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**Jesus Giving Life**    Fourth Week of Lent    Monday, April 1, 2019    **Is 65:17-21;    Jn 4:43-54**    (He intends his followers to have the same effect.)

Today we are reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah: **“Lo, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; The things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. . . For I create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight; I will rejoice in Jerusalem and exult in my people.”**

So we often call this a prophecy. It’s not actually a prophecy exactly, but it is written by a prophet. It’s more of a promise. **Prophecies are usually complaints or indictments against the people, because they are not keeping the covenant. This is more of a promise, a salvific promise.**

Now what made Christianity distinct from Judaism is the belief that this promise is fulfilled in Christ himself, in Jesus, even in the Christ child. **So what was given for a place, Jerusalem, a geographical location, now is transferred to a person. That is a sort of transformation that created Christianity out of Judaism.** It is rooted in the past, but it has been transformed in a rather radical way.

Now from that viewpoint we have to understand the gospels try to show us how this promise is fulfilled in Jesus, the Nazarene. So today’s gospel is another story about how **someone comes to Jesus and finds life. And that’s the fulfillment of the prophecy that is originally intended for Jerusalem.** Indeed, “there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create.” Now this is true of the person of Jesus himself.

Now what this comment means, I’m not quite sure, here, why it’s here I don’t know. “No prophet has honor in his native place.” Well, but the point is that the people of Galilee are his

natives; they are his neighbors, and they welcome him. Now it's true at another time the people of Nazareth reject him, but not here. So why the evangelist quotes this here, I have no idea.

It doesn't seem to fit, because here's a story of people welcoming him, and then he is put off a little bit by this royal official, but then he relents and indeed works exactly the sign that he says: **“Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe,” in a way criticizing them, but then he works a sign anyway.** Well that's because **he is the source of life.** So, in a way, he can't help himself. **The Father is working through him.** People see the Father in him, are drawn to the Father through him and, therefore, they receive life as well. It's almost not a separate act; **it's almost simply part of the whole package of who he is and how he lives.** And **he intends his followers to have the same effect.** And that's why he says, **“Greater things than I have done, you shall do also.”** That's something you might contemplate.