

## Lenten Calendar Comments

Mar 4 - 10

### Tuesday, March 4: Initial Posting

Our Lenten calendar focuses on Isaiah's prophecies of the Messiah fulfilled by Jesus. Many were written in the "prophetic perfect" tense -- as if they had already happened.

Isaiah was written 700 years before Christ; strict Jewish tradition of memorization & copying ensures it was not written in multiple timeframes. The oldest copy found, dated to ~150 B.C., is the same as we have today. Surely, a God that created all there is can inspire His Word in His prophets!

Attached is an updated calendar from what was sent out in the church newsletter; the added 2nd page includes a brief summary of each text from Isaiah. Follow with us & grow in awe of our incredible God! Grace and Peace, Mike

### Wednesday, March 5: Isaiah 2:3-5 / John 4:25-26; 5:22-23; 12:46; 14:6

Isaiah! It is chock-full of prophecies which have already been fulfilled to grow our faith that prophecies of things yet to come **will** also be fulfilled. Did Jesus take specific actions just because it was written? Not really--God, who dwells outside the timeline of eternity, inspired His prophets to tell of what He knew would already occur!

- *v2:3 Teach*--in John 4:25-26, Jesus is talking to the Samaritan woman; when she says the Messiah will explain everything, He replies: "I who speak to you am He." But much is still to be fulfilled; e.g., *mountain*—stands for Jesus' throne in Zion (Jerusalem) when He returns.
- *v2:4 Judge*—in John 5:22-23 Jesus says that the Father has assigned all judgment to the Son; Jesus judges in Revelation 20:11-12. *v2:4* also prophecies peace--Jesus brings peace today to believers' hearts because they have restored relation to God (Romans 5:1-10) & assured salvation (1 Peter 1:3-5), but He will bring peace to the world when He comes again to reign over all (Revelation 21:1-7). World peace can only come when sin is fully eradicated—**only** Jesus can do that!
- *v2:5 Light*--Jesus is the light of the world (John 1:5-13; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). Light dispels doubt & danger on the path of life; enables discernment of truth; uncovers things hidden (John 3:20); and represents righteousness & goodness as well as God's blessings, presence, revelation, grace, mercy & love. We're called to walk in Jesus' light (1 John 1:7) & reflect that light into a world darkened by sin. All this is embedded in "I am the Way, the Truth & the Life." (John 14:6)

### Thursday, March 6: Isaiah 6:1, 8, 9-12 / John 12:38-45; Matthew 13:13-15; Acts 28:23-29

The first five chapters set the stage for Isaiah's vision by illustrating just how sinful & separated from God Israel had become.

- *v6:1 King Uzziah* died after 52 years on the throne, which must have unsettled the nation. However, Isaiah sees the ultimate King still on His throne & in charge. *v3* declares God's *glory* & emphasizes His over-arching characteristic of holiness by the strongest superlative of three-fold repetition. This is echoed in the continuous declaration of the same "Holy, Holy, Holy" of Revelation 4:8. John 12:38-41 declares that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory, which was also shown to Peter, John & James in the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:29).
- *v6:8 Whom shall I send?* Jesus claimed numerous times to be the One sent. For example, John 4:25-26 gives the dialogue: Samaritan woman: "I know that Messiah is coming." Jesus answered: "I who speak to you am He." Jesus was indeed the Messiah, but most rejected Him (John 12:38-45).

- *v9-10 Never understanding*—every prophet embarks on a hard road, since many people do not want to hear the truth. The prophetic word closes the way of God to those that are spiritually rebellious, proud & hypocritical, but opens it to the physically blind, humble & poor, because they realize their need for God. That is why Jesus spoke in parables (Matthew 13:10-15). I like J. Vernon McGee's explanation: "God never hardens hearts that would otherwise be soft. God simply brings the hardness to the surface." Note also that God's message is one of light; those that can see will; those that are spiritually blind will not.
- *v9-13 How long?*—the nation would get worse until the sinful condition requiring judgment was removed. Yet, God would preserve the remnant of those with hearts for Him. Here again, we have had partial fulfillments (e.g., Babylon captivity), with the ultimate to occur when Jesus comes again. Even when the *Stump* (Jesus) brought new life, many hearts were still closed to His message (Acts 28:23-29), as they will be until Christ comes again. But whether hearts be closed or not, we are still called to follow Isaiah and be witnesses to the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

### Friday, March 7: Isaiah 7:14 / Luke 1:35; Matthew 1:18-23; 1 Timothy 3:16

From Isaiah 7:14 *Immanuel*—God with us. Isaiah announces this verse to Ahaz after he tells him to ask a sign of the LORD, but Ahaz refused with a lame excuse. Many "scholars" contend that the word for "virgin" actually means "young woman" – as if a young woman conceiving would be worthy of mentioning as a "sign." The 71 Jewish experts that translated Scripture to Greek ~150 B.C. translated the word as "virgin." Deniers also seem to forget the exchange between the angel and Mary in Luke 1:31-35, which includes: "you will conceive" . . . "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" . . . "The Holy Spirit will come upon you."

- Jesus **had** to be born of a virgin—1) God was the only one who could forgive sin (Luke 5:21); 2) No human could wash away sin--the sacrificial Lamb must be spotless (without sin); but all (except Jesus) inherit Adam's sin & have a sin nature (Romans 3:23). Also, our best deeds are "as dirty rags" (Isaiah 64:6); 3) His birth would fulfil Genesis 3:15 regarding "seed of the woman" which was not how ancient civilizations traced lineage; 4) all summed up in 2 Corinthians 5:21: God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
- Gotquestions.org: The Bible teaches the preexistence of the eternal Son of God. In Isaiah 9:6, the child who is "born" is also the son who is "given." In like manner, Galatians 4:4 also teaches the preexistence and virgin birth of Christ: "God sent His Son, born of a woman." The virgin birth is important because that was the means by which "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14). The incarnation is when the eternal Son of God took on human flesh; without losing any of His divine nature, He added a human nature. That miraculous, history-changing event took place in the Virgin Mary's womb.
- Note also that Matthew's genealogy does **not** say that Joseph was the father of Jesus but rather the husband of Mary (Matthew 1:16). Luke traces Jesus' lineage by saying Jesus "was regarded as the son of Joseph, the son of Heli" (Luke 3:23) and then traces to Nathan, son of David; but wait—Matthew traces Joseph as son of Jacob up to Solomon, son of David—what gives? Conservative scholars believe that Heli was Mary's father; since Koine Greek does not have a specific word for "father-in-law," therefore, Joseph was called the "son of Heli" by marriage to Mary, Heli's daughter. Either way, Jesus met the prophecy that the Messiah would descend from David.

**Lynn Combs Wilson** Very interesting! Ahaz was a faithless king who didn't want to engage with God! Ahaz knew the sign would be a divine, supernatural act! Alma is also used Genesis 24:43 when Abraham's servant was selecting a bride for Isaac! A young woman, ha alma (A righteous virgin)!

## Saturday, March 8: Isaiah 8:14 / 1 Peter 2:8

BibleRef website has a description for Isaiah 8:14 worth quoting:

"The Lord does not change ( Malachi 3:6). He is holy and all-powerful. To those who honor Him as holy ( Isaiah 8:13), the Lord is a place of refuge. Their hope for survival and abundant life rests in Him. In this way, God is like a large, stable rock: a secure foundation and place of safety ( Psalm 18:2).

However, to those who do not honor the Lord as holy, that same cornerstone becomes a tripping hazard. God's truth cannot be denied, any more than a person can walk through a boulder. For those who reject Him, God becomes a "stumbling rock." He's something they cannot help but trip over. Everyone who tries to succeed and thrive apart from the Lord eventually falls and does not prosper. And for everyone who honors Him as holy, He is the solid rock on which they build their life.

Isaiah declares that it is the Lord who will become the stumbling stone for both houses of Israel. That means that both the northern ten tribes, Israel, and the southern two tribes, Judah, will be destroyed. The Lord will become a trap and a snare even to the people of Jerusalem in the end. They will refuse to honor Him, and that will bring them misery."

Jesus followed the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21:33-41, which included the tenants killing the son & heir) with a similar passage from Psalm 118:22-23 which did not sit well with the chief priests and Pharisees to say the least! (Matthew 21: 42-46) Paul cites this verse in Romans 9:32-33 to support righteousness by faith rather than by works with clear application to Jesus. 1 Peter 2:8 adds: "They stumble because they disobey the word—and to this they were appointed."

McGee gives a good summary: The Lord Jesus said that either you will fall on this stone—and He is that stone—fall on Him for salvation, rest upon Him who is the only foundation, and you will be saved; or He, the stone, will fall on you, judge you, and it will grind you to powder.