

The True Lord of all the World-Immanuel

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Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] We're going to turn to our Bibles now and to our reading from this morning, which is in Isaiah chapter 7 and Isaiah chapter 9, page 571, first of all.

We're looking at Isaiah this Christmas and particularly at the names that he gives to the promised child in chapter 9, verse 6. But this morning we're going to range around and fill in some other bits from Isaiah so that we really truly get the picture of the promised one that he speaks about.

And the beginning of chapter 7 tells us the context because there was a grave threat facing the people of God. Verse 1 of chapter 7, And in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, son of Isaiah, king of Judah, Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it.

When the house of David was told, Syria is in league with Ephraim, the heart of Azav and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.

It was a very grave threat indeed, surrounded by enemies. But God's response comes in verse 5. He tells us through his prophet, Because Syria with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah has devised evil against you, saying, Let us go up against Judah and terrify it and let us conquer it for ourselves and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it.

[1 : 36] Thus says the Lord God, It shall not stand. It shall not come to pass. In verse 10, again, the Lord spoke to Ahaz, Ask a sign of the Lord your God.

Let it be as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. And he said, Hear then, O house of David, is it too little for you to weary men that you weary my God also?

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.

Turn over to chapter 9 and verse 1. Though there be thick darkness and threat, the prophet says there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish.

In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the latter time, the latter days, he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

[2 : 58] The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has the light shined. 4 verse 6, To us a child is born.

To us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonder Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it with justice and with righteousness.

From this time forth and forevermore, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Amen. May God bless to us his word.

Well, do take your Bibles at page 573, Isaiah chapter 9. Amen. And we're thinking this morning about the one who comes to be the true Lord of all the world.

[4 : 04] We've been thinking in our carol services, and will be, about the question in the carol, who is he in yonder stall? Who is Jesus Christ, whose birth the world still stops to celebrate, even 2,000 years later, in a way that it does for no other human being?

That's the question that faced all of those that first Christmas. Who was this? And it's still a vital question for all people everywhere. And it's still a vital question for the church to be very clear about.

Who is the Jesus that we are proclaiming as the Christian church? Well, we're looking for our answer to the words of Isaiah the prophet, written some 700 years before the coming of Jesus.

Because through him, God told his people about that birth to come, and he called them to put their trust in this coming one, what he would do, and what he would bring to this dark world.

In our carol services, we're looking particularly at the four names in Isaiah 9, verse 6. And that's a verse that we know very well from Handel's Messiah and other places.

[5 : 19] But we looked last Sunday evening about the first name, the wonder counselor. He will be the one who purposes wonderful things for God's people, who will bring powerful and permanent leadership to all the human race, to be the true leader of all mankind.

But this morning, we're going to arrange a little further in the book of Isaiah to see that above all, Isaiah is telling us that the one who comes will be the Lord of all the world.

He will be the ultimate king, the king of glory, whose rule will never end, never be challenged, and never be defeated. As you can see right here, if you look at chapter 9, verses 6 and 7, we're told that the government will be upon his shoulder.

Verse 7, of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. And that seemed to be a cause for great joy. Obviously, this is no earthly government that he's speaking about.

We don't tend to rejoice in them that much, do we? And they certainly won't last forever. Stable and strong government, that was the catch word about a year ago, wasn't it? But it's pretty absent these days for Mrs. May, indeed for Mrs. Merkel in Germany.

[6 : 38] But this child's rule will be on the throne of David, says the prophet, and upholding his kingdom. And it will be a kingdom, he says, which is forevermore.

And the zeal of the Lord of hosts himself will do it. Who is he in yonder stall? Well, the chorus of that carol says, it is the Lord, the King of glory.

It is the Lord, oh, wondrous story. He is the Lord and the King of all earth and heaven. That's who the prophet told God's people to wait for, to look for, to long for.

However dark the days might be, however long those days of darkness might be, that was where their hope was to be set. So come back with me to first century Palestine, occupied territory, where for hundreds of years God's people having returned from exile had never yet been free.

First they were under the rule of the Medo-Persians, then it was the Greeks, and then it was the Romans. And many of them, of course, had given up all hope of any freedom. Some of them had led uprisings, rebellions, trying to seek their own freedom.

[7 : 53] But there was, in amongst all of that, there was a faithful remnant of God's people still clinging on, still hoping in the promises of the prophets that God would at last bring true succor.

It would bring a true savior to them. People like Simeon, remember, who meet them in Luke chapter 2, were told that they were righteous and devotes. They were waiting for the consolation, for the comfort of Israel.

What were they waiting for? For the coming of the child that Isaiah had promised. You remember how Handel's Messiah starts with the words from Isaiah chapter 40.

Don't worry, I'm not going to sing it. Comfort, comfort, consolation for my people, says your God. Make straight in the desert a highway for your God.

And then the chorus comes in wonderfully, doesn't it? And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh will see it together. That's what Simeon and these others are waiting to see.

[8 : 58] They're waiting to see the glory of the promised Lord. They're waiting for the beautiful feet Isaiah speaks about in chapter 52, do you remember? Who preach peace, who publicize salvation, who say to Zion, your God reigns as King and Lord at last.

That's what Luke means when he says that Simeon and these others were waiting to see the Lord's Christ. And God had revealed to Simeon, remember, very specifically that he would see him with his own eyes, that old man before he died.

And he was waiting quite literally for Christ's mass, for the birth of the Messiah. Neither Isaiah nor the other prophets knew exactly when Christ would come.

Remember Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1 that they searched, they inquired into precisely the time and the precise human identity of the Christ who would come.

But they knew what he was coming to do. He would come and suffer and then he would be glorified. And Isaiah was absolutely clear about what this one would come and do.

[10 : 09] The whole of his prophecies bound together by the person and the work of the child who was to come, who he really was and who and what he would really accomplish. Because, see, Isaiah is looking forward to very clearly the coming of the one who is the promised Lord, the Lord of all the world, the ultimate king, the king of glory.

And the answer, you see, that God was going to bring in this child was not just God's answer to his people, Israel's problems, but the answer to the greatest need of all the peoples of the earth.

Indeed, the need of the whole earth, the whole cosmos, the whole creation, which needs to be renewed and rescued and saved from the terrible curse of man's sin. And so, you see, when Simeon saw the infant Jesus in the temple, he said, Lord, you're now letting your servant depart in peace because my eyes have seen your salvation.

A light of revelation to the Gentiles, the peoples of the world and a glory for your people, Israel. See, he understood that this Christ child was to be the Lord of all the world, not just Israel because he understood what Christmas meant.

He understood what Isaiah and the other prophets had foretold. So, we need to try and grasp what Simeon was so clear about and what he had understood from Isaiah the prophet about who this child in the manger really would be and what he would do for the world.

[11 : 40] And to do that, we need to go a little bit beyond just these famous verses in Isaiah and get a sense of Isaiah's bigger picture of what his message is. Palmer Robertson, a writer in an excellent book called The Christ of the Prophets, he sums up Isaiah's message by saying that it's three connected mountain peaks provide the spinal backbone for Isaiah's prophecies.

And it's these three things. First, it's the coming of the promised king in David's line, the true, everlasting David who will sit on his throne forever. Second, it's the sufferings of the anointed servant of the Lord, the one who we know from Isaiah 53 and the other servant songs would suffer to redeem his people.

And thirdly, it's the arrival of the days of God's eschatological kingdom. That's just a big word that means the everlasting kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth.

This whole world restored forever. I think that's very helpful because it ties together all that it means for Isaiah that he is prophesying the coming of the promised Lord of all the world, the ultimate king of glory.

He's the answer, the ultimate answer to all this world's needs in all these three ways. He's the ultimate ruler of the whole world. He's the king like David.

[13 : 07] And he's the ultimate redeemer of the whole world. He's the anointed servant who comes to save from sin. And he brings ultimate restoration for the whole world.

God's promised kingdom of glory forever and ever. Three things. Let's think about these in turn then. about how Isaiah relates them to this child who's promised.

First of all, this child in yonder Saul is the ultimate ruler of the whole world. Turn back just to chapter 7 and this famous verse in verse 14.

The virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. Now let me just quote to you from Palmer Robertson's words on this verse.

He says, extraordinary efforts have been made to rid this verse of everything that sounds supernatural. Now maybe you've come across that.

[14 : 08] You've read books or you've heard people say this word in verse 14. It doesn't really mean virgin. It just means a young woman. And so they say there's nothing here about miraculous virgin births.

It's just that early Christians took it and used it and made it apply to Jesus. Well I can tell you that is just simply not true. This word means nothing other than a virgin.

If you want to read extensively on that go to Alec Matias enormous commentary on Isaiah and he will tell you this. Every explicit context in which you find this word used both in the Bible and outside the Bible it means precisely and exactly a virgin.

A young girl who has never slept with any man. But you see you only have to look at the context of this verse in this prophecy here in Isaiah chapter 7 that you can see that it's something absolutely out of the ordinary that God is promising.

Isaiah 7 begins as we saw with God's people utterly terrified with an enormous threat building against Judah. They were shaking like the trees in the wind it was so awful.

[15 : 16] But it was far more awful even than they realized. Look at verse 6 what was the purpose of it all? It was a threat to attack Jerusalem to attack the house of David and to wipe out the king in David's line.

In other words it was a threat to attack and to wipe out the whole of God's solemn covenant with David that a son of his line would always reign on the throne over God's people Israel.

See it's exactly the type of cosmic attack on the plan and the purpose of God for all eternity that you see right from the very beginning of the Bible right up to the end. Begins in Genesis 3 doesn't it?

With the serpent attacking the seed of God himself Adam and Eve in the garden. You follow it all the way through the story of Israel. Cain tries to murder Abel. Ishmael is against Isaac.

Esau is against Jacob. Pharaoh and the Egyptians are against the people of Israel and on it goes all the way through the story. Here is a cataclysmic assault on the plan and purpose of God himself.

[16 : 30] It's an attempt to destroy God's very covenant of salvation. That king was killed. His line was wiped out. The end of God's promised salvation.

And that's why it's so serious and that's why God says to Ahaz in verse 11 ask me for a sign because this is never going to happen. And Ahaz is all full of false piety.

He's just not trusting in God. I won't ask for a sign he says. So God says in verse 14 alright I'll give you one anyway. How's this? A mighty sign that will show you that just no force in earth or heaven itself can possibly ever threaten my plan of salvation.

Nothing can stop my promised seed to come gaining the victory for his people over all my enemies. Even if even if there's not a man left on this whole earth to father a child in David's line.

Even that can't stop me because a virgin will conceive and bear a son. And that child will be this world's ultimate ruler.

[17 : 44] He himself will be God the promised Lord. Look at his name. His name will be called Emmanuel God with us. So Ahaz can I make it any clearer than that?

The one who is God will be born of a woman to be the ultimate savior that you need. And Paul Robertson says only the same spirit of unbelief that marred the response of King Ahaz to the prophet's message will rationalize away the wonder of this word.

Emmanuel God with us coming to be the ultimate ruler of this word. A king who is himself God. The mighty God is one of his names.

That's the child who was promised to be born. That's the son who would be given to God's people. And he'll come as a king in David's line as promised.

Look over to chapter 11 and see where Isaiah again speaks about this one who's to come. Chapter 11 verse 1 you see he comes as a shoot from the stump of Jesse that is from the remnant of God's holy seed.

[18 : 57] Back in chapter 6 verse 13 God says that even through the exile and even through judgment God would preserve his holy seed. So he's a shoot from the remnant of David's line and yet look down to verse 10 he calls him there the root of Jesse.

Jesse springs from him. So on the one hand he's another David he's a son of David Jesse was David's father and yet he's the root and the origin himself of that whole family through whom this one was to be born.

In other words he is the king who is himself God the son of David and yet the root of all things. And that's why you see verse 2 of chapter 11 is so unique.

Look the spirit of the Lord Yahweh Jehovah the spirit of the Lord God will rest on him in all its fullness. The spirit of wisdom and understanding and counsel and might.

So you see the answer that God gives to Ahaz in that immediate problem they had that political problem was not notice a quick fix for that particular situation now.

[20 : 18] That the answer he gave was the hope of an ultimate answer for the whole world and all its darkness. That's what Simeon was waiting for in the first century. Not a political fix to get rid of the Romans that's what many people were wanting God to do.

No he was waiting for that ultimate answer the true Lord of the whole world to come in the coming of the King of Glory himself in that child. God's answers you see are never just mere political answers never just social answers.

That's such an important thing for the church to remember isn't it? When the church has forgotten that when it's got itself up to its ears in politics and social concerns and so on it's been a total disaster.

No when the angel spoke to Mary about the birth of her child to come he said this child will be great far far greater than just a political reformer a social reformer.

He will reign forever said the angel and of his kingdom there will be no end. He is the answer to all of this world's problems because he and yonder stall is this world's ultimate ruler.

[21 : 33] He's the king. That's the first great message that Isaiah the prophet hammers home all the way through to God's people. Well we'll look at the other two mountain peaks but before we do that we're going to break and we're going to sing that carol Who is he in yonder stall and we're going to repeat again and again this chorus.

It is the Lord a wondrous story. It is the Lord the king of glory. following door all the way please.

Thank you. Other stories Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[23 : 51] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. simply could not stomach. And for the most part, simply still can't stomach today, which is why most Jews will not accept Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

No Muslim will accept this idea either of a God who can suffer like that for his people. But Isaiah makes it so, so clear we cannot avoid it.

Look at Isaiah 42. This is the first of the four servant songs that we know, where Isaiah speaks of the suffering servant of God who will come to suffer for his people in order to redeem them.

[25 : 01] And look at the first thing that we're told in verse 1 of chapter 42 about this coming servant. I have put my spirit on him. Now we just read, haven't we, in chapter 11, verse 1 of God's king.

That the spirit of the Lord will rest upon him. And here he is resting on God's servant. Look at verse 4 here. He is God's servant who will bring what?

He will bring justice to the earth. Just as back in chapter 11, God's king would justly judge the poor, would bring equity, justice, righteousness to all the earth.

See, he's one and the same thing, doing one and the same job. God's king and God's servant. He's God's servant king. And if there's any doubt at all, all you have to do is read on a little further in Isaiah.

Do it later on to Isaiah chapter 42 and 43, where he speaks in that best known of the great servant songs. Do you remember I says, Behold my servant.

[26 : 10] He will be high and lifted up and shall be exalted. Now there's only one figure all through the whole of Isaiah's prophecy who is high and lifted up.

Who is it? It's God, the Lord of hosts, the Holy One of Israel. Remember Isaiah's call when he had that great vision of God and his glory in the temple. I saw the Lord seated on his throne high and lifted up.

And Isaiah chapter 57, God himself speaks and he says, Thus says the Lord, the one who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy.

See, this child is the servant, the savior, who is himself God high and lifted up.

And that's why, of course, only he can possibly be this world's redeemer. That's why he can fill the earth with righteousness, with justice and with peace, only because he's the only one with the power to deal with everything that prevents righteousness and justice and peace to fill our world.

[27 : 25] What is that? Well, it's the sinful hearts of men and women, isn't it? But he, the high and lifted up one himself, he comes, according to Isaiah, to be made low, to be made a servant, to be crushed, to be stricken for the sins of his people.

Read Isaiah 52 and 53 later on yourself. He comes to be an offering for sins, says the prophet, so that he, the righteous servant of God, might make many to be counted righteous before God.

And that alone is how God's everlasting kingdom will be established and how it'll be upheld in righteousness and peace from this time forth and forevermore.

Again, do you see that God's answer in this child that he promises is far, far more than something merely political, merely social, merely of this world. Doesn't concern the natural order, does it?

It's about sin. It's about the spiritual realm. It's about the things that are the root cause of all the disorder in this whole cosmos, in our world, in our lives.

[28 : 45] The sin in the human heart. That's so, so important. And that brings us, you see, to Isaiah's third great mountain peak. This child, he teaches, is the ruler of the whole world because he will be the ultimate redeemer of the whole world.

And therefore, his coming will initiate the ultimate restoration of this whole world. This child will bring cosmic restoration, recreation of the whole universe, the whole created order.

Now, that's such a feature of the later chapters of Isaiah's prophecy, as you know. Come back with me, though, just to chapter 11, because I want you to see that right at the outset, when he speaks about this one, the coming ruler of David, right at the start, it's all there so clearly in what he's speaking about, this child who's to come, the shoot of Jesse, who will also be the root of Jesse, the one who has the spirit in abundance, the one who promises to bring all good things to his people.

Look at what this new David is going to do. Look at verse 11 of Isaiah chapter 11. He's going to gather, first of all, all the faithful remnant of Israel scattered throughout the world under his rule.

In that day, the Lord will extend his hand a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea, from all over the known world.

[30 : 22] All the remnant of God's faithful ones who are waiting for his promise he's going to gather. That includes Simeon, and Anna, and Zechariah, and Elizabeth. They're all the faithful ones who are waiting for the consolation that Isaiah promised.

He'll gather them to be his people. But that's not all. Look at verse 10. He's going to gather all the nations under his rule as well. In that day, the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples, and of him shall the nations inquire.

Same in verse 12. He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel. You see? And Isaiah is full of that. Read through his prophecy.

It's full of that kind of promise for the nations. That's why in Matthew chapter 4, when he's recording the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Matthew quotes from Isaiah, from the very beginning of Isaiah chapter 9 that we read together about Galilee of the nations and says, this is the promise of God for the nations of the world being fulfilled in Galilee just as he promised.

Look at the context of these verses in Isaiah chapter 11 about this king who's going to come and rule Israel and the nations together. Look at what this rule of righteousness is going to look like.

[31 : 43] Look at verse 6 of chapter 11. In that day, Isaiah says, the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the young goat and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together. The lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra and the weaned child will put his hand on the adders then.

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

What is that talking about? It's not talking about groups of well-meaning Christians going into this world to make it a better place by helping people, is it? It's not talking about some sort of earthly utopia that somehow the people of this world can ever create for themselves through political means or social means or anything else at all.

Charitable work. It's nothing like that, is it? This is talking about a recreated universe, about a world made new. This is talking about the curse of sin being banished forever through the victory of God's coming servant king.

[33 : 11] Isaiah sums it up at the end of his prophecy in chapter 65 like this. Behold, says the Lord, I create a new heavens and a new earth. And the former things, they shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Nothing of the pain, the darkness, the wickedness, the misery, the horror of this world. None of it will even be in our memories, let alone in our sight.

And he goes on to describe the glory of God's eternal kingdom. He says it will be glorious and perfect and just and right. And it will be because, he says, in Isaiah 65, verse 25, because dust shall be the serpent's food.

That is at last, the serpent, the evil one, the great enemy, the author of sin, the destroyer of God's image in man. At last, he will be utterly destroyed.

Dust will be his food. He will bite the dust never to rise again. And only then, only then, will there be a world where, as Isaiah says here, they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.

[34 : 31] Who is he in yonder stall? He is the one, my friends, who at last will bring cosmic restoration to this world. All that we long for.

That's the child that this man, Simeon, and the others were waiting for. That's the child that Isaiah himself was waiting for when he wrote in chapter 8, verse 16, bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples.

I will wait for the Lord who is hiding his face for now from the house of Jacob. But I will hope in him.

And you see, in the birth of Jesus Christ, God is hiding his face no longer from this world. Love is smiling from his face, says the carol.

Strikes for us now the hour of grace, Savior, since thou art born. And Simeon said, now my eyes have seen it. I've seen your salvation.

[35 : 37] This child, the promised Lord, the ultimate king of glory, the ultimate ruler of this world, the ultimate redeemer of this world, the one who brings ultimate restoration to this world.

I've seen him. But that's also why Simeon said to the child's parents that Jesus would be a sign who was opposed in the world.

And that to be associated with him, with the real Jesus, would inevitably bring to them pain and opposition. Why is that? Well, friends, it's because the human heart doesn't want a savior from sin.

Doesn't want a God who takes back the world from our hands into his hands. We still think we can make a better world than God can. It's not the Jesus that this world wants.

And that's why it's not the Jesus that the church has always proclaimed. So I want to ask you all this morning, is this Isaiah's child the child you really are thinking about this Christmas?

[36 : 56] Have you got his identity and his task as clear as Isaiah did all those thousands of years ago? I hope so because if not, then it will be big, big problems for your Christian viewpoint and for our life as a church.

As it goes, let me just make that clear. Three things. If we don't really grasp that Jesus is the ultimate ruler of this whole world, then we might be inhibited, mightn't we, in proclaiming a unique gospel and a unique savior and a universal lord of all people.

We might be inhibited in proclaiming a Christ who does command all people everywhere to repent and to bow to his ultimate lordship. We might shrink back, mightn't we, from proclaiming Christ alone to Jews and to Gentiles, to Muslims, to Hindus, to spiritualists and to secularists, to everyone.

We might start to think in terms of interfaith witness and all kinds of things that just show that we've never grasped what the real Lord Jesus Christ really is and what he's about.

we need to grasp, don't we, Isaiah 11 verse 4, that if he will judge the world with justice, then look, he must ultimately destroy the wicked who won't submit to his rule.

[38 : 30] And if we don't understand and grasp his ultimate kingship, then we'll also be very tempted to end the book of Isaiah one verse early. You can look that up later and see what I mean.

But second, you see, if we fail to grasp that this child came to bring ultimate restoration for the whole world, the whole cosmos, then we might lower our horizons far too drastically and we won't look for a fulfillment of the gospel that's nearly big enough.

Our eyes won't be on the new heaven and the new earth that Christ has begun and that he will usher in at his return. And that will mean we're not truly living for that world.

And instead, our eyes will be really just focused entirely on this world and our priorities will likely just be on this world and we'll want to settle for a partial restoration of the world.

That's how you lose your way all down the road of the social gospel as liberalism has done. You get taken up with just alleviating this world's problems. And friends, that is something that can never ultimately be done by human beings.

[39 : 43] Many people start off as evangelical believers but end up getting sidetracked into putting all kinds of time and energy into nothing more than political campaigns, peace campaigns, poverty campaigns, AIDS campaigns, all things, all manner of things that may be good and useful in and of themselves and worth doing but which will never ever bring about the salvation and the transformation of this world.

Only the coming of the glorious risen Lord Jesus to rule this world can do that. Notice, as Isaiah, this child brings the real answer to this world's need, the ultimate transformation that we need.

And our task, Isaiah says again and again, is to proclaim that message to all the nations. That's the task that Jesus has given to his church.

And that, says Peter, is really how we will speed his coming and speed the coming of the peace, the justice, the joy, the sinlessness that we all long to see.

don't fill our horizons merely with what is passing but what is ultimate. And third, if we fail to see that this child really is the ultimate redeemer who suffers to bring salvation and who calls his followers likewise to share in suffering so that we can proclaim that message his way to the world for its salvation.

- [41 : 20] If we don't grasp that truth then we might fall into all kinds of misplaced triumphalism. We might mistake totally what it means to be real followers of this king in this world now.
- Because in this world King Jesus was despised and rejected. And he says, so it will be for everyone who follows me in this world.
- Remember what Simeon said to Jesus' parents at that time. And a sword will pierce your own souls also. You too will bear the pain of your association with the Christ.
- And you see, unless we see that as Isaiah saw it so clearly in the suffering of the servant of God we might start to think that all his glory will be something that we share now in terms of health and of wealth and of prosperity and all that bliss that he promises us in his kingdom.
- But no, in this world you shall have tribulation said the Lord Jesus Christ the promised Lord. But he reminded us that this world is not all there is.
- [42 : 36] So who is he in yonder stall that you're celebrating this Christmas? are you really as clear as Isaiah was all those centuries ago?
- If he is the unique ruler, the ultimate ruler, then you will bow to him alone and you'll call others to bow to him alone as the only Lord of their lives.
- And if he's the ultimate redeemer, then we'll trust in his cross and we'll also carry his cross gladly, won't we? bearing the reproach that he bore in order that we might share his message of salvation with others.
- And if he brings ultimate restoration to this world, then we'll live, won't we, with detachment from this world. We'll be increasingly content with material things, but we'll be increasingly longing for the coming of Christ to usher in his eternal kingdom forever.
- The whole trajectory of our life, the whole focus of all our energies will be focused there on the real world transformation, not on fantasies of utopianism as though we somehow can build the kingdom of God here on this earth.
- [44 : 00] There's a lot to think about, isn't there? And what Isaiah tells us of the one who is the promised Lord of all the earth. But I think that spending time pondering these things in this coming week will be a lot more useful, a lot more helpful for us than spending many hours trudging up and down Buchanan Street doing your Christmas shopping, don't you?
- Let's make time for the one who is the promised Lord of all the earth. Let's pray. of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end.
- Our gracious Father, how we thank You for the light and the life that has come into this world from Your heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Help us, we pray not to be carried away with mere sentimentality or with any sort of superficiality about the message of Christmas but to know, to understand from the scriptures the sheer height and the depth and the length and the breadth of the greatness of Your love and the greatness of the glory who is our Savior King.
- And so may we be fine following Him and worshipping Him and proclaiming Him to all the world and for all of our days until He comes.
- [45 : 39] Amen.