

# He Will Come and Save You

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Advent 3

Pastor Josh Frazee

Isaiah 35:1-10

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Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

All of creation is groaning. Can you hear it? Everything: the animals, the birds, people, yes, even the inanimate earth, the rocks, the hills, the valleys, and mountains. They are all deeply groaning. We are all deeply groaning.

The Messiah is coming; He has come, and He is coming again. When He was first here, the peoples shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” And as Luke [19] records about the same Triumphal Entry, “some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples.’ He answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.’”

The Messiah has come, yet He will be coming again to complete what He began. So we still hear the groaning. Here’s how Paul put it: “(T)he creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

We know, as well as Paul, that that redemption is coming—the Messiah who came once to save us from our sins, will come again to restore our bodies and the world itself. We know this from our Old Testament text, Isaiah chapter thirty-five.

## Verse 1

Isaiah depicts not only people as gladdened by the Messiah’s appearance but even the “wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.”

Yes, even the very land would rejoice at the coming of God’s Messiah. If the people were told not to, even the stones would have sang and cried “Hosanna to the Son of David!” Interestingly, both the wilderness depicted here and the untamed animals mentioned at the end of our text—those ferocious lions and ravenous beasts—are results of the fall into sin. Thorns and thistles often associated with desert places came directly after the fall; and neither man nor beast ate meat until after Noah sailed on the ark.

Isaiah mentions not only the redemption of Israel but of even creation several times in his book of prophecy. He says in two different places that the wolf will lay with the lamb. And here again, Isaiah depicts the wilderness rejoicing at the coming of the Messiah. But while the Messiah has come the first time, the wilderness is still waiting and groaning for His Second Coming. The desert places still produce thorns and thistles and animals are still not tame. Just recall the events of the gorilla with the child earlier this year.

This Advent we have been hearing how we are in a time to sing; and we do, but not because everything has already been completed. The Messiah has most certainly come and has definitely paid for your sins, but you still live in a divided body—having the desire to do what is good but not the ability to carry it out. The

world, also, has not been restored. So we sing, as it were, as a foretaste of the feast to come. That is why we are able to sing Christmas hymns at the end of our Advent Mid-week services: we have a taste of sanctification and the joy we have in Christ even now during our waiting. But it will be so much more at His Second Coming, and that is why we save the best and most singing for Christmas itself, as a representation at what we will be able to do and to sing when the Messiah comes the second time.

Then we will be living in a fertile land, like the Promised Land of Canaan mentioned so often in the Old Testament. Or like the lands of Carmel and Sharon, which, as the commentary notes say, “were known for their fertility.”

### Verse 2

God speaks through His prophet Isaiah as we continue our text: “Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, ‘Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.’”

As when the Israelites were about to enter the lands of Canaan and the Lord commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous, so He encourages Isaiah’s hearers, as well as us today, to be strong and firm—especially in our hands and knees. These are the parts of our bodies that tend to shake when we are afraid; but at the coming of the Messiah and as we prepare to enter the Promised Land of the new heaven and new earth, we have no need to fear. Like the people the angels visited at the first coming of the Messiah, we know that we are sinners and deserve to die before the Lord our God; but as the angels told their hearers to fear not, so also God tells you to fear not this morning.

God has paid for your sin; it is taken away. The Messiah about whom Isaiah had prophesied has come and has died for your sins. You bear them no more.

What is more, the Messiah came to show that restoration was and is coming. Isaiah prophesied that “the eyes of the blind (would) be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; (that) the lame man (would) leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.” In our Gospel text, we find those things are already beginning to happen. The Messiah answers John the Baptist’s disciples that ““the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear.”” The Messiah at His first coming began the work of restoration by taking away our sins; but He also demonstrated that a full restoration would be coming in Him. He healed the blind and the mute, the deaf and the lame. What is more, He also told John’s disciples that ““the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.””

Ultimately, everyone will be raised up at the return of the Messiah.

### Verse 3

Isaiah also prophesies this: “the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

The path to everlasting life is the highway which Isaiah also mentions a few verses earlier. He wrote that “a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness.” Be warned that the “unclean shall not pass over it.”

How, then, do we become clean? We have been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb, the Messiah who has come and has died for our sins, mine and yours. In the faith we have received from His Spirit, we believe in Him and that He is the Way, the very Way of Holiness Isaiah proclaimed.

And as we heard last week, it does not matter if you are new to that Way of the Messiah, or a lifelong member: “even if they are fools (that is, newcomers to the faith), they shall not go astray.” In the blood of His Messiah, God will not let any who have faith be snatched out of His hand. Instead, “the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing.”

This season of Advent, we are in a time to sing. We sing of the joy to come in and through the Messiah of God. And we sing that that joy, in part, has already come—having a foretaste of Christmas before it is here, and a foretaste of the joy of life everlasting, before we receive it in its fullness when the Messiah returns. Continue to sing in joy, dear brothers and sisters in Christ. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.