

The Cradle, the Cross and the Crown

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AM Service

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Text:

Isaiah 9:1 Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. **2: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.** 3: Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4: For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. 5: For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. **6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.** 7: **Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.**

Introduction

Isaiah chapter 9 starts with this word, “nevertheless”, which means we have to go back to the previous chapter to appreciate what Isaiah has to say in this chapter. Isaiah lived in difficult times. Darkness and despair prevailed upon the land because of the sin of the people and the coming judgment by the hand of God. Isaiah declares to us in ...

Isaiah 8:21 And they shall pass through it (wander through the land), hardly bestead (distressed) and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and **curse their king and their God**, and look upward. 22: And they shall look unto the earth; and behold **trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.**

It is against this backdrop that Isaiah receives the wonderful promise, about the birth of a child that would change everything.

Isaiah 9: 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Isaiah prophesied that the people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. No matter how dark the time and hopeless the situation, the light of the Lord shines in the darkest night.

And then Isaiah gave them this prophecy in ...

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7: Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Here is good news. Don't miss it. Don't be like the editor of a local newspaper who missed the "Big News".

It was in December of 1903, that after many attempts, the **Wright** brothers, **Orville** and **Wilbur**, were successful in getting their "flying machine" off the ground and into the air at Kitty Hawk. Excited over the accomplishment, they telegraphed this message to their sister **Katherine**: "*We have actually flown 120 feet. Will be home for Christmas.*" Excited about the news, Katherine hurried to the editor of the local newspaper and showed him the message. He glanced at it and said, "*How nice. The boys will be home for Christmas.*" He completely missed the big news - for the first time in human history, man had flown! (Daily Bread, December 23, 1991.)

Here is the good news. Christmas is about good news. I love Christmas because it reminds us that in the midst of seemingly hopeless condition, there is hope! The Christmas message is relevant and reassuring to us today.

Isaiah, the prophet, looked down the telescope of prophecy and saw 700 years into the future. He saw three things about our wonderful Lord that gave him hope. I believe Christmas message can be summed up in three words: a cradle, a cross and a crown. These three are woven together.

What did Isaiah see that gave him hope?

I - He Saw a Cradle

Isaiah 9:6 **For unto us a child is born**, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

As Isaiah looked 700 years into the future, he saw a cradle. He saw the Messiah who would be born as a baby. The mystery of the incarnation (a Latin word meaning "in the flesh") is at the heart of the Christian faith.

1 Timothy 3:16 **And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.**

Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: God appeared in a body. God in human flesh! The Almighty God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient God in the person of a tiny baby!

*Down from His glory,
Ever living story,
My God and Savior came,
And Jesus was His name.
Born in a manger,
To His own a stranger,
A man of sorrows, tears and agony.*

*Refrain
O how I love Him! How I adore Him!
My breath, my sunshine, my all in all.
The great Creator became my Savior,
And all God's fullness dwelleth in Him.*

No one can deny that the doctrine of incarnation, God taking the human form is a great and deep mystery. It is beyond human comprehension. **Though it is beyond comprehension that doesn't mean it is not true.** You may not understand electricity, but you don't have to sit in the dark until you do. **You may not understand how God could become a human being, but you don't have to sit in spiritual darkness until you do.**

II - He Saw a Cross

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, **unto us a son is given**: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

The next thing that Isaiah saw as he looked into the future was a cross. The Babe of Bethlehem did not remain a Babe in a cradle. The Bible states in ...

Luke 2:42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

Then in ...

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

The child grew and became strong. He grew in physical stature and in wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.

The Son of God came into the world **for the express purpose of living a sinless life and then taking my sin and yours** to the cross in His own body. Christmas is a wonderful story but we must never forget why Jesus came. **Christmas, to have meaning, cannot be separated from the cross.** The angel said at the birth of Jesus ...

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

The Apostle Paul, years later said ...

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Jesus Christ was the only person in history who was born with the purpose of dying.

*Born to die upon Calv'ry
Jesus suffered my sin to forgive
Born to die upon Calv'ry
He was wounded that I might live*

Christmas only makes sense in light of Cross. If you are going to truly appreciate the birth of Christ, **you must go to the cross of Calvary where He died.** He bore our sins at the cross.

Without His death and resurrection, Jesus' birth would have no eternal consequences for any of us. **It was His death that gave meaning to His birth.** Therefore, it is impossible to celebrate Christmas and ignore Calvary. They are woven together.

III - He Saw a Crown

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and **the government shall be upon his shoulder:** and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7: **Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.** The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

The third thing that Isaiah saw as he looked 700 years into the future was a crown, which speaks of Christ's kingship.

The Old Testament prophets prophesied that Israel would have an eternal King. Moses testified ...

Genesis 49:8 Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. 9: Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10: **The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,** nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

That the King of the Jews would be born was known even by the wise men from the east who were Gentiles ...

Matthew 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2: Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Our Lord spoke about His kingdom and His kingship when interrogated by Pilate ...

John 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, **Art thou a king then?** Jesus answered, **Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,** that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

As Jesus hung on the cross they placed a superscription over Him in three languages: Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. It stated, "*This is the King of the Jews*".

Luke 23:38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

Christ may not be recognized as king today but there is coming a day when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Closing Thoughts

This is God's gift of Christmas. **This is where our hope lies.** It's in the Cradle - the Child; the Cross - God's Son; the Crown - His coming kingdom and government. **This gift may not mean much to many people but it cost God everything.**

"**Unto us a child is born.**" The birth of Jesus Christ was for us! When the Son of God was born, it was for us! It was for all those who would recognize their need of a Saviour. Do you recognize your need of a Saviour? If you do, then His birth is for you.

And the government will rest on His shoulders

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7: Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Here is another reason why the coming of this Child is good news and brings hope. **The government shall rest upon His shoulder.** None of us has a shoulder broad enough to bear the rule and the government of the affairs of men. None of us had a shoulder broad enough to carry all the burdens of the world. **But this Child that would be born has a shoulder that is able to carry the weight of the world.** He shoulders the burden of rule that He is able to relieve the burden that is upon our shoulders.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30: For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Lastly, we have to remember that when Isaiah spoke these words they have not taken place yet. Years and years before the arrival of Jesus the prophet Isaiah wrote these words of prophecy. **And yet he described events as so certain as if they had already taken place.** How? Because of the One who gave this promise is faithful! And the “[zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.](#)”(Isaiah 9:7)

Oh, this Christmas may God help us increase our faith in His faithfulness. May we all experience a renewed love and appreciation for the gift of His Son.

AMEN!