

Advent in Biblical Perspective
The Messiah King
“The Messiah King and His Kingdom”
Isaiah 9

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We will be marinating in this text for the next four studies during this Advent Season. This is God’s Word. It’s inerrant and infallible. It is gloriously true. Isaiah 9:1–7 says [1] *But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.*

[2] *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.* [3] *You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.* [4] *For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.* [5] *For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.* [6] *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* [7] *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

This is my 23rd Advent Season at Briarwood. This has been a little bit of a challenge when having to approach the humiliation of Christ through His Incarnation, His life, leading to His atoning death, the tomb, then anticipating the glory of His exaltation, His ascension and His second coming that many times. There has been one text I have not preached from that I have longed to preach from and now I get the opportunity to do it in this season. It’s the Messianic prophecy found in Isaiah 9:1–7 which is a powerful text either by direct quote or by implication and penetration because it undergirds all the Gospels and the New Testament. It is such a glorious text and hopefully this might reclaim why the Advent Season is marked by the call to joy. It has a festive nature to it and why is it festive? Has it become rather stale? Or is there something burning gloriously effervescently at work in our hearts that begs to be expressed with joy to the world – the Lord has come?

In the next four studies we will be focusing on the four titles assigned to Christ, the Messianic King, from this Isaiah 9 text. This is an interesting prophecy. Christ has come to fulfill three offices – Prophet, Priest and King. This text, while it refers to Prophet and Priest, actually focuses on Christ the Messiah as King, His Kingdom and how He fulfills those offices in His humiliation. What do I mean by that? It is that Christ has humbled Himself by taking upon Himself humanity. The humiliation of Christ is not a humiliation of subtraction, it is a humiliation of addition. It’s not that He subtracted deity for He laid aside privileges of deity but there was still a Trinity for the 33 years of His ministry on earth. He took upon Himself the appearance of a Man, He became a Man – fully God, fully Man, two natures, one Person – and

He has come to fulfill the office of Prophet, Priest and King. Isaiah 9 brings us with a laser focus upon the Messianic King, Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

Kings have titles and when they are introduced, they insist that all their titles be read. For instance, if you were in England and Queen Elizabeth was introduced by her regal office, it would take a while to get to the festive events because she has 40 titles that are read every time she is introduced. In Isaiah 9 we have the King of Glory, the King of Kings and Isaiah inspired by the Holy Spirit of God brings our focus to four titles – Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father (How can a Son born be Everlasting Father?) and Prince of Peace.

Whenever there is expositional preaching of God's Word you dig down and deep to bring a focus to what the text is telling us yet there is an extraordinary danger in overdeveloping or under developing the text. One of the assets is you never preach the text without establishing its context. Any text without its context will become a pretext. So in this study in order to set up the next four studies we need to look at the context of those titles that are given to us and it is an astounding and astonishing context. First, I want us to look at what Isaiah wants us to see about this King and His Kingdom. Then we'll look at how the 'what' will be accomplished and then we'll look at who it is who will accomplish the very promises that are given to us. We have been instructed that we have a King who is a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. What will this King do? How will He do it? Finally, the takeaway will be, why is He doing it?

First, let's look at what the promises are of this King and His Kingdom. There are three promises that are given to us in the text. The first promise is found in verse 1. Isaiah 9:1 says *[1] But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.*

The first promise about this King and His Kingdom is that He is going to displace gloom with glorious joy. If you want to see the depth of the gloom then read Isaiah 8, but here having established that gloom in the previous chapter, Isaiah then gives the promise as he brings out the two tribes who were the furthest north in the land of promise – Naphtali and Zebulun – and says there was contempt, where the gloom was penetrating everything, but out of that same place will now come glorious joy. Isaiah is giving us a prophecy of the birth of Christ over 700 years before He is born and there is much gloom when he writes in Israel. The house of David begins to disintegrate in the later years of Solomon. Then comes the division into the kingdom with the ten northern tribes into rebellion and the two southern tribes – Benjamin and Judah. The king reigning while Isaiah writes this is king Hezekiah that God uses for a period of revival, but by in large kings kept taking them deeper into the gloom of rebellion against God, yet that is nothing compared to what is about to happen.

Upon Isaiah's death through these northern tribes specifically Naphtali and Zebulun, in the region of the Galilee, will sweep the hoards of paganism. First, will come Assyria and they will take away into captivity and slavery many and most of the ten tribes and those who are left are subjugated to amalgamation with the Gentiles. Then will come another hoard through – the Babylonians – and in three invasions they will take away the southern tribes. They will bring to annihilation Jerusalem as they destroy the Solomon Temple and degradation will now come. Then comes another hoard and that is the Medo-Persian Empire. Then comes the sweeping of paganism of the Greek empire under Alexander the Great and it will so invade particularly the Galilee that they will give up on their Hebrew names of their very region that they will be known as Decapolis. They will use the Greek names in paganism and that paganism will go so deep that

now the demonic will feel at home in that region. Then comes the iron hand of Rome as it comes in domination to hold fast the nation but then the Savior is born.

Where does He reside? He resides in the Galilee and the door of paganization to bring the gloom of rebellion and depravity throughout the land, now becomes the epicenter of the work of the Gospel as this One is raised in Nazareth by the Galilee. He ministers on the verge of the Galilee, like Capernaum and Magdala and from there He will go to Jerusalem to save us from our sins. Here comes a King who will go right to the place where the gloom had been distributed throughout the land and the people and begin His glorious work to displace gloom by the power of His grace and mercy, in which would come glorious joy to the world – the Lord has come.

Then there is a second promise which is made which is found in the next verse of Isaiah 9. Isaiah 9:2 says [2] *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.* This will mean a lot to the writer of the Gospel of John, which is John when he says in John 1:5, [5] *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.* But the light whenever it comes always displaces darkness. So here comes the King and His Kingdom and He will displace the darkness by His glorious light. Even though the darkness does not comprehend it or embrace it unless the Lord gives eyes to see and ears to hear, that light has now come and it is unstoppable.

Not only was there this sweeping movement of paganism for hundreds of years, but before Christ comes there is 400 years of silence from God. There is no Divine revelation, no Prophets, no preachers. So many of us take for granted what we have now with the many preachers, the Bible at our hands etc. but for 400 years God was silent and darkness pervaded. I've only been in what is known as deep darkness once and I know what is coming – the eternal condemnation of hell which not only has torment but it has outer darkness, literally meaning darkest darkness – and that was when a deacon in Charlotte was moving and I offered to help him move. We didn't really do a great job of packing so it was kind of falling everywhere so I said that since we were only going about a half mile to the new house that I would sit in the U-Haul to hold the furniture. I didn't realize that after I got in there to hold the furniture that as soon as the door was closed it was pitch black and by the time we got there I had no idea where I was. I had lost all sense of proportionality and relativity and everything. Darkness distorts. Darkness destroys but after 400 years of silence, God has finally spoken in His Son, the Lord Jesus.

There is a third promise. Isaiah 9:3 says [3] *You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.* This King and His Kingdom is coming to a remnant and even the remnant will have only a remnant that receive Him. He will come to a remnant of covenant people, but He will replace this remnant ultimately by making the remnant into a joyful multitude, because this message that is going from the Galilee of the Gentiles is going to all of the nations. A covenant people are going to be secured for this Kingdom by this King from every tribe and nation. This Gospel will penetrate every single area and He will bring forth a people whose gloom has been displaced where all of the glorious truth of the Gospel will have set them free, bringing them out of the darkness with the light of the Gospel and now come together as His people, a host too much to be numbered. Hear the echoes to Abraham – as the stars in the heavens, as the sand of the sea – this is a joyful multitude that He is gathering from the rising to the setting of the sun, a people of great joy. These are the people in this Kingdom of this King and those are His promises.

How will this King accomplish these astonishing promises? He will do through three 'for's. How will He displace the gloom with glorious joy? How will He displace the darkness with light? How will He take a remnant and make it a joyful multitude? Here is how He will accomplish His promises by the first 'for.'. Isaiah 9:4 says [4] *For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.* He will set His people free. This King is the emancipator for all who are oppressed in sin. All of His people for all of eternity He saves from the power of sin – you're born again, from the penalty of sin – you're justified, from the persuasion of sin – He keeps calling you, from the position of sin as He takes you from the kingdom of darkness and death into the Kingdom of light and the love of Christ. He not only removes the penalty of sin but breaks the power of cancelled sin. He then enables and empowers us to increasingly put to death the practice of sin. This One saves us from the dominion of sin and then one day when that King comes back the emancipation will be brought to perfection and He will remove the presence of sin and even the ability to sin. That's the glorious Day that this King has promised to accomplish – the emancipation of those who are oppressed by the dominion of sin.

It will be done interestingly as the day of Midian. What does this mean? It's also known as the day of Gideon. Who defeated the Midianites? It was the one whom God called – his name was Gideon. How many Midianites did he defeat? He defeated 32,000 and they even had the iron chariots and the lethal weapons and surrounded them. Gideon was going to go against them with 10,000 but God said 'no, that's too many so tell those who are fearful to go home and then tell the rest to drink from the river and divide those who lap up and those who cup up the water when they go to drink.' So they end up with 300 and those are the ones who go into the battle with clay pots and a torch of light and the cry for the sword of the Lord and Gideon. The Lord fought the battle. This is that amazing moment, isn't? In a manger, in a forgotten town of a King, with an appointed mother and an adopted father, this King will come and will come to the remnant but this King wins the victory for our very soul to set us free from sin, death, hell and the grave and defeats them.

Here is another thing He will do. He is going to triumph over all of His enemies. He will defeat sin, death, hell and the grave. Isaiah 9:5 says [5] *For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.* This Savior who will humble Himself to be born, live a life of righteousness, to be rejected, to go to the cross and there He will set us free from our sin. He will be placed in a tomb and on the third day He will rise again declaring He has won the victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave. He has won the victory and because He has defeated His enemies, when He comes again, He will destroy His enemies and all His enemies will be cast the hell of fire – sin, Satan, death – the place of the dead and they will be no more.

But wait, there are enemies that will not be cast under God's judgment for eternity – they will be saved for eternity. Romans 5:8 says [8] *but God shows (demonstrated) His love for us in that while we were still sinners (enemies), Christ died for us.* Instead of being cast under His judgment, the One who took our place and bore our judgment, when He comes again to destroy His defeated enemies, will welcome His elect, who were enemies of Him whom He saved from all of their sins for all of eternity to welcome us into glory.

There is one more 'for' so let's work our way chronologically through this. Gloom displaced with joy, darkness displaced with light, remnant turning into a multitude by emancipating us from the dominion of sin, by defeating God's enemies with all His majesty, holiness and glory and redeeming His people. This can only happen through a Divinely sent

warrior King who comes for us. Isaiah 9:6 says [6] *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Who is going to do this? A male, child, King is coming. This birth announcement doesn't say unto appointed mother and adopted father, but it says 'unto us a child has been born; a son has been given.' His Lordship and governance will stand because it rests upon His shoulders. Who is He? He is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace and those are the shoulders that will bear this Kingdom, its sovereign reign will be forever. It will be upon that Babe in the manger who in the manger is upholding the whole world by the Word of His power. There is no coalition for He doesn't need help – this is His work and only He can do it. We who work with Him and for Him because we love Him who first loved us, He is not dependent upon us, but He allows us to be empowered and used by Him.

Why and how does this take place? That brings us to a takeaway. Isaiah 9:7 says [7] *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.* This is not our justice. It's His and He saves us, not at the cost of His holiness and justice but by His justice through His grace. I John 1:9 says [9] *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* This is not our righteousness but His righteousness that clothes us, in justice because He has paid for our sins, He forgives us. Having satisfied the holiness of God He has shut the gates of hell and with His righteousness He has opened the gates of heaven for His people.

This One who is of the line of David is the One who establishes and upholds this Kingdom forever and this Kingdom cannot fail because this King cannot and will not fail. Here is the striking of the symbols of this glorious concerto of praise to the King – the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. Now you have a reason to rejoice this Christmas. It's not just showing up and going through the motions or mumbling a hymn for now you have something from your heart. He has taken the gloom of my sin away and brought me to the dawn of redemption. He has brought the light of His Word and the Gospel and by His grace I have been redeemed. He dispelled my blindness and my deafness. He gave me eyes to see and ears to hear and now the light of the Gospel has made sense. He has done all of that to bring me into the multitude of the Kingdom of God that one day we will join before the throne and to the praise of His glorious grace who is the King of glory. Worthy is the Lamb who takes away the sins of His people and brings them into glory.

This Kingdom that He has initiated is not only now but it is forever. The best is yet to come. Not yet has its fullness been given to us but it is now and is increasing. I know that things don't look too good in this country and many think we're losing impact in this country but that's another day and another sermon as to why a distracted church loses its impact when it gets off mission, off message and off ministry. But that's not what's happening.

Very simply, the Messiah King and His Messianic Kingdom cannot fail for the zeal of the Lord will do this. Zeal is an interesting word. The word ardor or passion could have been used. Holy week is also known as the week of passion. Do you think that Jesus who fulfilled His passion to do the will of the Father to save His people from their sins, who would not fail in His humiliation could possibly fail in His exaltation? The same zeal He had to save us from our sins is the same zeal that assures a Kingdom that is forever, relentless, unstoppable and will move throughout all the earth.

From a little upper room with frightened disciples seeing the risen Savior for the first time, to a mountain where He gives the first assembly of the church their mission, message and ministry and then back to an upper room where now the eleven become twelve and the twelve become a hundred and twenty, then 3,000, then 5,000 and then the Gospel goes north, south, east and west. The greatest work arguably will be done in North Africa where the great work of the Gospel will be felt there in Alexandria and other places. Within 25 years people in Europe will be saying ‘these people have turned the world upside down’ not because they went out to turn the world upside down but because they went out to turn sinners right side up and when sinners get turned right side up whole worlds begin to change – on mission, on message and in ministry. That is what needs to happen in our country.

Be encouraged. Dr. Pratt says that India and China now have more Christians than there are citizens in the United States of America. Iran a closed country? Iran is burgeoning with conversions, even the UN has declared that by the year 2025 there will be 200 million to 600 million new Christians in Africa. I have had the privilege to be involved in what is happening in Brazil. His Kingdom is unstoppable, relentless and the reason it will not be stopped is because the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. It is His passion and the One who would not fail to redeem His people will not fail in sending the redeemed on mission, on message and in ministry. The church is the embassy and epicenter of that Kingdom as His work goes forward and it’s not the church that does it but it’s Christ doing it through His people as they go throughout the entire world.

I’m not being anti-political here but I’m going to be very pointed. I’m very grateful for Christian engagement in the public square and I think there is the place in common grace and even in redeeming grace to bring the salt and light into the public square – included economic, military, politics, media, etc. Yet realize Jesus doesn’t need professors, generals, presidents, senators, etc., or anything out there because Jesus Christ will accomplish His purposes in His Kingdom and it is His zeal and passion that assures it. That’s where our hope and heart is.

This is the context – this Child. There may be some of you I need to speak with privately of this dispelling of gloom for unto you a son has been given. This Christmas will not be solved by a gift from your spouse. I’m all for good gifts from spouses. Don’t put the weight on your children. That gloom, darkness and dominion of sin is not going to be dispelled or displaced by going shopping on black Friday or at the parties you attend this season as you sing that you’re ‘dreaming of a white Christmas like you used to know’ but it’s the glory of the Christ and the zeal of the Lord that will accomplish this. It’s not the gift you give or the gift someone gives to you and I understand why we do this and I’m not against it. I just want you to understand that it is the Lord and His passion is our assurance that we have life evermore and His Kingdom is forever and ever. Its government is upon His shoulders.

As I go through the Gospels I never read of anything but one thing that is placed on His shoulders and that’s the cross. With that cross upon His shoulders our Savior rescues us from the gloom and despair of sin, the darkness of idolatry and breaks the dominion of sin as He defeats all of His and our enemies. This One who is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, will send His Kingdom for His people from the setting to the rising of the sun and the praise of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, because the zeal of the Lord will accomplish this and can do this for you personally, right now. If you have never come to Him, don’t let this day pass without coming to Him.

I love the rhythms of the Christian life. I love the opening hymn of first Advent every year which is Joy to the World, the Lord has come, for I anticipate it, but what I want more than

anything is for you to have joy, because the Lord who has come – you have come to Him, Lord and Savior. If you want to pray with someone about coming to Him please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for we'd love to talk and pray with you about this decision. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for these moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to begin to dig deep into this glorious prophecy in Isaiah 9. Guide us and direct us in it. Thank You O God for our great King! Unto us the Child King was born who is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace, so now we lift up praise to Him and we invite all to come to Him. Thank You for this advantageous season to do this. We consecrate ourselves in joy to worship Him, to bring Him to others and to bring others to Him that the Lord who has come might become their joy as they like us come to Him, in Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen.

Power Point

The Messiah King and His Kingdom

What?

Three Promises

1. Gloom displaced by Glorious Joy
2. Darkness displaced by Glorious Light
3. Remnant displaced by Joyful Multitude

How?"

The Three "For's"

1. Emancipation of those oppressed by sin
2. Triumph over all of His Enemies
3. An unexpected and unlikely Warrior King

Who?

The Government shall rest upon His shoulders and His Name shall be called...

Wonderful Counselor Mighty God

Everlasting Father Prince of Peace

Life Takeaway

The Messiah King and His Messianic Kingdom cannot fail, because He cannot fail.

The Zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this... His Kingdom is forever!