

Today we have the privilege of examining one of the most glorious prophecies in Scripture. Isaiah has already pointed us to the holy seed being the stump of Judah (6:13). The promised Messiah's lineage would be a part of the remnant that would return from the refining fires of captivity. Then we saw Isaiah tell the house of David that the sign that God would keep His promise of a Messiah deliverer would be the virgin birth of this One that was coming (7:14). Our last passage ended with the gloom and darkness the land of Ephraim would experience when Assyria came to conquer them and set up another king (8:22). But now we come to chapter nine that paints a picture of the glorious hope for the future.

We should stop right at the beginning and observe that no matter what we face, even in the midst of the discipline of God, the promises of God are sure. The discipline of God is for our good. The judgments of God are necessary to reach the promised end. That glorious conclusion would not be what it should be without God's discipline and judgments. And while they may be hard to endure, they take us to greater heights (Hebrews 12:10).

The passage starts in stark contrast to the previous verse. *¹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.* Isaiah 9:1 When Assyria came to conquer Syria, the path led them right through this region of northern Galilee. On the return trip the Assyrian army conquered the land and set up another king who promised to pay tribute (2 Kings 17:3). Historical records show the huge tribute that was paid by the gloomy Israelites. But in our verse today, the picture totally changes. Instead of being the brunt of a conquering army, they would be honored with the light of the Messiah.

The land of Zebulun and Naphtali were the ancestral lands Joshua divided to those to tribes (Joshua 19:10; 32). They included most of the land in which Jesus lived and ministered in during His life until the last months of His ministry. What is truly amazing is the wording of this prophecy. It is called Galilee of the nations, but at the time it was inhabited by Israelites. Isaiah predicted in a short time they would no longer be a people. When the remnant returned, the land was full of Gentiles. Large Gentile cities like Sephoris, Bet Shean, and Tiberius were dominant. So in the days in which the prophecy would come to pass, it was truly Galilee of the Gentiles.

Even more interesting is the highway from Rome to Egypt which went through this region and came to be called the Way of the Sea. It passed over the Jordan through Capernaum and went to the coast of the Mediterranean and south to Egypt.

Commented [PW1]:

Commented [PW2]: **Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)**
¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Commented [PW3]: **Isaiah 8:22 (ESV)**
²² And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.

Commented [PW4]: **Hebrews 12:10 (ESV)**
¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

Commented [PW5]: **2 Kings 17:3 (ESV)**
³ Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria. And Hoshea became his vassal and paid him tribute.

Commented [PW6]: **Joshua 19:10 (ESV)**
¹⁰ The third lot came up for the people of Zebulun, according to their clans. And the territory of their inheritance reached as far as Sarid.

Commented [PW7]: **Joshua 19:32 (ESV)**
³² The sixth lot came out for the people of Naphtali, for the people of Naphtali, according to their clans.

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. Isaiah 9:2 Jesus declared Himself to be the light of the world (John 8:12). Jews called the coming Messiah "the Great Light" (Ha'or Gadol) because of this prediction. Numerous other passages declared that the Messiah would be a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). That is not only because Galilee was called Galilee of the nations, but other passages predicted His ministry to the world (Isaiah 51:5; Psalm 65:5).

These two verse were cited by Matthew as being fulfilled in Jesus' ministry (Matthew 4:15-16). The majority of Jesus' disciples came from the region. Most of Jesus' miracles took place there. The people of the region who had looked to the earth for fulfillment saw the Light of the world, the glory of God, in the face of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:6). Deep darkness was not only a spiritual condition of misunderstanding the Word of God and its promises, but also of Roman oppression, taxation and hard labor. When we consider the prophecy was given 700 years before Jesus fulfilled it in detail, we can truly marvel at the foreknowledge of God.

³ You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. Isaiah 9:3 It sounds like the Triumphal Entry and the feeding of the 5000. But it is multiplied even further in splicing in the Gentile branches as the gospel goes around the world (Romans 11:17). As a light to the nations, Jesus brings the joy of heaven when each soul comes into the Kingdom. It's Christmas! It's the joy of knowing our debt is paid and our eternity secure in the hands of our loving Redeemer.

Isaiah will prophesy again of the spoil being divided in the Suffering Servant Song of chapter 53. After the Messiah bears our iniquity and becomes a guilt offering He sees the light of life. That speaks of the crucifixion and resurrection. God promises to give Him His portion and He then divides the spoil among the strong, those He has made righteous (Isaiah 53:12). I take this to mean the gifts of the Spirit and the good works He prepared in advance for us to do. To be in His service and see His power at work through us gives us great joy.

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. Isaiah 9:4 The day of Midian is referring to Gideon's band of 300 taking on the hordes of Midian that oppressed the Israelites (Judges 7:7). Jesus, with His little band of 12 took on the hordes of evil much more numerable than the camp of Midian; and Jesus won! Think of it. A builder from the little town of Nazareth, under the subjugation of Rome, took some fisherman and other insignificant men and broke the power of sin and death! The Midian analogy was as close as the prophet could come to the glorious work of the Messiah.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. Isaiah 9:5 The day is coming when there will be no more war, no more bloodshed, no more need for battle gear or weapons. The

Commented [PW8]: John 8:12 (ESV)

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Commented [PW9]: Isaiah 42:6 (ESV)

⁶ "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,

Commented [PW10]: Isaiah 49:6 (ESV)

⁶ he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Commented [PW11]: Isaiah 51:5 (ESV)

⁵ My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.

Commented [PW12]: Psalm 65:5 (ESV)

⁵ By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas;

Commented [PW13]: Matthew 4:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶ the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned."

Commented [PW14]: 2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV)

⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Commented [PW15]: Romans 11:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,

Commented [PW16]: Isaiah 53:12 (ESV)

¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Commented [PW17]: Judges 7:7 (ESV)

⁷ And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home."

coming King will cause such peace to reign that Isaiah's prediction of swords being beat into plowshares will come to pass (Isaiah 2:4).

How is that possible? Who is this One so mighty that with His little band He can transform this world of perpetual war and pain? Who can bring such joy from the hills of northern Galilee? Who is the great light that the Jews looked for at every Feast of Tabernacles who would bring light to the nations? *6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* Isaiah 9:6 He is the child born to the virgin predicted in 7:14. He is the One whom God told Eve would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). He is the offspring of Abraham who would bless the world (Genesis 22:18). A baby! Imagine that! He would be born as a helpless baby to a virgin, but He is born to us. He isn't just this woman's baby. He is born for us.

To us a Son is given. The child is born to us, but also the Son is given to us. Does that remind you of another verse in which a Son is given? It should. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him would not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). John was using the language of this prophecy. **Through the virgin the child is born to us, but He is the Son God gives to us.** That is why we give gifts to one another on Christmas. It is to remind us that God gave the greatest gift ever given. We can't fathom the greatness of this gift we have so freely received. Nothing can compare!

This child will grow up to have the government placed on His shoulders. After every government of man has failed to bring peace and prosperity, we will finally have One who can reign in righteousness. We will finally have One who, unlike Moses, can indeed bear the burden of the people (Exodus 18:18). His shoulders are broad enough to bear whatever burden you face. I hope you realize that! If you are carrying a situation, an unresolvable problem, know that your shoulders are too small, but His are more than sufficient.

Hear His name. I can't emphasize enough the importance of a name to the Hebrews. The expression, "the name of the Lord" appears 109 times in the Bible. The various names the Bible ascribes to God and to Jesus are a wonderful study in the nature and character of God.

Isaiah is prophesying what this child will be called. **The first name is Wonderful Counselor.** Hope Cottage has an interesting way of helping homeless women. They go to the prayer room together and ask the Wonderful Counselor to reveal to the woman what is the real source of the problem. How does He want their life to change? In most cases the woman knows in her heart exactly what the Lord is counseling her to do. Why? Because He is a Wonderful Counselor. When we try to tell a person what to do they will rarely follow through, but when they believe the Lord who created them told them what they need to do to get their life back on track, they have a lot more

Commented [PW18]: Isaiah 2:4 (ESV)

⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Commented [PW19]: Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Commented [PW20]: Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Commented [PW21]: Genesis 22:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Commented [PW22]: John 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Commented [PW23]: Exodus 18:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.

conviction to carry through. The staff there believes in the Wonderful Counselor because He counsels them. Is He your wonderful counselor?

When I have a situation that I don't know how to handle, too often I try to reason in my mind how to best resolve it. The Wonderful Counselor is waiting for me to come and ask for the only advice that is perfect. And do you know why we so often look to Him only after our own ways fail? It's because we might not like what He tells us to do. It is usually humbling. It often costs. But it's always the best solution to the problem. Praise God for giving to us the Wonderful Counselor!

His most wonderful counsel of all is when He counsels us to repent of our sin and accept Him as the Lord of our life. That should be followed by us hearing that counsel daily, from His Word and His Spirit within us. I hope you know Him as your Wonderful Counselor.

The next name by which He will be called is "Mighty God". We have already seen Isaiah's prophecies that speak of the eternal God of Israel are applied to Jesus in the New Testament. We indeed call Him the Mighty God. He broke the power of sin and darkness. He took the keys of death and hell (Revelation 1:18). He conquered the grave! There is none so mighty as He. And when the Battle of Armageddon takes place, when the forces of the world gather to resist Him, He laughs (Psalm 2:4). He will single-handedly destroy them with the sword from His mouth (Revelation 19:15).

Sometimes we think of God the Father as the One with power and authority, but Jesus declared that to see Him is to see the Father (John 14:9). He is the Word, the instrument of creation. The Hebrew scribes that made the Aramaic translations of the Old Testament so closely associated the Word with God that they used "the Word" instead of the holy name of God. All things were made by Him (John 1:3). He is the image of the invisible God and preeminent over all. All authority comes from Him (Colossians 1:15-17).

Do you have a situation in your life that is too much for you to handle? It's not too big for the One called Mighty God. He can not only take care of it, but He can do something even greater. He can help you to walk through the difficulty triumphantly. I think that is what is meant by the expression of Paul, "more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37)." Consider how Jesus walked through the abuse and torture of that last day. He then rose victorious in spite of man doing his worst. That is what the Mighty God can do in your life as well, by His resurrection power at work within you (Ephesians 1:19-20).

This is where the prosperity gospel is so short-sighted. Real power is seeing joy in spite of hunger and physical need. It is seeing the martyr tell the persecutor, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him (Job 13:15)." Real power is putting our limited resources in the hands of the Mighty God and watching Him do the impossible. It takes the aid of the Mighty God to walk by faith and not by sight. We may not understand His hand, but He helps us to trust His heart, His wisdom, and to believe He is all-powerful.

Commented [PW24]: Revelation 1:18 (ESV)
¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

Commented [PW25]: Psalm 2:4 (ESV)
⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

Commented [PW26]: Revelation 19:15 (ESV)
¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

Commented [PW27]: John 14:9 (ESV)
⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Commented [PW28]: John 1:3 (ESV)
³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Commented [PW29]: Colossians 1:15-17 (ESV)
¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.
¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Commented [PW30]: Romans 8:37 (ESV)
³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Commented [PW31]: Ephesians 1:19-20 (ESV)
¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might
²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

Commented [PW32]: Job 13:15 (KJV)
¹⁵ Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

Jesus is the Everlasting Father. We are accustomed to calling God our Father as Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9). However, we can look to Jesus as the unchanging Father as well. Father, brother, head, Creator, husband, friend: it takes all of these descriptions and more to describe all He means to us. When I stumble and He graciously lifts me up and tells me to try again, I can see His fatherly care. When He provides my needs, I know Him as a father. When He protects me from danger, I see His father's heart. And it will forever be that way, for He is the Everlasting Father. Yes, we will be His bride, but does not the best husband have fatherly qualities of loving care for his bride?

I'm always impressed by the fact that the Bible's description of our relationship with God through Jesus is more wonderful than I could have ever come up with in my imagination. Everlasting means that will forever be so. We won't wake one morning to find He has tired of us, fallen out of love, or grown impatient and decided to move on. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The word in Hebrew for prince can be translated in numerous ways: lord, keeper, master, etc. I'm reminded of Charles Cowman's first outreach in Japan. He found a minister who could translate for him and sent him around Tokyo to shout out, "If anyone is looking for peace come to the meeting at ...". An elderly couple were sitting on their balcony and heard him and went to the meeting. The husband told his wife that all his life he had been seeking for peace in his heart. Maybe this man had the answer to finding it. Hearing the gospel for the first time, they received Jesus as their Lord and Savior. They found the peace they were seeking in the Prince of Peace. He is the only way for us to have peace in our hearts (Romans 5:1).

Maybe today you have come with some anxiety. You don't know where to turn. The situation seems hopeless, but there is One in Whom you can find peace. That is why He is called the Prince of Peace. He alone can give you peace with God. He alone has the shoulders that can carry our burden. He alone has the power to change the situation, or greater still, to see us through it.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:7 He will increasingly reign in more and more hearts. His peace will never be overthrown by some unforeseen event, for He is already in the future. There is no power that did not come from Him. In the words "everlasting", "forevermore", and the phrase "no end", we have a triple assurance that our relationship with Jesus will never grow old. His power will never wane. Unlike the rulers of this world, He will never be replaced by another, nor would we desire it.

The prophecy of the Messiah reigning on David's throne has depths we don't have time to go over now. Let me just say that David united the kingdom, conquered Israel's enemies, and planned for the building of the temple. His son was to build the temple and reign over David's great accomplishments, but it is the descendant of David, Jesus,

Commented [PW33]: Matthew 6:9 (ESV)

⁹ Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Commented [PW34]: Hebrews 13:8 (ESV)

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Commented [PW35]: Romans 5:1 (ESV)

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

who builds the eternal temple of living stones (1 Peter 2:5), conquers the Enemy of our soul, and unites Jew and Gentile in Himself.

The zeal of the Lord of Hosts is going to cause this Son given to us to be all these things to us. Zeal is a passionate personal desire. The disciples saw Jesus' cleansing of the Temple as a demonstration of this zeal (John 2:17). It was just a picture of us as His house of worship where we commune with Him. He is as passionate or more so about the reality of that shadow, you and me. He wants us to be His and His alone. He is all we could hope for and He wants us to understand that. The Son is given to us, but we must receive Him (John 1:12). The most important decision you will ever make is to receive Him as your wonderful counsellor, your mighty God, your everlasting Father, and your Prince of peace. But next in importance is to experience Him as all these names imply every day.

Commented [PW36]: 1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)

⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Commented [PW37]: John 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Commented [PW38]: John 1:12 (ESV)

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

Questions

- 1 How was verse one fulfilled?
- 2 What is the Great Light?
- 3 What is the joy of verse 3?
- 4 What is "the day of Midian"?
- 5 Why "child born" and "Son given"?
- 6 What is the first name by which He is called? Do you experience it?
- 7 What is the second name? Implication?
- 8 What is the third name? Implication?
- 9 What is the fourth name? How can you experience it?
- 10 How is all this possible?