



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.  
Isaiah 9:7

December 18, 2011  
English Standard Version

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## *“God’s Reign”*

### **Isaiah 9:7**

*“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.”*

*Heavenly Father, thank You for making us Your people. We thank You for Your word. Thank You for its truth. We thank You for how it points to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and we pray today that You would open our eyes to behold the King of kings and Lord of lords. Focus us on Your Word and on Your Son. We desperately need Him this morning. Help us to see Jesus today, in His holy and precious name, we pray, Amen.*

### **INTRODUCTION: *What Do You Want for Christmas?*<sup>1</sup>**

A Sunday School teacher asked her class “What is Christmas - a time for?”

And she got the usual answers — Jesus’ birthday, a time of joy, a time to worship God ... but then one child raised his hand and answered ... “It’s a time for good sportsmanship ... because you don’t always get everything you want.”

“What do you want for Christmas?” That is a question a lot of people are asked this time of year. Some people are easier to buy for than others. In an old issue of Biography magazine

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<sup>1</sup> **The Introduction** is adapted from the sermons, “*What Did You Get For Christmas?*” by Rev. Jeff Strite, Church of Christ at Logansport, Logansport, IN, December 2003; “*The Incarnation: Heartbeat of our Faith*” by Dr. Robert Rayburn, Faith Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, WA, 12/19/20, [www.faithtacoma.org](http://www.faithtacoma.org)

several people were asked just that question, "What do you want for Christmas?"

One famous actress said she wanted to learn to play the guitar, so she'd like a guitar for Christmas. That wouldn't be so hard a gift to get ...

Another actress said she wanted "diamonds - what else?" Even that wouldn't be a difficult gift to purchase ... depending on how big the diamond was.

And one famous actor wasn't asking for much, just a "big, luxurious private jet" ... so some people are easier to buy for than others.

When we buy gifts for our loved ones we try very hard to get presents they either want or need. The problem of course (with many of the presents people get for each other) is that those gifts often end up in closets or toy boxes and eventually get sold in garage sales or down at "Thrift Store."

The ultimate gift (the Holy Grail of Christmas giving) is to give a gift **that will last** ... a gift that will meet such a deep felt need that it is not boxed up and put aside. In Isaiah, God says, "I'm going to give you a gift like that. I'm going to give you a gift that will last for a long, long time."

Let's look at it again, I'll be reading **Isaiah 9:6-7**, "*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. <sup>7</sup> 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 central figure throughout the Scriptures is Christ the conquering King. In the Book of Isaiah, the centrality of the conquering Christ is vividly seen for us. It is interesting that there are as many chapters in Isaiah as there are books in the whole Bible. These books divide into thirty-nine and twenty-seven, as do the books of the Bible in the Old and New Testaments. The tone of the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah has an Old Testament ring, while the remaining chapters sing with the gospel of the New Testament. The last twenty-seven chapters divide into three sections, each containing nine chapters. Isaiah, in his center division, deals with the Messiah. Of the nine chapters in the "Messiah" section (49-57), the center chapter (Isaiah 53), gives the clearest view of Calvary to be found in Scripture. It seems appropriate that Isaiah's name means "***The Salvation of Yahweh.***"

One moment the Book of Isaiah is black with thunder and the darkness of the storm. Then, the rainbow shines through, and Isaiah sweeps his readers onto the Golden Age still ahead for the world. He writes about the Messiah as the savior and sovereign to illustrate the cross and the crown. To Isaiah, Christ is just as much the Lamb of God as He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

In this Advent season I've now preached three sermons on the Incarnation of God the Son from Isaiah 9. The Prophet Isaiah has told us about the Coming of the Light, the Coming of the Son, and now he tells us about the Coming of the King. Isaiah is the prophet — more than any other — who foretold the coming of a Messiah who would be both God and Man. It is for good reason that the great church father, St. Jerome, referred to him as "***Isaiah the evangelist.***"

We think of four gospels, perhaps we should think of five — Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, **and Isaiah**. It's in Isaiah we learn, 700 years before His coming, that Christ would be born to a virgin, that He would be called Immanuel, ***God with us***, that He would suffer and die for our sins, and that His kingdom would extend over the entire earth, bringing peace, justice,

righteousness, and salvation to all mankind. And so now we read of the ...

### **INCREASE OF HIS RULE**<sup>2</sup>

*“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 promise of the coming king, the son of David, the hope of the Messiah to come — is highlighted in the passage before us. And in verse 6, Isaiah draws attention especially to His name, that is, the expression of His character, His reputation, His personal attributes, the character of the king.

And then of course, **Luke 2:11** will describe the birth of this child this way, *“For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* And so right out of the blocks, Isaiah is reminding us that we need this child. This child is here to do something for us that we cannot do ourselves, and furthermore, He’s **given**; He’s not just born. He’s **given** of God Almighty. God the Father **gives** this child into the world. *“He’s a child and a Son”* — language that clearly indicates His rule and His reign for Israel. He was what was needed for the succession of David’s line to fulfill the stipulations of 2 Samuel 7, *“a king to reign forever.”* And so a male child in the line of David was needed and this was that child.

Here’s the second thing — His work is kingly. And the kingly work of this child is described in that beautiful phrase that we love to hear sung in Handel’s *Messiah*, *“And the government shall be upon His shoulder.”* He will bear the weight of the world for His people. The government, the rule, the reign, will be on **His shoulder**. The government of the kingdom of God will rest on **His shoulders**, and so His kingly work is indicated in this passage.

Think of how tired Israel would have been waiting for the fulfillment of this promise by the time that Jesus came? How tired they already were by the time that Isaiah announced it? The Northern Kingdom had gone through how many dynasties? How many capitals? And after King Ahaz, the Southern Kingdom would **never again** be ruled by an independent Davidic monarch. And so **for 500 years** the people of God would wait for a ruler, and God says, “When He comes, His rule is never going to end. It’s going to be stable. It’s going to be forever.” So He is going to be the eternal King, the endless Monarch of His people.

*“Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end.”* And Isaiah now almost loses himself as he looks down this corridor and he sees the coming of Jesus, and beyond that he sees the growth of the kingdom of Jesus, and he sees beyond that: King Jesus ruling and reigning in all of His resplendent glory with His children that God has given to Him and that He has purchased with the great price of His own blood.

And not only will there be an increase of His rule, but there will be an ...

### **INCREASE OF HIS PEACE**

The prophet declares that peace and righteousness will characterize the reign of Messiah. Such is not the case now, but is to come. That’s one reason why Christians pray, *“Thy kingdom*

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**2 The Exposition of the text has adapted material from the Book, *The Book of Isaiah* by Dr. Allen Ross, Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, AL, The Biblical Studies Foundation, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org) And the Sermons, “A Light for Those in Darkness,” 12/9/07 and “A Child is Born,” 12/7/03, both by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan; “From Light to Darkness,” by Dr. Derek Thomas, 12/11/05, all of First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, [www.fpcjackson.org](http://www.fpcjackson.org); “What Did You Get For Christmas?” by Rev. Jeff Strite, Church of Christ at Logansport, Logansport, IN, December 2003; “The Incarnation: Heartbeat of our Faith” by Dr. Robert Rayburn, Faith Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, WA, 12/19/20, [www.faithtacoma.org](http://www.faithtacoma.org)**

*come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*” That reign will then issue into the eternal state, as we learn in **1 Corinthians 15:23-25**, *“But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.”*<sup>24</sup> *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.*<sup>25</sup> **For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.**”

The central idea of Isaiah’s oracle is as follows: **Complete and lasting peace comes with the righteous reign of the divine Messiah.** The prophet anticipates that the present gloom at the prospect of war in Isaiah’s own time will be replaced by the joy of peace. That peace can **only** be accomplished through a King who is a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. Righteousness and peace is impossible without Him; nothing is impossible for Him.

The words of the prophet held out hope for his generation. God was not abandoning His people to invasion and disaster, but was promising that in spite of the prospect of war there was a glorious future ahead. And on the eve of the birth of Jesus the nation also felt the oppression of world conflict and the despair it brings. Into that world Jesus came, clearly claiming to be the Messiah of Israel, this King of Wonder. But His first coming was to lay the foundation of the glory that would follow, that is, His death on the cross would reconcile people to God, bringing them into eternal peace with God through the forgiveness of sins. And so now as we look forward to His coming again, the words of Isaiah hold out hope for us too. Wars and conflicts abound; despair and depression accompany the fear of danger and aggression. But the Word of God is clear: there is coming a time of complete and lasting peace with the coming of Messiah. There is hope. We who know the LORD by faith need not despair as those without hope.

But what then are we to do while we wait for this King? First, it is our task to carry on the ministry that Isaiah had, to announce to the world the only hope, Jesus the Messiah. Our primary concern is that people find eternal peace with God. We are the ambassadors for this King, calling others to be reconciled with God. Our efforts must declare to the world that the hope of peace rests with Jesus Christ and none other.

But secondly, this passage also instructs us about the resources available to us even now from our King. We know that Jesus is **the Wonderful Counselor**, so we may obtain instruction and guidance for our lives from Him and in His Word. He is **the Mighty God**, for all power is given to Him, so we may trust Him to accomplish great things in and through us. He is **the Everlasting Father**, so we may take comfort in the stability that knowing our sovereign Lord reigns brings. And, He is our **Prince of Peace**, so we may rest in Him, knowing that because of Jesus Christ all is well between us and God. In short, these descriptions of our Lord Jesus Christ are calls to greater prayer, greater confidence, and greater service.

But why would God do this? Why would God announce this 700 years before Christ came? Why does God promise this righteous reign and peaceful rule? **Because He keeps His Word.** This is the ...

#### **FULFILLMENT OF HIS PROMISE**

Now, why would God give us a child as a gift? That does seem like an unusual kind of gift. As I thought about today’s sermon, I came across some very good answers to that question

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1. God gave us Jesus as a child so that we would understand one of the principle teachings of the church ... that is, that we all are called to be **humble**, as humble as a child in our walk as Christians.

2. Or, perhaps Jesus came as a child so that we would understand that through Jesus, God would now be accessible to us. In coming as a child, Jesus gave the image of being approachable and loving.

Now, those are both good answers ... but I believe there may be an even deeper reason as to why God sent us a child ... **because that was the present He had promised.**

Back in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve had sinned by taking of the forbidden fruit, they lost their closeness with God, and all of the blessings that God had given them. And as a result of their sin, from that day until this, mankind has lived in a constant fear of death, and has struggled with the hardships of life.

But God promised Adam and Eve that this curse would not last forever. Addressing the Serpent, God said, **Genesis 3:15**, *“I will put enmity [hatred] between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

In other words God promised that one day, Satan would be crushed. And he would be crushed by the offspring of a woman ... A child ... a son ... *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is give.”*

When Jesus died on the Cross, Satan believed he had struck Jesus down with a mortal blow. He had struck at Jesus’ heel and believed this so-called messiah was destroyed. But, instead, it was through that death on the cross and His ultimate resurrection, Jesus crushed Satan’s head and has defeated him for all time.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary, he told her, **Luke 1:31-33**, *“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus.”*<sup>32</sup> *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David,*<sup>33</sup> *and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”*

Does that terminology sound familiar! (***Throne of David, kingdom never end???***) Where do you think that angel might have seen those words before? Of course, these were the same terms used by God in His prophecy here in Isaiah 9. It was this gift of a child, this gift of a son that would bring us our salvation and our hope for eternity.

In other words ... the purpose for **this child** being born, **this son** being given was to establish a Kingdom ... a kingdom of peace and justice and righteousness. And it won’t last a mere 40 or 50 years... not even a kingdom of 1,000 or 2,000 years. **This Kingdom** would last **forever**.

What kind of kingdom would that be? Jesus was asked about that. When He was in Pilate’s courtroom, the Roman governor was questioning him ... **John 18:33-37**, *“So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?””*<sup>34</sup> *Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”*<sup>35</sup> *Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”*<sup>36</sup> *Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world.”*<sup>37</sup> *Then Pilate said to Him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world — to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.”*

Here it is again ... the reason Jesus was born was to become a King. But His kingdom

was not of this world. The Apostle Paul wrote that you and I are part of that Kingdom, **Colossians 1:12-14**, *“The Father ...has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness **and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**”*

Notice who accomplishes the work here. The Father does. The Father delivers us and the Father transfers us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. It is all the ...

### **ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE LORD**

And of course, finally in verse 7, at the very end of this passage, Isaiah will stress one more thing — it is the zeal of the Lord that will accomplish this for all Israel. God is the sovereign personal cause behind this hope and joy. *“The zeal of the Lord,”* he says, *“will do this.”*

**Psalm 124:8** says, *“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”* And that’s exactly what Isaiah is saying to Israel. The hope that they have is sure ... **not** because of anything **that they will do**, but because of **WHO** is behind that hope. And who is behind that hope? The Lord. And what does Psalm 124 say? That if it weren’t for the Lord, the anger of our enemies would have undone us. And here is Isaiah saying the anger of your enemies is no match for the zeal, the fire, the fervency, the fervor, the ardor of your sovereign God who has said, **“I will do this.”**

And by the way, do you notice something interesting about this statement? It’s the only statement in the whole passage, in all of Isaiah 9 up to the end of verse 7 that’s not in the past tense, *“The zeal of the Lord **will** do this.”*

That ought to be helpful and encouraging, shouldn’t it? Because some of us are here today and **we haven’t finished our walk in the darkness yet**. Oh, yes, the light of Christ dawned in our heart, and we rest and we trust in Him alone, or at least we profess that we do, but we find ourselves in a fallen world still facing the miseries of sin and all its effects. And here’s a word for you, *“The zeal of the Lord **will** do this.”*

As the Apostle Paul said so well in **Philippians 1:6**, *“And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you **will bring it to completion** at the day of Jesus Christ.”* And as we’re later admonished in **Hebrews 10:23**, *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”*

### **CONCLUSION: Some Things Just Don’t Last**<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of this sermon I said that the ultimate gift is to give a gift **that will last** ... a gift that will meet such a deep felt need that it is not boxed up and put aside. In Isaiah, God says, “I’m going to give you a gift like that. I’m going to give you a gift that will last for a long, long time.”

Well, if you're like I am, you may notice that there are some things that **just don't seem to last very long** in our society today. Just this week I was doing some Christmas shopping and bought some clothes for family members — **knowing** when I bought them that clothes can wear out pretty quickly.

Lots of things don't last very long. Do you know how long the paint on a highway lasts — you know, those dotted lines on the road? Four months. That's all, four months. Every four

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**3 The Conclusion** has adapted material from the transcribed radio broadcast, *“Jesus: King With Eternal Throne, Righteous Scepter,”* by Dr. Woodrow Kroll, [Back to the Bible](http://www.backtothebible.org), 3/20/06, [www.backtothebible.org](http://www.backtothebible.org)

months they have to go back and paint it again.

What about a pro basketball player's shoes? How long do you think they last? Two weeks. Two weeks, that's all, pro basketball player's shoes.

A dollar bill? About 18 months. Now, yours last a lot longer because it's under your mattress. But not for most people, once in circulation, it only lasts about 18 months.

And when I think about things lasting, one of the kings of England in the last century — his reign lasted a very short period of time because he decided to abdicate the throne. Same thing with some of the kings of Israel — there was one year they had four kings ... **in one year**. The same thing with the Roman emperors. There was one year there were four emperors. Talk about turbulence.

There have been several **hundred** presidents of the country of Italy **since World War II**. I mean, while we have turnover in office in the United States, it's not at all like it is in a lot of places in the world today. But even we have turnover very quickly — four years, maybe eight years, maybe less than that.

Now, we're thinking today about Jesus being a King — superior to any other king because His bloodlines take Him all the way to heaven. But notice in the Book of Hebrews that Jesus is not only superior as a King because of His bloodlines; He's superior as a King **because of how long His throne will last**. Look at this, **Hebrews 1:8**, *“But of the Son He says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.”*

Now, we elect a politician; we elect a governor; we elect a president. And four years later, in the presidency, we elect another one, or the same one, for another four-year period. And then we elect another one. We elect senators every couple of years. We elect representatives every few years. We elect mayors every now and then — and sometimes more than now and less than then. Things just don't seem to last.

But then we read again, *“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”*

We're coming close to Christmas, when it's all about the tinsel and the Christmas cards, and the food and the Christmas tree, and all of the rest. But, my friends, make absolutely sure that it's about **Jesus** — **Jesus** born in Bethlehem, **Jesus** dying at Calvary, **Jesus** rising from the dead, **Jesus** sitting at the right hand of the Father in glory; **Jesus** — the first and the last; the beginning, middle, and end. **Revelation 1:8**, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”* **Revelation 1:5-6**, *“... the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood<sup>6</sup> and made us **a kingdom**, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

And oh may God hide this treasure in our hearts, **2 Corinthians 4:6**, *“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.”*

May God hide this treasure in our hearts so that the light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ might also shine forth from our hearts as we prepare for this Christmas season. Think about Him ... **because He's the King ... And He will reign forever and ever. Hallelujah.**

You need to pray. Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

*Oh Lord, our Lord. Thank You that You are the Great King. The One to whom all knees*

*must bow and all tongues confess. Thank You that You are the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. Thank You that You are the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. Thank You that You love us and have freed us from our sins by Your blood.*

*Thank you that of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end. Thank you that Your kingdom will be one of justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. Thank You that the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Lord, here there is so much grace, always grace given to us ... in the person and work of Your Son, Jesus, For we pray, in the Name of the One who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.*

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### **Luke 1:32-33**

*“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”*