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LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH (31)

The ministry of Christ as the Anointed of Jehovah in His two comings

Christ's coming is of two parts and at two times. In His first coming, Christ came to minister, to dispense, Himself into His followers. In this way He carried out the New Testament ministry to dispense the Triune God into the disciples under His ministry, most of whom were Jews. This ministry in Christ's first coming laid a solid foundation for His second coming. When He comes the second time, He will come mainly in an outward way to rescue Israel from their circumstances and to bring in their restoration. This restoration will be expanded to include all things created by God. This period of restoration will last for a millennium, for the thousand-year kingdom.

The ministry of the Anointed of Jehovah is described in Isaiah 61:1-3. Verse 1 says, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, / Because Jehovah has anointed Me / To bring good news to the afflicted; / He has sent Me to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted, / To proclaim liberty to the captives, / And the opening of the eyes to those who are bound." As Luke 4:16-21 indicates, this refers to Christ in His first coming. The Lord's ministry in His first coming was one of grace, not vengeance, which is mentioned in Isaiah 61:2.

When the Lord came the first time, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and constituted with the essence of the Holy Spirit added to His humanity to be a God-man. He then lived thirty years as a man in that essence of the Spirit. At the age of thirty He came forth to carry out His ministry. At that time He was baptized in water, and immediately the Holy Spirit descended upon Him economically (Luke 3:21-22). Prior to that time, He was already constituted with the Spirit essentially, but in order to carry out God's economy, He needed the Spirit economically to empower Him and authorize Him to be the Servant of God to minister God into His chosen people. This is the significance of the words, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me."

As the Servant of Jehovah, Christ brought good news to the afflicted, bound up the wounds of the brokenhearted, proclaimed liberty to the captives, opened the eyes of the blind (physically and spiritually),

and proclaimed the acceptable year of Jehovah (Isa. 61:2a), which is the year of jubilee. Thus, He brought in the real jubilee.

Verse 2b goes on to say that the Anointed will also proclaim "the day of vengeance of our God." This refers to the Lord's second coming, for in His first coming He did not carry out vengeance. In His second coming He will avenge Israel, proclaiming the vengeance of God.

Verse 2 also indicates that in His second coming Christ will "comfort all who mourn." Verse 3 continues, "To grant to those who mourn in Zion, / To give to them a headdress instead of ashes, / The oil of gladness instead of mourning, / The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness; / That they may be called the terebinths of righteousness, / The planting of Jehovah, that He may be glorified." Here ashes signifies shame and headdress signifies glory. According to Hebrews 1:9, the oil of gladness is the Spirit. Instead of mourning, restored Israel will have the Spirit as the oil of gladness. Furthermore, instead of a spirit of heaviness, there will be a mantle of praise. As a result, Israel will be called the terebinths of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, so that He may be glorified.

The first part of Isaiah 61:1-3 refers to the Lord's ministry in His first coming (vv. 1-2a), and the second part refers to the restoration of Israel in His second coming (vv. 2b-3). Hence, this portion of the Word implies both Christ's first coming and His second coming. In Isaiah's prophecy the Lord's two comings are like two mountain peaks which, when viewed from a distance, seem to be one peak. For this reason, Isaiah put Christ's first coming and second coming together.

A Blessed Human Life - CHAPTER FOUR

THE LORD'S WORK OF RECOVERY IN THIS AGE

THE LORD DESIRING TO HAVE A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO LIVE FOR HIM

According to His economy, God created man, accomplished redemption, and produced the church. His desire, however, is that out of those whom He created and redeemed He would gain a group of people who truly live for Him on the earth. Yet two thousand years after God accomplished redemption and produced the church, He has yet to gain this group of people that He longs for.

History shows us that in the Old Testament God had gained the patriarchs throughout the generations and also the people of Israel. Later, the Israelites became degraded. God was greatly disappointed so He judged them. Even today, the Israelites are still under God's judgment. Although God in His grace left them a seed (Rom. 9:29) and also allowed the nation of Israel to be restored in 1948, today in our generation, before our eyes, the nation of Israel is in a condition far away from God, not knowing God at all. What they have passed down through the generations consists only of the Old Testament, which is a book of letters, and Judaism, which is a religion formed with Old Testament laws and regulations. If we travel to the land of Israel, we will see that everything is according to the letter, superstition, ritual, and religion. They know absolutely nothing concerning God, God's economy, and what God wants to gain on this earth. There is a very great gap between what they possess and what we have received in the church in the recent years.

As to the church, in the last two thousand years we can see the Catholic Church, the Protestant churches, and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Similar to the Jews, they have only the Bible remaining with them. They may read it, but many comprehend only the letter with nearly no understanding of the spiritual significances contained in them and without the knowledge of even the basic truths. In addition, we see a formal religion, that is, the so-called Christianity, which has become a great religion. Even today in Taiwan, there are many pastors and believers in Christianity who are no different from the people in the world. Therefore, even though God created man, accomplished redemption, and produced the church, it seems that He has gained nothing.

GOD'S WORK OF RECOVERY THROUGHOUT THE AGES

Throughout the ages God has been doing a continual work of recovery. He recovers again and again, recovering repeatedly. However, the degradation of the church keeps going downhill. We all know that when a torrent of water rushes down a mountain, nothing can withstand its force. It is impossible to reverse the flow of the water. In one sense, it is truly quite glorious that you and I were born in this age, but in another sense it is painfully sad, because all that we encounter is corruption, degradation, and a downward situation.

Starting from the time World War I ended in 1918, when I was only fourteen or fifteen years old, I paid much attention to the world situation; it has been nearly seventy years since then.

When I was studying in junior college, by coincidence, I came across a Chinese newsmagazine. By reading it my eyes were opened, and I started to understand the world situation. While I came to understand historical events from books, I also observed the development of the world situation. I came to the United States in 1961. In 1963, at a meeting where life and truth were released, I spoke a prophecy to all the people there. I said that one day the military forces of the world will gather in the Middle East to fight for the oil fields; because of the oil fields, the world's wealth and its center will shift to the Middle East. This is what I came to understand through sixty years of observation of the world situation and my study of history and biblical prophecies.

We can say that the entire world history is a fulfillment of the prophecies in the Bible. However, the Bible does not have a

prophecy concerning a great revival of the church at the end of this age. A century earlier, a group of teachers who expounded the Bible claimed that there would be a great revival. Although I believed their claim at the time, after reading the Bible again, gradually I realized that there is not such a thing. Using the early rain and the late rain in the Old Testament as the basis (Deut. 11:14; Jer. 5:24; Joel 2:23; Zech. 10:1), those teachers said that the early rain denotes the Holy Spirit coming in an early stage, while the late rain denotes the Holy Spirit coming in a later stage, typifying that there will be a revival at the end of this age. They have misinterpreted the Bible. In the Bible, the early rain and the late rain are mentioned not in reference to the church but to the children of Israel.

The last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation written by the apostle John, contains seven epistles. The seven epistles are not long. They point out the errors of the churches, that some commit fornication and others practice idolatry. In principle, almost every epistle tells the church that she should repent and that if she will not, the Lord will come to her in a negative way. Then afterward there is always this word: "To him who overcomes," or "He who overcomes." This shows us that the Bible does not have a prophecy concerning a final revival; rather, it contains promises to the overcomers.

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for brother Jim Hannah's recovery and the need of medical expense.
- Pray for Russian speaking saints for their needed shepherding from past co-workers.
- Pray for Boston Training Center that all the practical needs will be met.
- For daily exercise in GOW training: prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth and attend Lord's day meeting on time.
- Pray for migration to the 30 cities for shepherding and establishing churches. And for GTCA of the local people and gospel preaching in our daily living.
- For gospel preaching on West Valley College campus, as well as for English-speaking testimony in Campbell.
- Pray for Brother Guichang for the recovery of eye and experience of the Lord.

Announcement

- GOW trainig 4th term registration, register with brother Peter Liu
- Morning Revival: Crystallization-Study of Isaiah, Week 24.
- YP Bible Reading this week: Mark chapter 9-10
- Prayer meeting 7:30PM on Tues.(4/26) at Tien's place, 19070 Dagmar Dr., Saratoga, CA.
- Summer Training 7/4-/7/9, Anaheim, register with Brother Tien
- Summer school of truth will be held on July 24-29, Alliance Redwood
- 6th grade conference 5/13~15, register with brother Tai.