

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 35

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 35

Theme: "The Blessed Hope Realized!"

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 35:4 (KJV) "Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompence; he will come and save you."

INTRODUCTION

The switch from the anger and judgment of the LORD in Isaiah 34 to the glory and deliverance of the LORD in Isaiah 35 is indeed startling! The contrast from utter hopelessness to sudden hopefulness is total! What an encouragement from the Almighty God to His people who were in acute distress. The LORD was in absolute control. The passage is a vivid projection into the future home (the glorious city of Zion) of the sanctified.

If there is a chapter in the Bible that dwells on the significance of the future and how it impacts our present life, it will be Isaiah 35. The chapter begins with the wilderness and ends with the children of God entering Zion, the city of God prepared by God for

God's people! What a tremendous encouragement for God's people to know that, hated by the world, they have God and this eternal home awaiting them.

The requirement to distant themselves from this world is compensated by the blessed hope of Zion, an eternal city. As long as this hope is alive, they have no reason to like this world with all its sins, evil and wickedness. However, if they are to lose sight of this hope, they will soon forget that they are children of God. They will replace the hope of Zion in their hearts with a worldly life of sin and waywardness that bring shame to the name of Christ!

Remember Zion, a place prepared for all of God's children. What will they do there? **Isaiah 35:10** answers this question succinctly (KJV) "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

OUTLINE

1. Nature rejoices (vv.1-2);
2. Strengthening the fearful! (vv. 3-7);
3. The way of holiness! (vv. 8-10).

COMMENTARY

Nature rejoices – 35:1-2

Isaiah 35 continues where Isaiah 34 left off. This is implied by the usage of the third person pronoun "them".

The "them" in verse 1 cannot refer to Israel or Edom but to the affliction and judgment of the LORD against Edom. The reason is the language of verses 1 and 2. The "rejoicing, and joy and singing" cannot refer to Edom because they would surely not be rejoicing in the face of the judgment. And Israel was too remote a subject to be considered in the immediate context. That being the case, the only probable interpretation of the word "them" is "the affliction and judgment of the LORD upon Edom."

This is picture language where the figures of desolation (wilderness and solitary place) were glad when Edom was dealt with according to God's justice. This is because when the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, the return of the LORD will be nigh. When the LORD returns, all the earth will be transformed. There will no longer be wilderness and the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD and that can only mean that God's people will dwell in every corner of the earth!

The desert shall rejoice and blossom like a rose is another picture of the same. When the LORD's justice prevails on the earth and sins are dealt with, even dead things will come to life. Roses require fertile ground that is well watered in order to grow. This is in direct opposition to the desert. Not only will the wilderness and solitary places become things of the past but the earth will be fertile and flowers will bloom. There will be no more deadness on the earth! It will blossom abundantly and everything will rejoice with singing. Lebanon will receive the

glory of great majestic beauty and rich vegetation. Carmel and Sharon, two places in Israel well known for their great beauty, magnificent vistas and fragrant colourful flowers, will fill the desert and wilderness. The creation, that was once tarnished by the sins of man, shall see the glory and excellency of the LORD.

Strengthening the fearful! – 35:3-7

Turning his attention to the people of God, Isaiah charged the weak and feeble to be strong. He declared that they were to strengthen their weak hands and make firm their feeble knees. Weak hands and feeble knees are characteristics of one who is petrified. Weak hands mean that the person cannot hold anything, not even a weapon to defend himself and his family. Feeble knees mean that the person cannot stand upright. The two imageries when combined mean that the people of God have collapsed and are unable to move!

Isaiah charged the fearful of heart to be strong and to stop being afraid. Their enemies were still around but the Lord would deliver them. His vengeance would not be delayed. His timing would be perfect. He would come with a just judgment. He would surely come to save Israel! Israel must not waver in her faith. She must trust in the LORD no matter how strong and powerful the enemies might appear. Israel's God (note that Isaiah did not appeal to the covenantal name Jehovah but the name Elohim) would prevail over all of Israel's enemies. The emphasis was on God's power to save Israel.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. These miracles were done by the Lord Jesus Christ when He was on earth to demonstrate to His people that He was God. He healed all their diseases such as blindness and deafness. In the days of Christ, physical blindness and deafness were symbolic of the spiritual state of the people. When Jesus healed them physically, the message was that He could heal them spiritually too. In this context the meaning is that when the LORD returns there will be no more blindness and deafness. All the people will be whole.

The lame shall leap as a hart. The hart is able to leap over a 4-foot high fence from a standing position and over an 8-foot high fence from a running position. This means that the lame will be healed and be completely mobile. The tongue of the dumb will be able to sing. Singing requires a whole range of movement and control of the tongue. The wilderness will be flowing with water copiously and there will be streams in the desert. Verses 6 and 7 confirm the earlier interpretation of the wilderness and desert.

The parch ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land shall be drenched in water. The description of the healing of the earth continues in verse 7. Our world's wilderness and deserts may appear picturesque through the lenses of professional photographers but these landscapes, stark and bleak in reality, carry a theological message for us.

They represent the consequences of man's sinful ways throughout the ages. As these deserts and parch grounds spread, they are a reminder to God's children that this world is getting more evil and wicked, and the judgment of God is coming soon. The earth is groaning and crying out for Christ's return. Shouldn't God's people cry louder than these inanimate places that cannot speak?

The way of holiness! – 35:8-10

The way to the heavenly home is by the leading of the LORD. In the event that we do not know how to find our way home, the LORD assures us that a highway will be provided and the way clearly shown. It shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean will not be allowed to pass over it (walk on it). They do not qualify. This highway will be for "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." This means that the wayfaring men (believers), though considered by the world as fools throughout the ages, shall walk on the highway. They are the ones who will err no more in heaven. They are the holy ones of God, the true believers of Jesus Christ. No lion or any ravenous beast shall go thereon. These creatures shall not be found there. The redeemed shall walk therein in peace and freedom. The time period referred to here cannot be the millennium period as there will be lions present as described in Isaiah 65. Unless the lions will be changed and cease to be ravenous beasts so as to dwell and co-exist in peace with the lambs, my view is that this is a reference to the new heaven and new earth of Revelation 21 – that is, a

description of the earth after the millennium.

The ransomed of the LORD (believers of Jesus Christ) shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. The phrase "upon their heads" may mean that the joy can be seen from their countenance which will light up when they sing from the depths of their soul. They shall have joy and gladness. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Their singing will be from the true joy that they have received from the LORD. Their hope of heaven in the presence of the Almighty is now a reality. Sorrow and sighing will become a thing of the past and never to be seen on their faces ever again! Note that the name of God is not used here but the LORD. The emphasis is on the covenantal relationship that God has with His children through Jesus Christ. This is the only basis for the children of God walking on the highway and the way of holiness. They will definitely arrive safely and their demeanour will be one of great rejoicing like they have never experienced before. Amen.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 35:1-10

TUESDAY: Isaiah 35:1-10

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 35:1-10

THURSDAY: Isaiah 35:1-10

FRIDAY: Isaiah 35:1-10.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about the justice of God on this earth today? Do you think that there is God's justice on earth now? Please explain.

2. When you see the wilderness, the desert and the solitary places all over the world, what comes to your mind? Is there any change before and after you study Isaiah 35? Please explain.

3. Are believers able to see the way today? Where is this way to Zion today? Do you see the way? Please identify the "way".

Do you have such a face when you sing?

4. What comes to mind when you see diseases such as blindness, deafness and other diseases that cripple and kill? Do you view them differently after studying Isaiah 35? Please explain.

7. What lessons have you learnt from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?

5. Are you encouraged to live more for Christ even when the world sees you as a fool (as described in Isaiah 35)? How do you regard your errors today knowing that in the near future when you arrive in heaven you will err no more? Does this truth make you more humble and more ready to apologize and to seek and grant forgiveness? Please explain.

6. Is it possible to see true joyous singing on the face of believers?