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Grace Evangelical Church
Sunday, December 7, 2008
Communion Sunday
The Savior We Need -Isaiah
Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1-5; 53; 55:1-3, 6-7; 61:1-3

Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, and more names of leaders could be given of those who have come and gone on the pages of history.

Each of these men, as I see it, had a common thread. They may not have called it what I term it, but it was a driving force in their lives. They thought they were some kind of savior for mankind.

This is expressed today so vividly in the leader of Iran who thinks that the Muslim religion should be the religion of the world. In fact he has said that some kind of savior is to come and rule the world.

Then, the popular thinking in our day in the market place is that you and I are god. Bill Maher loves to mock God and Christianity. His new documentary film is called "Religulous (a play on the words "religion" and "ridiculous." So according to such thinking, we determine our own destiny. We are our own saviors.

However, when all the dust has settled, after man starts and ends up in his own little box, he eats, drinks, and is merry, and tomorrow he dies - still thinking that there is no need for a Savior. Yes, God in any way is not necessary.

You may have heard that the American Humanist Association (AHA), in Washington D.C., spent \$12,000 to plaster this message on 200 of the city's buses, "Why believe in God? Just be good for goodness' sake." So far, the idea has been widely unpopular in the nation's capital. Metro offices have been flooded with 286 complaints. The Murphy family in nearby McLean, Virginia started an online counter-campaign to the AHA's signs and has so far raised enough money to put 200 posters in the buses that read, "Why believe? I created you and I love you, for goodness' sake. -God."

I trust you never get over the amazing reality that the biblical God doesn't let man in his limited reason continue to live in his little box. Why?

The biblical God knows that mankind could never come up with a solution on his own of being boxed in to his little world. If he could come up with a solution, it would be limited, since man is finite, and it would be tainted with his own unrighteousness and sinfulness. Yes, God loves us so much even in our sinning against Him that He gives us His best, His own Son, to be our Savior.

In that process, God used prophets, like Isaiah, to tell us prophetically what He would do even before the actual event of the Savior's coming occurred.

I. Isaiah - the man.

1. **Isaiah was born into an influential, upper-class family.** His name means, Jehovah saves. Very fitting for the ministry that he would have.
2. **His father's name was Amoz (Isaiah 1:1,** but we do not know from what tribe he came. It is thought that he lived in Jerusalem, near the temple (Isaiah 6). He married a prophetess by whom had had a son named Maher-shalal-hash-baz (meaning hurry booty, hasten prey – promise of judgment) - (Isaiah 8:3). Another son, Shear-jashub, (meaning a remnant shall return – promise of mercy) is mentioned in Isaiah 7:3.
3. **Isaiah appears to have held a high rank in Jerusalem,** for Hezekiah, when sending a deputation to him chose the highest officers and the elders of the priests (II Kings 19:2). It is exceedingly probable that he was the head and chief of the prophetic order, holding in Jerusalem the same rank which Elisha had held in the prophetic schools in Israel. He rubbed shoulders with royalty and gave advice concerning the foreign affairs of the nation.
4. **Isaiah prophesied from 740-680 B.C** during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh.

5. After living most of his life in Jerusalem, tradition says that Isaiah was martyred during the reign of Manasseh (696-642 B. C.) by being sawed in two inside a hollow log (Hebrews 11:37).
6. Isaiah is called the prince of the prophets, yes, the evangelical prophet, for he tells us prophetically more about the person and work of Jesus than any other book in the Old Testament.
7. Isaiah was also the author of a biography of King Uzziah (II Chronicles 26:22), and of Hezekiah (Isaiah 32:32). Both the biographies have been lost, together with the annals of Judah and Israel into which they had been asserted. He is by general consent along with his prophecies considered the greatest of all Hebrew writers.

II. Isaiah – his call.

1. While in the temple in Jerusalem, the LORD gave Isaiah, in the year of Uzziah's death (740 B.C.), a vision of His holiness which changed Isaiah's life. He must be a clean vessel in order to be to be a servant of the LORD.

2. Isaiah responded to the Lord's holiness and acknowledged his own uncleanness and that of the people. An angel, a seraphim, meaning to burn, came and touched his lips with a burning coal (from the altar of incense, or the altar of burnt offering) which provided cleansing for Isaiah and readiness to serve the Lord.

We must remember that God comes not to condemn us in our sin, but to cleanse us from our sin. God doesn't come to us to hurt us but to heal us. He doesn't come to curse us but to cure of our spiritual sickness in our sin.

3. Isaiah responded to God's call on his life, by saying, "Here am I, send me." Although the people would not respond to Isaiah's message, he was sent to warn them of coming judgment as a nation, but also the hope which would eventually come through the Messiah and Savior, Jesus Christ.

III. Isaiah – his message.

1. Regarding the nation of Judah.

**Although scoffed at, he warned the nation and kings against foreign alliances, and urged Judah to trust in the LORD (Isaiah 30:1-17)

**He attacked the social ills of his day telling of the abuses that the spiritual declension had brought (Isaiah 1:3-9; 58:6-10).

**Isaiah, then, boldly declares the inevitable crash of Judah and the preservation of a small godly remnant (Isaiah 6:13).

**Isaiah points Israel to accept the Word of God which stands forever (Isaiah 40:8). He tells Israel that God is everlasting, the Creator of the ends of the earth (Isaiah 40:28). He tells Israel that the LORD never wearies, but He gives strength to those who wait on Him (Isaiah 40:31). Isaiah continued, From eternity I am HE (Isaiah 40:13). There is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth (Isaiah 45:21-22). Then in Isaiah 55, God through Isaiah gives Israel that great invitation to come to Him, to seek the LORD and He will be found (Isaiah 55:6).

I encourage you to read that great section of Scripture in Isaiah 40-48. Enjoy worshipping the true and living God!

**In that process he foretold about the first and second advents of the Messiah and Savior. Israel would one day be a blessing to the entire world.

2. Regarding the Messiah and Savior specifically.

(1) The Lord's person.

****Isaiah 7:14 – Immanuel – God with us.**

"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."

The historical context of this verse is during the reign of Ahaz (731 B.C.). God's sign to the king was that a virgin would have a son. He would not be more than 12-14 years old before Aram and Israel would be captured in 722 B.C. It is felt that the virgin at this time may have been Isaiah's second wife (Isaiah 8:1-4), his first wife dying after the birth of Shear-jashub – Isaiah 7:3).

The virgin of this passage was a type of the virgin Mary, who by the Holy Spirit miraculously conceived Jesus Christ. This passage is fulfilled in Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 1:23.

This verse is prophetically telling us that the Messiah and Savior who would be born would be God – deity, and man – humanity. He would be God in flesh.

Astounding, phenomenal, no matter how many times we hear these words. In the 7th/8th century B.C. God used Isaiah to prophesy that someone was going to be born who would be God and man.

Jesus Christ would be Immanuel – God with us.

****Isaiah 9:6 – A child is born, a Son is given.**

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful (Supernatural) Counselor – bringing words of eternal life; Mighty God (deity with supernatural ability), Eternal Father (Father of eternity – as Messiah, He would be a Father to His people, as Jesus would guard, supply, and care for His people), and Prince of Peace (peace between God and men, tranquility and wholeness to life and relationships – of course through the cross, and eventually bringing peace to earth).

But don't miss what is said here.

Jesus was born into the world as a baby, as a child, like all of us have come into the world. But Jesus was given as a Son, which is referring to His eternal existence as the Son of God, as deity, before He took upon Himself sinless humanity. Jesus was, is, and always will be the eternal Son of God – having that eternal relationship with His heavenly Father.

****Isaiah 11:1 – A shoot from Jesse, a branch – From the seed of David.**

"Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit."

Although the tree of David is felled – it seems to have no life, just a stump – a shoot would grow out of the seemingly dead stump, from Jesse, David's father. It would be the Messiah/Savior. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit (11:2), and have flawless integrity (11:3-5). But the word shoot tells us that Christ's beginning would be humble, such as being born to humble parents and being born in a very humble place- a stable.

Isaiah tells us that when the Messiah/Savior would come He would be Immanuel – God with us, born a child, but always the Son, the Son of God, born in a humble place into a humble home.

(2) The Lord's work.

****Isaiah 53 is the classic prophetic passage telling us Christ's work at His first coming.**

- It tells us of the Lord's coming lowly background – Isaiah 53:1-2).
- It tells us of the Lord's coming suffering (Isaiah 53:3-4).
- It tells us of the Lord coming to be our sin bearer – to be a substitute to pay the penalty for our breaking God's law, which is death (Isaiah 53:5-11). He would be crushed for our iniquities, and the iniquity of us all would fall on Him. He would be our guilt offering before God.
- It tells us why Jesus would become our substitute to pay the penalty for our sin – all we like sheep have gone astray, and God has laid on HIM the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). We need a Savior, even though we may not or do not realize it.
- It tells us that Christ will rise from the dead demonstrating that he has won justification for those who believe in Him – His days would be prolonged – and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand (Isaiah **53:10**).

A passage in the New Testament that refers back to Isaiah 53 is Mark 15:17-32 telling of our Lord being despised and rejected of men, being numbered with the transgressors. Also, I Peter 2:22-23

refers to Isaiah 53 as well quoting that He did no sin, neither was any guile found in His mouth (Isaiah 53:9). He bore our sins in His body and by his scourgings we are healed (Isaiah 53:4,11).

There is no doubt that Isaiah 53 refers directly to what Jesus Christ will go through, and what He will do for the sins of the world, yes, for each person. He would be the true Savior for Israel and the world.

- **Isaiah 61:1-3 foretold something of the ministry of Jesus Christ when He would come at His first coming.**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.”

Christ read this passage from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue as recorded in Luke 4:18-19. He applied it to Himself, for He was the fulfiller of Isaiah 61:1-2a.

- **Isaiah 60ff foretold that Christ would come a second time to establish His kingdom for Israel and the world. Israel would be a light to the nations. The Messiah’s glory would be declared among the nations (Isaiah 66:19).**

In fact, as Isaiah 61 continues in verse 2 – Jesus in order to establish His kingdom at His second coming would bring judgment on the nations as well as Israel as He sets up His kingdom, His 1000 year reign on earth. At this time, the prophesy of Isaiah 9 that the government would be upon His shoulders would be directly fulfilled as He ruled as King of the world on the throne of His father David.

That is a brief overview of the person and ministry of the prince of the prophets Isaiah. What can we learn from Isaiah’s life and ministry?

IV. Isaiah – Lessons for us today.

1. There is the true Savior, Jesus Christ (John 1:12; John 3:16; I John 5:11-13).

In the midst of a people who were rebelling against the Lord, Isaiah was telling the people that there was the true Savior in God Himself, and that the Messiah would come to be the Savior of Israel and the world. He was coming because mankind needed a Savior, needed to be forgiven so each person could be reconciled to God.

This month, again, we celebrate the coming of Immanuel, God with us. He would be the child born, the Son who was given. He would bring good news to the afflicted; He would bind up the broken hearted, proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners.

But he would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows. But more than that, He would be pierced for our transgressions, and our iniquities would be placed on Him. He would be the guilt offering for you and me before God. He would be our substitute to represent us to pay the penalty for our breaking God’s law which is death.

But is everyone flocking to Jesus? Is everyone ready to receive Him as personal Savior, and celebrate His birth?

Obviously not as we hear about what is transpiring in Washington D.C. and then in the state of Washington. Times have not changed. At his birth, Herod tried to have Jesus killed. No Savior. Still today. Some are saying, “No Savior.”

Regardless, Jesus loves sinners. In fact that is why He came. His name shall be called Jesus for He will save His people from their sins. He loves those who reject Him. Father forgive them, they know not what they do. So Jesus loves the atheists. He loves the agnostics. He loves you and me. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for each of us – because all of us stand guilty before God, we have sinned against Him, and need the forgiveness He has provided us in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. We must respond in faith to the true Savior (Isaiah 55:1ff; John 7:37).

God gives us the invitation to come to Him for forgiveness and eternal life. It's the same invitation as in Isaiah's day, **Isaiah 55. "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and you who have no money, come, buy wine, and milk, without money and with cost." The gift of salvation can not be bought – it is a gift for those who receive it.**

What did Jesus say in **John 7:37** on the eighth day of the Feast of booths, when water was not carried from the Pool of Siloam to the altar of burnt offering (which had been done seven days previously)? **"If anyone who is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'Out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" Jesus, as John wrote was talking about one's experience with the Holy Spirit of God.**

I trust that He Jesus is your personal Savior today. Obviously none of us can save ourselves. We need Immanuel, the Child born, the Son given. We need the Lamb of God who takes away our sin, who was pierced for our transgressions, and our iniquity was laid on Him.

As many as received Him to them He gave the authority to become the children of God, to be part of His forever family.

Once a person makes that decision to accept Christ as one's personal Savior, to ask Him into one's life, then one in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit can live for the Lord.

3. In order to live for and serve the Lord we must be a clean vessel before Him (Isaiah 6:1-8; II Timothy 2:20-22)

God knew that for Isaiah to serve Him He must experience His holiness and cleansing power (Isaiah 6). We are forgiven once for all when we accept Christ as personal Savior. Then in that walk with Him, we do have sinful thoughts, attitudes and actions. We are to keep sensitive to the Lord and confess our sin (I John 1:9) when we do sin, and if we offend someone, we are to go to that person and ask his or her forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32).

When we become callused toward sin in our lives is when we become ineffective for our Lord. We get an insensitive spirit to the Lord and to others. We think it doesn't matter what we think and what we do.

Paul told Timothy to be a vessel of honor, sanctified, that is to act in the power of the Holy Spirit that one belongs to the Lord. Then the believer will be prepared for every good work.

God's desire is that we be holy. We want to be happy. But true holiness before God is the way to true contentment and happiness in the LORD.

Really, obeying the LORD is true holiness and happiness in HIM.

John Brown, nineteenth-century Scottish theologian, has put it this way: "Holiness does not consist in mystic speculations, enthusiastic fervours, or uncommanded austerities; it consists in thinking as God thinks, and willing as God wills."

C. S. Lewis adds, "How little people know who think that holiness is dull. When one meets the real thing, it is irresistible."

4. God has a plan for our lives (Isaiah 6:8-13; II Timothy 1:9; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 3:23).

God made Himself known to Isaiah. He told Isaiah whom shall I send, and who will go for us? (Isaiah 6:8). What was Isaiah's response? "Some other time Lord." or "Please get someone else Lord." or "I don't have the talent." Or "I don't have the time."

Of course Isaiah, not like Moses, replied, "Here am I send me!"

The journey for Isaiah was not easy, as God told him it would be, but Isaiah ministered, as we said at the beginning some 60 years.

He finished his task for the Lord well. Why? He remained focus on the LORD in His holiness and grace.

I believe God has at least two calls on our lives.

(1) First the call to salvation:

Paul told the young pastor Timothy – II Timothy 1:9 – “Who has saved us with a holy calling not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.”

If you have accepted Christ as your personal Savior, you have an eternal call on your life. The Call to be God’s son or daughter, to be in His forever family.

2. The second call is to service:

It is to be a witness for Christ where He puts us (Acts 1:8), while we are to be His faithful stewards (I Corinthians 4:2), in serving the Lord with enthusiasm (Colossians 3:23).

I believe that this will include the occupation God directs you into, and that may change as time goes on. I believe it includes being a godly husband and wife – a godly father and mother – a godly child, a teenager, a college student, whatever our status in life. I believe that God sends each of us to be a servant for He puts us.

When that gets a hold of your life you will never be the same. It means that God has sent you to represent Him where He puts you in the gifts, talents, and energy He supplies you as you trust in Him.

All of us here are in full time Christian service to give glory to God.

I was talking to someone this week about this very thing. As we talked, he said it’s hard sometimes to keep that in focus. He commented that we get so involved in the work, which I call the nitty gritty, that we forget that we are to be doing all things to the glory of God. Hendricks use to call it the glory of the grind.

We are called to salvation through faith in Christ.

We are called to serve the Lord to the glory of God.

5. God has a plan for the world (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21).

God not only has His plan for each of His followers, He also has a plan for His world. As the book of Isaiah is read, it becomes very clear that God had and has a plan for His people Israel. One day, in His time He will restore Israel to her land and set up His kingdom there and for the world for a thousand years.

At the same time, Isaiah foretold that God would create a new heavens and a new earth (Isaiah 65:17). Revelation 21 gives us the description that some day God will put down all rebellion against Him, and create a new eternal home for all believers in Christ.

What day of rejoicing that will be! We can’t even imagine what that will be like.

But our life now and in the future is all based upon the death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ which we commemorate in His table today.

He is the one and only Savior, who has won forgiveness and eternal life for us, that through faith in Him we can serve Him with joyful enthusiasm in the Spirit’s power for His glory.

Give HIM praise!!