

# Highway of Holiness

Isaiah 35

By Scott Huckaby

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**BIG BEND  
BIBLE  
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## **Isaiah 35:1-7 – Joy of the Redeemed (NIV)**

*The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, <sup>2</sup> it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. <sup>3</sup> Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; <sup>4</sup> say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.” <sup>5</sup> Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. <sup>6</sup> Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. <sup>7</sup> The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.*

## **v1 – What will be the blessing following the judgment of the nations?**

*The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose: After the judgment on the nations described in Isaiah 34, God will bring a beautiful restoration.*

- We are seeing a foreshadowing of the fulfillment of this promise in the land of Israel since the Jews have returned to the land. Certainly, the ultimate fulfillment will be during the Millennial Kingdom.

## **How do we know this promise applies to the whole earth during the Millennial Kingdom?**

*Romans 8:19-22 – The earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.*

Nature is waiting for the transformation that will come when the Messiah reigns and believers are glorified.

## **v2 – What is the glory of Lebanon?**

*Isaiah 60:13 – The glory of Lebanon will be yours— the forests of cypress, fir, and pine— to beautify my sanctuary*

Lebanon was known at that time for their great forests and this will be the case for Israel during the Millennial Kingdom.

## **What would be the excellence of Carmel and Sharon?**

These two places in the land of Judea were famous for productiveness of all kinds... abundant harvests, fruits, and flowers, and pasturage.

## **v3 – What would the coming of the Messiah result in?**

*Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees:* The coming judgment would be enough to make the hands of anyone weak, and knees of anyone feeble. But in light of the glorious restoration God will bring from that time, it would be no time to have weak hands or feeble knees. God wanted His people to get strong and get going.

## **What else might weak hands and feeble knees represent?**

- We use our hands to work with; those with weak hands are not working for the LORD as they should.
- We use our knees both to walk and to pray with. Those with feeble knees are not progressing with the LORD and praying as they should.

## **Why did the writer of Hebrews quote Isaiah 35:3?**

*Hebrews 12:12-13 – Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.*

The point is being made in Hebrews that even in a time of chastening from the LORD, we should take strength and courage in Him, knowing that it is His Fatherly love and care that has allowed and directed the chastening. It's time to get strong in the LORD and move on!

## **What is the cause of weak hands and feeble knees among God's people?**

If we are not making progress in our walk with Jesus, fault can surely be found with weak hands and feeble knees.

#### **v4 – What should we say to the fearful-hearted?**

*Be strong, do not fear... He will come and save you:* In our present trials, we need the strong hope of the LORD to overcome our fearful hearts. Our fearful hearts are not helped by a vain, vague optimism; they are helped by the assured confidence that He will come and save us.

#### **How does this apply in the here and now as we see fearful developments of the coming Tribulation?**

God has revealed what would happen to remind us that none of this takes Him by surprise. He is in control and will look after His people. As we see fearful developments, this should drive us closer to Him. And we can have courage in recognizing that our Blessed Hope is getting ever closer.

#### **What will God coming *with vengeance and divine retribution* have to do with our salvation?**

The immediate context and application is God dealing with those nations that have oppressed Israel. But this also applies to us in the church today...

- Persecution is growing and our oppressors will see the judgment of God the same as Israel's enemies.
- Indeed, the ultimate rescue, the rapture of the church occurs in the time-frame when God is preparing to pour out His judgment on the nations.

#### **v5-6a – What comes with the salvation of God?**

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened:* When God's salvation comes, miraculous power comes with it. It is a miracle for the blind to see, for the deaf to hear, for the lame to run, and for the mute to speak. But when He will come and save you, He does it with miraculous power.

#### **When will these healings take place?**

- In the here and now metaphorically... our spiritual eyes and ears are opened when we are born again.
- Ultimately and physically, we'll be healed when we are resurrected at the rapture of the church.
- These healings are associated with the Messiah so these miracles authenticated Him and His disciples during His first advent
- Since much of the curse is removed during the Millennial Kingdom, I'd expect these healing miracles to characterize that time as well.

#### **How did Jesus refer to this passage to reinforce that He was indeed the Messiah?**

When John the Baptist was in prison, he became discouraged, and wondered if Jesus really was the Messiah he had proclaimed Him to be. When John's disciples brought this question to Jesus, He replied...

Matthew 11:4-5 – *Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

If Jesus didn't use the exact words of Isaiah 35, He certainly used the idea. Jesus, the Messiah, had come to bring God's salvation, and that would be accompanied by miraculous power.

#### **v6b – What else comes with the salvation of God?**

*For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert:* When God's salvation comes, miraculous provision comes with it. What was dry and useless before becomes well-watered and fruitful.

#### **How does the promise of restoring the land apply to God restoring people?**

*Streams in the desert:* Jesus said He would bring this kind of beautiful provision in the lives of His people...

John 7:38-39 – *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive*

There is no reason for a Christian to endure a "dry time," not when the miraculous power of Jesus Christ to provide is present.

#### **v7 – How is it *the burning sand will become a pool*?**

The word translated *burning sand* (NIV) or *parched ground* (NKJV) actually means "mirage" ...an atmospheric phenomenon frequently seen in deserts caused by the refraction of the hot rays of the sun. Now the prophet brings the glad tidings that what used to be a mere semblance and an illusion will one day become a glorious reality.

#### **Isaiah 35:8-10 – Way of Holiness (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup> *And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. <sup>9</sup> No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, <sup>10</sup> and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

### **v8 – What is the *Highway of Holiness*?**

Today, we take good roads for granted. But in the ancient world, a good road — a highway — was an amazing blessing for travel, progress, and business. Isaiah announces that in the ministry of the Messiah, there will be a wonderful highway known as the Highway of Holiness.

- The Hebrew word for highway indicates what our English word literally says: “a high-way.” It speaks of a raised road, lifted above the ground. It is a high, glorious road to travel on.

Isaiah previously made reference to this in context of the Millennial Kingdom...

Isaiah 19:23 – *In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.*

Egypt and Assyria represent all of the Gentile nations. During the Millennial Kingdom, the nations of the world will all send representatives to Jerusalem to honor the Lord during the Feast of Tabernacles...

Zechariah 14:16 – *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.*

### **Why is this Millennial Kingdom road to Jerusalem called the *Highway of Holiness*?**

That is where the Lord is and it will likely be an important pilgrimage of believers during the Millennial Kingdom. It is also likely that physically coming to Jesus during the Millennial Kingdom will generally lead to salvation.

### **Who will not go on the *Highway of Holiness*?**

*The unclean shall not pass over it:* This highway isn't for everyone. It has a “toll booth,” but you can't make it on this highway by paying your way. You are only allowed on this highway if you are cleansed by the great work of the Messiah.

### **How is it that fools will *not go astray on this road* (NKJV)?**

*Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray:* When we stick on God's Highway of Holiness, even though His work in us isn't complete yet (we may still be in some ways a fool), yet we are safe because we are on His highway! There are guardrails on the dangerous curves, and He keeps us from falling off as He develops the wisdom and maturity in us.

### **What is the principle of this highway that applies today?**

Matthew 7:13-14 – *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and confined is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

The Way to Jesus is to trust in Him for your salvation. There are other ways that most people take but they do not lead to Jesus. The Way of Jesus is confined and exclusive... only those who trust in His provision for eternal life will arrive at the place of holiness.

### **v9 – What promise is there for those on the Highway of Holiness?**

*No lion shall be there:* As we stay on God's Highway of Holiness, we are protected from the attacks of the lion. Though *your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Peter 5:8).

- That lion has never yet devoured anyone who stayed on the Way of Christ.
- This promise reflects the principle of eternal security and literally would be rhetorical because Satan will be incarcerated in the abyss during the Millennial Kingdom and actual lions will be herbivores.

### **v10 – What will characterize the travelers on the Highway of Holiness?**

*And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing:* Joy... We use this Highway of Holiness to come to where God lives and reigns — Zion — and we come there with singing. God puts a song in our hearts as we travel on His Highway of Holiness.

- The word *ransomed* is related to the word *goel* and refers to the one who has been rescued by the *goel* — the kinsman-redeemer.

### **When will our *everlasting joy* be realized?**

We can know a foretaste of this now, but we aren't at our destination on the Highway of Holiness yet. But when we arrive there...

Revelation 21:4 – *God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*

### **Is the Highway of Holiness literal or metaphorical?**

It is currently metaphorical as a spiritual journey on the Way of Christ. The Highway of Holiness will be both a literal one and spiritual one during the Millennial Kingdom.

### **What is a spiritual journey?**

Spiritual journey is a phrase used by many different religions to mean the natural progression of a person as they grow in understanding of God, the world, and themselves. It is an intentional lifestyle of growing deeper in knowledge and wisdom.

### **How is the spiritual journey of the Christian different from other religious persuasions?**

The spiritual journey of the follower of Jesus is vastly different from a journey toward some kind of “spirituality” that does not include, and is not based upon, the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Our journey is toward Christlikeness. It is more than just acquiring knowledge and wisdom; it is applying what you learn about God to your own life.

Some distinctions with Eastern/New Age religions (for example) are:

- New Agers advocate emptying your mind through meditation and chanting mantras; Christian meditation involves filling your mind with the Word of God.
- New Agers believe that people can choose their own path and that all paths lead to the same destination. The Bible says that there is only one path—Christ (John 14:6).
- New Agers believe a spiritual journey will result in harmony with the universe. The Bible teaches that the universe is at war (Ephesians 6:12).

The journey of Christians includes fighting for other souls as part of our own walk...

*1 Timothy 6:12 – Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

### **How should followers of Christ view their own spiritual Journey?**

At the heart of the spiritual journey is the understanding that it is a journey. None of us are perfect. Once we become believers, we are not expected to achieve instant spiritual maturity.

### **How may we make progress in our spiritual journey?**

The Christian life is a process involving our taking action...

*2 Corinthians 7:1 – Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

And allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us...

*Philippians 1:6 – being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*

And it has more to do with opportunity and intentionality than with age (1 Timothy 4:12).

- A journey filled with studying the Bible, obedience to what it says, and trusting God is a lifelong adventure that will bring true understanding of the world and a deep love for its Creator.

Good questions to ask ourselves are:

- Am I on that Highway?
- Am I making progress on it?
- Am I enjoying the travel?
- Am I inviting others to join us?

### **What applications come to mind from our discussion?**

- Don't have weak hands and feeble knees... make sure you're growing in Christ.
- We can trust in God's promises to help us deal with the fearful developments of the End of the Age.
- The Millennial Kingdom will be a blessed time on earth but we can experience a foreshadowing of that now.
- The Millennial kingdom will have a literal Highway of Holiness but the spiritual Way of Christ is available now.
- Life is a journey, make sure your making progress on the right path!