

Text: Isaiah 12

Title: "Zion's assurance of salvation"

Time: 11/16/2025 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Perhaps the best college basketball game I have ever watched was a contest between the UConn Huskies and the Syracuse Orangemen. The game was played as a quarterfinal of the 2009 Big East Tournament. Syracuse won the game by ten points, 127 to 117, but it took them six overtime periods to do so. The game started at 9:36 pm and did not finish until 1:22 am the next morning. At no time in the first five overtimes did the Orangemen have the lead. Only in that sixth overtime did they pull away for the win, and then the outcome was finally known.

It may take a while, but there comes a point in every sporting event when the outcome is no longer in doubt. If it is a close contest, that point may not come until the very last play. Once that outcome is known, the stadium erupts in a shout of elation and celebration.

In the previous chapter, Isaiah wrote about that day when the outcome of the contest between the Lord and all who oppose Him will be known to all (11:10). The Puritan Richard Sibbes wrote of that day: "But though God doth defer, yet in that day he doth perform. It is set down indefinitely, for it is not fit we should be acquainted with the particular time. . . . He sets not down a particular time, but 'in that day,' wherein he meaneth to be glorious in the performance of his promise. There is a time, and a set time, and there is a short time, too, in regard of God, and a fit time. . . . He hath a day, and a certain day, and a fit day to answer the waiting of all his people" (*The Glorious Feast of the Gospel*, 151-152).

Here in chapter 12, Isaiah tells us what the shout of elation and celebration is going to sound like in that day (12:1, 12:4).

Verse six of our chapter tells us that it is going to be a loud and confident shout of victory.

What we must trust by faith in the writings of Bible authors like Isaiah today, will in that day be what we see with our own eyes. That will be assurance of salvation. To the degree we can see this ultimate victory of the Lord over evil with the eyes of faith in our day, we shall be able to live with the assurance of salvation we need now, just as we shall have it then.

These six verses of chapter 12 describe for us what assurance of salvation is for the inhabitant of Zion (v. 6). *Zion* is the OT name for the Jerusalem of Christ's future kingdom on earth. The word *inhabitant* is feminine. Zion is the wife of Yahweh and the bride of Christ. The Jerusalem of today is nothing like what it shall be in that future day, but we are no less the citizens of that future Zion gathered for worship this morning. When Isaiah writes, "O inhabitant of Zion" (v. 6), he is talking to us who have the promise of our salvation today.

As we learn more about the believers' assurance of salvation here, we will find the grace of our assurance of salvation, the joy of our assurance of salvation, the disciple-making ministry of our assurance of salvation, and the sure foundation of our assurance of salvation.

#### I. The grace of our assurance of salvation (vv. 1-2).

Illustration: On Friday I received a news feed that reported on a recent Gallup Poll, which found a 17 point drop over the last 10 years in the percentage of Americans who are willing to say that religion plays an important part in their lives. In 2015, 66% of Americans were willing to say so. Now in 2025, only 49% respond this way. On the same day I watched a video about the 2018 collapse of the Willow Creek Church, the leader of the seeker-sensitive church growth movement of our day. This multi-thousand-member church collapsed under the weight of the moral failings of its leadership. One wonders

whether the difference between 2015 and 2025 is connected in any way to tragedies similar to this one in 2018.

Application: What we do not have to wonder about, of course, is the truth that we need not tremble at news feeds like this (v. 2). With assurance of our salvation, we can respond that we trust and are not afraid. We do not tremble.

There was a time, of course, when it was right for us to tremble ("thou wast angry with me"). That anger was the righteous response of the holy God to the sin of every sinner like you and me. Ps. 7:11, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." This is where every believer's saving faith begins. He starts trembling before God's just anger over his sin, and that leads him to salvation.

Illustration: Notice that the text here says *me*, not *us*. When the whole class makes the teacher angry with its misbehavior, it is quite a different personal experience than when it is just yourself who is in trouble with the teacher.

Each individual sinner is in trouble with holy God. Salvation does not come to us all together at once. It comes to us one-at-a-time. The good news, of course, is that it always comes with grace, God's love and compassion on us, which we do not deserve, and which we could never earn. God sent His Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins and to live for our righteous standing before holy God. The wrath of God turned from us and turned to Him (Isaiah 53). This is God's free gift of grace, His free offer of salvation. The assurance of salvation becomes ours when we simply trust God for it (v. 2).

With grace, we tremble not in a world of sin-gone-bad and lessening religion, because no religion ever could be our assurance of salvation anyway. We praise the Lord, not religion. He has had compassion on us, not religion. God is our salvation, not religion. He is our strength and song, not religion.

Can you say what Isaiah says all believers shall say with assurance in that day of final victory? Have you received by faith His grace? Are you trusting Him to save you, or are you still afraid?

## II. The joy of our assurance of salvation (v. 3).

Illustration: I saw another news story about water shortages in Iran. The story quoted the Iranian president as warning, "If it still does not rain, [citizens] have to evacuate Tehran." The article conjectured that it could be water mismanagement that ultimately topples current Iranian leadership.

Application: No such shortage threatens the waters of our salvation. Isaiah promises that with joy we shall drink from these inexhaustible waters. The last chapter of the Bible invites the thirsty to these waters: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:16-17).

To drink the water of salvation is to experience all the spiritual blessings in heavenly things that are ours in Christ (Ephesians 1). Perhaps the greatest salvation joy of all is the joy experienced by the One who provided these waters for us. We read of our Savior, Jesus Christ, "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). He rejoices as the Firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). And every time a thirsty sinner drinks for the first time with joy from the free waters of salvation, there is great joy in the presence of the angels (Luke 15:10). That is the joy of the Father over one sinner who repents.

## III. The discipleship ministry of our assurance of salvation (v. 4).

Illustration: I have heard the King James Version criticized as being hard to understand because of all the “thous” and “thees” we find in it. Understood correctly, however, the “thous” and “thees” are some of the features of the KJV that make the text more understandable to us than modern English translations are able to.

Today, our personal pronoun *you* can be either singular or plural. So when we read that word in modern translations, we do not know whether one person or more than one person is addressed. In the Elizabethan English of the KJV, however, *thou* is singular and *ye* is plural – two different words. This is helpful when it comes to translating biblical Greek and Hebrew, because those languages also have different words for singular and plural.

Application: We see this advantage of the King James Version in our passage this morning (v. 1, “thou”; vv. 3-4 “ye”). The progress of thought goes from a single person, in verses 1 and 2, to multiple people in verses 3 and 4. Isaiah is telling us that each of us individually must say what 1 and 2 says, and that when each of us do, we become connected with others for the blessings of verses 3 and 4. In other words, the gospel of verses 1 and 2 has on the one hand a multiplying force, and on the other a corporate connection. When we say out loud that we have trusted the Lord and are not afraid, others get saved and together we comprise the connected people of God.

Verse 4 is what we say as a group, and what we say is four commands that are also plural. These are commands we say to one another. This is the discipleship ministry of our assurance of salvation. We encourage one another to praise the Lord – to be a thankful people even in difficult times. We encourage one another to call on the name of the Lord – to pray together. We encourage one another to make known among peoples God’s deeds – to boldly witness for Christ. And we encourage one another to make mention of the exaltation of God’s name – to

bring to remembrance how exalted He is (KJV *make mention* = *make mention again; recall*). This we do especially when we celebrate the Lord's Table together in remembrance of Him.

The more assured we are of our salvation, the more we will be an encouragement to one another also to be assured.

#### IV. The sure foundation of our assurance of salvation (vv. 5-6).

Illustration: Brother Gary and I were reading about general revelation from Psalm 19 and Romans 1 last Thursday. Psalm 19 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." The passage goes on to describe the wonder of the sun's circuit across the sky. I heard the evangelist Ron Comfort ask someone once what are the chances that this massive burning ball of flame would be just the right distance from the earth, something just under 93MM miles, to perfectly ripen our tomatoes as they hang on the vine. That is a good question.

A couple of days prior, I had gotten a text from my son Brandon to go outside and look north. I stayed in bed, but I was happy to see the pictures that Brandon sent me from their home in Dunbarton. The sun's solar storm became a display of the wondrous color of the Northern Lights.

Application: This kind of general revelation of God's works of creation, providence, salvation, and judgment make Him known in all the earth (v. 5). The phrase *sing unto the LORD* is literally, "Sing Yahweh!" In other words, not only is the LORD the One to whom we sing, but also He is our song. We sing about Him. We sing about His wondrous deeds.

Illustration: Abby shared with us Thursday night that soon it will be lobster-trapping season in Nova Scotia. Her dad is a pastor there who is invited to board each lobster boat as the

season begins to offer a prayer for the crew and say a few words of encouragement.

She also mentioned that there is a lady who attends her church back home who is a crew-member on one of these boats. Abby says she is small in stature but physically strong, and that she is the loudest singer in her church. This dear sister not only sings loudly in church, she does so on her lobster boat too while she is out at sea pulling in traps. That is how a person assured of salvation obeys the command, "Sing Yahweh!" She does so because she knows that the sure foundation of the assurance of her salvation is the work of God.

Our passage concludes with the shout and yell of the female inhabitant of Zion in her assurance of salvation (v. 6). This is the wife of Yahweh and the bride of Christ. As citizens of Zion, our salvation is assured, the victory is complete, the contest has been won, because great is the Holy One in the midst of us. He is here this morning. His greatness is our assurance.

We do not know we are saved because we are good people. We do not know we are saved because we have accomplished much for the Lord. We do not know we are saved because we feel like it. We do not know we are saved because we were born in the right home or have attended the right church. We know we are saved because great is the Holy One in whom we have placed our faith. He will not fail us.

Conclusion: We have noted from verse 3 that the assurance of our salvation includes the experience of joy. That same word for *joy* can describe the experience of some for whom it is not appropriate (Isaiah 22). This is the joy of a people who seek not the waters of salvation, but water of a different kind: "Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago" (v. 11).

The Lord tells these people, “You can dig a ditch for a pool, but you have forgotten the One who made the water.”

The joy of this different water source is a different joy: “And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die” (v. 13).

It troubled Isaiah that many of his people rejected the Lord’s assurance of salvation in their lack of trust and their unbelief: “Therefore said I, ‘Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labor not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people. For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains’” (vv. 4-5).

With which joy shall we live? What water shall we drink — that gathered by ourselves or that given to us by the Lord? Will our the joy be the joy of salvation through faith? Or will we remain content with the joy that offers no such assurance?

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*