

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #16

Isaiah 9:1-7

One of the most famous verses used at Christmas time is **Isaiah 9:6**: “**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**”

In fact, this very verse is used in Handel’s famed musical, *Messiah*. **Isaiah 9:6** is often a verse quoted by children in a Christmas play or program. However, what is so sad is that most who cite it, or who have heard it cited, have no idea as to its actual meaning. As Dr. Harry Bultema said it is regrettable that many people see these words as referring to the birth of a Babe in Bethlehem, but this is a very “superficial interpretation,” which does not do “justice...to the context” (Harry Bultema, *Commentary on Isaiah*, p. 123). **THE TRUTH IS, THIS VERSE REFERS TO THE TIME WHEN JESUS CHRIST WILL BE RECOGNIZED BY THESE TITLES BY ALL WHO ARE ON EARTH.** Dr. G. Campbell Morgan said this is “one of the sublimest of Messianic prophecies” in all of the Bible (“Peace,” *The Westminster Pulpit*, Vol. 5, p. 9). **In order for Christ to reign as a God/King, He must be born, but this prophecy is not really as much about Christ being born as it is about Christ reigning on earth.**

The prophecies given in Isaiah 7-12 were all given during the reign of a very bad, evil king named Ahaz, who was the twelfth king of Judah. He was an idolator who constructed false heathen altars to heathen gods all over Jerusalem. He was a king who totally rejected God’s Word proclaimed through Isaiah. For example, when Isaiah told Ahaz that he had nothing to fear from surrounding powers (7:4) because God would deliver him (7:7), in fact he could “ask for a sign” from God (7:11), he refused (7:12), so Isaiah said God Himself would give a sign (7:14). Instead of depending on God, Ahaz actually took articles from the temple and gave them to the king of Assyria so that he would protect Judah (II Chronicles 28:16-27). Instead of depending on God, Ahaz depended on a godless, heathen king to protect him and, as a result, evil totally prevailed all through the land.

The opening verses of **Isaiah 9** are connected grammatically to what has just preceded it in chapter 8 by the conjunction “but.” What is recorded in chapter 8 is not a pretty picture. Darkness had spread and would continue to spread all over Palestine (8:22) as a result of a judgment of God. The people of Israel and Syria had refused to recognize the value of having a relationship with Judah so God was bringing the king of Assyria against them to flow through the land as a judgment. But because Judah would not turn to Him, God would bring this king of Assyria through the Land of Immanuel, all of God’s Promised Land (8:8). **Ahaz was so evil that instead of teaching the people to trust God and His Word and turn to Him, he was leading God’s people to consult with those demonic, such as mediums and spiritists (8:19).** Things were bad. There was very little light from God because very few looked to God’s Word (8:20). As a result, God permitted a string of terrible things to happen to break and shatter the pride of His own people (8:10). God warns Judah that He is her only hope of deliverance and that she needs to look to Him and His Word (8:16-17). It is in this context that we come to **Isaiah 9:1-7**. It sits in sharp contrast to chapter 8 and it finally gives Judah some positive hope:

THERE WILL COME A DAY WHEN THERE WILL BE GLADNESS AND JOY FOR ISRAEL BECAUSE GOD'S SON WILL COME BACK A SECOND TIME TO THIS WORLD AND WILL GIVE HER HER KINGDOM ON EARTH FOREVER.

There are three sons that take center stage in chapters 7-9. The first two were Isaiah's sons - Shear-jashub (7:3) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (8:3) who were signs to Israel (8:18) that a remnant would survive and that Israel's enemies would eventually be removed with great speed. The third son is God's Son, who would be born of a virgin (7:14) and who would eventually come to earth to establish Israel as God's nation and govern the entire world (**9:6-7**).

This text came at a time when darkness was dominating the world both in the theological arena and in an evil society. As F. C. Jennings said, the darkness was "dense" (*Studies on Isaiah*, p. 106). Things were so bad that satanic demonism was being consulted more than God (8:19). When people get away from God's Word, darkness will always be dense. In **Isaiah 9:1-7**, God says there will come a time when things won't be dark any more. In fact, in these verses there are **twelve amazing positive promises God makes to Israel:**

PROMISE #1 – God's land will one day be made glorious for Israel. **9:1**

When you read the Bible it becomes very clear that God has a specific land program for Israel. We also learn by reading the Bible that there are prophetic things about this land that pertain to Gentiles. **The specific promise here is that one day the Promised Land that has been ravaged by war and treated with contempt will become a glorious land.** The promise is even more amazing by mentioning the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, that were northern areas of Israel, that were totally dominated and demolished by the Assyrian invasion (II Kings 15:29). In fact, this area became known as Galilee of the Gentiles. So Isaiah is predicting that eventually, even the worst devastated land in the Promised Land areas will be a glorious land that reflects the blessings and glory of God.

Now Galilee did have the glory of God visit it briefly when Jesus Christ came the first time. In fact, these very verses were applied to Jesus Christ in Matthew 4:15-16. However, there is no question that when you look at the Promised Land, there is nothing about it that looks glorious today. In fact, it did not look glorious back in the days of Jesus Christ. Israel's Promised Land has never been a land in which you could say, 'what a glorious place.' This land of Israel is held in such contempt today, that its borders are surrounded (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt) by those who would just as soon kill its inhabitants

But God says He will make it glorious, "by the way of the sea," which refers to Gentile powers who will try and dominate Israel coming via the Mediterranean. **The amazing prediction being made in this verse is that there is coming a day, when this land will be made glorious and darkness and gloom brought about by all Gentile domination will be eliminated.**

PROMISE #2 – God will sovereignly permit His people living in darkness to see His light.
9:2

Isaiah predicts that a great light will shine in this land of Israel that is very dark. That light did in fact shine there briefly. Jesus Christ specifically, physically went to this very land of Immanuel for awhile. He did not go to Salt Lake City or to the United States; He went to this land of

Immanuel. Isaiah was able to predict that One would come into this dark and troubled place and He would enable people to see the light of God. Again, this very text was quoted in Matthew in connection with Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:15-16), specifically in reference to Him moving to these very Gentile areas. Jesus Christ came into this world as the “light” of God (John 8:12). Yet when He came that first time, most did not see the great light; they missed seeing it.

However, what is predicted here is that there will come a day when Israel will see God’s light and it will specifically shine on her. There has been a terrible blindness on Israel for over 2000 years. She still can’t seem to figure out who Jesus Christ is. There will come a day when she will see it. She will get it. He is her Messiah. He is her King. Until one comes to terms with Jesus Christ, one walks in darkness personally, practically and spiritually.

PROMISE #3 – God will multiply the nation. **9:3a**

There is only one race of people who can be classified as “the nation” and that is Israel. When you look at what has historically happened to Israel, you would think that to this point God’s program with Israel has been a program of mathematical subtraction and not multiplication.

The most persecuted people on this earth have been Israelis. Major powers of the world have threatened or actually tried to wipe her out - Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes-Persians, Greece and Rome. In our own time, there was Adolph Hitler from 1939-1945, there were the terrorists who killed Israelis at the Munich Olympics in 1972, and there have been attempts by leaders of Egypt and Iraq and Iran. But the worst is yet to come. During the Tribulation, the Antichrist will specifically try and exterminate the Jew from every part of the world (Rev. 12:12). It will be an unprecedented time of Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). The remarkable prediction here is that when Jesus Christ comes back, Israel will be multiplied.

PROMISE #4 – God will increase their joy. **9:3b**

Israel has always had a lot of religious stuff in its land. It has always had a lot of business deals and political maneuverings. But the one thing Israel hasn’t had much of is joy. Israel has never had a time when there was an increase and major harvest of joy. In fact, Paul, in referring to Israel, said that presently she was dead (Romans 11:15). There isn’t much joy in death and there is no joy when you are in a dead relationship with God.

When we went to Alaska, a man from Israel told me, “We live in constant threat and fear. We all go into the military as soon as we are out of high school because of the threats against us as a people.” What is predicted here is that One will come who will eventually bring joy to the land. There will eventually be an abundant joy and a harvest of gladness.

PROMISE #5 – God will break the strength of every weapon and every enemy. **9:4-5**

Israel has had trouble at every border. All she has known is oppression and war. F. C. Jennings, who lived to be 101 years old read these verses and said, “Has anything of this kind ever taken place in Israel?” (*Studies in Isaiah*, p. 111). Obviously never. Israel has always been at war and still is. Israel has had enemies for a long, long time and God promises one day He will break all enemies to pieces and burn their munitions. The comparative analogy to “the battle of Midian” is a reference to the victory Gideon won over the Midianites in Judges 7-8. **The thing that**

stands out about this battle is that Gideon won it with small numbers (300 men - 7:7) against massive numbers (well over 100,000 - 8:10). I think that is exactly the prophetic point. When massive numbers of enemies come against Israel and there is just a small remnant left, God will deliver Israel and will destroy her oppressors.

God promises here that a time will come when all war will be over. He will end it. All warriors against Israel will be gone and all weapons will be burned for fuel in a fire. All those anti-Semites will one day be crushed. When will this happen? **It did not happen when Jesus was born, but it will happen when Jesus returns.**

PROMISE #6 – God will bring His child, His Son into this world to accomplish this. **9:6-7**

Now the conjunction “for” of verse 6 explains how this miracle will happen. How can Israel ever expect to have all of these blessings which she has never had? How can this happen, that every enemy will be destroyed? **The answer is this - a Divine child will be born, who will come back as God’s Son, who will bring all of this about.**

These verses clearly establish the humanity and the Deity of Jesus Christ. First, you have a “child born” which is clearly a reference to His humanity and Christ’s first coming. **Second,** you have a “Son given,” which is clear reference to His Deity and Christ’s first and second coming. There are two main facts brought out about Jesus Christ:

(Fact #1) - God’s government will rest upon this Divine Son/Child. **9:6a**

The prepositional phrase “to us” refers to Israel, not us. He came unto His own, Israel, but His own did not receive Him, initially (John 1:11). So He intends to come back again at a time when the whole nation will see Him as God. In contrast to Ahaz, who couldn’t govern himself much less Israel, this Divine Person will one day have supreme rule over Israel and the entire universe. God’s entire system of government will rest on Him.

The image of government resting on His shoulders is intriguing. When a good shepherd finds one of his lost sheep, he puts it on his shoulders and carries it all the way home. This picture of Him carrying God’s government on His shoulders certainly is one that lends itself to God’s security.

It is a shame that most politicians think that their governing position has been given to them by the people. Truth is, it has been given to them by God and they had better take Him seriously, for one day all of the government of all the world will be conducted by Jesus Christ.

(Fact #2) - God will see that His Son/Child is recognized by His Divine names. **9:6b**

It has been estimated that there are 256 different names in the Bible which are connected to Jesus Christ (W. A. Criswell, *Isaiah*, p. 86). In this one verse are some of the most majestic names you will ever see pertaining to Jesus Christ:

Title #1 - There will be a time when Israel calls Jesus Christ Wonderful .

There are some who make “wonderful” to be an adjective describing counselor and there are some who make “wonderful” a distinct title. We know from Judges 13:18 that this very word, “wonderful,” is a Divine title of God. The actual word “wonderful” refers to someone way above the norm, at an ultimate exceptional level. There is coming a day when all Israel will realize that Jesus Christ was not just another rabbi, or teacher, or prophet, but that He was Wonderful God, totally above and beyond all others who ever lived and walked on this earth. His name shall be called Wonderful.

Title #2 - There will be a time when Israel calls Jesus Christ Counselor .

The Apostle Paul uses this term in connection with God and says no one is God’s counselor (Romans 11:34), but He is the only One able to reveal the mind of God. God has no counselor and J. Vernon McGee said Jesus never once called His disciples together and asked them what they thought He ought to do (*The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 3, p. 221). Jesus never asked them if they knew the will of God the Father so He could find it out. No one was His counselor; Jesus is the Counselor. Not one time do you ever find Jesus wishing He had done or said something else like we do so often. He always said and did the right thing. He is the Counselor of counselors. The specific noun “counselor” refers to One who is able to know and communicate God’s truth in a very authoritative way. This describes One that people want to go hear because He is at such an above the normal level. There is coming a day, when Israel will recognize that Jesus Christ is the Omniscient Counselor who can completely reveal the mind of God. (Most of today’s counselors, even those called “Christian counselors” do not know the mind of God because they know more about secular psychology than they do God’s Word.) One day, God’s counsel will rule the world from the ultimate Divine Counselor - Jesus Christ.

Title #3 - There will be a time when Israel calls Jesus Christ Mighty God .

This is as clear a statement of Christ’s Deity as you will ever read in the Bible - He is mighty God. Jesus Christ is El Gibbor, the Mighty of God. This refers to His Omnipotence. Jesus Christ is the All Powerful God and there is coming a day when Israel will call Him that and the rest of the world will bow to it.

Title #4 - There will be a time when Israel calls Jesus Christ Eternal Father .

Many people seem to be troubled by this statement concerning Jesus Christ because of the different members of the Godhead. How is it possible for God the Son to be equated with God the Father? **First**, God the Son has all of the attributes of God the Father and one of those attributes is Eternality. **Second**, the point of this is to describe Christ’s relationship to time, not His relationship to other members of the Godhead. Jesus Christ is the Father of all things, including time. Just as Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44), so Jesus is the Father of eternity. **Third**, Jesus was David’s father and would sit on the Davidic Throne. As one writer said, “If you want anything eternal, you must get it from Jesus Christ.”

When Jesus Christ was here on earth the first time, He said to Israel that He was in existence before Abraham (John 8:58) and they wanted to stone Him (8:59). He also said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30) and they wanted to stone Him (John 10:31). There is coming a day when Israel will call Jesus Christ, Eternal Father, with the same reverence they have for God the Father. All will recognize that Jesus is the Father of all creation.

Title #5 - There will be a time when Israel calls Jesus Christ Prince of Peace.

There is coming a day when Israel will recognize that only Jesus Christ can bring peace between her and God and peace to her land. The entire nation will acknowledge that He is the one who will bring peace between God and man and peace on earth.

If just one of the politicians got this point, they would meet with officials of Israel and say in their 'peace talks' that there is only one who can bring peace to you and that is Jesus Christ. You need to turn to Him and there will be peace in your hearts and in your land.

PROMISE #7 – There will be no end to the increase of His government. **9:7a**

When you look at the world, there is a diminishing right now of anything connected to God. From creation of the universe to the morals in the universe, God is being removed. Bibles are being taken out of schools. At Christmastime people protest nativity scenes and some refuse to say Merry Christmas or allow their employees to say it (what is left of them) because it brings Christ into Christmas. Sound doctrine is diminishing, sound churches are diminishing and so is Bible exposition. There will come a day when everything connected to God will increase.

When Jesus Christ comes back to do all of these things for Israel and when Israel finally acknowledges who He is, He will control everything and all the things of God will increase. There will be no end to His increase and reign. In other words, from the moment all of these things happen, He will reign forever and God's government will finally increase all over the world.

PROMISE #8 – There will be no end to the increase of peace in His government. **9:7b**

The prophet Isaiah would later say that the wicked cannot know the way of peace (Isaiah 59:8). In order for there to be an increase of peace, there must be a decrease of evil and sin. In fact, there must be an elimination of sin if there is to be an increase of peace. The promise here is that there will come a day in which evil works, evil words, and evil thoughts will be eliminated so peace may abound. **When Jesus Christ returns, everything will forever be at peace with God.** Jesus Christ will not only bring peace into the world, He will maintain it. It will begin at the end of the Tribulation and will continue to flourish during the 1000 year millennium and on into the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem.

PROMISE #9 – He will be a Davidic King. **9:7c**

Dr. Luke was clear to record that The Son of the Most High would sit on the throne of David His father (Luke 1:32-33) and would reign forever.

PROMISE #10 – He will establish a kingdom of justice . **9:7d**

We live in a world that is so confused that it thinks that no matter what crime the criminal committed, he should never be given the death penalty. When Jesus Christ reigns, the death penalty will be reinstated for the entire world. There will be no end to justice. No more bizarre court decisions that let some guilty killer go free. No more defense attorneys who twist and distort facts to get guilty clients acquitted. Justice will dominate a world run by Jesus Christ.

PROMISE #11 – He will establish a kingdom of righteousness . **9:7e**

There will be no end to righteousness. Think of a world that operates in total righteousness. We have never seen such a place. Israel has never seen such a place, but one day we all will. From the moment Christ reigns, righteousness will reign forever.

PROMISE #12 – God’s zeal will accomplish all of this. **9:7f**

Israel doesn’t deserve this. No zany plan of any human can accomplish these things for Israel or for the world. Only God can make this happen. The reason He will make it happen is because this is what He sovereignly has a zeal to do. The fulfillment of these promises does not rest on faithfulness of Israel, or us but on the faithfulness of God. As Dr. John Martin said, without God’s “sovereign intervention there would be no kingdom for Israel” (*Isaiah*, Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 1053).

Isaiah 9:6 is for the most part a reference to the second coming of Jesus Christ. At least seven years before He comes the second time to this earth, He will end the Church Age, via Resurrection of those who died in Christ and via Rapture of those who are alive. I truly believe we are on the verge of the Rapture. This world is a dark place and there are depraved things that are happening that are truly demonic. The only hope Israel has and the only hope the world has and the only hope we have is Jesus Christ. Paul said that this truth is to be made known “to all the nations” (Romans 11:25-26).

Here is the truth - Jesus Christ will come back and wipe out everything that is an enemy of God and anything that is an enemy of Israel. When that happens there will be real peace and joy and hope.

Now Isaiah was writing these prophecies because things were dark and threatening and he was trying to get the people to turn to the Lord. Perhaps that is the way it is now in your world. Turn to Jesus Christ and no matter how dark things are, you will find peace and joy and hope.