

“Thy Kingdom Come”
Isaiah 60:1-12

March 11, 2012

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^C John 1:1-4, 9, 11-12, 14
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^E John 4:21, 23-24
^F 1 Peter 2:5, Ephesians 2:20-21, John 8:36
^G Revelation 3:8
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^I Isaiah 19:23-25, Deuteronomy 30:1-4, Romans 11

A. Introduction

1. Things are Getting Worse

a. Israel, about to enter Canaan, was faced with a choice: obeying God and its attendant blessing; disobeying, and being cursed

(A) if you chart the spiritual life of God’s OT people on a graph

(B) from the entering of the land until the days of Isaiah’s ministry

(C) you see a series of peaks – times of national revival – and valleys – times of national apostasy – but ever going lower and lower

(D) Isaiah was alive when the people of Israel – the northern tribes – fell under that curse and taken captive by Assyria

(E) Isaiah has prophesied that the same will come to the people of Judah – the southern tribes – exile in Babylon

(F) it is a dark, discouraging time for the faithful among God’s people

b. the spiritual chart of the Church of Jesus Christ is similar

(A) in the NT times, believers turned the world upside down for Jesus Christ (Acts 17:6)

(B) for centuries, overcoming oppression from without, and false teaching from within, the church prospered, winning an empire

(C) but with brief peaks of the reformation, of revivals, of the growth of missionary societies, her spiritual level has been sinking

(D) and the church often seems to take as its rallying cry the words of 1 Timothy 4:1, ‘**But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons**’ and 2 Timothy 3:1, ‘**But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.**’ – and to think, ‘well, this is it’ and to settle down upon its lees to await Christ’s return

(E) Christians get discouraged from service in these dark times; but...

2. Opportunity Yet Abounds

- a. Jesus taught us, as His disciples, much about prayer
 - (A) in the model prayer, He taught that our central requests are to be, 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.' (Matthew 6:10, AV); a kingdom on earth carrying out God's will
 - (B) this same Lord taught, '... The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.' (Luke 10:2)
 - (C) and, 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.' (Matthew 24:14)
 - (D) and 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19)
 - (E) so there doesn't seem to be anywhere in Scripture a mandate to cease in our efforts to spread the kingdom, extend God's church; but rather the opposite that a bountiful harvest is yet to be reaped
- b. I do not believe that the words of our text today have been fulfilled
 - (A) the return from Babylon is but a dim shadow of the promise here
 - (B) the return of some Jews to their homeland hasn't fulfilled them
 - (C) so Isaiah's words are words of encouragement of a great event that God has yet planned for His people; and event that seems, as I read it, to include both His OT and NT people together
 - (D) that this is the result of Christ's first advent is clear; its relation to His second advent, I shall not attempt to define further than to say it appears to be a time when there is yet a great turning of people and nations to the one true God – to the kingdom of God

B. A Glorious Kingdom 60:1-3

1. By God's Presence (1, 2b)

a. God gives two creative commands: **Arise; Shine**

- (A) creative, because like the commands of Genesis 1, they are accompanied by the power to fulfill them
- (B) Israel, separated from sin, had no power to stand up: it had fallen
- (C) Israel, in these dark times, had no light to give forth

b. How can this happen? by God's own Presence among them

- (A) 1 Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ... 2b But the Lord will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you.
- (B) the sun rises from behind the mountains of Moab in the morning bathing the city of Jerusalem in sparkling light; is such a sudden fashion, God rises to shine His glory upon His people
- (C) 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. (John 1:1-4), then, There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. (John 1:9)
- (D) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14); God, in Christ came into the world
- (E) He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:11-12)
- (F) it is through Christ, then, and receiving Him, that one can obey these commands; can arise and shine for God

2. In Relation to Nations (2a, 3)

- a. the world without Christ is in a bad state: 2a For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples
- b. but those who have this light from God, have a light which will attract the lost to the safety of God's salvation: 3 Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

C. A Restored Kingdom 60:4-9

1. with Restored People (4-5a, 8-9)

- a. restored in terms of their numbers: the descendants of Jacob gathered, the results of Christ's travail collected: 4 Lift up your eyes round about and see; They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms.
- (A) look up; count them; they are every one of them present

- (B) sons returned from far places; daughters on the hips of nurses
- b. restored in terms of joy: **5a Then you will see and be radiant, And your heart will thrill and rejoice ...** The AV has 'flow together' but the idea is more that of beaming or shining – thus the command of v1 is kept
- c. restored in terms of homecoming: **8 Who are these who fly like a cloud And like the doves to their lattices?**
- (A) this is a question to be answered in the next verse, but look for a moment at the picture – that of homing pigeons
- (B) pigeons were domesticated as early as the 3rd millennium BC, but no one knows how long they were used for carrying messages – some say as early as 1000BC – a previous neighbour had homing pigeons and on one occasion I took them to the Essa side road at Barrie and they were home faster than it took me to get there
- (C) that is the picture: a great flock heading home to the towering dovecotes of the east. As Hugh Heron, spokesman for 'mikeys' as well as Heathwood homes, says, 'Home at last!'
- (D) God's own people ... home at last!
- d. restored in terms of glory; a glorious return home
- (A) glory in their arrival: **9a Surely the coastlands will wait for Me; And the ships of Tarshish will come first, To bring your sons from afar, Their silver and their gold with them,**
- (1) the Phoenician traders travelled to all the nations around the perimeter of the Mediterranean Sea
 - (2) even to the very western end, Tartessus or Tarshish in Spain
 - (3) from all these places, the sons are borne home by the nations – whether these be Jews alone or also Gentile believers is really not material, the point being is that the nations are God's means of bringing His people together
- (B) glory in their status: **9b For the name of the Lord your God, And for the Holy One of Israel because He has glorified you.**
- (1) in this part of the verse is given the reason the nations do so
 - (2) because God glorifies His people – those who claim Him as their Lord; those who have Him as their Holy One
 - (3) it is He who has engaged 'to bring many sons into glory' by 'the Captain of their salvation' (Hebrews 2:10)

2. with Restored Blessings (5b-6a, 7a)

- a. from many nations, **5b Because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, The wealth of the nations will come to you.**
 - (A) 'sea' here is used in a figure of speech to refer to all the nations bordering that sea, the Great or Mediterranean sea
 - (B) and the 'nations' are specifically the goyim; the Gentile nations
 - (C) not at the return from Babylon, nor since, has this taken place; for it is not only from distant nations, but also
- b. from neighbouring but enemy nations: **6a A multitude of camels will cover you, The young camels of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba will come; They will bring gold and frankincense ... 7a All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you, The rams of Nebaioth will minister to you;**
 - (A) these are the nations now covering the territory from Syria and Iraq on the north down to Yemen in the south, all Saudi between
 - (B) and the number of camels used to bear their gifts are such as to cover the land – wall to wall camel-loads of gifts as it were
 - (C) what is the reason for such turning to God's people? because of...

3. their Restored Worship (6b, 7b)

- a. **6b And will bear good news of the praises of the Lord.**
 - (A) it is the gospel that will effect change from enemy to friend
 - (B) the gospel of Jesus Christ that is to the praise of God
- b. using an OT picture, that of sacrifice of those flocks and rams brought to God, it is because of true worship to God that the nations come to share in it, **7b They will go up with acceptance on My altar, And I shall glorify My glorious house.** – this doesn't mean that animal sacrifice will be reinstated – Christ the Lamb of God in dying on the cross fulfilled all of that; nor does it mean that it takes place at the literal Jerusalem and temple there, for Jesus said, **'21... Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ... 23 But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to**

be His worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.' (John 4:23-24)

c. true worship is the evangelistic method of the Holy Spirit of God

D. A Sovereign Kingdom 60:10-12

1. Liberated from Captivity (10) – 10 Foreigners will build up your walls, And their kings will minister to you; For in My wrath I struck you, And in My favour I have had compassion on you.

a. the bondage of sin had brought the Jews into bondage of Babylon

(A) the order of Artaxerxes to provide Nehemiah with wood to build again the walls of the temple only faintly fulfils this prophecy

(B) Peter tells the true fulfilment, 'you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' (1 Peter 2:5)

(C) and Paul describes this in Ephesians 2:20-21, 'having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,'

b. for this is the true liberation: Jesus said, 'So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.' (John 8:36)

2. Ruling rather than Ruled (11-12)

a. the Open Gates – 11 Your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession.

(A) that men may enter; that men may worship and offer to God

(B) to one church Jesus wrote, 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.' (Revelation 3:8 NAS95)

(C) Oh! that we may be that church in this day

b. the Dire Warning – 12 For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, And the nations will be utterly ruined.

- (A) that this warning is given seems to indicate as I read it that what is spoken of in this chapter takes place before Christ's return
- (B) however that may be, let it stand as a warning to judges, rulers, governments and nations today, that persecution of the church of Jesus Christ, the church which Christ loved and gave Himself, will be met with the direst consequences, so let them beware

E. Conclusion

1. Sin Abounds

- a. nations, once nominally Christian, at least, wallow in wrong-doing
- b. around the world the church of Christ is greatly persecuted

2. But Grace Much More Abounds

- a. one estimate now places those professing Christianity within China at 70 million – a most difficult place to profess Christ
- b. in Isaiah 19:23-25, we read of the promise that Egypt and Assyria – the area now being centre of Islam – would be named along with Israel as part of the people of God – and through many means, despite suppression, people within those nations are coming to faith in Christ
- c. God has yet to work a work of repentance in Israel – which is the condition given in Deuteronomy 30:1-4 for their spiritual ingathering – but Romans 11 gives assurance that He will do so

3. Yes, the times are difficult; things are discouraging

- a. but God has yet a mighty work to do to build His church
- b. and He calls on you and me to be involved in doing it, praying, 'Thy kingdom come.'
- c. because, Jesus shall reign.

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AV Authorized (King James) Version
NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of my favourite commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan
 Volume 6, Isaiah, by Geoffrey W. Grogan, Principal, Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, Scotland;
EJY – The Book of Isaiah by Edward J. Young; © 1965; Wm. B. Eerdmans
K&D – Commentary on the Old Testament, by Keil & Delitzsch; Volume 7, Isaiah, by Franz Delitzsch
Kerux – The sermon and illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick to be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com.