

Isaiah – Chapter 12

WITH A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK AHEAD

Isaiah 12:6 – Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

This chapter is in the context of the prophecy of complete and absolute judgment but with the promise that complete and absolute restoration and glory is the ultimate conclusion. The phrase “on that day” refers to the day of restoration, therefore the thanksgiving expressed is not in the immediate context of judgment but in the future expectation and reality of restoration, salvation, and glory.

EXPOSITION

Now the Book of Immanuel (chapters 7–12) closes with a song. After the darkness of chapter 8, the brilliant light of 9:1-7, and the heavy judgment of 9:8–10:34, the remnant who have survived the blows and come to see the Branch in His glory (Chapter 11) finally open their mouths in praise.

Then you will say on that day, “I will give thanks to You, O LORD; For although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, And You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.” Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation. And in that day you will say, “Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; Make them remember that His name is exalted.” Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known throughout the earth. Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst.

The chapter is short, only six verses, yet it functions as the perfect conclusion to this section and everything that follows. This is a song of thanksgiving modeled on the great deliverance songs of the Old Testament. You hear echoes of Exodus 15, where Moses and the people sang after the Red Sea closed over Pharaoh’s army. The same structure appears here: personal testimony in verses 1-2, then a communal call to proclaim the news in verses 3-6.

Look first at the personal level in verses 1-2. The speaker is an individual Israelite who has lived through the anger of the Lord. The Hebrew verb for “was angry” is in the perfect tense; the anger is past and finished the anger also has a perpetual result, the salvation of the Remnant.

God’s wrath has done its work, the rod has fallen, and now the same God turns and comforts. The word “comfort” here is “נָחַם *nāḥam*” the same root we will meet again and again in chapters 40 and following. This word means to breathe, to regret, to comfort, to console, to avenge, to ease.

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God's anger burned, but eventually God turned aside (שׁוּב šûb) WE have these words that people love to use in context of a theologically loaded term, but this is God relenting, God turning aside, God's judgment is now over, and it is time for reprieve.

Your fierce breathing is spent, and you have turned back to me and you have given me a sigh instead.

The personal confession in verse 2 is simple and strong: "God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid." The phrase "I will trust and not be afraid" is almost a direct quotation of the earlier call in Isaiah 7:9 and 8:17, but now it is spoken by faith that has been tested and refined.

The word for salvation you will recognize "שׁוּעָה יְשׁוּעָה 'šû'â" deliverance, welfare, prosperity, victory, salvation.

Then the speaker piles up three designations for God: "the LORD GOD" (YHWH Elohim), "my strength," and "my song." The same shoulders that will carry the government of the world in 9:6 now become the personal strength of every believing Israelite. The song is not theoretical; it is sung by people who have walked through fire and come out the other side.

Verses 3-6 shift from the individual to the community. "Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation." There are three words that have to do with water in verse 3: draw, water, springs.

In Israel, drawing water from a well was daily labor. Here the Remnant draws water with joy because the source is no longer polluted by idolatry or injustice; it is the fresh springs of God's own salvation. Water is not only reality it also symbolizes life and supernatural provision (Isaiah 41:18, 44:3-4; Zechariah 14:8; John 4:10-14, 7:38; Revelations 21:6, 22:1, 22:17).

In verse 4-6, there are six things Israel will do:

1. Give thanks to the Lord
2. Call on his Name
3. Make known His deeds among the peoples
4. Make remembrance so that His name is exalted.
5. Praise the Lord in song
6. Shout for joy

The same Zion that was shaken by the Assyrian fist in chapter 10 now becomes the center from which the news of the Holy One spreads to the nations. They fulfil their mission as a light to the nations. There is now a confidence, a sharing without shame or fear. Israel becomes the center for knowledge, understanding, remembrance, praise, and song.

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Putting It All Together – Chapter 12 is only six verses long, yet it gathers up every major thread we have followed through the first twelve chapters.

- The Messianic Hope shines in the titles “God is my salvation” and “the Holy One of Israel.” The Child of 9:6 whose shoulders carry the government is the same One who has now become the personal strength and song of every believing heart.
- The Motif of the City reaches a high point. Zion, once the harlot city of chapter 1 and the target of the Assyrian fist in chapter 10, is now the joyful center from which salvation flows to the nations.
- The Holy One of Israel stands at the climax. His holiness judged sin fully; the same holiness now guarantees comfort and praise.

The chapter is not merely a nice ending to the first section, it is the theological bridge. The remnant has seen the anger turn away. They have tasted the comfort. They have drawn water from the wells of salvation. But for that to occur, their enemies need to be defeated and submit to God that is the importance of the Judgment of the Nations section chapters 13-35, the nations need to know the Holy One is great and the only God.

A LOOK BACK

Chapter 1 – The formal opening of the covenant lawsuit. Heaven and earth are called as witnesses. The nation is sick from head to foot, the faithful city has become a harlot, yet right in the middle God still says, “Come now, and let us reason together.” The chapter ends with the promise that Zion will once again be called the city of righteousness.

Chapter 2 – The bright tile of future glory: in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be chief among the mountains and nations will stream to it. Swords become plowshares. But immediately the tone drops: Judah is filled with everything but the Lord. The proud will be humbled and the Lord alone exalted in that day.

Chapters 3–4 – The purge of proud leaders and haughty women. Society collapses into chaos. Then, right in the darkness, the Branch of the Lord appears, beautiful and glorious. The remnant is made holy and Mount Zion is covered with the cloud and fire of God’s presence.

Chapter 5 – The heartbreaking love song of the vineyard. God did everything right, but the nation produced only wild grapes. Six woes name the poison: greed, drunkenness, mocking God’s timing, calling evil good, self-wisdom, and corrupt justice. The Assyrian army is already on the horizon.

Chapter 6 – Isaiah’s own call. He sees the Holy One on the throne, pronounces woe on himself, is cleansed by the coal from the altar, and is commissioned to a ministry of judicial hardening, yet with the promise of the holy seed in the stump.

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Chapter's 1-6 are general and vast. This is the prologue to the book and covers everything that is found in the rest of the book.

Chapter 7-12 is the Book of Immanuel

Chapter 7 – Ahaz refuses to trust the Lord during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis. The sign of Immanuel is given to the house of David: a virgin will conceive and bear a son. Near fulfillment assures Ahaz the threatening kings will soon be gone; far fulfillment points to God with us in the flesh.

Chapter 8 – The gentle waters of Shiloah are rejected; the flood of Assyria will come. The land is still called “Your land, O Immanuel.” Isaiah binds up the testimony among his disciples and waits for the Lord. The chapter closes in thick darkness.

Chapter 9:1-7 – But there will be no more gloom. Light breaks in Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walk in darkness see a great light. The yoke is broken as in the day of Midian. Then the reason: a Child is born, a Son is given. His name is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish the endless Davidic kingdom.

Chapter 9:8–10:4 – The northern kingdom refuses to return. Pride, refusal, civil strife, unjust lawmakers. Four times the refrain sounds. The anger of the Lord has not turned away.

Chapter 10:5-34 – Assyria is the rod of God's anger, yet the arrogant king does not understand this. The Lord will finish His work on Mount Zion and then punish the rod itself. A remnant returns and relies on the Holy One. The Assyrian army marches to Nob and shakes its fist at Zion, only to be cut down by the Mighty One.

Chapter 11 – The Branch from the stump of Jesse, full of the sevenfold Spirit, rules in perfect righteousness. Creation itself is restored. The root of Jesse becomes a banner for the nations.

Chapter 12 –The remnant praises the God whose anger has turned away, draws water from the wells of salvation, and calls the nations to join the celebration because the Holy One of Israel is great in their midst.

That is the first twelve chapters: indictment, future hope, present judgment, call to return, historical crisis, light in the darkness, refusal and rod, remnant, and finally praise. The mosaic is fuller but not complete.

Preview of the Judgment on the Nations - Chapters 13–35

Chapters 13–23 contain oracles against specific nations: Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, and others. These are not random pronouncements. They demonstrate that the Holy One of Israel is sovereign over every empire on earth, especially the historical and perpetual enemies of the Lord and Israel. The same God who judged His own people will judge the proud nations that He used as instruments.

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Chapters 24–27 form what is often called the “Little Apocalypse.” The scope widens to the whole earth. Cities of chaos are laid waste, the Lord reigns on Mount Zion, and death itself is swallowed up forever.

Chapters 28–35 return to woes against Judah’s leaders, warnings against trusting Egypt, and the final deliverance from Assyria under Hezekiah. The section ends with the desert blossoming and the ransomed of the Lord returning to Zion with singing.

Throughout these chapters the three threads remain visible. The Holy One of Israel judges the nations yet prepares the way for comfort. The Motif of the City contrasts the fall of proud capitals with the future exaltation of Zion. The Messianic Hope quietly undergirds everything; the Branch who will rule in righteousness is already in view.

The tone is heavy and the purpose is clear. God is not finished with the nations, and He is certainly not finished with His people. The lawsuit that opened in chapter 1 is expanding to the whole earth, but the song of chapter 12 has already shown us the outcome: the Holy One will be exalted in the midst of a rejoicing remnant. The light we saw in 9:1-7 has the last word.

Isaiah 12:6 – Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst.

We are in the economy of grace, we do not see the judgments of God currently is where we stand today. Judgment is real. The hand stretched out in anger is terrifying. But that same hand has turned to comfort, and the Holy One of Israel is great in our midst. May we, like the remnant of Isaiah’s day, draw water with joy from the wells of salvation and make His deeds known among the peoples.

The Prophetic Mosaic

Assembling the Vision

(Chapters 1-12)

THE DARK TILES
(Judgment & Rebellion)

The Covenant Lawsuit
(Chapters 1-5):
God enters a legal indictment against Judah for their spiritual 'wild grapes' and empty ritualism.

The Six Woes of Decay:
Specific 'rotten fruit' identified: greed, drunkenness, moral confusion, and the perversion of justice.

The Assyrian Flood (Chapters 8-10):
Because of Ahaz's unbelief, the 'waters of the Euphrates' (Assyria) sweep through the land.

The Holy One of Israel (Chapter 6):
Isaiah is cleansed by a coal from the altar to serve the King on the throne.

The Sign of Immanuel
(Chapters 7-9):
A virgin-born Son is promised—the 'Mighty God' and 'Prince of Peace' who ends gloom.

THE GOLDEN TILES
(The Messianic Promise)

The Branch of Jesse
(Chapters 11-12):
A righteous King emerges from a dead stump to restore creation and gather the remnant.

Unrevealed Future:
Chapters 15-66 yet to come.

THE THREE CORE THREADS

Theme	The Dark Reality	The Golden Future
The City (Zion)	A 'harlot' under siege.	The center of peace for all nations.
The King	Faithless (Ahaz).	The Branch of Jesse (The Messiah).
The People	A 'sick head and faint heart.'	A holy remnant drinking from wells of salvation.