

God Reigns

Isaiah 24:14-16a, 23

December 27, 2009

A. Christmas songs^A

B. The Incarnation

1. its meaning^B

2. its continuing reality^C

C. The Universal Praise Isaiah 24:14-16a

1. joy^D

2. east and west^E

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D. The Universal Rule Isaiah 24:23

1. the moon & sun^G

2. the elders^H

E. Conclusion – Reigning in me ...

^A Isaiah 9:6-7, 52:7, Psalm 2:7-8, 110:1, 4

^B Galatians 4:4-5

^C Hebrews 1:1-3, 2:8-9, 1 Corinthians 15:24-25, Philippians 2:5-11

^D Philippians 1:25; 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:1, 4

^E Psalm 103:12

^F 1 John 1:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Revelation 5:12

^G Genesis 1:16, Revelation 21:22-24

^H Revelation 4:2-4, 10-11

A. Introduction

1. Baseball and Christmas

- a. is there a connection, besides all the trading of players that has been going on at this time of the year?
... well, sort of
- b. if you are a baseball fan, then you probably know the name of Mike Wilner: he is a baseball analyst on the FAN-590 radio station and he has an extensive and very wide-ranging – encyclopaedic is the word – knowledge of baseball players and their statistics
- c. if you listen to him on any kind of regular basis then you will also know that he is a Jew
- d. on Christmas eve he was taking the place of some of the regular radio hosts with the explanation that at Christmas time, when the other people on the station want time off, they always call on a Jew; then as they introduced the next segment of the program with a Christmas song, he added, **all the good Christmas songs were written by Jews!**

2. I thought about that and decided he was right – more so than he may have known; consider the following examples, which I have taken from the Jewish Publication Society translation of the Old Testament:

- a. A lot of Isaiah is written in the form of poetry or a song, including much of the chapters 24-27, which are songs of judgement and of salvation, and which foretell the Christ, songs which echo back to Isaiah 9:6-7 (5-6 in the Jewish Bible): ⁵ **For a child is born unto us, a son is given unto us; and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name is called Pele-joez-el-gibbor-Abi-ad-sar-shalom {Wondrous Counsellor, God Almighty, Father of Eternity; Prince of Peace};** ⁶ **That the government may be increased, and of peace there be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it through justice and through righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts doth perform this.** (JPS)
- b. Then there are those words which we sang this morning from Isaiah 52:7 – **How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that announceth peace, the harbinger of good tidings, that announceth salvation; that saith unto Zion: "Thy God reigneth!"** (JPS)
- c. King David, too, the sweet singer of Israel, wrote some Christmas songs, as collected in the book of the

Psalms, songs that speak of the Christ, or Messiah:

- d. Psalm 2:7-8 – ⁷ ¹ I will tell of the decree: the LORD said unto me: "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give the nations for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession.'" (JPS)
- e. and Psalm 110 – ¹ The LORD saith unto my lord: "Sit thou at My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." ... ⁴ The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent: "Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek.'" (JPS)

- 3. yet Gentiles have written some good Christmas songs, too:
 - a. we have been singing some over the past few weeks
 - b. but there are also other ones, like that of Isaac Watts

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moon shall wax and wane no more;

To Him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown His head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With ev'ry morning sacrifice;

People and realms of ev'ry tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

Let ev'ry creature rise and bring
Honours peculiar to our King,

Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud amen!

c. and, in a more modern form

Majesty, worship His majesty,
Unto Jesus be all
glory, power and praise.

Majesty, kingdom authority
flow from His throne
unto His own,
His anthem raise.

So exalt, lift up on high
the name of Jesus.
Magnify, come glorify
Christ Jesus, the King.

Majesty, worship His majesty.
Jesus, who died, now glorified,
King of all kings. —^{2}.

4. For you see the songs we hear being played all around us

a. like

- (A) 'Frosty the Snowman,'
- (B) 'Walking in a Winter Wonderland' and
- (C) 'I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas'

b. though fun to sing, are not the real Christmas songs

- c. but rather those proclaiming the reign of the Messiah, the Christ
- d. for Christmas is the commemoration of the birthday of the King, the Incarnation of Emmanuel, God with Us

B. The Incarnation

1. which we celebrate in a special way at Christmas
 - a. that the Eternal God should enter into history in the form of a man, a servant, obedient to the cross
 - b. is an event difficult for us to comprehend, that the babe of Bethlehem is one and at the same time both the Son of Man and the Son of God
 - c. a truth only made known to us through faith by the work of the Holy Spirit of God

2. and the incarnation is a continuing reality, for when Jesus had finished his work on the cross
 - a. when He had been judged, punished and executed for my sin and for your sin
 - b. when he had descended into the grave and the deep
 - c. when he had risen again that we can be justified
 - d. it is then that we read of this same Jesus, '[...When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.](#)' (Hebrews 1:3b)
 - e. Jesus, as Son of God, eternally united with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as the Triune God (and even words fail to convey this truth adequately)
 - f. Jesus, as Son of Man, seated in order to rule: ²⁴ [then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.](#) ²⁵ [For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.](#)' (1 Corinthians 15:24-25)
 - g. as Hebrews reminds us, quoting first from Psalm 8, ⁸ ["You have put all things in subjection under his feet."](#) For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. ⁹ [But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.](#)' (Hebrews 2:8-9)

3. in the midst of a message of judgement and salvation

- a. this is what Isaiah reminds us in our text this morning
- b. that Jesus the Christ reigns though now indeed a reality
- c. will one day be universally visible and acclaimed
- d. in the first section, Isaiah 24:14-16a, he describes for us

C. The Universal Praise that Take Place

1. just preceding these verses there is a description of only a remnant left, a remnant, it seems, that now we hear: ¹⁴ They raise their voices, they shout for joy; They cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the LORD. ¹⁵ Therefore glorify the LORD in the east, The name of the LORD, the God of Israel, In the coastlands of the sea. ¹⁶ From the ends of the earth we hear songs, "Glory to the Righteous One," ...! (Isaiah 24:14-16a)
 - a. let us note just three things about this praise
 - (A) it is joyful
 - (B) it is universal
 - (C) its object
2. **They shout for joy**
 - a. Christianity is a religion of joy
 - b. Christ is the bringer of joy
 - c. as Carlos spoke on last Sunday, Christmas a time of joy
 - d. the ladies will be studying the book of Philippians starting in the new year, Paul's epistle or letter of joy
 - e. it is joyful because the gospel is a message of good news
 - f. Christ has dealt with the foundational problem that has ever attacked the joy of all mankind – sin and death
 - g. so, the remnant, those who have been delivered from out of judgement for sin, raise their voice in a shout of joy
 - h. this praise is universal
3. it is universal

- a. the word translated 'west' here, is poetical, 'from the sea' (which was, of course to the west) and that for the 'east' likewise, 'in the region of light' referring to the sunrise
- b. but, though poetical, the use of east and west is the same as found in Psalm 103:12, 'As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.', expressing the extent of the earth without boundaries – if you go north, for example, eventually you come to a place where you can go no further north; but go east, and you can continue going east for ever; and so to the west
- c. this idea is then confirmed by verse 16, 'From the ends of the earth we hear songs'
- d. this praise is universal

4. the object of praise is 'Glory to the Righteous One'

- a. there are various interpretations of the phrase righteous one, but I would suggest that this speaks of Jesus Christ
- b. this is the way that my Greek professor translated 1 John 1:9^{3}, 'If we confess our sins, He is the Faithful and Righteous One forgiving our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness.'
- c. the object of praise is Jesus: for God '... made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- d. and it is He that is praised in Revelation 5:12, 'saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing."'
- e. Jesus Christ is the object of praise

5. with this joyful, universal praise of Jesus Christ there is His

D. Universal rule – 'Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders.' (Isaiah 24:23)

1. not every Bible scholar understands this as taking place at the culmination of time, but from the language involved, I believe this to be speaking of the New Jerusalem
2. there are the references to the moon and the sun
 - a. Genesis 1:16 says, 'And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light

to rule the night: *he made the stars also.*' (Genesis 1:16 AV)

- b. God made the sun and moon to rule day and night
- c. but when time comes to an end, they surrender their rule to the One for whom they were made
- d. because their light is abashed and ashamed before the glorious splendour of God Himself
- e. ²² I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.' (Revelation 21:22-24)

3. and there elders are spoken of, which Revelation 4 describes

- a. ² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. ³ And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. ⁴ Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.' (Revelation 4:2-4)
- b. ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ¹¹ "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.'" (Revelation 4:10-11)
- c. with that act of casting their crowns before the throne, all dominion and rule is surrendered to the One on the throne.

E. Conclusion: those who will allow Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, to rule in their hearts today, will one day be present in glory, in this joyous acclamation of the universal and eternal rule of God. And we can voice that desire in our closing hymn, 'Lift Up Your Heads.'

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AV	Authorized (King James) Version
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NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
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2. Majesty, by Jack Hayford © 1981 Rocksmith Music
3. Rendering the adjectives as substantives, despite being anarthrous, recognizing the Hebraisms involved