

12-20-2015

Message: Where Is the Promise of His Coming? Part 3

Text: 2 Peter 3:1-4; Isaiah 9:1-7

Introduction

- A. While many have doubted and continue to doubt God's promises of the coming of His Messiah to replace all governments of the world with the establishment of His righteous, boundless, eternal kingdom, those of us who believe in the Lord continue to celebrate His promised coming to us 2000 years, and continue to order our lives in the hope of His promised return for us. May that come to describe the faith and hope of all of us and of our children by God's grace.
- B. This hope is part of what makes the gospel of Jesus Christ truly good news. For bad government is a burden on people. It is better than no government, it is better than anarchy, but bad government increases the misery index on its own people as well as others.
- C. Government can be bad due to ineptitude, a lack of skill sets in its leadership. But when we look at our world's present and past, governments are most often bad due to their failure to serve the one true God who has established all of them and to whom they will all one day give an account. Governments are bad due to sins of greed, pride, self-exaltation, exploitation, oppression, deceit, violence, mercilessness, prejudice, etc.
- D. All governments are affected by sin, because, as the Scriptures teach, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Nonetheless, all governing bodies and officials are established by God (Romans 13:1). Therefore, God requires our submission to them when they do not require our disobedience to God.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 13:1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

- E. And so the church lives under imperfect governments of the world whose lack of various levels of wisdom and godly integrity places heavy burdens on us. Many citizens in our own country are obviously frustrated with various government entities (Real Clear Politics approval rating for our president - 43%; for our congress - 13%). And if we feel burdened by government in the U.S., how much more does most of Christ's church throughout the world feel burdened! (See Transparency International map of "corruption perception index," where of 175 countries, the U.S. is tied with 3 other countries for 17th best. Somalia and North Korea are tied for worst, with Afghanistan coming in 4th worst.)
- F. Yet God speaks to us today from the 7th, 8th, and 9th, chapters of His prophet Isaiah, giving His people hope by promising them a governmental leader whom they could trust to always lead them wisely, fairly, righteously, victoriously, and in their best interest, a leader whose dominion, duration, and power would have no boundaries, whose dominion would fill the whole earth, the whole creation.

I. Isaiah 7: 1-9 Judah is governed by a godless king.

- A. King Ahaz of Judah over 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ was a bad king, who would bring Judah into much misery.

2 Kings 16:2 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and **he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God**, as his father David had done.³ But **he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the**

fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out from before the sons of Israel.

- B. 7:1,2 As part of God's judgment on king Ahaz, Judah came under threat from Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Israel.

Isaiah 7:1 Now it came about in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not conquer it. ²When it was reported to the house of David, saying, "The Arameans have camped in Ephraim," his heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind.

1. Ahaz had an opportunity to repent and to trust God and leave his enemies in divine hands
2. 2 Kings 16:7 but he trusted Assyria, regarding God unworthy of trust.

2 Kings 16:6 At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, and cleared the Judeans out of Elath entirely; and the Arameans came to Elath and have lived there to this day. ⁷ **So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me."**

- C. 7:3-9 God's offer of deliverance

1. 7:3-6

Isaiah 7:3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller's field, ⁴and say to him, 'Take care and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stubs of smoldering firebrands, on account of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah. ⁵'Because Aram, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has planned evil against you, saying, ⁶"Let us go up against Judah and terrorize it, and make for ourselves a breach in its walls and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,

- a. Ahaz was probably surveying his water supply for an anticipated siege
- b. Shear-jashub, Isaiah's son, means "a remnant will return"

(1) Ahaz had already suffered defeats and lost territory to Rezin (2 Kings 16:1-6)

(2) a remnant will return" indicates Rezin and Pekah will not swallow up destroy Judah

2. 7:7,9 "it shall not come to pass." In every circumstance in life there are 2 perspectives, human and divine. Salvation comes through faith in the divine perspective.

Isaiah 7:7 thus says the Lord GOD: "It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass. ... ⁹ ... If you will not believe, you surely shall not last."

- a. From Ahaz's point of view, the threat from Syria and Ephraim (Israel) required trust in Assyria.

b. From God's point of view, simple trust in God is required.

(1) John Oswalt – If Israel continues to refuse dependence on God while attempting to depend on the nations, she will have neither hope nor a message of hope for the nations. Will Israel realize that to depend on the nations is to lose her distinct mission to them, whereas refusal to depend on them is to become a blessing to them?

(2) Ahaz had no heart to trust God - 2 Kings 16:7-9, and is an example of the rulers with whom God contends in 3:14 because they lead God's people into ruin.

2 Kings 16:8 Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria.⁹ So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried the people of it away into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death.¹⁰ Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw the altar which was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the pattern of the altar and its model, according to all its workmanship.

(3) Ahaz adulterated the worship of God at His Jerusalem temple in deference to the king of Assyria (Cf. 2 Kings 16:18 "because of the king of Assyria").

2 Kings 16:10 Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw the altar which was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the pattern of the altar and its model, according to all its workmanship.¹¹ So Urijah the priest built an altar; according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, thus Urijah the priest made it, before the coming of King Ahaz from Damascus. ...¹⁷ Then King Ahaz cut off the borders of the stands, and removed the laver from them; he also took down the sea from the bronze oxen which were under it and put it on a pavement of stone.¹⁸ The covered way for the sabbath which they had built in the house, and the outer entry of the king, he removed from the house of the LORD **because of the king of Assyria.**

II. Isaiah 7:10-17 God puts Ahaz to the test

A. 7:10,11

Isaiah 7:10 Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying,¹¹ "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven."

1. God asks Ahaz to test Him, but in fact God was testing Ahaz

a. Ahaz's dilemma

(1) Isaiah challenges him to seek evidence that God is to be trusted rather than Assyria.

(2) But Ahaz does not want such evidence

(a) mind is made up

- (b) does not want some sign or evidence to embarrass him, since he is resolved to trust Assyria.
- (c) yet God put no limit on what he could ask. Ask whatever will convince you
- (d) evidence cannot create faith: it can only confirm it. Where there is no faith, evidence is something unwelcome which needs to be explained away. Ahaz naively believed Assyria would save him
- (e) John Wesley said, "If a man will not believe God, he will believe anything." Letters VI. 123

B. 7:12 Ahaz's slick political trick

Isaiah 7:12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!"

1. Feigns piety – refuses to ask God for a sign
2. Quotes Deut. 6:16 (as did Jesus in Matt 4:7)

Deuteronomy 6:16 "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.

Matthew 4:7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

- a. But Ahaz did not say this because He wanted to honor and obey God, but as a cloak for his continued disobedience and refusal to trust God.
- b. But God desires that testing of God that comes from a faith that dares to rest its weight on what God has instructed

Ps 34:8 "**O taste** and see that the Lord is good."

Malachi 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and **test Me now in this**," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

C. 7:13 Isaiah is sick of slick, deceptive politicians who bring loss, hardship and disaster upon their constituencies.

Isaiah 7:13 Then he said, "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?"

1. It is bad enough that they lie to their citizens.
2. But now will Ahaz lie to God?!

D. 7:14 God will give a sign

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

1. Immanuel – God with us
2. God with us will be joyful for some, embarrassing and terrifying for others
3. Though Ahaz has brought his household and country to ruin, God will be with us!
 - a. Matthew 1:23 the ultimate sign that God can be trusted

Matthew 1:21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:²³ "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME **IMMANUEL**," which translated means, "**GOD WITH US.**"

- b. Christ – ultimate fulfillment

E. Isaiah 8:3 was Isaiah's son a foreshadowing and preliminary typological fulfillment? Cf. 7:15,16 with 8:3,4

Isaiah 7:15 "He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. ¹⁶"For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken.

Isaiah 8:3 So I approached the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz; ⁴for before the boy knows how to cry out 'My father ' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria."

1. a child was born in Ahaz's day substantiating God's word, ...
2. ... foreshadowing the birth of another child who would provide even greater evidence that God can be trusted to be with us.

III. There is hope for the faithful

A. 8:4-8 Judah will be invaded

Isaiah 8:4 for before the boy knows how to cry out 'My father ' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria."⁵ Again the LORD spoke to me further, saying, ⁶"Inasmuch as these people have rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and rejoice in Rezin and the son of Remaliah; ⁷"Now therefore, behold, the Lord is about to bring on them the strong and abundant waters of the Euphrates, even the king of Assyria and all his glory; And it will rise up over all its channels and go over all its banks. ⁸"Then it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass through, it will reach even to the neck; and the spread of its wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel.

B. 8:10 but God is with us

Isaiah 8:10 "Devise a plan, but it will be thwarted; State a proposal, **but it will not stand, For God is with us.**"

- C. 8:17-18 People of faith have hope – Cf. Hebrews 2:13 where the speaker is Christ. The waters of death overflowed Him, but God raised Him from the dead to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Isaiah 8:17 And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him. ¹⁸Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.

Hebrews 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹²saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE."¹³ ... And again, "**BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME.**"

IV. 9: 1-7 The promised Messiah/King has come and will come again. How wonderful will be His kingdom!

- A. Where is the promise of His coming? God's Son and Messiah has come.

Isaiah 9:1 But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. ²The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

Matthew 4:12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; ¹³and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴**This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:** ¹⁵**"THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES--"** ¹⁶**"THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."**

- B. When He comes again a second time, He will complete the fulfillment of all that God has promised us in Him.

1. He will increase the nation and its gladness. 100% approval ratings!

Isaiah 9:3 You shall multiply the nation, You shall increase their gladness; They will be glad in Your presence as with the gladness of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands; ¹⁰and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

2. He will destroy all His opponents and our oppressors, lifting their burden from our shoulders

Isaiah 9:4 For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. ⁵ for every boot of the booted warrior in the *battle* tumult, and cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and **in righteousness He judges and wages war.** ¹⁵ **From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations,** and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

3. His government will not involve a separation of powers, of checks and balances needed due to the corruption of humans - it will all rest on His shoulders.

Isaiah 9:6a For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; **and the government will rest on His shoulders;**

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**

4. His decisions will be always wise, good and in all His people's best interest, with no unintended consequences, for He is a Wonderful Counselor full of infinite wisdom. His decisions will all be carried out and will not fail, because He is Mighty God. His reign will know no end, for He is Eternal Father, and His reign will establish eternal, creation-wide peace. .

Isaiah 9:6b ... And His name will be called **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.** **There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,** On the throne of David and over his kingdom, **to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore.** The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Isaiah 28:29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts, **Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great.**

Conclusion:

- A. Do we not want this government? This Messiah? Do we not want citizenship in His kingdom? If so, then unlike Ahaz, we will be sincere and trust Him now? We will embrace Him as our God and King now, in every aspect of life - family, money, church, work, government, recreation, inner thought life.
- B. If so, then we can live amidst a corrupt world in the certain hope of the promise of Christ's coming once again to bring to fulfillment His kingdom for which He taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
- C. As John Piper once on Isaiah 9:6 (12/19/2004), ...

The dawn of God's glory was the first coming of Jesus Christ. The high noon of God's glory will be the second coming of Christ. And that is where the sun will stay for ever and ever.