

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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The Promised Child-King

by Dan Trygg

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will accomplish this.” Isaiah 9:6-7

Last time we looked at some of the prophetic passages in the Psalms that talk about the Kingdom of God. I mentioned that the word “kingdom” occurs over 150 times in the OT, but there are only 12 passages that are really about the Kingdom of God. We looked at the three passages in the Psalms that refer to the Kingdom of God, now we turn to the prophetic books. **The next reference to the Kingdom of God occurs in the book of Isaiah.**

In the context, Ahaz was the king of Judah (the southern kingdom, ruled by the line of Davidic kings). He was 20 years old, and had just recently become the sole king, having been a co-regent with his father, Jotham for the final four years of his reign. Ahaz was a vassal of the Assyrian ruler, Tiglath-Pileser III, whose empire dominated the Middle-East, from Babylon to Egypt. However, because the king of Babylon tried to break away from Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser III led a military campaign there to put down that rebellion. Seeing an opportunity, the **two kings to the north of Judah, ...Rezin, the king of Aram (Syria), and Pekah the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel** (the remnant of the ten tribes of Jacob who had broken away from following the Davidic kings some 200 years before), **conspired to break away from the Assyrians**, as well. They tried to recruit the surrounding nations to join them in this effort. Because Ahaz refused, **these two kings attacked Jerusalem.** They laid siege to the city, but were not able to capture the city.

Yahweh sent Isaiah the prophet to meet king Ahaz, and to tell him not to be afraid or fainthearted about these two kings, because they would not succeed in their attempt to take Jerusalem. Yahweh plainly said, “It will not stand, or shall it come to pass.” He also challenged Ahaz, **“If you will not believe, you will not be able to stand or be established”** (7:9). God instructed Ahaz to ask for a sign from Him, as confirmation that His Word would come to pass (Isa. 7:11). When Ahaz refused, **God gave him a sign.** The message Isaiah spoke from God was recorded, and became a key sign in a *future fulfillment*, ...but for Ahaz it was simply that **“a young woman would bear a child, a son, and she will call his name, Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken”** (Isa 7:14-16). Basically, God was telling Ahaz to trust Him, and would protect Judah.

The prophecy went on to describe how **God was going to bring discipline and judgment upon the people of Syria, Israel and Judah. The Assyrians would come and “shave” the land of Judah**, like one shaved the hair off one’s head, legs and removed the beard (7:20). **The Assyrians would invade the land like a river overflows its banks, and would sweep through the lands of Syria and Israel, and even Judah, and “reach even to the neck”** (8:7,8). Their presence in the land would mean that the crops could not be planted or harvested, and the vineyards would be untended until briars and thorns filled the land. **People would survive on curds and honey from the animals they manage to keep alive, and could maintain.** Even though their crops will be untended, **God would cause the milk and honey to be abundant enough so that “everyone that is left within the land will eat curds and honey”** (7:22).

Then Yahweh told Isaiah to get a large tablet, and call on two reliable men as witnesses, Urijah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, and then write down the words, “Swift is the plunder; speedy is the prey”. God told him that, in spite of the plans and schemes, and even the victories against Israel and Judah, God Himself remained their hope. **The Syrian and Israelite coalition would not conquer Judah, nor would the Assyrians be able to totally destroy the houses of Jacob. God Himself is with them, and will preserve them.** They will escape like prey that quickly avoids capture.

Isaiah’s own wife bore the prophesied son, in this original context. The prophecy was that “...before the boy knows how to cry out 'My father ' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus (Syria) and the spoil of Samaria (Israel) will be carried away before the king of Assyria” (Isa. 8:4).

God was encouraging Ahaz to trust Him, and promised to deliver him and his people from these two rulers to the north, if he would just trust in Him. **Instead, however, Ahaz sent messengers to the Assyrians, along with a large financial gift, and asked for them to help him** ward off these two kings who had come out against them (2 Kg. 16:1-9). The Assyrians were only too happy to do that, but *they did not stop there, ...they also attacked Ahaz and the kingdom of Judah!* **Unwittingly, Ahaz had brought this disaster upon his own land! What Isaiah had prophesied**

came true, because the Assyrians killed these two kings, Rezin and Pekah within a year of Isaiah's prophesy. The land, however, was unplanted because the Assyrians overran the countryside.

God warned Isaiah not to act or think like his fellow Israelites. If they would honor Him as holy, He would be their sanctuary, but instead, because they rejected Him and His counsel, He will be a stone that both houses of Israel would stumble over, and a snare and a trap for those who reject Him. **Instead of following the law and the testimony of God, the people of Israel had come to seek mediums and spiritists. They were spiritually in darkness, and God gave them over to the consequences of their choices: They would be hard-pressed, hungry, distressed, anguished and in gloom, scattered in the darkness** (8:11-22). In a few short years, the northern kingdom would be removed, taken away by the Assyrians.

Nevertheless, God was not done with them. Those who had lived in darkness would see a great light. **This very northern kingdom that had been demolished and left in darkness will see the light.** In fact, God will make it glorious by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles (9:1). **God would once again multiply the nation. He will increase their gladness. He will break off the yoke of their oppressors.** All the old, bloody garments of the past will be fuel for the fire. **How?** – “**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**”⁷ **There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will accomplish this**” (Isa. 9:6-7).

As is often the case, God introduces hope into a very hopeless time. He speaks of light in the darkness, freedom from their oppressors. **The nation would be restored, built up and multiplied.** The new peace God will bring will be so secure that they will have no need for the old, bloodied military garb of the past, and they will burn it. **This restoration is focused upon the birth of a child, a son, who would sit on the throne of David. He will establish his kingdom and uphold it with justice and righteousness, ...fairness and integrity..., from that time, and on into the forever future.** The zeal of Yahweh Himself will bring this about!

It is important for us to realize that to Ahaz and his contemporaries, this would have sounded like a prophesy about *the next king*, Ahaz's son, Hezekiah, ...or possibly one of his descendants. The Hebrew here is not necessarily a future tense. It could easily be understood as “to us a child *is born*; to us a son *is given*”. How easy it would have been to assume that *just as* the son of Isaiah was a short-term sign, ...that by the time that boy had grown enough to know his father or his mother, or know right from wrong, that Rezin and Pekah would be removed along with their plunder – which took place *within the next year*, or so, ...*in the same way*, this child would also be a short-term sign. **AND, although Hezekiah was indeed one of Judah's greatest and best kings, he was by no means the full expression of what is prophesied here.**

And that name? “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” Names were very significant in the ancient world. They often represented a person's character, or some important characteristic about them or their life. **It was not at all uncommon for kings to be called by “sentence names”, many of which were compound names with a reference to their God.** This type of name is called a “theophoric name” and it affirms the nature of the deity, or requests the blessing of the god. So, **looking at the list of names in verse 6 would have been understood as a praise to Yahweh who was supporting, sustaining and working through this king,** but the people of that time would not have thought of these names as actually being descriptive of who this king was in himself.

Aside from the “prophetic hints”, which from our point of view are “hidden in plain sight”, but which would easily have been virtually invisible to the people of Isaiah's time, **the main take-away we get from this passage is that, even on the brink of the destruction and scattering of the northern part of the nation, God clearly reaffirms that there will be a human child who will come to sit on the throne of David. God Himself would restore the northern tribes and establish a just and equitable kingdom** (removing the reason for their departure), **which will grow and increase without end of expanse of territory or end of time. God's zeal will bring this about.**

In the next verses in Isaiah 9, and into chapter 10, God sends a word of judgment against the northern kingdom. Everyone will know that it was because of their pride and obstinacy that they will fall, and the land will be destroyed. They have disregarded God. They do not seek Him. They turn against Judah, and will experience the judgment of God through the Assyrians. Eventually, God will also judge the Assyrians for their evils and injustices. But, it will happen that a remnant of Israel will return to the land of Israel (10:20-22). Clearly, God is the King of the nations. He is in control over the shifting movements of kingdoms, ...their rise and their fall. And He will bring about, once again, a Davidic Kingdom in Israel. **Of this Kingdom, ...His Kingdom, where Christ is the prophesied, crucified, glorified and magnified King of all the earth, ...of this Kingdom there will be no end.** The zeal of Yahweh *will* bring it about.