has been paid, and “all that believe are justified from all things.” It shows that God's judicial wrath against our sin has been satisfied (Rom 4:25),

[Jesus] was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

We can know the forgiveness of sin and fellowship with God, if we receive the sacrifice he has provided in his son.

Second (vv. 40-41), he warns us of the implications of resisting the authority of a king who can rise from the dead. No coup can overthrow him. No army can conquer him. When God raises him up as king, and proves his support by raising him from the dead, it is folly to resist his authority. At his baptism, God declared (Matt 3:17),

This is my beloved son.

The Jews responded by rejecting his teaching. On the mount of transfiguration, God again declared (Matt 17:5),

This is my beloved son.

This time, the Jews responded by crucifying him. Finally, God raised him from the dead, and Paul tells us (Rom 1:4) that he is

declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Paul later makes this point to the people of Athens (Acts 17:30-31),

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

The resurrection qualifies Jesus as ruler, who will exercise the fundamental responsibility of a ruler, judging his people.

- It proves that he has himself passed the bar of God's judgment successfully. He has died, stood before the ultimate judge, and been returned to life. So his **integrity** is unimpeachable
- It shows the **power** of God that stands behind his judgment. Anyone can kill a living person, but only God can raise a dead person back to life. We should think twice, or even more, before



setting ourselves against his authority.

- It reminds us that he offers himself as **substitute** to all who will receive his sacrifice. There is no need for us to fear his condemnation. He offers forgiveness as a free gift to all who will repent of their sin and submit to him.

## 2, His Anointing

**2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,**--Throughout the OT, we are reminded that people can only do something worthwhile when God acts through them by his spirit.

At the time of the exodus Bezalel, master craftsman on the tabernacle, was noted for his ability

4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5 And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.

He had this ability because God

filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship (Exod 31:3-5; cf. 35:30-35).

The enabling of the Spirit of God is evident in those whom God places over his people.

- The Spirit of God was on Moses, and on the seventy elders who ruled with him (Num 11:15).
- Joshua was enabled by the Spirit in his leadership (Num 27:18; Deut 34:9).
- The ability of the judges to deliver Israel is repeatedly explained by the phrase, “The Spirit of the Lord came upon him” (Othniel, 3:10; Gideon, 6:34; Jephthah, 11:29; and notably Samson, 14:6, 19; 15:14; cf. 13:25).
- Saul's anointing as king was followed by the coming of the Spirit of God upon him (1 Sam 10:10). His victory over the Ammonites was attributed to the endowment of that Spirit (11:6).
- When the Lord replaced Saul as king, the Spirit left him, and came upon David (1 Sam 16:13, 14):

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed [David] in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. ... 14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, ...

The Spirit also comes upon prophets, throughout Israel's history. But interestingly, in spite of the universal references to the Spirit during the Exodus judges, and Saul and David, no later civil ruler is ever said to enjoy this endowment, until the promised Rod out of the ruined stump of Jesse. Recall 1 Sam 16:13, “the Spirit of the Lord came upon David **from that day forward.**” It was his permanent endowment, and even after he died, it was reserved for the One who would one day appear, not just as his successor, but bearing his name.

There follow six characteristics that the Spirit gives him, grouped in pairs. The individual pairs reflect, respectively, the intellectual, practical, and spiritual dimensions of life.

**the spirit of wisdom and understanding,**--Wisdom and understanding deal with the intellectual facet

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of life. They have been defined and distinguished thus (K&D): “Wisdom is the power of discerning the nature of things through the appearance, and understanding the power of discerning the differences of things in their appearance.” They both relate to the mind's ability to discern the meaning of the observed world.

**the spirit of counsel and might**,--Counsel and might relate to actions in the world. Counsel defines the actions that one ought to take, and might carries them out. Thus wisdom and understanding define the input function, counsel and might the output function.

**the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD**; The knowledge and fear of the Lord describe his relation to the Father. Knowledge is not abstract here, but knowledge of God; cf. Prov 2:5, “Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”

The first and third go together. Prov 9:10 makes this particularly clear:

9:10 The **fear** of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**: and the **knowledge** of the holy is **understanding**.

Prov 2:1-9 brings the practical side of life into consideration as well, though not with the words “counsel” and “might”:

*Desire for wisdom and understanding*.--My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto **wisdom**, and apply thine heart to **understanding**; 3 Yea, if thou criest after **knowledge**, and liftest up thy voice for **understanding**; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

*Knowledge and Fear of God*.--5 Then shalt thou understand the **fear** of the LORD, and find the **knowledge** of God.

*Wisdom and understanding*.--6 For the LORD giveth **wisdom**: out of his mouth cometh **knowledge** and **understanding**. 7 He layeth up sound **wisdom** for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

*Direction in Action*.--8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the **way** of his saints. 9 Then shalt thou understand **righteousness**, and **judgment**, and **equity**; yea, every good **path**.

In addition, the central pair picks up two of the titles of the Child named Miracle in 9:6:

- “counsel” is what a “counselor” gives
- “might” is the distinctive attribute of “the mighty God.”

What is critical here is that all three pairs are the result of the Spirit's work.

- It is the Spirit that gives wisdom and understanding to be able to interpret the world around us. Without his guidance, we will misunderstand what is going on.
- It is the Spirit that enables right decisions and gives power to carry them out. Without his enabling, we will take the wrong steps, or if we stumble across the right ones, we will not be able to bring them to effect.
- As Proverbs points out, both accurate understanding and effective action come from the fear and knowledge of God, yet even these are not available to us directly, but must be given to us



by the Spirit.

When the Messiah comes, he does not come in his own strength, but with the enabling of the Spirit of God in all these areas. Though he is “God with us,” the only power he exercises during his earthly ministry is the power of the Spirit. That same power is available to us, under the terms of the New Covenant that he has come to ratify.

Ezek 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

### **3-5, His Rule**

Now Isaiah goes on to describe the king thus anointed with three sets of metaphor: the senses by which he judges, the implements that he uses to carry out that judgment, and his royal attire.

#### **3, His Senses**

This verse names three senses. Our version makes clear the references to sight and hearing. The first clause is literally a reference to the sense of smell.

**3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD:**--Our version joins this clause more closely with the previous verse than with what follows, but the grammar here marks a disjunction with v. 2, and the common theme of senses joins together the three clauses in v. 3.

The first one is more literally, “His delighted smell shall be of the fear of the Lord.” He will be able to discern those who truly fear the Lord from those who do not. Compare the Lord's words to Samuel when he anointed David in 1 Sam 16:7,

for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

He will be able to look into the heart of people, to see whether they truly fear the Lord or not. And when he senses that fear of God in them, he will rejoice in it, because it resonates with the most fundamental characteristic of his own personality.

**and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:**--These statements are in contrast with the first clause. His judgment is based on whether people fear the Lord, not on what he sees them do or hears them say.

Our legal system wrestles with this distinction between the outward action and the inward intent. We recognize that one and the same action can be righteous or wicked, depending on the intent, and we even write intent into our laws, but it is very difficult to demonstrate it in a court of law. This king will be able to see directly to the heart.

**4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:**--Thus grounded on his perception of peoples' motives, he will be able to render judgment in accordance with God's law. Perhaps the poor are mentioned, not only as the most common victims of the rich who do not fear God, but because they themselves often do trust in the Lord:

James 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in

faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

#### **4, His Implements**

**and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,**--The Assyrian was God's rod to chastise Israel (10:5, cf. 9:4; 10:15, 24). When the Messiah comes, he will bring with him a rod of chastisement, but it will be the words of mouth. Compare “the sword of his mouth” in Rev 1:16; 2:16; 19:15. His word was powerful enough to bring the worlds into existence. Think of how terrible it will be to stand before God in judgment and hear from his own lips the very law that one has ignored or even mocked.

**and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.**--If there is a distinction here, the “rod of his mouth” will be the word of judgment, while “the breath of his lips” the actual dispatch. Compare

Isa 30:33 For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

Psa 18:8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

The imagery of fire is common for judgment: our Lord spoke of a place “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43-48), and the destiny of the wicked is described as “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev 21:8). This text adds a personal touch to this image: the fire is kindled by his own breath, hot with anger.

#### **5, His Attire**

To unpack the next image, we must consider first the meaning of the metaphor, then the two ethical qualities with which it is associated.

**5 ... the girdle of his loins, ... the girdle of his reins.**--The common garment in the Middle East is loose and flowing, to keep an insulating layer of air as protection from the heat and dryness of the desert. But it's easy for an active person to trip over such a garment. So someone preparing for vigorous action, and particularly for battle, will tie it up with a tight-fitting waistband or belt. Thus the verb “to gird oneself” is used to indicate preparation for action.

This king will not be idle. He prepares himself for action by taking to himself two qualities that reflect his integrity.

**5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,**--“Righteousness” means conformity to the law and character of God. He will conduct his government in accordance with God's law, thus claiming the promise of Ps 144:15, “Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.”

**and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.**--“Faithfulness” means “trustworthiness,” and indicates that a person will do what he has said he will do. It is easy for a politician to make promises in order to deflect criticism, only to neglect them in the turmoil of daily governance, but this king will be truthful and dependable. Whatever he says, he will do.

## 6-9, Its Consequences

So powerful is the reign of this king that the very order of nature is changed, and even wild animals become peaceful. Righteousness and equity extend not only to the affairs of men, but also to the natural order. The big idea that Isaiah seeks to communicate is that the fall will be undone, and the world will be restored to the state of Eden.

- Gen 1-3 reveals that violence is the result of man's fall. So we must not blame God for it.
- Here, we learn that someday creation will be restored. So we must not lose hope.

Isaiah describes this transformation in three stages.

The first is the peaceful *association* of wild and domestic animals:

**6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,**--The verb means “to sojourn.” We are to imagine the wolf on a long journey, overtaken by nightfall. He casts about for an inn in which to lodge, and spying a sheepfold, asks whether he can spend the night there. In the current order, such a request would invite the shepherd's sling and rod. But under Messiah's rule, he will be welcomed in.

**and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;**--Another pair of traditional foes, now resting quietly together.

**and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.**--Amos describes the usual treatment of cattle by a lion:

Amos 3:12 Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear;

But now the lion is not tempted by the succulent cattle on either side, but all three are so meek that they can be led even by a young lad.

The reference to Eden here is in the *submission* of the beasts to a human child. This reflects the dominion that God gave Adam over the creation in Gen 1,

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ... 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Consider the peaceful scene in 2:19,

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

The animals neither flee in fear from Adam, nor attack him.

The next stage remarks on the *diet* of these animals, deepening the reference to Eden..

**7 And the cow and the bear shall feed;**--The verb means “to graze.” The bear is ordinarily as

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bloodthirsty as the lion, as David testifies,

1 Sam 17:34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

But now his diet has changed, and he grazes alongside the cow, eating grass.

**their young ones shall lie down together:**--The cow, having grazed, lies down in the shade to chew her cud. Now the bear will do the same.

**and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.**--This makes explicit the implication of the previous two clauses, and again takes us back to the state of Eden. The original order was (Gen 1:29-30),

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. 30 And **to every beast of the earth**, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

Originally, every beast was to eat the green herb for meat. That changed with Adam's sin. Isaiah anticipates a day when this change will be reversed.

**8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.**--Here another consequence of the fall is reversed. Because of the role of the serpent in tempting our first parents, God cursed it. Part of the curse was (Gen 3:15),

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Now that enmity is done away. The young child can play with the serpent. Toddlers delight to tease adults, pulling hats down over their eyes or blocking their way, and their loving parents patiently go along with the game. In the same way, the little child, observing the snake popping out of its hole, pushes it back down and blocks it in with a chubby little hand. Today, such a game would be fatal, but in that day the serpent will become a harmless playmate.

So Isaiah reaches back to Genesis to motivate both the need for the new king, and the effect of his rule. The shoot out of the stump of Jesse will reverse the effect of Adam's sin and restore the earth to its original state of peace. It is a mistake to think that we can accomplish this with science and technology, or with diplomacy, or with enlightened environmental policy. Only the coming of the Messiah can bring about this reversal.

This coming reversal is central to our hope as believers, as two NT references make clear.

The first is Heb 2:5-11. According to the writer, David in Ps 8 also shared this hope when he wrote,

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? ... 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: 7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; 8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

The writer to Hebrews quotes from this Psalm, then notes wryly,

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8 ... For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was “made a little lower than the angels,” for the suffering of death “crowned with glory and honour;” that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

The point is that our Savior's mission goes far beyond just taking away our personal guilt and giving us everlasting life. It is a restoration of a fallen world to its original state of order.

This vision of a return to Eden also lies at the heart of Paul's description of the corruption and restoration of the created order in Rom 8:19-22. This passage comes at the center of a chiasm reaching from 8:14 to 8:30 (see my notes on the structure of Romans):

The ministry of the trinity	8:17	8:26-30
Our deliverance from suffering	8:18	8:23-25
The restoration of the creation	8:19-22	

The violence of the natural order, which leads to the suffering and struggles of believers, is a consequence of man's rebellion. When the Messiah brings people under his just rule, the rest of the natural order will be restored as well.

**9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:**--“My holy mountain” throughout the OT refers to Mount Zion. This peaceable kingdom will be centered in the Jerusalem sanctuary. “They” is to be understood impersonally, including not only the wild beasts, but anyone capable of malicious actions. “Nobody will hurt or destroy.”

It's worth remembering that wild beasts are often used in Scripture as metaphors for rapacious nations. Jacob compared his son Judah to a lion (Gen 49:9). Moses applies the same metaphor to Gad (Deut 33:20). David thus describes his persecutors (Ps 7:2). In the parable of the vineyard, Isaiah described the coming invaders as lions (5:29). Perhaps the most concentrated example is Daniel's vision of the four beasts in Dan 7: the lion of Babylon (v. 4), the bear of Persia (v. 5), the four-headed leopard of Greece (v. 6), and the ten-horned monster of Rome (vv. 7-8). Does Daniel have Isa 11 in mind as he describes these enemies of Israel, and their coming destruction when the Son of Man takes his authority (vv. 11-13)?

**for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.**--This effect will be far broader than just Jerusalem, but will extend to the whole earth.

Earlier scriptures had borne testimony to the spread of God's **glory** throughout all the earth:

Num 14:20 And the LORD said, ... 21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the **glory** of the LORD.

Ps 72:18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his **glory**.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole

earth is full of his **glory**.

But this proclamation is different. This time, it is not just God's glory, but his **knowledge**, that covers the earth. The Hebrew (with the accusative particle, דעת את יהוה) makes clear that “of the Lord” is an objective genitive. The Lord is the one being known. This claim goes beyond the previous one. It's not just that his glory is everywhere, but that people everywhere recognize it as his glory.

Habakkuk brings these two strands together:

Hab 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Knowing the Lord is not just acknowledging his existence. Isaiah gives a specific example of this universal knowledge in 19:21, and in the process clarifies what it means to “know the Lord”:

And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it.

Such knowledge entails submission to the Lord, offering sacrifice to him.

These circumstances clearly describe the Millennium. And yet other descriptions of that blessed time anticipate that there will be sin in the world, for the Messiah will rule with a rod of iron, and at the end of the period Satan will be able to gather a vast army to besiege Jerusalem. We must acknowledge that it is possible to know the Lord without being known of him (cf. Gal 4:9, “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God”). Under the circumstances of that day, everyone will recognize the Lord, and offer at least outward worship to him.

## **11:10-16, The King's Subjects**

We now come to four paragraphs that describe what life will be like “in that day.” The first two focus on the subjects of this new king (Gentiles in v. 10, Israel in vv. 11-16), and the last two (in ch. 12) describe their praise of him. The broad lesson of this section is that the coming king commands our **allegiance** and our **praise**.

### **10, The Gentiles**

Isaiah first notes that the coming king is not exclusively Jewish. He will command the allegiance of Gentiles as well.

**10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse**,--In v. 1, the Messiah is depicted as coming *from* Jesse's roots. But now he is depicted as *being* Jesse's root, the origin from which Jesse himself sprang, reminding us that the one born into the world in history was the same one by whom the worlds were made. How can the Lord be both the source and issue of Jesse? Only by being both God the creator and man the creature. Our Lord highlighted this same paradox to the Pharisees in Matt 22,

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?

They say unto him, The Son of David.



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43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

The shift is important in the context of this (one-verse) paragraph. As the offspring of Jesse, he commands the loyalty of Israel, but his claim on Gentiles is based on his position as the root of Jesse and of all other peoples as well, the one by whom all things were created.

**which shall stand for an ensign of the people;**-- “Ensign” **סֵנִי** is another of Isaiah's words. He accounts for ten out of 21 instance in the OT; no other book has more than 5, and that is Jer, who doubtless is drawing on Isaiah.

Previously, in 5:26, Isaiah spoke of an ensign that God would raise up to draw the nations as wild beasts to rip up his vineyard.

Isa 5:26 And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:

In the latter day, he will again raise an ensign to attract the Gentiles, but this time in subjection to Israel's king, who is also their creator.

There is a subtle difference between the two expressions. In Isa 5:26 we read of “an ensign to the nations,” while in 11:10 the expression is “an ensign of the peoples” (plural). “Nation” views a group of people as a political entity, while “people” focuses on its cultural identify. In the former passage, God is attracting nations as political forces to chastise Israel. Now he is drawing people “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

**to it shall the Gentiles seek;**--They eagerly flock to his rule. Here is their response to his gracious invitation. Not all of them will turn to him, as v. 14 and chapters 13-27 make clear, but many will.

**and his rest shall be glorious.**--The word “rest” **מנוחה** means “resting place,” and refers several times in Scripture to God's resting place on Mt Zion. See in particular Ps 132, which celebrated the carrying of the ark up to Mount Zion,

8 Arise, O LORD, into thy **rest**; thou, and the ark of thy strength.

13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. 14 This is my **rest** for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

When the Messiah is enthroned upon Zion, it will be filled with glory. Haggai foretold this (2:9),

9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

This promise was fulfilled when the Lord Jesus visited the temple. But even greater glory will come when he returns in power.

The image here is thus of the Lord enthroned on Zion, drawing the Gentiles to him there. Compare Zech 14:16-17,

16 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

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keep the feast of tabernacles. 17 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.

Isaiah 60:1-6 anticipates the caravans of tribute that Gentiles will bring as subjects to Israel and her king.

Prophecies such as this of the salvation of Gentiles show the force of God's universal reign over all the earth. But they are not fulfilled in the church age. Paul emphasizes in Eph 3 that what is happening now is quite different:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; ... 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

It was no mystery that the Gentiles would be saved. But it was a mystery that they would be on the same level as Israel. In v. 6 Paul goes to special verbal lengths to emphasize their fellow-status with the Jews:

εἶναι τὰ ἔθνη συγκληρονόμα καὶ σύσσωμα καὶ συμμετόχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ

He makes up the second of the three words to emphasize that Jew and Gentile are one body in the church. As he says in Col 3:11, in the New Man

there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free:

What Isaiah envisions is quite different. The Gentiles are not fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, fellow-partakers of the promises, but rather are drawn to the banner of Messiah flying from Mount Zion, bringing their tribute to him as their king.

Structural note: This verse about the coming of the Gentiles ends with a reference to Mt. Zion, just as at the end of the previous paragraph (v. 9), we read first of Zion (God's holy mountain), then of the knowledge of the Lord spreading throughout all the earth. The result is a chiasm that spans two paragraphs, a good example of a hinge.

### **11-16, Restored Israel**

The first description of the citizens “in that day” concerned the Gentiles who would be drawn to the king. Now we read a much longer description, of Israel's restoration.

**11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left,**--Once before, God had gathered his people from foreign exile, in bringing them out of Egypt. Verse 11 forms an inclusio with 15-16 in taking us back to that time.

Now God will do it again. Isaiah proceeds to describe the broad extent of the lands to which they will have been scattered. This has not happened at the time that Isaiah writes. He is looking into the future, beyond the foreign victories to the coming restoration. The locations are described region by region,

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eventually spreading out to cover the whole known world.

**from Assyria**--Centered on the upper Tigris river, the land that led the first great exile.

The next three cover Egypt. Jeremiah fled here after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. A colony of Jews at Elephantine, at the border of Upper Egypt, documented in the fifth century BC, probably dates to Manasseh about 650.

**and from Egypt**--The Delta and Lower (northern) Egypt

**and from Pathros**--Upper (that is, southern) Egypt

**and from Cush**--Just south of Egypt, modern-day Sudan

Now we bounce back to Mesopotamia:

**and from Elam**--SW Iran, northern shore of the Persian Gulf

**and from Shinar**--The area between the rivers; Babylonia, the place of exile under Nebuchadnezzar

Now a new direction:

**and from Hamath**--Central Syria, north of Israel

Finally, and most broadly,

**and from the islands of the sea**--The lands of the Mediterranean, not just what we would call islands, but also the coastal lands, known through the Phoenician maritime enterprise.

**12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations**--The very same expression as in 5:26, showing his sovereignty over those nations. Then, it summoned them to suppress Israel. Now, it will command them to release God's people.

**and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth**--By this time, both Judah and Israel will have been scattered, and both will be restored.

**13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off**--The tension between North and South was far older than Jeroboam's rebellion. Most recently in Isaiah, it manifested itself in the Syro-Ephraimite threat in ch. 7. When the time of promised return comes, this ancient opposition of the northern kingdom to the south will have been done away, purged out by the fires of captivity.

*There is some discussion on whether "Judah" should be understood, contrary to usage, as subjective genitive, to achieve a perfect parallelism. See Alexander for thorough and persuasive discussion on this point.*

**Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim**--While most of the opprobrium for the schism rests on the North, Judah was not completely innocent, but her antagonism also will be done away.

There is an important principle here: if we get a good view of our common enemy, the differences we perceive among ourselves will no longer preoccupy us. Internal strife is an indication that we are not taking our external mission seriously enough.

**14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.**--With the internal schism healed, the united nation will restore its hegemony over its historical territory. They will not only be free from the distant empires, but will also bring under control neighbors who had harassed them throughout their history.

Here is another principle: that our internal unity is essential if we are to be victorious externally.

Thus we see a movement in both directions: an external focus will lead to our greater unity, and that unity turn will make us more effective outwardly.

**15 And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make *men go over dryshod*.**--To facilitate the return from Egypt, Pathros, and Cush, he will repeat the parting of the Red Sea; to facilitate the return from Assyria, Elam, and Shinar, he will dry up the River, that is, the Euphrates.

**16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.**--Thus he will repeat the miracle of the exodus.

The restoration here promised has yet to take place. While many Jews have returned to Israel, most have not. The largest Jewish city in the world is not Jerusalem, Haifa, or Tel Aviv, but New York.<sup>2</sup> And nothing comparable to v. 15 has yet been seen. These promises do not refer to the time of Nehemiah and Ezra, or to the modern restoration of the state of Israel, but await a future fulfillment.

## 12:1-6, His People's Praise

Why does the king assemble his people, composed of both Jew and Gentile? As the Lord reveals elsewhere in Isaiah (43:21),

21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

We have considered what he does for his people. Now our attention is drawn to what they do for him.

The first of these two paragraphs describes the utterance of individual believers (“**thou** shalt say”), while the second looks at their encouragement of one another (“shall **ye** say”). The distinction and combination of these two is an important lesson for us: we need first to cultivate our individual relation to the Lord, and then to take responsibility for one another. (It's also a good example of the value of retaining the thou-you distinction in Bible translation.)

Each of these paragraphs has an important internal progression. Overall, Isaiah outlines four stages of praise, which opens like a flower to its full beauty. Each is addressed to a different hearer.

- v. 1, recognizing our own sin and thanking God for delivering us from it
- v. 2, encouraging our own hearts in the Lord
- vv. 3-5, encouraging others to seek the Lord

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<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish\\_population\\_by\\_cities\\_and\\_city\\_areas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_population_by_cities_and_city_areas)

- v. 6, the community of believers enjoying the full depth of emotional joy in the Lord.

Many today want to start with v. 6, but Isaiah reminds us of the order in which these must develop. If you try to force the bud to open before it is ready, you end up only with fragments. The flower must open in its natural order.

### **1-3, Their Individual Experience**

The progression in this paragraph is from personal praise, to self-encouragement, and then to encouraging others to believe. Thus it offers a paradigm for our spiritual life.

**12:1 And in that day thou shalt say,**--First, Isaiah focuses on the individual's response to what has happened in the previous two paragraphs. Notice the change in the one to whom he speaks, in the course of this paragraph. He begins with the Lord, then encourages himself, and finally speaks to others.

**O LORD, I will praise thee:**--This aspect of prayer is all too rare. We often think of prayer as asking for things, and indeed it is our privilege to cast our care upon the Lord. But praise is an important part of our conversation with the Lord. Paul regularly starts his epistles with prayer, and in each case he begins with thanksgiving before moving to petition.

If someone were to transcribe our prayer meeting, it would be dominated by requests. At the Lord's table, we should be more preoccupied with praise and thanksgiving, and the example of prayer here is a nice model for that.

**though thou wast angry with me,**--Our relation with God is not an "I'm OK, you're OK" relation. It begins with our acknowledgment of our sin and God's just wrath against it.

**thine anger is turned away,**--Here Isaiah is echoing the refrain from 5:25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4, "his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." The series of paragraphs in ch. 9 showed how in the face of repeated judgment, the people persisted in their sin; compare the comparable sequence in Amos 4, where the refrain emphasizes what the people didn't do rather than what God didn't do, "yet have ye not returned unto me" (4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11). The two go together. Because the people do not turn to the Lord, he does not turn away his wrath.

But now the people report that his wrath has turned away. The reason is that they have turned to him, as reported in 11:10-16. But they do not emphasize this. They take no credit for what his grace has enabled them to do, and focus entirely on his favor toward them.

**and thou comfortedst me.**--This is the first of 13 instances of this verb (D נחם) in Isaiah, and in most cases it is God who is comforting his people or causing them to be comforted. Perhaps the most revealing is the last, 66:13,

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Chastisement is unpleasant, but necessary. When it is over, the wise parent comforts the child and reassures her of the parent's love. So the Lord does with us, patiently revealing the need for the chastening and encouraging us in how we have been improved by it.

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In the next verse he draws present encouragement from his experience with the Lord. This might be testimony to others, but there is good precedent in the OT, and particularly in the Psalms, for self-encouragement (42:5, 11; 43:5; Jer 4:19; Lam 3:24). Recognizing self-encouragement here allows for a cleaner progression through the three verses. The bud began to open as the believer thanked God for saving him from sin. Now the petals unfold as the believer encourages his own heart in daily experiences.

Verse 2 is a chiasm, with the objective fact of God's salvation on the outside and the believer's subjective enjoyment of it on the inside.

**2 Behold, God is my salvation;**--The singer begins by remembering what the Lord has done for him. As recounted in 11:10-16, God has brought him back from alienation (the Gentile) or exile (the Jew), and delivered him from the oppression of the adversary.

**I will trust, and not be afraid;**--Here is an example for us. In ch. 7, Ahab and the people were seized with fear over the coming invasion. Isaiah has exhorted them to answer that fear with faith, and now he envisions a time when faith replaces fear entirely. Compare the progression in Ps 56 between v. 3 and v. 4. It has been said that you can travel the Christian life second class or first class. Second class is v. 3,

3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

First class is v. 4 (cf. v. 11), and our verse in Isaiah,

In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what flesh can do unto me.

What makes the difference between the two? Note the inscription of this Psalm. It was written "when the Philistines took him in Gath," probably after escaping from Achish in 1 Sam 21. David, having experienced God's deliverance from Goliath, then from Saul, and then from the Philistines, knows that God is able to save, and thus can rest on him. So here, the singer begins, "God is my salvation." The song is sung "in that day," when the Lord has gathered the Gentiles and restored Israel. Based on the experience of that salvation the believer rises to the confidence, "I will trust and not be afraid." Salvation comes first, then the stability of soul based on the remembrance of that salvation.

The same point emerges from a deeper understanding of the rest of the verse.

**for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.**--This segment is quoted from Exod 15:2. Thus Isaiah continues the Exodus motif that he introduced in 11:11, 15-16.

What is the relation between the first clause and the second?

- On Exod 15:2, K&D suggest that the *waw*-consecutive can express reason, and cite Gen 26:12.
- Joüon 118k describes something along these lines.
- Cf K&D on Josh 4:11, 12, "The imperfect with *vav consec.* here expresses simply the order of thought, and not of time."
- Waltke-O'Connor section 33.2.2 distinguishes an epexegetical use of the construction. Compare 2 Sam 14:5, "I am a widow; my husband died."

In this case, we should understand the verse, "Because he has saved me, he has become my strength



and song.” As the context in Exodus shows, the salvation came first, then the subjective enjoyment of it. The children of Israel were not strong in heart or singing while they stood on the shores of the Red Sea watching the army of Pharaoh approach, but after crossing over and seeing the Lord's judgment, they were strengthened and sang out in joy.

So the point of the whole verse is that God's past salvation (on the outside of the chiasm) enables us to overcome in times of difficulty (the central two members). While we are fearful, weak, and discouraged, he saves us. Then, as we think back to his salvation, we trust him for the future, we are strengthened, and can sing aloud for joy.

The NT apogee of this principle is Rom 8:32,

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

**3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.**--The third step in the opening of the flow is that having thanked God for his gracious salvation and encouraged himself in its implications for his daily life, the believer turns to others and encourages them that they, too, can enjoy the blessings of a life lived in God's salvation. This verse is a vivid picture of the principle in v. 2. The past experience of salvation is like a deep well, from which the believer repeatedly draws refreshing water throughout the experience of life.

The address to others is a linked keyword transition to the next section, which is completely occupied with what the believers say to one another.

#### **4-6, Their Encouragement of One Another**

**4 And in that day shall ye say,**--Note the change from “thou” to “ye.” He is now focusing on what the nation as a whole says to one another. Thus he is continuing the third stage of the opening of the flower that he introduced in v. 3.

What they will say consists of seven imperatives, divided into two groups, each with a reason (“for” כִּי). There are four contrasts between the two groups.

1. The first group, of five (vv. 4-5), are all plural; the second group (v. 6) is singular.
2. The first group and its reason concern “the peoples” (plural) and “all the earth.” The second focuses on the “inhabitant of Zion.”
3. The verbs in the first group all concern making God known to others. Those in the second group focus on the expression of one's own excitement.
4. The reason for the first group is God's past mighty actions. The reason for the second is his present dwelling with his people.

#### **4-5, The Community Bears Witness to Unbelievers**

These five commands are chiasmically ordered. They begin and praise end with verbs of. The next two both concern God's name, and the center highlights the message that we are to carry.

**Praise the LORD,**--In v. 1, the individual believer praises the Lord. Now he turns to others and exhorts them to praise the Lord.

Hebrew has two main verbs that are most commonly translated “praise” in the AV: **הלל** as in these two verses, and **הלל**. It is helpful to distinguish them.

- The verb **הלל** focuses on the outward expression of praise: boasting, acclamation, glorying in someone. It is the root of “hallelujah,” meaning “praise ye the Lord,” and the Hebrew name of the book of Psalms (**תהלים**, literally “praises”).<sup>3</sup>
- The verb used here focuses rather on confession and acknowledgment. In fact, it can be used to express the confession of sin:

Prov 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso **confesseth** and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.

Psa 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will **confess** my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

The emphasis is thus not on emotional expression, but on the underlying recognition of who the Lord is, and agreement with his statements about himself. And this is the verb that is used of the individual's praise in v. 1, and of what the redeemed exhort others to do in v. 4.

**call upon his name,**--We studied this expression in Gen 4:26, where it first occurs:

And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

This is a common expression in Genesis: Abraham (12:8; 13:4; 21:33) and Isaac (26:25) associate it with building an altar or planting a tree (not “grove,” which everywhere else in AV is ‘*asherah*, a wooden idol representing a Canaanite goddess). The construction with no direct object has two senses.

- We are likely to associate it with petition, and it clearly bears this sense in the episode of Elijah on Mt. Carmel (1 K 18:22-38); cf. also Joel 3:5; cf. Zech 13:9.
- But God himself is said to do this, Exod 33:19; 34:5, and this is hardly petition.

The common feature in all occurrences is the public proclamation of the name of the Lord.

- The altars and trees of the patriarchal narratives were a public way for Abraham and Isaac to call attention to their devotions to their God.
- The clause is associated with praise in Isa 12:4, and worship in Zeph 3:9 (parallel to serving the Lord).
- The phrase is applicable to the petition of Elijah because it is public. A prayer in his closet could hardly have been described as “calling on the name of the Lord.”

Thus this is probably better described as “making proclamation *with* the name of the Lord,” crying

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<sup>3</sup> However, in the titles of the Psalms a different term is used, **מזמור**, meaning “song.”

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aloud (the sense of “call”) while uttering the Lord’s name. The expression describes public worship, not private devotion.

We have good evidence that Adam and his wife trusted in the Lord, and both Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord. Why then does Moses say that public worship begins with the descendants of Seth?

Answer: Until the apostasy of Cain and his line, there was no need for a public proclamation of the Lord’s name. Everyone knew the Lord, acknowledged his rule, and worshiped him. Now the seed of the serpent has begun to appear and spread throughout the earth, challenging the Lord’s authority. In this context, it becomes the obligation of God’s people to stand against this apostasy, to make public proclamation of the name of the Lord and thus bear witness to his rule. Moses is here setting forth the concept of “worship as witness.” It is the duty of God’s people to be known as such, and that is the duty that Isaiah is setting forth in 12:4.

**declare his doings among the people[s]**,--Two words in this clause merit attention.

First, “doings” עלילות means “arbitrary acts.” When predicated of men, the term is always negative, implying wantonness or irresponsibility. But it is frequently used to describe the acts of God. He answers to no one but himself. In this he differs from the gods of the heathen, who are all contingent and dependent in one way or another.

Second, “people” is actually plural, referring to the diversity of cultures in the world. Thus, like “call upon his name,” this expression emphasizes testimony to Gentiles.

**make mention that his name is exalted.**--What does it mean for the Lord's name to be exalted? Such expressions are sometimes used to describe the result of our praise, e.g.,

Psa 34:3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us **exalt his name** together.

But here, using a different word for “exalted” (שגב), we are told that his name is exalted, apart from our action, and we are called upon to remind others of this objective fact. Ps 148:3 is the only other place that his name is said to be “exalted” using this verb, and here also there is a distinction between the objective exaltation of his name and our subjective recognition of it:

Psa 148:13 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for **his name alone is excellent [exalted]**; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

This verb and its derivatives are often used to indicate the security derived from a lofty fortification. In this light, our verse may be related to the metaphor in Prov 18:10,

The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe (בשגב).

Here the believer becomes safe (literally, exalted), by running into the name of the Lord, described as a fortification. “The name of the Lord” here, as often, refers to “the full being and power of YHWH” (HALOT lexicon, שגב, II 3), and “run[ning] into it” suggests taking refuge in the Lord by close association with him.

Given our passage's emphasis on the salvation that the Lord gives to his people, this sense fits well here. His name, his person, is an exalted fortification. That is a fact, whether anyone takes advantage of it or not. But in that day, we will make this fact known to all who will hear.

**5 Sing unto the LORD;**--The verb here, זמר, is the one from which the noun “psalm” is derived, as in the titles of individual Psalms, “a psalm of David.” The verb is often associated with praising the Lord in the presence of others. Compare its first use in the Bible, in the Song of Deborah,

Judges 5:3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will **sing** unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

**for he hath done excellent things:**--or “proud things” גאות. The root here, like “doings” עלילות in v. 4, has a different tone when applied to men and to God. It describes an attitude of pride and self-importance that is reprehensible in men. But it is God's glory to be proud and self-important. He acts in a way that shows off his power.

**this is known in all the earth.**--Modern versions translate this verb as expressing a desire<sup>4</sup>, “may this be known,” or “this is to be known.” But it occurs in the “reason” section of the alternation between command and reason, which favors the AV's rendering as a statement. Isaiah is echoing Ps 19:1,

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

and anticipating Rom 1:20,

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

God's exalted status as the absolute creator is manifest throughout all creation. Our mission is to present his claims to others and urge them to submit to him.

## 6, The Community Rejoices

From this outwardly-focused testimony we now turn to the expression of the community's joy in the Lord's presence. Here the flower reaches its full bloom, as believers collectively rejoice before the Lord.

**6 Cry out and shout,**--These verbs describe emotional outbursts. The first one is also used to describe the neighing of horses in Jer 5:8, 50:11. The point here is not on the content of the cry, but on the emotional state of the one who utters it.

There are two great errors one can make with regard to emotion in our relation to the Lord.

- The first is to try to suppress it entirely as carnal and ungodly. Our salvation ought to dominate our entire body, and soul, and spirit (1 Thes 5:23). God has given us the capacity for emotion, and it has a place in our praise to him.
- The second error is trying to start with emotion. As Isaiah has described the blooming of the flower of praise, the emotional response is the culmination, the end of the process, not the beginning. Starting with emotion short-circuits the process, and substitutes carnality for true spiritual response.

**thou inhabitant of Zion:**--The expression is collective. The precise phrase appears only here and Jer

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51:35, where it is parallel with “Jerusalem.” The verb is used with “Zion” twice more in Isa, at 10:24 and 30:19, predicated (in the singular) of the “people.” Isaiah is still exhorting the people as a whole (“shall ye say” in v. 4), but now as a united congregation giving expression to its joy.

**for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.**--From the first, God's desire has been to dwell among his people. But sin has repeatedly separated us from him (Isa 59:2).

- He walked in Eden, seeking fellowship with his creature (Gen 3:8), but sin led to their being cast out from this place of fellowship (3:24).
- He had the nation build a tabernacle “that I may dwell among them” (Exod 25:8). Later, the temple made this hope more tangible.
- At the time of the conquest, the Shekinah reluctantly left the temple (Ezek 10), but at the time of the restoration he promised, “I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem” (Zech 8:3).
- The Savior promised that where two or three are gathered in his name, “there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20).
- The promise in the new heavens and new earth is, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God” (Rev 21:3).

If we could truly know our own hearts, this would be our desire as well. One day our sin will be gone, God will dwell among us, and we will cry out for joy.

With this full joy, the flower of praise is completely open, delighting our hearts and the heart of God together with its fragrance and vivid colors.

## Notes

### ***God in the Midst***

Numbers 35:34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among בתוך the children of Israel.

Psalms 46:5 God *is* in the midst of her בקרבה; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.

Joel 2:27 And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst בקרב of Israel, and *that I am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

Zephaniah 3:15 The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, *even* the LORD, *is* in the midst of thee בקרבך: thou shalt not see evil any more.

Haggai 2:5 *According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you בתוכם: fear ye not.

Zechariah 2:10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee בתוכך, saith the LORD.

Zechariah 2:11 And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and

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I will dwell in the midst of thee בְּתוֹכְךָ, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

Zechariah 8:3 Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst בְּתוֹךְ of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

Ezekiel 37:26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them בְּתוֹכְכֶם for evermore.

Ezekiel 37:28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them בְּתוֹכְכֶם for evermore.

Ezekiel 39:7 So will I make my holy name known in the midst בְּתוֹךְ of my people Israel; and I will not *let them* pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.

Ezekiel 43:7 And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst בְּתוֹךְ of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, *neither* they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.

Ezekiel 43:9 Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them בְּתוֹכְכֶם for ever.

Ezekiel 48:8 And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand *reeds in* breadth, and *in* length as one of the *other* parts, from the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it בְּתוֹכֹוּ.

Ezekiel 48:10 And for them, *even* for the priests, shall be *this* holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand *in length*, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof בְּתוֹכֹוּ.

Ezekiel 48:21 And the residue *shall be* for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city, over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for the prince: and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house *shall be* in the midst thereof בְּתוֹכֹוּ.

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Luke 22:27 For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Luke 24:36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Revelation 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Revelation 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;



**Associated with divine qualities:**

Leviticus 22:32 Neither shall ye profane my holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I *am* the LORD which hallow you,

Isa 12:6 for great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee בקרבך

Zechariah 2:5 For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her בתוכה.

Zephaniah 3:5 The just LORD *is* in the midst thereof בקרבה; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.

**Where God works his wonders:**

Psalm 135:9 *Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee בתוכי, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.

Psalm 74:12 For God *is* my King of old, working salvation in the midst בקרב of the earth.