

<sup>8</sup> Thus says the LORD: “In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages; <sup>9</sup> that You may say to the prisoners, ‘Go forth,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’ They shall feed along the roads, and their pastures shall be on all desolate heights. <sup>10</sup> They shall neither hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor sun shall strike them; for He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them. <sup>11</sup> I will make each of My mountains a road, and My highways shall be elevated. <sup>12</sup> Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, and these from the land of Sinim.” <sup>13</sup> Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted.

Text: Isaiah 49:8-13 A 3-30-25 Passion History #4 Psalm 67 Responsive Psalm: 85  
Hymns: 155 (alternate tune), 141, 245, 145

### **PRAISE GOD FOR OUR SALVATION IN JESUS!**

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Most people will admit that they’re not perfect. But do you think that’s a good enough confession to God: “Nobody’s perfect”? Can you imagine as a child trying that on your parents when you had done wrong? “Hey, Mom and Dad, nobody’s perfect.” They wouldn’t accept that from us, and neither will the holy, righteous God. How do we look before Him?

We don’t have to wonder, because He tells us in His Word: “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Ro. 3:23). We’re all sinful. “*All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*” – Isaiah 64:6. There’s nothing we can do to make up for our sins. “*The wages of sin is death*” – Romans 6:23. What we’ve earned because of our sins is eternal death in hell.

We’re told, “*Say to the prisoners, ‘Go forth,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’*” We’re “*prisoners*” to sin. If you think that’s too strong a statement, try deciding not to sin anymore. By nature we’re “*in darkness.*” By ourselves, we can’t find our way to God. By ourselves, we’re lost and wandering with the rest of the world.

We need God to show us the truth about ourselves, and about Himself. God sent Jesus to set us prisoners free. Jesus says, “*If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed*” (Jn 8:36). God sent Jesus to rescue us who were lost in darkness. Jesus says, “*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*” (Jn. 8:12)

God knows we need a Savior from sin. In our text God the Father says to His Son, Jesus, “*In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in the day of salvation I have helped You.*” The “*acceptable time*” and “*the day of salvation*” are the time when God sent Jesus to save us. As the Bible says, “*When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son....*” (Gal. 4:4)

God said to Jesus, *“I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You as a covenant to the people.”* God the Father said about Jesus Christ, *“This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased”* (Mt. 3:17). Our salvation wasn’t easy for Jesus. When He was in agony in The Garden Of Gethsemane over His coming suffering and death, His Father sent an angel to strengthen Him (Lk. 22:43). Jesus carried out His Father’s plan for our salvation. Jesus lived a perfect life in our place. Jesus took on Himself the punishment we deserved. Jesus died for our sins on the cross. By giving us faith in Jesus and His perfect life and innocent death, God saves us.

God says that Jesus will *“cause [the people] to inherit desolate heritages.”* *“They shall feed along the roads, and their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.”* *“Desolate heritages,”* *“along the roads,”* and *“desolate heights”* are not at all places where sheep can find good grazing. The idea is that in the midst of this sin-sick world, in the face of our problems in life, God richly nourishes our souls in Jesus. When and where it seems impossible to us, Jesus comes with His salvation and help and blessings.

We’re told, *“The LORD has comforted His people.”* Isaiah wrote those words seven hundred years before Jesus was born. Yet God says that in Jesus He *“has comforted His people”* (my emphasis). God promised He would comfort His people in His Son. And when God promises something, it’s as good as done.

Bad things and unfair things sometimes happen to us. They can cause us much trouble and heartache. God doesn’t comfort us by making sure we never experience such things. Because of sin we’re going to have problems in life. For Jesus’ sake God comforts us and sees us through the bad times.

We’re told, *“The LORD ... will have mercy on His afflicted.”* “Mercy” in the original is very loving and full of comfort. It depicts the mercy and pity of the Lord as continuing uninterruptedly, as a fixed and settled attitude on His part (August Pieper, *Isaiah II*, ©1979 CPH, p. 369). The psalmist says, *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy”* (Ps. 103:8). We deserve God’s anger and punishment. We deserve to be forsaken by God. Jesus bore His Father’s righteous anger and punishment over our sins in our place on the cross. Jesus allowed Himself to be forsaken by His Father for our sins in our place on the cross. All we can do is beg God to have mercy on us. And because of what Jesus did for us, God does.

We’re told, *“Thus says the LORD,”* Jehovah, the living God, the God Who sent His Son, Jesus, to save us. *“I will ... give You as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth.”* Jesus would be born through the Jewish race. But He wouldn’t only be the Savior of the Jewish people. Jesus is the Savior of all people. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (Jn. 3:16, my emphasis)

We’re told, *“I will make each of My mountains a road, and My highways shall be elevated. Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, and these from the land of Sinim.”* (“Sinim” may refer to China, but we don’t know for sure.) These words remind

us of what Isaiah says a few chapters before our text. *“Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth”* (Is. 40:3b-4). They speak of God making a good road through the mountains. The idea is that God has made it so everyone, no matter where he or she is in the world, can come to Jesus and be saved. The way to Jesus is through hearing and believing His Word. As Paul says, *“The Gospel of Christ ... is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes....”* (Ro. 1:16)

We end with the fitting words, *“Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains!”* Isaiah is speaking poetically here, urging us to praise God for His salvation in Jesus for all people!

God loved the world so that He gave  
His only Son the lost to save  
That all who would in Him believe  
Should everlasting life receive.

God would not have the sinner die,  
His Son with saving grace is nigh,  
His Spirit in the Word doth teach  
How man the blessed goal may reach.

Glory to God the Father, Son,  
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!  
To Thee, O blessed Trinity,  
Be praise now and eternally! Amen. (TLH #245:1, 3, 6)