

CHRISTMAS INTERLUDE

Christ's Christmas Messianic Isaiah 9:6-7 Provisions For Today's Needy World Part II: Christ's Nurturing Reign Versus Today's Oppressive Administrations (Isaiah 9:6b)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Joe Myers' article, "The world has a leadership problem. So how do we fix it?" (weforum.org, July 19, 2016) reported that the Ketchum Leadership Communication Monitor for 2016 found that the two most sought-after qualities people worldwide desire in leaders are (a) leadership by example and (b) open communication.

However, the people of the world are experiencing anything but such qualities in many realms of leadership:

(1) Rocco M. Pugliese of Woodbury, in a letter to the Republican-American, Dec. 1, 2017, p. 8A, reported that "Germany's opening its doors to hundreds of thousands seeking refuge from the turmoil in the Middle East" has led to "the ominous upsurge in nationalism" in that nation. The Middle East's turmoil reflects oppressive leadership in the Middle East, Germany's resulting problems reflect problem leadership in Germany and the fact that immigration has become a big issue in Europe and America exposes the presence of troubling leadership in lots of Western countries!

(2) Congress has its set of unedifying leaders: the Boston Globe on November 17, 2017 ("Congress paid \$17 million in workplace violation settlements," bostonglobe.com) claimed, "The government has paid more than \$17 million in taxpayer money over the last 20 years to resolve claims of sexual harassment, overtime pay disputes and other workplace violations filed by employees of Congress." One employee wrote of her employer, a U. S. Representative, "in an affidavit that one of her duties was 'to keep a list of women I assumed he was having affairs with and call them at his request and, if necessary, have them flown in using Congressional resources,'" that is, using taxpayer moneys! (Rich Lowry, "Democrats' well-deserved albatross," Ibid., Republican-American)

(3) Our state government leadership is also problematic: The same paper's lead editorial (Ibid., "Would GOP repeat error?") told how "the famously unpopular Gov. Malloy . . . considers himself lucky to have won a second term," that "Bridgeport Mayor Joseph P. Ganim spent seven years in federal prison for corruption in his first mayoral administration" and that "Middletown Mayor Dan Drew faces a state investigation of his fundraising practices."

(4) The problem affects Evangelical leadership, too: R. Albert Mohler, Jr. in his piece "'Evangelical': What's in a Name?" (J. H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 33-41) claimed "postmodern" thought in Evangelical leaders today has led some evangelicals to grow "increasingly open to homosexuality and abortion."

Need: *We then ask, "This Christmas, what does God have to say about our facing oppressive administrations?!"*

- I. **In viewing the Christmas prediction of Christ's first coming in Isaiah 9:6-7 in light of its New Testament fulfillment, Isaiah 9:6b KJV claims the government would be upon Christ's "shoulder," a figurative reference "to the kingly robe to be worn by the Messiah" in His reign, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1053.**
- II. **Revelation 19-20 with Isaiah 9:6-7 reveals Christ will rule on David's throne at His Second Coming, and the book of Isaiah predicts He will reign in *REFRESHING CONTRAST* to current oppressive rulers:**
 - A. Isaiah 1:23 and 3:12-15 told of the problematic actions of Judah's rulers in Isaiah's era (as follows):
 1. The nation's princes distorted judgment by taking bribes so that the causes of vulnerable people like orphans and widows went unaddressed, resulting in injustice throughout society, Isaiah 1:23.
 2. Judah's leaders were immature and naive like the young and lacked male vigor so that Isaiah 3:12 ESV complained that "infants" oppressed Judah's people "and women" ruled "over them," resulting in these leaders turning the people away from God's upright paths, Isaiah 3:12 ESV; Ibid., p. 1040.
 3. A key abuse by Judah's leaders was their financial oppression of the people, acquiring goods as spoil by forcibly crushing helpless people in courts of law to seize their goods for own their homes, Isaiah 3:13-15.
 - B. However, Messiah's rule would contrast greatly with the rule of Judah's godless leaders (as follows):
 1. Isaiah 11:1-2 predicted that Messiah Jesus Christ will be empowered by the Holy Spirit of the Lord, of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge and of the reverence for the Lord, what qualities will equip Him with the vigor of God and complete maturity to lead people aright.
 2. This empowering will lead Messiah Jesus Christ to delight in reverence of the Lord so as to judge disputes not by what outwardly looks or sounds "good," but by objective, righteous judgment, Isaiah 11:3.
 3. Thus, He will render justice for the poor and meek while severely punishing the wicked, Isaiah 11:4-5.
 4. As the result of this activity by Messiah Jesus Christ, the world's nations will rally around Him, for they will find true rest in His oversight from former oppression by wicked rulers, Isaiah 11:10.

5. In the wake of Messiah Jesus Christ's judgments of the world there will be world peace, Isaiah 11:12-16.
6. Consequently, many people groups will come to Jerusalem to be taught by Messiah Jesus Christ of His ways that they might walk in them with blessing, Isaiah 2:3.
7. Jerusalem in Messiah Jesus Christ's reign, opposite today's Jerusalem, will be a place of great security: like God's glory of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night guided and protected Israel in her wilderness journey during her Exodus from Egypt, God will again make His glory visibly protect His people "like a tent" in offering "safety and peace" throughout the whole city of Jerusalem, Isaiah 4:5-6; Ibid., p. 1041.

III. This ministry of Messiah Jesus' FUTURE Messianic Kingdom reign has SOME applications for TODAY:

- A. We learned in our recent study of revisiting the Revelation 3:14-22 Laodicean Church prophecy that **our** era's overcomer(s) will figuratively be made by Christ to sit in His earthly Davidic throne, i. e., to have "a nurturing Bible exposition ministry to God's flock worldwide that lives in an oppressive era" to cite that study's notes.
- B. Accordingly, in the pattern of Christ's own coming Davidic reign on earth, the believer today can have refreshing leadership impact on needy and oppressed subordinates and people around him (as follows):
 1. By having trusted in Christ for salvation (John 3:16) and thereby being indwelt and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:9b), the believer can **rely** on the Holy Spirit's power (Galatians 5:16) to obtain God's motivation, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and reverence for God that will equip him to be accurate, decisive and just in functioning as an overseer.
 2. Accordingly, he can take actions that are impartial and Biblically upright, refreshing oppressed subordinates and people around him so that they will rally around him for more protection and nurture.
 3. Such a ministry can apply to any realm of oversight, be it parent over child, husband over family, church leader over congregation, employer over employees, government official over constituents, etc.

Lesson: *God's Isaiah 9:6b prediction that the Messianic government will be on Messiah Jesus Christ's shoulder in light of Scripture context reveals He will offer refreshing relief, protection and peace worldwide in the power of the Holy Spirit in contrast to the world's previous, sinful, oppressive rulers. Thus, by faith in Christ, a believer in an oversight position in any realm assigned to him by God can follow Christ's example by the Holy Spirit's power to provide the motivation and equipping to offer refreshing relief, protection and peace in widening circles of impact!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) May we follow Jesus' coming example of world rule on David's throne by (a) relying on the indwelling Holy Spirit's power (b) for the motivation, courage and wisdom (c) to administer just rulings for the refreshing nurture, protection and peace of subordinates, (d) what God will make influence others in widening circles of impact.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

The lesson of this message has applications right here in our Church life (as follows):

(1) Our Church Board has taken steps to provide greater physical security for the congregation when we meet together for Sunday services. Though we still rely on the Lord for our ultimate protection, the measures taken reflect sensible, wise precautions for the safety of the congregation.

(2) God has also led us into a more nurturing order as a Church in our V. B. S. and Sunday School ministries. In V. B. S., due to changes in society and how they affected the workplace and the home, we ceased dividing the children up into many classes of different age groups because we increasingly lacked the number of teachers we used to have, and we reorganized our V. B. S. ministry around one teacher who teaches the "older" children in one session and the "younger" ones in another session. This new order has produced more edifying discipling results.

Similarly, due to the desires of some parents and the lack of a regular teacher for them, the Teen Sunday School Class has been absorbed into the Adult Sunday School Class with welcome results: the teens learn that mature adults face issues similar to what they face, they learn from the class discussions how to relate with adults and they feel more comfortable getting involved in ministering alongside adults in the Church's ministries!

This modification of our ministries reflects more of a "family order" where people of a greater span of ages are grouped together. Incidentally, decades ago, I recall a Christian who was the Superintendent of Schools for Holt County, Nebraska telling me that the students of one-room classroom, K-12 schools in his jurisdiction consistently produced higher test scores than did the students in consolidated schools. This fact actually kept the K-12 one-room classroom order from being quickly discarded for the consolidated schooling format in that area of Nebraska!

God has thus led us to produce an order in our Church ministry that better nurtures and edifies God's people!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, may we heed Christ's lead in providing nurturing oversight.