

Grace to you and peace from Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to God. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. It is certain.

Isaiah 35:4–7 (NKJV) — 4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you.” **5** Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. **6** Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert. **7** The parched ground shall become a pool, And the thirsty land springs of water.

With Vengeance, God Saves a Broken Creation

Lord, Sanctify us by your truth, YOUR WORD IS TRUTH. Amen.

In Jesus name, fellow redeemed,

It was so precious to you. Now its broken. You knew this would happen. Why did you ever trust that other person? You knew they weren't responsible enough. You knew they wouldn't be careful with it. And they don't even seem to be concerned or sorry. Now you are angry. Now you want justice. You want the other person to pay you back. But they can never replace what was lost. What will you do?

God lost what was most precious to Him. The rebellion of mankind broke it. The perfect creation, a flawless work that caused God Himself to declare: “indeed, it is very good” – that creation was broken. What would He do?

We stand in the midst of a life full of broken things, things that we have broken, things that others have broken. From the beginning man has been breaking the things that God has entrusted with. When God returns, what will He do with us? **WITH VENGEANCE, GOD SAVES A BROKEN CREATION.**

1. He comes with vengeance

Do we have a right to be angry? When your son or daughter takes the car without permission and backs into someone, breaking the tail light, it is likely that dad or mom will be somewhat upset. Is it, however, in the place of mom or dad to punish sin? You may take away the keys or some other privilege, you may discipline your children in different ways, but revenge does not belong to us.

Romans 12:18–19 – Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

The word “recompense” in v.4 means “to repay actions for actions.” To repay sin does not belong to us. God comes with vengeance.

Sin has broken God's creation. It has separated man from the Creator. Sin is what stands between you and God, stealing His creation away, breaking it, burdening it. “So

as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men.”

Just one chapter prior, chapter 34, the Spirit reveals a judgment that comes against all nations. He calls for all the world and all things to come forth and hear these words. Hear of the wrath of the LORD against all nations, against sin. **Isaiah 34:5 – “For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse, for judgment. He calls this, 34:8, “the day of vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.”**

We must come to grips with God’s wrath against sin. It is very real. For God to leave sin unpunished would leave Him a liar. It would mean that God will dwell with sin. It would destroy His holiness – for the holiness of God is to be completely separate from sin. Death is the absence of life. Sin is the absence of God. Thus hell is just that – the eternal absence of life and God.

Isaiah 34:8 – For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

But notice the cause that is being vindicated! It is the cause of Zion! And what is this cause of Zion? Isaiah spoke of it in chapter 1 – **Isaiah 1:27 – Zion shall be redeemed with justice, And her penitents with righteousness.**

Through Isaiah, the Spirit is looking ahead, beyond. **v.4 – With Vengeance, with the recompense of God He will come and save you.** The Spirit speaks of the coming of God in the flesh. He looks to the culmination of God’s redemption – Christ, the Coming One. This is the cause of Zion; it is the saving cause of God. From the foundation of the world, God has been looking to this event. **Isaiah 63:4 – For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.** For in Christ, God both vengeance and redemption have come. In Jesus, God comes to repay sin with the punishment God alone can give. In fact, Jesus Himself is the payment. **2 Corinthians 5:21 – For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

The repayment, the wrath of God against sin is the cause of Zion. It is a cause which would leave God’s own Son crying out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” The vengeance of God comes to save you, to rescue and restore what it broken. This is why opposition to this cause brings such a devastating result. When Isaiah says in chapter 34, **the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, and His fury against all their armies** – it speaks in contrast to Zion, which is the people of God, the true believers in Christ. Zion is the spiritual assembly of those who have saving faith in the saving work of Jesus. All other nations stand outside and against this free gospel message. That is why God’s vengeance against sin still rests upon those who do not believe. They reject the righteousness that is found in Christ and are left separated, and opposing the cause of Zion. On the last day, the wrath of God will be against all who are enemies of this cause. Yet for those who believe in this cause – for those who grasp and cling to this saving vengeance in Christ, the last day brings salvation. **WITH VENGEANCE, GOD COMES TO SAVE.**

2. He comes to save

“If I have to come down their...” “If we have to stop this car...” So often this means there will be consequences to follow. As a child, this threat usually straightened things out.

We hear different references in Scripture to God “coming down here.” These are the moments in history where God intervened with some great work. Either He brought a work of His wrath or He brought a great miracle of deliverance. In Christ, God did both. (**v.4**) Through the vengeance that must be carried out, God comes to repair what was broken – He comes to save.

Isaiah wrote this prophecy just prior to a great event in the lives of God people – THE EXILE. The people of God had fallen far from the ways of God. In 536 B.C., the Babylonian armies will invade Jerusalem, destroy the Temple, and carry the people eastward into captivity. The Temple was left broken. When would God come to save and restore His people.

Have you felt as though in exile? Sin exiles us from the good that we should be doing. Sin exiles us from the faithful Christian lives we should be living. It breaks more than taillights; it breaks trust; it breaks relationships.

God will not leave it in our hands to repair the damage. Can we open the eyes of the blind? Can we make the deaf to hear? Can we cause deserts to spring forth with water and become a fruitful field? Granted, God has worked through us many great innovations that make it possible to reduce some symptoms of sin. Still, no matter how many cures, no matter how many technological discoveries allow us to increase the supply of food and water, we are still broken.

Romans 8:22 – For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

There is a “groan” that this creation lets out every day. Maybe its a bad hip. Maybe its a son or daughter, grandmother or friend that has been diagnosed with something awful. Maybe its a quick temper. Maybe its a tough marriage. Maybe its the guilt of past sins. “Ugh!”

In Matthew chapter 11, some disciples of John the Baptist come to Jesus asking Him: “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” Jesus responds: **Matthew 11:4–6 – 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.”**

The “coming one” is a reference to such Old Testament prophecies as the one we are looking at. The Old Testament believers were looking for the One who is Coming. See how Jesus is that Coming One. See how He healed this broken Creation. See how in Him was found the restoration of what has gone wrong in your life. Jesus took in Himself the curse of sin to set us free – to save this fallen world.

All those burdens of our sinful flesh are lifted in Jesus. Through many miracles Jesus proved that He was the One to restore all things. In our Scripture reading, we read of how Jesus groans within Himself. This is the same “groan” that Paul writes is the sound of all creation until now. Jesus has felt this burden, this curse. He looks up to heaven crying out “Ephaphtha!” He uses that same Hebrew word we find in our text twice: v.5 – **the eyes of the blind shall be opened (Ephaphtha) ... the ears of the deaf shall be opened (Ephaphtha).**

He has spiritually opened our ears and eyes. If not for the coming of Jesus, we would stand in dread of this return of God. We would be blind to His saving love. We would be deaf to His words of comfort. We would limp around trying endlessly to make our walk straight and upright. We would remain broken.

But now that bad hip, that friend or family member that has received such bad news, that quick temper, that tough marriage, that guilt – all are given to Christ. We can see through all the sin and ugliness of our lives to the pure joy that is given to us through Jesus.

(v.6b) As Jesus said to the woman at Samaria: “whoever comes to Me will never thirst!”

Jesus, Refuge of the weary,
Blest Redeemer, whom we love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Savior from the world above

In the midst of a broken world, a desert dreary, we find fountains of life spring forth. Here where we gather around His word we are given what our souls so desperately thirst for – the pools of God’s healing. Just take a moment to rest here. Here is where we can lay the curse aside, and in one fellowship, drink of this water – the water of life.

Be strong! GOD COMES TO SAVE.

3. He comes again

Well, now you’ve gotten back that important item. You’ve worked on it and fixed it – somewhat at least. Yet even though it is put back to its proper place in your life, it still does not quite look the same. It just doesn’t quite function the way it used to. But still it is yours. You have it. You now care for it. And that is what really matters.

We find ourselves in much the same situation as that precious item you tried to fix. It just never seemed quite the same. We carry scars. This is why even though we are made right with God, fully new in His eyes – even though we can now see and hear, we can now leap and laugh with our Creator – still we suffer. This is why we look beyond. We look beyond the scars and suffering to His return. He comes again to restore all things.

From the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, all of the fallen creation meets full salvation in Jesus. His miracles were proof that in Him is found the answer to every sickness, every disease, every sin committed.

As Jesus did in His earthly life, so does all creation – groan. It is what we refer to as the tension between the now and the not yet. We live in heaven and earth at the same time, both receiving every spiritual blessing and experiencing many physical curses, including the burden of a sinful flesh. It is through faith in Jesus, the resurrection and the life, that we are transported. We go to that heavenly place that God has placed in your heart. Jesus takes us away from the ways of sin, to live for heaven. Let us leap like a deer! By words and actions leap with heavenly joy. Not in a sarcastic or fake way. In a simple contentment, you leap. The world will go on groaning, filling itself with cravings, complaints, and discontent. But your faith confesses a heavenly hope, looking to His return. Your faith expresses a freedom from the burdens of this world that makes you light as a deer.

And so with all the creation – with flowers, streams, with the birds above and the beasts of the field – we look heavenward; we look to the second coming of God. **Isaiah 44:23 – Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, And glorified Himself in Israel.**

In His first coming, God was in flesh bearing sin. In His second coming God is in glory to rescue all creation from the burden of sin. All who believe in this salvation through Christ, are ushered into the new creation – the new heavens and new earth. Blindness, deafness, limps, and lumps will be no more. The resurrection God promises will restore all things giving us a heavenly body and bringing us into full communion with Him in eternity. Be strong. WITH VENGEANCE, GOD HAS COME, AND IS COMING TO SAVE THIS BROKEN CREATION. Amen.