

## Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

### **The Savior Is Born**

Scripture: Isaiah 8:19-9:7

Code: 1210

Isaiah chapter 8, the 8th chapter of Isaiah, and I would like to read as you follow verses 19 through the 7th verse of chapter 9, Isaiah 8 beginning at verse 19. Isaiah is speaking here to the godly remnant of Israel, in verse 19 we read, "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto those who are mediums, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God?

Should they seek on behalf of the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. And they shall pass through it, greatly 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. And they shall look unto the earth, and behold, trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness. 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 the Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. 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. Thou hast multiplied the nation. and increased the joy; they rejoice before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 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. 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. 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, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of peace. 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 justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

Let's bow together in prayer. Father we thank You again as we have heard the song glorifying our born Savior, given of God to redeem men, how we rejoice, how we rejoice not only that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem but that He has been born in us. Lord we thank You for this, and we pray now as we look to the Word of God that our minds and hearts might be opened to see things that we've never seen before, we might be taught of the Holy Spirit to live as we've never lived before. We give Christ all the praise and glory. Amen.

Will you turn in your Bible to the 8th chapter of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 8 and then chapter 9 really details for us perhaps the most classic prophecy regarding the coming of Jesus Christ. And when you

stop to consider a Christmas message there are all different ways that you can go at it, but I felt that perhaps it would be worth our while to examine an Old Testament prophet's view of the birth of the Messiah, Christ the Savior of the world. And as I began to look at the verses 6 and 7 of chapter 9 which detail for us the coming of this child, I became interested in what followed or what preceded I should say, those verses and became carefully involved in studying the previous chapters. And I came up with a very interesting parallel to our own day, in the day in which Isaiah gave the pronouncement regarding the Messiah's coming, the Savior's birth was much like our day, and the light that came out of the darkness of Isaiah's day is the same light that we announce to a dark world today. In fact Isaiah could well have been a 20th century preacher from what is the indication of these verses that we shall look at.

Now by way of introduction let me just say this, we celebrate Christmas and the birth of Christ in a context of, of kind of happy merriment. But when you really look around the world it isn't anything to be, to be merry about. And even when you look at what goes on at Christmas, as I find each year I get sicker and sicker. And the things that I see about me, the money mad self-indulgence that goes on and often in the name of Jesus Christ does anything but bring glory to Him. In fact as I've analyzed Christmas this year I've come to the conclusion that in many cases Jesus is the joke of Christmas.

The devil ordered, demon controlled world is mocking Jesus. In Superstar Jesus is a pathetic tragedy who blows His cool and gets crucified.

In Godspell He is a frolicking clown with a red nose and a superman teeshirt. In Handyman Stores which are like hardware stores the new gimmick is "Jesus Saves" light bulbs. with the filament spelling out Jesus Saves, a Christmas novelty, sarcastic blasphemy. Department stores in which I have been advertise and have hanging around Jesus Christ teeshirts and sweat shirts with cartoon faces of Jesus drawn on them. And the point of the world is obvious, Satan's not stupid if he can make Jesus a fad then when the fad goes the real Jesus goes too. One underwear manufacturer is advertising Jesus Christ jockey shorts for men and Jesus Christ bikini underwear for women. Even watchmakers have jumped onto the bandwagon and the latest radio announcement goes like this, Hi kids, it's Me, Jesus, look at what I'm wearing on my wrist, it's a watch with a live color picture of Me on the dial and hands attached to My crimson heart. Jesus has become a fad, and fads pass, and don't you think the devil doesn't know that. The world isn't honoring Jesus they are mocking Him.

And at Christmas when we talk of true honor the mockery seems all the greater, the hypocrisy seems even more blatant and the sin of rejection more blasphemous, and the need for the real Jesus right here in the 20th century America is just as great as it was in the day of Isaiah, just as great as it's ever been in the history of man. The darkness of man's heart hasn't changed one wit. In fact man has only become more clever in his devices and Satan has learned as history has gone on how best to dilute the person of Jesus Christ. And yet it's a strange thing because all throughout the history of man in his darkness and his unwillingness to respond to Jesus Christ he has always wanted a Savior,

he has always wanted a deliverer. Whether it's historical Israel or whether it's modern day America and the world everybody has always looked for a Savior, a deliverer, a peacemaker, somebody who could right the wrongs and make the injustices just. Somebody who could equalize and make the world what it ought to be and men have all cried for a Savior, men from every culture, and God has sent a has Savior but men refuse that Savior that God sent. And it's a sad thing to realize that the Bethlehem babe was the worlds redeemer, but as the Bible says, "Men love darkness rather than (what? than) light. Because their deeds were evil." The Bible tells us that God sent the Savior at precisely the right time. Galatians chapter 4 tells us, That in the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made unto the law." Exactly at the right moment in history Jesus Christ was born, at the right conflux of events, at the right strategic point in the history of man Jesus Christ arrived. Isaiah predicted this, looking to Isaiah chapter 4? for a moment let me read you one verse, verse 5, "Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." Now here he says in an acceptable time the Lord will act in behalf of Israel, God will send the deliverer and indeed God did send that deliverer, in the acceptable time. And Paul picks that up in Second Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 2 and says, "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted. and in the day of salvation have I helped thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." And there he's quoting from Isaiah 4? and applying it to today. Isaiah said, someday at the right time God will send a Savior. Ever since that Savior came it has always been the right time to receive Him and acknowledge Him. Messiah Christ the Savior of the world has been available to men every moment of every day since He arrived, two thousand years ago. And yet men continue to reject Him, continue to refuse Him. There's no reason to wait the evidence is monumental to verify who He is, and instead of receiving Him men mock Him. And they take that one holiday of the year that is designated to celebrate His coming into the world and they turn it into a crass kind of sick materialism. and make Jesus the joke of Christmas. But don't you see friends, it's in this kind of a dark, sick world that the announcement of Jesus Christ must continually and faithfully be given even though the world will not receive. We know that John told us that Jesus Christ was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not, He came unto His own and His own received him not. Yet for those few that receive God's promise is true.

Now as we go back to Isaiah keep in mind just kind of the scattered thoughts that I've given you because we're going to pick them all up as we look at this prophecy. It's the same kind of a dark world, it's the same kind of a God mocking world like we live in, to which Isaiah promises by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that there is coming a great redeemer. And in the prophecy beginning in chapter 6 verse 1 and running through chapter 7 to verse 17 we see four features that Isaiah points out having to do with the coming of this redeemer. We see first of all the pathetic scene which perfectly parallels our day' then we see the promised salvation, the perfect Savior, and the peaceful sovereign. Let's look first of all at the pathetic scene that was, that was extant in Isaiah's time and then see if we can't draw some parallels to our time today in the message of Christ to our world. Now

as we come to this scene it's in verse 1 through 22, and the passage is very important because it gives us the backdrop of Isaiah's prophecy. I mean why did Isaiah stop and give this prophecy, what was going on in Israel that prompted this?

Well the answer is that there was such darkness and such sin that it demanded the announcement of a Messiah redeemer for the sake of the godly who were there. Everything looked so black and so hopeless that the godly needed to be assured that God was still on the throne.

And also the ungodly needed to be assured that there was available light, that there was available salvation if they were willing to accept it. And so we see a pathetic scene of sinfulness that parallels the day not only that Jesus came but the day in which we live right here in 20th century America. Now the scene is really portrayed for us in Second Kings chapter 18 although we'll just refer to it, that's the setting upon which Isaiah bases this prophecy. Ahaz was the king and he was wicked to say the least, he was rotten to the core. He had introduced idolatry into Israel, he had introduced the worship of a god, Molech who was the savage god of the Ammonites, and I mean he was a savage god. He had established the work of Molech...the worship of Molech in the Mount of Olives, which is the east of Jerusalem in the valley of Hinnom, a place near Tophet which is right by the wall west of Jerusalem, so the city of Jerusalem was surrounded with the worship of Molech. And on the location of Tophet in the valley of Hinnom he erected a statue of this god and put a furnace at the feet of this god in order that they might throw children into the fire and burn them as offerings to this god. This is what was going on in Israel. Superstition was everywhere, gold and silver statues were worshiped in the homes of the children of Israel. Ahaz finally shut the temple door and barred it closed and left the whole temple to go to decay and waste. Under him true worship was totally extinguished.

Now you know that if true worship is eliminated Satan will be sure to bring in false worship and naturally that's what happened. So Isaiah moved into this scene and he warned Ahaz and he rebuked him and he offered him signs and he threatened him and he urged him to turn to God but Ahaz never would listen and he continued to go the way he was going and lead the people the same way. And what resulted from this is so frightening because it's exactly a parallel to our day. What resulted from this was the worship of demons, the worship of demons, devils, evil spirits. Now let me give you a couple of points and then I want to move right into verse 19 and show you this. Did you know that idolatry, mark this, is worshipping devils, did you know that?

Worshipping demons. When somebody worships an idol it's not just bowing down to that little thing whatever it is, stone or, or gold or silver or wood, when a man or a woman commits himself to worship a false god a demon will take over that false god and in reality he will be worshipping that demon. What is it that traps people into false worship and holds them there? They can worship a stone god and they will find that that stone god will actually answer their requests, will actually operate in their life, why? Because it is a demon that they are really worshipping, who is impersonating the god that they worship who doesn't really exist anyway. When an individual worships idols he

worships demons, fallen angels, and that's why they're hooked because those fallen angels can really function in their lives, and they can see strange and supernatural things happen as a result of worshipping a stone god. And it's not too different today, we find in our world today a eerie preoccupation with demon worship, with devils, with mediums, wizards, and all these other things. Now let me show you how Paul verifies this same truth in First Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 14 listen to it, he says in verse 14 a most important statement, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." Flee from it, why? Very important, verse 14, "That the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything?" Listen, "But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to (devils or) demons, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of demons." Paul said, flee idolatry because idolatry is sacrificing and worshipping demons, devils. And throughout the Old Testament every time a nation or Israel itself was involved in idolatry it was nothing more or less than demon worship. Idols are demons.

Psalm 96:5 says, "For all the gods of the nations are idols;" now watch that one, Psalm 96:5 very important, "For all the gods of the nations are idols;" and the word idols is translated in the Greek daimonia which is demons. All the gods of the nations are demons. If a man is going to be foolish enough to worship some stone thing or some false nonexistent god a demon will move right in on that and take over that man. And so the psalmist says, "All the gods of the nations are demons." And that is a statement without exception. All the gods the heathen worship are demons. In Leviticus we see the same truth, and I'm taking the time because I want to build on this point. In Leviticus 17 I think it's verse 7 it says this, "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto (devils or) demons, after whom they have played the harlot." You see this is idolatry again as characterized for example in terms of devil worship or demon worship. In Deuteronomy chapter 32 you have the same thing, a little more elucidated, chapter 32 verse 18, "They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger." What kind of strange gods?

"They sacrificed unto demons, not to God; to gods whom they knew not,"

now listen to this, "to new gods who came newly up," who came newly up from where? From that lower world, they were literally worshipping demon spirits. And he says in verse 18, "Of the Rock who begot thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God who formed thee. And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a very perverse generation, children in whom is no faith." Here was a generation of people again who were worshipping demons. The psalmist very carefully lays this out in Psalm 108, the same basic principle, he says this beginning in verse 8, "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons," that's the worship of Molech, burning their children, "And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and played the harlot in their doings." So you see what happens in

idolatry is simply demon worship, and may I hasten to say this, to worship anything but the true God is idolatry. Whether it's money, whether it's self, whatever it is, to worship anything but the true God is idolatry, and is nothing less than worshipping demons.

Paul said, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice unto devils." people say, well you may not worship Christ, you may...but if you're sincere..Well that doesn't mean anything. Sincerity is ridiculous. If I take a bottle of cyanide and drink it and say, well I am sincere I thought it was cough medicine, that's real nice only I'll be dead whether I was sincere or not. So like today Israel was fooling around with everything but God, and consequently they were worshipping demons. That's exactly what's going on in our world today, they were fooling around with all that goes with demonism, familiar spirits, seances, astrologies, horoscopes, seeking the supernatural in a fleshly manner, familiar spirits, mediums, wizards, magic, witchcraft the whole bit. And it is against this backdrop of blackness, of vileness, of sin, not only antiGod, but proSatanic, you know? It is against this backdrop that Isaiah speaks of the glorious coming of the child who is the Savior born into the world. And friends, this is the message that we have to preach too, do you know that? We're not announcing this to a happy go lucky world that's hanging somewhere in neutral, we're in the same kind of a black world preoccupied with demons and devil worship that Isaiah was in and our message comes to them just as Isaiah's did. That's why I say Isaiah could well have been a 20th century preacher.

Now with that in mind look at verse 19 and listen to what Isaiah says about the people. "And when they shall say unto you," and here he's talking to the godly people about the ungodly who will approach them and try to hook them, the godly in on this stuff, "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto those who are mediums," mediums are people who contact demons, "and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter:"

now we'll get to that, that's very interesting, "should not a people seek unto their God? Should they seek on behalf of the living to the dead?" That's necromancy, that's trying to bring up the dead, you know like Bishop pike, tried to bring his dead son who committed suicide, people trying to contact those who are dead, this is what was going on in Israel. Now familiar spirits is the word *ob* in Hebrew and when it was translated into Greek, listen to this it was translated *egstromthos* and that word means ventriloquist. Did you get that? It means ventriloquist. And these familiar spirits and wizards and mediums are ventriloquists who peep and mutter. Now what does it mean to peep and mutter? Well it means that they can communicate in high tones and low sounds. Ventriloquist demons, these people in Israel were actually communicating with devils. And lest you think that devils cannot speak, think again. They can peep and mutter in high tones and low tones, and the word used for the word familiar spirits is the word which translates ventriloquist.

Here was a preoccupation with the demon world, it's so common in our world today, a perfect picture of the backdrop of our world to which we announce that a Savior is born. Sometimes you know Christians can become so despondent and discouraged over what's going on in the world and the

announcement of the Savior comes to us as security, but it also comes to those who do not know Jesus Christ as an answer, to the ache in their hearts, to the trap that Satan has led them into.

In our world today the kingdom of darkness is expanding, a fantastic rise in crime, lust, deceit, moral depravity, suicide, war, homosexuality, fear, atheism, disease, psychotic disorders, mental illness, demonic oppression, possession, drug, alcohol addiction and all the rest of it. Along with spiritism and the occult. No less a person that Bishop Pike himself had televised a seance supposedly contacting his dead son who committed suicide and the medium through which he contacted him was Arthur Ford who happens to be a Disciple of Christ minister.

Suggested this year as ideal Christmas presents for your children and for adults are occult games such as Ouija board, Clairvoyant, Horoscope, E.S.p. Mystic Eye, Cabala and Voodoo, etc. And you've seen them in the toy store. There's a preoccupation in our world with these dark things, because men are in darkness. And there's a reason that men are in darkness and it's in verse 20, look at it, it opens with almost like a, a cheer, the first phrase there if you take it in original Hebrew is kind of a cheer, it's not really a sentence it's three cheers for the law and the testimony! See? It's like hooray for the law and the testimony! You know, what happened to your cheers for God's law, for God's truth, the problem is you got into this mess because you forsook the truth of God. You are not saying this, verse 20, "if they speak not according to this word," or this phrase, three cheers for the law and the testimony, see? If they're not living on the basis of upholding God's law and God's testimony that's the reason that they ran into all this problem. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." If a man will not recognize the truth of the Word of God he's in darkness, and he is a dupe for Satan.

What happens to people who are in this situation? Look at verse 21, and this again, perfect parallel for our day, "And they shall pass through it," through the earth evidently he means, "greatly distressed" or through life, "greatly distressed and hungry;" this is a picture of despair, isn't it? What happens when a person just puts God out of existence, just wipes out God's law and God's testimony, when he removes revelation, what happens? Despair, despair.

Where does he turn, what means anything? He says, "They shall be greatly 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 up." You see that's the first thing men do. They've rejected God's Savior, they've rejected God's salvation, so they're in total despair and instead of receiving God's salvation they look up and they curse God, see? Now what's happened in our day?

When America was founded America was founded on the principles that were Biblical, pretty soon America got going its own way, we became preoccupied with ourselves, pretty soon we just decided to wipe God out, and a few years ago the great announcement was made by Time Magazine that God died. And we have removed God from being in existence, God is no more around, we have

looked up in recent years and cursed God and now we're involved in cursing our leaders, you know that's all apart of our scene. They curse those who are over them, we've cursed God, we've removed God from our society, and the only thing left is total absolute despair. The number 10 song of our day on the top 10 is called American pie, and it's sung by Don McLain, it's a song of total despair, it's a sick, sad, tragic, comment on America today. In it he says this, he says, "Everything has gone wrong, (and then he says,)"

I went to a church for reassurance but Father, Son and Holy Ghost took the last train to the coast." So he decided the only thing to do was kill himself so he says, "I drove my Chevy to the levy, but even the levy was dry." This is a comment on what happens to men when they remove God, and this is exactly what's happened. This is what had happened in Israel, they were infested with demons because they had xed God out, you see? They looked up and they cursed God.

Now after you're done looking up there's only one other place to look, where's that? Down, now watch this in verse ?2' "And they shall look unto the earth,"

Let me ask you a question, what's the preoccupation of our people in America today? What one word is the little key word? Ecology. and where do they look? If you've eliminated God where is there to look?

To the earth. And so with no God the only thing we can look at, we can stare at the crumbling earth, and we can get all uptight because the grass is brown and the sky is brown and the flowers are brown and the trees are brown, and everything is dying. Well that isn't all there is to life, well it is if you've wiped out God my friend, that's all there is. Now we live in a world that is preoccupied with devil worship and is moving right down to the domain of the devil himself for he's the prince of this world and is preoccupied with the earth, they have crossed God totally out, and this is the backdrop against which we pronounce the coming of Messiah, the Christ of God. No wonder the world mocks, no wonder the world laughs, no wonder Jesus is the joke of Christmas. Men have cursed God the only thing left to do is look at the earth. But look what they find, "They shall look unto the earth, and behold, trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness." Ecology is the new god, and don't you think the devil isn't using it and manipulating it in any way he can to distract people from looking at the true God. Ecology has become a god. But it's empty, there aren't any answers. The ecologists today must be the most despairing man of all, because there seems to be no end, no hope. Two hundred million gallons of garbage pumped into the Hudson River everyday from every square mile of New York. That's just one little part of the problem, and if you want to get hung up in ecology you're really going to get hung up, there's no way out. God is dead, earth is dying, man is damned, he's doomed and like Isaiah's world everything is black, where is the light? We stand up, we announce the light and men go on in darkness because they love darkness what? Rather than light anyway. It's this black world that Isaiah speaks to and it's this black world that I speak to this morning and that you and I speak to as we announce Christ.



Look at the message of promised salvation. We've seen the pathetic scene look at the promised salvation that Isaiah brings in chapter ?.

Here comes the promise, verse 1 and this verse is so messed up in the King James, it's all tangled up and you can read it and not understand any of it so let me paraphrase it for you, and I'll just give you the translation out of the New American Standard. "But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish;" now that's better than, "Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation," wouldn't you say? I never did figure out what that meant. But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish. Now you see he's been saying, you're really in a mess, you're really in anguish but there's coming a time when the gloom will be over, you see? There's coming a time when the distress is going to end, there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish, and Israel's gloom is coming to a close. What a wonderful prophecy, the picture of misery is going to dissolve and the light is going to break. You know it's not too much different than the message we have to preach today, that even though the world may remain dark the light of life and salvation can be lit in your life and someday the world itself will be lit when Jesus comes back. All right so the promise comes that it's not always going to be gloom, now watch the next part of the verse, "in earlier times He treated the land of Naphtali and Zebulun with contempt," now here Isaiah is kind of going historical on us, and he says you see, you see God treated Naphtali and Zebulun with contempt, He reacted to their sin with punishment, and I mean they really got it. Tiglathpileser who was the monarch of Assyria, a little before this prophecy had come in and just wiped out that area, and incidentally that area is now known as upper and lower Galilee, that's the area around the Sea of Galilee, Zebulun and Naphtali. And it's referring to a specific spot in Israel for a very specific reason, this is a tremendous prophecy and I want you to see what I mean. All right he says then, in this particular place God had brought punishment because of sin. And the Holy Spirit actually points out this one little tiny territory on the whole globe, this little area of Galilee, why? Because it is in that little tiny area of Galilee that the Daystar is going to rise, that the dawn is going to break. Now notice the remainder of the verse, afterward or "later on He shall make it glorious," make what glorious?

"That little place by the way of the sea on the other side of the Jordan in Galilee of the Gentiles," Which is just another way to describe Zebulun and Naphtali, now watch what he's doing, he's saying it's black and it's tragic but God is going to intervene and salvation is going to come and where as God had formerly treated a little area with contempt because of their sin He is going to bring glory into that area. You say, well why in the world doesn't He choose Jerusalem, why does He choose Galilee to make this great pronouncement? Well in the first place Galilee had just been through it, and Galilee stood as a great example of God's wrath and so by contrast would also stand as a great example of God's mercy, you see. Galilee had just been wiped out, in fact the enemy had laughed at the massacre of Galilee because it had been so complete. And even two hundred years before that they had been flattened and wiped out previously, so they were a classic example of how God allows other nations to punish when they are in sin. And so he says for the example for the illustration He chooses

Galilee, but there is more to it than just that. This is a classic example of how God's wrath also ultimately can bring mercy.

Cod says then that the area of Galilee by the little Sea of Galilee, Tiberias, the little lake really up there, that is going to be the place where the great salvation will come to begin with, the King will come to Galilee. Now this is a pretty astounding prophecy because nobody would ever predict that the Messiah would arrive in Galilee. Galilee was the crummiest place of all. Even today strange as it may seem there's very little settlement around the Sea of Galilee a few ah, kibbutz and, and the little remains of Cana and Nazareth and so forth that have been built up and, and there's a lot of Arab population but, but the Jewish people haven't really moved to colonize all around the Sea of Galilee, there are some little spots there but it's a tremendous place and could well be populated but it isn't. Because Galilee has always had kind of a bad taste, you know? And the reason it always had a bad taste is indicated at the end of verse g, it's even called, Galilee end of verse 1 excuse me, it's even called Galilee of what? The nations or the Gentiles. You see Galilee was a border province right next to Gentile country and it was thus populated by many Gentile groups, because of that the Jewish people had always despised Galilee. In fact when Jesus arrived He spent 30 years plus of His life in Galilee as Isaiah's prophecy predicted He would.

He fulfilled that to the very letter, and when He finally arrived in Jerusalem they all kind of said, wow, I mean can anything good come out of that area, right? This guy is out of Galilee, doesn't the prophet say He's supposed to come from Bethlehem? Well little did they know that He'd been born in Bethlehem and moved to Galilee fulfilling the prophecy of Micah that He was born in Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah that He comes from Galilee. But the reason I believe that God had designed Galilee as that special place was to show first of all, watch this that the salvation promise was not institutional and it was not connected necessarily with temple worship, that it was the dawning of a new age, that Jesus Christ was coming and that a new body would be formed and a new temple would be built which would be made out of flesh. And I believe that though Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecy, shall suddenly come to His temple when He came and cleansed it and shall fulfill the prophecy again in His return. when He arrives in Jerusalem, at the same time that He came uniquely to the area of Galilee indicating that it was bigger than just a Jewish institution, that this was not simply the Messiah of Israel but the Savior of the world, He designed to come to Galilee of the Gentiles. He was to be the world Savior, He was for all men, not just the religious leaders in Israel, not just the Jews but for all men, and thus did He go to Galilee. This is kind of an open rejection really of the Jewish religion as such which was hypocrisy without reality. All right so that's the promise. Notice verse 2, we're going to have to hurry here. "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." What a wonderful contrast you see here.

God's prophet says, it's been dark but the light will dawn, and the people who walk in a dark world will see the light. Jesus Christ came into the world and the Bible says, "He was the light that lighteth

every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9. The light has dawned but men have crawled back under the rock in a tragic rejection. Now notice something would you please? It has always been, now this is important, it has always been throughout the entire history of man, throughout the Old Testament revelation that God has revealed the light of the coming Savior against always the background of deep darkness. I don't know if you've noticed that, it always appears that way. He is always chosen, the sun, to be the only blazing star in the dark sky. The prophecies that have come concerning Messiah have come again and again against a pitch black backdrop. For example in Genesis chapter 3 Adam and Eve had sinned, and immediately after their sin the promise came, didn't it? The seed of the woman would come to bruise the serpents head. It was true in Egypt, when Egypt was in the blackest kind of painful bondage, when things were going as badly as they could and there were horrible plagues everywhere Messiah was then revealed as the beautiful passover Lamb, and the blood sprinkled on the door posts and the lintels signified the salvation that would come for all who would believe and receive Him. In Isaiah for example chapter 28 verse 18 Isaiah gave the great prophecy of the coming of Messiah who would be the cornerstone, and the reason he did was because the foundation of Israel was rotted with sin, it's always been that way. In Jeremiah 23:5 Jeremiah said, "Behold, I will raise unto David a righteous Branch." And the reason he said it was because back in the first four verses of that chapter he had detailed the sick oppression and rotten sin of the leaders of Israel. In Ezekiel chapter 34 and 37 you have the same thing. exactly a prophecy of Messiah preceded by all the corruption and filth of Israel. In every case when things hit rock bottom, when hypocrisy and demon worship were at their height it is then that God proclaimed the announcement of Jesus Christ. And I'll tell you friends it behooves us in this day to know that, doesn't it? Today is the day to announce that Christ has come into the world, that there is a light for the darkness of this day and the darkness of men's hearts. The prophet said, light will shine out of darkness and it has, Jesus came as that light. In Matthew chapter 23 He claimed that He was the fulfillment of that prophecy. In Matthew chapter 23 verse 12 it says, "And now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the seacoast, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali," same area, now watch this, "He went there that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah, the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations; The people who sat in darkness saw great light, and to them who sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." Jesus ministered in Galilee in direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah.

And Galilee was dark. And our world is dark today, and the light has dawned and it's up to you and me to bear the light to a dark world, and for men to respond.

Then in verses 3 to 5 which we won't take the time to consider, Isaiah presents the Messianic Kingdom, the coming King will ultimately bring a Kingdom. Now you know that as, as Messiah came, as Christ arrived they refused Him. so the Kingdom was postponed. He came and He said, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is (what?) at hand." But since they rejected the King they forfeited the

Kingdom, so it was postponed. So read verses 3, 4, and 5 for they speak of the Kingdom that is coming. I'll just read through them without comment. "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and increased the joy;" that's the Kingdom, see, "they rejoice before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 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. For every battle of the warrior,"

listen to it, it should be, "For every boot of the warrior in the tumult of battle, and garments are rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire." The Kingdom is coming, joy, rejoicing, victory and the end of all war, peace, the Messiah's Kingdom which is forfeited but which is yet to come when He returns again. I call it Christmas two. Only when Christmas two comes the world won't have any opportunities to comment or to celebrate.

Now as we come to verses 8 and 7 we come to the distinctiveness of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. And this is so familiar I don't want to belabor the point this morning. But let's look at the perfect Savior, we've seen the pathetic scene, we've seen the promised salvation, let's look at this Savior who came, and whom we announce to the dark world today. Verse 8, "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, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The prince of peace." Those are unusual titles for a baby, aren't they? Here is the King, here's the perfect Savior.

Now I want to show you His perfections, first of all notice it says, a child is born, that speaks of His humanity, doesn't it? Jesus was a real human being, He was human, He was a man. The writer of Hebrews says, He was as human as any man. He took upon Himself flesh. Paul said in Philippians 2, "He humbled himself and was found in fashion as a man." The writer of Hebrews says, "He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin." Because He was human and because He felt what we feel and because He, He hurt where we hurt He is able to succor us, He is able to be sympathetic with us, and He's a faithful and sympathetic High priest. He was a man and He had to be a man because He had to die in man's place, He had to bear man's sin, He had to feel man's pain, He was a man. But more than just a man, notice the second phrase, "unto us a son is" what's the next word. Not born, what? "given," given by whom? By God. This is His deity. He was not only a man He was God. He was divine in human form. He had to be God, didn't He? He had to be man to bear man's sin but He had to be God to defeat sin and defeat death. Back in Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14 Isaiah prophesied that He would be God. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;" Isaiah 7:14 listen, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son," hum, whose son? "and shall call his name Immanuel." God with us, that's what Immanuel means. Who was Jesus Christ? He was God, with us. God in human form. Of Him God said, "Thy art my beloved (what?) Son." He had to be God, He had to be man. This was no ordinary child, this is the virgin born Holy Spirit conceived Son of God. It is He who is the light in darkness, He is the hope, shattering despair, this born child, this given son, He is the perfect one of God. He's the only hope for our dark world.

But men don't know who the Bethlehem babe is. He's the promise of the ages, the Holy One of Israel, the desire of nations, the King of peace, the light of history's darkness, the fulfillment of every man's hopes.

The perfect Savior. That child that men mock, that they laugh at, that they pay hypocritical homage to, that they keep in a manger, that they use as a gimmick to make money, that child is the Son of God. His perfections are indicated by His names, and you know them, look at them, Wonderful Counselor, and those two should go together, a Wonder of a Counselor. Men today search for wisdom, they search for answers, they search for the meaning of life, they search for solutions to their problems, they go to psychologists, psychiatrists, analysts, counselors. they read books, they try everything, they seek demons, they never get any help, and the Word of God says, are you looking for a Wonderful Counselor? I offer you Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The perfect Counselor. You see as God He knows everything, wouldn't you like to have a counselor who knew everything? You do.

He knows all about you, He knows all the needs of your heart, He knows how to answer those needs, He knows what's best for you, He knows how to solve your problems, He gives you wise counsel, He's not like Satan He never lies and He never plays nondirective technique games, He gives you straight stuff. He knows what you need. And a wayfaring man, though he be a fool, need not err." Jesus Christ is a Wonder of a Counselor. But you know there's got to be more to it than just that too, it's nice to have a Counselor, and to have one who's constantly faithful, never leaves you, He never forsakes you, He's there all the time counseling you every waking moment of every day. But more than just a Counselor you need some energy, and that you see in the second name, He's also the Mighty God, He can not only tell you what to do but He can energize you to do it, isn't that great? You know I think one of the most amazing things in counseling is that people come to you and they say, here's my problem John, and they go on and on about their problem, that's wonderful I say now let me tell you the solution, then they go out and never do it. I think of all the people I've counseled I can count on one hand those that have done what I, what I suggested would be the thing they should do, people don't ever do it. Usually people want you to tell them to do what they want to do, they want to get confirmed in what they're doing. But that's not how it is with Christ, He not only shows you what to do but He energizes you to do it, you see? What a tremendous, tremendous Savior He is.

Counsel can only go so far it, it stops at the point of power and that's where the Mighty God comes in. He not only counsels us but He has full divine power to act in our behalf, resurrection power, creative power. This born child, this given son, God's unspeakable gift is given to us to express His power. He is capable of defeating sin, destroying Satan, killing death, snatching men out of hell, healing, raising the dead, answering prayer, someday returning in full expression of His power, He is capable of redeeming men, of subduing the earth and all of its kingdoms and reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, He is power beyond power. And all that power is moved in behalf of you and me who love Him and know Him. And so to a black world and the black hearts of men without God we announce

there is a Savior, there is a child who was born, not just a baby stuck on the front of a postcard, not just a gimmick but the living Son of God who is a faithful and Wonderful Counselor, and who is a Mighty God. The third thing it says about Him, and this is so beautiful, He is the Everlasting Father. And we're skipping a lot of things for time sake.

The Everlasting Father, the Father of eternity in the Hebrew. He is both a Son and a Father, He is a child in time but in eternity He is the Father. He is a child of time and the Father of timelessness.

Jesus Christ fathered eternity, is that a heavy thought? He fathered eternity. He fathers eternal life for all who believe, and that's the main import of what Isaiah is saying. He is to you and to me who love Him and receive Him the source of everlasting life, do you see?

"Whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have (what?) everlasting life." This is no ordinary babe, He holds eternity in His hand from everlasting to everlasting He is God. This tender child, this gentle babe is the Father of eternity. Fourthly He is called The prince of peace, and His Kingdom is peace. He came to bring peace, three ways number one, He gives peace between a man and God, when you come to Jesus Christ the war is over, the rebellion has ended, you're at peace with God, Romans 5. Secondly He puts peace in your heart, an inner rest, Philippians ! peace that passes, what? Understanding.

The third thing He comes again someday to bring a Kingdom of peace where He will reign as prince and King. He is, Paul says in Ephesians 2:14, "He is our peace." This is what men want. Here it is, it's all here. What do men want? They want wise counsel, they want the power to overcome and be victorious, they want eternal life, they want to know there's life beyond the grave, and they want peace in their hearts. It's no accident that His names fulfill every desire of man, He is the desire of nations, He is the Wonderful Counselor that you need in every trial of life, He is the Mighty God who can take you out and snatch you out of every trial and make it victory, He is the Father of eternity who gives to you eternal life, He is the prince of peace who not only plants peace within your heart but makes peace between you and God and shall be with you and bring you to reign with Him in a Kingdom of peace. This is that child, this is that babe.

The perfect Savior.

And then lastly, He is the peaceful Sovereign and that's in verse 7, really verse 8 includes it where it says, the government shall be upon his shoulder," that means the government of the earth not the government of your life, that's the final Kingdom of Messiah. The peaceful Sovereign, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," an eternal Kingdom of peace, "upon the throne of David" He has the right to rule, He is David's heir, "and upon his kingdom, to order it, to establish it with justice and righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." people always say, when is the world going to be equalized, when are the justices

going to be meted out the way they ought to be, when are we going to get our due? There's coming a Kingdom and Jesus Christ will reign in justice and righteousness. A King is coming, He has the right to rule. He came once and offered His Kingdom and men nailed Him to a cross, but He'll be back. He'll be back to bring His Kingdom, it won't be offered next time it will be brought, and established in the earth. You say, I'd like to be apart of that Kingdom, only those who know and love Him will be.

Let me close with just picking out two words out of verse 8 that are repeated twice. "Unto us, unto us." "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Who's the us? To whom is this child given?

To everybody? No. Unto us who believe. Isaiah was speaking to the godly remnant in Israel. There is no Savior, there is no hope, there is no peace, there is no everlasting life, there is no mighty power, and there is no wise counsel for those who do not receive and believe in Jesus Christ. So against the darkness of this world we offer you what Isaiah offered, only it's not in the future it's in the present.

The Savior is born, receive Him and all that He offers to you.

Father we thank You that we've been able to look into this passage. We thank You for Jesus Christ and the reality of His life and work, what He does and means to us. Father we do realize that He fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament, that He fulfills the hunger of the despair of every man's heart. Father we look at our world and we just are sickened at the lostness of men, who have eliminated God and are looking to the earth and find it just as empty and just as despairing. Father somehow at this time against this blackness help us to present the glorious shining light of Jesus Christ.

May there be some here and there chosen by You who shall come to know Jesus Christ in the fullest sense, to step out of the darkness of this world into light, to Your Kingdom of light. As we close speak to us Father, that each of us may respond first of all if we do not know Christ to receive Him as Savior, secondly if we do to a new, to a new commitment to share Christ with the dark world about us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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