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Isaiah : Spirit Of Courage, Gift Of Tears



Synopsis

Isaiah lived in a time astonishingly like ours -- a time of immense violence, social upheaval, and gross neglect of the poor. In the great prophetic tradition, he intervened directly in political and diplomatic events. Like our age, his was one of whetted swords and rusted plowshares. Then the oracle came to him: Swords into plowshares! Simultaneously social biography and biblical commentary, Berrigan's newest book is a tour de force that brims with conviction. A must-read for anyone seeking to apply biblical truths to contemporary life; for anyone who wonders, What does Isaiah have to say to us? Dorothee Soelle author, *Theology for Skeptics* Written in a splendid immediacy of style and spirit, Berrigan's book bridges the gap between the then and now. Richard John Neuhaus, *First Things* A gifted poet's compelling invitation to rethink the nature of prophetic witness, then and now. Howard Zinn, author *A People's History of the United States* What you learn from this astonishing book is that behind (Berrigan's) secular acts of civil disobedience...there was always a profound theology of peace and resistance to evil...There is poetry and prophecy here to inspire us all.

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Customer Reviews

"The Dan Berrigan of public protest and media flash point is, happily, known to us all. In this book is the less visible Berrigan, the one who reads Scripture with fresh eyes, who cherishes images and phrases of faith with attentiveness, who echoes the prophetic cadences of dangerous faith."

---Walter Brueggemann "Good scholarship, good scripture, good soul! Dan has again shown us how

to put them all together. Is this perhaps Isaiah redivivus? Who else could do it but Dan Berrigan?"
---Richard Rohr, O.F.M. author of Radical Grace "What you learn from this astonishing book is that behind the very secular acts of civil disobedience in which Daniel Berrigan and his Plowshares friends engaged there was always a profound theology of peace and resistance to evil, represented by the biblical Isaiah. There is poetry and prophecy here to inspire us all." ---Howard Zinn author of A People's History of the United States "Poet to poet: Berrigan does Isaiah. Berrigan's free renderings pound like a jackhammer. His commentary lays bare the apostasy of religion in the service of the Powers. Anyone can write a commentary; only Dan Berrigan could write this."
---Walter Wink author of Engaging the Powers

I begin with a poem, which I dedicate with all my heart to the mysterious "one man" summoned by the poet: Come Holy Spirit, bending or not bending the grasses, appearing or not above our heads in a tongue of flame, at hay harvest or when they plough in the orchards or when snow covers crippled firs in the Sierra Nevada. I am only a man; I need visible signs. I tire easily, building the stairway of abstraction. Many a time I asked, you know it well, that the statue in church lifts its hand, only once, just once, for me. But I understand that signs must be human, therefore call one man, anywhere on earth, not me---after all I have some decency--- And allow me, when I look at him, to marvel at you.' ---Czeslaw Milosz For me, for many years, Jeremiah has been that one man. My thesis is simple and, I trust, audacious: each of the prophets, in the present instance Jeremiah, is an "other" of Yahweh. As God's compassionate and clairvoyant and inclusive image, each prophet strives for a divine (which is to say, truly human) break-through in the human tribe. Lacerating, intemperate, relentless, the prophets raise the question again and again, in images furious and glorious, poetic and demanding: What is a human being? We are unready for God; we are hardly more ready for one another. And yet, and yet . . . Through the prophets, Yahweh strives mightily for a breakthrough on the human landscape of history, to bring light to our unenlightened human tribe, to speak the truth, unwelcome as it is, of who we are, who we are called to become: friends, sisters, brothers of one another. This is a tough proposition that goes against the odds of our history, our wars, injustice, and greed, our idolatries. Again and again, these venturesome spirits, the prophets, are warned of the odds: strive as they may, no one---from top to bottom of the social structure, "kings, prophets, priests, people"---will hear; they will turn in despidal from the message of Yahweh. Worse and worse the warning goes: scorn and obloquy will be the lot of the truth-teller. Frequently the authorities of temple and state will unite against the prophet, invoking the "law of the land." And when the iniquitous law allows it (or even when it does not), the authorities will seek a capital

sentence. Jesus stands in this line of these hapless heroes. Willy-nilly, the afflictions of the prophets are his own. He will echo, some five or six centuries later, the awful word of Yahweh addressed to Jeremiah. --from the Preface

Looks brand new Thanks

Very helpful

The book Isaiah: Spirit of Courage, Gift of Tears has enlightened my view from previously brousing through. I was reordering this book that came with a CD, in which I had planned to use as part of my class presentation. What happened to the CD? I lost the first copy in transition before I compleded reading the book. The overview for content is substable. Thanks .May Veazey

I first read this book eighteen years ago but reread it when I heard of the author's death. It is a reflection on the prophet Isaiah. He lived in a time like ours -- a time of immense violence, social upheaval, and gross neglect of the poor. In the great prophetic tradition, he intervened directly in political and diplomatic events. Like our age, his was one of whetted swords and rusted ploughshares. Then the oracle came to him: Berrigan's book is important for anyone seeking to apply biblical truths to contemporary life. After all, most Christians only read Isaiah for his prophecies of the virgin conception and the Crucifixion of Jesus, thereby missing out on his most important message. "Here I am, send me!" With these words Isaiah accepted to be the minister of God's word and bearer of what Daniel Berrigan called unwelcome news. He was to act as a kind of father confessor, holding his people to a public repentance. He was to enlarge upon the specific of their sin: injustice, militarism, greed, aping the nations, making the covenant a dead letter. He was also to tell the other nations of God's generous and passionate love for them. Isaiah's vision of the holy One had its price; it would require the complete gift of himself to a cause that, by human reckoning, appeared impossible or at least improbable. But, like all the other prophets, Isaiah's mission originated in and was directed by God, because of this, his words continue to speak, challenging the recalcitrant and comforting the contrite. Behind Berrigan's acts of civil disobedience...there was always a profound theology of peace and resistance to evil...There is poetry and prophecy here to inspire all.

The innocent are as innocent of this or that religion as of this or that skepticism or evil. And the righteous in America today---& in the global political-economic society of which it's a part---are at least as likely to be skeptics of the Enlightenment tradition, out of which the USA & other more-or-less democracies emerged, after all, as to belong to this or that church, or to be immersed in the Bible, whether Old or New Testament, Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish versions. Or, for that matter, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, or smaller groups sharing a text or belief system---or they may be sampling or immersed in those other belief systems, texts, communities. So Isaiah, especially in the language of, say, the King James Bible of about 1600---which is great (stunning, useful, en-couraging) stuff, alternating with awful stuff (contradictions, chauvinism, cruelty, political spin-doctoring)---is foreign & off-putting. Too bad. Berrigan's translation brings us a brother, sufferering from finding himself within a society we realize is all too like our own, from resisting joining in, & from speaking truths that would greatly improve the situation if only others listened, but it's clear that they're not listening. Familiar? Such truth-telling, & concisely expressed & consistent indignation are in short supply, however many centuries have presented the opportunity for (& obstacles to) articulating, recording, & circulating it. Such brothers are rare & terribly valuable. Isaiah no longer being among us, it's only to Daniel Berrigan I now say, thank you!

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