

Session 1

December 2, 2018

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY

Isaiah 7:10-14; 9:6-7; 11:1-5

A panoramic view of Scripture shows that Christ and His redemption were promised from the very beginning. From the seed of the woman promised in Genesis 3, to the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22, to Job's declaration of His redeemer's presence in Job 19; from the prophets to the psalms; from the beginning of the books of Moses to the end of the prophet Malachi, the Old Testament prophesied the earthly appearance of the divine Lamb slain before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:18). As Christmas approaches, we are reminded that Christ's incarnation came as no surprise. Perhaps no prophecy is more familiar at this time of year than that provided by Isaiah more than 700 years before Christ was born. In our focal text, three promises were made.

Christ would be a human *among us* (7:10-14). In the context of Isaiah's day, Judah's wicked king Ahaz found himself entangled in a military conflict that would lead to certain defeat. While He may well have allowed Ahaz to perish at the time, God was not so quick to give up on His people. In His grace and mercy, He sent Isaiah to encourage the king with the assurance of God's protection if he would only obey (Is. 7:1-9). In an unusual gesture, God invited the king to ask for a sign that would authenticate God's promise. Arrogant King Ahaz feigned humility and refused. In the next verses, God promised a sign anyway; one with a view to the future. More liberal commentators argue that the word for virgin in verse 14 simply means "young woman." But the term always applies to a maiden ready for marriage and never refers to a woman who is already married. Gabriel's conversation with Mary makes it clear that Christ is the fulfillment of this prophecy. He would be conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and live among us (Matt. 1:18ff and Luke 1:26ff). It was a necessary part of God's redemptive plan. Galatians 4:4-5 says, "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law."

Christ would be God *for us* (9:6-7). The incarnate Christ would live *among us*, but He would also be God's gift *to us* (v. 6; see also John 3:16). I think verse 6 describes the *role* of Christ on the world's behalf. He will manage all things, especially the governing of this world. He will provide the epitome of advising for those who seek His guidance. He will serve as the visible expression of Almighty God, the earthly manifestation of the eternal Father, and the sole provider of peace (see John 14:23). I think that verse 7, then, describes the *reign* of Christ. His rule would be far reaching in range, unending in time, and prosperous in its character. Just as importantly, it would fulfill the promise made to King David that the earthly Messiah would come as his descendant and reign on his throne (see 1 Kings 8:25; 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Ps. 132:11).

Christ will be a judge *after us* (11:1-5). In these verses, the Lord attests to the character of the Messiah Himself, a spirit-filled savior and righteous judge. Like the previous prophecy, these verses look forward, even beyond His first coming to His second. First, we see His *origin*. As prophesied in chapter 9, He will come from the line of David (who was himself the son of Jesse). Then we see His *anointing*: four times the Holy Spirit is mentioned, applied in seven different ways. His is the Spirit of the Lord, who will fill Him with all wisdom and understanding, counsel

and strength, knowledge and reverence. Third, we see His *honor*: as opposed to the limitations of earthly justice, Christ will judge with both perfect compassion (v. 4a) and with perfect justice; punishing the wicked (v. 4b) and upholding the righteous (v. 5).