

CHRISTMAS INTERLUDE

Christ's Christmas Messianic Isaiah 9:6-7 Provisions For Today's Needy World Part III: Christ's All-Sufficiency Versus Sinful Rulers' Personal Deficiencies (Isaiah 9:6c)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Wherever we turn, we face sinful rulers' personal deficiencies, a fact seen on a single editorial page of a paper:

(1) The lead editorial, "Connecticut faces a mess" in the Republican-American, December 11, 2017, p. 6A, reported how "Gov. Malloy and legislative Democrats enacted the two largest tax increases in Connecticut history and promised they would restore the state to fiscal health. They were wrong, dishonest or both." The lack of wise counsel and/or administrative judgment means even more taxes will be leveled upon state taxpayers, Ibid.

(2) Jonah Goldberg's piece, "Facing the reality of Jerusalem" (Ibid.) critiqued the administrative impotency of former president "Obama" who "threw the balance of power" in the Middle East "heavily in Iran's favor, lifting sanctions and giving Iran hundreds of billions of dollars. He thought the Iranians would join the community of nations or some such twaddle. Instead, they pocketed the money and now are on a surer path to a nuclear bomb."

(3) Even long-term government institutions seem at risk: a letter by Joseph Carella of Oxford, Connecticut on the same editorial page (Ibid.) claimed, "Police brutality protesters . . . are embellishing the ills that are compounding the self-destruction of this formerly great nation. In their closed mindedness, the police cannot do right."

(4) Consequently, the lack of real, lasting peace weighs heavily on the world. Mr. Goldberg's article that told of "President Trump's . . . announcement that the United States will recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel" claimed, "It's true . . . The Knesset, Israel's parliament, convenes there . . . What makes the decision controversial is that everyone had agreed to pretend it wasn't the capital to protect 'the peace process.'" (Ibid., Goldberg)

Need: *Accordingly, we ask, "This Christmas, what is God's solution to sinful rulers' personal deficiencies?!"*

- I. **In viewing the Christmas prediction of Christ's first coming in Isaiah 9:6-7 in light of its New Testament fulfillment, Isaiah 9:6c ESV claims the Messiah Jesus Christ will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**
- II. **These titles expose Christ's All-Sufficiency in contrast to sinful rulers' personal deficiencies:**
 - A. Christ's title as "Wonderful Counselor" contrasts with sinful rulers' dreadfully inept counseling deficiencies:
 1. The word "Wonderful" describes the term "Counselor" as in the NIV and ESV, B. K. C., O. T., p. 1053.
 2. Accordingly, Messiah Christ is thus God's All-Sufficient answer to sinful rulers' counseling deficiencies:
 - a. In Isaiah 8:19, God's prophet observed that Judah's people were consulting mediums and spiritists who tried to contact the dead for insight on the future versus inquiring of the living God.
 - b. Isaiah critiqued this effort, asserting that if people did not say they needed to look to God's written Word for insight, they had no dawn, "no spiritual light," Isaiah 8:20 ESV; Ibid., p. 1052; cf. Psalm 119:105)
 - c. Consequently, those who did not heed Scripture would pass through the land looking for adequate insight only to become enraged upon not finding it. They would thus speak contemptuously of their king and God when looking upward toward superiors for insight without finding it and in desperation when looking downward toward subordinates without finding insight there either, Isaiah 8:21-22a ESV.
 - d. Eventually, they would be thrust out into the thick darkness of hopelessness and gloom, Isa. 8:22b ESV.
 - e. However, Messiah Jesus Christ would come to the darkest area of Israel, Galilee in Northern Israel, as a "Great Light," revealing God's truth as God-come-in-the-flesh, and He is the Word of God Personified (Revelation 19:11-16) in that all Scripture focuses on revealing and honoring Him!
 - B. Christ's title as "Mighty God" contrasts with sinful man's inept efforts to protect the innocent from evil foes:
 1. The term "Mighty" translates the Hebrew word *gibbor*, "mighty" in strength and vitality for war. (Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. I, p. 337; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 148)
 - a. Contextually, Isaiah chapters 13-23 predicted God's judgment against ten "foreign nations who at some time had persecuted Judah," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Isaiah 13:1.
 - b. Messiah Jesus will thus use His might as God one day to conquer all these foes, delivering His people.
 - C. Christ's title as "Everlasting Father" contrasts with sinful and hence transitory government leaders:
 1. Jesus' title as "Father" here is not to be confused with the Person of "God the Father" in the Trinity, but He is a "Father" in the sense of being a Father *figure* in meeting Israel's needs, Ibid., Young, p. 338-339.
 2. The word '*ad*', "everlasting" (KJV, NIV, ESV), suggests His **stability** as Father opposite sinful leaders:

- a. Isaiah began his prophetic ministry the year king Uzziah died (Isaiah 6:1), a real tragedy for Judah: he died after a 52-year reign that began in greatness only to fizzle in the end as God struck him with leprosy for proudly trying to usurp the role of a priest in God's temple, Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., v. Five, p. 854-857.
 - b. Uzziah thus died as a quarantined leper to be buried outside the plot of the kings, 2 Chron. 25:23 NIV.
 - c. Conversely, Messiah Jesus Christ will have an **everlasting** role as a Father to His people for He, unlike Uzziah, is without sin, so He enjoys God's full and **eternally stabilizing** support as Israel's King!
- D. Christ's title as "Prince of Peace" contrasts with sinful man's deficiency in achieving real, lasting peace:
1. In Isaiah's era, many in Judah failed to trust God to deliver them from Gentile foes, so they fearfully spoke of a conspiracy in an Aram-Israel alliance against Judah (Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 1051), so that God told Isaiah not to fear what the people of Judah did, but to revere Him and thus find sanctuary, Isaiah 8:11-15.
 2. As a "Prince," then, Messiah Jesus will produce worldwide "Peace" to end such fear and war, Isaiah 2:4.

III. This ministry of Messiah Jesus' All-Sufficiency provides applications for us *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, specifically, to have a highly influential, nurturing Bible exposition ministry to God's people worldwide who face oppression.
- B. Accordingly, the believer can have refreshing impact on needy, oppressed 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).
 2. Thus equipped, he can act like Christ in God's spiritual enabling to be a blessing to people around him:
 - a. Since Christ is the Word of God personified, the believer can counsel others using Scripture alone to avoid sinful man's darkness and see Christ, the "Great Light," use His written Word to guide and give mental health to the needy as the "Wonderful Counselor" of Isaiah 9:6c.
 - b. Equipped by Christ with a supernatural gift for service (Eph. 4:7-16; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11), the believer can use that gift to provide blessing regardless of sinful opposition, be it human or demonic.
 - c. Enabled by the Holy Spirit's power, the believer can remain faithful in life and service (Gal. 5:22-23) without yielding to debilitating sin, thus becoming a long-term, stable person to other people around him.
 - d. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the believer can influence others with God's peace, Galatians 5:22-23.

Lesson: *In contrast to sinful leaders' deficiencies, Jesus Christ is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace, to be realized fully in His coming Messianic Kingdom. Those who trust in Him are equipped with the Holy Spirit so that they can function like their Lord Jesus Christ in (1) using the Bible to see God ably counsel needy hearers through that Word, (2) in serving the Lord successfully with a supernatural gift from God, (3) in staying faithful in service and (4) in influencing others with God's peace.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) May we disciple others to be subjects of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and (3) rely on the Holy Spirit and use Scripture to see Christ's Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace qualities implemented in and through us to God's glory!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

After I had served as a pastor in three churches covering a span of two decades, my father who had met with many pastors in his ministry as a mission representative for SIM International, asked me, "Don, are you now counseling in your pastoral ministry?"

That was quite a question, for I had greatly modified my views on the subject over the years. I told him, "I used to counsel anybody who asked for it, but recently I've stipulated that a party must attend at least two of our church services a week before I will counsel them. I've learned in counseling sessions that the vast majority of the time I simply refer to what I have taught from the Word in some recent sermon or lesson, that I was only enabling people to become dependent on me as a counselor instead of getting them to heed God's Word from the pulpit!"

Dad's reply was informative. He answered, "In my years of working with many biblical pastors, I have found that around the 20- to 25-year mark of their ministries, they all cease counseling for the same reason you just gave!"

Thus, if many biblical pastors who have each completed decades of pastoral ministry all testify to the importance of heeding Scripture ALONE as proclaimed from the pulpit for all counseling needs, we need to heed that Word for our counseling needs! Indeed, Isaiah 8:20 in the Word of God teaches our need to do this!

May we trust in Christ to be saved. Then, may we rely on Christ, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace for blessing, and see Him bless others through our ministries.