

Isaiah Chapter 34 & 35

These chapters give us a picture of the Israelites coming out of exile to their home. These chapters give the promise of a future home.

Isaiah ch 34

Judgement upon the nations has turned the world into a desert. But the desert will bloom again.

Verses 8-10 – a picture of the exiled people brought home. There is gladness, joy and singing.

Isaiah ch 35

Verses 1-2 – The wilderness and dry land will be glad and blossom. There is renewal.

The names Lebanon, Carmel and Sharon are places in the desert

Lebanon - fertile soil

Carmel - order

Sharon – a place of beauty

Verses 3-4 – God's people are told to strengthen themselves. God is coming and will make things right (through Salvation).

Verses 5-7 – The eyes of the blind will be opened, the deaf hear, the lame leap. There will be no disease, deformity or aging. There will be renewal.

Verses 8 – 10 – The highway of the redeemed is the way of holiness. No unclean will be walking on it. There will be no threat. Only the rescued will return.

Genesis and Revelation

The beginning and the end of the Bible reflect this message:

In Genesis, Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden

In Revelation, God's people return home.

When the Israelites returned, they were under the Romans. This did not feel like home to them.

People live in a world where they are homeless. To be home is to put Jesus first.

Psalm 90:1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

When Adam and Eve gave into sin, they lost their home. When people live in sin they are in exile.

When Jesus came to live on earth, he gave us glimpses of the new home.

See Luke 4:18-19.

Ambassadors for Christ

As ambassadors for Christ, (2 Corinthians 5:20), we belong to another world. We know we are exiles in this world because Jesus was. Jesus was born in a stable, because there was *no room* for him in the world.

Matthew 8:20 – the Son of man had no where to lay His head.

He was born without a home so that we could have a home (in Heaven).

If we are saved, the way that Jesus tells us to be saved, (with repentance), our life turns around and goes in a different direction.

See also:

1 Chronicles 29:15

Hebrews 11:13

1 Peter 2:11

Our home is Paradise

Our home address is Paradise. You are here on earth as an alien, and an ambassador, on temporary assignment. Heaven is not what the comedians portray in pearly gates jokes; we don't want such images to dominate our thinking on this vital subject as we progress towards our terminus here on earth. In fact, it's more like an airport than a terminus. There is ticket printed for you and a seat assigned all ready to take you into the presence of Jesus, His Spirit and your Heavenly Father. And with them, stand a huge crowd of people who arrived before you, as well as all manner of splendid angelic beings.

It's as if we're running a race to get to our heavenly destination. And as we cross the line there are others waiting for our arrival... family and friends who have gone before us, eagerly awaiting our arrival.

There is an account of a steam ship berthing in New York a hundred years ago. A millionaire was one of the first to alight, with a brass band is playing for him and VIPs on the podium with streamers ready to give him a formal welcome back home. On the third class deck a woman walked the gangplank, coming home to retire after investing her life on the mission field. She had sacrificed family and the chance of marriage as well as all manner of comforts and opportunities for making a career.

As she walked ashore there was no one to welcome her and no band playing for her, but she sensed the voice of God saying with great tenderness, "This is not your homecoming. That entrepreneur is having his grand welcome now but I am preparing yours. You can't imagine the grandeur and scale of what I have prepared for you!"

No quitting, no slacking off. Today I run the race of life with my eyes firmly set on the finish line.

