

# I

In many countries around the world Jan. 6 is celebrated as 3 Kings Day in honor of the Maj from the east who proclaimed this child to the world as "the King of the Jews". We can wonder why God chose pagans for this epiphany moment. Earlier God sent the message of the birth of a savior to shepherds for their epiphany moment. The religious inner circle seems to have been ignored in favor of outsiders who would not have studied scripture, in particular the book of Isaiah. Certainly the kings from the East did not know who this toddler was. Mary and Joseph had studied scripture, had their talk with the angel, but the enormity of this moment, this child, must have been beyond their understanding. Stealing a few words from the Gaither song writer: Mary, did you know this baby will walk on water? Mary did you know this baby you delivered, will soon deliver you? When you kissed the face of this baby, did you know you kissed the face of God Almighty.

If they had studied and understood the words of the Lord in the book of Isaiah, they would have seen a great description of the servant God and what his purpose was.

# II

Isaiah lived between the years 739-686 B.C. The nation of Israel was split, with 10 tribes living to the north with Samaria as their capitol and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to the south with Jerusalem as their capital.

Life was not easy. Because of the constant fear of invasion from their pagan neighbors, fear prevailed. To the south, Egypt was a threat and to the north, Assyria and the northern tribes threatened Judah. They were aware of their history of occupation and didn't want to once again lose their freedom, culture and way of worship to another pagan country. For protection, the north turned to Syria, but the nation as a whole turned to the worship of idols. Their old friend Baal even made an appearance. In the 41<sup>st</sup> chapter of Isaiah, we see the word of God being spoken through Isaiah, making a statement saying; "behold, you (idols) are nothing, they are a delusion, works of nothing, he who chooses you is detestible".

This is the world the Lord, through Isaiah brought a much needed message of hope. Without hope for the future, we give up and Israel was on the verge of collapse, in fact during this time Syria would conquer and control them. But, it seems when Isaiah would bring a message of destruction, it would be followed by a message of hope.

III

Isaiah 42:1

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight.

God is making a presentation of his choice of a servant to which he adds, it is a good choice, I will support and I am delighted.

Make no mistake, God uses the possessive pronoun my. This is his servant, not my servant, not your servant or Israel's servant. This is not a slave, but one who has humbly volunteered to do the work of God's will. In humility, he will respond to all of God's commands.

Here we see the Holy Spirit brought into the plan. We'll talk about that later.

The mission is defined as bringing justice to the nations. The Israelites must have liked the thought of revenge. Dreaming of a conquering army marching the streets of Syria was something to dwell on. But what is this? "shall not raise his voice in the streets". What kind of servant is this and who is it. We haven't heard a name yet-only servant.

In verse three God says: He will not destroy the bent reed and the flickering light he will not be put out. I think we can all confess to times of brokenness, a time when we lose hope, we wonder if we will ever laugh again, will life be good again and maybe some rebellion has set in. we have asked questions of our God, how can this be? Why did this happen. The light of faith is dim, the world seems like a dark place. The promise is, he will not destroy, but lift you up.

In faithfulness he will bring justice and he will not give up, he will not be stopped till his mission is complete. The justice of God is different than what we think of as justice. God's justice is a restorative justice. When the thief in the night steals and destroys that work of art created by your great grandmother-its. The sheriff will call and say:"we have caught the thief". But where is my painting? God's justice restores what we have lost. More on that later.

He who created the heavens and stretched them out has called you unto righteousness (being right with God). "I will take you by the hand". When you are a broken reed, your faith is flickering, the hand of the almighty creator will take you by the hand and lift you up.

We've heard a lot about justice. We realize we are a broken reed and can't fix ourself. How in God's courtroom will you be found innocent? In Genesis 1-2 Man lived n harmony with God and then sin entered in. in Genesis 3, man lost his righteousness. We live in Genesis 3. If we are declared innocent in Gods courtroom, what kind of justice is that? It's the Jesus kind of justice. Jesus takes the kind of Justice you and I deserve. The righteousness of Christ is credited to our account. Verdict-not guilty. The son of man came not to be served, but to serve and hive life to many

IV

Paul Harvey might say; "and now for the rest of the story".

The scene is at the Jordan River. John the Baptist is baptizing believers. He has a large following, but when he sees Jesus coming he says,"I need to be baptized by you and do you come to me? Jesus replied "It is to fulfill all righteousness".

This is Jesus, fully man, fully God, fully servant, here to fulfill all righteousness. That's why God sent him to earth. But how does baptism fulfill all righteousness

If John's baptism was one of repentance why Jesus? There could be many reasons for the baptism of Jesus. God received a lot of glory. Father Son and Holy Spirit were all there. God wanted to tell people about his son. But we can't forget about the importance of the Holy Spirit without whom none of us can bring the word of God to a fallen world. The next chapter tells us the Holy Spirit leads Jesus to the desert for 40 days and 40 nights. Another example of a humble servant. And of course to fulfill all righteousness

We are all sinners helpless to fix that righteousness gap between us and God. The servant Jesus was baptized that we could be the righteousness of Jesus. Luke records a conversation with Jesus saying he was distressed till his baptism was complete. Death and resurrection was God's plan to restore righteousness.

Acts 10:39-40 They put Him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raise Him on the third day. Mission completed. The humble servant completes his mission. Who believes in him and follows him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.