

Isaiah 9:1-7
April 8, 2018

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Fill in the blank: “You know someone is living in spiritual darkness when.....” [Let people engage.]

Q: What did spiritual darkness look like to you before you knew Christ? Did you even know you were in the dark? [Let people engage]

Q: When did you become aware that you needed a Messiah? [Let people engage]

Q: Upon accepting Christ as your Savior, what did you most hope He would do for you? [Give me peace? Direction? Remove guilt?]

I was blessed to grow up in a strong Christian family. I was exposed to God and Jesus from the cradle to the time I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior at age 10. Looking back at that time period, I think my spiritual darkness looked more like “ignorance” at that age, especially as it related to sin. I wanted to please my parents, so I stayed out of trouble doing what I was told most of the time. Unlike my brother, who was rebellious and declaring his independence at age 6 by trying to jump a train and run away. Have you heard of MoPac? The “Missouri-Pacific?” In 1967 there was no roadway called “MoPac.” Gene could go from our house to the train tracks with ease. Gene’s spiritual darkness led him to believe he didn’t need anyone to have authority over him. He really struggled with that.

Transition: It’s been a couple of weeks since we have been in Isaiah, so let me help us get some traction. We learned in the last part of Chapter 8 that there is only one source of knowledge and revelation that God has given us to understand His Kingdom. And it is NOT mediums and spiritists, or fortune tellers, or palm readers. God’s people were living in spiritual darkness, and ironically, by seeking mediums who were also in darkness, only served to deepen the darkness of God’s children! There is only One whom we should consult, and His name is Jesus.

As we go through today’s study, it is my prayer that all of us CAN deepen our appreciation of Jesus as our Messiah BY reviewing the ATTRIBUTES of Jesus as outlined by Isaiah in the first seven verses of Isaiah. Let’s begin.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.1:

- Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—

V.2:

- The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

V.3:

- You (probably refers to God the Father) have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder.

V.4:

- For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

V.5:

- Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

V.6:

- For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

V.7:

- Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.1a: Who are the people in distress? [The people of the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, i.e. the Northern Kingdom.]

Q: As a refresher, why are they experiencing gloom and distress? [God humbled them by way of the Assyrian army. They suffered the most when Assyria swept over Israel and conquered the Northern Kingdom.]

Q V.1b: Isaiah says, "he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles." Who is Isaiah referencing? [Christ, the Messiah]

Q: What is so encouraging about the fact that our Redeemer will honor the "Galilee of the Gentiles?" [It means that Christ's salvation goes beyond the Jewish people. Salvation is available to anyone!]

Q: Let's look at the geography referenced by Isaiah. What sea is he referring to and what does he mean "along the Jordan?" [The Sea of Galilee. **The way of the sea** describes a major international highway running through this region. This is the only place where the Bible used this phrase, but it appears often in Assyrian and Egyptian records. The invading Assyrian soldiers took that route when they invaded the Northern Kingdom. From that area the Messiah will arise and will wipe away the gloom and darkness brought on by Gentile domination.]

Q V.2: What does Isaiah mean by "he will *honor* Galilee of the Gentiles?" [Because the geographical **areas named in Isaiah 9:1 were especially devastated** when the Assyrian army moved in, but these **areas would be especially honored by the ministry of the Messiah**. Jesus was identified with "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matt. 4:15, NIV)]

Q: When Isaiah says, “a light has dawned,” what is he referring to? [The Redeemer will come and bring to the world the dawning of a new day (v. 2). He will lead the people from spiritual darkness into light.]

Transition: In vv. 3–5, Isaiah looks to the future when Christ will come a second time. The prophet likens the second coming to the dawning of light. He then describes the **effects** of the new dawning light.

Q V.3: What are the first two effects? [An enlarged nation and an increase in their joy]

Q: What is meant by “an enlarged nation?” [At the second coming when the Lord will reign for a thousand years, He will bring the saints with Him!]

Q: How does Isaiah describe what this “increased joy” feels like? [like a people who rejoice over a harvest – you feel His provision, abundance, and blessing; like men rejoicing over dividing plunder – represents victory with God’s help]

Q V.4: How else does Isaiah describe what this “increased joy” feels like? [It’s like an oppressive yoke that has been shattered. The weight is lifted.]

Q V.5: How else does Isaiah describe what this “increased joy” feels like? [It’s like taking dirty, bloodied clothing and burning it so that it becomes fuel.]

Q: Let’s hit the pause button. What sort of parallels are you seeing in these metaphors compared to the gospel message? [We inherit the spiritual rituals; we are no longer enslaved to sin; the blood of Christ has removed the stains of our own sins and have made us “white as snow.”]

Transition: Verses 6-7 are hopefully well-known to us. Isaiah shares who God promised to send as the Messiah. This is such an important part of our Christian doctrine, let’s look at the truths about the Messiah.

Q V.6: Let’s look at “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.” Who is “us?” [the nation of Israel; His covenant people]

Q: What truths do you see in just this sentence alone?

- The Messiah comes to us as child. He is 100% human
- The Messiah comes to us as God’s Son. Thus, he is also 100% deity.
- God *gave* His Son to redeem us. It was an act of love.

Q: “And the government will be on His shoulders.” What truth(s) do you see in this sentence?

- The Messiah will reign on this Earth when He comes again.
- Christ is sovereign.

Transition: The Messiah will have multiple titles.

Q: What does it mean to you that Jesus is a “Wonderful Counselor?” [He will rule with perfect wisdom; He has the knowledge to lead us and guide us.]

Q: What does it mean to you that Jesus is called a “Mighty God?” [He’s omnipotent; no one can overcome Him.]

Q: What does it mean to you that Jesus is called the “Everlasting Father?” [We have a perfect Father in heaven who will be our father forever! His love for us as His child will be unconditional; we will rest in His love.]

Q: What does it mean to you that Jesus is called “The Prince of Peace?” [Peace and fear cannot co-exist. When He comes to reign, He will usher in His Peace because He IS peace!]

Q V.7: What are two things that will increase without end? [His rulership and His peace]

Q: What will His reign look like? [Established and upheld with justice and righteousness from the time He arrives and for all of eternity.]

Q: What emotion of the Lord will accomplish the establishment of His reign? [Zeal!]

LOOK:

Today is April 8, 2018, the third anniversary of my father’s transition to eternal life in heaven. I bet you my life savings account that Gene is in San Antonio talking to Dad at his grave. If Dad were allowed to send us a message, he would say Jesus has risen indeed. “never give up praying for Gene’s salvation.” He needs Jesus, just like us. Please pray for Gene and all who are spiritually lost!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (Is 7:17–10:34)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

II. Israel Will Be Defeated by Assyria (7:17–10:34)

From 7:17 on, Isaiah is talking to apostate Israel and Pekah, her king. He warns the Northern Kingdom that Assyria will come upon them and completely ruin them, leaving the land in poverty and ruin instead of fullness of blessing. It was at this point that the “sign child” was born (8:1–4), and named Maher-shalal-hash-baz—“speed to the spoil, haste to the prey.” His name emphasized the coming ruin of Samaria and Syria (8:4). Israel’s confederacy with Syria would not protect the people (8:11–15); they needed to join with Jehovah and let Him be their stone of safety. They needed to get back to the law (8:20).

In 9:1–7 Isaiah gives a second prediction of the coming Messiah; see Matt. 4:13–16. The areas mentioned in 9:1 suffered the most when Assyria swept over Israel, but they would be the ones to see the light of Messiah. In vv. 3–5, the prophet looks down the years to the time when Israel would rejoice, when burdens would be lifted, when the weapons of warfare would be burned as fuel—the time when Jesus Christ would reign as Prince of Peace. See here the humanity of Christ (“a Child is born”) and the deity of Christ (“a Son is given”). Then the prophet jumps from His humble birth to His glorious reign, when He shall rule from Jerusalem and there shall be perfect peace.

In 9:8–10:34, Isaiah continues to warn Israel of her impending doom. He also warns Assyria not to become proud of her victories, for she is but a tool in the hands of God. Her day of defeat will come too. We may see in Assyria a type of the Antichrist who will gather all nations against Jerusalem at the Battle of Armageddon. Just as God defeated Assyria with His miraculous power, so He will defeat Satan and his united armies (Rev. 19).

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted (pp. 36-39)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. Shear-jashub: A promise of mercy (Isa. 9:1–11:16)

This name means “A remnant shall return,” and the return of the Jewish remnant to their land is a major theme in these chapters (10:20–22; 11:11–12, 16). When Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Ephraim), the nation was never restored but became what we know as Samaria. After the Babylonian Captivity (606–586 B.C.), the people of Judah were given another chance to establish themselves in the land; and through them, the Lord brought the Messiah into the world. Had a remnant not returned, God’s plans for redeeming a lost world might have been frustrated. How much depended on that small remnant! God’s mercy to His people is seen in four ministries the Lord performed for them.

The Lord promised them a Redeemer (Isa. 9:1–7). Isaiah continued the theme of light and darkness (8:20–22) by announcing, “There will be no more gloom” (9:1, NIV). The Redeemer will come and bring to the world the dawning of a new day (v. 2; Luke 1:78–79; John 8:12). We know that this prophecy refers to Christ because of the way it is quoted in Matthew 4:13–15. The geographical areas named in Isaiah 9:1 were especially devastated when the Assyrian army moved in, but these areas would be especially honored by the ministry of the Messiah. Jesus was identified with “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Matt. 4:15, NIV), and His loving ministry to the people brought light and joy.

But the prophet looked beyond the first coming of Christ to His second coming and the establishing of His righteous kingdom (Isa. 9:3–7). Instead of protecting a small remnant, God would enlarge the nation. Instead of experiencing sorrow, the people would rejoice like reapers after a great harvest, soldiers after a great victory (see Jud. 6–7), or prisoners of war after being released from their yoke of bondage. Of course, some of this occurred when God defeated Assyria and delivered Jerusalem (Isa. 37). But the ultimate fulfillment is still future; all military material will be destroyed (9:5) because the nations will not learn war any more (2:4).

Isaiah 9:6 declares both the *humanity* (“A Child is born”) and the *deity* (“A Son is given”) of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet then leaps ahead to the Kingdom Age when Messiah will reign in righteousness and justice from David’s throne. God had promised David that his dynasty and throne would be established forever (2 Sam. 7:16); and this is fulfilled literally in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32–33; Zech. 9:9), who will one day reign from Jerusalem (Isa. 11:1–5; Jer. 23:5–8; 30:8–10). This kingdom is called “the Millennium,” which means “one thousand years.” The phrase is used six times in Revelation 20

If His name is “Wonderful,” then there will be nothing dull about His reign! As Counselor, He has the wisdom to rule justly; and as the Mighty God, He has the power to execute His wise plans. “Everlasting Father” does not suggest that the Son is also the Father, for each Person in the Godhead is distinct. “Father of Eternity” is a better translation. Among the Jews, the word “father” means “originator” or “source.” For example, Satan is the “father [originator] of lies” (John 8:44, NIV). If you want anything eternal, you must get it from Jesus Christ; He is the “Father of eternity.”

The Lord judged Israel for their sins (Isa. 9:8–10:4). This long section describes what will happen to the Northern Kingdom when the Assyrians invade. While Isaiah’s ministry was primarily to the people of Judah, he used Israel as an object lesson to warn the Southern Kingdom that God does not take sin lightly. Judah had sinned greatly, but God in His mercy spared them for David’s sake (37:35; 1 Kings 11:13; 15:4; 2 Chron. 21:7). However, God’s long-suffering would one day end.

The key statement is, “For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still” (Isa. 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4; and see 5:25). This is the outstretched hand of God’s judgment, not His mercy (65:2; Rom. 10:21). God judged them for their *pride* in thinking that their present difficulties were temporary and the nation could rebuild itself better than before (Isa. 9:8–12). He also judged them for their *hardness of heart* in their refusal to repent and return to the Lord (vv. 13–17). God’s loving purpose in chastening is that we yield to Him; but if we harden our hearts, then chastening becomes judgment (Heb. 12:1–11). Israel was being led astray by false prophets and foolish leaders; the nation would not listen to God’s Word. Ephraim’s own wickedness was destroying the nation, the way a fire destroys a forest or a field (Isa. 9:18–19). But the sinners would become fuel for the fire *God* could kindle! In their greed, the people of the Northern Kingdom were devouring one another (v. 20) and battling one another (v. 21); but they would soon be devoured and defeated by Assyria.

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 1052–1054). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

f. The future deliverance of the nation (9:1–7)

In these verses Isaiah spoke of the coming Deliverer who will effect the changes in the nation of which the prophet had been speaking. The Messiah’s coming will lead the nation into joy and

prosperity, which had been lacking for years. His coming will fulfill the promises to Abraham and David about the prosperous kingdom. The “child” motif again is evident (v. 6; cf. 7:14–16; 8:1–4, 18). The Child will grow up to be the Deliverer (9:7), not a *sign* (8:18) of deliverance but the Deliverer Himself. He will effect the changes necessary for prosperity and spirituality to come to the nation.

9:1. A time will come when **gloom** and darkness (8:22) will be a thing of **the past**. The gloom on the northern section of Israel came because of discipline. God **humbled ... Zebulun and ... Naphtali** for a while. Though Isaiah was probably using these two tribal names to represent the Northern Kingdom, it is striking that Jesus’ upbringing and early ministry was mostly in that very area near the Sea of Galilee. His presence certainly “honored” that area. In 732 B.C. this northern portion of Israel became an Assyrian province under Tiglath-Pileser III, thus humbling the people there and putting them in gloom. Under Gentile domination, that area was called **Galilee of the Gentiles**.

The way of the sea describes a major international highway running through this region. This is the only place where the Bible used this phrase, but it appears often in Assyrian and Egyptian records. The invading Assyrian soldiers took that route when they invaded the Northern Kingdom. From that area the Messiah will arise and will wipe away the gloom and darkness brought on by Gentile domination.

9:2. With typical Hebrew parallelism the prophet described the effect of the Messiah on this northern part of Israel. **The people** were **in darkness** (cf. 8:22) and in **the shadow of death**. Then they saw **a great light** and **light ... dawned** on them. Matthew applied this passage to Jesus, who began His preaching and healing ministry in that region (Matt. 4:15–16).

9:3–5. **You** probably refers to God the Father, who will lead the people from spiritual darkness into light (v. 2) by sending the Child (v. 6), the Messiah. The light will increase **their joy** like the joy at harvesttime or the joy of winning a battle and **dividing the plunder**. “Joy” is another emphasis of Isaiah’s, mentioned more than two dozen times in the book. This will be a supernatural work of God much like the nation’s deliverance when Gideon defeated Midian (Jud. 7:1–24; Isa. 10:26). It will be like taking a burden off one’s back (9:4). At that time, after the Child-Messiah will come, the implements of warfare will be destroyed (v. 5) because in His reign of universal peace implements of war will not be needed (cf. 2:4).

9:6–7. Here Isaiah recorded five things about the coming Messiah.

1. He was to be born **a Child**. The implication, given in parallel style, is that this Child, **a Son**, was to be born into the nation of Israel (**to us**) as one of the covenant people.

2. He will rule over God’s people (cf. Micah 5:2) and the world (Zech. 14:9). **The government will be on His shoulders** figuratively refers to the kingly robe to be worn by the Messiah. As King, He will be responsible to govern the nation. In Isaiah’s day Judah’s leaders were incompetent in governing the people. But the Messiah will govern properly.

3. He will have four descriptive names that will reveal His character. He will be the nation’s **Wonderful** (possibly “exceptional” or “distinguished”) **Counselor**, and the people will gladly listen to Him as the authoritative One. In the kingdom many people will be anxious to hear the Messiah teach God’s ways (2:3). He is also the **Mighty God** (cf. 10:21). Some have suggested that this simply means “a godlike person” or hero. But Isaiah meant more than that, for he had already spoken of the Messiah doing what no other person had been able to do (e.g., 9:2–5). Isaiah understood that the Messiah was to be God in some sense of the term.

This Deliverer will also be called the **Everlasting Father**. Many people are puzzled by this title because the Messiah, God’s Son, is distinguished in the Trinity from God the Father. How

can the Son be the Father? Several things must be noted in this regard. First, the Messiah, being the second Person of the Trinity, is in His essence, God. Therefore, He has all the attributes of God including eternity. Since God is One (even though He exists in three Persons), the Messiah is God. Second, the title “Everlasting Father” is an idiom used to describe the Messiah’s relationship to time, not His relationship to the other Members of the Trinity. He is said to be everlasting, just as God (the Father) is called “the Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9). The Messiah will be a “fatherly” Ruler. Third, perhaps Isaiah had in mind the promise to David (2 Sam. 7:16) about the “foreverness” of the kingdom which God promised would come through David’s line. The Messiah, a Descendant of David, will fulfill this promise for which the nation had been waiting.

The Messiah is also called the **Prince of Peace**, the One who will bring in and maintain the time of millennial peace when the nation will be properly related to the Lord. Together, these four titles give a beautiful picture of the coming Messiah’s character (Isa. 9:6 includes the first of Isaiah’s 25 references to peace.)

4. The Messiah, seated **on David’s throne** (Luke 1:32–33), will have an eternal rule of **peace and justice**. His rule will have **no end**; it will go on **forever** (cf. Dan. 7:14, 27; Micah 4:7; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15). Following the kingdom on earth, He will rule for eternity. He will maintain **righteousness** (cf. Jer. 23:5), as His rule will conform to God’s holy character and demands.

5. This will all be accomplished by **the zeal of the LORD Almighty**. The coming of the millennial **kingdom** depends on God, not Israel. The Messiah will rule because God promised it and will zealously see that the kingdom comes. Without His sovereign intervention there would be no kingdom for Israel.

Apparently Isaiah assumed that the messianic Child, Jesus Christ, would establish His reign in one Advent, that when the Child grew up He would rule in triumph. Like the other prophets, Isaiah was not aware of the great time gap between Messiah’s *two* Advents (cf. 1 Peter 1:10–12; and see comments on Isa. 61:1–2).

3. EXILE FOR THE NORTHERN KINGDOM (9:8–10:4)

After giving a glorious description of the coming Messiah, who will usher in the kingdom for the nation and whose reign will last forever, Isaiah focused on the nation in his day. Some have questioned why Isaiah placed these verses here. But, characteristic of this great prophetic writer, he alternated the message of judgment with the message of blessing. In contrast with the Messiah’s future reign of justice and righteousness (9:6–7; 11:4; 16:5; 28:6, 17; 32:16; 33:5; 42:1, 3–4; 51:5), the nation in Isaiah’s day was ruled by leaders who did not care about the people under them (cf. 5:7).

a. Israel judged because of arrogance (9:8–12)

9:8. Though Isaiah was writing to the nation of Judah he often used the Northern Kingdom of **Israel** (also called **Jacob**) as an example of the fact that God judges His sinful people. The **message** was one of coming judgment on the North. When these words were written, the Northern Kingdom was already in some disrepair (v. 10a). The coming **fall** of Israel (in 722 B.C.) should have warned Judah that God is active in the affairs of His people. Judah should have realized that she too would be destroyed if she persisted in the activities that characterized the North.

9:9–12. The coming judgment on Israel would be widely known, but it would not be enough to turn her back to God. **Ephraim**, one of Israel’s largest tribes, often represented the entire Northern Kingdom (cf. 7:2, 17). **Samaria** was the Northern Kingdom’s capital city. Apparently

Israel's inhabitants felt that they would experience only a temporary setback (**the bricks have fallen**) and in proud confidence thought they could **rebuild**. In fact they felt that they would be able to make their nation better than ever. But this was not to be the case. They were going to be squeezed by **Rezin's foes** (Rezin was the king of Aram, 7:1, an ally of Israel). Those foes were **from the east** (other **Arameans**; Rezin was king of part of Aram) **and Philistines from the west** (cf. 2:6). This was the Lord's doing. But even this judgment did not appease God's wrath because the people continued to refuse to deal with their sin. So God would continue to chasten them. This section (9:8–12) ends with a refrain which is repeated three more times in the following verses: **Yet for all this His anger is not turned away, His hand is still upraised** (vv. 12, 17, 21; 10:4). This repetition heightens the effect of God's intense anger and underscores the certainty of continued judgment.

b. The entire nation judged (9:13–17)

9:13. The prophet lamented that even though the Northern Kingdom had suffered at the hand of God, they still had **not returned to Him**. So their continued refusal would lead to more judgment. Israel was like a child who stubbornly refuses to obey his parents and therefore is punished more severely.

9:14–17. Israel's refusal to turn to God would result in the most severe judgment imaginable. The whole nation, from rich to poor and from old to young, would be cast aside. **Both head and tail** (v. 14, explained in v. 15) is a merism, a figure which gives opposite extremes to include the whole spectrum. **Elders (the head)** and false **prophets (the tail)**, **guides and those who are guided**, and **young men ... the fatherless ... widows**- these were all **ungodly and wicked** and therefore would be judged by God. On the refrain in verse 17b see comments on verse 12.

c. A description of wickedness (9:18–21)

9:18–21. The people's **wickedness** (cf. v. 17) is pictured as burning them up **like a huge fire** with a large **column of smoke**. The judgment would come not only from God (v. 11) and from enemies of the nation (v. 12), but also from within. The nation would destroy itself by its own wicked deeds. **People** would oppose each other (v. 19), **devour** each other (v. 20), and even entire tribes will be in conflict (v. 21). On the refrain in verse 21b see comments on verse 12.