

A new permanent salvation

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Preacher: Phil Martin

[0 : 00] Isaiah chapter 4 and we're beginning to read at verse 2. In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.

And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy. Every one who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.

Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day and smoke and shining of a flaming fire by night.

For over all the glory there will be a canopy, there will be a booth, for shade by day from the heat and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

Well good morning everyone. Keep that passage open and let's pray again as we look at it. Our Father in heaven as we come to your word we pray that you would unfold your word to us.

[1 : 50] Thank you that your word sheds light into our hearts and souls. And we pray that you would be doing that this morning among us.

We long to know you better. We long to trust in your promises. We long to live for the future glory. The hope that you've set before us in Christ. So we pray that you would be at work among us now in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well we're going to next week we're going to come back to our series in Hebrews.

But we're just going to take a brief moment to look at the promise of the new Jerusalem. God's promise of the new Jerusalem.

You can see that that's what this passage is about. We're diving into one of the prophets Isaiah who was writing 700 years before Jesus.

[3 : 00] Just look down and see in verse 3 we get the mention of Zion which is another name for Jerusalem. And then Jerusalem verse 3. Verse 4.

The daughters of Zion. The bloodstains of Jerusalem. And then verse 5. The Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion. In other words new Jerusalem.

So that's the subject of this little group of verses. The new Jerusalem. It's the new Jerusalem.

Not England's green and pleasant land. It's the new Jerusalem. Not the old Jerusalem in the Middle East.

This is the goal. The final goal of all of God's plans. And here we have a window in these verses. Into where everything is going.

[3 : 59] For God's people. It is therefore for the Christian. It's our destination. I don't know what disappointments or struggles you might be going through at the moment.

If you're following the Lord Jesus. Well here is a chance to keep our eyes on the destination. In the New Testament.

The letter that Peter writes. His first letter. He says this. He says. Set your hope fully on the glory. That will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Well that is the new Jerusalem. That is what these verses are about. The glory. That we are heading towards. The destination. For the Christian.

I don't know if you've heard of this guy. Pharrell. Was I think his name. He was a German prisoner of war. Just after the Second World War.

[5 : 01] He was taken to a Siberian labor camp. To the furthest east. Of Siberia. So. It took a year to get there. And a third of the prisoners died along the way.

And the book is a true story. Of how this one guy. Escaped. And had a three year journey. Back to Germany.

And amazingly survived. It's an amazing story. But think of him. With a picture in his mind. Of home. During those three years.

As he wandered through the desolate wasteland. Of Siberia. Well that was the picture that kept him going. Through the months and months of cold hard bleak journey.

Well God's promise of a new Jerusalem is like that for us. And we have just a moment to consider this picture of home.

[6 : 06] Three points today. This new Jerusalem will be a new promised land. Secondly where people will have been washed forever by the Lord.

And thirdly wrapped forever in the presence of the Lord. So firstly a new promised land.

God says in this fresh new salvation that he promises. Verse 2. In that day. The branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious.

And the fruit of the land. Shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. Israel. I don't know what you imagine when you imagine God's new Jerusalem.

But we're not to imagine just a massive city of concrete. But actually a whole new promised land. New Jerusalem.

[7 : 09] A whole new creation. Their land as Isaiah prophesied at this point. Their land was about to be destroyed by Babylon.

Can you see that in 3 verse 26. Just before. Her gates shall lament and mourn. Empty she shall sit on the ground. Describing Zion. Describing the desolate land.

The promised land that had been given. But was being brought under judgment at that point. For the people's sin. But God says after that.

There is a day coming. 4 verse 2. When I will make the land glorious and beautiful again. So this is a picture of a beautiful inheritance.

The promised land again. But this time forever. It will be beautiful. Do you see that verse 2?

[8 : 09] The branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious. Beauty to delight the heart. We've been in Wales over the last few days. God knows how to do beauty.

Doesn't he? When you look around. God's pretty good at beauty. Think of the most beautiful land you've ever seen. To take the breath away.

Think of the holiday brochures. With their colour enhanced pictures. As you sit on the tube. Well it's that kind of picture that God is showing us. Of this land that he has in store for his people.

It will be beautiful. Breathtaking. We can barely imagine it. Notice also it will be rich. Do you see that?

The fruit of the land shall be the pride and honour of the survivors of Israel. As the people look around they will see provision that will never run out. It will be rich.

[9 : 06] And they will boast. It will be their pride. They will know that their inheritance is the envy of the world. Actually what we have here is a glimpse again of Eden as it was meant to be.

An unspoiled world. No longer affected by the curse that came in at Genesis 3. Where the grounds would give food only by the sweat of the brow.

So what will the new Jerusalem be like? It will be a new promised land. Turf under the feet.

Physical creation. Remember the upper room the night before Jesus died. As they were drinking the wine.

Remember Jesus speaking to his disciples just before his death. These words he said. I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of this vine. Until that day when I drink it new.

[10 : 06] With you in my father's kingdom. Physical. New creation. The inheritance. The New Testament speaks of the inheritance that is yet to come for God's people.

Of an inheritance that will never perish, spoil or fade. Picking up on this promise in Isaiah and other places in the Old Testament. That will be brought at the revealing of Jesus Christ when he comes again.

So just a brief point here. Part of the joy of heaven and the new creation and the new Jerusalem will be the land.

And sometimes we perhaps get a little bit super spiritual as Christians as we talk. As if we're slightly embarrassed to be looking forward to that bit.

We feel we must say of course it's not about that. It's about being with God. Well yes and yes it is about being with God. But part of how we will enjoy God.

[11:11] Will be how we enjoy his creation. Now the other promised land went wrong.

The people sinned. They were kicked out. What about this one? This one will be forever. Why? Verses 3 and 4.

Just look down with me. He who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy. And everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion.

And cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst. By a spirit of judgment. And by a spirit of burning. Well secondly washed forever by the grace of the Lord.

Isaiah says that this fresh new salvation. This new Jerusalem. In it God's people will be holy. Do you see that? Verse 3. They will be holy because.

[12:17] Verse 4. They have been washed forever by the Lord. And so here we have a glimpse of the future. Finally God's people.

Fit to live with him. Just as it was always meant to be. Now for hundreds of years.

The people of God had labored under the law of Moses. The law of Moses that exposed sin. But could not remove it. Animal sacrifices and the temple system that could never wash away sin.

The sin of God's people. As we've been seeing in the Bible overview. As we've been doing in our growth groups. The sin of God's people was the great problem that wouldn't go away. In the Old Testament.

This moment in the prophets. Is a massive moment in the Bible story. It's a hinge. It's a turning point. When God says to his spiritually filthy people.

[13:22] I will wash away your sin and your guilt. Once and for all. Notice who does the washing away.

Do you see that in verse 4? Do we do it? Will the people wash away their own sin? No. When the Lord.

Shall have washed away. The filth. God says. I will do. What you cannot do. I will do.

What the law of Moses. Cannot do. What endless animal sacrifices. Cannot do. What no religion. Can do.

I will wash away. Your sins. It will be permanent.

[14:19] When you wash something away. That's it. Isn't it? And so verse 3. Finally. God's people will be called. Holy. Not temporarily.

But forever. Just to say. In verse 3. Where you see. That he who is left in Zion.

And he. And remains in Jerusalem. Those who are left. And those who remain. Refers to the survivors. After the judgment day. To come. God has spoken of a great judgment.

In verse. In chapter 2 of Isaiah. Where he will judge. The whole world. For its sin. And so those words. Those who are left. Speak of the survivors.

Those who remain. After the judgment of God. The judgment day to come. Well they will be those. Who have been washed. Who can remain.

[15:21] In the new Jerusalem. Well fast forward. 700 years. And we see. This plan. This promise. Being fulfilled.

As Jesus Christ. Died on the cross. Notice that. God said in verse 4.

I will take it away. By a spirit of judgment. And a spirit of burning. Why did Christ have to die. Such a painful death. Because he was.

Experiencing the judgment. And the burning. That our sin deserves. Well this is a.

Present reality. For the Christian. You are washed. If you have put your. Faith in Christ. You have been made ready. To live with God forever.

[16:18] In a new Jerusalem. You are ready. You are washed. You are washed. But this washing of sin.

Is not the end of the story. But is preparing God's people. For the end goal of the story. For the climax. And that is that we are able.

To live with him. And he with us. Forever. Verses 5 and 6. Then the Lord will create.

Over the whole site. Of Mount Zion. And over her assemblies. A cloud by day. And smoke. And the shining. Of a flaming fire. By night. For over all the glory.

There will be a canopy. There will be a booth. For shade by day. From the heat. And for a refuge. And a shelter. From the storm. And the rain.

[17:16] So secondly. Washed forever. By the Lord. But thirdly. Wrapped forever. In the presence of the Lord. Verses 5 and 6. This is the climax. This is what the washing is for.

So that we can live forever. With a holy God. A holy people. With a holy God. Verses 5 and 6. Come as a result of verses 3 and 4. Because they are holy.

Therefore they can be with him. In his holy presence. For us. Well this therefore is the happily. Ever after ending. The one that the Disney film.

Is trying to find. The imagery is all about God's holy presence. With his people. And I just want us at this point. To see this.

And for this we just need to do. One little bit of hard work. Which is to turn back. To page 96. Keep a finger where you are. Turn back to page 96.

[18:19] In your Bibles. Which is the end. The very last verse. Of the book of Exodus. Exodus. And I want us just to see. That this is where the imagery is coming from.

That Isaiah is using. So Exodus chapter 40 verse 38. For the cloud of the Lord.

Was on the tabernacle by day. And fire was in it by night. In the sight of all the house of Israel. Throughout all their journeys.

Exodus. Now. This. Is the climax. Of the old Exodus. God comes to live. Among his people. In the tabernacle.

And the cloud and the fire. Symbolize his presence. Come back. Flick back now to. Isaiah chapter 4.

[19:16] And verse 5. This is the climax. Of the new Exodus. But better. I wonder. Can you spot the difference.

As I read verse 5 again. Then the Lord will create. Over the whole site. Of Mount Zion. And over her assemblies. A cloud by day. For over all the glory.

There will be a canopy. It will be over all. The whole site. Of Mount Zion. In other words.

The whole of Mount Zion. Will be like. The Holy of Holies. God's unfiltered. Glorious presence. With. All his people. The Old Testament. Temple. Tabernacle. Was pointing towards. A day when God. Would be able to live. Barrier free.

[20:16] With his people. This time. It's permanent. There's no moving around. No lifting off. Like in the desert.

But a permanent home. God dwelling. Barrier free. With his people. His unfiltered presence. On Mount Zion.

God. God. but there's more, because his presence is not only close and holy, but it is intimate, because where it says, over all the glory there will be a canopy, in verse 5, that word canopy is a bridal canopy. It's used only two other times in the Bible, once in Psalm 19 to describe the sun coming out of the bridal chamber, and once in Joel where he says, let the bride leave her chamber or canopy.

In modern Jewish weddings, it's the thing that symbolically is held over the bride and groom during the ceremony to represent their new home together. In the film Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves, it is where Robin Hood and Maid Marian finally get hitched under the canopy. In fact, indeed, most Hollywood rom-coms end in that way, outside under the canopy, the booth over the bride and groom.

Here then are the people of God, pictured like the bride of God, tenderly wrapped in his presence, as a husband might wrap his arms round his bride. Precious to him, intimate.

[22:15] Back in Deuteronomy, he described his people as his treasured possession. Well, he couldn't have them through the law of Moses.

But finally, through this fresh new salvation, in his new city, God will have his people as his treasured possession, his bride, holy, washed, forever.

This is the hope of the Christian. This is what our tired and weary hearts are longing for.

The happy ending. No more tears. No more harm. No more dangers. Do you see verse 6? His presence is protection from any danger, from the heat and from the storm.

The promised land. The new Jerusalem. Right at the end of the Bible, Revelation 21 says this, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth has passed away.

[23 : 31] The sea was no more, and I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. Well, that promise is restating this promise.

The destination. So therefore, what should we say?

Keep going. No matter how hard the journey is, as I say, I don't know, the Lord knows where we're all at in our different situations.

Take the photo out of the back pocket and lift up that photo of the destination.

[24 : 38] God is keeping his promises. He is keeping his promises. Here is the destination. Life forever with God, washed, holy, in his new Jerusalem, which is a new creation.

Let's pray. We just want to thank you, Father, for the grace that we see in these verses.

That you say you will do it. That we couldn't wash ourselves and that instead of abandoning your people and abandoning us to judgment, as you should have done, as we deserved, you refused to and you persisted and you are finding a way to bring sinners to be with you forever in perfect joy in the beauty of your presence.

so, Father, we pray that you would help us to keep going, to keep pressing on along the difficult road through the trials and temptations and struggles of following the Lord Jesus, knowing where we're going.

And would you keep us and carry us along the journey, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Amen.

[26 : 28]