

Isaiah 9:1-7
The Gloom is Not Final

Introduction: This section is found in what some refer to as the Book of Immanuel, since the name occurs 3x (7:14; 8:8, 10). In 8:19–22, Isaiah and his fellow believers were warned against pursuing ‘alternative revelation possibilities’, like consulting the dead. That would only land them in agonizing darkness (8:20b–22). The only safety, the only light, was in the teaching and testimony Yahweh had already revealed (8:20a). Now Yahweh was about to supplement that testimony with a word about the difference a child will make for even a devastated people (9:1–7). He will prove a ‘great light’ for a people walking in darkness. (D. R. Davis)

1) **A great grace is coming for Israel—9:1-2**

- a) The contrast: ¹ *But* (in contrast to 8:22) *there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish.*
- b) ***In the former time*** he (God) *brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali* (west of the Sea of Galilee),
 - i) The two northernmost tribes, under the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser III in 734-732 BC.
 - ii) When the boiling Assyrian pot spilled over, this area was first to be scalded. (D. R. Davis)
 - iii) It was Yahweh’s judgment—the northern kingdom was one, 200-year-plus exercise in apostasy (cf. 2 Kings 17:7ff.). (D. R. Davis)
- c) ***but in the latter time*** he (God) *has made glorious...*
 - i) *the way of the sea* (of Galilee)—Assyrian province of Dor
 - ii) *the land beyond the Jordan*,—Assyrian province of Gilead
 - iii) *Galilee of the nations*.—Assyrian province of Megiddo
 - iv) This land was in absolute rebellion against God in the days of Isaiah.
- d) ² *The people who walked in darkness* (in Galilee) *have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*
 - i) These rebels did not discover the light, nor did they produce it. They wallowed in their darkness, but suddenly find themselves blinking in the light. It is graciously given to them, in spite of themselves. (Oswalt, 1:242)
- e) Compare the NT use of these verses:
 - i) Matt. 4:12-16—Galilee was the first to experience the ministry of Christ.
 - ii) God will not be satisfied that His people have experienced the just results of their rebellion. That experience is only a means to an end, by which God’s goodness and glory can be manifested in their salvation. (Oswalt, 1:239)
 - iii) Yahweh refuses to let His people go, even if they are unfaithful to Him.

2) **God will act and Israel will respond with praise—9:3-7**

- a) What does God do?

- i) God's work: ³ *You (God) have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;*
 - (1) This nation had previously been devastated and depopulated (7:20-23).
 - (2) Luke 2:10—great joy to all the people (of Israel)
- ii) The people's response: *they rejoice before you* (in worship) ...
 - (1) Like farmers—*as with joy at the harvest,*
 - (2) Like victorious warriors—*as they are glad when they divide the spoil.*
- b) Why are they rejoicing? 3 reasons gradually increasing in significance
 - i) Immediate reasons—9:4-5
 - (1) Reason # 1—Genuine **liberation** for Israel—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.*
 - (a) In the days of Gideon (Judg. 6-8) God delivered Israel with a wonderful display of divine power, without the use of any adequate human means (Alexander, p. 201).
 - (2) Reason # 2—Genuine universal **pacification**—⁵ *For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment being rolled in blood will be as fuel for the fire.*
 - (a) These instruments of war will be rendered obsolete, not by the United Nations, but by the Ruler of the Nations. Remember 2:4.
 - ii) Ultimate reason—9:6
 - (1) The promise of the Child: ⁶ *For to us (Israel) a child has been born (His human origin), to us a son is given (His divine origin); and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be call (by God the Father) ...*
 - (2) Four aspects of His character given as titles
 - Whereas 7:14 concentrates on his **birth** and 11:1–16 on his **kingdom**, vs 6–7 chiefly emphasize his **person**. (Kidner)
 - These titles would not be used of a mere human
 - (a) *Wonderful Counselor*,—extraordinary military strategist
 - (i) Compared with the bungling King Ahaz (Is. 7:12-13; 2 Kings 16:7)
 - (b) *Mighty God*,—extraordinary military power against His enemies
 - (c) *Everlasting Father*,—extraordinarily long tender, protective reign but He is the author or creator of time
 - (d) *Prince of Peace*.—extraordinary invincible prosperity and tranquility, perfect social justice
 - (i) This is not merely inner peace, but external, world-wide peace.
 - (ii) Or as one Jewish man said, “Shalom means we win, you lose!” (D. R. Davis)
 - (3) ⁷ *Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom,*
 - (a) **Why** will He be on David's throne?
 - (i) *to establish it*—to guarantee the kingdom

- (ii) *and to uphold it*—to maintain the kingdom
 - (b) **How** will He establish and support David's throne?
 - (i) *with justice* [mishpat]
 - (ii) *and with righteousness* [tsedeqah]
 - (c) **For how long** will He do this?
 - (i) *from this time forth and forevermore.*
 - 1. A ruler with no term limits!
 - (ii) There is no possible way this refers to a merely human ruler.
 - (d) **How will this be accomplished?**
 - (i) *The zeal* (jealousy; passion; intense devotion to and love for) *of Yahweh of hosts will do this.*
 - 1. God is not a disinterested or impartial bystander.
 - (ii) No human agency can accomplish this. It depends solely on the power of a sovereign God.
- 3) **Things we need to remember:**
- a) Messiah will be king.
 - b) Messiah will be both God and man.
 - c) So, bleak as it looks in 732, the celebration, liberation, and pacification will all come true, as will the dominion, the throne, and the justice. The burning passion of Yahweh of hosts will see to it. There is nothing like certainty to stir your faith. (D. R. Davis)
 - d) If God can bring rebellious Israel out of darkness into light, He can do the same for you. But He comes to you on His terms. Are you willing to be made whole?

Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God
Isaiah 9:6

Introduction: We will focus this week and next on the four titles of Christ recorded in Isaiah 9:6. This explains how the victorious, covenant-fulfilling work of God comes about. (Motyer)

1) Background to Isaiah 9:6

- a) This verse describes the future time when Christ will rule the entire world from His throne in Jerusalem.
- b) It answers the questions,
 - i) “What right does He have to rule?”
 - ii) “What will He be like as the king of the entire world?”
 - iii) “Can we trust Him?”
- c) Notice that 9:6 begins with “for”:
 - i) This describes the reason for the joy and peace yet to come.
 - ii) A child is born, and a son is given.

2) What do these titles mean? (see parallel thoughts in Jer. 32:18-19)

- a) **Wonderful Counselor** (emphasizes His supernatural, infinite wisdom)
 - i) The noun: **Wonderful** [pala’] (lit. “a wonder of”)
 - (1) Extraordinary, exceptional, unusual, distinguished, hard to understand, that which produces a reaction of awe, astonishment and praise
 - (2) Used of God’s **works**—Ex. 15:11; Ps. 77:14; 78:12; 88:10; Is. 25:1
 - (3) Used of God’s **name**—Judg. 13:15-21 (esp. v. 18)
 - ii) The noun: **Counselor** [ya’ats]
 - (1) One who plans or consults, or gives advice about problems
 - (2) See Is. 40:14; Rom. 11:34—God needs counsel from no one
 - (3) Jesus is a wonderful counselor because God’s Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge rests upon Him—Is. 11:2
 - (4) Ps. 33:10-11; Prov. 19:21—God’s counsel will stand forever
 - iii) Used together in Isaiah 25:1; 28:29
 - iv) His infinite wisdom (Omniscience): Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Eph. 3:10
 - (1) God applies His knowledge in such a way that the best means are employed to achieve the highest ends in order to glorify Himself the most. (McCune)
- b) **Mighty God** (emphasizes His omnipotence)
 - i) The noun: **God** [El]—shortened form of Elohim
 - (1) Emphasizing strength and might
 - ii) The adjective: **Mighty** [Gibbor]—strong, to prevail
 - (1) Commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of a successful warrior. A mighty military champion

- (2) One so powerful so as to be able to absorb all evil and defeat it.
(Oswalt)
- iii) The omnipotence of Christ
- (1) Observed in His title: *the Almighty* (Rev. 1:8; 19:6)
- (2) **Negatively:** things Jesus cannot do:
- (a) There are things that Scripture says God is unable to do because they would contradict his character or revealed will.
- (b) This includes the truth that He cannot:
- **Repent/regret** (like a man) (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29)
 - **lie** (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2)
 - **deny himself** (2 Tim. 2:13)
 - **be tempted** (so that he succumbs) (James 1:13)
 - **change** in his essence, purposes, or promises (James 1:17; Mal. 3:6).
 - **look with delight on sin** (Hab. 1:13)
- (3) **Positively:** things Jesus can do.
- (a) **Creation:** John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16
- (b) **Miracles:** Matt. 8:27; Mark 4:41
- (c) **Providence:** Heb. 1:3
- (d) **Redemption:** 1 Cor. 1:24
- iv) This title is used in Is. 10:21.

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) He ought to strike wonder and awe in our hearts.
- b) In the kingdom He will be the Teacher before whose authority the whole world will submit. People will marvel at His wisdom and power.
- c) See 1 Chron. 16:8-36.

Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace
Isaiah 9:6

Introduction: Having observed that He counsels in a marvelous manner, and that He is indeed a powerful God, we see this week the third and fourth characteristics of Messiah.

1) Everlasting Father (emphasizes his eternal, beneficent reign)

a) Father [lit. "Father of..."]

i) It emphasizes His compassionate rule as king.

(1) Culturally it also carried with it the concept of authority.

(2) In Gentile cultures the king was referred to as the son and the deity as the father. Some kings claimed to be the father of those they ruled.

Even David refers to King Saul as his father and Saul refers to David as his son—1 Sam. 24:11, 16

(3) Pictures the father as protector/provider—Job 29:12-16; Ps. 68:5

(4) Pictures the father as disciplinarian or punisher—Prov. 3:12

ii) This is not to confuse Jesus with God the Father. This refers to Jesus' role as king.

b) Eternity

i) It emphasizes His relationship to time. He is the originator (source, founder, inventor, or author) of eternity.

(1) Jesus created the ages of time—Heb. 1:2

(2) His reign (dynasty) is "forever"—2 Sam. 7:16

(3) His existence is eternal—Is. 57:15; John 1:1

(4) His praise will be eternal—Ps. 111:10; Phil. 2:9-11

c) These are used together in Is. 63:16b

2) Prince of Peace (emphasizes his just and prosperous administration)

a) Prince [רַב] (lit. Prince of ...)

i) Remember the name of the Russian rulers before the Communists? They were called *Tsars* (Czars), similar in sound to the Hebrew. The Roman *Caesar* and the German *Kaiser* are similar to the NT Greek *kaisar*.

ii) It was used of different military, political, civil, and religious leaders and administrators throughout Israel's history.

b) Peace [שָׁלוֹם]

i) The basic meaning is that of completeness and fulfillment, wholeness and unity, peace and safety, harmony and unimpaired relationships with others.

ii) He is the embodiment of peace—Mic. 5:5

(1) He is a peaceful king, one who comes in peace and one who establishes peace, not by a brutal squashing of all defiance, but by means of a transparent vulnerability which makes defiance pointless. (Oswalt)

- iii) He will remove all powers that disturb peace—Is. 26:12; 66:12
- iv) His reign will be characterized by peace—Is. 9:7
- c) These terms are used together in Is. 26:3, 12.

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) These titles emphasize His existence and eternity. He will be King as long as the kingdom exists. There will be no change of power. Christ will always rule His kingdom!
- b) Because He is the originator of eternity, He can grant eternal life to those who come to Him in faith and repentance. See John 10:27-28.
- c) Because Christ will rule and will bring peace, completeness, and fulfillment, He is also able to do the same today.