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Commissioning (Isaiah 6)

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

- Isaiah used the first five chapters to show us the sinful condition of the people, and God's offer of forgiveness. He also revealed visions of the final redemption.
- Uzziah had reigned for 52 years, and Judah was prosperous. See more about his era: 2nd Chronicles 26. His death must have frightened people. What would happen to Judah now? Assyria was beginning to move against the region.
- Prophets could be commissioned through the Word of the Lord coming to them, or perhaps from being caught up to see the Lord in His heavenly court.
- The train was the hem of His garment, and it would emphasize His greatness.

2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

- This is the only place we meet the seraphim. Seraph means "a burning one" and they seem to be among the highest of supernatural beings. Notice how they veil their sight from the Glory! The house is filled with smoke, which probably serves to veil and protect everyone (see Psalm 18:9-11.)

5 So I said: “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 my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.”

- Isaiah knew he lived in a midst of a sinful people, but he had humility!
- This is a picture of God giving grace to Isaiah, purifying his heart and mouth.

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” 9 And He said, “Go, and tell this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ 10 Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.”

- A difficult part of Isaiah’s ministry is that his ministry will mostly result in a further hardening of the people. When we harden our hearts, what happens?

Advice to King Ahaz (7:1-2)

1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2 And it was told to the house of David, saying, “Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

- The Syrians and Israel are now attacking Jerusalem. They had been fighting together against Judah, and Judah had been defeated by them.
- Ahaz was a wicked king who sacrificed his children in the fire.
- Syria and Israel were allied against Assyria, and wanted to install their own puppet king in Jerusalem, and make a united front against the Assyrians.

Conspiracy (7:3-9)

3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field, 4 and say to him: ‘Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, 6 “Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel”— 7 thus says the Lord GOD: “It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass.... Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, so that it will not be a people... If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.””’.

- Isaiah brought Shear-Jashub, whose name means “a remnant shall return.” As things turned out, only a remnant would return.
- Isaiah tells Ahaz not to worry about Syria and Israel (“Ephraim”). God was trying to encourage Ahaz not to fear any of them!
- God says Israel will be wiped out by the next generation, and this came to pass. By the time those 65 years went by, the Assyrians had brought in foreigners to mix with the native population. This resulted in the creation of the Samaritans.

Immanuel (7:10-17)

10 Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 “Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.” 12 But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!” 13 Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. 15 Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. 17 The LORD will bring the king of Assyria upon you and your people and your father’s house—days that have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah.”

- Immanuel means “God with us,” or “God is with us.” The New Testament of course applies this prophecy to Jesus, God in the flesh, but there’s an original meaning and context that was important here for Judah.
- We don’t know why Ahaz refused God’s offer of a sign. Ahaz was a wicked king who was devoted to foreign gods and sacrificed his children to them.
- Is the *virgin* of v. 14 an actual woman, is it Zion herself giving birth to a remnant? It doesn’t seem to refer to a wife of Isaiah or of Ahaz. Whoever she is, by the time her child would reach the age of moral responsibility, the neighboring nations Ahaz feared would be destroyed.
- Remember: God is in control of the nations.
- Notice that this prophecy is not for Ahaz alone; it was given to the House of David, the royal family that culminates in Jesus. Jesus is the greater fulfillment of this word, and He fulfills it for all of us, not just for a remnant. He is God with us!

Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (8:1-4)

1 Moreover the LORD said to me, "Take a large scroll, and write on it with a man's pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz..." 3 Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; 4 for before the child shall have knowledge to cry 'My father' and 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria."

- Isaiah's other son is more than just the owner of the Bible's longest name; he's a prophetic sign: his name is "he is hurrying to the spoil and swift to the prey."

Fear the Lord instead (8:13-14)

13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. 14 He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

- Instead of being afraid of conspiracies, God says: fear Him first!

16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. 17 And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; and I will hope in Him. 18 Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion. 19 And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

- Isaiah must have felt an urgency to preserve his prophecies and God's Word.
- Isaiah and those children are for signs and wonders. *Hebrews* applies this passage to Jesus and the Church.
- Note: another warning against occult practices.
- If we don't speak according to God's Word, it's because we have no light in us!

Light arising in the darkness (8:22-9:2)

22 Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness. 1 Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, as when at first He lightly esteemed the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward more heavily oppressed her, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.

- Despite the darkness of his own days, he prophesies a future in which those northern regions of the Galilee will see a great light.
- "... He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet..." (see Matthew 4:12-14).

The Prince of Peace (9:3-7)

3 You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy; they rejoice before You according to the joy of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. (cont'd ->)

4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.... 6 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. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

- Christians have always taken this passage as referring to Christ. These titles are obviously supernatural, and they speak of the far future when the nation will know relief from oppression.
- Notice that once this reign begins, it will never end!
- Messiah's titles tell us that He's something more than merely a Man:
 - He is *El Gibbor*, which means the Mighty God, or God the Mighty One.
 - He is also *Everlasting Father*, meaning something like "Father of Eternity."
- Messiah is human but also the Divine, preexisting One!

Assyria Punished and the Remnant Returns (ch. 10)

5 "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation. 6 I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7 Yet he does not mean so, nor does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off not a few nations. 8 For he says, 'Are not my princes (cont'd ->)

...altogether kings?... 11 As I have done to Samaria and her idols, shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?’” 12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks.”

- Isaiah goes on to say that Assyria is only like a rod in God’s hand – and how could a rod wield itself against the one who lifts it up?

20 And it shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, will never again depend on him who defeated them, but will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. 21 The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. 22 For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them will return... 27 It shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil.

- When Assyria is dealt with, it will be seen how God preserved a remnant; they will return to *El Gibbor!* This could be for the end times: (1) the people embrace their Messiah, and (2) Israel will never again rely on those who struck them.

The Branch (Isa. 11:1ff)

1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 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.

- This is the anointing of the Spirit that rests upon the Messiah, the various anointings that the King will need in order to govern righteously.
- The *stem of Jesse* refers to House of David, the kingly line of God's people.

3 His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; 4 but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.

- See again the contrast between their corrupt leaders and the Messiah's righteous rule. He will judge the world and destroy the wicked. The New Testament writers echo this language!

6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

- Notice that in His kingdom there is even peace between human beings and the animal kingdom, at least in the mountain of the Lord.

Regathering the people (11:10-12)

10 “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.” 11 It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

- I believe this also refers to the Messiah’s coming: Pathros is in Egypt and Cush is Sudan and possibly Ethiopia; Elam is in Iran; Shinar is the land of Babylon. It seems to be a complete regathering of the people.
- This will happen *in that day*, presumably when He slays the wicked.
- Here see God reversing Israel’s fortunes, using the picture of the banner: in ch. 5 He said He would wave a flag to summon the nations to chastise His people, but now the Messiah Himself is a flag that summons the Gentiles to worship Israel’s God! And the Gentiles will seek Him.
- Isaiah uses the same word here as he does in ch. 5 – it’s a flag, a banner, or an ensign. What a glorious future the Lord was showing them!

God in their midst! (12:1ff)

1 And in that day you will say: “O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. 2 Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; ‘For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation....’” (cont’d ->)

4 And in that day you will say: "Praise the LORD, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make mention that His name is exalted.... 6 Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"

- This is what God's people will say in that day. Verse 2 quotes the Song of Moses in Exodus 15, after the people crossed the Red Sea.
- Jesus will be the Greater Moses, leading them to safety in a Second Exodus!
- God will not be hidden behind the veil of a Temple; He'll be living there among them, personally!

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