

## ISAIAH 62:10-12

**ADVENT: ARRIVALS At THE CITY OF GOD !  
Self, Newcomer, Savior, and the Future**

*Go through, go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people! Build up, build up the highway!  
Take out the stones! Lift up a banner for the peoples!*

*Indeed the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the world, "Say to the daughter of Zion, Surely your salvation is coming! Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him."*

*And they shall call them "The Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD!" And you shall be called "Sought Out"—A City Not Forsaken.*

Imagine that someone is coming to Lemmon to demonstrate a Fix-It technique for a serious and widespread problem. What sort of "arrivals" would we be awaiting? **1)** We ourselves would first need to "arrive" and get on board with the importance of the day. **2)** We would be awaiting the arrival of many visitors to witness Fix-It technique about to be explained, displayed, and shared—what a stage for Lemmon! **3)** We would be awaiting the arrival of the main event! the man himself—whether doctor, farm and ranch scientist, computer troubleshooter, etc.—he would need to be welcomed properly. **4)** We would also be waiting the arrival of the new future— with the Fix in place!

In the same fashion, Christmas is the great Fix-It celebration of our ONE problem. Is it lack of rain? Lack of transparency in government? Lack of an adequate electrical grid? Lack of ability to deal with killer bugs? No, it's worse. It's sin. I hope you knew I was going to say that. The Bible says it too. "Sin" is disobedience to God. Sin is killing you! It has a 100% mortality rate. Christmas presents the Fix-er and the Fix-It program.

**1)** *Go through, go through the gates!* Isaiah is speaking to God's Old Testament people returning to Jerusalem from the shame of exile and captivity. He is not just describing their earthly return to earthly glory, but their return to God's glory and God's acceptance in God's "city." Isaiah is speaking of a spiritual return. "Go through! --- Get on board!" Or now for us, "Enter the Fix-It glory of Christmas!" We are not talking about physical preparations for physical things, but the spiritual preparations for spiritual things. Removing sin is not a physical "scrub-it-away" problem, not a physical "bury-it-in-gifts" problem, not a physical "get-better-holiday-décor" problem. It's the "disobedience-of-the-soul," a spiritual problem. Therefore, preparing is a matter of the heart. In that regard, "Do you understand what's wrong with you?" (Has anyone in frustration ever asked you that? "What's wrong with you?!") The answer is sin--disobedience against God. Christmas presents the Fix-It solution for sin. You need it! During Advent, the knowledge of sin is the starting point. It's not pleasant, but it's the whole problem. Jesus is the only Fix-It, the only solution. Cling by faith to Christ. Through Him your sin is washed away. Through Him you are "on board"! You are "in"!

**2)** *Prepare the way for the people!* If a big day a great presentation were coming to Lemmon, do you think other people would hear about it on their own, or in their dreams? I think Lemmon would publicize its big day—by word of mouth, newspaper, radio, television, etc. Also, then, for celebration of Christmas, people need to be aware of the widespread sin-problem and be aware of the marvel of the Fix-It in Jesus. We need to facilitate the road to Christ. *Prepare the way for the people! Build up, build up the highway! Take out the stones! Lift up a banner for the peoples!* Get the road ready for others. Make the path smooth. Take away any stumbling stones. Take the stones out of the way that hinder Christmas from being about God's Son and the only solution to the sin problem. Make the way to Christ as easy as you can. What can you do differently this year, to remove the focus on things? Please don't answer, "I need do nothing different."? Better look again. It's Christ-mas is not Pary-mas, Friendship-mas. It's Christmas. *Lift up the banner!* Inviting, welcoming, and directing others to the Savior. Don't just wish them a "Season for Greetings" or a "Happy Holiday-ness." The banner says Christ-mas! Direct the arrival of others, certainly your own family, to the Truth that Jesus brings the Fix-IT for sin, death, and eternal separation from God.

3) We at Lemmon would also be awaiting and expecting the main event, the man himself to present his marvelous d Fix-It. It would not be fitting to ignore him. The same is true at Christmas. The Savior has come! The Rescue and the Rescuer is here! Jesus deliberately came, in love, to be your scape-goat, you blame-taker, your punishment-getter before God. Don't disregard Him! Isaiah says, *Indeed the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the world, "Say to the daughter of Zion, Surely your salvation is coming! Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him."* Even the people at the ends of the earth would proclaim to Zion, to Jerusalem, *Surely your salvation is coming!* Remember how Wise Men came from afar, and yet Herod right next door to Bethlehem hated the idea. Today radio speakers, computer speakers, the CD players, commercials on TV, blare "Christ the Savior is born" or some similar line, but the Truth of Christmas goes right past the heart. Your salvation, your Savior, the One who salvages you from the meltdown pile at the junk yard, is born into flesh! for your rescue!

*Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.*" He knew what He had come to do. Do you know why He came? Was it, To set an example for you, so you know how to make yourself righteous with the Father? No, He's not the example-give on how to save yourself. He's the Rescuer. "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). "[He], for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus came and His reward with Him. He knew the harsh and brutal path ahead; He also knew the joy and peace for you! That was His goal. He went forward in love. Now as you are preparing for the yearly celebration of the Christmas, treasure your forgiveness, your clean record, and your fresh start Jesus. Prepare for this annual celebration of His arrival. It's about Him. He will not be in a manger feed box, but He will be in the message of God's Word, the Bible. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (I Timothy 1:15). The message is, the Savior has come for you and for all sinners. This Christmas prepare your heart to celebrate Him, His birth on earth for you, you and all sinners.

4) The people here at Lemmon would also be awaiting the new future, the changed future. Life will be so different with the Fix-It. A better tomorrow and a better life for children and grandchildren,

Isaiah said, *They shall call them "The Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD!" And you shall be called "Sought Out"—A City Not Forsaken.* Isaiah promised that the people of Jerusalem going forward would be a most blessed people. They who had returned to Jerusalem from their humiliating captivity in Babylon, would now be looked up to, not looked down upon. They would be recognized as "The Holy People," the people righteous and acceptable to the God. Instead of becoming scorned and outcast, they would be His "set-apart" people. They would be recognized as the "Redeemed" of the Lord. Redeemed—rescued at a price and set free—ransomed! Do you remember the words? "He has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with His holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death. All this He did that I should be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; just as He has risen from death and lives and reigns to all eternity"—Martin Luther. *And they shall call them "The Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD!" And you shall be called "Sought Out"—A City Not Forsaken.*

"Jerusalem" would no longer be relegated to the trash heap of conquered and humiliated cities. Jerusalem would be Sought Out! "Jerusalem" is not just the physical city, but All God's People, all believers in Christ, all who will be in heaven, the "Church" with capital "C," the Holy Christian Church, the Invisible Church, is the "Jerusalem above," the "heavenly Zion." The believers in Christ will be "Sought Out, a city Not Forsaken." You, a member of God's Invisible Church, are included, safe in the Lord! Your sin problem has been and Fixed by the innocent-Christ-on-the-cross for you, by the Christ-risen-and-leaving-the-tomb-empty-in-victory-for-you. You need not cower or feel despised. You are part of the most sought-out group ever. Whether St. Luke's congregation grows or falls, whether the CLC grows or falls, whether your life grows or falls, you are safe in Christ. You are part of the heavenly Zion, the city "Sought Out," the city "Never Forsaken." So much!

During Advent, as you await Christ-mas, remember these arrivals: 1) You, yourself, go through the gates; get on board. 2) Prepare and improve the "road" for others that they may be part of the message of forgiveness and eternal salvation in Christ. 3) Focus on the arrival of Jesus, the Son of God born on earth at the manger in Bethlehem to be your brother and Savior. 4) Look forward and relish the sure security and glory of the future, that Christ brings peace with God for believers while yet on earth and then in heaven! Blessed Advent!