

## Come Lord Jesus, Our Messiah

**1 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.**

**3 Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; 4 say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.” 5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.**

**9 No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, 10 and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.**

All of these words are reminders and banners, flags waving over the results of sin: desert, parched land, feeble hands, knees that give way, fearful hearts, blind, deaf, lame, mute, and sorrow. A man isn't a sinner because he is struck with feeble knees, or a woman who is mute, or deaf, or sorrowful. But without sin these things would not afflict the world. And God wants to teach us something through Isaiah's prophecy.

This is the last, the final prophecy, in the first half of the book of Isaiah. And here the prophet sings a song about the Savior who will put an end to the destruction of sin. Interwoven here in the words of one of Israel's greatest writing prophets we hear a reminder of just how completely Satan ruined and twisted God's creation. What had been made to be a glorious garden, the very source of our word Paradise, was in the beginning a towering summit above all the rest of creation. The river Moses describes watering Eden broke into four headwaters to move off in different directions in what to the ancient Antediluvian world were **the four greatest rivers**. And since rivers run downhill, Moses tells us without having to waste words on the obvious fact was that for everyone in the world who would live outside the Garden of Eden its location was not only well-known but obvious, so that even a child would know: Eden? That's up there. Upstream, uphill, up there on that height-- where else would God's park and Paradise be? But it was wrecked by the words of the devil, and now no one can return. No one can see the Tree of Life, or the scuff in the soil beside the idyllic pathway where God formed man from the red clay.

After Satan ruined it all, sin came tearing through and broke and hurt man, as this still-raging storm of sin strikes people blind, deaf, lame, mute, and hurting in so very many ways that we lose sight of the source, and we begin to think: Those differences we have because of

our flaws? Embrace them! In our sinful human flesh, we are afflicted by so many of the results of the fall, and maybe most especially with fear. Fear describes Adam and Eve hiding under the canopy of the trees in the garden with the flimsiest of excuses for what they had done and were still doing.

All this wreckage of sin in the world is only part of the problem, and it's the lesser part. It's only the sign of the worse problem. For **just as the desert shows** just how far the world has fallen from being a Paradise, **so also man is a ruined wreck** of what God made. To be blind, deaf, mute, crippled, are hardships, but they also remind us of the worse problem, which is the sin we commit by habit, by temptation, and even by choice. The world in its fallen idiocy has given up on trying to understand sin or to look to a Savior from sin. Instead, so many celebrate sin and are not terrified by it.

So it is with God's **world**: a mess, hurt by the devil and his lies, misunderstood by foolish man. But into this mess, God was sending his Son to clean everything up, to heal, to mend, to make it like it used to be.<sup>a</sup>

The act of sending the Savior into the world is not described here; but the healing he brings is described in the case of all of the words that describe the world and mankind hurt by sin: **Desert** will be glad, **Wilderness** will blossom and burst into bloom like the crocus. Here in the west, the Crocus is often a spring flower, but in the Middle East it is a late autumn flower, where a bare and seemingly empty garden may explode overnight with crocus blossoms as late as the end of December.

The promise of the coming Savior was to show that he would bring healing to sin in mankind. It will be like healing coming to bodies, the blossoming of a desert, a change so complete that dangerous things will be beautiful, simple, and peaceful-- no lion or hungry beast. The barren places will suddenly gush with pure water.

The whole prophecy is a symbol for what will literally and truly take place:

- What was dead will live.
- What was barren will thrive.
- What was ruined will be whole again.
- Where there was fear, there will be reassurance
- Where there was danger, there will be comfort and peace
- Where there was sin and temptation, there will be none at all. We will live and rejoice according to the will of God and the miraculous freedom of truly sinless living.

These healings are a part of the proofs that Christ brought when he came. The signs of his miraculous birth, the sign that accompanied his baptism, the miracles like these that accompanied all of his preaching and teaching-- these **were convincing proofs** for many, but **not for all**. There were some who rejected him, just as there are many today who would

rather embrace the evidence of sin and its effects in their lives and reject the one, the only one, who brings healing and salvation.

But for us who are blessed with his healing and with the forgiveness of our sins, there is a response he gives us to follow through with. We cannot do his works of mending or healing, of saving and forgiving. **Even a physician does not** restore a hurt body to its sinless state, but only to a healed state for the sinner. But Christ gives us all a way to thank him and a way to serve him, by doing other works that he did: He carried out **patience, love, peace, meekness**, and these are things that everybody can do. Christ also spoke with honest words and said what he meant. If he tested a person's faith, it was their faith being tested. He did not indulge himself in testing his friends of their friendship.

Do not repay evil for evil,<sup>b</sup> and don't take revenge or get back at someone for what they've done. Live at peace with everyone. You don't know how shocked a person can be by this way of living, and who knows what kind of door God may open with it? On the one hand, the world will become exactly that much less a violent and molested place. But on the other hand, you may invite them to ask you, or someone else, why you choose to live peacefully instead of spitefully.

Even if this only affects your marriage, think of how much better your marriage can be, where what was bitter can become sweet, where what was angry can become loving, where what had grown cold can become passionate and affection once again-- isn't this, too, the healing Christ brings? **Where faith is put to work** and put into practice, you life **right now, today** is impacted and made better, all because our Heavenly Father had mercy on his fallen, ruined creation, and promised to send his Son to repair it, and when his Son our Savior came, he did everything the Father willed, without leaving anything out.

He kept every commandment perfectly and taught us that keeping them is more than living up to every letter; but going right down deep inside to the way we think and speak, and not just what we do. He **paid the price** for our sin and **banished it forever**.

We live in his forgiveness. We show it with our worship, our thanks, and in the way we treat each other, forgive each other, and dig more deeply into his Word day by day.

Comfort your family and your friends with the word of God through the Prophet: "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come." This is more than about Christmas, or even his second coming on the Last Day. **It's about how we live and love** and care for each other now, today. **Rejoice, rejoice, believer**. Amen.

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<sup>a</sup> Amos 9:11

<sup>b</sup> Romans 12:17