

# Isaiah 12

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] What now for Scotland? Where do we go from here? I want us to think about these questions, but from a very particular perspective. Namely, what is the role that we as believers have to play in forging and directing the fortunes of our nation and our kingdom, the nation of Scotland and the United Kingdom, of which Scotland still forms a part? The role we have to play is grounded in our identity, in who we are. It has rightly been stressed in the context of the independence debate that our core identity as Christians is not as citizens of Scotland or as subjects of the United Kingdom, but as the people of God. As Paul clearly expresses that reality, but our citizenship is in heaven. Or in the words of the prophet Isaiah that we've read in chapter 12, we are inhabitants of Zion. We are the people of Zion. We are citizens of Zion. We are, if you wish, a people amongst a people, a nation in the midst of a nation, a kingdom within and indeed beyond a kingdom.

As the people of God, as citizens of Zion, how are we to relate to the nations we belong to? How are we to relate to and where do we stand vis-a-vis the nations of the world? And in chapter 12 of the prophet Isaiah, we're given an insight into this matter. The prophet calls on the citizens of Zion to think again in regard to where they stand vis-a-vis the nations of the world. Isaiah is calling for a seismic shift in how the people of God understand who they are and what God has called them to be and to do. To understand this, we need to take a short step back to get a feel for the times in which Isaiah ministered and identify the key problem of a flawed self-identity that plagued Judah, the southern kingdom, with its capital in Jerusalem. And we'll do this, we'll take this step back by considering one brief historical cameo that is played out before the prophet Isaiah. So we're just going to take a step back and consider one incident in the time that Isaiah ministered that I think will help us to place in context the call that he makes here to the citizens of Zion. King Ahaz takes...