

Behold! A Branch Is Growing!

December 2, 2018 – Isaiah 4:2-6

“In that Day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem, The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; He will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. Then the Lord will create over all the Mount of Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.”

The attitude of the women in Israel were a reflection of what was going on in the land of Judah at the time of Isaiah in 700 B.C.

Isaiah 3:16 – The Lord says, The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, tripping along with mincing steps, with ornaments jingling on their ankles.

The People of Israel had fallen away from God as a nation, only a small remnant remained faithful to God. Because of the masses that fell away, God was going to send a foreign nation that would come and carry the Nation of Israel into slavery. As New Testament believers living after the fact, we know that it would be the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

This is God speaking through the Prophet Isaiah – to His people in Judah and Jerusalem. [The Northern tribes of Israel have already been carried into slavery by the Assyrians 135 years earlier in 722 B.C.]

Other passages from Isaiah that give us further insight into the spiritual state of Judah includes the following:

Isaiah 1:4 – Ah sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on Him.

Isaiah 1:13 – Stop bringing meaningless offerings!

Isaiah 1:15 – When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood.

In the midst of this spiritual apathy in the land of Judah, we see that God still demonstrated His Love and compassion by promising to send the Branch of the Lord, Who we know is Jesus, the Savior of the World.

May we never fall into spiritual apathy and demonstrate disregard for the Lord and His Word.

As Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, we are Confessional Lutherans - Confessional Christians.

That means that we know what we believe based upon the Holy Scriptures and we say so.

To be a Confessional Lutheran takes guts, courage, strength. It means that if other people actually know what you believe, they will either laugh or roll their eyes or scoff or verbally attack your beliefs, or they will have to admit, “That is The Word of the Lord.”

As a Confessional Lutheran when God says in Genesis 1:1 – “In the Beginning God Created the Heavens and the earth.” You humbly submit to that Word of the Lord and you do not question.

When the Holy Scriptures say that God said Let there be light, and there was light, You simply believe that word.

When the Holy Scriptures say that there was evening and there was morning, the first day, as Confessional Lutherans you simply say *This is the Word of the Lord*, a Day is a Day and a day was 24 hours then just as it is now.

When the Holy Scriptures tell us that God was going to send a flood that would cover the entire surface of the earth, and that God sent animals two by two to go into the Ark which Noah built, you believe it and take the Holy Scriptures at face value. And when Scripture tells us that God preserved the Life of Noah and his wife and their three sons – Shem – Ham and Japheth in the Ark together with their wives a total of 8 human beings, you believe it and take the Word of God for what it says.

And we could continue on with the doctrine of the Trinity, the Dual Nature of Christ, the Total depravity of Mankind, the blessings of Baptism which God has given us as New Testament Christians, even the Baptism of Infants, and the Doctrine of the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper, The Promise of the Savior – Jesus and His coming into the World to die for the sin of the World, Yes – to Justify all Mankind, and when Scripture tells us that Jesus rose physically from the dead and that one day he will come again to raise us and all the dead, and the believers will live forever in heaven with their new glorified bodies while the unbeliever will spend eternity in hell.

When we read and hear these things from the Pages of Scriptures, we simply take them for what they are - God's Word.

Yet someone will criticize. And so, to be a Confessional Lutheran and Bible Believing Christian takes courage, strength and guts.

May we never fall into spiritual apathy and demonstrate disregard for the Lord and His Word.