

Wonderful Counselor

Isaiah 9:6-7

One of the reasons I love the prophet Isaiah is because God used him to clearly articulate how stupid idolatry is. Listen to this challenge Isaiah sarcastically gives to his fellow Israelites in **Isaiah 41:22-24**,

“Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen . . . declare to us the things to come,²³ tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad . . .²⁴ But you are less than nothing and . . . he who chooses you is detestable.”

Isaiah was not vague in his contempt for idolatry. In contrast to the dumb idols, Isaiah repeatedly spoke for God and accurately told the future. Because Isaiah lived in a dark time – God often used him to foretell coming judgments upon the nations – including the Ten Northern Tribes of Israel and Judah. Many of the judgments Isaiah foretold were on the horizon when Isaiah lived. For example, in **Isaiah 8:1-4** we read,

“The LORD said to me [Isaiah], ‘Take a large scroll and write on it with an ordinary pen: Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz [the spoil speeds, the prey hastens].² And I will call in Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah as reliable witnesses for me.’³ Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said to me, ‘Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.’⁴ Before the boy knows how to say ‘My father’ or ‘My mother,’ the wealth of Damascus [the capitol of Syria] and the plunder of Samaria [the capitol of Israel] will be carried off by the king of Assyria.”

And guess what? The Assyrians carried off the Ten Northern tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. – before Isaiah’s son could cry out “father” or “mother.” And Isaiah had two witnesses to confirm that God told him what was going to happen – before it happened.

In **Isaiah 10:12**, God revealed His plans for Assyria,

“When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem [the capital of Judah, which was also going to be attacked by the Assyrians], he will say, ‘I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes.’”

Twenty years after the Assyrians carried off the Ten Northern Tribes of Israel, a massive army from Assyria ransacked Judah and had surrounded Jerusalem. Listen to what happened in **Isaiah 36:1-20**,

“In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah’s reign [701 B.C.], Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.² Then the king of Assyria sent his field commander with a large army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. When the commander stopped at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman’s Field . . .⁴ [he] said to them [the officers of Hezekiah], ‘Tell Hezekiah, This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: On what are you basing this confidence of yours? [Hezekiah refused to surrender] . . .⁷ And if you say to me, “We are depending on the LORD our God” . . .¹⁸ Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? . . .²⁰ How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?’”

The answer came that very night and is recorded in **Isaiah 37:36-38**,

“Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men [soldiers] in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning – there were all the dead bodies [surrounding them]!³⁷ So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there [his army had been destroyed].³⁸ One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons . . . cut him down with the sword”

And that was the end of arrogant Sennacherib. Did the people of Judah, who had been miraculously delivered by God from the army of Assyria – go on to walk faithfully with the Lord God from that time on? No. For a time

they did. But eventually they became worse than the Ten Northern Tribes of Israel. And so **Isaiah 39:5-7** reveals that judgment was coming upon Judah down the road,

“Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD Almighty: ⁶ The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. ⁷ And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you [this is in the future], will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’”

That was fulfilled about 115 years later in 586 B.C. But about 20 years before God carried out that judgment upon Judah, a prophet by the name of Habakkuk complained to God about the wickedness of Judah and was wondering how long God was going to put up with it? God reminded Habakkuk that He was going to deal with Judah’s wickedness by having the Babylonians conquer them. But Habakkuk then complained that the Babylonians were more wicked than the people of Judah. God’s response was that after He used Babylon to judge wicked Judah, He would then judge wicked Babylon. 47 years after Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, Babylon was destroyed by the Medes.

Are we getting the idea that everything God says is going to happen – happens? God has a great track record, which should give us total confidence regarding whatever God says is going to happen. This brings us to our primary text for the four Sundays of Advent. I hope you will open your Bibles to Isaiah 9:6-7. This prophecy was 700 years into Isaiah’s future and speaks of great blessings. Let me say that a common feature among the

prophets was when they spoke of God's judgments, which were often close at hand, they would invariably go on to speak of great blessings that were yet to come. I have already shared a lot of bad news. Here is the good news,

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given [why doesn't Isaiah say “For to us a child will be born, to us a son will be given – since he is speaking of the distant future? It is called prophetic certainty. Which simply means there is no power in the universe that could prevent this prophecy from being fulfilled], and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.”

700 years after Isaiah spoke these words, here is what the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary in **Luke 1:30-35**,

“Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God ³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. ³³ The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.” ³⁴ ‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’ [Mary probably did not hear about the great blessings the Messiah would achieve. She was stuck on how she was going to give birth to the Son of God] ³⁵ The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.’”

The Lord Jesus Christ is obviously the fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6-7. And just as there was prophetic certainty that the Messiah would be born of the Jews, from the lineage of David, there is also certainty that the increase of his government and peace, will not end. Friends, Christ's kingdom has been

growing for 2,000 years. There are presently hundreds of millions of Christians who have been rescued from Satan's domain of darkness and transferred into Christ's kingdom of light. There is a higher percentage of Christians versus non-Christians today, than ever in the history of the world. And I am not talking about name only Christians, but genuine Christians, who take the Great Commission of Christ seriously and are willing to die for their faith.

There are wonderful Christians who believe Christ will not sit on David's throne until His Second Coming. At that time He will dwell in Jerusalem and sit on a throne ruling over Israel. I believe a better understanding of what Isaiah is saying is that David's throne was merely a shadow of Christ's greater throne – which he is presently on. What characterized David's throne – David's rule? **II Samuel 8:15** states that “David reigned over all Israel – doing what was **just and right** for all his people.” What does Isaiah 9:7 foretell concerning Christ's kingdom? It will be characterized by **justice and righteousness**. And it will never cease to increase upon the earth. The way I understand Isaiah 9:7, is that the citizens of Christ's kingdom, Christians who embrace Christ as our king and follow His laws and commands, will continue to grow in number and influence.

Does the Bible predict this in other places? In our New Testament reading Christ told His disciples that it was to their advantage that He return to His Father. **Daniel 7:13-14** tells us some of the reasons why Christ said that. Listen to what the prophet Daniel says 500 years before Christ's

ascension,

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man [that was Christ’s favorite title for Himself], coming with the clouds of heaven [where was he coming to?]. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence [this is speaking of Christ’s ascension to God the Father, not His Second Coming].¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language **worshiped him** [this is prophetic certainty; it is going to happen]. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

But wait a minute, Christ is in heaven, how can He rule over kingdoms and governments on earth? How does Satan rule over his earthly kingdom of darkness? He works through people who do his bidding. **Daniel 7:27** tells us that Christ rules over His earthly kingdom in the same way,

“Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and **all rulers will worship and obey him.**”

There is nothing that can stop that prophecy from being fulfilled. The only question is when will all rulers worship and obey Christ? The Apostle Paul understood this prophecy as a picture of what a successful Great Commission will look like and he prayed that all Christians would understand that. Listen to his prayer recorded in **Ephesians 1:18-22**,

“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,²¹ far above all rule and authority, power

and dominion, and every title that can be given . . . ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

2000 years ago the Lord Jesus, our wonderful counselor, commanded His followers, the Saints, the Church, the Body of Christ on earth today, to make disciples of all the nations, and that He would be with us while we did so. Christ’s promise to be with us was His guarantee of success. In other words, our wonderful counselor has revealed God’s way of fulfilling Isaiah 9:7, Daniel 7:27 and His unconditional promise to Abraham – which is recorded in both the Old and New Testaments. **Genesis 22:16-18** gives us the clearest articulation of this promise,

“I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you [Abraham] have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies [the meek will prevail], ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed”

There is simply nothing that can stop that promise from being fulfilled – as the writer of Hebrews testifies in Hebrews 6:13-20. But how do we know that followers of Christ are the descendants of Abraham whom God has chosen to bless all the nations? Because the Apostle Paul explicitly says so in **Galatians 3:6-8**,

“Consider Abraham: ‘He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ ⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe [in Christ] are children of Abraham [whether they are Jews or Gentiles]. ⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles [the nations] by faith, and

announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’”

The Apostle Paul is explaining how followers of Christ will bless all the nations – it is by living and sharing the gospel. And just in case we slept through those verses, Paul goes on to say in **Galatians 3:29**, “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” God’s promise to bless all the nations of the earth is a foundational promise of the Bible. And the Lord Jesus Christ did and continues to do – all the heavy lifting for that promise to be fulfilled through the Church, His Body, His Bride, His Temple, His Holy Nation – called out of darkness to be a transforming light to the nations.

Christ is our wonderful counselor because He directs us to the path we are to follow. He is our wonderful counselor because disciples making disciples is the means by which Christ’s followers will bless all the nations. The more who people embrace Christ as their wonderful counselor and king, the more Christ’s government and peace will increase upon the earth. Let’s Pray.