



Author: Isaiah the prophet

Date: ca. 722 BC

Christmas in Isaiah

Jesus is the “promised One.” All the prophets testified of Jesus, of His suffering, and of our forgiveness in His name. Chief among these prophets is Isaiah. His writing has been called “The Fifth Gospel” because he preaches so clearly of Jesus, His birth, His life, His suffering and death and resurrection. Isaiah preaches Christ crucified for sinners. In this four-part Bible Study we will consider Christmas in Isaiah, looking specifically in Isaiah 7:10–16, 9:2–7, 11:1–10, and 12.

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Around the Word Bible Study Advent, 2015

Isaiah on Christmas Isaiah 12:1-6

Introduction: Isaiah 12 is a short and beautiful hymn of praise. We’ve seen the promises which Isaiah has given to the Lord’s people in the first 11 chapters of his book, and now he promises joy, that the people will break forth in praise to God. “You will say in that day, ‘I will give thanks to You, O Lord!’” (Isaiah 12:1). If we are ever tempted to think that the Old Testament is all Law and threats with no Gospel or comfort, then the antidote is Isaiah 12, a little hymn of joy that is full of comfort.

Opening: Psalm 98:4–9

⁴Make a joyful noise to the LORD, | all the earth;*

break forth into joyous song and sing | praises!

**⁵Sing praises to the LORD | with the lyre,*
with the lyre and the sound of | melody!**

**⁶With trumpets and the sound | of the horn*
make a joyful noise before the | King, the LORD!**

**⁷Let the sea roar, and all that | fills it;*
the world and those who | dwell in it!**

**⁸Let the rivers clap their hands;
let the hills sing for joy together**

**⁹be- | fore the LORD,*
for he comes to | judge the earth.**

He will judge the world with | righteousness,*
and the peoples with | equity.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;**

**as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

Read Isaiah 12:1–6

What images did you see? What are the pictures?

What important theological words did you notice?

Read the verses again, and note especially words related to the Lord’s kindness, like “comfort” and “salvation”.

Is this chapter Law or Gospel?

v. 1: “in that day”

This is the day of the Lord’s mercy, the day that the virgin conceives (Isaiah 7:14), the day that the Child is born who is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), the day that the Shoot springs out of

the stump of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1). The day that the church bursts forth in this song is the day that we know Jesus and His mercy.

“I will give thanks to You, O Lord...”

We thank people because they have done something nice to us. When we give thanks to God it is because He has done something kind and wonderful to us.

What kindness has the Lord shown us? While we might answer this question mostly according to the gifts of creation (God gives us life, food, family, and other temporal blessings), the main thing in this text is the gift of salvation. God gives us Jesus, and in Him we have life and salvation.

“You were angry with me”

Read Romans 1:18 and Ephesians 2:2–3. Why is God rightly angry with us?

Notice in Isaiah 12:1 we say that God *was* angry with us. His anger is past tense. But now...

“Your anger is turn away, that you might comfort me.”

This is beautiful! Jesus, on the cross, has turned God’s anger away from us.

Read John 1:29. How does the preaching of John the Baptist about Jesus help us understand this verse in Isaiah?

Read Romans 5:1–2. Through whom do we have peace with God?

v. 2: “God is my salvation.”

Isaiah has been very clear that the Messiah would be both God and man. In Isaiah 7:14 the Child born of the virgin will be named “Immanuel”, God with us. In Isaiah 9:6 the Child

will be named "Mighty God." Now this Child is simply called "God." There is no escaping the teaching that Jesus is both God and Man.

See Matthew 1:21. How does the name "Jesus" teach that Jesus is God? Notice how the meaning of the name Jesus is almost exactly the words of this verse.

We are always tempted to find life and salvation apart from God, especially through our own works or efforts. How does this verse correct this error? See also Romans 4:5.

"I will trust"

Salvation is a matter of faith, not works. See Romans 3:28. How are we justified?

"strength... song... salvation"

This verse is an old hymn. Read Exodus 15:2 with context. Then read Psalm 118:14 with some context. This hymn was first sung when the Lord brought the people through the Red Sea on dry ground. It is latter sung by David in his great Messianic Psalm 118. Isaiah now takes up the song as he meditates on the Lord's mercy.

When we say that the Lord is our strength we admit that we do not have strength of our own. How does this remind us of salvation by grace? See also Ephesians 2:8.

v. 3: "the well of salvation"

Luther: "After the word of the Gospel has been preached and the voice of rejoicing has sounded forth, there follows the discernment of spirits and the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit" (LW 16:130).

Read John 7:38. How does this verse help us understand Isaiah 12:3?

v. 4: "from that day"

See 2 Corinthians 6:2. When is "that day?"

"call upon His name"

This is a common phrase in the Scriptures. See Acts 2:21 (which quotes Joel 2:32). What is the result of calling on the Lord's name?

Consider Romans 10:12–14. What does Paul teach us about calling on the Lord's name?

Bible Study

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Martin Luther reminds us that "calling on the Lord's name" refers to the preaching. "In Hebrew: Proclaim His name, not this or that person's. All good things must be credited to Christ. For a while the name of Christ is not seen, that is, His work is not preached and heard, but then there will of course be His suffering and resurrection for our redemption and salvation," (LW 16:130).

v. 5–6: "Cry out"

When the Lord acts kindly and graciously to us, we sing! Consider Psalm 9:11 and Psalm 96:1.

How is the song of the church bound up to the goodness and grace of God?



Consider reading this chapter again. In Christ, God's wrath is turned away and God looks upon us with an undeserved kindness and mercy. This song is our song, our joy, our confidence, and our life!

Closing Hymn: Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored.
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell;
Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller is pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in Aurora, CO (www.hope-aurora.org), editor of Around the Word, and co-host of Table Talk Radio. Contact him at bwolfmueller@gmail.com.