

Challenges, Choices, Consequences

Isaiah 7:14; 9:6

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Dec. 3rd

While warfare is the inevitable conflict between opposing forces; The Goal of any Righteous Warfare is eventual and lasting Peace. This is why Jesus came! *Lk 2:10-14* Peace is not the absence of Pain or Problems, but an awareness that we're on the right side of this cosmic conflict, in partnership with "The Prince of Peace"! (Is. 9:6; Mt 11:28,29) Since "Peace" (from *eiro*) means to join; Our Peace (*Or lack thereof*) is related to who/ what we Join. These two incredible promises were originally given to King Ahaz (735-715 BC) who faced choices/challenges similar to our own. While His Father Jotham and he had some interesting similarities, they had one important difference! Jotham *"did that which was right in the sight of the Lord...prepared his ways before the Lord his God."* (2 Chr. 27:2,6)

Ahaz chose a very different path, resulting in a very different
"Partnership." (and posterity)

1. The Choice(s) of Ahaz.

A. Our early choices are important, because they set us in motion.

Newton's 1st law of motion (inertia) *"an object at rest (or in motion) will tend to remain (at rest or in motion) until acted on by an equal/opposite force."*

- 1) He chose to reject God 2 Kings 16:2 *"did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God."*
- 2) One choice tends to produce others.
 - a) Rejecting God led him to embrace the gods (values) of his time. 2 Kings 16:3 *"he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the ...heathen,"*

B. Choices lead to Consequences Gal. 6:7,8

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

2. The Challenges and Chastening of Ahaz

A. God chastens those he loves! Heb. 12:6,7

- 1) This principle is timeless. 2 Sam 7:14
- 2) Since God loved Ahaz, He allowed conflicts (consequences) to come.

B. This "chastening" came in the form of war. Isaiah 7:2 *"And it was told (Ahaz) saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, (nûa': shaken, wavered) and the heart of his people."*

- 1) His sin (and ours) affects others! (Ro 14:7) *How much will our sin cost others?*

C. God often has to shake us up to wake us up!

- 1) God's goal is not condemnation, but restoration! Rev. 3:21 *"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent."*
- 2) God sent Isaiah to Confront, Counsel and even Comfort Ahaz. Isaiah 7:4-11
7 Thus saith the Lord, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass...11 Ask a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.
7:12 "But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD."

- 3) He rejected God's offer of peace (partnership) because he had already accepted Satan's!
a) He Robbed God's Temple to pay the Assyrian King to fight his battles! 2 Kgs 16:7-8
b) This led to a poisonous partnership that brought pain, treachery and conflict for decades.
Such conflict has become the norm in this world that consistently rejects God's word and ways.

Conclusion:

Like Ahaz, we tend to panic in the face of problems, and trust the "reasonable" offers (solutions) that come from the world, but result in debt, doubt, and disappointment. Jn 10:10 *"The thief commeth not but for to steal...kill...destroy"*

We too tend to look to the wrong sources for Peace, Protection and Provision. Isaiah 8:19-20 *"should not a people seek unto their God?...to the Law and to the testimony? If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."*

Our choices produce partnerships! (With either God or the gods of this world)

Application:

Remember Newton's 1st law:

"an object in motion tends to stay in motion until acted upon by an...opposite force"

Even after our short-sighted, selfish choices (resulting in poisonous partnerships) God comes to us with his counsel and comfort, and invites us to return to him. Mt 11:28-30 *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

Since Peace is related to Partnership,
Which King's choices most accurately reflect yours?

2 Chr. 27:2 *"(Jotham) did that which was right in the sight of the LORD..., 6 So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God."*

2 Kings 16:2 *"...Ahaz did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God..."*

3 *..he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations (idols) of the heathen"*

Perhaps God is wanting to introduce you this holiday Season to the promise and privilege of partnering with *"the wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"*

Isaiah 9:6

