

16. Jesus in Isaiah – Part 1

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The OT Books can be divided into 5 sections: the Books of the Law (Genesis to Deuteronomy), the Books of the History (Joshua to Esther), the Books of the Poetic and Wisdom (Job to Song of Solomon), the Books of the Major Prophets (Isaiah to Daniel), and the Books of the Minor Prophets (Hosea to Malachi). The designations of two Books of the Prophets are not because of greater or lesser importance, rather simply length. This Book starts the beginning of the fourth section of the OT.

There are some silly theologians who insist that this Book was written by two or three different authors. According to the many authors of the NT Books, as well as Jesus Himself, as they were quoting what Isaiah said throughout this Book, they named Isaiah as the author. I believe that Jesus and the apostle Paul are far more creditable than some self-impressed modern day theologians.

Isaiah was a very courageous man who was not afraid to denounce kings and priests, nor did he try to be politically correct. He simply and boldly declared the Word of God.

This Book was written between 700-680 B.C. Isaiah's contemporaries were Amos, Hosea, and Micah.

The Book of Isaiah provides us with the most comprehensive prophetic picture of Jesus Christ in the entire OT. It includes the full scope of His life: the announcement of His coming in chapter 40, His virgin birth in chapter 7, His clearest proclamation of being deity in chapter 9, His proclamation of the Good News in chapter 61, His sacrificial death in chapters 52 and 53, and His return to claim His own in chapter 60.

Because of these and numerous other christological texts in Isaiah, the Book stands as a testament of hope in the Lord, the One who saves His people from themselves. For this reason, many have called the Book of Isaiah "the Fifth Gospel."

Isaiah was living in a nation that was given over to idolatry by their own choice. The people had forsaken their commitment to the one true God – Yahweh God of the Hebrews – and had become contaminated by the polytheistic concepts of the pagan religions. Their idea was, "If one God is good, then certainly two or three or more gods would be better. The more, the merrier. A god for every occasion, every need, just in case."

Socially, Isaiah was living in a time when people were indulged and loving it. They certainly did not want anybody laying a guilt trip on them just like now. The people in America are more concerned about the latest gossips about the Hollywood celebrities, chats on Twitter and Facebook, and sports game score than the Good News of Jesus Christ.

A. JESUS IN THE FUTURE HOUSE OF GOD

Isaiah 2:1-4 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall

come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

Since we are hearing the prophecy here, we need to understand which era the prophet is talking about. In context, the term 'the latter days' is referring to the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ on this earth, the thousand years of peace after the seven years of the Great Tribulation.

During this Millennium period, the central point of the earth will be Israel. It will be the leading nation of all the earth; and in the center of Israel, the mountain of the Lord's house will be located. It is not because Israel itself is special, but because it will be God's choice.

During this Millennium period, every human on the earth will acknowledge and submit to the Lordship of Jesus. It will be the time of the perfect government, not by democracy, but theocracy which means that we will be ruled by God Himself, not by dumb majority votes.

During this Millennium period, there will be no more war. Since the people who live in the Millennium still have their own free will, they will have conflicts between nations and individuals, but they will be justly and decisively resolved by the Lord Jesus. That means that Raytheon will no longer produce Tomahawk missiles, maybe parts for John Deere tractors.

In 2013, the United States alone spent 3.9 trillion dollars in the defense budget. Can you imagine the total amount of the defense budget for all the nations around the world? During this Millennium period, all that money will be spent for something constructive rather than destructive.

B. JESUS IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

Isaiah 2:12-19 For the day of the Lord of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up-- And it shall be brought low-- 13 Upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, And upon all the oaks of Bashan; 14 Upon all the high mountains, And upon all the hills that are lifted up; 15 Upon every high tower, And upon every fortified wall; 16 Upon all the ships of Tarshish, And upon all the beautiful sloops. 17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The Lord alone will be exalted in that day, 18 But the idols He shall utterly abolish. 19 They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the Lord And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

To the OT prophets, "the Day of the Lord" was foreshadowed by events in their own day. In the Book of Isaiah, Assyria's conquest of the Northern Kingdom Israel and invasion of Judah, and the Babylonian Captivity of Judah both picture the coming "Day of the Lord" which will happen during the Great Tribulation era.

The term "day of the Lord," which was used more than 25 times in the Bible, does not necessarily refer to one specific day. It speaks of "God's time." The idea is that

now is the day of man, but the day of man will not last forever. One day, the Messiah will end the day of man and bring forth the day of the Lord.

Why will God judge the humans He created? Because of their idolatry, covetousness, pride, and exploiting of the poor that is mentioned in v6 through 22. Instead of holding to the truth of God's Word, they were adopting superstitions from the heathen kingdoms around them just like many religious seekers do with the Eastern religions today.

Whether you believe it or not, there are many Christian churches and denominations that started to embrace the Eastern religion practices and unbiblical spiritual practices to reach God, such as:

- Contemplative prayer
- Prayer Labyrinths
- Candles
- Yoga
- Liturgies
- Icons
- Crosses
- Eastern type meditative practices (New Age)
- Prayer Beads
- Chants/Mantras
- Incense

By the way, do you know what contemplative prayer is? It is a meditative practice where a person focuses on a word and repeats that word over and over for the duration of the exercise. He or she is encouraged to empty one's mind during this practice. Jesus talked about the danger of emptying one's mind without filling it with the Word of God in Matthew 12:

Matthew 12:43-45 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

C. JESUS IN IMMANUEL

Isaiah 7:10-16 Moreover the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 "Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!" 13 Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. 15 Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.

King Ahaz was a wicked bad king of Judah. He worshiped all the other gods and even sacrificed his own son to a pagan deity Molech according to 2 Kings 16.

The attack by the northern kingdom Israel, a.k.a. Ephraim and Syria took a great toll against the southern kingdom Judah. The Lord allowed it to happen because they had forsaken Him. When this allied force attacked Jerusalem, Ahaz and his people were shaking in fear instead of trusting the Lord. Because he rejected the idea of trusting the Lord, he had nothing to hold onto.

Faith in God's promises is the only way to find peace in the midst of our troubles.

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.

In God's eyes, the invasions of these two kingdoms were nothing. Just as He told Ahaz through Isaiah, Assyria destroyed Syria and Israel 65 years later.

The Lord offered a sign for Ahaz so that he could trust God. Wouldn't you know, he refused it piously. Ahaz wouldn't trust the Lord because he secretly allied with Assyria. Besides, if Ahaz saw the sign from the Lord, he was obligated to believe in the Lord. That is why he refused.

Some might say, "But Ahaz was doing what the Scripture said in Deuteronomy and what Jesus said in Matthew." Yes, the Bible tells us not to tempt or test the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:16 "You shall not tempt the Lord your God as you tempted Him in Massah."

But when the Lord tells you to test Him, you test Him. That's what an obedient servant of God does.

This sign had two fulfillments:

1) The immediate fulfillment

Some biblical scholars think that this was immediately fulfilled when a young woman in the royal household shortly married, conceived a son, and unknowingly naming him "Immanuel." Before this boy came to eat solid food, Israel and Syria were to be defeated. It is also possible that God is just referring in a figurative way to a year or two periods of time.

Actually the name 'Immanuel' was a rebuke to Ahaz since he rejected the Lord's presence and didn't trust Him.

2) The ultimate fulfillment

It was important that Jesus be born of a virgin that He could be in a human flesh. But Mary conceived the Lord by the Holy Spirit that He might have a sinless human nature. The modernist who denies Christ's virgin birth denies His eternal Godhead and deity. Either He is God, or He is a really bad con-artist, not a good teacher.

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is one of the key doctrines of Christianity. Because if Jesus Christ is not God come in sinless human flesh, then we have no Savior.

Jesus never became God, nor did Jesus ever cease to be God. His deity – which means His divine Lordship, the fact that He was God – was pre-human, pre-earthly, pre-Bethlehem, and pre-Mary.

In the incarnation, in that moment when Jesus came to this earth and was born of the virgin Mary, He didn't lay aside His deity. He was God before He was born as a human baby, and He remained God after He became a man.

By the way, in case you are wondering why Jesus' parents didn't name Him "Immanuel", there was a great reason. Angel Gabriel who was dispatched by the Lord told them to do so:

Matthew 1:20-21 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

The name 'Jesus' which means "Yahweh is my Salvation" describes His mission, while 'Immanuel' which means "God with us" describes who He is.

D. APPLICATIONS

- 1) We should not mix our faith in Christ with any other religious practices that come from cults and occults, no matter who encourages us to do so.
- 2) We should never forget how much sacrifice our Lord made for our salvation.