

CHRISTMAS INTERLUDE

Christ's Christmas Messianic Isaiah 9:6-7 Provisions For Today's Needy World Part IV: Christ's Righteous, Eternal Golden Age Versus Today's Sinful, Declining Era (Isaiah 9:7a,b,c)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

This Christmas Eve Sunday, a stunning, oppressive vacuum of morality exists in society:

(1) Chris Powell's article, "Harassment and lacking leadership" (Republican-American, Dec. 15, 2017, p. 6A) told of politically liberal Senator Al Franken's resignation over allegations of sexual misconduct, and he mused over Mr. Franken's theoretical replacement by a Republican Senator who would favor a President Trump Supreme Court nominee who pledged to try to overturn the Court's ruling on abortion! Mr. Powell then asked, "How troublesome would a little uninvited fondling seem then . . . to people opposing . . . a . . . reversal in abortion policy?" (Ibid.)

Chris Powell may be the "managing editor of the Journal Inquirer in Manchester," Connecticut (Ibid.), but his trivializing of "uninvited fondling" and suggesting that a reversal the Court's ruling that favors "abortion" to be a possible unwelcome development treats as tolerable what Matthew 5:27-28 with Leviticus 20:10 (on "uninvited fondling") and Exodus 21:22-25 (on "abortion") show to be the capital crimes of sexual assault and murder!

(2) This moral vacuum affects us locally: last Sunday, a member told me of a painful case involving the issue of divorce and remarriage and another how oppressed he is by a relative's efforts to get him to tolerate homosexuality.

Need: *So we ask, "What is God's answer to the stunning, oppressive vacuum of morality that exists in society?!"*

- I. In viewing the Isaiah 9:6-7 Christmas Season prediction of Christ's first and second comings, Isaiah 9:7a ESV claims Christ will rule in a golden era for society that recalls Solomon's past golden era:**
- A. The Isaiah 9:7a claim that Christ's rule will increase in "peace" recalls Solomon's 1 Kings 4:20-28 golden era:
1. The word for "peace" (*shalom*) in this context denotes not only peace itself, but its broader meaning of "prosperity in general as opposed to want and sorrow," J. A. Alexander, The Proph. of Isaiah, 1974, p. 205.
 2. Isaiah 9:7a thus recalls Solomon's golden era of Israel's monarchy when the population increased, the people were happy, often celebrating, Solomon ruled from Gaza all the way up to the Euphrates River and the people of Israel were at peace and enjoyed personal property ownership, 1 Kings 4:20, 24-25.
- B. Thus, in His Messianic Kingdom, Christ will also rule in a golden era of great blessing, peace and happiness over the nations of the whole world, with each subject enjoying personal property ownership, Micah 4:1-4.
- II. However, opposite Solomon's golden era, Christ's golden era for society will have NO END (Isaiah 9:7b), and the context explains the DIFFERENCE as a matter of SIN and RIGHTEOUSNESS in the KINGS:**
- A. **Solomon's golden era ended** due to the **marital, idolatrous, sexual and infant murder sins** of Israel's **kings**:
1. When God first promised to bless Solomon's reign, He added the provision that *if* Solomon *obeyed* Him, God would *lengthen* Solomon's days, implying also a prolonged golden era for Israel, 1 Kings 3:14.
 2. Yet, 1 Kings 11:1-8 reveals Solomon loved and *married* many *pagan women* who turned his heart away from God to *idols* accompanied by the sins of *immorality* and *infant sacrifice* in violation of Deut. 17:17 et al., so God planned to rend most of the kingdom from his son, 1 Kings 11:9-13; B. K. C., O. T., p. 508.
 3. Sadly, Solomon's willingness to violate Scripture by marrying these foreign women was influenced by his father David whom we before learned wed the pagan woman Maacah to enhance his power, 2 Sam. 3:3b.
 4. After Solomon's reign, various kings in his line who ruled over the Southern Kingdom of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin tried in vain to restore the nation's former golden era under Solomon:
 - a. Solomon had used 72,000 ounces of gold to make 500 decorative shields to line the causeway from his palace to the temple, 1 Kings 10:16-17; Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, ftns. to 1 Kings 10:16 & 1 Kings 10:17.
 - b. However, in his son Rehoboam's reign, Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt forcibly took the treasures of both the temple and also the gold shields that Solomon had made for the causeway, 1 Kings 14:25-26.
 - c. Rehoboam then made less glorious bronze shields to replace the gold ones, but he stored the bronze shields out of sight and brought them out for display along the causeway only when he made a formal trip from his palace to the temple, a symbol of the decline of Judah's wealth and security, 1 Kings 14:27-28!
 - d. Later, in the prophet Isaiah's era, Judah's king Hezekiah tried to amaze a delegation from Babylon by showing them all his treasures, seeking to impress them like Solomon had impressed the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-5 with Isaiah 39:1-2), which pride on Hezekiah's part was judged by God, Isaiah 39:3-8.
- B. However, **Christ's coming golden age of His kingdom will NEVER END due to His RIGHTEOUSNESS:**

1. Isaiah 9:7b ESV reveals Christ's rule will be marked by "justice" (*mishpat*) and "righteousness" (*sedaqah*), the same words the Queen of Sheba used when she told Solomon that God had set him on Israel's throne to render "justice" and "righteousness," 1 Kings 10:9 ESV; Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 621, 526.
2. However, since Christ is **sinless**, He will *forever successfully* administer "justice" and "righteousness," so unlike Solomon's case, God will *prolong Christ's* kingdom, causing it to increase in blessing *forever!*

III. This coming ministry of Messiah Jesus Christ in His Kingdom 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, influencing the spread of "justice" (*mishpat*) and "righteousness" (*sedaqah*) through his lifestyle and ministries (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. He can then act like Christ to be a *successful* blessing to people around him, Romans 7:15-25 with 8:1-5. In particular, he will make decisions like Christ will make as described in the prophecy of Micah 4:1-4:
 - a. A believer equipped with and dependent on the Holy Spirit will make objectively Biblically correct decisions, not showing favoritism to weak or strong parties, but administering just judgment, Micah 4:3a.
 - b. This activity will negate a lot of anger and lead to peace in relationships around him, Micah 4:3b.
 - c. Such peace and justice will cause people to take responsibility for their own welfare rather than trying unjustly to take advantage of others or live off of the hard-earned wealth of other people, Micah 4:4a.
 - d. Such peace and productivity will alleviate a lot of fear and hence distrust in people, Micah 4:4b.

Lesson: (1) *In contrast to Israel's kings whose sins ended Israel's initial golden age, Christ's sinlessness as He sits on David's throne in the Kingdom will lead Him to administer "justice" and "righteousness," producing growing peace and bounty in an endless golden era.* (2) *Believers today can rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit to practice "justice" and "righteousness" that produces greater peace, bounty and security around them to the glory of God.*

Application: (1) *May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16.* (2) *May we then rely on the Holy Spirit to live out God's "justice" and "righteousness," affecting others to be more at peace, happier and more settled to God's glory.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We address the moral issues mentioned in our introduction with God's "justice" and "righteousness" rulings:

(1) "Uninvited fondling" is a capital crime in God's eyes, for Jesus held that just to look with lust on a woman is the capital crime of adultery (Matthew 5:27-28; Leviticus 20:10)! ***We thus condemn "uninvited fondling"!***

(2) Exodus 21:22-25 teaches abortion at any trimester is punishable by death! ***We thus condemn abortion!***

(3) Regarding divorce and remarriage along with homosexuality, we heed Jesus' Matthew 19:3-6 lead and recall man's creation as our pattern: Genesis 2:20-24 shows God made Eve from Adam's rib and presented her to him as his wife. (a) Jesus taught that what God then joined in marriage as composed of one flesh, no man was to separate!

Some evangelicals teach that the Matthew 19:9 "except for fornication" clause and the 1 Corinthians 7:15 "not under bondage" clause allow for divorce or divorce and remarriage, but these clauses can **NOT** be interpreted in these ways, for then Jesus would lie since He did not permit divorce in Matthew 19:6 and Paul would also lie as he did not permit divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10, and if one claims that these two **did** lie, he undermines the Christian faith!

Rather, (i) Christ's allowing "divorce" via the Matthew 19:9 "except for fornication" clause applied to three cases unique to Jews in His era -- union in violation of the Levitical degrees of marriage, immorality during a betrothal and union of a Jew and a Gentile, cases that do not apply to us. (ii) Also, in 1 Corinthians 7:16, Paul used the first class condition [the particle *ei* in the protasis ("if" clause) and no particle *an* in the apodosis ("then" clause)] of the conditional clause, "whether [if] thou shalt save" (KJV), meaning "If, and it is true," (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 592; Dana & Mantey, A Man. Gram. of the Grk. N. T., 1955, p. 289-290) to show he expected a believer to lead his divorced, lost spouse to Christ and save their union, not re-wed another! ***We thus condemn divorce and remarriage!***

(b) Regarding homosexuality, God put Adam and Eve in a heterosexual union, not a homosexual one. Also, Leviticus 18:22 calls homosexual acts abominations. ***We thus condemn homosexual orientations and practices!***

To summarize in a POSITIVE statement, we uphold permanent, heterosexual, nurturing marriages that are also the sole realm for meeting one's sexual needs, and that married couples must only edify their offspring.

May we trust in Christ to be saved. Then, may we rely on God to live out His justice and righteousness.