

“Unto Us”

The Lord’s message to Isaiah combines prophecies foretelling punishment for the wicked with promises of mercy and comfort for God’s remnant people. Judah’s enemies were tools in God’s hands, enlisted to bring judgment on the nation that forgot the Lord. Yet even as Assyria assembled to do God’s will, a message of hope accompanied God’s warnings. Isaiah spoke of a coming child, the virgin’s child, whose kingdom and power will never end. The Lord was thoughtful to comfort His people despite the trouble and sorrow ahead.

Isaiah’s gospel

Soon Israel would be ravaged, Judah and Jerusalem would follow, but deliverance and salvation is the portion of all to whom the Lord shows grace. The gospel comforts all who rest upon God’s word and Isaiah preached the gospel. Isaiah’s hearers lived in days of great darkness yet into that darkness shined a greater light and this light shined on them. This light is the Wonderful child whose birth is foretold, the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. Many years would pass before the Christ-child actually came, yet present tenses, ‘is born’ and ‘is given’ are used for the future certainty of His arrival.

Particular grace

We should note the precision of Isaiah’s language here in this great Messianic prophecy. This child who will come, the child born and the son given, is given to and for God’s elect. It is specifically and particularly ‘unto us’ the Son is given. Here the remnant people upon whom God’s grace comes with sovereign purpose are identified separately from those upon whom judgment will fall. The prophet distinguishes between those to whom grace is sent, the ‘us’, (v. 6), and those who do not turn to the Lord (v. 13). Judgment does not bring repentance, only effectual grace can soften a sinner’s heart.

Seeing Jesus

Here Isaiah’s sublime descriptions of the Messiah lift the eyes of the downcast that they might glimpse the Lord’s Anointed. Here is solid ground for faith and hope. Here is more evidence of Immanuel, God with us. The child born is also the son given. Both facts blend sweetly together. To be born in flesh Jesus left His Father’s side. To save His people He was freely given.

The Prince of Peace

Now we learn of Christ’s fitness to reign and His strength to shoulder the weight of kingly office and righteous government. We learn of His names and nature: Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. These are potent, glorious names that display to believing minds the true character of the child and the true identity of the Son. We learn Christ’s kingdom shall endure forever and consist in perfect peace.

Faith in Jesus Christ

The revelations of Christ’s coming were sent to the elect remnant to sustain them through centuries of oppression and captivity. They continue to illuminate the church in every dark age. Whatever it is that you who trust in Christ are called to endure in this life you know your help is found in the Lord Himself and not in the strength of men. Long before the Saviour was born of Mary, Christ’s people were already being sustained by faith in His accomplishments.

Holiness and love

But let us note, too, how holiness and love, justice and grace, punishment and mercy co-exist side by side in the Lord’s dealings with fallen men and women. As God’s righteousness is visited upon His enemies in judgment His pity flows to His children in love. The final section of our chapter reminds us that wickedness shall never go unnoticed nor evil unpunished. The hand of God ‘is stretched out still’, displaying His purity and truth.

Reconciled by His death

This message was given to believers long ago from God by Isaiah. Christ’s coming brought hope to the hopeless. It spoke peace to those surrounded by enemies. It gave courage to a people gripped by fear. The elect of God looked to Jesus, the coming Prince of Peace, and by faith found comfort in trusting Him. God’s elect still look to Jesus and

experience the peace procured through the blood of His cross.

‘His hand stretched out still’

As the Lord gives us eyes to see our own sin, discernment to know the enemies around us and within, He also lifts our eyes to see Christ and gives us faith to trust in Him. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. He who comforted His people in days long past comforts His people still. The same ‘hand stretched out still’ to judge, is stretched out still to bless.

Amen

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