

U**P**LOOK

DECEMBER 2006

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

Portraits OF Christ

A photograph of a winter landscape. In the foreground, a snow-covered slope leads up to a line of evergreen trees. The trees are dark against the bright, hazy sky. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

**TEN PROOFS OF
CHRIST'S DEITY
IN ISAIAH**
Jesse Gentile

**THE GRAND
ILLUSION**
Michael Windheuser,
Ph.D

**ISAIAH'S ROSE
GARDEN**
Sam Thorpe, Jr.

www.uplook.org



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The One who commanded the light to shine out of darkness Himself has shined in our hearts. Such light is ours to share with an ever-darkening world.

Portraits of Christ

What do we do in the dark times?

Dark times. Sooner or later, everyone faces them. Isaiah prophesied over a period of sixty years. There were moments of light in those decades, but, on the whole, the time was bleak. His book was written to Judah and Jerusalem (1:1), largely to reprimand the nation for its evil ways. It was during Isaiah's ministry that Judah's sister nation, Israel, fell to the hand of the king of Assyria. And it wasn't only in his surroundings that Isaiah discerned problems. When he considered his own condition, he was forced to lament, "*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips*" (6:5). Dark times.

Confronted by sin, around and within, faced with the immediate judgment of Israel and the eventual judgment of Judah, how did the Lord enable Isaiah to persevere? By graciously giving him magnificent portraits of the coming Christ.


The kingdom of Israel was on the verge of captivity. Although few realized it at the time, the hope of Israel wasn't in a kingdom, but in a King. So the Lord promised His people that, one day, "*Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty*" (33:17), and that this King would reign in righteousness (32:1).

In judgment, God was going to remove from Judah "*the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counselor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator, ... their princes and rulers*" (3:2-4). But, in reality, there was Another who was their true Mighty Man (42:13), Judge (33:22), Counselor (9:6), Prince (9:6), Ruler (40:10). Isaiah's hope, Israel's hope, Judah's hope were all the same: Messiah.

In the New Testament, when the Hebrews were again facing times of trial, God's remedy remained unchanged: "*Looking unto Jesus...consider Him*" (Heb. 12:2f). And it is the same today. During difficult times, the world has a stream of shifting "solutions"—entertainment, drugs, self-esteem, materialism, psychology, etc. But the believer has the privilege to rely on the one Answer that has remained unmoved, unchanged, and unequalled for all of human history: Christ.

However, it turns out that these portraits of Christ aren't only meant for the saved. Seven hundred years after Isaiah prophesied, an unbeliever was sitting in his chariot poring over Isaiah 53. He realized that the description wasn't an end in itself, and so he asked, "*of whom speaketh the prophet?*" (Acts 8:34). "*Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus*" (Acts 8:35). And the man got saved! The picture had done its job—not simply revealing Christ, but doing so in such a way that caused others to desire to know Him.

It would be helpful, wouldn't it, if all unbelievers spent their free time reading Isaiah, desperate to know of whom he was writing. Alas, today, for every person who has read Isaiah 53, there are thousands who have no idea that his book even exists! But this comes as no surprise to God. And that is why He has scattered throughout the earth some other portraits of Christ. Us. We are called Christ-ians, aren't we? Certainly we aren't the perfect pictures that we see in the Scriptures. Not yet, anyway. But we are being "*changed into the same image from glory to glory*" (2 Cor. 3:18).

We aren't ends in ourselves either. It is true that we aspire to live in such a way that others will notice a difference in us. But we'll know our portrait is truly accurate when it inspires people to look past us and long to know the Original. 

UPLOOK

DECEMBER 2006

Volume 73 • Number 9

Founded in 1927 as Look on the Fields, UPLOOK is published monthly except for occasional combined issues which count as two issues, by Uplook Ministries and Uplook Ministries (Canada).
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ISSN #1055-2642

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UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant, and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues, to God be the glory.

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Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all unsolicited material. News items must be submitted at least two months in advance of issue requested. Selected news items will be carried for two issues (if time permits). The editor reserves the right to determine those items best suited for the magazine. Editorial decisions are final. Photos accepted. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for photos you wish returned. Send news items to frontlines@uplook.org

Postal Information

US POSTMASTER: (USPS 620-640)
Send address changes to UPLOOK,
P. O. Box 2041, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041
Periodical postage paid at Grand Rapids, MI.

CANADIAN POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to UPLOOK,
P. O. Box 4089, St. Catharines, ON L2R 7S3
International Publication Mail Product
(Canadian Distribution) Sales Agreement No. 40020782

British POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to UPLOOK,
P. O. Box 1163, Bristol BS39 4YA

Subscription Information: The Uplook magazine mailing list is maintained on a subscription basis. There is no charge for a subscription, however you must renew your subscription annually in order to continue receiving the magazine. An initial subscription is for six issues. Thereafter any time you renew, your subscription will be extended a further ten issues. There are three ways to renew:

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The Grand Illusion

Once The Truth is rejected, all other truth is fair game.

I hate gravity. Oh, it has its uses, like keeping my morning coffee in the cup and holding down all the files of scientific articles stacked up in my office. But it also consistently causes me unnecessary aggravation. I open the freezer door and the ice cream slips out and heads toward my toes. If I stand two rolling suitcase bags next to each other, one will invariably fall and knock the other over. When I bend over to pick up the bags, my glasses fall on the floor. If I pile up my collection of CDs, they will not be in a neat stack when I return.

Gravity does not discriminate, nor does it take vacations. It is relentless. Gravity is an opportunistic predator that takes advantage of small deviations from level to bring any object down to the lowest level of potential energy—usually the floor. Most adults courageously fight the good fight against gravity every day. Teenagers, on the other hand, have not yet taken up the struggle and live in relative harmony with gravity—especially in their bedrooms. Everything just automatically goes on the floor, giving gravity nothing more to do.

Perhaps teenagers intuitively sense something that some theoretical physicists are now considering: could gravity really be just a grand illusion? In a recent *Scientific American* article, former Harvard University physicist Juan Maldacena says one of the three dimensions of space—height, width, or length—might be an illusion created by particles moving in just two dimensions, and that gravity, too, “would be part of the illusion.”¹ Maldacena uses the example of a holographic image which appears to be three-dimensional, even

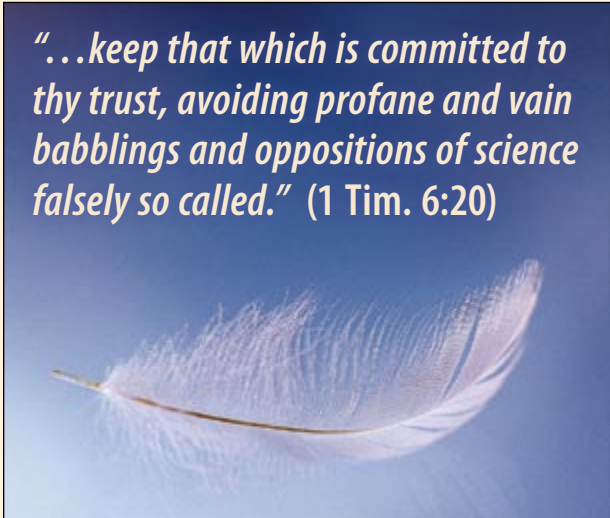
though it is physically a two-dimensional object. In a holographic image, depth is an illusion.

Illusions are fine in holographs and the world of the theoretical physicist, but we live in a world where gravity and its effects are very real. For decades there has been a growing gap between science based on observable, repeatable events and experiments, and the non-testable theories of virtual universes and dimensions of the theoretical physicist. Without the requirement for experimental verification, speculation and theory too often become fact by simple assertion. For example, Maldacena asserts that, in the quantum view of the world, everything is in flux. Even so-called empty space, “which is, in

fact, filled with virtual particles that perpetually pop in and out of existence,” is not really empty.¹ Theoretical physicists have come to accept theory as fact and have, in turn, encouraged the general public to regard verifiable facts as a grand illusion. As much as I might wish gravity were an illusion, I am not persuaded to believe that it is so by pseudo-scientific assertions of what “might” be based on quantum physics. No, the evidence that gravity is not an illusion is too easily found in my teenager’s room, where I can’t see, let alone walk on, the bedroom floor. ☹

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

1 J. Maldacena, “The Illusion of Gravity,” *Scientific American*, November 2005, 56-63.



Clermont Citrus Tower Outreach

Young Florida assembly finds ways to reach out.



The believers who gather as New Testament Believers' Fellowship, in Clermont, Florida, continue to be encouraged as they have been joined for worship over the past 8 months by other believers who have relocated to the area as well as visiting believers. They write, "We have had several opportunities to reach out into the community with the good news of God's love, most recently participating in the 50th anniversary celebration of Clermont's Citrus Tower. More than 500 Gospel of Johns, together with our tri-fold, "Glorify His Name", containing the gospel and information about who we are, where we meet, what we believe, and how we function were distributed in a 6 hour period. The threat of rain did not dampen the assembly's enthusiasm for the event, but a good supply of "umbrellas with a tract", provided by a Michigan brother, proved very popular. The whole assembly participated in this event in one way or another, as community families and friends flocked past our display tent to enjoy several vocal groups and other family activities before the spectacular firework display.

We are now trusting the Lord will "water the seed that was sown." Several evangelistic messages have been planned as follow-up. We welcome believers visiting the area to view our site, www.NTBelievers.com or contact Lanny Evans at (407) 469-2712 for directions and meeting times."



EXCEL 2007 IN MICHIGAN

The saints at Northwest Gospel Hall are again sponsoring the Excel conference with Dr. Steve Price (KS) as the expected speaker. Excel will be held at Pine Trail Camp, Saugatuck MI, on Jan 19-21. This conference is intended for serious-minded young people with a desire to spend time digging deeper into the Word of God. There are no specific age limits. **Contact:** Joe Fleeger 616-696-0658

EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH

The fellowship of believers in the Bemidji, MN area is hosting evangelistic meetings Jan 25-28 with Ben Scripture. He will be using the Creation/Evolution discussion as a springboard for sharing the Gospel. Employing different methods to get the word out and invite the unsaved, the believers are praying that the Lord will fill the community center and that God will draw people to Himself. Prayer regarding these

meetings would be appreciated.

Contact: 218-243-2240

FOCUS CONFERENCE

Northside Bible Chapel, (4510 E. 61st North, Wichita, KS) will host the annual FOCUS Young Adult Conference Feb 16-18. The scheduled speaker is Joe Reese (ON). **Contact:** Randy Horn 316-832-9756
Tom Goodson 316-744-3977
email: thmsgdsn@yahoo.com

HOLIDAY, FL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Holiday Gospel Assembly in Holiday, FL is pleased to announce their annual Bible Conference on Friday evening and all day Saturday, Feb 16- 17. Speakers expected, in the will of the Lord, are Brian Gunning (ON) and Ross Ragland (MO). The theme of the conference is "Old Testament Prophecies in View of Current Events." **Contact:** Lee Cappiello 727-845-4572
email: ecappiello@tampabay.rr.com

SUDBURY, ON WINTER WEEKEND

Sudbury Bible Fellowship is looking forward to their 19th Annual Winter Conference at Galilean Bible Camp on Feb 23-25 with Peter Kerr (ON) as the scheduled speaker. **Contact:** Jamie Martin 705-560-5646
email: wc@thesword.ca
web: www.thesword.ca/wc

SPRING CONF. IN PHOENIX

Palms Bible Fellowship, Phoenix, AZ is hosting their annual Spring Conference Mar 2-4. The invited speaker is Alan Parks (SC) and the topic is "The Deity of Christ." **Contact:** David Wright 480-917-2771
email: davidwendywright@msn.com

MENS' RETREAT AT IROQUOINA

Camp Iroquoina, Hallstead PA, will hold its annual Men's Retreat on Saturday, Mar 3. Friday night accommodation is available. Randy Amos (NY) is the scheduled speaker.

FRONT LINES *continued*

Men, bring your musical instruments!

Contact: Mark Thomas

570-967-2577 campiroquoina@epix.net

HOPE IN THE LORD

The Christians at Hope Bible Chapel in Birmingham, AL extend an invitation to their annual Spring Conference Mar 7-11. The invited speaker is Bill Gustafson (SC).

Contact: 205-833-2380

email: prosborough@juno.com

CHALLENGED IN CHILLIWACK

A Men's Challenge Conference will take place, Lord willing, in Chilliwack, BC Mar 15 to 17 at Charis Camp. The theme is "Men for God in a Perilous Culture". Expected speakers are Larry Price, Joe Reese, and Jamie Hull. Topics will include: "Men and Morality in a Permissive Age", "Prayer and Discipline in the Believer's Life", and "Passion and Purpose in the Things of the Lord".

Contact: Allen Rae 604-987-3022

email: j_allen@shaw.ca

TEXAS SPRING CONFERENCE

The Dallas Area Conference is scheduled for Mar 30 through Apr 1, Lord willing. Thomas Wheeler (TX) and Jim McKendrick (MI) will be ministering the Word. The meetings will be held at Wheatland Bible Chapel, 1303 Wheatland Road, Duncanville, TX 75116. **Contact:** John Daniels 972-424-9889 or

_john_marilyn_daniels@verizon.net

TAVISTOCK AREA CONFERENCE

The Conference will be held Apr 14 at the Tavistock Mennonite Church Building, 131 Wettlaufer St., Tavistock, ON. Doug Kazen (WA) will speak on "The Holiness of God" and Gary McBride's (ON) topic will be "Discipline in the Local Assembly".

Contact: Mike Bastiaansen

519-475-4528

FATHER / SON RETREAT IN GEORGIA

Camp Hope's Father/Son Retreat is planned in the will of the Lord for Apr 20-22. The conference begins Friday with registration at 7:00 PM and ends Sunday with lunch. Cost: \$40/family.

Contact: Steve Roys, 770-536-4787

7011 Pony Lake Rd.,

Dahlonega, GA 30533

camphopega@arilion.com

Registration forms at:

www.camphopega.org

VESSELS OF HONOR 2007

A Young Adults Conference convened by East Tulsa Bible Chapel is to be held May 25-28 on the campus of Park University, Parkville, MO.

The theme will be "Pure Light in a Dark World". Speakers expected at this time: John and Bobbie Heller,

Jonathan Peck, John Bjorlie and Larry Sheraden. **Contact:**

Jim Lindamood 918-663-1121

jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org

Dan Moffitt 918-744-6484

danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net

www.vesselsofhonor.org



OZARK FAMILY CAMP

Ozark Family Camp hosts three separate weeks of family camp each year from late July to mid-August at Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp in Missouri. The camps are a great source of fellowship with other believers and spiritual encouragement. There is no set fee for the camp but rather it is provided on a donation basis. To be put on the mailing list to receive a brochure and registration form in the spring, contact Dan Moffitt at danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net or 918-744-6484.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Virginia

Bethel Bible Camp, Woolwine VA is in need of an experienced Camp Director and an experienced Maintenance Mechanic. Committed men desiring to labor for the Lord are requested to consider these positions.

Contact: Bethel Campgrounds Inc.,

PO Box 71, Woolwine, VA 24185

email: BethelBibleCamp@swva.net

276-930-2201

HOMECALL

Marcus B. Harvey went Home to be with the Lord on November 9, 2006 at the age of 81. Marcus was born in Guatemala, and lived in Jamaica before coming to the USA. He worked for the local electrical utilities company for 40 years where he was known for his consistent life and testimony. Marcus was in fellowship with the saints at Prospect Bible Chapel in Hartford, CT since coming to this country. He served faithfully for several years as an elder and will be a great loss to our assembly. He leaves his wife, Wynette, daughter Olivia, son Milton and two grandchildren.

GOOD NEWS
ALABAMA
MAR. 3-11

PLEASE PRAY, AND PLAN TO BE INVOLVED
TWO COMBINED GOSPEL EFFORTS WITH
THE GOOD NEWS ON THE MOVE TEAM
WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS IN UPCOMING ISSUES

NEW
ENGLAND
JUN. 2-9

The High and Holy One

When the king died, Isaiah looked higher.

Like Isaiah, we need a renewed vision of Christ's majesty and holiness.

In Isaiah 6, the reader is provided with a breathtaking vision of the very throne room of heaven. It is a passage most of us are so familiar with that we can easily lose sight of the privileged glimpse we are provided with. As we enter into the vision Isaiah had of our Lord, there is a sense in which we are on holy ground, much like the appearance of the Lord to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3. In these few verses, Christ is pictured in glorious majesty seated on the throne of the universe with the "sovereign right, power, and ability to rule over all."¹

Isaiah's vision comes on the heels of King Uzziah's death. At first glance, the majesty of Isaiah's vision of Christ and the passing of King Uzziah's seem unrelated. King Uzziah's long

52-year reign was marked by much blessing. The fitting commentary on his life found in 2 Chronicles 26 was that, "He did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father Amaziah had done...and as long as he sought

the Lord, God prospered him." He clearly enjoyed tremendous military success which translated into widespread fame. But, unfortunately, his earthly success made him vulnerable to being lifted up with pride. The writer of 2 Chronicles tells of King Uzziah's undoing. He entered the temple and assumed the priestly duty of burning incense, and, when confronted by Azariah the priest, he responded with prideful anger.

His response was a condemnation of the condition of his heart. God acted quickly to deal out punishment and Uzziah was immediately struck with leprosy. He remained a leper till the day of his death, leading an isolated existence and no longer enjoying the presence of the Lord. Sadly, like so many believers, King Uzziah's life is the story of one who started well and finished poorly.

Undoubtedly, this was heavy on the mind of Isaiah. What a disappointment! In reality, Uzziah's life was an illustration of the condition of Judah as a nation. The Lord comes to Isaiah early in his ministry and provides him with a vision that will change his perspective. It is a vision of the One who will never disappoint.

The throne

It is notable that what Isaiah sees in his vision is the Lord sitting on a throne. He specifically uses the divine title *Jehovah Adonai*, speaking of God in terms of His sovereign rule and authority. Isaiah's vision portrays Christ seated on the throne of God. There are many thrones spoken of in Scripture in connection with the work of Christ. Most look forward to a coming day of Christ's rule. The throne of grace is one we enjoy daily as we enter into prayer and find mercy and grace. But the throne on which Christ is seated in Isaiah 6 is one which He has rightfully occupied eternally. The writer to the Hebrews, quoting the Psalmist, recognizes this fact. "But of the Son He says, 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.'" (Heb. 1:8)

The ensuing verses describe the majesty associated with the Lord's throne. The writer is struck by the awesome presence of the Lord. The throne on which He sits is high and lifted up, a fitting description of the exalted Christ



THE HIGH AND HOLY ONE *continued*



reigning over the universe. The sight is marvelously splendid with the train of His robe filling the temple. The celestial beings surround the One seated on the throne and, as if to avoid drawing any attention to themselves and away from the Sovereign Lord, use their wings to cover themselves. The glory belongs to Jehovah alone. The disciples were privileged to get a similar vision of Christ in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Looking back in his second epistle, Peter writes, “*but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’*” (2 Pet. 1:16f)

The cry

But now Isaiah’s attention turns from the marvelous sight to the marvelous sound of the seraphim encircling the throne and crying out to one another. What is the theme of their cry? The Holiness of God. “*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.*” Holiness not only speaks of God’s absolute purity, but of the idea of His separateness. “The thought is of all that separates Him and sets Him apart and makes Him different from His creation.”²

We can’t help but think of our Lord as He walked this earthly scene. His feet may have been muddied by the same dirt but in every aspect of His thinking, speech, and conduct, He operated on a completely different plane than the mere men around Him. He was not bound by the same natural laws. He turned water into wine and walked on water. He “[upheld] *all things by the word of His power*” (Heb. 1:3). He spoke of heaven as His home and enjoyed constant communion with His heavenly Father. He was absolutely pure and incapable of sin. When a woman caught in the act of adultery was dragged by the religious elite into His presence, He revealed their hearts with the comment, “*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*” When all the critics had ashamedly walked away, Jesus was the only one left standing. The commentary of the New Testament writers who were acquainted with

the intimate, unseen, unrecorded moments of His life was that “*He did no sin*” (1 Pet. 2:22), “*He knew no sin*” (2 Cor. 5:21), and “*in Him is no sin*” (1 Jn. 3:5). The song of the seraphim is taken up with the holiness of God. No one ever displayed this more perfectly than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The King

One final note about the Seraphim’s song is worth adding. They address the One on the throne as the “Lord of Hosts.” This is a name of Jehovah often used synonymously with the God of Israel in the Old Testament. But, in Psalm 24, it is prophetically used of Christ. This psalm looks forward to Christ’s return to an earthly Jerusalem after the final triumph over His enemies at Armageddon. He is presented as the victorious Commander greeted by the very gates of Jerusalem. The question is asked, “*Who is the King of Glory?*” The answer: “*the Lord of Hosts.*” Ultimately, the One who sits on the throne of the universe and governs it according to His right and power will be recognized in the very place that rejected Him. He will take the throne and be crowned as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Like Isaiah, we need a renewed vision of Christ’s majesty and holiness. Amidst the uncertainty in the land following the death of Uzziah and all that it might imply for Judah’s future, God provided Isaiah with the surety of the One who is ultimately in control. Which of us has not had the experience of being disappointed by a believer whose life has been derailed by poor decisions, worldly distractions, or the allure of sin? Our mistake is placing undue confidence in men and taking our eyes off Christ. Inevitably, a deeper appreciation of the greatness of Christ in His dominion over the universe, and an understanding of His holiness, will affect our view of self and fill our hearts with worship. 📌

Endnotes

- 1 T. Ernest Wilson, *The Messianic Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Gospel Folio Press, 1997), p. 110.
- 2 J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), p. 225.

Amidst the uncertainty in the land following the death of Uzziah and all that it might imply for Judah’s future, God provided Isaiah with the surety of the One who is ultimately in control.

Who is He?

Child. Son. Counselor. God. Father of Eternity. Prince of Peace.

In this clear Messianic passage, we find a rapid-fire description of the coming Christ.

While all Scripture has significant meaning, it seems that, every so often, we run across a passage where every word is bursting with insights about our Lord. Isaiah chapter 9 contains one of those passages.

This chapter seems an unlikely passage to find such insights. Just as the preceding chapter, this one starts off describing Israel's impending persecution by the Assyrians. Then, the subject abruptly shifts to the coming Messiah. It tells how those suffering in darkness will see a great light. What is interesting about this, besides the fact that Jesus is that light, is that verse 1 tells of how Galilee was suffering in darkness. When Christ came, those in Galilee were the first to experience the light of His miracles and ministry.

Chapter 9 continues by describing armor from a battle being used as fuel for a fire. This was a common symbol of victory in ancient times. But here it is also a symbol of peace because it shows the battle is finally and decisively over, with the victor burning the armor of the enemy. As we move into verse six, we see who this Victor is:

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

In this clear Messianic passage, we find a rapid-fire description of the coming Christ. Like many prophecies in the Old Testament, this passage gives a complete description of the Messiah and does not differentiate

between His first and second comings. This makes sense in that God does not change His character or His plans between the two earthly appearances, nor is He bound by time, often speaking of His plans as if they are already completed.

Careful consideration of the first part of this verse shows it to be a veiled reference to Christ's deity and virgin birth. As a child He was born of a woman, but as a son His was given. Compare this with Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

Modern science has determined that the gender of a baby is determined by the father. We see here that it is far more than His gender that was given by God the Father. He sent His eternal Son into this world to become a man. The vehicle He used to bring Him into this world was the virgin birth. Thus He was both a baby born and the given Son.

Shoulder vs. Shoulders

I have often heard the comparison between verse six and the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15. It is pointed out that we, the lost sheep, are carried on the Good Shepherd's shoulders (plural), pointing out that we are more secure and given more effort than the government of this world. While there is some merit to this illustration, the picture here is of the symbol of a government being born on the shoulder. This is the common place for such a symbol, whether it is an emblem, a sash, or a sword.

This speaks of the Lord's coming kingdom. Christ has already secured the victory with His triumph at Calvary and His resur-



WHO IS HE? *continued*

rection from the dead. At His return, the rest of these prophecies will be fulfilled. We will see Him completely destroy His earthly foes and thereby usher in an era of unprecedented peace. He will establish a government on earth and will reign for a thousand years.

The last half of the verse lists different descriptive names of this coming conqueror. These names give us marvelous insights into the attributes of the Son of God. Let's consider them one by one.

Wonderful Counselor

Scholars differ on whether this one name or two separate descriptions. Either way, it is consistent with what we know Christ to be. Matthew Henry says, "Wonderful, for he is both God and man. His love is the wonder of angels and glorified saints. He is the Counselor, for He knew the counsels of God from eternity; and He gives counsel to men, in which He consults our welfare. He is the Wonderful Counselor; none teaches like Him."¹ He is the ultimate counselor for there is no one that can give Him advice. Isaiah 40:13 says, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor hath taught Him?"

Mighty God

This affirms Christ's deity and shows His power. He is not like the gods the nations around Israel worshipped. He is the omnipotent Creator of the universe. The phrase in the Hebrew can be translated "the conquering God." This does not just refer to His second coming, but also to the fact that He has conquered sin once and for all.

Everlasting Father

Critics say that this title is contradictory. Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God. Here it clearly refers to Christ being the everlasting Father. Another rendering of this phrase is Father of Eternity, which would speak of Christ as the source of eternity. Furthermore, He is the originator of a new generation of people in that He has brought them eternal life through His conquest of sin, death, and the grave. Lastly, this title also links Him to God and testifies to His equality with the Father.

Prince of Peace

This is the culmination of all the names. As Alexander Maclaren puts it, "The name pierces to the heart of



Christ's work."² His power is sufficient to end all war and usher in lasting peace. More to the point, the Lord Jesus is the only One who can calm the inner storm that sin has caused. He has conquered sin once and for all and brought us eternal life. In times of distress He counsels us and assures us that He is in control. That road to true peace lies through submission to Him.

Verses 7 and 8 assure us that His is a perpetual reign. His earthly line to the throne runs through David. It is fascinating to see in Matthew how the kingly line is traced to Joseph, Jesus' adopted earthly father. However, this poses a problem for us since we read in Jeremiah 22:30 that that line had been cursed as punishment for King Jeconiah's wickedness. "Thus saith the Lord, 'Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.'"

But Jesus was not Joseph's seed! What's more, not only is Christ in the line of David through Joseph, He is in the line of David through Mary. Luke chapter 3 gives us a different genealogy, that of Mary. We find it diverges at David. Instead of following the kingly line through Solomon that was ultimately cursed, it follows the line through David's son Nathan, thus escaping the curse on Jeconiah. And so we see He is still the rightful heir to the throne of David.

Isn't that just like our God? No detail is overlooked. He ensured that there was no question when it came to His Son's qualifications to reign. Verse 7 ends with a guarantee: the same power that set all these things in motion will bring them to pass. God's purposes cannot be stopped. We have seen part of this prophecy fulfilled in the first advent of our Lord. We look with yearning hearts to see the rest of it fulfilled by the power of God. 🕯️

Endnotes

1 Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing, n.d.).

2 Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984).



NEW LIFE IN HIM *From seed planting to fruit growing*

The Deity of Christ

Who do you say that I am?

If Jesus began His existence at His birth, then the eternal Trinity is a fallacy. Neither would Jesus be God, for God is eternal. If Jesus was not God, yet knowingly received worship, He was a blasphemer and all who bow the knee to Him are guilty of idolatry. If we cannot believe His claims then He was a liar and cannot be trusted. Such are the consequences if Jesus is not God. However, Scripture reveals to us the truth regarding Jesus Christ and His divinity. What are some of the biblical evidences for the deity of Christ?

A plurality

Jehovah spoke of Himself in the plural: *“Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,”* *“The Lord God said, ‘Behold man is become as one of Us,’* *“Let Us go down...”* (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7, 8). There are also instances where the Angel (messenger) of the Lord speaks as God: to Abraham He states, *“by Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord”* (Gen. 22:15f). In Exodus 3:2-4, God calls to Moses in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush. Samson’s parents both converse with the Angel of the Lord in Judges 13:21-22, expecting to die, *“for we have seen God.”* This Angel of the Lord who identifies Himself as God throughout the Old Testament disappears in the New Testament. John 1 verses 1 and 14 tell us why: *“The Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”* The Messenger and the Message are now the same.

Eternal

The One born in Bethlehem was One *“whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting”* (Mic. 5:2). He was *“in the beginning with God”* (Jn. 1:2) and He was *“before all things”* (Col. 1:17). The fact that He was “only begot-

ten” is a term of favor, not a statement implying that He was created—Hebrews 11:17 describes Isaac as such in his relationship to Abraham, although Isaac certainly was not Abraham’s first, or only, begotten in time.



Creator

Jehovah is given sole credit for creating all things: *“Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein”* (Neh. 9:6). Yet of Jesus we read, *“the world was made by Him”* (Jn. 1:10), and *“all things were created by Him, and for Him...and by Him all things consist”* (Col. 1:16f). John 1:2 emphasizes this by re-stating

it in the negative: *“Without Him was not anything made that was made.”* Hebrews 1 further discusses the Son of God’s role in creation: *“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands”* (v. 10).

Made flesh

John records *“the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”* The One who said, *“I am from above”* (Jn. 8:23) was *“sanctified, and sent into the world”* (Jn. 10:36). Hebrews 1 states, *“He [God] bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world”* (v. 6) and then says that this firstbegotten is the One who *“laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of [His] hands”* (v. 10). His eternity perplexed others when He made such statements as *“before Abraham was, I am”* (Jn. 8:58). Furthermore, Jesus clearly stated, *“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father”* (Jn. 16:28), showing that He did not begin His existence in the manger, but, rather, He *“came*

THE DEITY OF CHRIST *continued*

down from heaven” (Jn. 6:38) and would return “up where He was before” (Jn. 6:62).

Self-representation

Some suggest Jesus was a “front man,” born into this world to represent God to the world. God, however, represents Himself, for in Isaiah 42:8 He declares, “*I am the Lord...and My glory will I not give to another.*” Yet we read that Jesus is not only repeatedly worshipped in the New Testament (Mt. 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; Jn. 9:38; 20:28), but He also invites others to put their faith in Him as they would in God (Jn. 14:1). God jealously guards His glory, yet we read of Jesus, “*we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*” (Jn. 1:14), and later, in Jesus’ own words to His Father, “*glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was*” (Jn. 17:5). To the Jews He plainly declared, “*I and the Father are one*” (Jn. 10:30).

His names

Jesus was given the name “Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23) which means “God with us.” He was also called “the mighty God, the everlast-

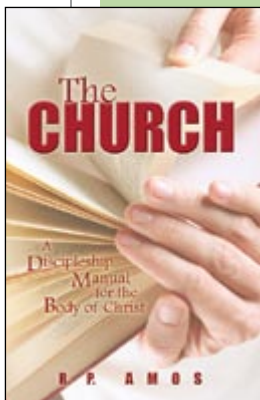


Surroundings of the Garden Tomb near Gordon's Calvary, Jerusalem

ing Father” (Isa. 9:6), and “Saviour” (Jn. 4:42), titles that belong exclusively to Jehovah (Ps. 50:1; Hos. 13:4). Many verses refer directly to Jesus as God (Heb. 1:8; Acts 20:28; Titus 2:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Jn. 14:9; 1 Tim. 3:16). Jesus personally claimed Jehovah’s name stated in Exodus 3:14—I AM—which caused His enemies to unexpectedly fall backward (Jn. 18:5f). Jesus also made a dreadful promise to those who do not believe the truth so plainly revealed: “*if you believe not that I AM He, ye shall die in your sins*” (Jn. 8:24).

In light of the overwhelming evidence, what would you say if He asked you, “*but who do you say that I am?*” (Mt. 16:15). 🗨️ —RANDY HORN

If Jesus was not God, yet knowingly received worship, He was a blasphemer and all who bow the knee to Him are guilty of idolatry.



The Church: A Discipleship Manual for the Body of Christ by R. P. Amos

This study manual is designed for disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who are serious about serving Him. It answers, from the Word of God, many questions Christians ask concerning the assembly (church) of God’s New Testament children.

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The Branch

When all is dark and dead, Messiah comes bringing light and life.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”
Isa. 11:1, 2



Isaiah’s prophecies are marked by the contrast between God’s blessings and God’s judgment; blessings upon those who obey God, and judgment upon those who do not. The centuries that followed Isaiah’s lifetime were marked by God’s judgment. The nation of Israel was conquered, exiled, and persecuted. Years of desolation passed before the prophetic Branch of Isaiah 11:1 came. Isaiah would have been astounded had he understood the full impact that this Branch was to have, not only on his nation, but on people everywhere. And he would have wept had he realized how many centuries would pass (twenty-seven and counting!) before this prophecy would be completely fulfilled.

Background – God’s people are forsaken

Before considering the opening words of Isaiah chapter 11, it is helpful to look at chapter 6’s description of Isaiah’s commission from God, an event that likely took place over 40 years before. In the first seven verses, Isaiah recounts his vision of the throne of God. This passage stands out in the Old Testament as the place where God’s glory is revealed to man in the most visible and powerful way. Isaiah was overcome with wonder and fear. He says, “Woe is me! For I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts” (v. 5). The Lord then cleansed Isaiah and commissioned him for service. Isaiah’s calling, however, stands out in stark contrast with the glory and power of his vision. The message the Lord had prepared for Isaiah was filled with desolation and despair. The Lord told him that his preaching would be ignored—the people would “see” but not “perceive”; they would “hear” but not

“understand” (v. 10). Shocked, Isaiah asked, “Lord, how long?,” and the Lord’s response is one of Scripture’s most hopeless prophecies concerning God’s people. The Lord told Isaiah that Israel would be desolate until:

...cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, the land is utterly desolate, The Lord has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. But yet a tenth will be in it, and will return and be for consuming, as a terebinth tree or as an oak, whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump. (Isa. 6:11-13, NKJV)

The Lord did not answer Isaiah’s question, instead He told him that the nation of Israel was going to be reduced to nothing more than a dried stump in the ground—seemingly forsaken by their God; as good as dead. And this proved to be the case in history. From this point forward Israel slowly drifted from God and from prominence among the nations until 150 years later when they were decisively conquered and led into captivity. Seventy more years passed while the remnant left in the land were consumed by the culture and practices of the conquering nations.

Hope springs forth

The image presented in chapter 6 is hopeless. Israel is pictured as a century-old stump, dried up and wasting away. The nation that God used to judge Israel is similarly “lopped down” (read about God’s judgment on Assyria in chapter 10). But then we get to chapter 11, and in the midst of this desolation there appears a message of hope! What peace it must have given Isaiah when he realized that God was not finished with

THE BRANCH *continued*

Israel, and that some day *“there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots”!* Israel would have to wait centuries for her Messiah to come, but eventually the words of Job would ring true: *“For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground”* (Job 14:7, 8). The Branch was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David and the promised Messiah. Isaiah 11:2 could be a description of no one but Him: *“And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”*

The remainder of the chapter outlines three characteristics of the restoration that the Messiah will bring to the world.

1. The restoration of righteous judgment

When the Messiah comes, *“He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: But with righteousness shall He judge the poor”* (vv. 3, 4). Who but the Son of God could judge in true righteousness and not simply by what is seen and heard? Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this passage. When He came to earth as our sacrifice we saw a glimpse of the righteousness and peace that He will someday bring to the nations. When He comes again the world will experience, for the first time, absolute perfect judgment.


2. The restoration of peace to the nations

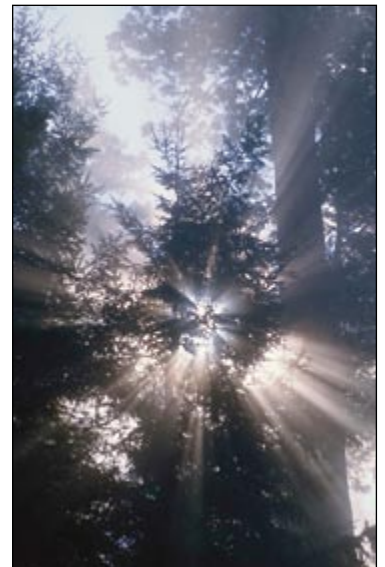
When Jesus Christ comes to reign, the world will experience true peace. In that day, mankind will be able to experience personal peace with God, the peace that *“passes all understanding”* (Php. 4:7), as well as geo-political peace such as the world has never known. Imagine a world where even the wild beasts are gentle towards the weak (vv. 6-8). Small wonder that all the nations will seek Him (v. 10), and *“His rest shall be glorious.”*

3. The restoration of Israel to their land

In that day, Israel will be fully restored to their promised land. It is significant that in verse 11 Isaiah refers to this restoration as the second time that the Lord recovers the remnant of His people. Isaiah’s prophecy was looking beyond the first restoration of Israel to their land, a restoration which occurred under Cyrus the Persian nearly 200 years after Isaiah wrote these words. It was looking beyond that significant day in May, 1948, when Israel was once again recognized as a nation. This prophecy will be fully realized when God’s Chosen One, Jesus Christ, the Root and the Offspring of David (Rev. 22:16), gathers His chosen people from the four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:12), and they say, *“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation”* (Isa. 12:2).

Our experience as Christians is not unlike Israel’s. We were spiritually desolate before Jesus came into our lives; spiritually dead in fact (Eph. 2:1). We were outside the promised blessings of His chosen people (v. 12). But God had not forsaken us, just as God had not forsaken His people Israel. His plan was to redeem us and to restore us to Himself. But even though we were not forsaken, Someone else was. Before righteousness and peace could be restored in this world and brought to our lives, Jesus Christ, the rod out of the stem of Jesse—the very One that these glorious verses describe—was forsaken by God (Mt. 27:46), and He died for us (Isa. 53:5; Rom. 5:8). How easy it ought to be to love God when we consider how He expressed His love to us!

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and send His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 Jn. 4:10) 



Our experience as Christians is not unlike Israel’s. We were spiritually desolate before Jesus came into our lives.

Jehovah's Servant

First rejected, then vindicated (Isa. 42:1-9; 49:1-6)

His was the only life lived always for God, never for self.

The 42nd chapter of Isaiah presents before our eyes the majestic perfections of the Servant of Jehovah. Here we have Jehovah speaking with great delight of the moral glories of His peerless Servant. *"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but...took upon Him the form of a servant"* (Php. 2:6-7).

The Servant and God

All through the Old Testament, God called certain men by the name of "My servant." Men like Abraham (Gen. 20:24), Moses (Num. 12:7), Caleb (Num. 14:24), Job (Job 1:8), and others. The term is even used to describe the nation of Israel (Isa. 41:8-9). But of none of these did God speak in such glowing terms

as when He described the perfections of His Chosen One. He is the One whom God upholds in the face of all human contradictions and satanic opposition. And He is the One who the world rejected, despised, and crucified.

The word "elect" was understood even by the Jewish theologians as referring specifically to Messiah. That is why the

rulers of the nation gathered around the cross derided Him saying, *"He saved others, let Him save himself if He be the Christ the chosen [elect] of God"* (Lk. 23:35). But because He truly was the chosen One, He did not save Himself then, but, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. Yet He was *"Declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead"* (Rom. 1:4).



"In whom My soul delighteth" could not be said of anyone else of the entire human race except of Christ. For He was the sinless One who came to do His Father's will (Jn. 6:38) and who glorified God on the earth (Jn. 17:4). And He did it at the cost of laying down His life. His was the only life in history lived always for God and others and never for self. No wonder that twice during His earthly journey, first at His baptism and then on the mount of transfiguration, heaven was opened and the Father announced, *"Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased"* (Lk. 3:22; Mt. 17:5).

"I have put My Spirit upon Him" denotes a unique relationship with the Holy Spirit of God that puts this Servant in the place of pre-eminence. Never has there been a man who was so related to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was instrumental in preparing the body of His incarnation (Lk. 1:35). At the Lord's baptism, the Spirit appeared in bodily form like a dove that abode on Him. Thus, God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38). During His earthly ministry as the perfect, dependant Man, the Saviour was full of the Holy Spirit and was always led by Him (Lk. 4:1). He performed miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 12:28). The Holy Spirit was involved in the resurrection of Christ (Rom. 1:4). And now, in this dispensation, the divine Spirit is occupied with glorifying Him (Jn. 16:14).

The Servant and man

The moral glory of the Servant is further seen in that *"He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street."* How very true of our blessed Lord, who sought no glory, notoriety, or fame for Himself. So, as He went

about healing those who were oppressed of the devil, He charged them that they should not make Him known (Mt. 12:15-16). When the multitudes that He had just fed wanted to take Him by force to make Him king, the Lord departed to a mountain Himself alone (Jn. 6:15). And when His unbelieving brethren tried to entice Him to show Himself to the world, His answer was, “*My time is not yet come*” (Jn. 7:6).

Christ's beautiful character is also seen in His relationship with men around Him. To the sinner, bruised and splintered like a reed, He offers forgiveness, healing, and rest. For He says, “*Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest*” (Mt. 11:28). For the backsliding believer, whose faith has been reduced to a smoking flax, He rekindles the flame and causes it to shine brighter for Him. Thus, the Lord Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith fail not, knowing full well that he was about to deny Him that very night (Lk. 22:31-32). He still occupies the place of the great high priest interceding for His own.

The triumph of this wonderful Servant at His second coming is brought before us in several statements here. First, we are told He shall bring justice to the nations (v. 1). Our world, which is now reeling under the weight of domestic, social, national, and international injustice, will see justice performed at all levels. “*He shall bring forth justice in truth*” (v. 3). His justice will be entirely founded on truth for, “*In righteousness He doth judge and make war*” (Rev. 19:11). And finally, we read that His purpose will not be frustrated, “*Till He has set justice in the earth, and the coasts shall wait for His law*” (v. 4). He will have righteousness for a scepter of His kingdom (Heb. 1:8), and then will the governing laws of this planet emanate, not from the United Nations, but from His throne in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3).

As the Saviour is the light to the Gentiles now through the gospel of His grace, He will also be, at a future time, the mediator of a new covenant for the people of Israel, when they repent and accept Him as Messiah (v. 6-7). These are the eternal counsels of God and, as such, the Christ is assured of Jehovah's care (v. 6).

The Servant speaks

So far we have read the Father's testimony to His Son. But when we come to chapter 49:1-7, we see the Servant speaking about Himself. We are first told of His calling before His birth. Hundreds of years later, but still before His birth, He was named by the angel both to Mary (Lk. 2:21) and to Joseph (Mt. 1:21). Others, such as Ishmael (Gen. 1:11) and Isaac (Gen. 17:19), were called by name before birth. But this is the only One whose name designated Him Saviour.

The Lord's hidden years, before the beginning of His public ministry, are briefly described in verse 2. Here He is seen being prepared for His teaching ministry as His mouth is made like a sharp sword, which is a common picture used of Him in the Scriptures (Rev. 1:16; 2:16; 19:15). Hidden in the hand of Jehovah, He became a polished shaft to be used mightily of God to bring His message to His people like no one else could.

The failure of Israel to be a true servant of Jehovah is a historical fact. For, in spite of the clear command in verse 3, the nation failed to bring glory to God. Therefore, the perfect Servant took on Himself the task of doing so; for, as we read on, we seem to have the Servant looking back on His ministry and labor among the people. At the end of His time with them, it seemed that, for all intents and purposes, His labor was in vain. Only a handful of followers adhered to Him, received His word, and believed that He was sent of God (Jn. 17:8). The nation at large rejected Him and refused to accept His Messiahship (Jn. 5:37f). Yet He did not make an accusation to the Father against them (Jn. 5:45). He chose rather to commit Himself to the One who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:24) saying, “*surely the justice due to Me is with the Lord and My work with My God.*”



This One is the true Israel, God's Servant-Prince.

And God was indeed well-pleased with the work of His Faithful Servant, for He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand.

The Servant saves

The primary work of the blessed Servant was to bring the rebellious nation back to God. He offered Himself to them as their king at the beginning of His ministry, but the leaders refused Him and accused Him of being an imposter. His grace took Him to the cross to die for sinners of all nations. And, although Israel is not yet gathered, He is thought of by God to be glorious. For God has highly exalted Him far above all the heavens (Eph. 4:8). As He addresses Him in verse 6, we learn that the task of raising Jacob and of restoring Israel is lightly esteemed in comparison with the present work of taking the gospel to the nations. Thus, He is now preached as God's salvation to the ends of the earth (Acts 13:46-47).

Verse 7 is full of rich teaching about the person of the Servant, His rejection, and His final vindication. We are first given three descriptions of Him in regards to His humiliation. He is the One whom the entire human race, with a few exceptions, has despised and rejected (Isa. 53:3). This was the case during His earthly ministry and remains so in today's world. There are even those who now claim to name His name and yet refuse to accept God's record of Him, for they are not willing to receive a crucified Christ or to believe His Gospel of grace.

Next we read that He was "*abhorred by the nation,*" a clear reference to the nation of Israel. There was no reason for them to abhor Him. He went about doing good, healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, and feeding the hungry. Yet He testified at the end of His journey that "*they hated me without a cause*" (Jn. 15:25).

But the willing humility of the Servant, however, is seen most clearly in the third description: "*a servant of rulers,*" which, more accurately translated, means "a bond slave of the despots." All through His life on earth our

Saviour graciously submitted Himself to the powers in authority at the time. Those were not particularly just or fair men. They were despots who ruled by decree, like Tiberius; men who perverted the truth and sought false witnesses to prove their case, like Annas and Caiaphas; rulers who abused their God-given powers, as Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas. Yet, in dealing with each of them, the Master showed majestic self-control, unprecedented patience, and divine grace. He said to the Herodians who were trying to entangle Him, "*Render, therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God, the things that are God's*" (Mt. 22:21). With regards to the request for tribute money, He said to Peter, "*Then the sons are free, notwithstanding lest we should offend them...give unto them for Me and thee*" (Mt. 17:26-27). He was under no obligation to pay, but He took the place of the servant of rulers. When faced with a challenge from Pilate about the ability of the latter to crucify or release Him, the Lord did not deny Pilate's authority to do so. Yet He reminded him that that authority was given to Pilate from above. Our Lord then went on to tell him that those who delivered Christ to him had the greater sin, thus exonerating neither him nor them (Jn. 19:11).

How then will the faithful Jehovah reward such an exemplary Servant? By having the kings and princes of this world to arise in awe of Him to worship (v. 7). For they shall shut their mouths at Him when they behold the glory of the One whom they have despised and rejected.

*To Him whom men despise and slight
To Him be glory given,
The crown is His and His by right,
The highest place in heaven.*

—Thomas Kelly 



All the world shall some day see that He was the right Man for the task.



ELDER HELPS *To feed, to take heed, and to lead*

Single Overseers?

Should an unmarried man be recognized as an elder?

Is there a man in your assembly who meets all of the requirements of Titus 1:6-9 except that he is not married? If so, you are blessed indeed. He is free to serve in the fellowship without the distraction of caring for a wife and family (1 Cor. 7:33-35). The godly qualities he possesses mean that he is qualified to counsel others. Some might want to add, "...but not about family life." We are not so sure. The fact is that people tend to seek counsel of those who inspire their confidence, sometimes asking help from those who do not have personal experience but who know the Word of God and can apply it with conviction and discretion. But see our last paragraph for more on this.



Let me digress. What we have just said about the value of having single men in the church, whose testimony is without reproach, also applies to single women who work within the bounds prescribed for them in the New Testament. Let us be thankful for them and leave room for their service according to their gifts. No godly woman will want to assume responsibilities that are not hers or go beyond Scripture, as is sometimes feared. But the word spoken concerning deacons, "...let these first be proved, then let them serve" should be applied to all who are recognized as "servants of the church" (1 Tim. 3:10; Rom. 16:1). A true elder who, with his wife, has a well-ordered home and is given to hospitality, provides a home which singles of both sexes can visit and be guided as to how they may best use their gifts and fulfill needed ministries in the assembly.

But we are straying from the main question! Does the Word of God allow for a single man to be recognized as an elder? We are not sure that the statement that an elder "must be the husband of one wife" would, by itself,

settle the issue. Certainly, it would forbid him to have more than one. The addendum "having faithful children..." would certainly necessitate marriage, but some might judge that the caveat "if married" could be understood to apply to both requirements.

RELATED QUESTIONS

"Suppose an elder was married but his wife has died?" Such a man would be free to marry another and that would not transgress the "husband of one wife" command. If he did not remarry and his children were not grown and away from home, he would find it difficult to properly care for his family and continue to serve as before. "What about a marriage in which God has granted

no children? Could the husband be an elder?" With the cooperation of his wife, a man of this type could be a tremendous asset to any company of believers. Many of us have benefited from the service of couples in this situation. May we suggest that "having faithful children" certainly contributes to the desirable assets for an elder, but not having children does not rule out a man from being recognized in this role.

To sum up then: The opinion of this writer is that the Scriptures do not answer our question directly. Our advice would be that any single servant of the Lord would do well to work closely with others who are married. When faced with questions that involve the marriage relationship or family life he might be wise, in most cases, to ask if he could share this with one of the married brethren. 📞

We appreciate the comments and questions we receive. They help us deal with current needs. Please keep them coming to elders@uplook.org

The Sovereign Lord

Perfect power maintained in perfect control.

What unspeakable beauty is seen in the omnipotent Servant's humility

I still remember the first time that I heard someone say that the Lord Jesus Christ is the theme of all the Scriptures. I vividly recall contemplating that statement and wondering if it were really true. For some time I had known that much of the New Testament was about Christ, and I knew that on some level He had been predicted to come for years before His appearance, but it seemed a bit of a stretch to say that all the Word of God was about Him. What about Moses, Joseph, Abraham, and David? They seemed to take up considerable portions of God's Word as well.

Well, since that time it has been a tremendous pleasure to prove myself wrong and to personally see the theme of the Lord Jesus in "all the Scriptures." Isaiah 50:4-9 is no exception to that theme. The glories of our Saviour shine brilliantly from this short portion of His Book.

These verses are from the third of the servant songs of Isaiah. One significant feature of this song is the use of the title "Lord God" (vv. 4, 5, 7, 9). This is the translation of *Jehovah Adonai* which carries the meaning of Sovereign Lord. This name implies that "God is the owner of each member of the human family and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all."¹ The Servant of Jehovah showed this unrestricted obedience and thus displayed, for all of us, the life that our God requires. These verses divide naturally into the following three sections which all point to the Servant's flawless nature:

- v. 4 – The mind of Jehovah's Servant
- vv. 5-6 – The will of Jehovah's Servant
- vv. 7-9 – The faith of Jehovah's Servant

The mind of Jehovah's Servant (v. 4)

This Servant had the tongue of the learned. His mind had been filled with the things of the Father and He perfectly delivered them to this world. He knew *how to speak*. He spoke all the right things at all the right times ("in season"). Professional officers were sent to take the Lord Jesus prisoner, and they returned empty-handed because "never man spake like this Man" (Jn. 7:46). They were so amazed by what they heard that they couldn't arrest Him. However, it is not enough just to know everything. All of us have known people who are "know-it-alls." They tend not to be comforting. And we often find it hard not to speak up when we know something. But notice here that it is highly commendable that the Lord Jesus not only knew what to say, but spoke those words in just the right season and in just the right way so as to benefit those who were weary. There is much to admire and emulate in this one characteristic of our Lord.

Christ not only had the tongue of the learned but the ear of the learned as well. He was awakened morning by morning, which indicates a continual intimacy. He did and said only what the Father told Him (Jn. 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28). His was a life of complete devotion to the Father! We can be so quick to pat ourselves on the back for lives with a good percentage of devotion. But what a standard the Servant of Jehovah sets for us! He must increase and we must decrease to the point where all that can be seen in us is Him. And what an example of spending time alone with the Lord! If we are to copy Christ, then we will allow ourselves to be awakened to hear as we sit quietly at Jehovah's feet. Perhaps having done that, we will speak more of what our Father would have us speak.



THE SOVEREIGN LORD *continued*

How should we speak?

Reference	Subject	Directions
Acts 18:9	Gospel	Do not be afraid, but speak
Eph. 4:25	Character	Each one speak truth
Eph. 5:12	Conversation	A shame to speak of such things
1 Pet. 4:11	Public ministry	Let him speak as the oracles of God
Jas. 4:11	Family of God	Do not speak evil of one another
Jas. 1:19	Wisdom	Quick to hear, slow to speak

The will of Jehovah's Servant (vv. 5-6)

The admirable Christ has a will that was and is perfectly subject to the Father's. The Father is a loving authority, and the Son is an obedient Servant. Notice verse 5, "I was not rebellious." He heard and accepted the will of His heavenly Father and proved His obedience beyond question when He acted out the dialogue of verse 6, "I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." It is an insult to spit in another's presence. It is more of an insult to spit in their direction. It is still more so to spit on them. But the worst is to spit on their face! What unspeakable beauty is seen in the omnipotent Servant's humility when He does not turn away from such treatment but willingly endures to the end to please His Father and accomplish God's will!

No follower of Christ will ever be able to fully understand the depths of woe that the Lord Jesus went through on our behalf. Because of His grace we will never feel what He felt, never experience the wrath of God, never stand and give an account to the holy One for our sin. He suffered for us. The shame, the pain, and the sorrow were all rightfully ours. But He endured them so we would never endure a day of that wrath. Instead, intimacy with a loving and holy God is ours to look forward to. What grateful hearts ought we to have!

*Praise the Saviour, ye who know Him;
Who can tell how much we owe Him?
Gladly let us render to Him
All we are and have.*



The faith of Jehovah's Servant (vv.7-9)

The life of faith that the Servant would lead is repeatedly stressed in this last section.

- v. 7 – the Lord God will help Me... I know that I will not be ashamed.
- v. 8 – He is near...who will contend with Me? Who is My adversary?
- v. 9 – the Lord God will help Me... who will condemn Me?

Notice Christ's example: "Who, when He was reviled did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23). The word "committed" means "to hand over to someone to keep, use, take care of, or manage." When the Lord Jesus suffered the agony we deserved, He responded in total, faithful dependence on the Father. We are told to do the same. "Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him" (1 Pet. 4:19). Do we, day by day, hand our lives over to our heavenly Father to keep, use, take care of, and manage? We must, if we are to follow the example of the Servant of Jehovah! This is the abundant life which the Lord Jesus came to give. To have eternal life is to know Him (Jn. 17:3). Heaven is to behold Him. True life is that which enjoys intimacy with God. The life of faith is the life of Christ. We are blessed in Him; let us now "walk, just as He walked" (1 Jn. 2:6).

The mind, will, and faith of Jehovah's Servant are both a great challenge and a great beauty to us. If we are to hear the words "well done, thou good and faithful servant," then we must copy Him. There is no doubt that as we follow the example of the Servant of Jehovah, our God will be greatly glorified and greatly pleased! Praise God for His Servant and praise God for the grace that makes us like Him! 🕯️

Endnote

1 Robert Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951), p. 34.

God's indwelling Spirit delights to show us Christ and then provides the grace to change us to be like Him.



Isaiah's Rose Garden

Thoughts for study from Isaiah's famous song

Isaiah, speaking of a future time, declares *"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose"* (Isa. 35:1). A preview of those blossoms can be found in Isaiah's fourth Servant Song, where the Father calls *"Behold, My Servant"* (Isa. 52:13). A rose garden is a place of contrasting elements: beauty and thorns, fragrance and soil, budding life and rotting death, glory and suffering. No place do these elements blend and complement one another more more clearly than this often cultivated Messianic prophecy. Let us stroll along the garden pathway through the many glimpses of Christ that this chapter sets before us.

BEHOLD GOD'S SERVANT

Isa. 42:1-4	the Sovereign Judge	"the Just. . ."
Isa. 52:13-53:12	the Suffering Saviour	"...for the unjust"

HIS PATTERN

Isa. 52:13	the Servant of Glory	Isa. 53:1
Isa. 52:14	the Man of Sorrows	Isa. 53:2-9
Isa. 52:15	the King of Glory	Isa. 53:12

HIS TITLES

Isa. 52:13; 53:12	the Lion	His divine glory	the King	Isa. 19:14
Isa. 52:14; 53:2	the Root	His humanity	the Man	Isa. 19:5
Isa. 53:7	the Lamb	His humiliation	the Lamb	Isa. 1:29

HIS POSITION

Isa. 53:2-3	on the earth	His incarnation
Isa. 53:4-9	on the cross	His substitution
Isa. 53:10-12	on the throne	His exaltation

THREE ATTITUDES

Isa. 53:1-6	our attitude toward Christ
Isa. 53:7-9	Christ's attitude toward us
Isa. 53:10-12	God's attitude toward Christ

THE PIVOT POINT

Isa. 53:1-7a	a sevenfold description of man's view of Christ's sufferings
Isa. 53:7b	"as a lamb to the slaughter" (the center phrase of the chapter)
Isa. 53:7b-12	a sevenfold description of God's view of Christ's suffering

KEY WORDS

the Saviour's nature	servant (13)	sheep (7)	soul (11)
the Saviour's suffering	sorrows (3)	stricken (4)	stripes (5)
the Saviour's mission	sin (10)	slaughter (7)	sprinkle (15)
the Saviour's victory	satisfied (11)	seed (10)	spoil (12)

CONTRASTS

Isa. 52:13, 15	the Servant and the Sovereign
Isa. 53:4-5, 11-12	the sin-bearer and the spoils of blessings
Isa. 53:3, 10, 12	the grief & sorrows and the great & strong
Isa. 53:7, 12	the submissive Son and the powerful Potentate

THE SUFFERINGS INFLICTED ON CHRIST

Isa. 53:1-5	by the actions of men
Isa. 53:5, 10	by the actions of God
Isa. 53:12	by the actions of Christ

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

Isa. 52:13; 53:12	Matthew	Christ the King	the lion
Isa. 52:13; 53:11	Mark	Christ the Servant	the ox
Isa. 52:14; 53:2-3	Luke	Christ the Man	the man
Isa. 53:9-11	John	Christ the Eternal God	the eagle

CHRIST AND THE OFFERINGS/SACRIFICES

Isa. 53:2	wave offerings of first fruits	"grew up before Him as a tender plant"
Isa. 53:4	the scapegoat	"bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows"
Isa. 53:5	the peace offering	"the chastisement of our peace was upon Him"
Isa. 53:7	the Passover	"led as a lamb to the slaughter"
Isa. 53:10	the sin offering	"made His soul an offering for sin"
Isa. 53:10	the burnt offering	"yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him"
Isa. 53:12	the drink offering	"He hath poured out His soul unto death"
Isa. 53:12	the trespass offering	"made intercession for the transgressor"



ISAIAH'S ROSE GARDEN *continued*



THE THREE TENSES OF CALVARY

Isa. 53:4, 5, 6, 10a, 12	in the past
Isa. 53:2b, 3, 7b	in the present
Isa. 53:2, 10b-12	in the future

HIS REJECTION

Isa. 53:2	"there is no beauty"	His appearance as man
Isa. 53:3	"He is despised and rejected"	His rejection by man
Isa. 53:5	"with His stripes we are healed"	His salvation for man
Isa. 53:7	"He is brought as a lamb"	His substitution in man's place

THE THREE QUESTIONS OF ISAIAH 53

Isa. 53:1	"Who hath believed our report?"	Rom. 10:16
Isa. 53:1	"To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"	Jn. 12:38
Isa. 53:8	"Who shall declare His generation?"	Acts 8:33

THE SOURCE OF CHRIST'S SORROWS

Isa. 53:3	His rejection by men
Isa. 53:4	His position for men
Isa. 53:10	His mission before God



What a sweet aroma of Christ we experience as we stroll through the rose garden of Isaiah 53. The riches of Christ's character, work, and redemption abound throughout the five three-verse stanzas of Isaiah's fourth Servant Song. We are faced with key principles that prophetically set the stage for His comings, yet He is also presented as a stumbling block to His own people. We must behold the submissive Servant before we see the arrival of the Sovereign Lord. He must be the Man of Sorrows before He returns as the King of Glory. 🕊

THE STAGES OF THE LAMB

Isa. 53:2	"new born suckling lamb" (alt. trans. for "tender plant")
Isa. 53:7	"as a lamb" (less than a year old)
Isa. 53:7	"as a sheep" (an adult female ewe)

WORD PICTURES OF THE LAMB OF GOD

Isa. 53:2	a baby lamb	entering into humanity
Isa. 53:5	a sacrificial lamb	substituting for the sinner
Isa. 53:6	a redeeming lamb	gathering and healing stray sheep
Isa. 53:7a	a silent servant lamb	opening not His mouth
Isa. 53:7b	a humbled suffering lamb	led as a lamb to the slaughter

A SUMMARY OF MESSIAH'S LIFE

Isa. 53:1	God reveals Himself through His Son
Isa. 53:2	Messiah's incarnation
Isa. 53:2	Messiah's early development to manhood
Isa. 53:3	Messiah's rejection by his own
Isa. 53:4	Messiah's suffering under humanity
Isa. 53:8a	Messiah's betrayal and arrest
Isa. 53:5-7	Messiah's suffering by Roman soldiers
Isa. 53:8, 10, 12	Messiah's death on the cross
Isa. 53:9	Messiah's burial in a rich man's tomb
Isa. 53:10b	Messiah's resurrection from the dead
Isa. 52:15; 53:12	Messiah's exaltation as the victor

Holy Ground: 53 Meditations on Isaiah 53

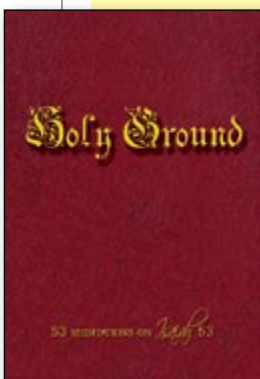
Various Authors, Compiled by Brian Gunning

Around the world millions of Christian believers meet on the first day of the week in obedience to their Lord's command, "...*this do in remembrance of Me*" (Lk. 22:19). This is the most precious time of all Christian gatherings. With this meeting in mind, this book has been prepared. It is a collection of meditations on the beloved Isaiah 53. As the reader considers the meditations, both heart and mind are drawn to the Saviour. This will show us how Scripture describes, and we are to think about, the Servant.

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A Ministry Fit for a King

A daughter's testimonial to her father's faithful life and work

What do a trumpet, hand puppets, and a U-Haul-type trailer have to do with evangelism? Well, for 40 years—involving children in more than ten states—that's how my dad and mom pioneered a children's ministry that touched thousands of lives.

Many knew Bill King as “Mr. Bill,” “Uncle Bill,” “Mr. King” or even “the man with the puppets,” but to me he was just Dad. It all started in the early 1960s when my dad was living in Durham, NC. He worked odd jobs to pay the rent, but his heart's desire was winning others to Christ. He had played the trumpet in school and in the Air Force (including being given the honor of playing taps on the anniversary of D-Day at Normandy twice), but had now found a way to connect that talent with sharing the Good News with children. He had a puppet named Jack who, he claimed, actually played the trumpet while he blew in the air. If you ever attended camp or Bible School with my dad, you'll remember his famous line while getting Jack out of his case: “You'll have to excuse me while I give him a hand.” I think the adults always enjoyed that more than the kids.

In this way he caught the attention of children. From there, he tried different methods until he found what worked for him. He and Mom believed that if they could reach the hearts of children, win them to Christ and then plug them into a good local assembly, those children would have a chance to grow up to be fruitful Christians as adults.

My parents packed up the family at the beginning of every June and traveled across the country until the end of August, conducting Vacation Bible Schools and speaking and working at Christian camps. They always went wherever they were asked, from Nebraska to Texas, from



Bill King

Minnesota and Georgia and many places in between.

Dad's “formula” was simple: teach a Bible character or theme in the first part, have a craft that took five sessions to complete, and then close out with a missionary story that left just enough hanging to bring the children back the next day to see what would happen. Oh, and singing that energized and excited the kids (he loved the fast ones)!

One thing that always impressed me about the end of Bible school each day was that Dad would never finish without a clear presentation of the gospel. After all, that was the point. He

would tell the children that if they wanted to know Christ as Savior, to stay in their seats when everyone left and someone would talk with them. There was no pressure applied. When children did stay behind, he would start out by asking them why they had stayed. He was always careful not to lead a child into a false profession of faith; he made sure they understood what they were doing.

I also remember that, every time a child accepted Christ, Dad would remind us that all who had worked together in that effort were a part of it. He never took credit for what the Lord was doing, and always recognized the part my mom and the rest of us played in making Bible school run smoothly.

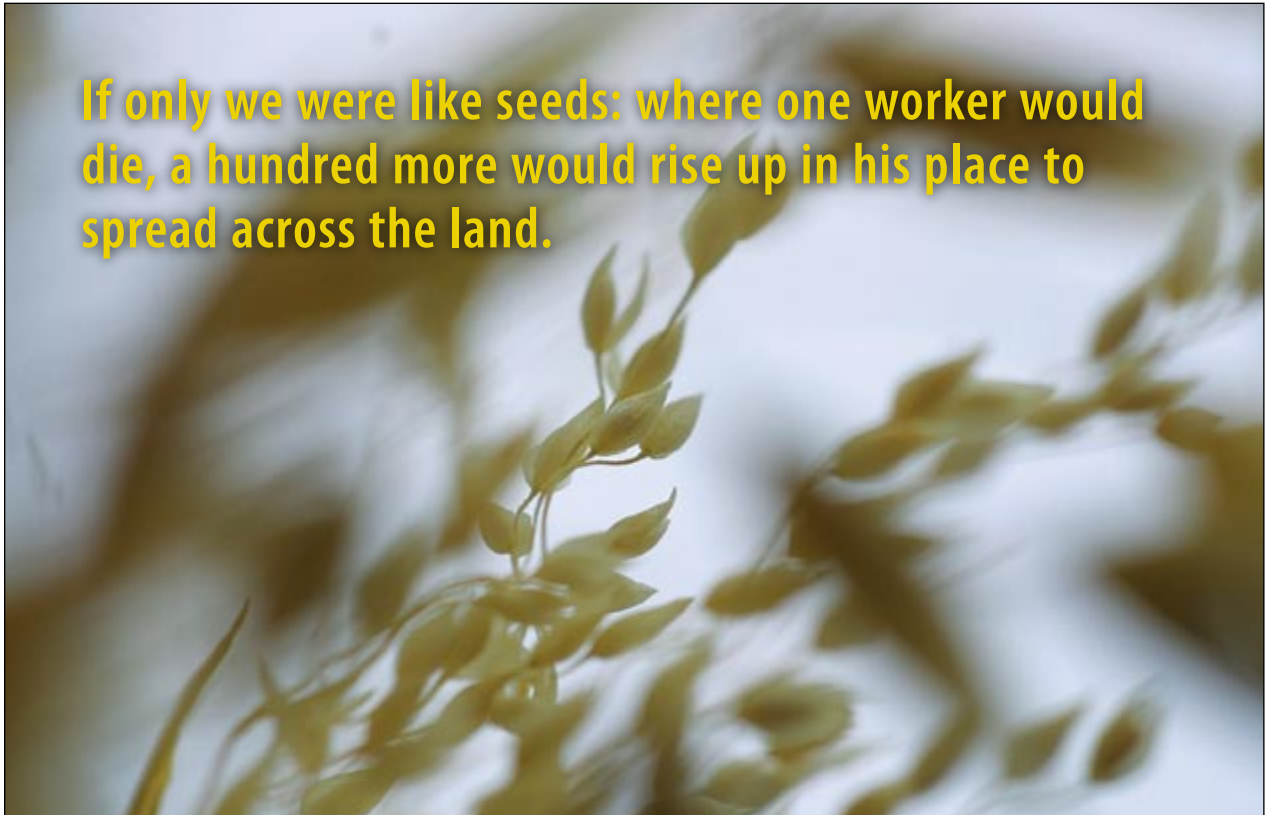
My sisters and I grew up being a part of a significant ministry in the Southeastern States and never really knew it. It was just what our family did. I remember counseling at Mountain Top Youth Camp during Teen Camp one summer and being overwhelmed by the number of teens who stood up at the campfire and told how they had come to Christ during

A MINISTRY FIT FOR A KING *continued*

a Bible School or week of camp where my father had been speaking. Just recently, a friend of mine at our local assembly shared how my dad had pointed her to the Lord.

I have thought about the impact of my parent's ministry in recent days and pondered

Testament principles. He, along with four other families, pioneered and established the work in Wilmington. He was always looking for new places where a New Testament work could be established, fulfilling the instruction of 2 Timothy 4:2, "*Preach the word, in season and out of season.*"




If only we were like seeds: where one worker would die, a hundred more would rise up in his place to spread across the land.

over what made it so strategic for so many years. Was it because my parents were such extraordinary people? Were they more gifted than others? Or was it that they simply yielded their lives and gifts and talents to the Lord for His use and were willing simply to go where He led and to do what He wanted?

I have only talked about the ministry Dad had with children, but as many know, he never missed an opportunity to talk about the Lord with anyone. There are many adults who will be in Heaven as well because Dad was obedient to share the gospel. He was an encourager of young men and firm in his appreciation for New

On September 27, 2006, at age 69, Bill King lost his battle with pulmonary fibrosis. But what did he win (Php. 3:8)? He had lived his whole life for that moment when he would see his Savior's face and hear the words, "*Well done, good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord*" (Mt. 25:23).

I can't help but wonder who will continue this work? Who will carry on this work of reaching others for Christ, of discipling young, and building up the local assembly? We might not be called to such a far-reaching ministry, but we are all called to reach others for Christ. Will you take up the challenge? 

Interrupted by Grace

With mercy and with judgment

We know perfectly well why the Lord stopped reading where He did, for, thanks to the New Testament, we see something that Isaiah didn't see.

When we are new to the Bible, we are commonly struck by the differences between the Old and New Testaments. This is an understandable phenomenon given, among other things, the major differences between Israel and the church. But as we grow in our knowledge of the Word, what we find most striking is the remarkable unity of the Scriptures. Indeed, this is one of the many evidences of their divine origin: written over 1600 years by men ranging from fishermen to kings—men of different cultures, nations, and languages—we discover that its teachings remain consistent regarding every question of life and death, God and man, sin and salvation, heaven and hell. As we consider the cause of this unity, we find

it to be twofold: a common Author and a common Theme. Just as there are a variety of human authors, and yet behind them all there is the one true Author; so, too, the Bible covers a variety of topics, all held together by the Scriptures' one grand theme. "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me" (Jn. 5:39).

The teachings of the two testaments are unified in Christ. The Old Testament is filled with pictures and prophesies of Him. The New Testament answers to it by presenting the Lord Jesus as the substance (Col. 2:17) and fulfillment (e.g. Mt. 1:22; Acts 3:18). The Old Testament was designed to prepare men for the coming Messiah; the New Testament reveals Him as Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:36). The two go hand-in-hand, so that our knowledge and appreciation of Christ would be severely impoverished if we were to be without either one.

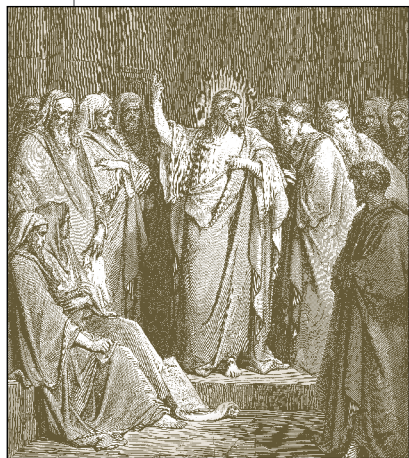
So it is, when we consider the book of Isaiah, that we discover that its glorious portraits and prophecies of Christ are taken up in the New Testament. Consider, for a moment, Isaiah 61:1-7. There is no doubt that this is a prophecy and description of the coming Messiah ("anointed", v. 1). But at the inception of His public ministry, our Lord entered the synagogue at Nazareth, opened the book of Isaiah, and read this passage:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Lk. 3:18f)

Having done so, He sat down, and, with all eyes fixed on Him, pronounced, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Lk. 4:16-21).

Notice how the two Testaments complement one another. Were we only to have the Isaiah passage, we would know that a Messiah was coming, but we would have no idea who He was. But if we just had the passage in Luke, we would know only half the story. That day in Nazareth, the Lord Jesus only quoted part of the Isaiah passage. The words He read perfectly described His incarnation and ministry: preaching the gospel, setting captives free, giving sight to the blind. Yet He stopped mid-sentence, and it is only because of Isaiah that we know this. For when we read the Isaiah passage, we discover that not only had He come to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, but also the day of vengeance of our God.

As was so often the case, from his vantage point before the coming of Christ, the Old Testament prophet saw the two advents of



Christ in the Synagogue, Gustave Doré

Christ superimposed, one upon the other. This led to questions and difficulties: How can Messiah both suffer and reign? Such questions don't baffle us. We know perfectly well why the Lord stopped reading where He did, for, thanks to the New Testament, we see something that Isaiah didn't see. We understand that the Lord Jesus would come to this world twice. At His first coming, He came in mercy and grace to bring salvation to men. But the day is coming when He will come a second time. And this will be a time of judgment.

Which brings us to Isaiah's final portrait of Christ, found in chapter 63. This time it is His second coming in view. "*For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart*" (v. 4). Here again we see the unity of the Scriptures. As we read Isaiah 63:1-6 we can't help but notice its similarity to Revelation 19:11-16. And here again we see the value of letting Scripture interpret Scripture. Occasionally, someone will speak of Christ's robe dipped in blood in Revelation 19, and relate that to the blood of Calvary. But when we read Isaiah 63, it is abundantly clear that the blood on His robe isn't His own, but that of His enemies:


"Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment" (Isa. 63:2-3).

His first coming was marked by the shedding of His blood in mercy. His second coming will be marked by the shedding of the blood of His enemies in judgment.

Yet it is worth noting that our Lord did once wear a robe soaked in His own blood. Prior to His crucifixion, they scourged Him and then put a scarlet robe on Him while they beat and mocked Him (Mt. 27:28-31). How significant that many of the things His enemies did to Him that day in mockery were foretastes of what will one day happen in reality. The rod, the robe, the crown, proclaiming Him king and kneeling before Him—all

of these were unwitting foreshadows of the events at His return. They won't be laughing then.

What a sight that will be! This One who is glorious in His apparel and who marches in the greatness of His own strength (Isa. 63:1)—who else could this be but, "*The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle*" (Ps. 24:8)?

We sometimes sing, "With mercy and with judgment, my web of time He wove." But we could equally sing, "With mercy and with judgment, *the* web of time He wove." One appearance in mercy; one in judgment. Around these two appearances, the Lord has shaped all of history. Both elements are essential. But we see where His heart is, though, don't we? A *year* of mercy versus a *day* of judgment. 

The rod, the robe, the crown, proclaiming Him king and kneeling before Him—all of these were unwitting foreshadows of the events at His return.

These examples from Isaiah provide us with several important lessons regarding the Word of God.

- Possessing the Bible, the simplest saint today can understand truths that the holiest prophet of the Old Testament struggled to understand (1 Pet. 1:10f). What grace! And how thankful we ought to be to hold the completed Scriptures in our hands.
- Scripture interprets Scripture. The safest method of Bible interpretation is to consult all of the passages on a topic and allow them to shape our understanding.
- When interpreting prophecy, we need to take the Word of God at face value. When we see that all of the prophecies concerning our Lord's first coming were fulfilled literally, how can we suggest that the prophecies concerning His second coming (many of which are found in the same sentences) are anything less than literal? There were those (and there still are today!) who wrongly attempted to "spiritualize" the prophecies of His first advent. Those who attempt to spiritualize the prophecies concerning His second advent are guilty of the same error.
- Notice the precision of the Scriptures. They do not merely contain vague, general teachings. The course of history hangs on the very word at which a quote ends.
- The Scriptures are perfectly planned. The Lord moved Isaiah to record his prophecies so that when Jesus came, He would be irrefutably shown to be the Messiah.
- Christ is the unifying theme of the Old and New Testaments.

Ten Proofs of Christ's Deity in Isaiah

To the objective reader, there can be no doubt that Messiah is God Almighty.

Who else could paint the detailed portrait of someone centuries before His appearance?

The book of Isaiah overflows with proof of the deity of Christ. Let us consider ten such evidences.

1. The first and the last

Three times over (Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; and 48:12) the Lord (Yahweh/Jehovah) declared Himself to be *"the first and the last."* These are awesome and provoking words used by God to describe His own sovereign existence as ruler of time and space. He places His hands on either end of history. He surrounds all of time. He controls all events. He is the first cause; the prime mover. From Him, through Him, and to Him are all things. Yet when we turn to the book of the Revelation, our Lord Jesus is referred to as *"the first and the last"*

three times as well (Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:12-13). As Jesus claimed the "I AM" title of God as His own, so here He mixes it again with Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet). *"I AM the first and last, I AM the beginning and the end."* (Follow this with Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:10-12; Jn. 1:3.)

2. The glory Isaiah saw

Isaiah 6:1-5 brings before us a vivid eyewitness account.

Scripture clearly affirms that no man has seen, or can see, God in His unveiled glory and live. Yet, in exciting and condescending grace, God repeatedly revealed Himself in the second person of the Trinity throughout history: as the Angel of the Lord, to Moses on Sinai, to Jacob's and to Samson's parents, and ultimately in incarnation. Here Isaiah saw Him in a perceivable glory which men down

through time have barely been able to handle (Ezk. 1:28; Dan. 10:7-9; Rev. 1:17). The sight is terrifying and beautiful. Isaiah called Him the King, the Lord of Hosts. But John applies the very words of God, those concerning the rejection of Isaiah's ministry, to Christ. What was true of God was true of Christ. John then says, *"Isaiah saw His glory, and spake of Him"* (Jn. 12:41). Isaiah saw Christ, spoke of Him, and prophesied of Israel's blindness towards Him.

3. The titled Son

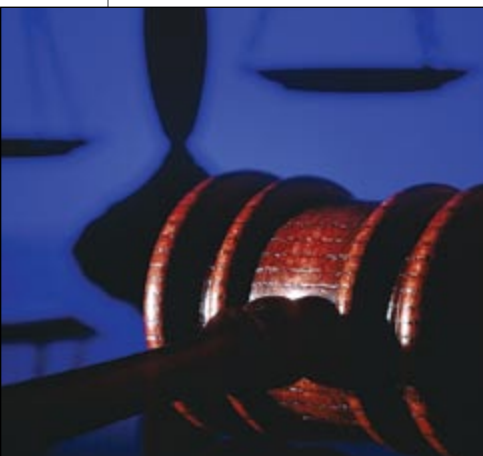
In Isaiah 9:6-7, the Son of God, the One who would sit on David's throne, is announced and described with titles. He is "the mighty God" (v. 6). In the next chapter, that same name is given to the Jehovah (10:21). Therefore, the Son of God is the mighty God. Compare the words "Wonderful counselor" (possibly a single title) to Judges 13:18.

4. The only Saviour of humanity

Repeatedly, the Lord God unequivocally stated that He alone is Saviour (Isa. 43:3, 10f; 45:21). Yet the New Testament constantly affirms that Christ is the only Saviour (2 Pet. 1:1; Titus 2:13; Lk 2:11; Mt. 1:21).

5. Ye shall be My witnesses

In Isaiah 43:10-11, Jehovah powerfully declared Himself as the only Saviour and commissioned Israel to be His witnesses to that fact. After the Lord had forced Israel into and out of captivity by His own hand, Israel would be qualified to witness to the fact that the God alone saves. When we turn to Acts 1:8, we see that Christ sent out His disciples with the same words God used in Isaiah, *"Ye shall be My witnesses."* What did the disciples witness to? *"There is salvation in no other [except*



TEN PROOFS OF CHRIST'S DEITY IN ISAIAH *continued*

A scroll of the
book of Isaiah
displayed in the
Shrine of the Book
in Jerusalem



in Jesus Christ] *for there is no other name...by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). Thus, two phrases attesting to the Lord as humanity's only Saviour and His sending out witnesses to this fact, are mirrored in connection with Jesus Christ: He alone is the Saviour of humanity, and He has appointed witnesses to proclaim this fact.

6. One who shares glory with God

In Isaiah 42:8, we read that the Lord does not share or give His glory to another. *"I am the LORD, that is My name, and My glory I will not give to another."* It is an absolute. But turning over to John 17:1-5, we listen in as Christ, kneeling in the garden, asked His Father to glorify Him with Himself! And He spoke of sharing this glory with the Father before the world was created. In 1 Corinthians 2:8, the Lord Jesus Christ is called "the Lord of Glory." (How could one be the Lord of glory, or the Lord of the heavenly glories, without being God?) Furthermore, in Philippians 2:9-11, we discover the beautiful mystery that God the Father is glorified when men worship and bow the knee to Christ as Lord. The Father who shares His glory with no one has given the Son a name above every name!

7. A stumbling block

In Isaiah 8:14, we hear Isaiah being warned by God to not succumb to the anxiety attack Judah experienced over surrounding conspiracies by powers like Ephraim and Syria. Isaiah was not to go about wringing his hands in concern. Instead, he was to set apart God in his heart as his source of security. *"...let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread."* God was to be a sanctuary for Isaiah. Reading on, we come to the famous verse that the Lord of hosts would be *"a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"* to those who rejected His salvation. *"Many among them shall stumble...fall and be broken."* When we turn to the New Testament, Peter quotes this very passage along with another about a "rejected stone" (Ps. 118:22) and applies them to Christ (1 Pet. 2:7f). In Isaiah, the Lord as Saviour is the stumbling stone and rock of offense. In the New Testament it is Jesus Christ. He is the stumbling stone because He is God the Saviour.

8. The God who would visit His people


In Isaiah 40, the Lord gave a beautiful promise of com-

fort to His people that their punishment for sin would come to an end. Soon she will see the glory of the Lord approach. God will walk on a prepared highway and visit his people (40:3)! He will comfort them (40:1). (Note that *"Behold your God"* is applied to Jesus by John.) Get up to the towers and spread the news! This sounds too good to be true. How could Israel be sure? Isaiah 40:8b answers, *"...the Word of our God stands forever."* When we turn to Matthew 24, we hear our Lord also describing His coming to visit His people and take account of them. How could the disciples be sure of this? Just as the Lord said in Isaiah that His words would not pass away, so Jesus says, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."* The deity and coming of Christ is made certain by the fact that, like the Lord in Isaiah, He is the author of the eternal words of God.

9. He bears the name of the virgin's son

The very naming of Jesus Christ is a fulfillment of Isaiah. Matthew 1:21-23 states that by giving Jesus His name, Joseph was fulfilling the prophecy that the son of the virgin would be called Immanuel. Matthew translates this name as meaning, *"God with us."* How much clearer could Scripture be? Jesus is actually named, "God with us!" If we return to Isaiah 7 and read about the historical events which gave rise to the prophecy of the virgin birth, we discover that God desired to convince king Ahaz that He would be with him and protect him. Sadly, rather than receive salvation by faith in God's revealed Word (2 Samuel 7 promised God would preserve David's line on the throne), Ahaz attempted to create his own salvation by works. He took the gold from the house of the Lord and tried to buy his salvation from Assyria (2 Ki. 16:8-9). In the long run, this proved to be a brush with death for Judah (Isa. 7:17-25). If man desires God to save Him from destruction, He must let God save him; he must have Immanuel.

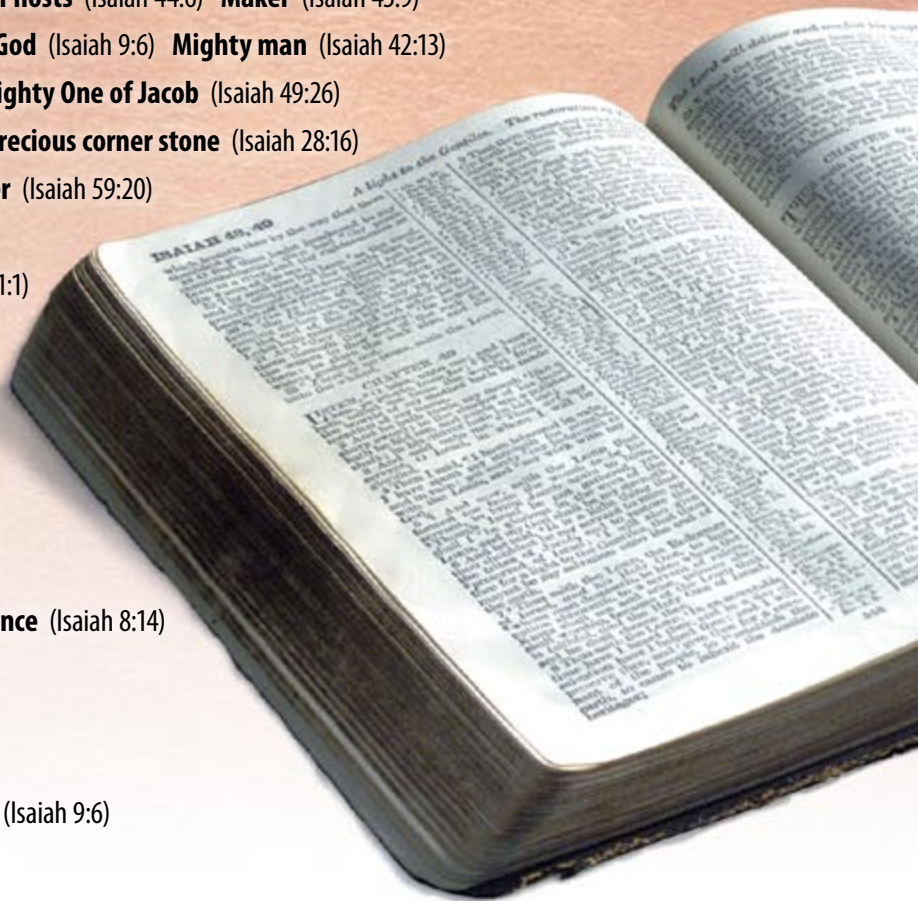
10. Now it is your turn!

Study Isaiah 45:23 carefully. Start by reading verses 20-22 for context. Next read verse 23 and compare it with the following two passages: Philippians 2:10f and Romans 14:11. What two truths can you discover about Jesus Christ that were first spoken by God in Isaiah? Are these proofs of deity? If so, how? 

Names & Titles of our *Lord Jesus Christ* in *Isaiah*

Angel of His presence (Isaiah 63:9) **Arm of the Lord** (Isaiah 51:9) **Branch** (Isaiah 11:1)
Child born and the Son given (Isaiah 9:6) **Commander** (Isaiah 55:4) **Counselor** (Isaiah 9:6)
Covenant of the people (Isaiah 42:6) **Creator of Israel** (Isaiah 43:15) **Creator of the ends of the earth** (Isaiah 40:28)
Elect of God (Isaiah 42:1) **Ensign of the people** (Isaiah 11:10) **Everlasting Father** (Isaiah 9:6)
First and the last (Isaiah 44:6) **Glorious Lord** (Isaiah 33:21) **Glory of the Lord** (Isaiah 40:5) **God** (Isaiah 40:9)
God of David (Isaiah 38:5) **God of Israel** (Isaiah 45:15) **God of Jacob** (Isaiah 2:3)
God of the whole earth (Isaiah 54:5) **God of truth** (Isaiah 65:16) **God of your salvation** (Isaiah 17:10)
Holy One (Isaiah 40:25) **Holy One of Israel** (Isaiah 41:14) **Holy One of Jacob** (Isaiah 29:23)
Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14) **Judge** (Isaiah 33:22) **King** (Isaiah 33:22) **King of Israel** (Isaiah 44:6)
King of Jacob (Isaiah 41:21) **Lamb to the slaughter; sheep before her shearers** (Isaiah 53:7)
Lawgiver (Isaiah 33:22) **Leader** (Isaiah 55:4) **Light of the Gentiles** (Isaiah 42:6) **Lord** (Isaiah 6:1)
Lord God of hosts (Isaiah 3:15) **Lord of hosts** (Isaiah 44:6) **Maker** (Isaiah 45:9)
Man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3) **Mighty God** (Isaiah 9:6) **Mighty man** (Isaiah 42:13)
Mighty One of Israel (Isaiah 30:29) **Mighty One of Jacob** (Isaiah 49:26)
My righteous Servant (Isaiah 53:11) **Precious corner stone** (Isaiah 28:16)
Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) **Redeemer** (Isaiah 59:20)
Redeemer of Israel (Isaiah 49:7)
Rod out of the stem of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1)
Root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:10)
Root out of dry ground (Isaiah 53:2)
Saviour (Isaiah 45:15)
Servant of rulers (Isaiah 49:7)
Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 42:1)
Shepherd (Isaiah 40:11)
Stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (Isaiah 8:14)
Sure foundation (Isaiah 28:16)
Tender plant (Isaiah 53:2)
The husband of Israel (Isaiah 54:5)
Tried stone (Isaiah 28:16) **Wonderful** (Isaiah 9:6)
Your King (Isaiah 43:15)

(This is not an exhaustive list.)



Set for the Defense of the Gospel

Some “brights” are calling for the eradication of all religion.

Due to the almost complete retreat of evangelists from the public square, the gospel has become a strange sounding message to many. The term “evangelical” in most quarters now means “We believe the gospel,” not “We preach the gospel.” The certain sound of the trumpet with its convicting and converting power is seldom heard in the marketplace. This—among other reasons, like worldliness in the churches—has emboldened the enemies of God.

Four books—diatribes, really—have risen to the top of the Best Seller list recently. They are *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* by Daniel Dennett, and two books by Sam Harris: *The End of Faith* and *Letter to a Christian Nation*. They have become something akin to the four “Gospels” of atheism. Dennett, by the way, objects to being called an atheist, and suggests the term “brights” instead. Hardly appropriate for “the natural man” who “receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14).

Dawkins, England’s most pugnacious atheist, is “Charles Simonyi professor of the public understanding of science” at Oxford University, a sort-of Director of Missions for Darwinian evolution. Daniel Dennett is Austin B. Fletcher Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University. Sam Harris is a philosophy grad (Stanford) and is earning a doctorate in neuroscience, no doubt hoping he can prove that belief, love, and morality are merely neurological functions.

This page obviously doesn’t allow for any serious critique of the arguments in these books. Most of them have been posed and answered long ago. But there are a few new twists. One repeated theme is a call for the end of religious tolerance. The authors, if possible, despise liberals who compromise the Christian message even more than they do those who take the Bible literally. They object to the way Western society has allowed religious positions to go unchallenged in the name of tolerance. It is not enough to tolerate Christianity because, they say, Christianity is not merely a benign fairy tale. Indeed, all forms of religion are, according to these authors, bringing civilization to the brink of extinction. “We need a world government,” says Sam Harris, and “[t]he diversity of our religious beliefs constitutes a primary obstacle here” (*The End of Faith*, p. 151).

Here are snippets from some reviewers who would agree generally with the basic theses of these books. They are not Christian by any means. Their objections have to do with the treatment of the subjects addressed. For example, Terry Eagleton, English Literature professor at Manchester University, reviewing Dawkin’s book, writes:

Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the Book of British Birds, and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology. Card-carrying rationalists like Dawkins, who is the nearest thing to a professional atheist we have had since Bertrand Russell, are in one sense the least well-equipped to understand what they castigate, since they don’t believe there is anything there to be understood, or at least anything worth understanding. This is why they invariably come up with vulgar caricatures of religious faith that would make a first-year theology student wince. The more they detest religion, the more ill-informed their criticisms of it tend to be.

The last year has seen a significant sea change in American public discourse regarding God and the Christian message.

If you are not already aware of this new wind blowing across our bow, everyone serious about the Great Commission would do well to batten down for the gale-force storm that is brewing.

It is no small comfort that the Captain is onboard with us.



In a *New York Times* review (Feb 19/06), Leon Wieseltier, literary editor of the *New Republic*, assesses Dennett's attempt to demolish the Christian worldview:

Scientism, the view that science can explain all human conditions and expressions, mental as well as physical, is...one of the dominant superstitions of our day.... For a sorry instance of present-day scientism, it would be hard to improve on Daniel C. Dennett's book. *Breaking the Spell* is a work of considerable historical interest because it is a merry anthology of contemporary superstitions.

In an October 2006 book review titled "Dawkins the dogmatist" in the British *Prospect* magazine (prospect-magazine.co.uk) Andrew Brown, author of "The Darwin Wars," begins by quoting Dawkins as saying:

"The majority of us don't cause needless suffering; we believe in free speech and protect it even if we disagree with what is being said." ...Does he believe in it himself? He quotes later in the book approvingly and at length a speech by his friend Nicholas Humphrey which argued that, "We should no more allow parents to teach their children to believe, for example, in the literal truth of the Bible or that planets rule their lives, than we should allow parents to knock their children's teeth out." But of course, it's not interfering with free speech when atheists do it.

Dawkins not only believes that Christian parents should not be allowed to teach their children about God and the Bible, he also thinks scientists (and philosophers who agree with them) are the only ones who have any right to speak. In addition, scientists who are Christians have also disqualified themselves. Because they believe in the "God delusion," they are sufficiently biased that anything they suggest from their scientific endeavor cannot be taken seriously. In this way, only those who agree with his presuppositions ought to speak. We might call this the Dawkins delusion.

But if there is no Purposer, how can life have any purpose? Dawkins addresses the issue in this fashion:

It is a tedious cliché...that science concerns itself with *how* questions, but only theology is equipped to answer *why* questions. What on Earth is a *why* question? (p. 56).

He then proves that some *why* questions are silly (Why are unicorns hollow?) and then leaves it to us to conclude that he has somehow proven that all *why*

questions are equally silly. But eventually he addresses the atheist's lack of purpose in life by telling a story about himself and fellow scientist James Watson:

I conscientiously put it to him that...some people see no conflict between science and religion, because they claim science is about how things work and religion is about what it is all for. Watson retorted: 'Well I don't think we're *for* anything. We're just products of evolution. You can say, "Gee, your life must be pretty bleak if you don't think there's a purpose." But I'm anticipating having a good lunch.' We did have a good lunch, too (p. 100).

Such is the result of evolutionary thought, placing brilliant scientists on the level of lost sheep looking for a few tufts of grass to hold death at bay a little longer.

Sam Harris, in the absence of any deity, lays claim to the right to define morality on his own terms. In this he lays a flawed premise as the foundation for his argument. He states: "Questions of morality are questions about happiness and suffering." From this, in caustic terms, he sets about to prove that God, Christians, and their Bible do not maximize happiness and minimize suffering. Therefore, by his definition, the God who—in his mind—does not exist anyway has disqualified Himself from being the arbiter of right and wrong.

At the heart of Christianity is the Cross, the ultimate Right Thing which was also the most excruciating thing that ever happened. Indeed suffering, although a by-product of sin, is one of God's most effective tools in accomplishing the redemption of lost souls.

These arguments only confirm that "*men by their wisdom knew not God.*" Though God calls us to reason with Him (Isa. 1:18), it is to our ultimate peril, in matters where we are uncertain, if we assume that we are right and God is wrong.

The books, however, can be somewhat helpful to evangelists because they show the present state of atheistic philosophy. We must be prepared to deal with such arguments "*with meekness and fear*" as we present "*a reason of the hope*" we have (1 Pet. 3:15). And it should humble us to see how hard such atheists work at maintaining and propagating their hopeless faith. One wonders whether we are as willing to give ourselves to the rigorous task of presenting the case for the true Christian gospel to a generation made skeptical of Evangelicalism by its blatant worldliness and half-hearted devotion. 🚫

HOW MANY MESSIAHS?

WHEN JESUS OF NAZARETH presented Himself to Israel His forerunner, John, bare witness to Him: “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). And with this end in view, as the sacrificial sin-offering, “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures...He was buried, and... He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3f). The central theme of the prophets is “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet. 1:11). How the same person could suffer and reign was an enigma. There must be two Messiahs, it was suggested, one to suffer, Ben Joseph of Ephraim, the other to reign, Ben David of Bethlehem. But is not this of the nature of an expedient?

What if the Messiah to be “cut off,” according to Daniel 9:26, should prove to be the Holy One of whom David sings in Psalm 16: “Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption?” (v. 10).

“David...is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day, therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on His throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:29-31).

The only safe conclusion is that the suffering and glorified Messiahs are one and the same Person. The God of resurrection must be reckoned with.

—WILLIAM HOSTE

