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Isaiah 9:1-7 "Our Wonderful Savior is Born"

Intro. Today is the first Sunday of the Christmas season. Christmas is supposed to be a time of joy. But for many it is a time of sadness and depression. One reason for this is that people's sorrows seem to be magnified. Those that have financial difficulties realize this more acutely than at any other time of the year. Those that have lost loved ones sense their loss even more. The lonely are even lonelier. Sometime family members get out of sorts with one another, and refuse to come home for Christmas. The pain of their absence is heightened at Christmas. So during this season of the year, many people are going through a time of darkness.

When Isaiah the prophet spoke the words of this text, the people of Israel had gone through a very sad time. Because of their sin and rebellion, God allowed the mighty kingdom of Assyria to come against the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and totally devastate it. In fact, the Northern Kingdom ceased to be a country. You think you have problems! Many lost their lives. Many lost their homes. They lost their whole country. But even in wrath, God remembers His mercy. So about 700 years before Jesus Christ was born, God gave the prophet Isaiah a marvelous vision of Israel's restoration. Isaiah said that God would turn their darkness into light, their sorrow into joy, and their captivity into freedom. God gave a ray of hope in a very dark time in their national history. It was like the Christmas star shining in the blackness of the night, to give hope to all.

You may have come this morning feeling a little down and depressed. But I have good news for you. The same hope and light that God promised Israel, He wants to extend to you as well.

This morning we will take a look at a wonderful prophecy of the coming of Messiah. It was written seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. We will look at the wonderful promises of God. Then we will learn about the One who would bring about these blessings. In the process, I will show you who has fulfilled this marvelous prophecy. So I want us to begin by looking at:

I. THE PROMISED BLESSEDNESS

In vv. 2-5 the prophets gives a series of promises of what will happen to Israel some day. They are spoken in the prophetic perfect tense. That means that these promises are so sure, they are spoken as if they had already been fulfilled. Notice the promises that God made to Israel, for I believe that He makes the same kind of promises to us.

A. He Would Turn Their Darkness into Light – After describing the land of Galilee in v.1, the prophet says in v.2, "The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined." As I said, at this very time in Israel's history, the Northern Kingdom had been obliterated when the Assyrian army moved in. I think it is interesting that in the very area of the Northern Kingdom, the light of the coming Messiah would shine. In Mt. 4:13-17 Matthew makes note of this prophecy, and how it was fulfilled in that home base of Jesus' ministry was in Galilee. God favored the devastated Northern Kingdom by being the home base of the Messiah's ministry.

Friend, God may allow dark times to come into your life, but He has a way of turning your darkness into light if you will only trust Him while you are in the darkness. Give Him time, and He will lead you out of the darkness and into His marvelous light.

B. God's People Would Be Multiplied - Again, Assyria came against Israel in cruel fashion, and hundreds of thousands of Israel's people were killed. Many more were deported and scattered to other countries. The population of Israel was decimated. Yet, in spite of this, Isaiah envisions a time in v.3 that he could give a prophecy saying, "You have multiplied the nation...." Though Israel has faced virtual extinction several times in their history, God has caused them to multiply once again. But the complete fulfillment of this prophecy awaits the Second Coming of Jesus. In the coming Kingdom Israel will be multiplied as the stars of heaven, and as the sand of the seashore.

A spiritual fulfillment has occurred because of the coming of the Messiah. According to Gal. 3:29, all who believe in Jesus are spiritually sons of Abraham. Now there are countless millions of people known as the people of God. You may feel like the people of God are a very small minority, but I can assure you that there are hundreds of millions of true believers.

C. God Will Turn Their Sadness into Joy – In v.3 the prophet goes on to predict a time when God will have, "increased its joy...." The KJV is incorrect when it says, "And not increased the joy...." So to the sad & depressed Israelites, God promised that He would bring joy back to the nation. He even promised great joy. Here in our text the joy is described as the joy of a harvest or the joy of a victory celebration after battle.

This prophecy began to be fulfilled with the birth of Jesus. In Lk. 2:10 the angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people." Then, the night before Jesus was crucified, Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (Jn. 15:11). Jesus has come in order that you might have joy. The real message of Christmas is to bring joy to our hearts.

Have you experienced the joy of the Lord? He wants to give you joy that no one can take away.

D. He Would Turn Their Captivity into Liberty – So many times Israel came under bondage to another nation because of their sin. Assyria was the most recent example in Isaiah's day. But here in v.4 the prophet explained one reason for the great joy that would come to the nation. He says to God, "For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor...." And notice that this will come "as in the day of Midian," probably a reference to the great victory over the Midianites through Gideon and just 300 men (Judg. 7:19-25). Israel is oppressed from all sides today. They are in bondage to fear. But when Jesus comes again, He will miraculously bring about a complete victory & freedom for His people, and they will rejoice.

Just as God promised Israel physical freedom, even so, He has offered us spiritual freedom. In John 8 Jesus spoke of the bondage of sin. He said, "Whoever commits sin is the slave of sin." But because of the coming of Jesus, we can be set free from the bondage of sin. He came to free us from the oppressive guilt of sin. He came to free us from the power of sin. Now we can resist temptation. We can overcome addictive behaviors. We can resist peer pressure from the world. God wants us to experience freedom.

E. He Will Establish a Kingdom of Peace & Justice - In vv. 6-7 the prophet envisions the Kingdom Age when Messiah will reign in righteousness and justice from David's throne. In v.6 the prophet says of this coming One, "the government will be upon His shoulder." In v.7 he says, "Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom."

God promised that the rule of Messiah would bring peace. He also promised that His kingdom would be one of justice. In v.7 the prophet says that God would "establish it with judgment and justice." Furthermore, unlike the kingdoms of this world, this kingdom would be established "from that time forward, even forever." (cf. 2 Sam. 7.16). Again, in v.7 he says, "Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...."

This promise 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).

So God made some wonderful promises to His people Israel. I believe the spiritual essence of these promises apply to us as well. Wouldn't you like to have your darkness turned into light, your sadness to joy, and your bondage to freedom? If so, then let's see next of all:

II. WHO WILL FULFILL THE PROMISES

You will not find light for your darkness in the religions of this world. You will not find lasting joy in alcohol, drugs, or worldly pleasures. You will not find peace in a pill. Instead, after giving these wonderful promises in vv. 2-5, the prophet then tells us the source of the promised blessings. He says, "For unto us a child is born...." These promises are all wrapped up in the birth of the promised Messiah, a Savior who was to come. The hope of Israel and the hope of mankind is not to be found in the scientific and social advancements of civilizations. The hope of mankind is not to be found in laws of progress. The hope of mankind is not to be found in Congress or the U.N. But the hope of Israel and the hope of mankind is all wrapped up in the Savior whom God has promised. What each person needs and what our world needs is a Savior from God! That is what we read about in vv. 6-7.

Notice what these verses tell us about the Messiah God promised to send. First we see:

A. The Majesty of His Deity - We see here that this person would have a unique birth. V.6 says, "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given...." It may appear that the two phrases say the same thing. Though this is a case of Hebrew poetic parallelism, the second phrase adds an important difference. Notice that the text says that He would be "given." That speaks of the deity of Jesus. Why is that? It is because that phrase clearly implies that this Savior would be *sent* from God. John tells us in John 3 that God sent His Son into the world. Jesus Christ did not have his beginning in Bethlehem. In John 1 we read that Jesus, who is called "the Word," has dwelt from eternity with God the Father. Then in v.14 we read that He became flesh, and dwelt among us. God's Christmas gift to humanity was His own Son. Only God's Son could fulfill the promises of giving light, joy, and peace to a devastated nation.

Notice that the verse goes on to say that "the government will be upon His shoulders." The word translated "government" is found only here in this prophecy, and it could be translated "responsibility." What responsibility! He would need broad shoulders indeed. As you read the rest of v.6 to 7, you can see that only God's Son would have broad enough shoulders to carry out this responsibility. Only God's Son could establish an eternal kingdom.

You may face great problems today, but Jesus is far greater than your problems, for He is God. Put your faith in Jesus. We will talk more about the deity of Jesus in just a moment. But we not only see the majesty of His deity, but also:

B. The Mystery of His Humanity - Notice in v.6 that this child would be born. That speaks of the humanity of Jesus. Yes, the Savior must be a human like unto us to deal with the problem of human sin. God became man so that He could get on our level, and so that we could understand Him. Have you ever been to a foreign country, and heard people speak languages you couldn't understand? Nowadays you don't need to go to a foreign country to hear a foreign language! Just go to Walmart! Well, God exists in a realm that we cannot understand. So God translated himself into a person that we could understand.

Now this prophecy of the merging of humanity and deity into one person is a great mystery. In fact, 1 Timothy 3:16 says, "without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." Dr. John Phillips said the great mystery of the manger is that God should be able to translate deity into humanity without either discarding the deity or distorting the humanity.

There is none to rival Jesus. Who else is like Him? He is the God-man! As a man He had to pay taxes; as God He paid them with a coin from the mouth of a fish. As man He had to eat food; as God He took the loaves and the fish and multiplied them to feed over 5000! The little baby of Luke 2 is the great God of Genesis 1.

Next, the prophet goes on to tell us not only the majesty of His deity, and the mystery of His Humanity, but also:

C. The Message of His Names (v.6b) – In the Bible, the name of a person means far more than just a way to identify someone. A name reveals the character of a person. It indicates the work of a person, especially in reference to God. There is a message about the Messiah in each of the names given here in our text. Notice that He would be called:

1. Wonderful - Judges 13:18 indicates that this is a name of God. There in that verse the [Angel of the] LORD said to Manoah, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful [*paliy*]?" So according to this prophecy, the Messiah would be called Wonderful [*pele*], for He would be wonderful, as God Himself. I call Him wonderful for a number of reasons. First:

a) He was wonderful in His birth. Jesus was the virgin born Son of God. He was sent from heaven by supernatural conception. Furthermore, I do not know of any other birth where a large army of angels proclaimed the praises of His birth. I do not know of any other birth where God sent a special star to accompany His birth.

b) He was wonderful in His power - After Jesus calmed the storm, His disciples exclaimed in awe, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the waves obey His voice?" On another occasion, when Jesus had caused the dumb to speak and the deaf to hear, they said, "He has done all things well" (Mk. 7:37).

c) He was wonderful in His teaching - After the Sermon on the Mount, we read that the people were astonished, for He spoke with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 7:28-29). On another occasion after He spoke, the people were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?... Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Mt. 13:54-55). No, the wonder of His teaching is explained by the fact that He is God's Son. How could a man growing up in the small town of Nazareth, without the benefit of higher education, speak with such knowledge, wisdom, and authority? How wonderful He was in His teaching!

One response we should have to this truth is that of worship. He is wonderful, and He is worthy of our worship and praise.

Now the fact that Jesus was wonderful in His teaching leads to His next name:

2. Counselor - The Hebrew may read, "A wonder of a counselor." His counsel, His advice, His plans were marvelous and wonderful. Jesus never needed to seek counsel from others; He gave counsel.

Have you come to realize how complicated life can be? There are so many difficult decisions to make. How are you supposed to live? Jesus Christ should be your counselor. Prov. 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." He is the one that can direct your path in the right way. He will counsel you from within by His Spirit, and He will guide you by His written Word. Just live according to this book. Jesus is the One that can give you wise counsel. If we lack wisdom, we should ask Him. Following His counsel will lead to blessing.

3. Mighty God - If this promised child is to fulfill these great promises, He needs to be more than just a mere man. We have already talked about the majesty of His deity. Even as Isaiah 7:14 says, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Immanuel, God with us." Since Mary was a virgin, Jesus had no earthly father, but God was His Father, and He was the unique Son of God. Jesus is rightly called the Mighty God because He has been given all power on heaven and in earth.

We know that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy of being called the Mighty God. In addition to what we have already said, He had to be the Mighty God to face the death of the cross and bear the sin of the world, and yet come out from such an experience alive from the dead! And after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to Thomas, and though Thomas doubted, Jesus cast out his doubt by showing him his hands & feet, still bearing the nail holes. Thomas then fell at the feet of Jesus and proclaimed to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Are you facing an assignment that seems too great for you? Well keep in mind that Jesus, the Mighty God, can help you. Paul said in Php. 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Furthermore, He is called

4. The Everlasting Father - "Everlasting Father" does not suggest that the Son is also the Father, for each Person in the Godhead is distinct. Among the Jews, the word "father" means "originator" or "source." For example, Satan is the "father [originator] of lies" (John 8:44). So Jesus is the source of what? Notice that Jesus is not just called a Father here, but "Everlasting Father" or "Source of Eternity." He is the source of eternal life, for He is eternal. Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." Though born in Bethlehem in time, He had come from eternity past. And He will live through eternity future. That is why in v.7 God promises that this King will establish an eternal kingdom.

So Jesus is the source of eternity. If you want anything eternal, you must get it from Jesus Christ; He is the "Father of eternity." The older I get, the more I realize how short life is, and how mortal we are. Dying men need an ever living Savior, the Source of eternal life. If we are to have any hope of eternal life, we need an everlasting father who can bestow eternal life to His children. The religious leaders of Israel thought, when they had crucified Jesus, that they had snuffed out His life and done away with Him. But if Jesus is the One who fulfilled this prophecy, then we would expect that He would overcome death and live forever! And so, when Jesus rose from the dead, He proved that He could indeed be called the "Everlasting Father." So dear friend, if you have not yet

placed your faith in Jesus for eternal life, don't wait another day. You have no assurance that you will have the opportunity tomorrow.¹

Tears were streaming from the evangelist's eyes as the Spirit of God directed him toward three young men on the back row. The message that night had been on the "The Horrors of Hell." The man of God had made a passionate plea, attempting to rescue any soul bound for that awful place. As he approached the trio, he was about to ask them to please come to the Lord and confess their sins. Before he could utter a word, one of them smirked and said, "Huh, preacher, how far is it to hell, anyway?" The other two laughed and they all turned and exited quickly from the church. Then they heard the squeal of the tires as they pulled out on the highway and sped away. His broken heart followed them as far as possible, hoping they would return. Others, however, did respond and a number of people were praying around the altar.

The prayer was soon interrupted by a state trooper's knock on the front door of the church. His question paralyzed the congregation. "Do any of you know three young men?" and he went on to describe what they were wearing. The people responded that they did and wondered aloud why he asked. The officer sadly unfolded the story. Just two and one-half miles down the road, at the big bend, their car had left the road and split in half around a large oak tree. The people hurried to their cars. When they arrived, they found three dead bodies lying beside the road. It was two and one-half miles to hell for those young men!

I suppose that none of us realize how close death is to us. It stalks our every step and waits around every corner. God's Word says it would be thus, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). In reality, I suppose we're all just one breath away from judgment. At any moment, we could meet all the facts of our life, which will dictate where we spend eternity.

5. Prince of Peace - To Israel, who had been obliterated by war, God promised that He would give to them "the Prince of Peace." In fact, the angels said at the birth of Jesus in Lk. 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace..." To a world that talks much about peace but experiences very little of it, God promises that the Prince of Peace would be born. God promised to send the Prince of Peace. What kind of peace will He give?

a) Peace with God - To every soul who is at war with God because of their sin, God promises that He will send a Prince of Peace. Indeed, Rom. 5:1 says, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Are you at peace with God this morning? Do you know that your sins are forgiven?

b) Inner Peace - This Prince of Peace can also grant inner peace to the soul. Even in the midst of the storms of life, we can have His peace which passes understanding (Phil. 4:7). A few weeks ago Cheryl & I went to GA for Thanksgiving. We left around 2 PM in the afternoon. As we traveled on I-85 we heard a noise. It turns out the serpentine belt broke. I was able to keep driving to the next exit at Salisbury, NC. As we pulled into a Chick-Filet, the van completely died and we had to push it the last 10 feet into a parking place. I want to testify that I did not fret when the van broke down. I knew God would take care of us. I found out about an Auto Zone in the area and walked about 6 blocks to purchase a new belt. I asked if they knew of anyone who could install it. They told me of an employee who was off that day that might help. They

¹ Another possible meaning of this name is that Jesus would have the attributes of a father. Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." Jesus so often protected His disciples. Like a father, Jesus provided guidance for His disciples, and He continues to guide us today. But the glory of every father should be his love for his children. Surely Jesus, like no other, demonstrated the love of the Father for His children. He was willing to die on the cross for our sins, only because of His love. Oh, what a story of a Father's love we find in the story of the prodigal son (tell).

called him, and he agreed to meet me at the van. It turned out that the bearings on a pulley caused the belt to break, so we had to go back & get a new pulley. Finally, he was able to complete the repair about 2 1/2 hours after we first broke down. I believe that God provided that person to do the repair. I believe the location of the breakdown was providential.

c) Peace Among Christian People - At the birth of Jesus the angels not only said, "Peace on earth..." but peace also "peace... among men of good will." Peace is given on earth to men of good will now. Show me a place where there is love, joy, and peace among people, and I will show you a group of people who are ruled by the Prince of Peace, Jesus. If a whole family will yield to Jesus there will be peace in that family. If a group of people will submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, there will be peace in that group of people.

d) Peace to the Whole World - Finally, according to v.7, this Prince of Peace will some day bring in everlasting peace to the whole world. This world seeks a lasting peace, but never finds it. We look for peace in the Middle East, but lasting peace will never come until Jesus comes again, and fulfills this prophecy. Our world rejected the Prince of Peace. That's the reason there will be no peace until He comes again. But some day, when Jesus comes again, there will be a lasting peace all over the world. That is partly because His kingdom will be established with justice and righteousness. What a day it will be to have a government free from corruption. We've been hearing about all the corruption in the U.N., in the Palestinian authority, and in many other governments. The only One who can bring lasting peace is Jesus Christ. He alone can establish a just government.

Conclusion: Who fulfills the description found in v.6? Wouldn't you agree that Jesus Christ is the only One who fulfills this prophecy? You say, "Pastor, would Jesus save me?" Oh, he will, if you will repent of your sin and if you'll trust him. Now, He came the first time to redeem us, He's coming the second time to rule and to reign over us. And His second coming is just as certain as His first coming. Are you ready? Have you trusted in Him as your Savior?

Sources: Matthew Henry Commentary; Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture, Vol. 5* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977 reprint); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible, Vol. 3* (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1982); *Pulpit Commentary*; Adrian Rogers, notes from his sermon on Isaiah 9:6-7 entitled, "History's Greatest Happening," 12/08/91; *The Best of Billy Sunday* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord, 1965), 11-18 [25G.26]; Charles H. Spurgeon, *12 Christmas Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976 reprint), 11-14 [25G.41]; Warren Wiersbe, *Be Comforted: Isaiah* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 1992); Wycliffe Commentary.

ABOUT THESE SERMON NOTES

This document has not been transcribed from an audio recording, but is the result of the sermon preparation process. Most outlines are original to the author, but much of the content of the notes are taken from commentaries, other sermons, and Bible study aids (see sources above). Sermons are preached without notes, and thus the content of the "live" sermon is in the author's own words. To get an audio recording of this message, you may send \$2 for each audio cassette tape ordered, plus \$3 shipping & handling for each order mailed in. Up to 2 messages come on each cassette or CD. Make checks payable to Swift Creek Baptist Church, P.O. Box 235, Colonial Heights, VA 23834.