

Isaiah 9:1-7
November 25, 2018

With Thanksgiving past, welcome to the Advent season. Advent means coming or arrival, and December 25th is the day we mark as the Advent of Jesus Christ.

December 25th was not the day that Jesus Christ entered the world he created. It was not the day that a young mother cried out in anguish as she gave birth to a baby boy. It was not the day that the Christ child breathed his first breath of this broken atmosphere. It was not the day that the cries of a newborn rung out and spooked some Bethlehem livestock. It was not the day God became man to rescue man from God. December 25th was not the day that heaven invaded earth and that the creator became the creature so long ago.

But December 25th was and is a good day to celebrate the birth of the Light of the World.

Why?

In the ancient Mediterranean and European world the end of December was the most frightening time of the year. Before artificial light when the sun set, not only did the temperature drop but all light seemed to be put out.

In late December darkness seemed to swallow up all the light and send people scurrying.

The darkness hid all manner of unseen threats.

People were left to find shelter wherever they could and nightly gather around a flickering to beat back the cold and dark one night at a time.

But even the youngest child knew that any darkness could be pierced by even the faintest of lights. Darkness cannot consume light; Light always punches a hole in darkness. There is no darkness so dark that as to eat up the light.

The light always shines through the darkness.

The last week of December then was the ideal time of year to celebrate the coming of the Light of Christ into a dark world.

The story of Christmas is a story of light coming the darkness. The Light of Christ to the World of darkness.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:5

The world Jesus came to was dark, but it was not dark because God had made it that way. God created all things and after each day’s work said, “It is good.”

So how did the God’s good world get so dark?

Sin and death came and made our world a land of deep darkness.

The dark and sinister shadow of sin was nowhere in God’s good world. But then a snake slithered into a

garden and talked a couple into believing that God was not good. And that that was the day all the land was covered in a deep darkness.

Genesis 3 records mankind's funeral, the day they turned from God and died. The man and woman may have still been breathing but that doesn't mean they were alive. They were spiritually dead. Mankind became spiritual zombies.

- Sin had entered God's good creation and was in the process of destroying everything.
- Death now hunted and claimed all of mankind.

The story of Christmas, the Advent season is the story of the coming Jesus Christ the dawning of that great light. In the coming weeks we will listen to the great prophet—Isaiah—as he announces the coming of the light of Christ.

Today we hear of the coming of a child.

Jesus the Light of the World has come—and Isaiah will tell us why it matters and what it means that he came.

This son begins to turn everything around. The curse is beginning to be turned back and destroyed. Everything changes with the coming of the son.

Today's promise is more than a pledge of personal salvation—but of complete restoration. We the people of deep darkness have seen a great light.

Our world is not the only thing dark and broken. Mankind is in anguish, dark and broken. We break others and we are broken ourselves. But this light, this Jesus, offers more than personal salvation but complete and total restoration.

Today we hear of a child. This child is called by Isaiah the Light. The light has dawned, the son has come.

PROP: The Light has dawned and he can do more than we think.

And so, each advent season we set aside the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas to remember what has begun in Bethlehem and what it means today.

We the people living in the land of deep darkness will look again at the light that has come.

Today and for the following weeks we will harken back to long ago promises of Isaiah about Jesus. Isaiah spoke with the most clarity about the coming of Christ—and he did so some 750 before.

“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.

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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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
9:1-7

PRAY

A light dawned
A Child born

1. A Light dawned

Isaiah was a prophet who spoke of a light dawning in the darkest period of Israel's history. Most of the nation was about to be destroyed at the hands of a routing army.

Isaiah speaks of what will come.

"They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. [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." Isaiah 8:21–22

The land would be in thick darkness. Most of the nation of Israel was destroyed and the future of the nation seemed doomed.

They would be thrust into deep darkness.

The light that Isaiah was talking about—Jesus Christ—was a light that would shine not just on Israel but the whole world. Jesus himself would say that he was the 'light of the world.' Isaiah is speaking of a promise to more than just the nation of Israel...but to who?

"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."

We are the people who have dwelt in a land of deep darkness. Deep darkness is an apt description of the land that we all live in.

I looked at a news website last night and read the following headlines in our country:

“An argument in a Florida WalMart leads to gunfire and a woman is killed.”

“475 people still unaccounted for as (CA) Campfire is nearly contained.”

“Gunman dead and 2 wounded—including a 12 year old girl—in Alabama shooting.”

“House explodes in Minnesota neighborhood.”

We are a people who live in the land of deep darkness. Our world is broken. We need someone to restore all that is broken. And so very much is broken.

The land of deep darkness—this world we live in—is the land that the light of Christ has shone.

Isaiah describes the land the effect of the great light that we see shining from Bethlehem so long ago.

Verse 1—The Light would come from Galilee,

“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.”

As we've seen in Mark, Jesus is a Galilean and comes from the way of the sea doing so much ministry in the northern part of Israel.

The light is going to come from the north and

Verse 3—He will bring Joy

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.

The nation, the people would be greatly multiplied, people in the land of deep darkness would flock to the light. And the ones in anguish had great reason for joy.

What kind of joy?

The kind of joy that comes with a full stomach. The kind of joy that comes after a bountiful harvest when the people knew they would have enough to eat through the winter.

The light will dawn bringing Joy

And

The light will bring Freedom—

Vs. 4,

⁴For 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.

The people dwelling in the land of deep darkness are burdened, oppressed.

Mankind was enslaved by a pervasive internal and external corruption. We were like beast of burdens led about at the whim of a cruel oppressor.

What oppressor was that?

Not just sin but death.

Everyone lives with a death sentence and yet Isaiah speaks of day when the death sentence of death could be lifted for the people in the land of deep darkness.

Jesus has broken this oppression for the people in the land of deep darkness as on the day of Midian.

What does that mean?

The day of Midian was the day that Gideon routed the 120,000 troops with only 300. Here was his battle plan given by the Lord—take these men armed only with torches covered by jars. Sound the trumpet and then shout, “For the Lord and for Gideon.”

The army did this and the enemy started fighting amongst itself. Napoleon never had a victory so surprising and unlikely.

Jesus would bring freedom from the slavery to the corruption of sin. He would win a victory much more surprising and unlikely than Gideon did at Midian.

How did Jesus break the rod of our oppressor?

By dying.

Nobody expected that. And yet without his death there would be no gateway to victory. Death was the path Jesus took to break the oppression of death.

Why?

Because he broke the power of death by coming back to life. That was a victory even his closest associates did not see coming. He died, came back and now leads people from the land of deep darkness away from the power of death.

It was a more unlikely victory than at Midian for the people in the land of deep darkness.

The light has dawned. He brings

Joy
Freedom
Peace

Vs. 5,

But note this kind of peace. The kind of peace that the light promises to the people of the land of deep darkness is thoroughgoing,

For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle
tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

The battle will be great that the one would fight and
he would fight alone. The victory would be so
thorough that there would be no more need have the
garments for battle.

All the boots of the warrior will be discarded.
All the garments of the warrior are thrown out.
All the armor and accessories of battle are burned.

In other words, this victory won by Jesus for the
people of the land of deep darkness would be won
without us needing to fight.

We need not dress for battle to fight our enemies.
Someone else will fight for us.

A light dawned and the light has brought

Joy
Freedom
Peace

What kind of warrior would be able to win this kind
of battle? Who could come and destroy all enemies,
even our archenemy death?

Who could promise wondrous joy?
Who could promise exhaustive freedom?
Who could promise comprehensive peace?

A child.

2. A Son Born

Our great champion comes as a child. A baby!

A baby?

The latest movie does not depict a baby as the conquering hero. But this baby was different. This baby was also a son.

Isaiah says,

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;

The means of our salvation is a child born. A son given. God always uses the most unlikely means to save his people.

The light is a child.

Vulnerable
Weak
Helpless
Exposed
Feeble
Frail

How could a baby be the means of saving the people of the land of deep darkness?

“God’s answer to everything that has ever terrorized us is a child. The power of God is so far superior to

the Assyrians and all the big shots of this world that he can defeat them by coming as a mere child. His answer to the bullies swaggering through history is not to become an even bigger bully. His answer is Jesus." Ray Ortlund Jr.

This baby was also a son.

Not just a son to Joseph and Mary. But a son to God Most High. The son sent to be a light to the world.

Who is he?

If we had any doubts that Isaiah is speaking to more than just the nation of Israel that is dispelled when he begins to describe this child.

Who is this child?

The government is upon his shoulders—he is king. A king that threatens and terrorizes his people to get them to obey? A king that puts the pressure on the people by raising taxes, armies and cities?

No.

He places the government upon his shoulders. He rules for the good of his people.

"He is a king of the most unparalleled... grace. Never was any kingdom ruled by a government so mild and gentle and gracious. He is exceedingly gracious in the manner of his ruling his people by sweetly and powerfully influencing their hearts by his grace: not

governing them against their wills, but powerfully inclining their wills." Jonathan Edwards

His name?

Isaiah regales us with what the baby would be called but who he is.

Who is he?

and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

This is not an ordinary baby.

He is:

Wonderful Counselor
Mighty God
Everlasting Father
Prince of Peace

Wonderful Counselor:

Most kings need a bevy of counselors because no one person could be an expert at everything.

But not Jesus.

He is the Wonderful Counselor.

He needs counsel from no one.

Human wisdom and ingenuity is faulty. We do not know what will happen tomorrow and don't remember what happened yesterday. We simply lack the wisdom and perspective necessary to be good counselors.

Not this Jesus.

He is a wonderful counselor not only does he have all the depths of wisdom and insight—he is the one and only one we need counsel from.

The best counselors cannot impart all the wisdom we need to confront life's troubles. Jesus is different. He knows what it is like to walk this earth and face the same troubles we have to face. He was the child born and son given for us.

He is the Wonderful counselor not just because he knows all things and needs no help—that is true. But also because he knows what it is like to be human. He lived in our shoes.

Christmas celebrates Jesus who came and entered our suffering. The counsel he gives is understanding.

He knows our frailties. He knows we are weak. He knows we are dust.

When he speaks and guides he does so with all the heartache, trials, afflictions and troubles that we are going through. He understands.

Other religions do not offer a savior who suffers with and for his people. Other religions have high ideals but we have a savior to attained perfection for us.

“There is no other religion that says God has suffered, that God had to be courageous, that he knows that it is like to be abandoned by friends, to be crushed by injustice, to be tortured and die. Christmas shows he knows what you’re going through.” Tim Keller

We can follow him and know he will not turn us astray.

Mighty God—

He is our champion. Our God-hero. He is the one who fights for us. We are not trained to fight for ourselves against all of our adversaries.

We serve a Mighty God who fights for his people. Though we do not always deserve it our Mighty God refuses to leave us. He refuses to abandon us.

He always fights for us.

More than that he is able to protect and preserve all those who trust in him. All those who come to him he will fight for.

He can and will fight for you.

Everlasting Father—

He is the one who can care for us. If you think that Jesus was somehow not equal with God somehow

God Jr., think that no longer. He is called Everlasting Father.

Many kings claimed to be the father of their people saying that they would take care of them and advocate for them and yet they failed.

Not Jesus. He is who we need.

He will not abandon you.
He will always be there.
He will never leave you.
He will always support you.

He will care for you better than any father could.

Possibly, your father ran off when you were young—Jesus does not and cannot do that to any who come to him.

Even the best, benevolent kings were temporary. Not this king. He is called Everlasting Father.

He cannot die—not anymore. He died once and death can no longer touch him. He has defeated death and he lives to protect all who come to him.

Prince of Peace:

He is more than an emissary of peace, he doesn't just bring news of a peace treaty. Jesus has come to bring a complete and lasting peace with God.

Christmas celebrates lasting peace with God.

Christian—you are forgiven of your sin—even more
you can live without worry that you will be punished.
The Prince of peace has been punished for you.

How successful would his reign be?

Vs. 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.”

The increase of his government will ever expand.

“The empire of grace” will ever and always expand.

