

THE FATHER'S CHRISTMAS GIFTS TO US IN HIS SON
"Gift Two - Christ As Our Oppressor-Overcoming (Mighty) God"
(Isaiah 9:6b)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A number of people face wearing, oppressive relationships:

(1) A call came in this week concerning a Christian who is under relationship stress from associates. He was extremely depressed, seemingly worn down into a hopeless state of mind.

(2) A week ago I talked a long time with another believer about relationship oppressions faced. The party shared that they seem almost to feel like an island of loneliness due to relationship oppressions, whether they be in the family, work or even in Church relationships!

(3) Again, someone talked recently with my wife, Nadine about an oppressive family situation a neighbor was facing, a situation that is complicated by financial needs coupled with problems caused by the recent death of a parent in the family.

(4) My wife, Nadine and I have experienced this **wear** in relating to doctors about our daughter's health. Most physicians of the AMA school of thought view Connie's Chronic Fatigue as being psychologically-induced. Thus, though Connie has repeatedly experienced even long bouts of focal seizures, even in the presence of a woman who is close to getting her RN, since she has been diagnosed by Dr. Conley in Flint, Michigan as having Chronic Fatigue, it has been hard trying to get Connie to be examined by a neurologist as Dr. Conley recommends. The neurologist sees only those who are referred by a **local** general practitioner, but you cannot get **local** general practitioners to refer you accordingly unless they believe your condition is not just psychological. Nadine and I are leery of dealing with local doctors on the issue as they are aware of the Chronic Fatigue diagnosis, and we felt we'd get nowhere fast by contacting them **again!** Fortunately, we found a local doctor who reevaluated Connie this week and **now** has **readily** referred her to a neurologist. Apparently Connie's condition has deteriorated to the extent that her neurological needs are **obvious**, but the **process** has been a very long, **wearing relationship** trial! In fact, the day we obtained the referral, Nadine was so keyed up she could hardly prepare supper!

This Christmas, what is to be done about meeting the needs of those suffering wearing oppression in relationships faced?! IS there any hope, and, IF so, just HOW is it realized?!"

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "A party I know this Christmas is worn out from having to interact with a party who is oppressive! What can he DO about it?!"

- I. **When Isaiah wrote the Isaiah 9:6 predictions concerning the birth of the Messiah, the people of Israel faced the overwhelming and abusively oppressive invaders of ancient Assyria:**
 - A. Due to Israel's **own** sinful departure from God, Isaiah predicted that God would send the Assyrians to conquer the land, Isaiah 8:6-8a.
 - B. This prediction was very troubling for the people of Israel to hear as we can glean from secular records about the Assyrian soldiers:
 1. The Assyrians had great military organization that enabled them to defeat armies their equal in power, Cam. Anc. History, v. III, p. 99. Thus, they were **brazenly confident** while in conflict.
 2. Since an Assyrian military campaign's spoil was divided among **all** its troops, there was often greater profit for its soldiers to fight than to be at peace. Thus, the Assyrians **relished war**, *Ibid.*, p. 101!
 3. Also, the Assyrians were in constant contact with notoriously lawless hill-district peoples, causing them to become **brutal**. This led to their war **victims** suffering unthinkable **abuses**, *Ibid.*, p. 104.
 4. Accordingly, news of an Assyrian invasion into Palestine would have left the people of Israel very afraid.
- II. **Disturbed about Assyria's future conquest of Israel, Isaiah told Messiah, "Immanuel" about the invasion of HIS OWN land!**
 - A. Assyria was often depicted in statues as a **winged** bull with a king's face (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, v. One, p. 373)
 - B. Isaiah thus addressed Messiah, "Immanuel," complaining that Assyria would stretch out his **wings** to conquer **His own** land, Isaiah 8:8b.
- III. **In response, God's Spirit led Isaiah (cf. 2 Pet. 1:21) to predict that MESSIAH would overcome even Assyria's harmful invaders:**
 - A. At the end of Isaiah 8:10 which predicts Assyria's demise, the phrase "for God is with us" (NIV, KJV) literally reads "for **Immanu-El**", or "**Immanuel**" in the Hebrew text! (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 619)
 - B. Isaiah 8:9-10 is thus Isaiah's reaction to Assyria's conquest, and predicts its invasion will not last, for **Messiah Immanuel** will see to it!
 - C. Similarly, one of the names of Messiah, predicted in Isaiah 9:6 of the context, pictures Messiah, God the Father's "Mighty God" **gift** to man as the **Oppressor-Overcoming God** in Israel's behalf (as follows):

1. The term "Mighty God", from the Hebrew "*El Gibbor*" appears repeatedly in the Old Testament to picture Israel's God "*fighting* for His people," cf. B.D.B., Hebrew & Engl. Lex., p. 150. (These texts are Ps. 24:8; Deut. 10:17-18; Neh. 9:32; Isa. 10:20-21; Jer. 32:18.)
2. In this context, Messiah, the **Opressor-Overcoming God**, would see that the Assyrians had a limited time in **His** land so that God's people could be freed under the "Mighty God", Immanuel-Messiah!

IV. **This "Enemy-Overcoming" MIGHTY GOD, Immanuel-Messiah provides help for believers TODAY who face oppressive opponents:**

- A. Jesus Christ fulfilled Isaiah 9:6 and its context, coming as the Mighty God and "God-with-us" Messiah, see Matthew 1:21-23.
- B. As such, Jesus said that **though** His people would be persecuted in the world, they should be of "good cheer", for **He** [as the Is. 9:6 "Mighty God"] had **overcome** the world, Jn. 16:33, Young, Isaiah, v. I, p. 337.
- C. To see just what this victory over oppressors is and how one can have it today, we view Isaiah 8-9 in light of relevant New Testament texts:
 1. The **original** enemy, *Assyria* invaded Israel as **judgment** for Israel's having **sinned** in departing from her true God, Isaiah 8:6-8.
 2. In part, then, Jesus came to save men from their judgment-causing **sins**, and that through His death on the cross, Mtt. 1:21; He. 10:5-7
 3. When one believes in Christ as Savior from sin, he is given eternal life so he will overcome all evil within and without, John 5:24.
 4. **Then**, as a believer who faces an **ungodly**, harmful relationship, one is equipped with God's Spirit to **stand up under** the oppressor's efforts (2 Tim. 1:8), and doing so leads to eternal reward (Mtt. 5:11) which gives him cause for **joy** (Mtt. 5:12)!
 5. Then, at the end of his earthly sojourn, Jesus will glorify the believer so that he loses his sin nature, 1 Cor. 15:51-57, and knowing that only causes him to **abound** in living for Christ, 15:58.
 6. Finally, Christ will judge the believer's oppressors at His coming (2 Thess. 1:6-8) and at the White Throne judgment, Rev. 20:11-15.

Lesson Application: *If one is afflicted in having to relate to oppressive parties, or afflicted by his OWN sin nature, he needs Jesus, the "Mighty God" for help. Christ is available by (1) faith in Him for salvation from sin (Jn. 3:16). (2) As one believes in Christ, he then is given the indwelling Holy Spirit of God to face godless, oppressive parties with God's sustaining, inner power, 2 Tim. 1:8. (3) As one DOES this, he can be cheerful, knowing he is gaining eternal rewards for this experience (Mtt. 5:11-12) and will one day outlast all evil in himself (via the rapture) or in others (via the final judgment) as Israel outlasted Assyria of old!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

James and Marti Hefley, in their book, By Their Blood: Christian Martyrs of the Twentieth Century, p. 501 tell of the martyrdom of a brave Tutsi pastor in Burundi.

Reverend Yona Kanamuzeyi ministered in a camp of fellow Tutsi refugees whose homes had been destroyed by Hutu purges. He developed 24 village churches centered around a large mother congregation that ministered to 6,000 refugees in all.

Threatened by his wide influence, on January 24, 1964, Hutu soldiers drove up to his home in a jeep and ordered him and an associate into the jeep with them. Anticipating what was coming, the pastor told his associate, Andrew Kayumba, "Let us surrender our lives into God's hands."

When they arrived at the camp, the sergeant in charge told the pastor that he had better pray to his God. The pastor, sensing that death was imminent, stood up and according to Andrew's later recollection prayed this prayer: "Lord God, You know that we have not sinned against the government, and now I pray You, in Your mercy, accept our lives. And we pray You to avenge our innocent blood and help these soldiers who do not know what they are doing."

The two men were then tied. While Andrew watched, the pastor was led to a bridge. As he walked, he was heard singing:

"There's a land that is fairer than day
And by faith we can see it afar:
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling place there."

Shots then rang out, and the soldiers threw the pastor's lifeless body into the stream. Kayumba was then told to say nothing about the martyrdom or he too would be slain. Andrew was then released and he fled to a neighboring country, living to tell of his pastor's death.

Like Pastor Yona Kanamuzeyi of Burundi, we can overcome our wearing, oppressive relationships by (1) faith in Christ for salvation and (2) empowering by the Spirit of God to take what they dish out with great power. (3) We can also trust God to avenge us of wrongs suffered in the final judgment and hope for the final, eternal victory of life in eternity!