

Advent 2021
Why Did He Come?
Part 1
“Sin’s Alienation”
Isaiah 59

1. Sin’s Separation: What separates humanity from their Maker?

- a. This separation is not due to any lack on God’s part.
- b. Our sin has separated us (“*has been separating*”) us from God.
- c. Our sin has hidden His face from us so that He will not hear (e.g., Ps 66:18, Is 1:15),

2. Sin’s harvest: What is our spiritual condition before a holy God?

- a. We are guilty in thought, speech and action (:e.g., Matt 5)
- b. Our judgments are flawed as they originate in our fallen minds.
 - Flawed reasoning (Is 64:6)
 - Toxic actions (Jn 10:10)
- c. Our self justification cannot cover our guilt any more than cobwebs can clothe us (The opposite of Zech 3:1-4)
- d. Apart from God we are without hope (Eph 1:-13).

3. How is this seen in our world?

- a. Injustice
- b. Righteousness inaccessible.
 - We are blinded. (PS 82)
 - The brokenness that we see all-around us wears on us.
- c. Our condition is fully exposed to God.

4. How has this been mended?

- a. God Himself (“His own arm”) worked salvation.
 - The just for the unjust (1 Pet 3:18).
 - God is both just and justifier (Rom 3:21-31).
- b. The Redeemer came to Zion (Is 40:1-11).

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Part 2
Isaiah 40
“His Promise”

This prophetic word points to the One who would (and has!) come.

1. **Words of comfort to a people under discipline: 40:1-2.** Israel and Judah had been warned in the preceding chapters of pending judgment. Here the focus changes and words of comfort are given.
 - a. Jerusalem’s hard service (“warfare,” or term of service) was completed. The prophet is told to speak “comfortingly” (“gently and to the heart”) to her.
 - b. Her (Jerusalem’s) sin had been paid for - double. (Jer16:1-21).

God’s discipline of His people is always done in love and with a glorious end.

2. **A voice calling (Mtt 3:1-11, Mk 1:1-8): “In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”**
 - a. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low. (Also Mal 3:1-5)
 - b. The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.
 - c. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. (Is 9:1-7, Jn 1:14, Gal 4:4)

God’s plan unfolds in His way and time.

3. **A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?”**
 - a. “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness (“goodness, kindness”) is like the flowers of the field.
 - The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”
 - Look at Ps 103:13-18, Jas 1:9-11, 1 Pet 1:24 - the works of man shall perish, those things wrought by the will of God are eternal.
 - * The castles and forts of the ancients crumble. Our monuments will vanish.
 - * We have this need to be remembered. But don’t set your hopes on it. Walk though any cemetery. But God remembers all.
 - b. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God.” (Mtt 1:23, 3:13-17, Lk 2:11, Jn 1:19-32). But how did He come?
 - See, the Sovereign LORD (“Lord God”) comes with power, and He rules with a mighty arm (“Strength, power, might”). See Is 59:15b-18, Act 4:12, 2 Pet 1:1)
 - See, His reward is with Him, and His recompense accompanies Him. (See Is 62:11-12).
The near fulfillment of this was God’s restoration of the nation after their captivity and exile. He ultimate fulfillment is seen in the finished work of our Savior. Rev 22:12
 - c. He tends (“pastures, tends, feeds”) His flock like a shepherd.
 - He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart.
 - And gently leads those that are with young. (Ps 23, Jn 10, Ps 103)

Our powerful Savior, Lord of all, is a loving Shepherd

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Part 3
Isaiah 52:13-53:12
“His Provision”
(An ordinary man)

1. God’s suffering servant

- a. He is wise and exalted.

- b. He suffered:
 - His wounds were appalling.
 - His appearance rendered almost un-human.

- c. He would sprinkle (*spiritually cleanse*) many nations.

- d. No one could have anticipated God’s plan (1 Cor 2:6-10).

2. Who has believed God’s message and seen His power? *Who could have foreseen it?*

- a. He was an unlikely Savior (humanly speaking).
 - Like a root out of dry ground (He would seem improbable - Jn 1:46)
 - He wasn’t the sort “casting” would choose for the part of Savior.
 - His own rejected Him (Jn 1:11).

- b. He bore our sin, guilt and pain (Rom 8:1-4)
 - Most considered Him rejected by God and men.
 - Yet His suffering was for our benefit (Jn 15:13).
 - His suffering healed sin’s separation (Jn 3:16). That wound has been healed (2 Cor 5:11-21).
 - He bore our (humanity’s sin), though we all are stained by its guilt (Rom 3:23, 5:12-21).
 - He was mistreated and denied justice yet He did not defend Himself. (How can sin be defended before a Holy Father?)
 - He did not make any effort to avoid His suffering and death, nor did His contemporaries understand that His suffering was for them/us?

- c. There was/is a plan.
 - His suffering and death was intended to humiliate and punish yet, His burial was honorable (Lk 23:50-54).
 - He was completely innocent of transgression. (2 Cor 5:21, Heb 4:15)
 - His suffering was God’s will to atone for sin.
 - He is victorious!
 - * He who died childless will have children who will be a vast company (Jn 1:12, Rev 7:9-17).
 - * He lives! After His suffering He has, and is seeing the fruit of His sacrifice and He is satisfied. (Rev 1:5, 17:14)

3. This “ordinary man” is exalted! (Is 45:18-25, Phil 2:5-11)

- a. For He poured His life out unto death and was numbered with the transgressors (That would be us!).

- b. He bore our sin and made (and makes!) intercession for us.

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Part 4
Luke 2:1-20
His Presence

(An ordinary child born to an ordinary family and revealed to ordinary people)

1. Caught up in events 1-7

- a. The emperor had ordered an enrollment of the population empire-wide.
- b. The holy family was required to travel to Bethlehem to enroll. She was almost due to deliver her baby.
 - Think of it: 90 miles. The movies always show her riding on a donkey. There is no evidence that she did anything but walk.
 - More than anything, consider the power and timing of God:
 - * Mic 5:2 is the prophecy stating that Bethlehem was to be the birthplace of the Messiah (See also Matt 2:1-6).
 - * About this time, a celestial event was beginning that would catch the attention of certain students of astronomy and prophecy who lived hundreds of miles to the East.
 - * A murderous monarch (Herod the Great) was ruling in Judea.
 - * The Mediterranean and Middle Eastern world had been prepared - a common trade language, common government, transportation and communication readily available.
 - * It was "go time." Not earlier, not later. God's timing. Gal 4:4, 1 Cor 10:11

Although things may seem random to us, God has a plan

2. An obscure but not un-heralded birth. 8-15

- a. Consider the people to whom God announced the greatest event in human history: Shepherds out with their flocks. Ordinary men doing an ordinary job. Consider 1 Cor 1:18-30 - He came for us all.
- b. An angel of the Lord appeared ("stood") by them and God's glory illuminated them.
 - They were terrified ("*they feared with great fear*") See also Dan 8:15-19
 - The angel had a message: "Fear not, I bring good news of great joy for all people."
 - * Today (Or "now") in the town ("city") of David a Savior has been born to you: Christ the Lord.
 - * "Here's your sign" - they would find the infant wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger (Feed trough).
- c. Then, as if to impress on the shepherds the importance of the event, a great company "multitude" of heaven's army appeared.
 - They praised God and said: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men on whom His favor rests. (Jn 3:16, Rom 5:1)
 - The angels departed and left the shepherds, who acted on the message they had heard.

He came as one of us, to all of us.

3. The first to see and honor the Lord or Creation after His birth - ordinary men 16-20

- a. They hurried off and found the family.
 - It must have been a memorable night. Their search would have upended the town.
 - They spread the news, to the amazement of those who heard it.
- b. Mary and Joseph must have needed the confirmation. It would not be the last time either.
- c. The shepherds *returned* - to what? Their sheep. Bloom where God plants you!

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Part 5
Luke 2:21-52
Commencement

In our society weddings have become a big event. But a wedding is a beginning, a starting point. Once wed, a couple face life together. A marriage is both an event taking place at a place and time and also a journey. A couple's focus should be on their life together. Similarly, the birth of Christ happened but it was the life that followed that should be our focus.

1. As Joseph and Mary began their ministry as parents, they sought the Lord. Their son was raised in accordance with the Law. 2:21-24

- a. He was circumcised and named on the 8th day (Lev 12:3, Lk 1:31)
- b. He was consecrated to the Lord (See Ex 13:1-2, 11-13)

2. God gave the new parents some encouragement: 2:25-38

- a. Simeon was allowed to see and hold the Lord's Christ.
 - He prayed and prophesied: "Now I can go....my eyes have seen Him."
 - * Salvation. The light of revelation to the Gentiles. (See Is 49:6)
 - * Glory of Israel. (Eph 3:1-6)
 - He then blessed them and gave Mary a message.
- b. Anna gave thanks to God and spoke about Him to all who waited for the redemption of Israel (e.g., Mk 15:43, Lk 1:68, 2:25, 24:21)

3. They returned to Nazareth in Galilee. 2:39-40

4. At the temple (12 yrs old): 2:41-52

- a. Traveled with family.
- b. When they left He remained behind.
- c. He astounded the teachers of the law.
- d. It appears from the text that He knew already who He was.
- e. He obeyed His parents and grew in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man.

5. What about us?

- a. Salvation is a destination but also a journey.
- b. Heb 10:19-25. Because we have confidence to approach God in prayer (by the blood of Jesus) and by a new and living way, and because we have a great High Priest, let us:
 - draw near. (How? Via prayer, the word, fellowship and service).
 - hold unswervingly ("*hold tight/fast*") to our hope (confidence).
 - consider how we may spur ("*provoke*") one another toward love and good deeds.
 - not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing.

Bon Voyage!