

GOD'S PROMISE OF A GLORIOUS FUTURE FOR THIS WORLD: HIS COMING KINGDOM OF PERFECTION AND JOY ISAIAH 35:01–10

Introduction

There are many encouraging signs in life. Picture the millions of travellers on the highways and byways across the nation. When we are running low on fuel and see a road sign for gas one mile away, we feel blessed. When we are thirsty or hungry and spot a listing of restaurants up ahead, we feel energized. When we are too weary to travel on and spot a hotel billboard, we are relieved. And when we finally arrive at our destination due to a good map and accurate road markers, we are excited and feel a sense of accomplishment. At that point, we consider that the journey was worthwhile.

In the present Scripture the LORD issues a strong warning to the whole world (28:1-35:10). This warning is the climactic close to the woes, the strong warnings to the various nations of the earth. But it is also a glorious promise of the LORD's coming kingdom, a promise to all who travel the highway of holiness. This is, *A Glorious Promise to the Whole World: The LORD's Coming Kingdom*, Isaiah 35:01-10.

Isaiah 35:01-10 God's Promise of a Glorious Future for This World: His Coming Kingdom of Perfection and Joy

God issued a wonderful, astounding promise: some day in the future the earth will be transformed, perfected and filled with joy. This is a glorious description of the Messiah's kingdom, what is known as the millennial reign of Christ on earth. One day the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth to establish God's kingdom. The future of the earth is bright, hopeful, promising and encouraging. The LORD is going to change this evil world back into a Garden of Eden. What follows is a vivid portrayal of the transformation that will take place:

1. The land will be completely restored, transformed into a Garden of Eden (vv. 1-2). The desert and parched land of the earth will undergo a dramatic change. The soil will be filled with rich nutrients, and the vegetation will blossom so much that it will seem to break forth in shouts of joy and rejoicing (Psa 55:12-13; 96:11-13; 98:7-9; see note, Rom 8:19-22).

The glory of Lebanon is a reference to the fragrant cedar forest of the land. Carmel was known for its mighty oaks, and Sharon for its beautiful pastures and lush, green pasture land. (H.C. Leupold. *Exposition of Isaiah*, Vol. 1, p. 547).
 2. *In that day*, the glory and splendour of God will be seen by all the people of the earth (v. 2). As a result of the total transformation, the whole earth will be filled with the
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beauty of nature, with the radiance and majesty of God. All the citizens of the earth will witness God's glory in nature. But even more incredible, they will be able to see the Lord living upon earth as their Ruler and King (33:17).

3. Down through the centuries, God has given weak and fearful believers the wonderful guarantee of God's salvation. Isaiah now says that the weak and fearful should look ahead to the glorious future promised by God. They should strengthen themselves in the promise of God's Word. When they become weak, they need to strengthen their weak hands and steady their feeble knees. They need to live strong and righteous lives, keeping the commandments of God. Furthermore, they need to be courageous witnesses for the LORD. Fear should never be allowed to take over their hearts, turning them into cowards. God's people are to keep their eyes on the glorious future promised by the LORD. The LORD will come to carry out perfect justice and judgment upon this earth. He will come to save His people from their enemies, those who ridicule, mock and persecute them (v. 4).
4. When the glorious transformation of the earth takes place, all disabled believers will be healed and restored to health (v. 5). All the blind will be able to see, and all the deaf will be able to hear. Crippled believers will leap like deer, and the mute — those who cannot speak — will shout out for joy.
5. All land that had been ruined and parched will be transformed, changed into fertile soil that is well watered (v. 6). Water will flow both in the wilderness and in the desert. Streams and rivers will flow abundantly across the face of the earth. Pools will replace desert sand, and springs will bubble up out of ground that had lacked rain (v. 7). Vegetation will grow everywhere, on all land that had formerly been ruined or barren.
6. The Messiah's kingdom will have a very special highway running through the midst of it, a highway that will be known as the *Way of Holiness* (vv. 8-10; 11:16; 19:23; 40:3; 62:10). In Isaiah's day traveling along the roads was often dangerous. The danger was due to ferocious animals, thieves and natural obstacles such as deep ravines and narrow paths on the sides of hills. But in the Messiah's kingdom, the *highway of holiness* will be perfectly safe. There will be no unclean or wicked person or ferocious animal to endanger the life of the traveller. All the unclean and wicked of the world will have been removed from the earth. Only the righteous — the holy and obedient who have kept God's commandments — will be living upon earth. Therefore traveling the *highway of holiness* will pose no threat to anyone. Only the redeemed will travel this path.

Note the purpose for the highway: it is to be the road by which the ransomed of the LORD return to Him (v. 10). If a person is to return to the LORD, he must first be redeemed by the LORD. When the LORD calls individuals to the promised land from their captivity (to sin, evil and wickedness), they must respond. They must return to the LORD by traveling along the *Way of Holiness*. This path is the only road by which a person can return to the LORD. In the Messiah's kingdom, the *highway of*

holiness will be the road that leads to Zion or Jerusalem, the capital of the Messiah's government. In the present Scripture the people of the Messiah's kingdom are pictured traveling the *Way of Holiness* in order to worship the LORD in Jerusalem.

Thought 1. God gives the wonderful promise of a climactic change of the earth. He will cleanse the earth of its sinful, corrupt condition and transform it into a new Garden of Eden. The kingdom of God is coming to this earth, and when it does, the earth will become a perfect utopia. Listen to what God's Holy Word says:

(1) The present heavens and earth will be recreated into a new heavens and earth.

Mat 24:35 *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."*

2 Pet 3:7-13 *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.*

Psa 102:25-26 *In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

Isa 34:4 *All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shrivelled figs from the fig tree.*

Isa 51:6 *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever; my righteousness will never fail.*

Isa 65:17 *"See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."*

Isa 66:22 *"As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure."*

(2) No people will enter the Messiah's kingdom or live in the new heavens and earth unless they have been redeemed by the Lord and live holy lives.

Rom 3:23-24 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

2 Cor 7:1 *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

Gal 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

Eph 4:22-23 *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 1:14 *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Heb 9:12-14 *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

Heb 12:14 *Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.*

1 Pet 1:15-16 *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

1 Pet 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

2 Pet 3:11-14 *Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. ■*