

The background of the entire page is a composite image. The top half shows a dark, starry night sky with a prominent four-pointed starburst in the upper right quadrant. The bottom half shows a landscape of rolling, arid hills under a warm, orange and yellow sunset sky. The hills are illuminated from the side, creating soft shadows and highlights.

ISAIAH'S CHRISTMAS

ADVENT READINGS ON THE GOOD
NEWS OF GREAT JOY

BY ANDREW HALL

ISAIAH'S CHRISTMAS DAILY READING

December 1	<i>Isaiah 1:1-2:5</i>
December 2	<i>Isaiah 2:6-5:30</i>
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December 22	<i>Isaiah 59-61</i>
December 23	<i>Isaiah 62-64</i>
December 24	<i>Isaiah 65-66</i>

During Advent 2018, I planned to read through the book of Isaiah and spend time each morning thinking about the glorious message of Christ. I would write a summary of the reading and shared it online each day. The result is what you hold in your hands. Spending Advent with Isaiah prepared my heart for Christmas, and my hope is that these reflections will do the same for you.

The book of Isaiah has been called "The Fifth Gospel," and for good reason. The New Testament's use of "gospel" has strong connections to Isaiah (40:9). The setting of the book is gloomy: though God's people have disobeyed his commands, broken his covenant, and deserve judgment, God will come to bring peace and salvation to those who trust him (52:7).

Isaiah sees that there will be a King (chs. 1-39), a Servant (chs. 40-55), and a Messenger (chs. 56-66) who will come to bring salvation. In the political and spiritual turmoil of his day, Isaiah looks forward to the coming of Jesus Christ and the glorious future he will bring. His message is more than individual salvation (it certainly includes our forgiveness of sins), but this salvation includes the renewal of all things. God will save sinners and redeem the creation.

In his message of hope, Isaiah looks backwards and forwards: from the first exodus to a new exodus; from the creation to the new creation; to the first Jerusalem to the new Jerusalem; from the first Davidic king to the new Davidic King. The book may be challenging to read, but digging deep you will find that Isaiah's message is to produce joy. You will be surprised at how relevant Isaiah is for our day.

A few people made this work so much better, and the result is what you hold in your hands. With an editorial eye, Andrew MacLeod improved this work with his comments and suggestions. Amy Nelham used her artistic skill to make this booklet appealing and accessible. The mistakes that remain are my own!

My prayer for you is that you will find this good news of great joy is for you, and that your heart might sing with delight in Christ this Advent season.

Andrew Hall
November 2019

DECEMBER 1ST

READ ISAIAH 1:1-2:5

In his Advent sermon, German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer commented:

"The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come. For these, it is enough to wait in humble fear until the Holy One himself comes down to us, God in the child in the manger. God comes. The Lord Jesus comes. Christmas comes. Christians rejoice!"¹

Reading Isaiah during Advent will provoke the soul. The book authentically speaks to the brokenness of our world and the reality of judgment. At the same time, this harsh reality stirs a longing in the soul for something greater to come. Isaiah saw a people who had been reared by God, yet now they had become rebellious (1:2). Now there is only gloom, dread, the waywardness. Hope will come, but only when there is a realization that the people are poor in spirit.


Isaiah notes that the people's hearts are far from the Lord, as evidenced by their wickedness, injustice, and oppression (1:4). Her worship is corrupt (1:10-17) and she needs purification in heart and action (1:16ff). And God invites her to repent and receive his forgiveness and cleansing (1:18-20). The people of God (Zion) will be redeemed by justice and her repentant ones by righteousness (1:27). Final redemption will come to those who walk in righteousness and justice, but judgment awaits those who continue in rebellion (1:27-31)

But a day is coming when God will dwell again with humanity, and justice and peace will prevail (2:1-4). Until that day, we hear Isaiah's cry: "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord" (2:5) and we wait and pray with the apostle John, "Yes, Come Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20b)!

¹ From Bonhoeffer's December 2, 1928 sermon from Rev. 3:20. Quoted in Edwin Robinson, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christmas Sermons (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 21.

DECEMBER 2ND

READ ISAIAH 2:6-5:30



Superstitious. Wealthy. Arrogant. Fortune tellers advertise their services. Financial services abound. This description sounds like Western nations. But it is the description of God's people - both in modern times and Isaiah's day. Adopting mysticism (2:6) and arrogant from the comfort of wealth (2:7-8), God says that his people will be humbled and he alone will be exalted (2:9-11). His judgment will cause men to flee and seek refuge (2:10, 19-21; cf. Rev. 6:12-17), for no one can hide from God in the splendour of his majesty (2:12-21).

God's people live without any regard to God's ways - they worship other gods and are greedy (2:7-8). Judah will be weakened (3:1), ruled by the immature (3:2-4), and Zion will be ashamed as she is taken into exile (3:16ff; 5:26-30) because they have called good evil and evil good (5:20). Instead of being a vine that produces a bountiful harvest, God's people have become a wild vine with bad fruit (5:1-25). People are drunk, arrogant, unjust, and corrupt (5:20-25). God will not tolerate such wickedness.

But God will send a future king to restore his people (4:2ff) and will restore his beauty in Zion (4:5-6). There will be a king who comes who will reign forever and ever (the Branch of the Lord - 4:2). We know who this king is! The only way that the righteous shall live (3:10) is if the Lord would forgive and rescue his people (4:3-4)! And when he comes, he will make his people a fruitful vineyard as they remain connected to him (John 15:1-5), producing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22).

DECEMBER 3RD READ ISAIAH 6-8



"The gospel of Jesus Christ is more political than anyone imagines, but in a way that no one guesses."¹ You can try to untangle religion and politics, but the result will be disastrous. Christ is political - but not how you think he is political.

God is the God of the nations, and he will demonstrate that the earth belongs to him. Isaiah 1-39 is the message of God's kingship.

The year King Uzziah dies, Isaiah sees the King of kings (6:1-4) and becomes deeply aware of his own sin and need for cleansing (6:5-7). Once forgiven and cleansed, Isaiah is commissioned to speak to God's people who are without moral leadership and will result in their desolation and exile (6:8-13). The land will be ruined (7:18-25).

But God has not abandoned his people. He will give a sign - from David's house a virgin shall conceive a child, and he will be named 'God with us.' God will establish his reign through David's line (7:11-14). But for now, God will take his people into exile (8:1-10) and will hide his face from his people (8:17). Although they blame God for their desolation, they ought to seek God, and his instruction and testimony, for this will be their light (8:20). Without his Word, there is only distress and darkness (8:22).

Into this world came Immanuel - God with us (Matt. 1:18-25). Born from David's line (Luke 2:4), Jesus came as the Word of God (John 1:1-4, 14) bringing the words of eternal life (John 6:68-69). Some will stumble at his teaching like one stumbles over a stone (8:14, cf. 1 Pe. 2:8), but others will see that there is no other hope but in Christ alone (8:17; 1 Tim. 1:1).

¹ Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 117.



DECEMBER 4th
READ ISAIAH 9-10

Something has gone wrong in the social, economic, moral, and cultural fabric of the West, and populism is a growing response. People are looking for leadership in government to address the problems of stagnant wages, moral confusion, economic hardship, and cultural conflict. People expect that government can solve these problems and bring about a better world.

Similar expectations of the government of Judah existed during Isaiah's day. The Lord says a day is coming when light will shine and the people will see it. Joy will increase because the people will enter into the kingdom of peace under the perfect king. This king will be a child who will bring to fulfillment all that God promised to David, establishing peace and justice forever (9:1-7).

But the message has fallen on deaf ears. There will be national disaster (9:8-12), political ruin (9:13-17), social collapse (9:18-21), and moral anarchy (10:1-4). God will use Assyria as the rod of discipline while, at the same time, judging Assyria for her arrogance (10:5-19). But in his discipline, God will save a remnant of Israel (10:20ff) which will be set free from their oppression (10:27-34).

People want politics to solve moral problems. But political leaders are just as fallen as we are, and sometimes more so (9:14-16; 10:1-3). If politics is just as flawed as our world, where will hope come from?

When Handel wrote his masterpiece, *The Messiah*, he understood this passage in light of the redemptive story of the Bible: the King is going to come to break the oppression of sin and evil. The Lord Jesus is this political leader - Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!



DECEMBER 5th
READ ISAIAH 11-12

Quite often, people vote for the lesser of two evils – there is no ideal candidate who embodies all of their values. Who most closely represents what I believe? Who will bring the kind of change that I value? Having ideals suggests that we long for something transcendent.

Isaiah 11-12 brings us to the first major division in the book. The ideal king will bring just and righteous change as the Lord is praised in Zion. Out of the stump will come a fresh shoot (11:1); God's people will be exiled, but out of that exile will come a new work (6:13).

This new work out of the old stump comes from David's line: empowered by the Spirit (11:2), the Messiah himself will rule in justice (11:3-5), establishing peace so that death and destruction will come to an end (11:6-9). God will again gather his people and the nations will come to him (11:10-16). God will be in the midst of his people and they will rejoice (12:1-6). The Lord, the Davidic king, the mighty God, will be their strength and song and will become their salvation, a salvation that satisfies their thirsty souls (12:2-3).

In Jesus Christ, the longing of our soul is realized. He is the living water who quenches the thirst of the soul (John 4:10, 13-14). He is the presence of God who has come to dwell with humanity (John 1:14). And he is the One who shall reign forever and ever, whose kingdom shall never know an end (Revelation 11:15)!

DECEMBER 6th

READ ISAIAH 13-16

No one likes talking about God's judgment. Any talk of God's judgment will cause people to recoil. It seems harsh and awful. Yet within the message of judgment is both warning and hope: don't put your trust in the wrong places, but trust in God alone!

God speaks to Isaiah about His judgment against Babylon (13:1-22; 14:3-23), Philistia (14:28-32), and Moab (15:1-16:14). But these words are not spoken to those nations, but to the people of Judah. Why tell God's people of the judgment of the nations?

Babylon was a rising superpower that would compete with Assyria; and both nations would collapse (13:17-19; 14:24-27). Throughout the Bible, Babylon represents the nations scattered at Babel (Gen. 11:1ff). She symbolizes the national power which defies God and murders His people, and she will be destroyed (Rev. 17-19).

While Judah may be tempted to trust in political alliances and power with godless nations, the Lord of the Armies (Lord of Hosts) will overthrow these powers on the day of the Lord (13:4-6; 14:24-27) because of their sinful pride and arrogance (13:11; 16:6).

While the nations trust in their gods (14:12-15), these gods prove worthless and powerless. God's people must remember that there is only one throne that will be established in steadfast love: the throne of David where justice and righteousness will be pursued forever (16:5).


There is only One King who shall reign over the world in peace and justice: Jesus Christ! While some trust in military might, God's people must trust in the Lord our God, ruler of the nations (cf. Ps. 20:7)!

DECEMBER 22ND
READ ISAIAH 59-61

When evil abounds and it feels like we make no difference in the world, how do we carry on? The darkness can feel so dark and hopeless. Is there any light to be found anywhere?

Isaiah 59 sounds like the present experience of many - wondering why God doesn't save. But the picture here is of Israel after the exile - in sin and without hope. The problem is not God's ability to save (59:1) but the sin of his people and their crooked ways (59:2-8). If the discipline of the exile was unable to create softened hearts, what can be done? Collective repentance is the way back (59:9-15a). The only way back to God is God's own arm as he puts on armour to destroy the enemies and bring salvation (59:15b-19). God's messenger will come and bring redemption in the power of the Spirit (59:20-21). And Zion will return - not from exile, but to God who is their light (the shining light is not the sun but God himself, 60:19). It is God's light that will shine, dispelling the darkness, and bringing nations to himself with their gold and frankincense (60:2-7). It is a global salvation with people from the ends of the earth coming to the City of the Lord; but also a global judgment for those who do not embrace the Holy One of Israel and his City (60:8-16). When God chooses to act, there will only be peace, prosperity, and righteousness; and the people will live, not with sorrow, but with the light of God's presence (60:17-22). The present circumstances cannot continue. So God will bring his blessing and judgement by his Messenger (61:1-2). The year of jubilee favour will see the rebuilding of what was ruined and the restoration of joy (61:3-7). The reason why God will restore that which is broken is because he is a God of justice (61:8-9). The response to God's salvation and the clothing of righteousness which he gives to his people will be praise throughout the whole world (61:10-11).

We still live in a broken, sin-filled world. Paul quotes Isaiah 59 when he speaks of the universal problem of sin (Rom. 3:15-17). He sees that the clothing of righteousness comes from Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21-26). He is the light of the world (Jn. 8:12). Even from his birth, the nations come to him with their gold and frankincense (Matt. 2:1-12). He announces in his



DECEMBER 23RD
READ ISAIAH 62-64

When we read the soaring promises of Isaiah 61 concerning the rebuilding and restoring of all that has been broken, our temptation is to ask, "What can I do to make things better? How can I bring God's kingdom?"

But Isaiah 61 is not a call for God's people to do something to see the kingdom come. It is a call to trust in the Sovereign Lord who will speak and act by his Messenger, establishing glory in Zion, the city of the great King. Isaiah won't keep silent until this glory happens - he will pray, giving God no rest until his promises come to pass (62:1-7), and he will watch for the coming judgment foretold in 61:2. Zion, God's city, will no longer be desolate and rejected, but will be called "My Delight is in Her" and "Married" (62:4) - a picture of God's covenantal faithfulness to his people, his love abounding in forgiveness of sins and redemption (62:8-12).

But God's vengeance will come. Speaking as a watchman, Isaiah sees that the Messiah would march towards Zion as a warrior, victorious in battle, defeating all his foes (63:1-6). So Isaiah prays, remembering God's goodness, especially his rescue of Israel in Moses' day. But the problem had been the people's deep rebellion against God, so deep that God became their enemy (63:7-14). So the only place Isaiah could turn to was the Lord, full of tenderness and compassion. He pleads with the Lord that God himself would come down. The only hope for salvation is God himself (63:15-64:1). When God acts, it is unlike anything any eye has seen or ear heard. Israel's sin is great, and the only way they can be saved from their filthy deeds and would-be righteous acts (which are like filthy rags) is if God acts, not because of their righteousness but because of his great mercy and grace (64:8-12).

When the apostles read these verses, they saw the renewed Jerusalem from above. The writer of Hebrews would call this the city of the living God (Heb. 12:22), a better heavenly homeland (Heb. 11:14, 16) the city whose builder and designer is God himself (Heb. 11:10). At Christ's baptism, Mark says that the heavens were torn open and the Spirit of



DECEMBER 24th

READ ISAIAH 65-66

What do we do when we see injustice and evil and it seems that God is silent? Will we trust in God or will we abandon him?


In response to Isaiah's prayer for God to come down (64:1), the Lord responds by saying that he has revealed himself over and over to his people, a people who did not seek him or call on him (65:1). The problem has not been with God but with those who walk in ways that are not good. The problem is persistent rebellion which says to God, "Stay away from me!" But God responds to Isaiah's question of whether or not he will deal with sin (64:12), and answers yes - sin will be repaid (65:2-7). Though God will judge and destroy those who reject him and worship false gods, he will remember his people and preserve a remnant, making their land great and enjoyable (65:8-16). Even better than a rebuilt Jerusalem will be new heavens and a new earth; a new Jerusalem where there will be no more weeping or death but only abundant Life. It will be a place where God will meet all his people's needs before they ask (65:17-25).

For God has never wanted a temple to dwell in (66:1-2), even though Isaiah looks toward a day where the current temple would be destroyed and Jerusalem and its temple rebuilt. Religious activity is of no value if the heart is far from God. For God will deal with all sin and evil (66:3-6); but he will also bless his people, and they will know of his comfort and presence like a child held by its mother (66:7-14). God will deal with his enemies once and for all (66:15-17, 24), and his glory will be made known the whole world wide (66:18-23). So will we trust in his word? Will we remain a people characterized by humility and godly fear?

As we wait for the day of Christ, we are to remain steadfast and immovable, keeping our hope in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). Though we experience many troubles at the present time, we remember that Jesus has overcome the world and that these momentary afflictions are producing for us an eternity of glory (Jn. 16:33; Rom. 8:18)!

DECEMBER 7th

READ ISAIAH 17-19



The pressure to form political alliances is great. In the 1980s, the Moral Majority aligned itself with the Republican Party in the USA to push back against the sexual revolution. But in 1989, the group dissolved as donations dried up and leader Jerry Falwell announced (from Las Vegas) that the Christian Right had done what it was supposed to do. But had it really accomplished its goals?

In Isaiah's day, Judah's king Ahaz had been urged to join forces with Syria and Israel to keep back superpower Assyria (Isa. 7). With Judah being threatened by these two, Isaiah speaks an oracle against Syria (Damascus, Isa. 17) and Ephraim (Israel, 17:3). They will be laid to waste (17:12-15) by Assyria with a few people left like grain at the edge of a field (17:4-6) because of their worship of fertility gods (17:7-11).

But Cush (Cush - 18:1-6) will be no help either (18:1-6). Egypt will be crushed (19:1-15) and the Lord of the Armies will be victorious (Lord of Hosts - 19:16-25); and the Lord who fights for his people will be known and worshipped throughout the earth (19:19-26). One day the banner of the Lord will be raised (18:3) and all nations will worship the Lord of the Armies, bringing gifts to him (18:7).

When Jesus was born, Matthew tells us that Magi came with gifts from afar (possibly lands such as Egypt), and bowed before Jesus to worship and adore him (Matt. 2:9-11). One day, people from every tribe and tongue, people and nation will bow and worship (Rev. 5:9). So why trust in political alliances when the Lord himself will judge the nations? One day, they will all bow and worship him and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:10-11). And for that day we pray and wait.

DECEMBER 8th READ ISAIAH 20-23

Often we pray and wait, and wait and pray, wondering if our prayers are heard. It can be hard to wait - we want God to act now! Yet God is working out his global purposes, and often we must wait since we do not know how the pieces of life fit together in God's universal plan.

God will expose the folly of self-placed hope, and Isaiah is to play the part of a captive as Egypt and Cush will be humiliated by Assyria. Their shame in being led away as captives will reveal the condition of their souls - pitiful and naked (20:1-4). Hope cannot be found in political or military power (20:5-6).

Instead, hope is found in the God of the Armies. While Babylon (21:1-10), Arabia (21:13-17), and Tyre (23:1-18) are filled with pride and self-glory (23:9), they will be humiliated and shamed (23:9b). Even God's people in Jerusalem are full of recklessness and treacherous partying so that the city of Jerusalem, the mountain of the Lord, has become a valley and the vision of the Lord has been lost to sinful indulgence (22:1ff).

God will decree the fall of human power (23:7-9). God will remove the worthless and self-seeking Jerusalem official Shebna (22:15-19), and in his place will put Eliakim, a man who is insufficient for the task (22:20-25). But one day a King will come who will reign with authority (the One who has the key of David - cf. Rev. 3:7) over all the nations.

So we wait and pray, trusting that God is working not just in our lives but in all of human history so that Christ may be seen as the King of kings!



DECEMBER 9th
READ ISAIAH 24-27

Sometimes life is almost too much to bear. All around us is sickness and sorrow, disease and death, calamity and chaos. Our lives feel the pain of our own mortality, of evil and injustice, and of destruction and death. Will it ever end?

Isaiah tells us that it will end. Chapter 24 describes a global judgment for breaking God's laws (24:5-6). The day of sinful indulgence (24:7-11) will be replaced with joyful global worship (24:14-16). The city of man (24:10) will lie in ruins never to be rebuilt (25:2), but God will secure his people in the city of God (26:1-2; 27:12-13).

So we can praise God like Isaiah (25:1-5) because one day we will feast with God; the curse will be reversed, death will be swallowed up, and the tears of pain will be wiped away (25:6-8; cf. Rev. 21)! God's judgment means God's salvation: death is defeated and by faith, God's people will live securely forever (26:1-6).

For now, we wait (26:7-21). We wait with faith and desire (26:8) in a world that is confounded by grace (26:9-11). Life is full of waiting and disappointment (26:12-18), but the promise of resurrection stands (26:19). Chaos will be overcome (27:1). God's people will live securely in the city of fruitfulness (27:2ff).

One day, the living and the dead will be judged (1 Pe. 4:5). Christ has swallowed up death and one day will be seen as victorious (1 Cor. 15:11-58)! For now, we do not give up. Though we experience many afflictions, they aren't worth comparing to the glory that is to be revealed (2 Cor. 4:17-18; Rom. 8:18)! So we press on by faith!



DECEMBER 10th
READ ISAIAH 28-29

Sometimes, things look foolish and useless to us; but they can become the key piece to something glorious!

The question of Isaiah 28-35 is one for the King of Judah, and one for all of us: will we hear and trust the word of the Lord, even when it seems foolish, or will we rely upon our own understanding?

Isaiah 28 begins with sad news: God will come against the northern kingdom, Ephraim, by a foreign invader (28:11-13), because her king and people have rejected the life-giving word, and instead have opted for drunken indulgences (28:1-4; 7-10). Even Jerusalem, capital of the south, is ensnared in false worship and will be besieged. The people are willfully blind, and have rejected the prophet's word from God; and spiritual leaders who should know better give 'wise' and 'intelligent' advice contrary to God's commands (29:1-14), paying homage to the Lord but having hearts far from him (28:13-14). Making political alliances is like making a covenant with death (28:15) because it misplaced trust in human wisdom rather than in God and his word.

But this will change - God will act for the sake of his name (29:23). It may seem strange how God will act, but the result will be glorious (28:21-29). The result of this will be that the Lord will give his Spirit and keep a people for himself (28:5-6). A foundation will be laid in Zion that is trustworthy and sure (28:16) which will annul the covenant of death (28:18).

Some will not see the message because of spiritual blindness (29:9-14, Mark 4:10-12), and others may stumble on the stone (Isa. 8:14); but Jesus Christ is the sure foundation of faith (Acts 4:11) who destroys the wisdom of the wise by the foolishness of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18-31). What God has chosen to do seems strange, but to those who believe it is marvellous in their eyes (Matt. 21:42; cf. Ps. 118:23)!

DECEMBER 11th

READ ISAIAH 30-32

There is something wonderful about the anticipation of opening presents at Christmas; but when the last package has been unwrapped, how often do we hear a child ask, "Are there any more?" We love good gifts, but we know that we are not fulfilled. Something awaits. Isaiah 30-32 is a picture of living in between the times.

Isaiah 30 begins with the reason it is foolish to trust in political alliances apart from the wisdom of God: it is the action of rebellious children (30:1, 9). Despite having clear instruction, they want sermons that tickle their ears (30:10-11). But misplaced trust will be their shame (30:1-7). Placing confidence in anything other than the Lord is like relying on an unsteady wall; it is like a pot that can be smashed to bits (30:8-17). Egypt is no help because she is weak (30:5,7; 31:1-3); but the Lord of the Armies is mighty to save (31:4-5).

The way of salvation is found in repentance (30:15; 31:6-7) and turning from worthless idols (30:22). God will deliver his people (30:18-26; 31:4-7) and crush the enemy (30:27-33, 31:4-5).

In that day (31:7), God will send his righteous and just King to establish peace and will re-order all things (32:1-8). While we wait for that day, we know salvation will come through judgment (32:8-20), and so we live in the in between time. God will pour out His Spirit (32:15; cf. Acts 2) and his work of making things right and just will begin.

Opening presents makes us long for the ultimate gift. The gift of Christ and the giving of the Spirit awaken a longing in us for the ultimate Day. For in that day righteousness, peace, and life will be ours as we dwell with Him forever (Rev. 21-22).

DECEMBER 12th

READ ISAIAH 33-35

Where do we find help when life is hard? How do we press forward when all around us is disappointment? When it looks like God is against us, what do we do? Isaiah 33-35 gives us a picture of judgment and salvation.

Assyria the destroyer, who comes against Judah, will be destroyed (33:1). God's people will cry out for mercy (33:2) and justice and peace will prevail when his people fear the Lord (33:5-6). The lament of 33:7-9 indicates that the strategies of rulers and leaders will fail, God will arise (33:10), and people will ask, "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?" (33:14). Those who are repentant can (33:15-16)! All who cherish evil will be judged, and the King will be seen in his beauty (33:17-24)! There will be a global judgment for all who resist the Lord and his people (represented by Edom in 34:1-17). They will feel the curse intensely (Edom is handed over to unclean animals), for God will carry out his decrees as they have been written (34:16-17).

But when the king is seen in his beauty, he will restore all things - the land, the people, the world (35:1-10). The joy which has been unreachable will now be realized! The Way of the Lord will be the road his people walk because his people will return as his redeemed to himself (35:8-10)!

When Jesus came, he opened the eyes of the blind (Lk 7:22) and pronounced the way of the Lord (Mk 8:27-10:51). We have seen that Jesus has already begun the final work, but we wait for the 'not yet' - the kingdom in its fullness at the resurrection (33:21-22; 35:1-10; 1 Cor. 15:20-58).