

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

NOVEMBER 2001

ISAIAH AND THE COST OF SECURITY

BY TIM KELLER

In the last few weeks I've been doing my own personal study of Isaiah 6:1-13. "The year that King Uzziah died" (v.1) things looked bleak from Isaiah's point of view. Uzziah had ended his life alienated from God (2 Kings 15:5; 2 Chron 26:16ff). And just a few years before, in 745 B.C., the ruthless imperialist Tiglath-Pileser III had taken the throne of Assyria and begun a campaign of terror and conquest. Israel was in his path. The king was dead and the kingdom of Israel looked like it would be swept away.

But one day Isaiah went in to the temple and had his famous

"I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, [for] my eyes have seen the King..."

vision of God. Of course, no one can see God in his essence (John 1:18), but Isaiah was given a sight of a throne, of a massive robe that filled the entire temple, and of royal attendants all calling and singing about the sovereign majesty and dominion of the Lord. In short, he was given a vision of God's "exalted kingli-

ness" (J.Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, p.70.) He cries, "My eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty" (v.5.)

Verses 1 through 5 of Isaiah's vision start and end like this: "The year the king died...I saw the real king!" The very foundations of his own country's power and sovereignty were trembling, but then Isaiah sees the ultimate king, the ultimate ruler, the ultimate keeper of justice in the earth. He is so solid and real that he makes everything else tremble, shake, and smoke when he gets near it (v.4.) Here then was real security. Here is the king

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GOSPEL ECONOMICS – PART II

BY DAVE BISGROVE

Last month I wrote an article outlining the broad Scriptural principles concerning Christians and wealth. (See www.redeemer.com under How To Get Involved/The Stewardship section for a copy of that article.) This month, I would like to apply some of the practical applications of those principles to our daily lives by addressing some frequently asked questions.

1. What is the basis for the tithe? (You mean there is a scriptural tax on my money?)

In the Old Testament, believers were required to give a tenth of their income to the support of the ministry and the needs of the poor. Jesus endorses the giving of tithes in Matt. 23:23, but then

we are told that should give as we are "able and even beyond (our) ability." (II Cor. 8:3) Jesus himself teaches that our relationship to wealth should be far more radical and generous than that of the Old Testament when he reminds his followers that God was "pleased" to give us the kingdom (something God's followers in the Old Testament longed for) which, Jesus says, should liberate us to "sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure

in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Luke 12:33-34). Therefore, the tithe (10%) is seen as a kind of minimum guideline for giving for those of us who 'have been given the kingdom.' Of course, there are seasons to economic life that sometimes strain our ability to give. In many cases, good planning over time will be necessary to move our giving into Biblical proportions without renegeing on

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ISAIAH AND THE COST OF SECURITY

that does not die. How profoundly comforting it must have been for Isaiah.

But it is not that simple. Before Isaiah could have the greater security that comes from knowing God's kingliness, he had to experience the greater *insecurity* that comes from knowing God's holiness. Isaiah's first response to this vision was "*Woe to me!...I am ruined! I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, [for] my eyes have seen the King...*" (v.5) The vision of God's kingship had to shake him before it could make him secure and establish him. Surely Isaiah knew he was sinful and weak, but the clearer perception of God's glory gave him a clearer perception of his own moral and spiritual failure. And so he simply cries out. He doesn't even cry out for mercy or help, so profound is his sense of deserving rejection. The word "*ruined*" literally mean "silenced." He has no excuses, not even any appeals. He has no right to speak as a prophet.

What happened then was not surprising to Isaiah. He saw one of the angels fly toward him with fire in his hand. (v.6.) "In the Old Testament fire is not a cleansing agent but is symbolic of the wrath of God,...his unapproachable holiness,...and the context of his holy law." (Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p.78.) In his sensation of utter unworthiness, Isaiah thought that this was fire coming out of the presence of God, probably to destroy him (cf. Numbers 11:1-3.) The use of '*tongs*' (v.6) showed that this indeed was divine fire that even the angels could not touch light-

ly. But to his shock, the fire instead is placed on his "*lips*," the very point of his felt and confessed need. Surely it would have hissed or burned for a moment! But immediately he heard the words, "*See...your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned for.*" (v.7) How could this be? "This, however, was fire from the altar, the place where holiness accepted...the death of a substitutionary sacrifice. The *live coal* thus encapsulates the ideas of atonement, propitiation, satisfaction, forgiveness, cleansing and reconciliation." (Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 72.) Surely Isaiah had 'known' before that he was a sinner accepted by the mercy of God. But now he knew it in a more profound way.

Now (and only now) comes the new security of knowing the eternal king. Isaiah eagerly applies for a job ("*Here am I. Send me!*" v.8), but it is a job of preaching to a society that is breaking down. He is called to preach, "*until the cities be ruined and with - out inhabitants...*" (v.11), and yet he is given the promise that out of all the disorder a new life will spring, all is not lost (v.13).

Isaiah's deep new security equips him for social breakdown, instability, and uncertainty. But the cost of this new security was (temporarily) a new insecurity as he experienced both his own weakness and God's grace at a new level.

I said that I have been studying this passage personally, and now you see the reasons why. We too are facing a social uncertainty that is very new to most of us. We also wonder if we are entering a period not just of uncertainty but of instability. How will we get the new security we will need to face anything with a "*Here am I*"?

I have come to see that the general idea of God's 'exalted kingliness' is vaguely comforting to the believer. But in times of stress a general cognitive idea is not enough. His kingliness must be "real to the heart" (as Jonathan Edwards would say) if it is to be a true source of security that enables us to look death in the face with calm. But this kingliness only becomes more than an idea through a deeper experience of self-awareness,

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CHURCH FAMILY UPDATE

Membership Vows:

David H. Eun
Rochelle Y. Yu

Infant Baptisms:

William Yujin Eun,
son of David Eun &
Rochelle Yu

Anna Elizabeth Eberwein,
daughter of Jeff & Julia Eberwein

Aaron Theodore Pradhan,
son of Jiten & Beth Pradhan

Caleb Joshua Yoo,
son of Steve & Miriann Yoo

Margaret Ellen Wolf,
daughter of Karl & Ellen Wolf

Hannah Youngjoo Suh,
daughter of Andrew & Esther Suh

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
Buddy Mungo
Dave Jacobs

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
OFFICE • 271 MADISON AVENUE • SUITE 1600 • NEW YORK, NEW YORK • 10016
212-808-4460 (phone) 212-808-4465 (fax)

HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM
EAST 69TH BETWEEN PARK AND LEXINGTON
services at 9:30 • 11:15 • 6:00

CHURCH OF ST. PAUL AND ST. ANDREW
86TH AND WEST END AVENUE
services at 7:00

GOSPEL ECONOMICS – PART II

legal and personal financial obligations.

2. Do I give 10% of my gross or net income? (You mean on my base salary AND my bonus?)

Scripture teaches that we are to give back to God our “firstfruits” (Exodus 23:16, 19.) Proverbs 3:9 encourages us to ‘honor the Lord with (our) wealth, with the firstfruits of (our) crops.’ This is consistent with our understanding that we are first and foremost citizens of God’s kingdom, seeking to invest our resources (time, talents, money) in ways that are consistent with God’s values and priorities. This is what Jesus meant when he asked us to think first of investing our wealth “where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.” Therefore, it is Biblical to calculate your tithe and offerings on your annual gross income.

3. Should I give all of my tithe/offerings to Redeemer Presbyterian Church? (You mean my giving is restricted?)

The answer to this is a qualified ‘no!’ Your gift is an act of personal worship to God in response to his grace in your life. However, if you consider Redeemer your ‘home church,’ then you might consider allocating a significant portion of your tithe and offerings to the community where you invest most of your time and talent, and where others are investing in you. Also, the church is that community established by God through which ALL aspects of his kingdom values are to be lived out. At Redeemer this means our budget goes to:

- church planting,
- the financially and socially marginalized,
- teaching and worship,
- the deepening of community through Fellowship Groups,
- counseling,
- cultural renewal, and many other areas.

Having said that, your tithe

and offerings should be a byproduct of prayer and consideration as God works on your conscience.

4. What are the ways I can give? (OK, help me “Share the Vision”)

There are many ways you can give to Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

- Place your checks/cash into the offering plates on Sundays.

- Mail your checks (please don’t send cash) to the church office. The address can be found on the page 2 of this newsletter.

- You can donate stocks and mutual funds and other ‘property’ that often provide you with a double tax benefit

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Annual Income	% = Weekly Giving (Dollar Amount)											Tithe		
	1%	2%	3%	4%	5%	6%	7%	8%	9%	10%	12%	15%		
\$10,000	\$2	\$4	\$6	\$8	\$10	\$12	\$13	\$15	\$17	\$19	\$23	\$29		
\$20,000	4	8	12	15	19	23	27	31	35	38	46	58		
\$30,000	6	12	17	23	29	35	40	46	52	58	69	87		
\$40,000	8	15	23	31	38	46	54	62	69	77	92	115		
\$50,000	10	19	29	38	48	58	67	77	87	96	115	144		
\$60,000	12	23	35	46	58	69	81	92	104	115	138	173		
\$70,000	13	27	40	54	67	81	94	108	121	135	162	202		
\$80,000	15	31	46	62	77	92	108	123	138	154	185	231		
\$90,000	17	35	52	69	87	104	121	138	156	173	208	260		
\$100,000	19	38	58	77	96	115	135	154	173	192	231	288		
\$110,000	21	42	63	85	106	127	148	169	190	212	254	317		
\$120,000	23	46	69	92	115	138	162	185	208	231	277	346		
\$130,000	25	50	75	100	125	150	175	200	225	250	300	375		
\$140,000	27	54	81	108	135	162	188	215	242	269	323	404		
\$150,000	29	58	87	115	144	173	202	231	260	288	346	433		
\$175,000	34	67	101	135	168	202	236	269	303	337	404	505		
\$200,000	38	77	115	154	192	231	269	308	346	385	462	577		
\$250,000	48	96	144	192	240	288	337	385	433	481	577	721		

NOVEMBER IS OFFICER NOMINATION MONTH

During the entire month of November, Redeemer will be accepting nominations for Elder, Deacon and Diaconess. The WTC Disaster has caused increased needs both within Redeemer and city-wide. We expect to see the ripple effects of this tragedy for months to come. Therefore, now more than ever, the Diaconate needs qualified Redeemer members to serve practically in these offices. If you are a member, please start to consider whether you or someone you know, who is also a member, could serve in any of these offices.

The Elders serve on the Session and provide spiritual leadership to the congregation through oversight of Redeemer ministries, leaders and members. *1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9*

The primary work of the Diaconate is mercy. Deacons and Diaconesses offer help to those in crisis or challenging situations by assessing their needs and

working together to find solutions. Social, emotional, physical, as well as financial support may be provided. The Diaconate also strives to link individuals to the broader Christian community within Redeemer, in the hopes that they will feel Christ’s love long beyond their experience with the Diaconate. *Acts 6:1-4 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13*

How Do I Nominate Someone?

You must be a member to nominate someone. First ask the person that you want to nominate for Elder, Deacon or Diaconess if he or she is a member and willing to be considered for the office. Obtain a nomination form from Redeemer’s website (www.Redeemer.com) or the information table at all services and then fax their name(s) with your signature to the church office to the attention of Andrea Clark at 212.808.4465. The deadline for submitting nominations is November 30, 2001.

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ISAIAH AND THE COST OF SECURITY

repentance, cleansing, and new joyful apprehension of his grace. It is only as I let his holy majesty 'de-stabilize' and then 're-establish' me that his royal majesty becomes a living, bright reality to me. The cost of a new 'stability' of grace is a temporary 'instability' of repentance and dependence on him. It is, however, a small cost in light of the wondrous benefit. "Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away." (Is 35:10)

Suffering and Glory An Open Forum

Music from
Felix Mendelssohn's Elijah
Performed by
Orchestra of the Redeemer,
the Redeemer Choir and soloists

Lecture by Timothy Keller

Public Question and Answer Session

11 November 2001 6:00 PM
Hunter College Auditorium
69th and Park Ave

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GOSPEL ECONOMICS - II

(assuming the investment has appreciated and that you have held the stock for more than one year). By donating appreciated securities you avoid the capital gains tax faced when selling the stock, and the church pays NO capital gains tax when it sells the donated security. (For more information on this method see the section entitled "Donation of Stocks and Other Assets" on the web site (www.redeemer.com) under the Stewardship section. (See chart page 3.) You should also check with a tax professional before initiating any transfer of securities. If you would like to donate stock you can initiate the transfer through your broker and request that the shares be transferred to:

Charles Schwab
Account Name: Redeemer
Presbyterian Church
Account Number: 7354-3138
DTC #: 0164

Please call or email me (david@redeemer.com) if you are considering this kind of gift so that I can send you a letter of receipt.

- If your bank has automated bill paying (i.e. JP Morgan/Chase) you can set up Redeemer Presbyterian Church to receive electronically generated checks, allowing you an easier way to be systematic in your giving.

Remember, in order to receive the appropriate documentation you need for tax purposes from us your name and address must be clearly identifiable on your check.

In order to help those who are interested in contributing to Redeemer, the chart on page 3 has been designed to help you calculate what a tithe looks like based on your annual income. An interactive version of this chart is available on our web site under the Stewardship section.

Thank you again for your interest and investment in Redeemer's vision. Your gifts are a great encouragement in light of the tragedy of September 11, and will play a significant part in the church's role in meeting the spiritual, cultural, and physical needs of our congregation and our city.