

The Child Born to Us

Isaiah 9:1-7

December 16th, 2018

Big Idea: The child born to us will roll back gloom and darkness as the Prince of Peace.

Intro

Many of our Christmas songs assume a joyful listener:

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year”

“O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant”

The closest we get to a sad song at Christmas is “Grandma got run over by a reindeer”

We use words like Grinch and Scrooge to describe those who lack seasonally appropriate displays of joy.

What is the weary soul supposed to do at Christmas? Pretend? Avoid gatherings of God’s people?

We can be like those described in Proverbs 24:20

Prov. 24:20 *Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.*

Christmas does contain “good news of great joy,” but we must remember that it was first proclaimed to those in darkness and even misery.

If you’re here with a happy heart this morning, you’ll see a reminder of the solid source of your joy.

If you’re here with a heavy heart this morning, I hope you’ll see that God understands your pain and it’s for the weary soul that the Child was born.

1. The Child will be the great light to those in darkness. (9:1-2)
 - a. The chapter begins with “But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish”
 - i. “But” and “no more” imply a contrast or a change. We see that contrast at the end of chapter 8.
 - ii. The scene is of darkness, distress, gloom, and anguish.
 - iii. Their faithless king Ahaz has poorly led the nation, spiritually and politically. They are about to overrun by the Assyrians from the north. It would bring in acute famine and oppression.
 - iv. Some will go to mediums and spiritists for answers, the equivalent of consulting a horoscope or psychic today to trying to hear from the dead. Isaiah responds, “should not people consult their God? To the law and to the testimony!”
 - v. In their anguish they will be enraged at their king, which is partly appropriate, but also at God, wholly inappropriate. (v. 21)
 1. ESV - Proverbs 19:3 When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the LORD.
 - vi. They will experience very real distress, darkness, and gloom (v. 22)
 - vii. They need hope. And the Lord gives it to them by looking ahead.
 - b. Zebulun and Naphtali will be the first to feel the treads of war and invasion because they were in the far north of Israel. But they would also be the first to see the light of the Messiah.

- i. **Matthew 4:12-17** Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; ¹³ and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴ *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ¹⁵ "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES-- ¹⁶ "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED." ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- c. Notice that the Christmas story doesn't shy away from the darkness but all too often our attempts at Christmas cheer do.
 - i. We can be like those described in Proverbs 24:20
 - 1. Prov. 25:20 *Like* one who takes off a garment on a cold day, *or like* vinegar on soda, Is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.
 - ii. Zack Eswine - God has told us his story of good news and great joy by reminding us plainly of why this news and its joy are so desperately needed. God's way of telling us the story includes, rather than removes, painful details.
 - iii. There were painful details in the context of Isaiah's original prophecies.
 - iv. There are painful details in the accounts of Jesus' birth that fulfill these prophecies.
 - 1. Luke 2:1 "A decree went out from Caesar Augustus"
 - a. They were living in an occupied land with little power or representation.
 - 2. Luke 2:7 "There was no place for them in the inn"
 - a. Even for the standards of their day, there was little personal comfort as this young woman delivered her first born child.
 - 3. Matthew 2:13 "Rise, take the child and His mother, and flee"
 - a. The flee to a foreign country, likely leaving most of their possessions and family relationships behind in order to preserve the life of their child.
 - 4. Luke 2:35 "A sword will pierce through your own soul also"
 - a. The birth of the child didn't remove grief or death from this world yet. The promises were being fulfilled but there is an ache that remains.
- d. Hope at Christmas isn't found by ignoring, avoiding, or downplaying pain and misery. It's found by focusing on the Child born to us, born into our pain and misery.
- e. O come all ye faithless, joyless and defeated. O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem. Christmas is for the weary, for the messed-up, and for the broken. If your life isn't Instagrammable, Christmas is for you. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Sam Allberry
- f. In absolute darkness, even a small candle casts a great light.
 - i. Jesus came as the light of the world.
 - ii. John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."
 - iii. We still struggle in darkness in that we still have physical and emotional pain. We still sin and are sinned against. But His light shines in our darkness and one day He will eradicate all darkness.

2. The Child will be the great **liberator** to those who are **oppressed**. (9:3-5)
- a. Many live today in places where they are oppressed by their own government or an outside force.
 - i. Cameroon – English speaking portion forced to flee as the military controlled by the French speaking majority, many have fled the villages to survive.
 - ii. 100 Christians, including leaders and members, were arrested from a prominent church in China this week; Uyghers in western China, as many as 1 million in reeducation camps
 - iii. North Korean citizens
 - b. As we mentioned, that was the case for the Israelites with the invading Assyrians when Isaiah prophesied. That was also the case for the Israelites 700 years later when Jesus was born.
 - i. Jesus didn't immediately free them from political oppression.
 - c. Consider the promises in these verses
 - i. V. 3 – God will multiply the nation, just as He promised to Abraham that his descendants would be like the stars in the sky
 - ii. V. 3 – He will increase their gladness
 - 1. The gladness will be like the farmer with harvest or the soldier after war
 - iii. V. 4-5 – For (notice the connection) – this explains the gladness
 - 1. They will be delivered from their oppressors – the yoke will be taken off, the boot used for war and the cloak rolled in blood will be burned because they aren't needed for war anymore – using vivid word pictures
 - 2. **Psalm 46:9** He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.
 - iv. V. 4 – he compares it to the battle of Midian in Judges 6-7 - Gideon defeated the Midianites who had been oppressing them in a cycle of sin, servitude, supplication, deliverance, peace.
 - 1. Expositors Bible Commentary – vast multitude of the enemy swarming all over the land, the giving of a sign, the emphasis on faith in God and not dependence on man, and perhaps the defeat of great forces through apparently insignificant means (300 men in the case of Gideon, and the child of promise here). Most of all, of course, the passage promises total redemption by the Lord.
 - d. Jesus said he came in fulfillment of these promises in Isaiah.
 - i. **Luke 4:17-21** And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, ¹⁹ TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." ²⁰ And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."
 - ii. Certainly people are still oppressed and experiencing injustice today around the world. One day Jesus will roll all of that back and bring perfect justice.

1. O Holy Night, written in France in 1847 and translated into English a decade later – “Truly he taught us to love one another; His law is love and His gospel is peace; Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother, and in His name all oppression shall cease.”
 2. As the gospel permeates a society, it should lead to greater justice, so in that sense the song is correct, he taught us to love one another and it rolls back oppression. But perfect justice won’t come until Jesus comes again and sets up perfect justice.
- iii. But He does now offer freedom from sin
1. **John 8:34-36** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.
 2. **Romans 6:6-7** knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.
3. The Child will be the great **Lord** who rules with **wisdom** and righteousness. (9:6-7)
- a. The expectation continues to building in these verses through the use of “for”
 - i. The light will shine on those in darkness, you will make them glad...FOR you shall free them, FOR you will establish peace...FOR a child will be born to us.
 - ii. All these wonderful events must have an adequate cause (Geoffrey Grogan)
 - b. Isaiah said the child will be born “to us.”
 - i. We chuckle when a husband and wife say “we’re pregnant!” because we all recognize that the wife is bearing the burden there. But we understand what they mean – a child will be born to them.
 - ii. And yet this passage uses the plural for at least the nation of Israel, but by extension of the Abrahamic covenant, to all of us – a child will be born, has been born to us, he has been given/sent to us.
 - c. The government will rest on His shoulders
 - d. Four names or titles given for this Son
 - i. Wonderful counselor – speaks to his wisdom. Unlike the foolish King Ahaz leading the nation to ruin, this Son would be wise.
 - ii. Mighty God – Used in Isaiah 10 very clearly of the Lord, the God of Israel –
 1. **Isaiah 10:20-21** Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.
 - iii. Eternal Father – may wonder if this refers to the Son, the 2nd member of the Trinity, why is He called “father” here?
 1. Father is used in this context of a benevolent protector king. The emphasis is on His care for His people and His eternity, not His relationship within the Trinity.

2. **Psalm 103:13-14** Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are *but* dust.
3. **Isaiah 22:20-21** "Then it will come about in that day, That I will summon My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, ²¹ And I will clothe him with your tunic And tie your sash securely about him. I will entrust him with your authority, And he will become a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

iv. Prince of Peace – He is the ruler that will bring peace

1. Don't sanitize it and make it merely a spiritual peace, although that is true.
2. **Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
3. There is real, tangible hope to people displaced by war that one day Jesus, the prince of peace, will bring peace.
4. There will be no end to the increase of His government or peace.



1

1. The Child will be the great light to those in darkness. (9:1-2)

Proverbs 19:3 (ESV) When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the LORD.

2

1. The Child will be the great light to those in darkness. (9:1-2)

Matthew 4:12-17 Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; ¹³ and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴ This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ¹⁵ "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES--" ¹⁶ "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED." ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

3

1. The Child will be the great light to those in darkness. (9:1-2)

Proverbs 25:20 Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, Is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.

4

1. The Child will be the great light to those in darkness. (9:1-2)

Zack Eswine - God has told us His story of good news and great joy by reminding us plainly of why this news and its joy are so desperately needed. God's way of telling us the story includes, rather than removes, painful details.

5

1. The Child will be the great light to those in darkness. (9:1-2)

Luke 2:1 *A decree went out from Caesar Augustus*

Luke 2:7 *There was no room for them in the inn*

Matthew 2:13 *Rise, take the child and His mother, and flee*

Luke 2:35 *A sword will pierce even your own soul*

6

2. The Child will be the great liberator to those who are oppressed. (9:3-5)

Psalms 46:9 He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.

7

2. The Child will be the great liberator to those who are oppressed. (9:3-5)

Luke 4:17-21 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, ¹⁹ TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." ²⁰ And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

8

2. The Child will be the great **liberator** to those who are **oppressed**. (9:3-5)

O Holy Night, vs. 3

Truly he taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace;
Chains shall He break, for the slave is
our brother,
and in His name all oppression shall
cease.

9

2. The Child will be the great **liberator** to those who are **oppressed**. (9:3-5)

John 8:34-36 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the **slave of sin**. ³⁵ "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ "**So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.**

Romans 6:6-7 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would **no longer be slaves to sin**; ⁷ for he who has died is **freed from sin**.

10

3. The Child will be the great **Lord** who rules with **wisdom** and righteousness. (9:6-7)

Isaiah 10:20-21 Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the **mighty God**.

11

3. The Child will be the great **Lord** who rules with **wisdom** and righteousness. (9:6-7)

Psalms 103:13-14 **Just as a father has compassion on his children**, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are *but* dust.

12

3. The Child will be the great **Lord** who rules with **wisdom** and righteousness. (9:6-7)

Isaiah 22:20-21 "Then it will come about in that day, That I will summon My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, ²¹ And I will clothe him with your tunic And tie your sash securely about him. I will entrust him with your authority, And he will become a **father** to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,