



# The Mediator— *Christ in Isaiah*

*When God set His  
bow in the sky, He  
celebrated the grace  
of His Covenant—  
which is eternally  
consumated through  
the mediation  
of Christ  
(Revelation 4).*

**T**he Lord Jesus Christ, in His person and work, is the key to all Scripture. This is a fundamental principle in the interpretation of God's word. The Lord Himself verifies this fact in Luke 24:44: "That all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." The book of Isaiah belongs to that section of the Old Testament identified as the prophets. Thus, according to our Saviour's infallible testimony, Isaiah spoke of Him.

Like the other penmen of Scripture, Isaiah wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or "the Spirit of Christ" as Peter describes the third person of the Trinity (1 Peter 1:11). In that section of his epistle, Peter makes distinct reference to the Old Testament writers, calling them "the prophets" (v. 10), a title that obviously includes Isaiah. Moreover, the apostle informs us in verse 11 that "the Spirit of Christ . . . was in" these prophets, testifying "beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Observe carefully this intimation of the precise nature of the subject addressed by the prophets: They wrote of Christ, but specifically with respect to His sufferings and His glory, thereby giving the student of Scripture a framework within which to analyse any part of their work.

We will surely see Christ in Isaiah when we look for Him in His sufferings and in His glory—terms, which, in a most succinct way, sum up the redemptive work of Christ. He suffered, then He entered into His glory, and He did so on behalf of His people as their representative and federal head, in order to save them and bring them to glory. In essence, therefore, Christ will be seen in Isaiah when we view Him as He must always be seen, as "the only mediator between God and men."

The foundation of Christ's work as mediator is His person as the God-man. Two key references in Isaiah furnish a clear presentation of the theanthropic person of Christ; that is, He is God and man, with two distinct natures in one person forever. Isaiah 7:14 predicts the miraculous conception of Christ's

humanity: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Note the language and the truth this verse contains. A virgin bore a son (a testimony to the supernatural conception of Christ’s true humanity) within her womb and of her substance. In other words, the offspring of the virgin was truly man, and yet He was truly God, for He was called “Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

The second reference to the unique person of Christ is found in Isaiah 9:6, with the opening words being of particular significance: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” These words underline the two distinct natures of Christ in one person. The “child is born”—this is His real humanity. However, the “son is given”—this points to the eternal sonship and deity of our Lord. Christ the Son was sent forth by His Father, taking into union with His deity a true humanity and being born of a virgin. His birth was the miracle of all miracles, in that it gave rise to the unique and blessed person of Christ. This unique person is the basis of all that He accomplished in His redemptive work as the mediator between God and men. It is no surprise, then, to find Christ in Isaiah in this capacity, operating on behalf of His people.

Christ is mediator of the covenant, the covenant of grace. All that He performs on behalf of His people as their mediator is to be viewed within the framework of that gracious covenant. Christ Himself is the head of that covenant, the representative of His elect people. It is in Him that His people are viewed, as indicated in the words of Isaiah 42:1, where the Father refers to Christ as “mine elect.” Christ is God’s elect

in the sense that He is the chosen head of a covenant people, and they are chosen or elected in Him. For that reason, Isaiah speaks of Christ as the very personification of the covenant. The Father addresses Christ saying, “I . . . will . . . give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles” (42:6). Similar words are found elsewhere: “I will . . . give Thee for a covenant of the people” (49:8). All that the covenant of grace proclaims and promises revolves around Christ the mediator of that covenant. Thus, He is all that the covenant bestows on sinners by way of all its saving benefits and blessings.

Furthermore, Christ as mediator was anointed by the Holy Spirit in order to discharge His ministry: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). The historical account of His actual anointing is recorded for us in Matthew 3:16 and in Luke 3:21–22. Thus, in Isaiah, there are plain statements with respect to the anointing of Christ by the Holy Spirit (see 11:1–2; 42:1; and 61:1). In these three references, there is evidence of development. In the first, it is predicted that on Christ “the Spirit of the Lord shall rest.” In the second, God the Father speaks of Christ as His servant and calls Him “mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.” Then He says immediately, “I have put my spirit upon him.” The Father signalled His delight in Christ by anointing Him with the Spirit, as is verified by Matthew 3:16–17. Finally, in the third reference, Christ speaks prophetically of His being anointed by the Spirit and entering into His mediatorial work, a prophecy

fulfilled as He Himself declares in Luke 4:17–21.

In His role as mediator, Christ was anointed by the Spirit to fulfil the three offices of prophet, priest, and king. Isaiah confirms His ministry in these three areas. Returning to Isaiah 61:1–3, we see that Christ the prophet is plainly in view, commissioned to “preach good tidings . . . , to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Interestingly, in quoting from this passage (Luke 4:18–19), Christ does not include the words “the day of vengeance of our God.” That day has not yet come; thus Christ’s prophetic office continues to be exercised through His church’s proclaiming the glad tidings of the acceptable year of the Lord. Christ the priest performs a dual role. He makes atonement for the sins of His people, and He also intercedes for them, as is summed up in the final words of Isaiah 53: “He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (v. 12). Isaiah also points us to Christ the king: “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness” (32:1). Isaiah had already seen that king in his great vision, recorded in chapter 6: “Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” The One he saw was Christ, verified by the testimony of John 12:39–41.

And so, to use Peter’s method of Bible study is truly to find Christ in Isaiah. The prophet not only presents to us Christ in His sufferings, he shows Him in glory as well. May what we have seen of Him in this brief overview be an incentive for you to look for more of Christ in this great book! ■

Rev. John Greer is  
the minister of  
Ballymena Free  
Presbyterian Church,  
Northern Ireland.

