

## **“HOPE IS ON THE WAY” (Insights from Isaiah) Part 2**

12.8.19

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is the second message in our Christmas series, “Hope Is On The Way.” We are looking at select OT prophecies that give us pieces of what we had to look forward to in the promised coming Savior that God first announced to Adam and Eve after their tragic fall in the Garden of Eden.

Last week we learned two (2) things about this coming “hope”:

- 1) This savior was going to be a human being — God referred to the woman’s “offspring,” but in a completely unique way; it was going to be a product of the woman’s “seed” — no mention of the seed of a male.
- 2) This savior was going to be able to be hurt — the serpent will “sting” him — while at the same time being the one whose life and power would “crush” the head of the serpent.

Today, we will be adding to our picture of this coming “hope.” Let’s look at some more pieces of this picture, courtesy of the OT prophet Isaiah.

### **TEXTS & ANALYSIS**

***“[T]he Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel” — Isaiah 7:14.***

- 1) This prophecy tells us that that the mother involved in this amazing event will be a “virgin.” Now the Hebrew word used here simply means a young woman old enough to be married. In the Israelite culture of the time, a woman of marrying age would have by definition been a virgin; the only other option was “prostitute.” But in the larger implications of the arrival of a savior, the mother’s being a virgin can only mean a supernatural conception — letting the world know that the child will be both fully supernatural — a child of God — and, being born of a woman, fully human.
- 2) This savior will be a male, the woman’s “son.”
- 3) He will be known, as in taking on the role, as “Immanuel,” which means “God with us.” This again informs us of the supernatural, divine makeup of this savior, whose presence will quite literally be in a way unlike anything we have known or experienced before.
- 4) FULFILLMENT:
  - a) ***[A]fter [Joseph] had considered [divorcing Mary quietly], an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. . . . When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus — Matthew 1:20, 24-25.***

***b) The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ — John 1:14; I John 1:1-3a.***

***[T]here will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past He humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future He will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan — the people walking in darkness have seen a great Light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a Light has dawned — Isaiah 9:1-2.***

- 1) This prophecy tells us that this savior, this hope that is on the way, will have a prominent presence in the far north of Israelite territory: Zebulun and Naphtali were the two tribes allocated this part of Israel's promised territory when coming into the Promised Land. They were also the first to feel the wrath of God through the power of the Assyrian Empire as they began the conquest of the ten northern tribes. They certainly would have experienced a very dark time as they experienced both conquest and exile — not to mention their precipitous fall into the darkness of sin that would have paved the way for God's judgment in the first place. But despite this history, they would experience the light of God's hope in the person and presence of this savior.
- 2) Galilee would be the epicenter of this "great Light" that would dawn upon them. Incidentally, the "Way Of The Sea" was an established route both of commerce and conquest, running from the Euphrates River all the way to Egypt. Coincidentally, this was the likely route that the Assyrian army would have used when invading the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And while this is its only reference in Biblical history, this route is mentioned frequently in unearthed Assyrian and Egyptian records.
- 3) "Galilee of the nations," in other translations called "Galilee of the Gentiles," is an acknowledgement that, due to its history of being visited by many foreign influences (mostly due to attacks or invasions), the district of Galilee had a distinctively foreign flavor, with many otherwise foreign influences coexisting together.
- 4) FULFILLMENT:
  - a) ***[Joseph] withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene — Matthew 2:22b-23.***
  - b) ***[Give] joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light. For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the***

***Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins — Paul, Colossians 1:12-14.***

***For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness 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 — Isaiah 9:6-7.***

- 1) Once again, the maleness of this hope, this savior, along with the fact that this hope will come to us as a child — suggesting that the entire life of this savior will be the long-awaited hope. In other words, this child would always be Jesus (obviously), but this child would also always be the Christ.
- 2) This hope is going to be a ruler — bearing the burden of government. The government being “on His shoulders” is a figurative reference to the kingly robe often worn by royalty as a sign of their authority as well as an acknowledgement that it is a hope, a savior, who is coming to be a ruler.
- 3) We also read of the attributes of this ruler: He will be —
  - a) Wonderful Counselor:
    - i) Wonderful — pele (peh^~leh): a noun meaning a wonder, a miracle, a marvel; it is used to represent something unusual or extraordinary. It *always* appears in the context of God's words or deeds — including the child to be born as the Messiah. There is going to be nothing dull about this savior's reign.
    - ii) Counselor — ya'ats (yaw-ats^): a verb meaning to advise, to consult, to counsel, to deliberate. The idea is that this savior will lead His people through His wisdom and understanding.
    - iii) This ruler will have no need of human counselors but He Himself will be His own counselor and do so in an exceptional or distinguished way.
    - iv) FULFILLMENT:
      - (a) ***When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching — Matthew 7:28.***
      - (b) ***The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about Him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest Him. . . . Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn't you bring Him in?” “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied — John 7:32, 45-46.***
  - b) Mighty God:
    - i) Mighty — gibbowr (gib-bore^): intensive of powerful, mighty man, strong (man), valiant man.
    - ii) God — 'el (ale): a noun meaning God, it expresses various ideas of deity according to its context.

- iii) FULFILLMENT: *They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!” — Mark 4:41.*
  - iv) This title, ascribed to Yahweh Himself, is now proclaimed as belonging to this child as well.
  - v) As a “wonderful counselor,” this savior will have the wisdom to rule with righteousness and justice; as “mighty God,” He will have the power to execute the wisdom of his rule.
- c) Everlasting Father:
- i) Everlasting — ‘ad (ad): a noun meaning eternity, everlasting, evermore, old, world without end.
  - ii) Father — ‘ab (awb): a noun meaning father, primarily used to mean either a human or spiritual father.
  - iii) This ruler will rule as a good father — as a provider and protector — in a reign that will never end.
  - iv) FULFILLMENT: *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. . . . And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” — Matthew 28:18, 20b.*
- d) Prince of Peace:
- i) Prince — sar (sar): a noun meaning a chieftain, a chief, a ruler, an official, a captain, a prince. The person wearing this title would have immediate authority as a ruler.
  - ii) Peace — shalom (shaw-lome^): a noun meaning peace or tranquility, from a root word meaning “safe.” But the “peace” spoken of here is much more than simply the absence of conflict; it also speaks of a wholeness and integration into the world where no issues of conflict remain.
- 4) This is not a ruler that will be subject to normal human lifespan. This ruler, specifically tied to the house of David and therefore the tribe of Judah, will have a “forever” rule, with no end in sight. It will be a rule characterized by justice and righteousness.
- 5) This rule is not going to be undertaken by human effort, but rather by God’s power and design.

*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him — the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord — and He will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what He sees with His eyes, or decide by what He hears with His ears; but with righteousness He will judge the needy, with justice He will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth; with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be His belt and faithfulness the sash around His waist. . . . In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him, and His resting place will be glorious — Isaiah 11:1-5, 10.*

- 1) This hope will be born within the family line of David. There is some thought that the Hebrew word for “branch” — *netser* (nay<sup>^</sup>-tser) — may be the connection that Matthew was making in his gospel when he was inspired to write these words: ***[H]e went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that He would be called a Nazarene — Matthew 2:23.*** While there is no direct quote of these words in the OT, Matthew may have been making the general point, taken from many of the prophets, of one being despised due to background or reputation; coming from Nazareth would have carried some of that connotation.
- 2) Both this section of Isaiah and Isaiah 42 make mention of the same thing: that this hope will have the Spirit of the Lord resting on him. And then it describes what that “Spirit of the Lord” will look like:
  - a) Wisdom and understanding,
  - b) Counsel and might,
  - c) Knowledge and fear of the Lord, in fact, even delight in the fear of the Lord.
- 3) As a result of being endowed with the Spirit of the Lord, this hope will not judge on appearances — not on what He sees or on what He hears. Rather, He will judge in the righteousness of the Spirit of the Lord — which will make His judgments absolutely correct. As Jesus Himself said in John: ***“Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly” — John 7:24.***

***“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on Him, and He will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out. In faithfulness He will bring forth justice; He will not falter or be discouraged till He establishes justice on earth. In His teaching the islands will put their hope. . . . I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness” — Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7***

- 1) This savior will not appear with the human traits that one usually associates with dynamic personalities; he will not make a lot of noise in the streets, or raise a defiant fist into the air to inspire others to follow him. In fact, according to Isaiah 53, there is going to be nothing special about him: ***He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him — Isaiah 53:2b.***
- 2) He will be a gentle individual, not even breaking a bruised reed or blowing out a candle. At the same time He will have power beyond understanding; it will be impossible to discourage Him, and He is predicted to be one who will bring justice to the earth.
- 3) He will be for all people — Jews (a new covenant for the people) as well as a light for the Gentiles. By His ministry, and in the strength of the Lord’s spirit, those spiritually blind will be able to see, those in spiritual captivity will be released, and

those in the darkness of spiritual dungeons will once again have their spiritual sight restored.

- 4) Jesus referred to a similar idea when reading in the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth; He read from Isaiah 61:1-2 which says: ***The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners — Isaiah 61:1 (quoted by Jesus in Luke 4).*** Jesus' conclusion as He finished reading? ***"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" — Jesus Christ, Luke 4:21b.***

## CONCLUSION

It's interesting, isn't it? I mean, God, being God, could have had the hope He promised Adam and Eve back in the Garden be the world's most charismatic leader — unbearably handsome in appearance, physically strong without peer — very literally the epitome of "a man's man." But what did He do? He fashioned His response to sin in a package that would stun the world by wisdom, would reach out to a world hardened by sin with love and gentleness. And He'd start this earth-changing savior as a child, a baby. How does that make any sense at all? Yet it does.

Jesus Christ appeared as maybe the greatest surprise package that the world has ever known. But everything about Him was God's design — to reach out to everybody, to love everybody, to challenge everybody, to change everybody — and to do it by directly intervening in human history with a very special human being — His own Son. And, because He was God's design, He was perfect. Two thousand years ago in a little village called Bethlehem, God's perfect gift arrived — and the world has never been the same. It was never supposed to be.

How has Jesus changed you? How has life in Christ been different than life apart from Christ? There is a world desperately in need to know what difference He makes — and that story starts with you. What difference has He made? Let's pray!