

The Desert that Blossomed

Isa 35:1,2 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; ² It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God.

In this passage we see a most glorious and what may be called a beautiful poetic description of the church, the Kingdom of God upon the earth, and when brought to its fruition, it glorious end, a kingdom eternal in the heavens. When Isaiah tells us that the wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose he is talking about the church that exists in the midst of a dry deserted wilderness, he is talking about a land of Zion that shall cover the earth, the enlarged Zion. When Isaiah speaks of this kingdom as the land of Lebanon, Carmel and Sharon, it is to be noted that they were lands noted for their beauty, their coolness in the heat of summer, and their abundant growth of cedars and sweet smelling flowers. He was writing to a people that did not live upon those mountain sides with the cool breezes, but to a people that physically lived in a parched land, but spiritually lived on the hill sides of Lebanon. Even as we here live in a land of wooded forest and beauty yet in reality we live amongst a people dwelling in a wasteland of sin. What we shall see in this chapter is a glorious description of God's church, a kingdom you, by grace alone, have been made a part of. We shall see the church described as a desert that flourishes with beautiful flowers and through the written word we are granted the ability to behold the excellency of God's kingdom. We shall see the responsibilities of God's ministers within His church. We shall see that the church if a Highway of Holiness, and how nothing unclean shall enter God's kingdom. And finally that it shall be a place of singing with joy and gladness for all sorrow and sighing shall be removed forever. We shall then understand that this is a kingdom that begins here and now and shall forever be.

A. The promise, the wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad

1. The presence of God's kingdom shall bring about a glorious change that shall affect the world
 - a. Because of sin the world is a desert waste
 - b. Because of the fall the whole world had become a place of darkness and death

Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned

- c. And the sad result is that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

- d. The whole of creation proclaims that God is, yet men refuse to hear that truth so loudly proclaimed throughout the whole of creation around them
 - (1) The heavens declare the glory of God - world wide message Ps 19
 - (2) Yet that message proclaimed so clearly is suppress in sinful rebellion - Rom 1:18-20

*Rom 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **suppress the truth in unrighteousness**, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For **since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

2. But here we see the promise of a kingdom of God that shall cover all the waste places of earth and make a real change
 - a. The desert shall blossom abundantly
 - b. The glory of God will shine forth in that world of darkness
 - c. Therefore the desert will become a place of gladness and joy
3. This restoration began when God brought the remnant back from Babylon
4. From that remnant of the seed of David would come forth a Redeemer Messiah
 - a. It has had a greater fulfillment in what is called the great commission

- b. That command of our Lord to his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel
- c. We heard it proclaimed by our Lord just prior to His ascension

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

- 5. This world wide blossoming of the desert, this glorious kingdom had its beginning in the book of Acts but will not have its completion until fulfilled in eternity
- B. When we read that it shall blossom abundantly and be filled with rejoicing, even with joy and singing this speaks of a worldwide proclamation of the gospel
- 1. It had its beginning on the Day of Pentecost when 3,000 were added to the church
 - a. It was on that day of outpouring that Peter saw a grander vision
 - b. It was on that day that the Jewish Apostle first understood that the gospel was to go throughout the world

Acts 2:16-17 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;

Acts 2:21 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

- 2. Its first growth to the Gentile world was when by the ministry of Peter the Italian Cornelius was added to the church
- 3. And then it began to have wider circulation after the conversion and call of the Apostle Paul

CONCLUSION: As time passed the preaching of the gospel went forth throughout the whole world

The whole world began to see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God

Just as Isaiah prophesied here in this passage before us this morning, those living in a dry desert wilderness have seen the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God."

And where do we see the glory of the Lord

- We see it in the preaching of God's Word
- We see it in the praise of God in song
- We see it in the privilege of prayer
- We see it in His presence in our midst this morning

What we can learn here this morning is that when God speaks, it shall come to pass

What was true of the saints in Ephesus is just as true here this morning

They were dead in trespasses and sins

They who had been blinded by the god of this world were now citizens of a new and glorious kingdom

You here this morning were part of that kingdom made up of a dry desert wilderness, but now you are a living in a kingdom filled with gladness because God purposed that His gospel should be preached to you

Gladness and joy should fill your heart this morning

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When Isaiah speaks of this kingdom as the land of Lebanon, Carmel and Sharon, it is to be noted that they were lands noted for their beauty, their coolness in the heat of summer, and their abundant growth of cedars and sweet smelling flowers.

We see a glorious description of God's church, a kingdom you, by grace alone, have been made a part of.