

Title: God IS Salvation
Text: Isaiah 12.1-6
Theme: The Promise of Salvation
Series: Isaiah #17
Prop Stmtnt: God's promise of salvation guarantees our rescue, thanksgiving and worship.
Aim: I aim to call my people to be grateful now, and worship now in view of their salvation to come.

A GPS can be a wonderful thing, except that often times they only show you where you are at the moment. One of the benefits of a map is being able to see the big picture so you know where you have been and where you are going.

For several months we have been studying the Old Testament book of Isaiah. The overall theme of the book is: Our God Saves! This is obvious because we run into this over and over, as we do in our text for this morning. Isaiah is a prophet who lived and ministered to the southern kingdom of Judah around 700 BC when Assyria was the dominant force in the known world and when Babylon was attempting to throw off Assyrian power and emerge as a power in her own right. While world history looks at events through the eyes of power, God looks at history through the eyes of his plan for his people. His call to his people remains his call to us. Turn to me and be saved, because I am God, there is no other. Today, we are going to look at a chapter that is comprised of a two-part hymn. But, in order to appreciate this hymn, we need a map, not just a GPS. Isaiah is, in many ways, like the Bible. It has two parts: 1-39 is much like the OT (you have a problem) and 40-66 is much like the NT (only God can save you). Even though the first part of the book emphasizes the seriousness of attempting to reject the authority of God, there is still a number of places that tell us about God's mercy and God's plan to rescue his people, even if it just a remnant.

- 1-5 God's people have a serious problem!
- 6 God is on the throne and must be trusted!
- 7-39 Who are you going to trust, God or the Nations?
- 7-12 Ahaz trusted in the Nations, and made a mess
- 13-35 Don't trust the nations because God is judging the nations
- 36-39 Hezekiah trusted in God and God delivered him.

Our text this morning comes at the end of the first section of this main argument. In spite of the fact that Judah is in deep weeds and headed for so much sorrow, Isaiah sees that one day, these people will believe. In fact, Isaiah sees that day of God's deliverance with such certainty that Isaiah anticipates what our response is going to be like. The result is the great text of hope, joy and confidence. I have looked forward all week to reading this and preaching this.

Read Text:

Section of Isaiah – trusting God! We demand to know, why should I trust God? What evidence can God put forth that I will deem good enough for my approval? What can God do that will meet my standard of expectation? What is that for you? For some it is the fixing of a marriage, or the provision of a job, or the removal of a temptation or sinful habit, or the healing of a terrible disease that has gripped a child, or providing you with a child. You pray and pray for deliverance based on your schedule, and if God does not come through, then you have determined that God has not met your standard. God did not measure up. Whatever God is, if he is, he is at the least, not all that he is cracked up to be. Most people fail to realize how fundamentally flawed, and intrinsically arrogant that is! God is not on trial! I am not the judge who is in any position to haul him into court (even if it is my own puny, little, narrow-minded court) and sift through the evidence that I select for my evaluation, while God nervously rubs his hands and paces back and forth with shallow breaths and awaits my verdict as to whether or not I will trust him. ARE YOU KIDDING ME!!!

Think of this! Bench-press this! What guarantee did Israel first give to God, that if God would send them a deliverer and would rescue them from Egypt, that they would serve him faithfully all their days? God, completely unprompted, by his own volition, chose to make a promise with Abraham, and he, on the basis of his own goodness and faithfulness carried that out by delivering Israel from Egypt. Over and over the Psalmists and the prophets remind Israel of that deliverance and ask the obvious question. Since God, on the basis of his own power, character and plan demonstrated his worthiness of our trust at that point, and since God is still the same God, is he not worthy of our trust now? Let's bring this a truth a little closer to home for us. The deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage through a savior from Egypt then, was a picture of a much greater deliverance of sinners in bondage to sin, by means of a Savior. We need to ask ourselves this question. What guarantee did we first provide to God that rendered us worthy of Him sending His very own Son to this earth as our Redeemer? Did we give God a deposit of faith that said, if you send us a Savior, we promise you that we will believe? No. In fact, "*God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Romans 5.8) What else do you need? What greater thing can God do that would make him deserving of your trust than in the giving up of his own Son for you? "*He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*" (Romans 8.32) Beloved, we need this text here in Isaiah 12. We need to hear Isaiah singing the praises of God, declaring the mercies of God, heralding the salvation of God, extolling the power of God, reveling in the character of God, championing the promises of God, anticipating the plan of God and banking on the sovereignty of God so much that he states with joyful boldness, even in the midst of difficult days, he states with joyful boldness that not only will God be vindicated, but God's people will see it, experience it, taste it and will, one day, with their whole hearts declare it! Notice how the chapter begins. "*You will say in that day:*"

In that day, you may remember, is a phrase that the prophets use to refer to the “Day of the Lord.” The “day of the Lord” is a time of specific judgment upon those who reject God as well as a time of deliverance for those who trust in God. (v.1 – see 11.1, 11.10-11)

So, here is where we are in Isaiah. In response to the fact that our God saves, that THE KING will come; that his kingdom will come; that his deliverance will be complete; that his enemies will be dealt with; your gratitude toward God, your confidence in God, your declaration and proclamation of the worthiness of God and your loud, glad, uninhibited, unabashed, un-intimidated, whole-hearted, full-throttled worship of God as part of the people of God is absolutely, positively guaranteed.

This is what you will say to God (vs. 1-2). Ok grammarians, what is the verb tense? It is future. This is what you are going to say. You can go ahead and write a check of thankfulness today based upon the guaranteed deposit of your salvation then. Isaiah is telling them that you will say thank-you because God will save you. What is the point?

1. Salvation produces Gratitude. (1)

You are going to be overwhelmed with gratitude when you realize your salvation. But, this statement here begs a question. How can God’s anger be turned away? We may be tempted to think that God is like us, in that, if we wait for a while, then God will cool off and sort of forget about it – right? Is that how God is?

When I was about 8 years old, I was in Iowa one summer visiting my grandparents. We went, one evening to visit a relative, who, let’s just say, really loved money. He was the type of guy that would have sold his own kids if he could get enough for them. Anyway, he had a big yard, and a riding lawn mower, so, I decided to drive this thing around and around and around the yard, which after a while was rather boring. Sitting in his driveway was a brand new Buick. So, to add some excitement to my evening I tried to see how close I could come to his car without hitting it. One time, however, I got way too close and instead of pressing on the brake, I panicked and only pressed on the clutch and slammed right into the driver’s side door. I knew that I was in deep weeds, so I ran. I literally ran all the way to the other side of the town! (ok, only 3 streets away) I found an apple tree and climbed all the way to the top, where I could not be seen. My hope was, that his anger would perhaps turn into a wee bit of concern when I couldn’t be found. I stayed in that tree for a long time that evening. And it worked. But is that how God’s anger works? Does God go on a long walk in order to cool down? NO! God’s anger is not primarily emotional, but it is judicial. That is, God’s anger is his settled disposition against the wrongness of sin. God’s anger is the result of his perfect righteousness being offended by sin. And as the Jews clearly understood from the book of Leviticus, that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. Isaiah does not spell out the details of this yet, but, some how, some way, there was going to be an atoning sacrifice made on behalf

of sinners. God's anger does not just settle down, God's anger has to be appeased. Later on in chapter 53 we find out how. We find out that God is going to send a Messiah, this King, to be our Savior. He is going to remove the wrath of God from us, because He is going to take the wrath of God upon himself. God's wrath is going to be averted from us because it has been redirected upon him. God is going to be just and righteous in his dealing with sin, and is going to be merciful in his dealing with us. Isaiah is saying here, that "IN THAT DAY" when you get that, when you realize that, when you experience that, you will give thanks! You will say, I will give thanks to you, O LORD! Instead of experiencing your wrath, I experience your comfort. By the way, the 2nd half of Isaiah (which I liken unto the New Testament), begins with the word, "comfort." This text here is a taste of what is coming.

You see, it is not just the fact of salvation that puts high-octane fuel in our worship engines, but as verse 2 makes clear, it is the means of salvation that just overwhelms us. Not only are we rescued from God's anger, but God himself is MY salvation. You will say, "God is my salvation" because:

2. Our God saves!

This hymn of triumph is not a staid, stodgy, stoic, stuffy, reserved, rigid, respectable and restrained musical piece. This is the language of delightful surprise! Behold! Look at this!

There is a family in our church where the mother of the wife (and grandmother) lives in New York. This grandmother thought that she was going to be spending Christmas alone. On Christmas Eve, this family showed up. Her grandson, walked into her room and said, "hi Nana." How do you think she responded? How would you? Delightful surprise evokes shouts of joy! Now, hold the phone for a second. What if, her grandson walked in and said, "Hi Nana" and she simply said, "oh, hi." What would that say?

Are you tracking with me? Do you understand the point that I am making here from this text? Verse 2 is not a half-hearted, "bored out-of-my-mind, when is this going to be over" response. Oh no! This is heart language. In fact, the pronouns in verses 1-2 are singular. Isaiah is saying that you are going to own this. You are going to see this. And when you see that God himself is your salvation; that God himself has come to die for you, that God himself, in the person of Jesus Christ has averted the righteous wrath of God the Father by becoming the sacrifice in your place, that you will be so surprised that it will evoke shouts of joy!

The reality of God's salvation is the foundation for my trust. The certainty of God's salvation is the reason why I will not fear and the guarantee of God's salvation is rooted in God himself. The language of verse 2 is basically a repeat of Ex. 15.2, which is the 1st hymn of the Bible. What was that? It was a loud, raucous declaration of the deliverance of God at the Red Sea! God came through! Our God saves! God is my strength! (I am not my strength.)God is my song! (I am not my song.) God is my

salvation! (I cannot save myself, and no one but God can save me). Now, lest you think that I am making too much of this, I want you to think again of the context of this. Who is the king of Judah? Ahaz. What did he do back in chapter 7? He was given the opportunity to trust God. God said, “ask me for a sign and I will do it for you – anything – just ask”. And Ahaz said – no. In his feigned piety, this arrogant jerk said, “I will not put God to the test.” In other words, I am too full of myself, too dignified, to put myself into a position where I have to acknowledge the power of God. What is this entire section about? It is this point! Our God saves and ONLY God saves. There is no soul-rescue, no sin-forgiveness, no life-purpose, no satisfaction, no joy, no contentment, no peace, in anything or anyone else. You don’t have to ask him for a sign. He has already given you one. It is Christ! Christ is the means of our salvation. Christ is the One who shows us why God is my salvation. When you have the opportunity to express your trust in him, and you choose to reserve your voice, and you choose to hold back your praise, and choose to stuff your affections, and you choose to keep back your energy, and you choose to keep your time and your talents, and your treasure all to yourself; then I need to ask you this: What greater thing are you saving it for? John Trapp, the Puritan scholar said it so well and I heartily agree with him. *“No duty is more pressed in both Testaments than this, of rejoicing in the Lord. It is no less a sin not to rejoice than not to repent.”*

This text does not stop here. The one who is overwhelmed with God’s deliverance for them will tell others about the provision of God’s deliverance for them. So, not only do we see how salvation drives gratitude and salvation puts God on display, because only God can save, but we also get to see that salvation is not a gift that we can keep to ourselves. It must be shared.

3. **Salvation and Worship are for others!** (3-4b)

God’s deliverance motivates you to proclaim your gratitude to God before others. But notice the imagery that is painted in verse 3. Isaiah anticipates the day, when the people of God will draw water from the wells of salvation. The symbolism is clear. Isaiah sets forth a picture of wells that cannot run dry. They are full of water that people need and the redeemed, the rescued are excitedly drawing water from these wells in order to share it with others. This is a picture of missions. The people of God are excitedly drawing living water from wells that have no limit. There is plenty for others. They are running with buckets of water to the desperately thirsty and parched who have been left for dead. Now, they are splashing, drinking, rejoicing and playing in the abundance of water. What a picture of salvation. What a picture of evangelism. As Leon Morris said, *“There is nothing of the piety of the pond in Christianity.”* Meaning, there is nothing stagnant about the water of the gospel. Therefore, our response to the gospel cannot be stagnant. We sing it, *“Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all.”* For some of you those remain only as words on the screen. You will sing that with your all, when all of your heart is captured by the truth: Our God Saves!

The point is so clear. Salvation does not come from other nations. Salvation only comes from the true God. And you (Judah) are the people of God who are to bring salvation to them! This is a great text for missions. The OT people never quite got this figured out, but Isaiah envisions the day when they will. We are the New Covenant people of God, who are the recipients of these wells of salvation. Our gathering today is in partial fulfillment of this promise. We are the “peoples”. We are part of the nations of the earth to whom the message of God has come.

We are proclaiming that God is exalted, but we are doing this, not as a people who are on the outside looking in, but as ones who are on the inside. The God of the Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph is our God. He is the true God. And we are just as much his children than any citizen of Israel has ever been or ever will be. Because the only way one has ever become one of his own, is through faith in God. You must come to faith. You must abandon your trust in yourself and in your ability to earn moral points, or religious points, or think that your religious label or church attendance counts for a thing before God. You have no righteousness that earns you a thing expect more judgment. You need to be completely saved. And thank God, He has sent you a perfect Savior who, alone can save you so completely, that there is nothing left for you to pay. All you can do is humble yourself and receive this Savior as your King.

The text ends with a two verses that really function as one. The fact that God will save, that God will heal, that God will comfort, that God is salvation, that God’s salvation will be proclaimed to the ends of the earth and that God’s name will be famous throughout the entire world evokes a response of absolute delight. In fact, these two verses function as a great purpose statement for the book of Isaiah. God is not simply interested in you learning history and seeing the details of how he predicted and carried out his plan for his people and his plan to send a Redeemer. He tells us these things in order to capture our hearts. He tells us these things in order to amaze us so that we will respond in wonder and worship.

4. **Worship is our response to salvation!** (5-6)

Worship is to the LORD! (We sing about the LORD, and we sing *to the LORD*)
Worship is our response to the works of God. (*For he has done gloriously*)
Worship is our response to the worth of God – “*great in your midst...*”
Worship is our loud and joyful response to the worth of God. “*Shout and sing for joy*

Starting in verse three and continuing to verse six, the pronouns change from singular to plural. The individuals that are rescued and redeemed are now part of the people of God who together tell the world and then with others from all over the world who are rescued and redeemed declare to the ends of the earth, the worthiness of God. This is the kind of people that God has called us to be. He is jealous for our worship because he is zealous for our joy. He knows that He alone can save. He alone can satisfy. When you have truly experienced that, it will cause you to worship, it will cause you to witness, it will give you great joy.