

ISAIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 34 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As you look at this world, as you look at things that are going on around you, are they getting better and better? There was a French psychologist who lived from 1857 to 1926 who introduced a popular method of psychotherapy and self-improvement that was based upon optimistic autosuggestion. This is what she would tell her patients to say, "Every day in every way I am getting better and better."

In other words, have good thoughts and everything will be okay. And that idea, that philosophy has been incorporated into the fabric of our lives. Man thinks he is moving towards something great, that he is going to think good thoughts and good things will happen.

If that is all it took then when we turned on the news we would see only good reports but we don't. I should get that big promotion and work but instead I was laid off! When we went to hospitals we would not see sick adults and children, many who will die during their stay there. No, things are not getting better and better, they are getting more and more evil.

As we will see as we get into Isaiah chapters 34 and 35 they give to us two pictures of life, of where we will be, Heaven or Hell. These chapters move us on into eternity in a sense. Make no mistake about it, Heaven and Hell are real and the choices we make in this life will determine where we are going. If you are living by faith in Jesus Christ, if you are walking in the light as He is in the light, then chapter 35 is where you are headed or the Kingdom of God and eternity with Him! If you are not living by faith in Jesus Christ, if you are walking in darkness apart from Him, then chapter 34 is where you are headed, or the judgment of God and eternity apart from Him!

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Isaiah chapter 34 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening and we look at this chapter that deals with the woe of the nations or the judgment of the nations that have turned from the Lord.

ISAIAH 34

VERSES 1-4

1. Francis Schaeffer used to say that if he had one hour to explain the gospel to someone, he would spend the first fifty minutes on the bad news of the judgment and then the last ten minutes on the good news of salvation, because without the context of judgment we don't appreciate or even understand salvation. How true that is!

Notice what the Lord is doing here. He is telling the nations of the world to "**come near,**" "**to hear,**" to "**heed**" and what are they to come near and hear, come near and heed? That "**the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies.**"

You see, in that final battle the nations of the world will come together to fight against the Lord, and God will laugh at their foolishness. He mocks them for their arrogance. And He will destroy them for their rebellious hearts. During this time there will be so many dead that there will be no time to bury them and their bodies will rot in the fields and be food for the birds!

2. David Guzik shows how the stage is set for the last days and how the Tribulation Period is getting very close. He wrote,

The stage is set for a rebuilt temple that will come in the last days, necessary to fulfill the prophecies of the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

The stage is set for the sort of world-dominating confederation of nations, heir to the Roman Empire to arise (Daniel 2:36-45; Revelation 13:1-8; 17:10-14).

The stage is set for a political and economic “superman” to arise, the sort of single political leader who will lead this world-dominating confederation of nations (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 13:4-7).

The stage is set for the kind of false religion the Bible says will characterize the very last days (2 Thessalonians 2:4, 9-12; Revelation 13:11-15; 17:1-6).

The stage is set for the kind of economic system predicted for the very last days (Revelation 13:15-17).

The stage is set for the end-times scenario the Bible says will happen between Russia and Israel in Ezekiel 38-39.

- David Guzik, Isaiah chapter 34

3. As you look at verse 4 here in Isaiah chapter 34 you see that it is not only the earth that will be shaken in this judgment, but the heavens themselves will be shaken. You can read the book of Revelation and see that the judgments that Isaiah has spoken of are those judgments spoken of during the Tribulation Period.

4. Notice also that God is judging the nations, the earth dwellers and I think that is important for us to understand. We live here on this earth but this is not our home as Christians. Paul put it like this in Philippians 3:20-21, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”**

Also, Peter reminds us in II Peter 2:9, **“then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.”**

God will not judge the righteous with the wicked and please understand that we are only righteous because of the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith! Thus, this coming judgment upon the nations will be on those that have rejected Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior!

VERSES 5-7

1. First of all we need to understand that God’s sword is bathed in heaven or when God brings His judgment down upon the nations it will be done in righteousness; it will be fair, it will be right! Now as you read of this blood flowing it should remind you of what we are told in Revelation 14:20, **“And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.”**

This is the last great battle where the nations of the world will gather together and fight against our Lord Jesus Christ and His army and this battlefield is located in the valley of Megiddo. It is here that we see the fierceness of His judgment as blood flows for some 184 miles flowing some 4 to 5 feet high or splashing up 4 to 5 feet high. You see, blood spilled like grapes being trampled upon in a winepress. From Bozrah, in Edom, northward this blood will flow to Megiddo at the foot of Mount Carmel - this is the battle of **ARMAGEDDON!** The interesting thing is that God will spare Jerusalem, the city itself, from this blood bath, the place where He will establish His kingdom!

It is hard to imagine this kind of carnage and for blood to be flowing or splashing some 4 to 5 feet high for some 184 miles, but listen to what one historian has to say regarding another devastating slaughter against the Jewish people. Josephus, in recounting the massive destruction and bloodshed that occurred when Titus and the Roman army swept across Jerusalem, said that the Roman soldiers “Obstructed the very lanes with dead soldiers; and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fires of many of the houses was quenched with these men’s blood.” (Wars:6, 8). This next battle will be even more intense, more destructive!

Listen to what Jon Courson had to say regarding all this bloodshed and someone else who shed His blood. He wrote, “And now I begin to understand, to see I have two options: I will either drown in the horrific bloodbath of Armageddon, or I will bathe in the gracious Blood of the Lamb. Truly, the greatest bloodshed in all of history took place not in a world war, but when Jesus died on the Cross in order to wash us in His blood.”

And I think that is why we see these animals being mentioned as a sacrifice, they are a picture of the shed blood of those who have come against the Lord. You see, in associating this time of judgment with the image of sacrifice, Isaiah tells us that this is payment for the penalty of sin. Even as a sacrificial victim paid for the sin of the one bringing the sacrifice, so the bloody judgment of sin at Armageddon will be a payment for the penalty of sin. It will be an imperfect, incomplete payment, but it will be a payment of some kind.

2. Now why does Isaiah speak of Edom specifically here? Keep in mind that Edom was family, descendants of Isaac and he was Jacob's brother. Not only that, but Edom had become the perpetual enemy of Israel, and when the Lord returns, this is one of the areas He will judge as well as come to the Jews who are in Petra and have called upon Him as their Lord and Savior. We see this in Isaiah 63:1, **“Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?; ‘I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.’”**

But I think there is more to it than just that because we are talking about the judgment of the nations and as you read what is before these verses and after you can clearly see it is speaking of that final judgment, the Great Tribulation period! I think the reason Edom is mentioned is that they are representative of all those nations, all those people who have turned against God's people; the Jews and thus, they have turned from the Lord! Because of that they will be wiped out, I think that is pretty clear!

One writer put it like this, “Edom was a sister nation to Israel, but it hated Israel more than any other nation. Throughout all of history we see a burning hatred of Edom against Israel. It is for this reason that Edom is frequently presented as a representative of all the nations that hated the Jews.” (Bultema)

VERSES 8-10

1. Why is this judgment coming upon the nations? Because “**. . . it is the day of the LORD’S vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.**” Now this is troubling to some because when they see this word “**vengeance**” associated with the Lord they just can’t understand it. And think about that. When we use that word we are talking about getting even, paying someone back for what they have done to us. “You’re going to get what is coming to you!” we might say. Please understand that this is not what we should take from this word. What does it mean then? Listen carefully,

The word “vengeance” is of crucial importance. It does not mean getting even with someone, as we use it. It refers to God’s action in carrying out the sentence which He as Judge has justly imposed.

- Daily Notes of the Scripture Union

So this judgment is fair, it is right as I have said already. They refused to receive the pardon that God had given to them, the complete forgiveness of their sins that is only found in Christ and thus, they will have to pay for their sins and they will do so for eternity in the Lake of Fire! You see, God’s patience and longsuffering will come to an end and He will pour out His wrath upon all those who reject Him.

2. Now as you read these verses the devastation is overwhelming at that is exactly what we see in Revelation chapter 8 where one-third of the earth's vegetation is destroyed. One-third of the oceans are destroyed. One-third of the fresh waters will be destroyed and unusable. Then, as we get to Revelation chapter 16 and the bowl judgments are poured out we see that all sea life died. The fresh water supply will be polluted, all of it! Judgment has come and man will not be able to stand before a holy and righteous God apart from Christ!

VERSES 11-15

1. Once again we see Isaiah tell us that in this judgment much of the earth will be so destroyed that in many places, only wild animals will be able to live. Thus, following the battle of Armageddon, the world will come to this state of devastation and will wait for the Lord to restore it back to the time when He created it and it is then He will set up His Kingdom.

2. Now maybe some of you doubt that this is going to happen. There are many who do and if you are in that category, listen carefully to the challenge that Isaiah is giving to you.

VERSES 16-17

1. Isaiah knew that the words he was speaking were from the Lord and because of that Isaiah is challenging the people to read the Scriptures and see if these things don't come to pass. And as they read, they could see clearly that God's Word did and does come to pass. God says what He means and means what He says!

2. So here is the choice that is before you, to live by faith in God or to walk away from Him. But no matter what you do, you cannot evade the consequences of your decision. Let me give you an example of what I mean. Most of you have heard of Lance Armstrong. He was a seven-time winner of the Tour de France and he was also a survivor of cancer. Now when his life was in danger, when things did not look too good for him, this is how he rated his chances,

Quite simply, I believed I had a responsibility to be a good person, and that meant fair, honest, hardworking, and honorable. If I did that, if I was good to my family, true to my friends, if I gave back to my community or to some cause, if I wasn't a liar, a cheat, or a thief, then I believed that should be enough. At the end of the day, if there was indeed some Body or presence standing there to judge me, I hope I would be judged on whether I had lived a true life, not on whether I believed in a certain book, or whether I'd been baptized. If there was indeed a God at the end of my days, I hoped he didn't say, "But you were never a Christian, so you're going the other way from heaven." If so, I was going to reply, "You know what? You're right. Fine."

- Lance Armstrong, with Sally Jenkins, *It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life*, p. 113

Now let's think about how good of a person Lance Armstrong was. He was not a good person, he lied to people, he cheated, he divorced his wife, he stole the Tour de France races by using illegal drugs to improve his performance, he was not honorable. So he was not a good person and the reality is, none of us are, none of us are good, we all fall far short of the glory God.

And I guess that is not the main issue when you think about it. The main issue is Jesus Christ and what you have done with Him, is He your Lord and Savior. If He is then you can enter into Isaiah chapter 35, the Kingdom Age. If He is not your Lord and Savior I am sorry to tell you that Isaiah chapter 34 is for you, the judgment of God. Don't be like Lance Armstrong who said that if he was not allowed into heaven, "Fine." It won't be fine, search the book, read the Word of God and you will see for yourself. And as you search may you come to that saving faith in Jesus and you can come with us to Isaiah chapter 35.

ISAIAH 35

VERSES 1-2

1. As we look at this world, the beauty we do see in so many places we have to remember that the world we live in today is only a shadow of what it was like when God created it. And the devastation that is coming in this judgment, as we read in Isaiah chapter 34, is going to be complete. Scientists are telling us that today, on our planet; the deserts are expanding at an alarming rate. In just North Africa alone there are ten thousand square miles of desert that are being added each year! The deserts are growing and like I have said, what is coming in the judgment of God will be devastating.

But in the Kingdom Age, that which was barren, that which was desolate will be restored and not only the land but the whole of creation. That is what Paul is telling us in Romans 8:19-23, **“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits 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; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”**

When God created the heavens and the earth everything was very good. Animals lived together in harmony; they were not meat eaters but vegetarians. But then sin entered the world through Adam and not only was Adam and all his descendants affected by this, but all of creation was also affected.

Paul said in Romans 5:12, **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”** Now creation waits for the day when the Lord will return and release them of the bondage of sin that is in this world and that has affected them as well as us.

Of this time we are told in Isaiah 11:6-9, **“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.”**

In Isaiah 35:1-2 we are told **“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God.”**

And in Hosea 2:18 we are told, **“In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely.”**

Creation didn't ask for this, but because of man's sin they were affected by it. Now, they are standing on their tiptoes waiting for the revealing of the sons of God for when that occurs the Lord will return and set up His Kingdom on the earth. This waiting Paul illustrates as a woman in childbirth. Now, how many of you fathers have pictures of your wife in labor? Hopefully none of you because it is not a pretty picture but I bet you do have pictures of the results of that labor, the birth of your child. Now we have a picture of what the Kingdom Age is going to be like as God has told us, but it is just a glimpse of what it will be like and we can compare it to what we see now, what we might call labor pains and we too wait for the birth of the Kingdom Age, the return of Jesus! It is as Morris tells us, "Creation is not undergoing death pangs . . . but birth pangs."

So in the Kingdom Age God is going to restore the earth and its creatures to the way it was in the beginning. The deserts will blossom with life. No more harsh winters, but the earth will be tropical from the North Pole to the South Pole.

And we do see evidence that in the past, not millions of years ago but thousands of years ago, probably not more than 6,000 years! We have found around the world the fossil remains of plants and animals that support this. We have found fossils of asparagus ferns that are 50 feet tall. Mosses grew to 2 to 3 feet high instead of just an inch or so today. Horsetail reeds reached heights of 50 feet; today they grow just 5 or 6 feet tall. Redwood forests are found buried under massive ice deposits in the South Polar Region. And two islands within the Arctic Circle, the New Siberian Islands (now called Novosibirskiye Ostrova Islands), and the Spitzbergen Islands (now called Svalbard Islands) have both been found to have entombed in them immense frozen gravel mounds of entire fruit trees with the fruit still on them.

I believe that is what Isaiah is speaking of; the land will blossom forth in the Kingdom Age as all of creation is living in harmony with the Lord who will be ruling and reigning from Jerusalem!

VERSES 3-4

1. First of all let's look at this in regards to the Tribulation Period. Before God steps in things are going to be very bad, very dark, very hopeless. And God is saying for those going through the Tribulation Period, "Hang in there, the light is coming! Don't lose hope!" And they will need to hear those encouraging words, for those days will be very dark.

2. Secondly, what about this "**weak hands**" "**feeble knees**" "**fearful-hearted**"? What does this mean to us? Does this even apply to us? What I find interesting is what Paul says in Hebrews 12:12-13, "**Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.**"

Paul is quoting out of Isaiah to make the point that even in our day, during a time of chastening from the Lord, we should not lose heart, we should not stop moving forward. Paul is telling them, "Hey guys, since all that Christ has done for you, since He has given you His example to live by, since you have His truths, stand up and move out! Follow those paths the Lord has set for you!"

The word “**paths**” or TROCHIA, (trokh-ee-ah’) in the Greek speaks of the tracks left by the wheels of a cart or chariot and then later on, those paths are used by travelers, they would follow those paths. Folks, as we follow the path of Jesus, may others follow behind us, may we be examples to them moving in the right direction, not the wrong! It is as Proverbs 4:25-27 says, **“Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.”** In other words, Paul is calling for them and us to ***STAND STRONG!***

That is also what Isaiah is speaking of. Maybe you are fearful this evening over situations that you are facing and from a human standpoint you have every reason to be fearful. But you are in Christ and thus, your perspective should be different.

If you are fearful, then listen to what the Lord is saying here, ***“Be strong, do not fear . . . He will come and save you.”*** In our present trials, we need the strong hope of the Lord to overcome our fearful hearts. Our fearful hearts are not hoped by a vain, vague optimism; they are helped by the assured confidence that He will come and save. And where is the confidence found? Yes in the Lord but it is revealed to us by His Word through His Spirit!

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 6:10-18, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”**

Here is the key, our strength does not come from our power, our might, our ability but it is from the Lord, it is found in the Lord! And as Paul speaks of the armor of God keep in mind that he was chained to Roman soldiers and as he saw these men day in and day out the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to make a comparison of the Roman soldier versus the soldier of the Lord who was going to battle against the enemies of God, and thus, he penned these words for us.

Paul tells us to “**put on the whole armor of God**” not just part of it, not just what you want to put on, but all of it because the enemy is going to use all the resources that are at his disposal to fight against us. Too often Christians are like the Iraqi man who was captured during Desert Storm and he was found wearing a Cub’s tee shirt, jeans, and sandals on his feet. He was an American that went to visit family in Iraq and then the war broke out and he was drafted but not given the equipment he needed to do battle. If we are not prepared, when the Devil comes with his scheming’s we will not be able to stand against his onslaught! We need to stand firm against his attacks and the idea is to hold a critical position while under attack!

Notice that Paul does not tell us to go and look for this spiritual warfare, he just tells us it is a fact and if you are serving the Lord the enemy will come looking for you, not maybe, he will! We need to be ready!

You see, our battle is not against flesh and blood but it is a spiritual battle. Yes, it is played out through the flesh because Satan and his forces use man as his tools to do his work by. Thus, it is truly a spiritual battle. In fact, Paul lists the rankings of these demonic forces, Satan being in charge, followed by principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness. The Scriptures don’t elaborate much more on these and we really don’t need to know more about them, what we need to know is our armor, how to protect ourselves, and that is what Paul tells us here in Romans chapter 6, to put on the whole armor of God!

Paul tells us that as Christians we are to “**withstand**” or ANTHISTEMI (anth-is’-tay-mee) in the Greek and it speaks of taking a stand against a great opposition. How many battles have been lost because soldiers did not take the battle seriously? Custer thought, “It’s only a few Indians, not a big deal!” and that was the last stand he took! Of course it was Custer’s last stand! Sorry about that! The “**evil day**” is not a specific day but a period of time when the enemies of God will grow stronger and more evil and the conflict will be intense, as we are seeing today!

May we use our hands to do the work of God. May we use our knees to move for the Lord. May our heart be filled with the love of God so much that it overflows and touches the lives around us. You see, not full of fear but strong in the Lord knowing He will see us through any battle we face! “**He will come and save you.**”

And keep in mind that if we are not making progress in our walk with Jesus, fault can surely be found with weak hands and feeble knees and a fearful heart!

VERSES 5-6a

1. I long for this day because when God sets up His Kingdom He will heal the physical infirmities; there will be no more physical handicaps in the Kingdom Age! Think about that. When God’s salvation comes, miraculous power comes with it. It is a miracle for the blind to see, for the deaf to hear, for the lame to run, and for the mute to speak. Do we see that today? You bet we do but it is just an indication of what is coming in the Kingdom Age.

Now let me also say this. God has done at least one huge miracle in your life. You see, when He saved you He did so with miraculous power! Never forget that fact! You see, Jesus came to take all of us who were spiritual cripples you might say and make us into world-beaters!

2. Let me also share this with you. Remember when John the Baptist was put in prison. Why was John the Baptist placed in prison? We are told in Matthew 14:3-4, **“For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. Because John had said to him, ‘It is not lawful for you to have her.’”** John was in prison because he stood up for righteousness and when the light shown upon the darkness of what Herod had done, he tried to extinguish the light by placing him in the Machaerus prison which was located about 5 miles east of the Dead Sea.

You see, Herod Antipas, who was the governor of Galilee, had fallen in love on one of his trips to Rome with Herodias. The only problem was that Herodias was married to his brother Philip. That made Herodias his sister-in-law! But he seduced her and when he returned to Galilee he divorced his wife and married Herodias.

That was what John was coming against, calling out this sin and in the church today, nobody wants to say anything against any sin. We want to accept what everyone and anyone is doing, but not John and it cost him dearly. Make no mistake about it, when you stand up for righteousness, it will cost you something but to be silent is wrong!

So John was discouraged and he was wondering if Jesus was really the one that He claimed to be. In Matthew 11:2-6 we are told of what transpired, **“And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.’”**

Jesus, to encourage John told the disciples of John to go back and tell John what they have seen! That the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk and-so-on. And Jesus did not use the exact words that Isaiah used here but you clearly get the idea that Jesus, the Messiah came to bring the salvation of God to the people and He did so with these accompanying signs of miraculous power. He is going to do no less in the Kingdom Age as the earth and all of creation will be restored!

VERSES 6b-7

1. God not only heals the people but He will also heal the land. You see, when God's salvation comes, miraculous provision comes with it. What was dry and useless before becomes well watered and fruitful.

2. And please understand that Jesus said that He would bring these things into our lives.

Remember what He said in John 7:37-39, **“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”**

This feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, began on the 15th day of the month of Tisri and ran for 7 days. Each day the priest would go down to the pool of Siloam and fill a golden pitcher with water and then travel back to the Temple and circle around the altar once before pouring out the water over the altar. On the seventh day they would circle the altar seven times before pouring out the water. And all this showed how God provided for them during their wilderness wanderings and it looked forward to the coming Messiah and His Kingdom.

Now it is the eighth day, a holy convocation, no water was poured out on this day. And at this point, as the people are all around, Jesus stands up and says **“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”** John 7:37-38. Think about this for a minute. No more water is being poured out and yet the people are still thirsty and Jesus is telling them that if they want to satisfy that thirst in their souls, they need to take Him into their lives!

Even today people have thirsty souls and they try to find temporary respites to quench this thirst with all kinds of emotional and material things, but they never satisfy, they never fill a thirsty soul like Jesus does. It is as Isaiah 44:3 says, **“For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring.”**

Or in Isaiah 55:1-3 we read, **“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you - The sure mercies of David.”**

Today we turn on the television and we hear all kinds of commercials telling us what we need. I wish they would come out with a commercial that says ***“GOT JESUS?”*** or ***“JESUS, IT DOESN’T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS!”*** You see, in the heart of every person is a god-shaped void that man tries to fill with all kinds of things and Jesus is the only thing that fits, He alone can satisfy!

Now John, writing this Gospel some 50 years after this event, tells us Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit that was to be given on the day of Pentecost, not the indwelling of the Holy Spirit but the empowering of the Holy Spirit. We have dealt with this before but just to re-cap, after the resurrection of Jesus we see Jesus appear to His men and in John 20:22 we are told, **“He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”** At this point they are New Testament saints as the Holy Spirit has come inside them.

Then in Luke Jesus tells us **“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”** Luke 24:49. And in Acts 1:8 we read **“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

And then in Acts chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost we see the fulfillment of this promise as the believers are empowered to be witnesses of Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit coming upon a believer in power and thus, we are not just to be vessels to contain God, but channels from which God can flow through and touch the lives of others, living water not stagnant ponds! Temple put it this way, “No one can be indwelt by the Spirit of God and keep that Spirit to himself. Where the Spirit is, He flows forth; if there is no flowing forth, He is not there.”

You see, there is no reason for a Christian to endure a “dry time,” not when the miraculous power of Jesus Christ is present in their lives to provide those refreshing waters!

3. One last point here. That parched ground shall become a pool spoken of in verse 7, one writer explained it like this, “The word translated parched ground actually means mirage, air reflection, an atmospheric phenomenon frequently seen in Eastern deserts which is caused by the reflection of the hot rays of the sun . . . Now the prophet brings the glad tiding that what used to be a mere semblance and an illusion will one day become a glorious reality.” (Bultema)

VERSE 8

1. In the Kingdom Age we will make a yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem on the Highway of Holiness. No sinners will be there, only the righteous. And even someone who gets lost easily will be able to find their way, probably because of all the praise songs being sung as we travel to the holy city to see our King! Now keep in mind that the Hebrew word for highway indicates what our English word literally says, “a high-way.” It speaks of a raised road, lifted above the ground. It is a high, glorious road to travel on! I guess that is why we won’t get lost!

2. Listen to what Spurgeon wrote regarding this Highway of Holiness! He wrote, “Engineering has done much to tunnel mountains, and bridge abysses; but the greatest triumph of engineering is that which made a way from sin to holiness, from death to life, from condemnation to perfection. Who could make a road over the mountains of our iniquities but Almighty God? None but the Lord of love would have wished it; none but the God of wisdom could have devised it; none but the God of power could have carried it out.” Amen to that!

3. Now what is also interesting is that this High of Holiness is not for everyone! That may surprise you but listen again to what Isaiah said, **“The unclean shall not pass over it.”** In other words, you can’t make it on this Highway of Holiness by paying your own toll you might say, sorry. You are only allowed on this Highway of Holiness if you allow someone else to pay that toll for you and that person is Jesus Christ. You see, you are only allowed on this highway if you are cleansed by the great work of the Messiah.

VERSE 9

1. Why won’t there be any carnivorous animals on this Highway to Holiness? Because there will be no carnivorous animals in the Kingdom Age, not even man. We will all be vegetarians!

VERSE 10

1. What joy we see in the Kingdom Age. And can you imagine the worship being sung out as we travel on this Highway of Holiness that leads us to the Lord. What joy we will have as we begin our ascent up the mountains of Jerusalem to see our King!

2. Now as we move into chapters 36-39 next week, we won’t cover all of them next week, but understand that we are moving into an historical account of the destruction of the Assyrian army. Why does God do it this way? To show us that He fulfilled His promises in the past and what He has promised regarding the Kingdom Age will come to pass! You see, we must walk by faith, believing and trusting in His promises!

3. As I close this evening let me leave you with this to think about. If you want joy to fill your life then you need to trust in the Lord, you need to rest in Him. The Lord is saying to us, "Trust in Me enough so that you will follow Me and I will bring you home with singing. I will overwhelm you with a joy that is unbroken and unbreakable. No more sorrow or sighing but just the joy that I can fill your life with!"

Or you can try to fill yourself up with the things of this world and in the end you will come up short. You will never find that joy you were looking for because that joy is only found in Jesus!

So we have seen in our study this evening two kinds of people and two destinations. Who are you? What are you becoming? May you be a follower of Jesus being conformed into His image and entering into the Kingdom and not a follower of everything and anything but Jesus and being conformed into this world and entering into the Lake of Fire! The choice is yours? Who are you? What are you becoming?