

The Advent series: The Importance of the OT and Isaiah's Role

WHY is it so HARD to WAIT?

In an age of instant gratification and over achievers ... express mail ... e-mail: NO chance for "process"

"Waiting on God" – Is. 64:1-9

Isaiah's desires as he looks for God's *salvation* ... After he had preached God's impending *judgment*

Isaiah knew about waiting on the Lord ... His preaching was a prophetic message from a God of judgment and redemption to a people that were content!

I. A Theology of Waiting

A. Why would an Almighty God makes us wait?

(The question **assumes** that waiting is **bad**)

- **Because He works in history** (*not all is a miracle ... implies "real" time*)
- **If it's history it's ALL connected** (*implies revelation: apostles & the prophets*)
- This makes it really accessible ... **even as you wait: *prayer*** ... central in **Is. 63-64**):
 - No "fly now pay later"
 - FedEx
- A sovereign God who elects also provides the means!
- **Missing** the "waiting" is to **MISS God *pursuing His own glory* "in real time"** ...
- **Feeling of idleness**

B. What it says of us ...

What do you think of yourself when you have to wait?

- Our **incapacity**: we're not in **control**
- Is it **idleness** or is it **activity**?

1. Isaiah's context: God is coming...in the *midst* of obvious unfaithfulness

⊕ "I want my terrible nana ..." (Erwin McManus's story)

2. “God wouldn’t judge His ‘city on a hill’”

⊕ *Deuteronomistic history*

3. Allusion: Israel’s Egyptian *bondage*

God sent Moses as He would send Jesus
(Unexpected and Unassuming):

- ⊕ Remind them of His covenant
- ⊕ To stir them (along w/ Pharaoh/Herod)
- ⊕ To lead them worship (desert)
- ⊕ His presence: *changes everything*

4. A cry for intervention (The sight and sound of an ambulance [?])

- ⊕ **THEN** ... *saved* from **Pharaoh**
- ⊕ **NOW** ... *saved* from God **Himself**

C. What it says of God (His *uniqueness*)...

“... *No eye has seen a God but you*” (v.4)

The God who acts is not motivated by bribes/coercion

II. Our Need of Waiting (vv. 5-7)

What do you do when you **feel** “*empty/dry*”?

A. Understanding where we are ... (vv. 5-7: a developed doctrine of sin [in the OT])

These were covenant breakers ...

Deut. 28:47-48, “⁴⁷ *Because you did not serve the Lord your God w/ joyfulness & gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things,* ⁴⁸ *therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you.*”

God blesses **only** the **faithful** and the **righteous** ... BUT this we are NOT

Before Him we are ...

1. *Unclean*: the cry of the leper
2. *Fading leave*: fallen/decaying ... death
3. *Disinterest in the Lord* (asleep): worship
4. *Divine alienation*: He gives what we want

“As Moses *lifted up the serpent in the wilderness ...*” WAITING: not instant ... the humility of Advent

B. Knowing what we need ...

“*And shall we be saved?*” (v. 5)

- Points to *why* X was sent to be faithful/righteous in our behalf (Mt. 3:15)... “*to fulfill all righteousness*”
- No wait ... no trust ... no rest!

III. The Benefits of Waiting (vv. 8-9)

Simeon & Anna's role ... they recognized the promised one ... because they had waited

A. Where God pursues His own glory ...

Who's at work? ... Our place (in Advent)? (v. 8):

1. “*Your are our Father*” ... Jesus’ (and the Trinity’s) gift of God’s Fatherhood
2. “*We are the clay ... you are the potter*”

⊕ A place of rest/transformation (the virgin Mary):

- ~ The *energy*: the potter’s
- ~ The *strength*: the potter’s
- ~ The *freedom*: the potter’s

⊕ His sovereignty ... His story (The Magi)

3. “*We are the work of your hands*”

- ⊕ What *ultimately* defines us as His
- ⊕ He cares ... for His own

B. Grasping His steadfast love (His “stubborn” love)

The *Hope* of His grace & His *faithfulness* to the Covenant (v. 9)

- ⊕ “*Be not terribly angry ...*”
 - ~ He is *already* rightly angry
 - ~
- ⊕ “*Remember not iniquity for ever*”
 - ~ Not a *prescription*, BUT a diagnosis
- ⊕ “*Behold, please look, we are your people*”
 - ~ Waiting on (an appeal to) *His covenant*
 1. *Faithfulness*
 2. *Steadfast love*

Is. 40:31 ... Isaiah’s picture of waiting:

The Difference between the flight of a chicken and the flight of an eagle!

- *The chicken tries the hardest ... and stays put*

- *The eagle waits ... and mounts the thermal currents ... and raises the highest*