

Sermon Notes & References
Here Is Your God! (Behold Your God!)
Isaiah 40:9-11
September 19, 2010

- A. Introduction
 - 1. our lacking in attention^A
 - 2. the context of our text^B
 - 3. to the exiles of Israel & Judah

- B. The Gospel: Your God Is Here Isaiah 40:9
 - 1. to whom is the verse addressed? – the ‘evangelistess’
 - 2. Isaiah, the evangelical prophet – the ‘evangel’
 - 3. the message for the Church of Jesus Christ^C

- C. Your God Is Powerful Isaiah 40:10
 - 1. God is in charge^D
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- D. Your God is Gentle Isaiah 40:11
 - 1. the nature of new-born lambs
 - 2. the sheep of His pasture^F

- E. Here is my God ... because of who He is, I can

^A Mark 12:30
^B Isiah 9:6-7, 7:14
^C Acts 1:8

^D Jeremiah 27:5, Deuteronomy 26:8, Jeremiah 21:5
^E John 5:17, 2 Corinthians 5:9, Titus 2:14
^F Psalm 79:13, 95:7, 100:3

A. Introduction

1. we are not a people given to prolonged attention
 - a. Attention Deficit Disorder is not limited to school kids
 - b. most of us suffer it in some fashion
 - c. I do not watch a lot of television – I find it far too easy to waste many hours in doing so – but one thing that I really do enjoy watching on it is a football game
 - d. and not just one football game, either!
 - e. on a Saturday afternoon – or better even yet, at the end of the year when there is a flock of bowl games – you might just possibly find me, with the TV remote in my hand, flicking between the various games
 - f. there is a short break in the action, there is a stoppage in the game, and my attention wanders off to another game

2. sadly, all too often, that describes our spiritual attention
 - a. a brief thought here and there in the midst of a busy life
 - b. yet, God's desire for us is much different
 - c. the OT lays out the priority for our attention which Jesus confirms in the NT, '[And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength](#)'... (Mark 12:30, NKJV)
 - d. The Bible is, among other things, a record of God seeking to get and keep the attention of His people
 - e. and we, His people, give our attention for a few moments
 - f. then, off we drift to other thoughts, concerns and interests

3. God sent Isaiah, a prophet eloquent of speech, to Judah
 - a. to get the attention of His people
 - b. yet even so he had a warning for Isaiah: this people would keep listening, but not perceive; they would keep looking, but not understand; their ears dull, and their eyes dim

4. God sent Assyria, His tool, His rod of punishment
 - a. taking away the 10 northern tribes, Israel, into exile
 - b. bringing Assyria even into Judah, to Jerusalem's gates
 - c. to get the attention of Judah, His people
 - d. but they wandered off to their own ways and wants

5. God spoke gracious words to Judah, His people
 - a. words promising the Anointed One: Messiah the Saviour
 - b. a Child to be born; a Son to be given: and His names shall be called '[Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace](#)' (Isaiah 9:6)
 - c. and above all, in the midst of all the uncertainties of the invading foreign armies, came the promise of '[Immanuel](#)' – God with Us of Isaiah 7:14
 - d. but they were not interested; they switched channels to other gods and other pleasures

6. So God will punish Judah; into exile, they will go to join Israel
 - a. but to the faithful remnant within that exiled whole house of Israel – & Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the following prophets make it clear that God never abandoned the northern tribes – God gives another chance to pay attention to Himself
 - b. the prophet Isaiah steps forward to the podium
 - (A) the mist that masks heaven from view is blown aside
 - (B) and the prophet announces

7. '[Here Is Your God](#)', or literally, '[Behold Your God](#),'
 - a. this is an announcement and a presentation to the crowd gathered round to look upon and examine the Almighty, Sovereign God with whom they have been dallying
 - b. the rest of the book of Isaiah gives reason upon reason why the faithful remnant of Jacob, Judah and Israel, the exiled people of God – as well as each and every one of us – should pay the closest attention to God
 - c. As Pastor Don Howard^{2}. puts it, '[The message isn't to give God a passing glance, but to engage in a long-term mission to know and experience His greatness.](#)

- d. After every preaching and teaching time in this place, those of us given the wonderful privilege of teaching God's Word should ask, "Did I help the people to behold their God?"
- e. C.H. Spurgeon, the great British preacher wrote, 'The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.'

- 8. in the last three verses of this prologue to the last 27 chapters of the book of Isaiah, we are give three tremendous facts that should shake us to the roots that we give God our attention
 - a. 1. The Gospel: Your God Is Here
 - b. 2. Your God is Powerful
 - c. 3. Your God is Gentle

B. The Gospel: Your God Is Here 40:9

- 1. *Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!'*
 - a. some translations make Zion and Jerusalem the audience
 - (A) saying the ones to hear the message that is broadcast by a mighty voice from the high mountains
 - (B) while that interpretation is possible, when you read the Hebrew, it is more natural to take this verse as being addressed to the city of Jerusalem, to Zion
 - (C) in Hebrew, this, as most cities, is referred to as 'she'
 - (D) the verbal forms in this verse are all feminine singular
 - (E) Franz Delitzsch, a noted 19th century Hebrew scholar renders the verse this way, '*Upon a high mountain get thee up, O evangelistess Zion; lift up thy voice with strength, evangelistess Jerusalem: lift up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God.*'
 - b. so I accept the rendering of the AV, NAS and marginal note in the NIV, that Jerusalem is being addressed
 - (A) this ties in with what has preceded
 - (B) in Isaiah 40: 1-2, God's spokesmen are called to bring a message of comfort to Jerusalem
 - (C) in verses 3-8, the message they are to carry is given
 - (1) first, that preparation should be made for the arrival of the Lord – a spiritual preparation

- (2) second, that the brevity of human life makes that preparation all the more important
(D) now, having heard that message, the people of God are themselves to act as an evangelist, broadcasting the news to the people that have not yet heard, namely, the cities of Judah

2. we have called Isaiah the evangelical prophet

- a. particularly in these last 27 chapters, he uses a Hebrew word, in its various forms – Basar – whose meaning is to bear tidings: news of the birth of a son; news of a victory in war; news of God's salvation of His people
- b. when the OT was translated into Greek, the translators usually chose the word from which we get our English evangel, that is, gospel
- c. the good news; the gospel; the glad tidings – is that the God for which we have to prepare is now here!
- d. as I have mentioned already, we are studying the Life of Christ from Mark's gospel in our adult Bible class; in nine short verses Mark covers John the Baptist and his ministry in preparation for the coming Messiah
- e. Mark is bursting with the news; he can hardly wait before announcing the arrival of Immanuel, and so in verse 10 he announces Jesus the Christ – your God is here!

3. the Church of Jesus Christ

- a. is the NT counterpart to the OT Jerusalem-Zion
- b. in the world today, it is the visible people of God
- c. it should be likewise bursting with the good news – your God is here!
**Go tell it on the mountain! Over the hills and ev'rywhere–
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!**
- d. it is to be told on the high mountain – broadcast far and wide so that none are omitted from hearing it – Julius Caesar relates this method of sending news in his writing
- e. it is to be told with a voice lifted up mightily – boldly, certainly, assuredly, positively – for it is truth
- f. and, to a people and a world that are separated from God, the message that in the person of Jesus Christ, His own Son, God has opened the way in which we may come to Him; that we may approach Him and be in His presence
- g. Jean Calvin says that for mankind, **'the sum of our happiness ... consists solely in the presence of God.'**

h. so the church is given the task of spreading the message in the parting words of Jesus to His disciples of then and now, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.' (Acts 1:8)

4. the first reason for paying attention to God is that He has entered this world to save it in the Person of the Son of God

C. Your God Is Powerful 40:10

1. Behold, the Lord God will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him.

2. The first part of this verse leaves us in no doubt

a. it is God who is in charge

b. that, too, is a theme recurring all through Isaiah

c. God is Sovereign

d. Uzziah was a great king, built up the nation of Judah, and thought he was the cat's meow; then he went into the temple improperly and learned differently, leaving a leper

e. Sennacherib thought that the god of no nation could stand in the way of his empire building; certainly the backwater city of Jerusalem could not stop him – until the young men of his army were slain by the angel of the Lord and he fled back to Assyria, there to meet his death

f. Nebuchadnezzar had taken over all Assyria had gained and added to it, making Babylon great; and then one day as he rejoiced in that fact, he had to be led out to the fields where he ate grass like an animal until he learned that the Lord God rules in the affairs of men

g. God is Sovereign

h. His arm is powerful – the OT echoes with this theme

(A) in creation: 'I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight.' (Jeremiah 27:5)

(B) in redemption: 'the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and

with great terror and with signs and wonders' (Deuteronomy 26:8)

- (C) and in punishment: 'I Myself will war against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm, even in anger and wrath and great indignation.' (Jeremiah 21:5)

3. then in the second part of the verse

- a. we see how God can employ this power and sovereignty
- b. the words 'reward' and 'recompense' both relate to work
- c. the first, 'reward' is that as result of the work done by someone, he is paid his hire or wages
- d. the second, 'recompense' has a primary meaning of work and the result to the worker for the work he has done

4. Taking into consideration the first part of the verse

- a. where God is the powerful Sovereign Ruler
- b. this can be interpreted as the justice that God metes out
- c. to the righteous, that of reward
- d. to the wicked, that of punishment
- e. and this, certainly, give one cause to pause and reflect and realize that we should pay attention to this God of power

5. but the words can be view from another perspective

- a. that God, the powerful Ruler, is the one who has worked
- b. John 5:17 tells us, 'But He answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.'
- c. and furthermore, '... that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them,' (2 Corinthians 5:19) – this is the work of God
- d. the reward that is with Him, the recompense that God receives for His work of redemption, is the people whom He has redeemed, paid the price, 'who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.' (Titus 2:14)
- e. that we have been bought with a price is also a reason to pay attention to the God who purchased us at Calvary

D. Your God is Gentle 40:11

1. Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In {or, better, by} His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

2. what a picture!

- a. in some ways it contrasts so sharply with the verse before
- b. yet, the gentleness of God is only effective by His power
- c. the same arm that was outstretched to create the world, to deliver Israel from Egypt, and, yes also to punish Israel by sending her into captivity
- d. that arm can gather his lambs – tender, weak
- e. some animals are remarkably vigorous at birth – a mother giraffe delivers her calf standing up, so that it is released from the mother at a height of six feet and soon stands up
- f. but lambs are among the more delicate animals
- g. and you will know, if you have read any of the books by James Herriot, they chose the least friendly time of year – the end of the winter with the cold snow or rain – and the least friendly of places – up on the wind-swept hills – to be born into a truly inhospitable environment
- h. so the shepherd, gathers his shepherd's cloak with a belt, makes a pouch at his bosom, into which the young lamb can be placed for warmth and shelter
- i. the carrying the lamb, the new mother is lead – not driven – but gently led to a place of shelter for her and her lamb

3. God's people are the sheep of His pasture

- a. and his care of them from their new birth as believers
- b. throughout their lives
- c. is one of unrelenting kindness and gentleness
- d. and will not such a loving Father capture your attention and mine all the days of our life?

E. Conclusion

Meekness and majesty, manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity;
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.
Oh what a mystery, meekness and majesty
Bow down and worship, for this is your God.^{—{3}}.

1. Here is your God; Behold Him; cannot you safely trust Him with every aspect of your life? will you not trust Him today?

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
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. *Who Is Like Our God*, by Pastor Don Howard of Stoney Creek Baptist Church in London, Ontario; from Kerux Sermons #26057,
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