

The Triumph of Zealous Grace

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Isaiah 9:6-7

Preached on: Sunday, December 22, 2013

Once again we have an opportunity that we never want to take for granted, to open up the word of the Living God and have him speak to us through it. So will you take your Bibles and turn to Isaiah 9. This morning I would like to speak to you about the glory and the excellency of our Lord Jesus Christ and all that he has promised to accomplish for us and, therefore, I've entitled my discourse to you this morning "The Triumph of Zealous Grace." In a moment, we will look at verses 6 and 7.

A. W. Tozer wrote this,

"The gravest question before the church is always God himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like."

Indeed, our view of God will determine how we worship in private and in public. It will determine what kind of church we go to. It will determine what type of pastor, what kind of elders we would seek to shepherd us. It will determine how we serve Christ, how we serve the saints, how we spend our money, how we treat our families. Indeed, everything that we think and do is ultimately rooted in our understanding of who God truly is.

Satan is a diabolical genius when it comes to deceptions. Deceptions that seek to destroy how man conceives of God. He likes to seduce foolish and naïve people, even Christians. And one of his greatest strategies is to raise up false teachers that will distort the word of God and demean the God of the word and offer us a different kind of god. A god that we can control and a god that we can impress. A god that will wink at our sin. A god that will dance to our beat. A god that will really require nothing of us. A god that basically orbits around our center of gravity and the Christmas season is a perfect time to attack all of that head on. It's a perfect time to elevate our most holy God to his proper place, to focus exclusively upon the excellency and the majesty of Christ.

So this morning, I would like us to examine an ancient prophecy that God gave to his servant Isaiah. A prophecy that will reveal much about who God is and how we should conceive of him. A text that speaks of, ultimately, the birth of Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God; a text that speaks of God's steadfast love for those who fear him and his judgment upon those who don't. So let me read this text to you beginning in verse 6 of Isaiah 9.

"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. 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 the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

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This is a portion of the Christmas story that is seldom preached in its context. In fact, I don't believe it's applied very often but it's one that speaks to our hearts in a very special way. By way of background: it was revealed to the prophet Isaiah as he ministered to the people of Judah during a time of enormous spiritual darkness. This would have been a period about 700 years before Jesus was born; a time when Israel was divided: Israel in the north, Judah in the south. Isaiah prophesied for about 34 years during the reign of four different kings. Beginning at the death of King Uzziah, he prophesied during the reign of Jotham, of Ahaz, of Hezekiah and finally of Manasseh.

As we look back at ancient Judah during that time, we can see amazing parallels to the United States of America. During the 52 year reign of King Uzziah, Judah has prospered greatly. They had a very strong economy; they were a very wealthy people; they developed themselves into a very powerful commercial and military state. They were a proud people; they considered themselves to be militarily invincible. But the word of God tells us that they were materialistic. They were filled with crooked politicians. Even their spiritual leaders were phony apostates. They were religious on the outside but idolaters on the inside, hypocrites. The moral corruption was staggering so God promised judgment upon this people and you can read about that in Isaiah 5.

Now, at the end of Uzziah's reign, we know that we violated God's command and attempted to assume the role of a priest and he went in to burn incense on the altar. The consequences were devastating as you may recall, and God struck him with leprosy which very soon led to his death. It was then that God called Isaiah to prophesy in the year of King Uzziah's death which was 739 BC. The vast majority of the people rejected the prophet's warnings. Only a small remnant believed. Does it sound familiar? Finally, according to tradition, Manasseh had enough of Isaiah preaching about this Messiah and their sin and all of these things so he had him cut in two with a wooden saw. Folks, it was against this blackness that God promises the light of salvation through a child that would be born and here we learn much about who God is and how his steadfast love is manifested to those who fear him.

This morning, I want us to look at this text in four different categories. We want to: first of all, look at the Messiah's birth and then the Messiah's titles, then the Messiah's kingdom and finally, the Messiah's zeal. A most important reminder during the Christmas season where Satan and his minions are working overtime to distort the person and the work of Christ.

First of all, as we look at the big picture of this text, we see that God reveals these amazing truths to Isaiah with no explanation as to the interval of time when this Son is going to be born: Isaiah had no idea it was going to be 700 years later. Nor does he offer any measure of the time span between when the child would be born and when the government will rest on his shoulders. In other words, he doesn't tell him that there is going to be a first and then a second coming, a first and a second advent.

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Now, this is a common prophetic device known as prophetic foreshortening where a prophet will reveal A and B and maybe even Z with no idea what intervenes between those particular events. So, the prophets often would look ahead and they would envision the Messiah who would come but they would look at, for example, this text and see, “Well, a Son is going to be born and here’s his titles and there is going to be a government that he will reign over,” but they could only see, shall we say, two peaks in the distance. If you ever drive towards Denver, Colorado from the east, you will eventually begin to see the great Rocky Mountains and as you look at them, all of the peaks look like they’re just lined up all together. Then once you get there, you begin to see that some of them are much further behind others. So, too, in Bible prophecy. They could only see the two peaks; they had no idea of the size of the valley in between. Such is the case here: Peak 1 was the birth of Jesus; Peak 2 is the Second Coming of Jesus when he will establish his government, his millennial kingdom and he will reign on David’s throne.

Now, do not therefore see this as a text that has some double meaning because that is not at all the case but, rather, one event is merely a harbinger of the next, an even greater, more climactic event. So from our perspective, we can look back and we see the time interval in the valley between the Lord’s first coming and his second coming and right now, frankly, we are living in the valley awaiting that second peak. So, 700 years before Christ, Isaiah sees two mountain peaks of precious hope. A child would be born who would some day rule from the throne of David in an everlasting kingdom.

So let’s examine the text a little more closely. First of all, let’s look at what it says about the Messiah’s birth. “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us.” Notice, it does not say that a child will be born from us nor does it say that we will produce from ourselves a son. Indeed, he was born but he was conceived by the Holy Spirit of God; he was God’s only begotten Son which means “unique; one of a kind; spawned from God the Father and of his very essence; possessing his very nature.” Then it also says that this child will be a son that “will be given to us.” Please understand: the Son of God was not made, he was not created, he already existed. Rather, what we see here is that he was given, he was begotten of the Father. Yes, he was a child but he was the eternal Son of God. He was the son of David, more importantly, the Son of God. Remember, Jesus told Nicodemus that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.”

So, what we have here in this prophesy is that a child would be born to us and it will be a one of a kind Son, a unique Son, a Son par excellence. He would be Immanuel, God with us. But we must also realize that this gift of Christ was promised before time began. Let that sink in for a moment. Before time began. We read this in a number of passages. In Titus 1:2, we read this and this is stated by God who cannot lie. In 2 Timothy 1:9 we read that God “to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,” which can be translated “before time began.” “But now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus.”

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Now, notice what else is promised here concerning this child that was to be born to us, “a son will be given to us,” it says. At the end of that verse, it says “And the government will rest on His shoulders.” Now, obviously that is not happening right now but it will. The fulfillment of that text is promised in so many passages. For example in Psalm 2, beginning in verse 8, God the Father describes his Son’s kingship. He says, “Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thy inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. Thy shall break them with a rod of iron, Thy shall shatter them like earthenware.” Folks, I don’t know about you but I cannot wait to see the King of Glory rule the nations of the world. I cannot wait to see that happen. Man may remove Christ from Christmas but he cannot remove Christ from his throne. Some day all of the wicked rulers endemic to this world, to this political climate of our world, will surrender to the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So many prophecies speak of this. It will be a time when Jerusalem will be the capital of the world. When Christ will rule from the throne of David. During the millennial kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ will enforce his will with a rod of righteousness and protect the sheep of his fold with a scepter of iron and we will even rule with him. For example, in Revelation 2, beginning in verse 26, we read, “And he who overcomes and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations. He shall rule them with a rod of iron, they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels.”

So, first this prophecy speaks of the Messiah’s birth. Secondly, it speaks of the Messiah’s titles. Here we have four pairs of names and each name actually foreshadows his coming rule upon the earth, especially during his millennial kingdom. The first two names are linked to an earlier name that Isaiah speaks of, Immanuel, God with us, and the second two names really denote the glorious conditions that he will eventually bring about. Notice this first name in verse 6, “And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor.” It could be translated “Wonder Counselor.” It denotes a supernatural counselor or one giving supernatural counsel. Think about it: this would have been an enormous encouragement to the believing remnant in those days, those who recognized the bad counsel they were receiving from the false shepherds, those who saw the hypocrisy and wickedness of the nation, those who saw their political leaders and their own wickedness.

So, we’re seeing here that a kingdom is going to rise and we know that all kingdoms that rise also fall if they have bad counsel. But not this one because there is a Wonderful Counselor that is coming and certainly the everlasting kingdom will require wisdom, the wisdom of an eternal, omniscient God. So this child, he says, would be a supernatural counselor. We know that he was, indeed, God Incarnate. So this was the first hope of Zion that God gives through Isaiah. It’s really a divine promise, if you will, that would occur ultimately during the millennial restoration after the judgment that will come upon the earth. For example, in chapter 1:26 of Isaiah, we read this, “Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city.” Not too long ago, I got back from

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Isaiah went on to prophesy in verse 27, “Zion will be redeemed with justice And her repentant ones with righteousness. But transgressors and sinners will be crushed together, And those who forsake the LORD will come to an end.” This is a staggering truth, isn’t it? One day the little baby Jesus that eventually went to the cross and was crucified, the one who was risen from the dead, the Wonderful Counselor, is going to return and he is going to be the absolute Monarch of the earth. Talk about politically incorrect but, folks, this is the truth.

Let’s think more deeply about our precious Savior and Lord. I meditated on the idea of him being a Wonderful Counselor and I jotted down a few things that I wanted to share with you but there are so many more. I will just share a bit. We see his supernatural counsel first of all, in eternity past. Think about it: before time began, before space was even created, the Triune God counseled together to determine and decree a plan. A plan that would ultimately put the glory of God on display. And we know, according to Romans 11:36, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

To be sure, the eternal Son was a part of that counsel and with perfect oneness with the Father and the Spirit, they deliberated together to determine this glorious plan. Together they deliberated on creation. They determined that there would be a vast universe; there would be galaxies; there would be stars all of which they would name. There would be our sun, our moon; there would be the earth and all that is in it. They determined together the laws of physics. They determined the essence and the purpose of every angel. They counseled together to determine the unfathomable intricacies of DNA and on and on we could go. Indeed, as John tells us in John 1:3, “All things came into being by Him,” referring to the Lord Jesus, “and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

Together they counseled concerning man. The Lord Jesus as this supernatural counselor, was a part of that deliberation with the Triune Godhead to determine the shape of your face, the shape of your nose, the color of your eyes, the sound of your voice, your sex, your height. Even the length of your days. With infinite wisdom, our Wonderful Counselor worked in perfect unanimity to determine everything about your life. Indeed, the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 139:15, “My frame was not hidden from Thee, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth,” referring to the mother’s womb. He went on to say, “Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book were all written The days that were ordained for me.” Think about it: our beloved Christ was the counselor for all the wondrous works of God.

And as our Wonderful Counselor, he even deliberated with the Father and the Spirit to eventually allow sin and evil to enter into the perfect universe that they were going to

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create. This is evident in so many passages of Scripture. God's testimony of himself tells us in Isaiah 45:7, "I formed the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." As we look at Scripture, we know that he ordained evil to enter his perfect universe through the voluntary choices of moral creatures. Why? In order to dramatically display his glory through his holiness, through his wrath, through his mercy and grace and love and power.

Our Wonderful Counselor also helped craft the plan of redemption including the uninfluenced choice of those that would be saved. Ephesians 1:5, we read that the Father "predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself." In verse 11, "we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." Indeed, all of God's elective purposes were ordained from eternity past. This would include his divine decree for Satan to rebel, for Adam and Eve to sin. And by imputation, for all men to sin in Adam requiring, therefore, that the Lamb be slain from the foundation of the world, Revelation 13:8. It's amazing. We can, therefore, conclude that God's elective eternal purposes were decreed and even set into motion before creation. This would even include our Lord's Incarnation. His atoning work. It's amazing, isn't it, to think that the blessed baby Jesus that we celebrate during this time of the year, this little infant in a manger, was also the Wonder Counselor and he remains the Wonder Counselor. For this reason, Isaiah would say in chapter 25:1, "O LORD, Thou art my God; I exalt Thee, I will give thanks to Thy name; For Thou hast worked wonders, Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness."

We also see that his supernatural counsel continues in the present. Doesn't he counsel us today through his providence? Because he has decreed all things for our good and his glory, he controls, he orchestrates all things to accomplish his purposes. Even all of the events in our lives. Ephesians 1:11, we read that he accomplishes or brings about, "all things according to the counsel of his will." Proverbs 19:21, "Many are the plans in a man's heart but the counsel of the Lord it will stand." In Acts 17:28, we read, "In him we live and move and have our being." In Romans 8:28, we know that God causes "all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purposes."

My friends, there is nothing that happens in your life that was not first determined in eternity past to ultimately inure to your eternal benefit and our Wonderful Counselor was a part of all of that and remains a part of all of that. Think about it: at the proper time and according to the counsels of eternity, you were called by his grace to be born again and one day you will be called by grace to pass through the veil of this life and it will be the omnipotent Christ, our Lord Jesus, that sustained you and preserved you, protected you for it is he "who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory blameless with great joy," Jude 24.

He also counsels us through his word. He's doing that right now. He is the eternal Logos, the Incarnation of the word of God, that reveals the very mind of God, the very heart of

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God. We hear his voice when we look into his word and we read it and we hear it preached and taught. He counsels us through his presence in our lives. Beloved, he remains Immanuel, God with us. It wasn't just for a while and now he's somewhere else. He is still with us as he dwells within us. Did he not promise, "Lo, I am with you always even until the end of the age."

And what a wise and sympathetic counselor he is. I thought about this: when you go to seek counsel, you want to make sure the person you're going to receive counsel from has some credibility, right? You want to make sure that that person knows the word and is living out the word and has something to say. You want to make sure that that person fears the Lord because "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and so forth. But you also want to make sure that somehow that person sympathizes with your struggle and truly delights in you and longs to enter into your life and do all they can to help you find peace and resolution. Well, our Wonderful Counselor can meet those qualifications perfectly. I can't. Nobody can but he can. "For we do not have a high priest," Hebrews 4:15, "who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but one who has been tempted in all things as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore," what? "Draw near with confidence." Why? Because he is the Wonderful Counselor. "Draw near with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Indeed, according to Proverbs 8:31, he "rejoices in his inhabited world and delights in the children of men." Oh dear friends, what a perfectly wonderful counselor he is. Proverbs 8:14, we read, "Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding." What folly it is to neglect his counsel. How foolish to go seeking after counsel that is not rooted in all that he is and all that he has said.

Finally, we see that his counsel pertains even to the future. Isn't it funny as you look at it: man is absolutely incurably curious about the future. You can open up almost any paper and you're going to find horoscopes that people will run to. They will look for zodiac signs, they will go to tarot cards and then there are those little cookies we open up that have something in there that we don't want to let anybody see us reading as if they're really going to tell us the future. But our Wonderful Counselor has revealed enormous amounts of information concerning the destiny of the world, the destiny of the nations, even of the universe. Even the destiny of every person who has ever lived. Why? Because in the eternal counsels of the Triune Godhead, he participated in determining the course of human history. In fact, human history cannot be understood apart from Christ because ultimately it is his story. He is the one that devised it and decreed it before the foundation of the world.

As we look at his word, we see fulfilled prophecies all over the place. There were over 300 of them fulfilled just with respect to his first advent. And hundreds more that will, therefore, likewise, be fulfilled literally. So if you want to know the future, consult with the Wonderful Counselor. Go, for example, to the book of Revelation, the Apocalypse Jesus Cristo, the revealing, the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, in the very first verse we read, "The revelation of Jesus Christ." Revelation literally meaning "unveiling."

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“The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his bondservants the things which must soon take place.” And in verse 3, he says, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and heed the things which are written in it for the time,” literally “the season,” “is near.”

Well, we must move ahead quickly. Not only is he the Wonder Counselor, we also read here that he is Mighty God, El Gibbor. He is the warrior God. This child that would be born, the Son that would be given to us upon whose shoulders the government will some day rest, is a warrior God. If we had time, we could look back at verses 3-5 and we could see how that he will fulfill those military references as well as so many others throughout Scripture. But he is the Mighty God and, my friends, when he returns, he will liberate his people Israel from the bondage of their sin. He will reconcile them unto himself and he will conquer her enemies once and for all.

Now, as the child we could see him in his humanity but as the Mighty God, we see his deity. This will be the one whom penitent Israel will one day turn and this is the one to whom we in the church age have turned as believers. We haven't turned to a mere human being that lived and died but to the second person of the Triune Godhead who is the Mighty God. He is the omnipotent, all-powerful God, able to accomplish all that he has decreed, all that he has desired, all that he has promised. In fact, the Psalmist calls us to worship in Psalm 24:8, saying, “Who is the king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty. The Lord mighty in battle.” Can't you just hear the Israelites shouting that out?

But notice the third in this quartet of predicted pre-eminent titles: he is the Eternal Father. Literally, Father of eternity. This is an amazing concept. This child who would be born, the Son who would be given, is the Father of eternity. Again, think about this: Isaiah's words would have been of great comfort to the believing remnant there in Judah trying to survive in that idolatrous country, knowing that judgment was coming upon them.

The title of Father points to a number of things. Briefly, it would certainly point to his concern for the helpless, a concern that will dominate his rule during the kingdom age as well as his care, his discipline for his children. Proverbs 3:12 speaks of discipline, “For whom the Lord loves, he reproves even as a Father the son in whom he delights.” Isaiah even speaks of the Redeemer as Father in Isaiah 63:16. There we read, “For thou art our Father though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not recognize us. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Thy name.” Then in chapter 64:8, “But now, O Lord, thou art our Father. We are the clay and thou art a potter and all of us are the work of thy hand.” Folks, remember this, this Christmas, as you look at the babe in the manger.

Finally, he's also the Prince of Peace. He will be the one who will be the embodiment of peace when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. Isaiah 2:4, we read about this. Isaiah says, “And he will judge between the nations and will render decisions for many peoples and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning

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hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation and never again will they learn war.” My friends, you must understand that the peace that he will eventually secure among the nations of the world when he comes and he reigns upon the throne of David during the millennial kingdom, that peace must begin first with the peace that he must secure between sinful man and holy God. We must be reconciled to him because apart from that we remain his enemy. We remain under condemnation. We remain under judgment. And, certainly, he would be the Prince that would bring that peace which must occur first.

You will recall in Luke 2, the angels came to the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shines all around them. They are terrified and he announces the birth of the Savior and in verse 13 we read, “Suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased.” This does not mean that he offers peace to those who are pleasing to him. This is not a reward for meritorious behavior, meritorious service. Nor is this just some general, “Well, because of Jesus, the whole world just experiences some kind of peace.” That’s not at all what this text is saying. Literally it’s saying: Peace among men of his good pleasure. Or it could be translated, Peace toward men on whom God’s sovereign pleasure rests.

Beloved, this is the glorious good will that God grants to his elect. The angels are crying out, “Glory to God in the highest.” Why? Because he has sovereignly chosen certain ones to be recipients of his grace, those elected solely on the basis of his good pleasure. Those who can know the peace of God because they have been reconciled to him, because they have been declared righteous, because they have been forgiven, because they have placed their faith in Christ. So to that end, indeed, he is the Prince of Peace.

Thirdly, we see here of the Messiah’s kingdom. Not just his birth and his titles but in verse 7, we read, “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 the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.” This points us now to the Davidic kingdom. This will be the destiny of the child. This will be the future of the Son, the millennial kingdom that is promised over and over and over again in the Old Testament and even in the New. It’s going to be inaugurated at his Second Coming. It will be a kingdom with peace on earth when God, once again, reigns in all of his righteousness and all of his glory. It will be a time, for example, when Jerusalem will be judged like in 3, 8 and following. Immediately following that judgment, we read of the establishment of the mountain of the Lord in Jerusalem during the millennium. It will be a time when the New Testament saints will rule with Christ, will judge the 12 tribes of Israel. It will be time when Satan will be bound. The sheep and the goat nations will be judged according to Matthew 25. It will be the time when the tribulation saints will have been resurrected.

In fact, as we look at the word of God, we see that the entire topography of Jerusalem will be miraculously altered. There is evidence that it will be the highest place on the

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planet. That there will be no uninhabitable places upon the planet. That the millennial temple described in Ezekiel 40-48 will be built. It will be the time when the New Jerusalem, the city of God, will descend from heaven like a giant space module hovering over the earth, read about it in Revelation 21. And like a magnificent chandelier suspended over the earth, the glorified saints will travel back and forth serving our King.

Beloved, this is an amazing thing. Don't think for one second that we're living in the kingdom now. That somehow the church has replaced Israel. Amos 9:11, "In that day, I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins and build it as it used to be." Zechariah 9:10, "He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth." Beloved, if language means anything, it means that there will be a literal kingdom upon this earth and there will be a literal throne and a literal Jerusalem with a literal King who is the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessings for both Jews and Gentiles are beyond description and all of this is because a child was born and a Son was given.

But how can this possibly be accomplished? We look at our world today and we see it absolutely disintegrating. We are in a moral and an economic free-fall as the Lord prepares the world for the antichrist. How in the world is this going to be accomplished? Well, God tells us through his prophet at the end of verse 7, "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this." So we conclude by looking for a moment at the Messiah's zeal. Zeal in the Hebrew means "ardor" or "passion" or it could even be interpreted "jealousy." It's a term, actually, that's derived from an Arabic verb meaning "to become intensely red." It carries the idea of a man's face becoming red because of deep emotion. As we look at the word of God, we see it's used to describe a husband's jealousy for the love of his wife in Proverbs 6:34. We see in Song of Solomon 8:6, that it's used to describe the love that bursts forth, that just inflames the hearts of a bride and a groom. Isaiah uses the term in chapter 63:15 to describe God's zeal and almighty deeds, the stirring of his inner parts to act. In Psalm 79:5, we read how his zeal is compared to a burning fire and to be sure, "God is a consuming fire, a zealous God," Deuteronomy 4:24. You will recall that it was zeal for his Father's house that caused Jesus to cleanse the temple.

So what's the point? Isaiah is saying this: the burning passion of this Son who we know to be the Lord Jesus Christ, will cause him to return as the Lord of Hosts to accomplish all that he has ordained. My friends, because he is a consuming fire, because he is a jealous God and because he is faithful to his covenant promises, the Lord Jesus Christ right now is ordering and directing the events of human history, moving them all toward the Messianic kingdom which will be the consummating bridge between human history and the eternal state. Beloved, this is the triumph of zealous grace. Remember this when you think of Jesus this season: know full well who he is and what he is up to.

Lately the attacks on Christian beliefs have reached a new level of hostility, haven't they? We are labeled as being ignorant, bigots, using hate speech, Bible toting idiots, I heard

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The Triumph of Zealous Grace

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Isaiah 9:6-7

Preached on: Sunday, December 22, 2013

this week. One pundit said, “Just because it’s in the Bible doesn’t mean it’s true.” And on and on it goes. The world’s hatred of Christ is mounting. Hatred of his word is mounting. Hatred of his people is mounting. But know this, dear friends, and I quote Isaiah 14:24, “The Lord of Hosts has sworn saying, Surely just as I have intended so it has happened and just as I have planned it, so it will stand.”

My friends, is this how you conceive God in your mind and your heart? If it isn’t, then you do not understand the God of the Bible. May I challenge you to take this Christmas season and use it as an opportunity to see the Lord Jesus Christ as he really is. You see, he’s no longer a babe in a manger, meek and mild, but he is the Lord of Hosts. He right now sits at the right hand of the Father. Families, take time to rehearse these things with your children. Fathers, especially you. Just take these titles. Every week I give you questions that you can use to deal with your children. Rehearse these things with them.

I close with this thought: a day will soon come, dear friends, when the nostrils of the Lord Jesus Christ will flare and he will rise from his sovereign throne in absolute fury and he will, as promised, with a face that is red with righteous indignation, return to this earth and pour out his wrath upon the wicked and he will judge the nations and he will establish himself because he is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He will return, according to Revelation 19:15, and “smite the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron and he will tread the winepress of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty.” And then the fulfillment of what Isaiah has promised now over 2,700 years ago, will be fulfilled. “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 the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.” Then we will witness with our own eyes the triumph of zealous grace.

Let’s pray together.

Father, these are such amazing truths and I confess that our hearts just become almost overwhelmed when we realize what you are up to, when we realize who you really are and when we realize how you are being mocked and ridiculed in the world in which we live and sometimes, Lord, even in our own hearts. O God, forgive us. May we elevate you to the proper place where you need to be in our lives and may we use this Christmas season to re-evaluate who you really are and may we tell others the good news that there is still time if they will but believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing their sins, repenting of their sins, knowing that he is the only means of salvation that they will be saved. Lord, may we be controlled by the gospel and may we be consumed with the triumph of zealous grace. I ask all of this in the precious name of the one that we serve, the one that we await, the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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