

GIVE THANKS

Bible Background • Isaiah 12

Printed Text • Isaiah 12 | Devotional Reading • Psalm 92:1-8

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: UNDERSTAND that we should praise God for His mighty deeds; EXPRESS a willingness to praise God; and OFFER praises to Him for His mighty deeds.

In Focus

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was an English pastor, preacher, poet and hymn writer who wrote as many as 600 hymns, including the ever-popular “Joy to the World.” Although this hymn—based on Psalm 98 and first published in 1719—is sung primarily during the Christmas season, a careful reading of the of the hymn reveals that Pastor Watts was not actually alluding to the birth of Christ in the hymn but rather the Christ’s millennial reign. Consider these two of the four verses:

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ;

While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains

Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,

Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove

The glories of His righteousness,

And wonders of His love,

And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders, of His love.

In His first coming, Christ did not come to rule the world with truth and grace. He came to seek and to serve the lost. When He returns, He will rule and reign.

God gave Isaiah a vision of that time, and the prophet penned this beautiful psalm of praise that looks ahead and glorifies that great day.

Keep in Mind

“And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted” (Isaiah 12:4).

Focal Verses

^{KJV} Isaiah 12:1 And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. 2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. 3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. 4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. 5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. 6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

^{NLT} Isaiah 12:1 In that day you will sing: “I will praise you, O Lord! You were angry with me, but not any more. Now you comfort me. 2 See, God has come to save me. I will trust in him and not be afraid. The LORD GOD is my strength and my song; he has given me victory.” 3 With joy you will drink deeply from the fountain of salvation! 4 In that wonderful day you will sing: “Thank the LORD! Praise his name! Tell the nations what he has done. Let them know how mighty he is! 5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done wonderful things. Make known his praise around the world. 6 Let all the people of Jerusalem shout his praise with joy! For great is the Holy One of Israel who lives among you.”

The People, Places, and Times

The Prophets. God commissioned the prophets to fulfill a particular role—to be “servants of the Lord.” The prophets conveyed God’s message to men and women as such, they had special abilities to carry out their tasks: As “interpreters,” they explained God’s acts; as “seers,” they saw what was hidden from others; and as mouthpieces, they voiced God’s truth.

The prophets encouraged God’s people to trust in God alone and not to bow before human strength or military power. They firmly believed that God is the almighty ruler of the universe, the moral governor of the world and the covenant of Israel. He controls all things for the good of those who love Him. Therefore, God’s people should obey Him and not fear the empty threats of men.

The prophets encouraged God’s faithful people regarding the future. Moses had prophesied that God would cut off His people and send them into exile (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). Yet they received encouragement from God. Exile was not the end for them because God would restore His faithful people, and through them, He would send the Messiah (see, for example, Isaiah 51:11; 54:10).

Background

The great reign of Christ on earth (Revelation 20:1-6) is referred to as the “millennium,” meaning a thousand years (*mille* is Latin for “thousand” and *annus* is the Latin word for “year”). Many Old Testament prophets, including Isaiah, predicted this 1,000-year period. The prophet Isaiah said, “The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (9:6, NLT). Isaiah also prophesied: “In that wonderful day when the LORD gives his people rest from sorrow and fear, from slavery and chains” (14:3, NLT).

Of course, Isaiah was not the only prophet who was blessed with a vision of the reign of Christ on earth. The prophet Micah was given a glimpse of that time and joyfully wrote, “Everyone will live in peace and prosperity, enjoying their own grapevines and fig trees, for there will be nothing to fear. The LORD of Heaven’s Armies has made this promise!” (Micah 4:4, NLT). Zechariah, another Old Testament seer who served in Jerusalem after the exile as both priest and prophet, also looked forward to that great day and wrote: “And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be one LORD—his name alone will be worshiped” (Zechariah 14:9, NLT).

At-A-Glance

1. Praise the Lord (Isaiah 12:1-3)
2. Sing and Shout to the Lord (vv. 4-6)

In Depth

1. Praise the Lord (Isaiah 12:1-3)

Imagine a single day in which no one dies, no one gets sick, no war is waged, no crime is committed, every belly is full and all hearts are filled with joy and peace. Since the beguiling in the garden of Eden, not only has there never been one single day like this but not one single moment. Yet our Lord encourages us to anticipate not just one such day but also many glorious days. At that time all the effects of sin such as poverty and pain, death and destruction, and selfishness and sorrow will be completely eliminated. Isaiah looked at this day and his heart overflowed with song and praise for the Lord.

Isaiah compared the return of the people of Judah to the exodus experience at the end of chapter 11: “like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt” (Isaiah 11:16). At that time, Moses and the Israelites sang a beautiful song exalting God’s greatness and praising Him for His victory over their oppressors. In the future reign of Christ, God’s people will again praise Him for the final restoration of Israel and unification of His divided and scattered church. “In that day” (12:1), the unified church of Jew and Gentile with one voice will say, “I will praise (Him).” Isaiah was so sure of the fulfillment of this promise from God that he composed this song of praise thousands of years before its future fulfillment.

He praises God for His great love, which causes God to turn away His anger toward disobedient people and instead bless them with divine favor. When we call out to Him in sorrow and repentance, He not only turns away from judgment; He becomes a source of

comfort. His awesome power comforts those in danger. His omnipresence consoles the lonely. His infinite love is a comfort to all who seek Him, and His faithfulness comforts all that trust Him.

On that day, all God's people will say with wonder, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid" (v. 2). He not only has saved us, but He continually rescues us from the perils of life and death through the wisdom of His Word, the indwelling presence of His Spirit and the unceasing intercession of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ. Because we are surrounded inside and out and defended in the physical and the spiritual, we can trust and not be afraid.

Trust implies three things: security, confidence and hope. We are secure in our knowledge of God's infinite love for us. We have absolute confidence in God's ability to meet every need, overcome every obstacle and guide us along paths of right living. So rather than dwelling in the trials of today, we look forward in hope to the triumphs of tomorrow.

Yes, "the LORD Jehovah is my strength" (v. 2b). In all things, God's people are more than conquerors because we depend on strength greater than our own (see Romans 8:31-37). As God declared to the prophets of old, He proclaims to His people today and into all eternity, "It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6, NLT). Because we can depend on His strength, our hearts are merry and they burst forth, "singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, making music to the Lord in your hearts" (Ephesians 5:19, NLT).

2. Sing and Shout to the Lord (vv. 4-6)

What's in a name? In today's modern Western world, people tend to be concerned with how a name sounds rather than with what it means. This was not true of the ancient biblical world. In those days, parents' names for their children would reflect the future they hoped for their children, the character they desired for them, or maybe something that occurred during the birth of their children. As it is with the children of those ancient parents, the name of the Lord is packed with meaning. God's name signifies His eternity, His infinite presence and the holiness of His character.

In that day when Christ reigns on the earth, people will express their heartfelt gratitude for their deliverance from the defeated kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son. They will express this gratitude by calling on His name, making His exploits known to the world and proclaiming that His name is to be exalted. The Holy One's presence among His people will cause them to sing of His glorious deeds and shout for joy. What a glorious time that will be when all God's people can shout out in complete victory: "The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15, NLT).

Search the Scriptures

1. What two acts did God perform that caused Isaiah's heart to burst forth in praise (Isaiah 12:1)?
2. Aside from praising God with his lips, what three acts did Isaiah promise to perform in gratitude to God (v. 4)?

Discuss the Meaning

Contemplation of God's goodness to us serves two vital purposes: First, it causes us to take our minds off the things that trouble us and focus our attention on how blessed we are. Secondly, and most importantly, it brings joy and comfort to our hearts that causes us to sing and shout praises to His name.

Lesson in Our Society

How do you demonstrate your thankfulness to God? Isaiah expressed his gratitude by being both active and inactive. In his inactivity, he got alone with God, shut out the world and thanked Him. In his activity, he sang songs of praise to God and made Him known to others. We live in a time that features an avalanche of information and activities—so much that our fast pace can distract us from taking the time to be thankful. What can you change so that you can come before God with thanksgiving?

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Isaiah 12

1 And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

The context of this hymn of praise, written by Isaiah, is climactic in that it comes on the heels of the prophetic description of the Messiah in Isaiah 11. Some scholars suggest that this short chapter is derived from two brief psalms of thanksgiving, outlined in vv. 1-2 and vv. 3-6. George Buttrick, et al., state that Isaiah 12 “forms a ‘lyrical epilogue’ to the first main division of the book” (253) of Isaiah (Isaiah 1-12), sometimes referred to as “First Isaiah.”

It appears that this song of praise also has an echo, as Moses used some of the same phraseology when God delivered the Children of Israel from the hands of the Egyptians at the Red (or “reed”) Sea (see Exodus 15). Although the date and origin of this song cannot be established, it is clear that Isaiah was thankful for the blessing of Yahweh and the power to deliver His people.

In Isaiah 12:1, the phrase “that day” comes from the Hebrew word *yowm* (**yome**) and conveys the idea of a specific point of time and history. Another way to say this would be “on the Day of the Lord.” Scripture is replete with references regarding the “Day of the Lord” (see Isaiah 2:12-22; Ezekiel 13:5; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 16:14). Thus, it would appear that Isaiah is referring to the millennial period when God regathers His people into Zion (i.e., New Jerusalem; see Revelation 21:1-8; 22:1-5).

Notice, in Isaiah 12:1, that there shall be a declaration among God’s people (“thou shalt say”) to make mention of the goodness of God. Every person who has been affected by the Lord’s mercy is called to tell publicly of His lovingkindness in a form of praise.

This particular Hebrew word for “praise” is *yadah* (**yaw-DAW**), and some of its meanings include: “to speak out, confess, sing, and give thanks.” Essentially, *yadah* gives the idea of the acknowledgment of sin, and the public joy of the nature and work of God to deliver us from that sin. A secondary implication of this Hebrew verb is the expression of thanks to God by way of praising Him. The word “bless” would also be a good translation for *yadah*, as believers’ praise should always lead to giving thanks for God’s work on their behalf. Though praise is “corporate” in nature, here Isaiah affirmed that it must be an individual act of faith (“I will praise . . .”).

Isaiah also acknowledged that God had been annoyed and infuriated with His people because their sin was so grievous and pervasive (see Isaiah 1:2-31; also 2:5-5:30). The Hebrew word for “angry” (*anaph*, **aw-NAF**) illustrates anger as expressed through nostrils flared in exasperation. Indeed, a “sinning believer” would likely yield greater irritation from God, the name of Christ, and the church. Yet, Isaiah has made known to both his audience (and us) that God’s compassion for His people is always evident, as His wrath and fury has subsided. God demonstrates His comfort and care for those who trust Him.

The Hebrew word for “comfort” is *nacham* (**naw-KHAM**) and some of its meanings include “having pity, compassion, and consolation.” It is interesting that most of the references in the Old Testament to *nacham* speak of God “repenting” or changing His mind (for example, see Genesis 6:6-7; 1 Samuel 15:11; Jonah 3:9-10). However, a thorough understanding of *nacham* helps us see that like a mother who comforts her children (Isaiah 66:13), God also comforts His people (see Psalms 71:21). His compassion for Israel always “overflows” (see Hosea 11:8, NLT). As the church of Jesus Christ, and the “Israel of God” (see Galatians 6:16), we should thank God that we are recipients of His comfort today.

2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. 3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

As we come to the second, and final, stanza of the first hymn (and the first verse of the second song), the writer decisively affirmed the nature of God as “*El Yeshuw`ah*” (**ale yesh-OO-aw**), “One who saves, delivers, provides prosperity, rescues, and destroys enemies.” In both the Old and New Testaments, this phrase has a very strong spiritual meaning. As Jehovah is the God of our salvation (see Psalms 68:18-20), He brings forgiveness of sin (Luke 1:77) and the destruction of Satan’s kingdom from the lives of His people (1 John 3:8).

In the New Testament, the Greek word *Yeshuw`ah* was the name given to Jesus Christ by the angel Gabriel (see Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:31) and witnesses that God and Jesus are the same. Peter declared to the religious leaders: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). And, the apostle Paul made clear, “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

For Isaiah, *El Yeshuw'ah* provided two specific benefits: trust and confidence (“I will not fear . . .”). The Hebrew word for “trust” (*batach*, **baw-TAKH**) literally means, “to feel safe and secure in God and depend solely upon Him for our protection” (see [Isaiah 26:3](#)), while the idea of “not (being) afraid” is “to cease from terror, dread, anxiety or fear.” Why? Because we have a God who has “become” (Heb. *hayah*, **haw-yaw**) salvation for all who trust Him.

The context of [12:2](#) is significant because God is spoken of three times: God (*El Yeshuw'ah*); Lord Jehovah (Yahh-Yeh-ho-vah); and “become my salvation” (*hayah Yeshuw'ah*). This reveals the timelessness and self-existence of God. The key to the meaning of Jehovah/Yahweh is actually found in the verb *hayah*, as it speaks of “I AM THAT I AM” (see [Exodus 3:14](#)), or, as better translated, “I AM HE WHO IS,” or “I AM HE WHO EXISTS.” This is the one true God who is able to bring deliverance. No wonder Isaiah encouraged God’s people to sing!

As stated earlier, this text also echoes Moses’ song of deliverance as the people exited the Reed Sea (literal name), stood on the other side of the shore, and witnessed firsthand God’s power to destroy Pharaoh and their Egyptian enemies (see [Exodus 14:1-15:2](#)). Moses’ song confirmed the strength of God and His determination to provide salvation for Israel in its darkest hour. He has the same determination for us today. Who wouldn’t want to praise a God like that?

In [12:3](#), Isaiah connected the two “songs” with the word “therefore.” Often, this word gives the connotation “as a result” or “for this reason,” and perhaps we can ascertain the basis of that connection. Just as God brought Israel from the waters of the Reed Sea through to salvation, God also makes available the “water” of salvation for those whose trust is in Him.

The image of “draw(ing) water from the wells of salvation” ([Isaiah 12:3](#), NKJV) is intriguing. Raymond Brown, et al., suggest that this particular scene of the well is played out in Deborah’s song after Jael killed Sisera and Barak pursued and destroyed Jabin, the king of Canaan (see [Judges 5:11](#)). Author Merrill Unger affirms that it points toward Israel’s deliverance from the hands of Egypt (318; see [Exodus 15:1-21](#)). Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible concludes that the ancient Jews “seemed to have applied it to the times of Messiah. On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles they fetched water in a golden pitcher from a fountain of Shiloah” near Mount Zion, joyful all along. “They brought it through the water gate into the Temple, mixed it with wine,” and poured the mixture onto the sacrifice on the altar (Clarke, 573). They seemed to have adopted this custom as an emblem of future blessings, for it was not ordained in the Law of Moses. Although we see it in Isaiah, this song does not have a direct benefit with the Mosaic dispensation; the characterization seems more in line with the church than with ancient Israel.

Jesus used this same word play in the New Testament as He shared with the woman at the well (see [John 4:7-14](#)) and at the Feast of Tabernacles ([John 7:37-39](#)). Jesus established that the well of living water depicts the overflowing of the Holy Spirit. When we think of the power of God’s Spirit resonating through our lives and the benefits of salvation— eternal life God has guaranteed all believers whose trust and confidence is in Him, “perfect peace” in every circumstance; see [Isaiah 26:1-12](#)—we can’t help but praise God!

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. 5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

Isaiah continued his reference to “that day,” an indication when all God’s people shall gather (see [Revelation 7:11-17](#)); and salvation will be complete (see [2 Corinthians 6:2](#)), as God’s people pronounce “praises” to their God. Here, the Hebrew word is *yadah* (**yaw-DAW**), and it means to exult God with music, such as a song of praise, or a celebratory hymn for the glory and honor that is due Him. In the New Testament, Paul encourages us to sing and make a spontaneous melody in our hearts to the Lord (see [Ephesians 5:19](#)), and in [Psalm 33](#), the writer David tells us that we are to sing and praise God with a new song ([33:3](#)).

Isaiah instructed those who belong to God to call upon the Lord ([12:4](#)). The Hebrew word for “call” is *qara'* (**kaw-RAW**), and there are several ideas conveyed with this definition, including: “to cry aloud, proclaim, roar, preach, summon, implore, declare a name, summon someone important, or praise and celebrate with a loud voice.” As we look closely at [Isaiah 12:4](#), all of these definitions could be inserted in this verse, as Israel is called to speak loudly and confidently of God’s saving grace for His people so that His name will be lifted among the nations (see also [Psalm 34:3](#); [145:4-6](#)).

In what manner does Isaiah persuade the people to praise and exalt the Lord’s name? First, they are told to “sing unto the Lord” ([Isaiah 12:5](#), emphasis added). The Hebrew word for “sing” is *zamar* (**zaw-MAR**), and the idea is to celebrate something or someone with song or to be a part of continued praise with music. Thus, praising and singing to God must be a part of both our private and public lives. “Let

the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds” (Psalm 149:5, NKJV). We are instructed to sing our praises, not only in our local congregation but also in the privacy of our own homes. As David declared, “I will bless the LORD at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalm 34:1).

Next, Isaiah’s reason for praising the Lord is based on God having done “excellent things” (12:5). The Hebrew word for “excellent” (*‘addiyr*, **ad-DEER**) affirms “might, nobility, majesty, power, splendor and distinct in nature, and tells of the wonderful work God has done, chief among them.”

6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

Isaiah concludes this short chapter of a praise song and thanksgiving by conferring to the people the importance of “cry(ing) out and shout(ing)” with their praise. Later, in Isaiah 54, the prophet also commanded that the people do the same: “Sing . . . and cry aloud” (v. 1). The idea of crying out suggests that our praise and thanksgiving should be loud and glorious (see Psalm 66:1-2).

The prophet’s original address in chapter 12 was to the “inhabitant(s) of Zion,” indicating that this is a personal word for Israel regarding the mighty work of deliverance that Jehovah God has wrought for His people. In Isaiah 12:6, the phrase “Holy One of Israel” (Heb. *qadowsh*, **kaw-DOSHE**) affirms that God’s majestic holiness is without equal and is completely perfect. He is the “Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 1:4), the “holy God” (Isaiah 5:16, NIV), and the “Holy One” (Isaiah 40:25). God’s “name is Holy” (Isaiah 57:15), and because He is, God is also free from the moral imperfections and failures often associated with humanity (Hosea 11:9). Thus, we can depend on God to be faithful to His promises (Psalm 22:3-5) and complete in His deliverance of His people.

In Isaiah 12:6, the prophet assures us that the Holy One of Israel wants to be “in the midst” (Heb. *qereb*, **KEH-reb**) of His people. The sense of this word is to be so intimate that one can see, speak and touch another. Indeed, God desires that type of relationship with all of His people. That is the reason He became flesh and dwelt among humanity (John 1:14). Do we want that kind of relationship with Him?

Psalm 150:1-6 shares the importance of coming into the house of the Lord with praise and thanksgiving for God’s mighty work in and through Israel (and the church). We must remember that we are “God’s house” (Hebrews 3:6, NIV), and He wants to be in the midst of His people (see Revelation 1:12-13) to give divine direction to those who have a strong desire to praise His name. Indeed, praising God should be a part of our daily devotion. As David declared, our Lord “inhabitest the praises of (His people)” (Psalm 22:3). Believers certainly want to praise a God like that!

Say It Correctly

Jehovah. jih-HOH-vuh.

Zion. ZI-uhn.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY	Giving Thanks Is Good	(<u>Psalm 92:1-8</u>)
TUESDAY	Coming into God’s Presence with Thanksgiving	(<u>Psalm 95:1-7</u>)
WEDNESDAY	Remembering God’s Wonderful Works	(<u>1 Chronicles 16:8-13</u>)
THURSDAY	Giving Thanks and Praise to God	(<u>1 Chronicles 29:10-18</u>)
FRIDAY	Receiving God’s Goodness with Thanksgiving	(<u>1 Timothy 4:1-5</u>)
SATURDAY	Where Are the Other Nine?	(<u>Luke 17:11-19</u>)
SUNDAY	Giving Thanks to the Lord	(<u>Isaiah 12</u>)

Notes