

## **Isaiah Predicts the Birth**

Isaiah 9:1-7

The passage we will look at is an incredibly detailed prophecy, given to the prophet Isaiah 700 years before it would come to pass. It is so detailed that it is impossible, statistically speaking, that anyone could have predicted so many details to come to pass in one life. It was given so that you might with confidence know that Jesus is indeed the Savior of the World and that He desires to be your Savior. It demonstrates that God is in control and things are running according to His plan, regardless of the sinfulness of man and all Satan's schemes. We'll read through the prophecy and then take it one verse at a time and try to take in just a little of what it means.

Isaiah 9:1-7 (NIV)<sup>1</sup> *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--<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> You 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.*

<sup>1</sup> *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—*

There are two opposite translations for this verse. I believe, along with Vernon McGee, that both are true. The ambiguity of the Hebrew was allowed by the Holy Spirit. Some would render this that the distress will increase whereas other translations read that honor will be bestowed. Syria had afflicted the region and Assyria is going to afflict them to a greater extent. That is true. On the other hand God is going to honor that region with the ministry of His Son. Both are prophetically accurate.

Jesus was born in Judea, but grew up in the land this prophecy describes. He did most of His ministering there, fulfilling this passage exactly. Jesus' hometown of Nazareth and His main area of ministry were in the land of the old tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. What did "*Galilee of the Gentiles*" mean at the time Isaiah gave the prophecy? The North had fallen to the Assyrians. At that time it could be called Galilee of the Gentiles. But looking forward to the time of Christ, we see two major Roman cities, Tiberius and Sephoris, were in this region. Even Capernaum quartered a Roman garrison. You could see why a prophet looking forward to the time of Christ would call it "*Galilee of the Gentiles*". It was the part of Israel that bordered and was infiltrated

with Gentiles to a much greater extent than the South. The Way of the Sea, was the Roman name for the highway that went by Capernaum and over to Megiddo and down the coast to Gezer and Egypt. The road markers with distances have been found and parts of the road still exist. The Synagogue in Capernaum was adjacent to this highway. It was not even called that in the time of Isaiah. "Along the Jordan" - Jesus' ministry also included trips up and down the Jordan. The vast majority of Jesus' ministry area is perfectly described in this verse. Gloom will be vanquished for those distressed by captivity to sin. God will honor this region with the ministry of His Son.

*<sup>2</sup> 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.*

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The land was dark because it was under Roman rule. But more than that, the Scriptures had been twisted into a form of bondage instead of the joyful loving directions of God. Instead of a celebration of life in the goodness of God, there was the distress of trying to keep the multitude of additions and interpretations man had placed on the Law. But this good news is not just for those in the darkness of first century Galilee, it is for us right here. There is a darkness of man's many doctrines that divide the church up into many fragments. The darkness lies in 21st century USA that seeks to honor all faiths as equal. It is also the darkness of moral relativism and humanistic teaching in our educational facilities. The answer for us is the same answer Galilee needed, the personal presence of Jesus the Christ! There, the answer was in His own human body, and today the Answer is in us. We are the light of the world. Jesus said so! "*Let your light so shine that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" We live in a land of darkness and the shadow of death and need to bring the Light of Life.

*<sup>3</sup> You 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.*

The Lord is the One who enlarges the church and increases our joy. The new nation fills the earth - the Kingdom of God. It is thrilling to see how Christianity is growing and thriving outside the USA. Jesus rose on the Festival of Firstfruits which was the rejoicing of the harvest of barley. There was a rejoicing started that day that only increases as the Kingdom grows, one soul at a time. We rejoice as the harvest of souls comes into the Kingdom.

*<sup>4</sup> 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.*

He's referring to Gideon's defeat of the vast army of the Midianites and the gathering of spoil for days. No more having your harvest robbed, for our treasure is safe in heaven. The book of Judges tells of the great oppression of the Midianites and how men had to hide their food and livestock in a cave to survive. They weren't just taxed - they were robbed on a regular basis and that is what sin does to us. The One coming was to deliver us from that continual domination and exploitation of Satan. After defeating the Midianites, Gideon's army had so much loot, there is no way they could carry it all off. That is our abundance in Christ!

*<sup>5</sup> Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.*

God will put an end to physical conflict and the destructiveness of war when He sets up His Kingdom upon earth. Our battle with God ends when we surrender to His Lordship. All that we fought Him with in the past becomes fuel for the fire. We used to be dressed in 'self', but we have now put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We now have a white robe and our feet no longer have boots of war but the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

*<sup>6</sup> 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.*

The miraculous birth of Christ is unto us. To us He is given. God so loved the world that He gave us His Son. He became a man for our sake. In Romans 8 the Apostle Paul tells us that if God has given us His Son, then with Him, He will graciously give us all good things. Make it personal - unto ME a child was born. He came into the world for ME. He is given to ME.

Wonderful Counselor - We do not know if the Spirit meant two separate nouns or an adjective with a noun. Surely both are true. His name is Wonderful! All that He does is wonderful. All that He plans is wonderful. He can never be less than wonderful. He is the most wonderful Counselor too, for He knows us through and through. He knows everything that will come in our lives and everything that has been. There can be no more wonderful Counselor than He. If you want the very highest and best for your life, then you need to make regular appointments with the Wonderful Counselor. In fact, He is so good that His counsel is priceless, but he always has an opening in His schedule for you. Do you go to Him to for counsel or run to man first? He is the Wonderful Counselor!

Mighty God, He is called. He is the Word incarnate. The Word that created everything visible from nothing is mighty indeed. Nothing can stand against that might, and no one can resist it, no one can successfully challenge it. He is mighty to the ultimate degree, so you better get on the winning side. No one looking at that manger would have used the term 'mighty' but that just demonstrates the extent of His might. The distance between the height of one's greatness and the depths of their humility is the measure of might. Jesus is the Greatest and the most humble and so He is The Mighty One.

Everlasting Father - the I AM - one with eternal God Jehovah. He has no beginning and no end. He sees all of time and space in a glance and retains it all. He was there at your birth and will be there at your death, and at your resurrection. 10,000 years times 10,000 years are just a pinprick in the Eternal Now in which He lives.

Prince of Peace - for the only way to peace with God is through Him. We were born rebels in the rebel camp of the world and intended to snub His grace and misuse His blessings - living in a state of war with our Creator. But His wonderful grace drew us to the peace that only He could purchase. Peace with God means we have no need to fear judgement - and can live graciously and lovingly with our fellow man because of

Him. And peace with Him and our fellow man will be the rule when He reigns over this earth in righteousness. His peace is a peace that passes understanding. It is greater than the lack of violence, it is a deep internal knowledge of being right with your Creator.

*<sup>7</sup> 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.*

He will not end His reign like others, whose kingdoms soon shrank and other nations came and took back the lands they once surrendered. His government -rule over people and land they are stewards over - will only increase. Those under His rule will go from peacefulness to greater peace and that will never end! He inherits the throne of David, as promised in Scripture. He is descended from David. We have never seen a kingdom of justice and utter righteousness - the closest was probably David's reign- but we will experience it now and forever. We taste it now in our spirit. The LORD Almighty - Jehovah Tsabaoth - the One who commands the awesome angels, (who could stop Him) will in His zeal (white hot burning passion often connected with love), command it to be and see that it is accomplished. The groundwork is laid. We just wait for the time to be perfect, when the trumpet will call us home.

But if the child was not given, none of the glorious future could take place. In the manger we marvel at the miracle that brought Him into a body. We look ahead and marvel that He could accomplish what He began in us. People always ask, "How could God allow this or that?" The time is coming for Him to take over this sin sick world. The King will reign in righteousness. No one will ever again ask, "Why doesn't He intervene?" Then they may ask, "Why is He always intervening?" The time is coming but it is not yet. He has done so much but this prophecy also hints at what is yet to come. Let His reign in you begin now and never end. Let His light shine through you into the darkness of this world so that they can know His peace.

Look at all that is foretold here: The exact area of Jesus' ministry with descriptions that would be more meaningful in the time it came to pass, that light would shine into the darkness, how the Kingdom would grow in joy, the abundance we have in Christ, the defeat of the oppression of Satan and sin, that the Messiah would be born a human child, the Son of God given to us, that He will reign over His Kingdom, the names by which He would be called, the eternal nature of the Kingdom, that He is of the Davidic lineage, that He will rule in justice and righteousness. The white-hot burning love of God will bring it all to pass.

How much we have! How much we have to look forward to!