

THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT: **Isaiah 9:1-7**

INTRODUCTION. Christ brings light where there was once deep darkness. **BOYS AND GIRLS**, when you see lights during the Christmas season, think of Christ as the light, who shines in the darkness! **John 1:5** "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

CON(TEXT). **Isaiah 9:1-2**

"1 But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

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."

- ◊ **WALKED** (v.2) = actions.
- ◊ **DWELT** (v.2) = surroundings.

- **TEACHING/EXPLANATION:** In **Isaiah 2**: Isaiah says to the people, "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord." In **Isaiah 5**: They are not walking in the light but, rather, they are people who "Call evil good & good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness."
 - **The picture Isaiah paints leading up to this passage is a dark one!**
Not only do the people do dark deeds, they also have shut their eyes to the truth of what God has revealed in His Word and sought counsel from mediums and necromancers (Isaiah 8).
 - **On top of being morally dark and refusing to look at the light of God's Word**, the Assyrians are invading from the North. Zubulan and Naphtali, which are in the northern part of Israel in a region called Galilee, have already been captured by the Assyrians.
 - **They did dark deeds**, they shut their eyes to the light of God's Word, and an enemy is coming to destroy them.

BUT THEN A LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS! This light is Christ Jesus (Matthew 4:12-17).

- **GILL:** [This is the] true character of all the people of God before conversion, who are in a state of darkness, under the power of sin, shut up in unbelief; are in gross ignorance of themselves, and their condition; of sin, and the danger they are exposed to by it; of divine and spiritual

things; of the grace of God; of the way of peace, life, and salvation by Christ; and of the work of the blessed Spirit; and of the truths of the Gospel; they are in the dark, and can see no objects in a spiritual sense; not to read the word, so as to understand it; or to work that which is good; and they "walk" on in darkness, not knowing where they are, and whither they are going."

DOCTRINE. Christ stepped into the darkness to shine as the light that will never be extinguished.

OUTLINE.

- I. WHAT CHRIST PRODUCES WHEN HE SHINES AS THE LIGHT (**Isaiah 9:3-5**).
- II. HOW CHRIST SHINES AS THE LIGHT (**Isaiah 9:6-7a**).
- CONCLUSION (**Isaiah 9:7b**).

I. WHAT CHRIST PRODUCES WHEN HE SHINES AS THE LIGHT (**Isaiah 9:3-5**).

Isaiah 9:3-5

"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."

I) When Christ shines as the Light, He Multiplies the Number of Believers (**Isaiah 9:3a**).

Isaiah 9:3a

"You have multiplied the nation;"

II) When Christ shines as the Light, He produces Joy (**Isaiah 9:3b**).

Isaiah 9:3b

"you have increased its joy;"

III) When Christ shines as the Light, He produces Rejoicing (Isaiah 9:3c).

Isaiah 9:3b

"they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil."

IV) When Christ shines as the Light, He Sets His People Free from their oppressors (Isaiah 9:4).

Isaiah 9:4

"For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian."

- Isaiah here uses a story from the book of Judges to help us see that the seemingly impossible is possible with the LORD God. The LORD defeated the Midianite army through the leadership of Gideon. He prunes down Gideon's army from 32k, to 22k, to 300. Why? To show that He is the One who gives victory.

V) When Christ shines as the Light, He produces Peace (Isaiah 9:5).

Isaiah 9:5

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

II. HOW CHRIST SHINES AS THE LIGHT (Isaiah 9:6-7a).

Isaiah 9:6-7a

"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.

7a 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."

I) Christ shines as the light by taking on our nature and dwelling among us (Isaiah 9:6a).

Isaiah 9:6a

"For to us a child is born,"

- **John 1:14** "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

- **Jesus entered into the darkness with us.**

- **COMFORT/HOPE:** Whatever darkness you are in or will be plunged into, remember that Christ entered into this darkness to shine as the light. *HE WILL ILLUMINATE THE NIGHT AND BRING THE DAWN.*

II) Christ shines as the light by being given to us as Guarantor or Surety (Isaiah 9:6b).

Isaiah 9:6b

"to us a son is given;"

- **INSTRUCTION:** Jesus was not simply given to as an example or a model or a teacher or a Prophet. Jesus was given to save us from our sins.
- **Matthew 1:21** "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."
- **Jesus was given to us as a Guarantor or Surety of the New Covenant of grace**, whereby sinners like you and me could have all our iniquities pardoned and full righteousness given with Jesus as our representative before God the Father!
- **Hebrews 7:22** "Jesus [is] the guarantor (or Surety) of a better covenant."

III) Christ shines as the light by establishing the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 9:6c).

Isaiah 9:6c

"and the government shall be upon his shoulder"

- Christ takes upon Himself the difficult work of upholding the Kingdom of God! Jesus does not need you nor me nor anyone else to accomplish His purposes. He uses us, but He does not need us. The government of the Kingdom of God is not upon my shoulders, nor your shoulders, nor John MacArthur's shoulders, nor R.C. Sproul's shoulders, nor Voddie Baucham's shoulders, nor any other hero's shoulders, save Christ Jesus, the true Man and Hero, the true Head of the Church; the true Solomon who builds the Temple of God, which is the Church. **"And the government shall be upon His shoulder."**

IV) Christ shines as the light by giving the Counsel we need (Isaiah 9:6d).

- **POOLE:** "This is not to be taken for a description of his proper name, by which he should be commonly called, but of his glorious nature and qualities." — **Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*. E4 Group. Kindle Edition.**

Isaiah 9d

"and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor,"

- **I) EXHORTATION (general).** Look to Christ for counsel in the Scriptures, saints. He is not only the counselor but the Wonderful Counselor. If you do not have a good Study Bible, let me know and I will give you one!
 - **II) EXHORTATION (men).** Men, take your family to the Scriptures every day in Family Worship so they may experience the Wonderful Counselor who is Christ Jesus! If you do not have a Family Worship Bible Guide or are needing help or guidance with Family Worship, let me know today and I will get you resources.
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS,**

V) Christ shines as the light by using his Might to rescue and defend us (Isaiah 9:6e).

Isaiah 9:6e

"and his name shall be called. . . Mighty God,"

- **EXAMINATION. BOYS AND GIRLS,** Is anything impossible for God? Do you act like that when you pray?
 - Q1.** Do you pray like Jesus, your high priest, is Mighty God?
 - Q2.** Do you pray like God loves you and works all things for your good, Christian, or do you pray like you are a nuisance?
- **Christians, hear me:** The "**Mighty God**" loves you, Christ has forgiven you, the Spirit has sealed you, and the Godhead seeks your eternal good above all.

VI) Christ shines as the light by being more like a loving Father than a distant monarch (Isaiah 9:6f).

Isaiah 9:6f

"and his name shall be called. . .Everlasting Father,"

VII) Christ shines as the light by being the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6g).

Isaiah 9:6g

"and his name shall be called. . .Prince of Peace."

VII) Christ shines as the light by ever increasing the dominion of His kingdom (Isaiah 9:7a).

Isaiah 9:7a

"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."

- **INSTRUCTION/COMFORT:** The nations of this world will teeter and totter. They will be here one century and may be gone the next. America has stood for 250 years and may stand for another thousand, or it may fall in the next hundred_God only knows.

But there is one thing we can know for certain: The Kingdom of God shall stand firm through all the ages. Christ will continue to save sinners, sanctify saints, and the kingdom will progressively grow in the world like a mustard seed until it takes over the whole garden; it will continue to influence the world like yeast in a dough until it effects everything. Why? Because Christ has undertaken the weighty work of building the kingdom of God—"and the government shall be upon HIS shoulder" (Isaiah 9:6c).

TAKE HEART, beloved: our Kingdom shall never falter not fail because we belong to the Kingdom of Christ.

MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT, beloved: pray and labor to do your part in building up the kingdom of God—"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

CONCLUSION (Isaiah 9:7b).

Isaiah 9:7b

"The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."

DOCTRINE. Christ stepped into the darkness to shine as the light that will never be extinguished.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Study Questions

1. Context and Darkness (vv. 1–2)

According to the sermon, what kinds of “darkness” does Isaiah describe (personal, cultural, and spiritual)? How does this reflect the doctrine of total depravity (1689 Confession, Chapter 6)? In what ways do unbelievers today still “walk in darkness” and “dwell in a land of deep darkness”?

2. The Sudden Shining of Light (v. 2)

The preacher describes the light as flashing suddenly rather than gradually dawning. How does this illustrate the Reformed understanding of regeneration and effectual calling (1689 Confession, Chapters 10 and 11)? Can you think of examples in Scripture where God sovereignly shines light into darkness without human cooperation?

3. Effects of Christ’s Light (vv. 3–5)

List the five effects the sermon identifies when Christ shines as light: multiplication of the nation, increase of joy, rejoicing, breaking of oppression, and peace. Which of these most clearly points to definitive sanctification or progressive sanctification (1689 Confession, Chapter 13)? Why is joy described as both an inward affection and an outward expression (rejoicing)?

4. The Child Born and Son Given (v. 6)

Explain the distinction the preacher makes between “to us a child is born” (Christ’s incarnation and humanity) and “to us a son is given” (Christ’s divine sonship and role as surety). How does this uphold the two natures of Christ in one person (1689 Confession, Chapter 8)? Why is it significant that Christ is given as our “guarantor” or “surety” of the new covenant (cf. Hebrews 7:22)?

5. The Government Upon His Shoulder (v. 6–7)

The sermon emphasizes that the government of the kingdom rests solely on Christ’s shoulder, not on any human leader or effort. How does this comfort believers concerning the certainty of the church’s perseverance and ultimate victory (1689 Confession, Chapter 17)? What practical difference should this make when we see churches struggle or nations rise and fall?

6. The Fourfold Name (v. 6)

For each title, explain how it reveals Christ’s nature and work:

- Wonderful Counselor
- Mighty God
- Everlasting Father
- Prince of Peace

How do these titles together refute both Arianism (denying Christ’s deity) and modalism (confusing the persons of the Trinity)?

7. The Ever-Increasing Kingdom (v. 7)

Isaiah says "of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end." How does this support a postmillennial or optimistic amillennial view of the progress of Christ's kingdom rather than a premillennial retreat? How should this truth shape our priorities in life (cf. Matthew 6:33)?

8. The Zeal of the Lord of Hosts (v. 7)

The passage ends by grounding all these promises in God's own zeal for His glory. How does this affirm the doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace (1689 Confession, Chapters 3 and 10)? Why is it comforting that the accomplishment of these promises depends entirely on God's zeal rather than human effort?

Discussion Questions

1. The preacher says that every Christian's conversion mirrors Isaiah 9:2—God sovereignly shining light into utter darkness. Share (as you are comfortable) how God suddenly "flashed" light into your own darkness. How does remembering your former condition deepen your gratitude for Christ this Christmas season?
2. Christmas lights are used as an illustration of Christ shining in darkness. In what practical ways can we as families and as a church use the Christmas season to point others to Christ as the true Light (John 1:5; 8:12)?
3. The sermon strongly exhorts men to lead family worship so that their households regularly hear from the Wonderful Counselor in Scripture. Why is consistent family worship especially important in a culture of "deep darkness"? What obstacles do you face, and how can the church help?
4. When we pray, do we pray as if Jesus is the Mighty God for whom nothing is impossible, or do we sometimes pray "small" prayers that reflect unbelief? Share an area of life where you need to bring "large petitions" to the throne of grace.
5. The preacher stresses that Christ entered fully into our darkness (incarnation, temptation, suffering) yet remained without sin. How does the truth that Jesus is a sympathetic High Priest (Hebrews 4:15) comfort you in current trials or remaining sin?
6. Since the government of Christ's kingdom is on His shoulder alone, and its increase will have no end, how should this affect our attitude toward cultural decline, political turmoil, or apparent setbacks in the church?
7. The sermon closes with a call to "seek first the kingdom of God." What competing kingdoms or priorities most tempt you to invest time, money,

and energy elsewhere? How can we together encourage one another to labor primarily for the only kingdom that will never fail?

8. In light of the entire passage, why is the incarnation ("to us a child is born, to us a son is given") the ultimate reason for Christmas joy, even in a dark world? How will meditating on Isaiah 9:1–7 shape your celebration of Christ's birth this year?

PURITAN QUOTES

- "His name shall be called Wonderful—It is noticeable that that which follows is given not as many names, but one... the first two should also be taken together, and that we have in the four clauses four attributes rather than four names." — Matthew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, vol. 2 (London: 1683–1685), commentary on Isaiah 9:6.
- "Glorious things are here spoken of Christ's government... That it shall be an increasing government. It shall be multiplied; the bounds of his kingdom shall be more and more enlarged, and many shall be added to it daily." — Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 4 (London: 1708–1710), commentary on Isaiah 9:7.
- "The Father shall devolve it upon him, so that he shall have an incontestable right to govern; and he shall undertake it, so that no doubt can be made of his governing well, for he shall set his shoulder to it." — Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 4 (London: 1708–1710), commentary on Isaiah 9:6.
- "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation... Note, In the worst of times God's people have a nevertheless to comfort themselves with, something to allay and balance their troubles." — Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 4 (London: 1708–1710), commentary on Isaiah 9:1.
- "That the same person should be 'the mighty God' and a 'child born,' is neither conceivable nor possible, nor can be done, but by the union of the divine and human natures in the same person." — John Owen, *Works of John Owen*, vol. 9 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust reprint, 1965–1981; original 1670s), exposition on the person of Christ referencing Isaiah 9:6.
- "And the government shall be upon his shoulder: not only of the world in general, but of the church in particular; this child is born to royal dignity; he is King of saints; his government consists in ruling in the hearts of his people." — John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, vol. 5 (London: 1763–1766), commentary on Isaiah 9:6.

- "His name shall be called... Prince of peace: his kingdom lies, among other things, in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; the sceptre of his kingdom is the golden sceptre of grace and mercy." — John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, vol. 5 (London: 1763–1766), commentary on Isaiah 9:6.
- "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light... In the doctrine of the Messiah... His victories... His government and dominion as Immanuel." — Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 4 (London: 1708–1710), summary of Isaiah 9:1–7.
- "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end... The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." — Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 4 (London: 1708–1710), commentary on Isaiah 9:7 (emphasizing divine zeal as the guarantee).

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Brothers and sisters, friends, visitors, make sure you have got your Bible open with me if you would to Isaiah chapter 9. we are looking at verses 1-7. This our final Sunday before Christmas. And this is the truth that we need to understand from this passage. Christ brings light where there was once deep darkness. that is the whole point of this Christmas passage. A passage that is um read at Christmas time especially because of verse 6. For to us a child is born. To us a son is given. that is obviously talking about Christ. And then we have Matthew in Matthew's gospel he quotes Isaiah 9 and says this is about Jesus. So we are not just looking at Isaiah 9 and saying I think this is about Jesus. Now, God himself later through one of the apostles of Christ says, "This passage is about the Lord Jesus Christ." But not only is verse six about Christ, but verses 1- 7 are about him. And the whole point is that Christ brings light where there was once deep darkness. Boys and girls, look up here at me. Christmas time, the Christmas season that we are in even right now in December. it is like the darkest time of the year. I do not mean like sinfully or morally or something like that. I but it is literally dark. It gets dark really early in the day. How many of you realize that like every day it gets dark, you cannot play outside anymore, and then you are like, "Feels like it is bedtime. it is like 9:00." and then you look up and it is 5:30. it is like, all right, adults, I think you and I probably feel this more than anyone. But it is the darkest time of the year. And what is interesting is that it is the season that we celebrate the birth of Christ, Christ coming into the world. And so even providentially though it is the darkest time of the year, it is the brightest time of the year as far as how people present their houses and present their businesses and present everything that we all put

up Christmas lights and Christmas trees with lights and we shine light and so it is a time to see beautiful lights and even in our city we have a whole park decked out in lights to go see. And that is just a picture and it has been from the beginning since people lit candles and set them in their Christmas trees. I do not advise that. But it was something that the darkest time of the year, but it is when we celebrate the birth of Christ and he is the light that shines in the darkness. So Christians especially have always used light like that to decorate and to shine. And boys and girls, every time you see Christmas lights, every time you see lights this time of year, I want you to think of the darkness of sin and that Christ came into the world. And God says Christ came in and shines light in the darkness. He is the light that shines in the darkness to come and save us from our sins and to come and expose the darkness and bring the light where there is safety and peace. So when you see lights, especially during the Christmas season, boys and girls, think Christ is the light and he is the light that shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. that is what God says in John 1:5. Adults, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. that is what John says in John 1:5. Christ himself says he is the light. John says Jesus is the light. And these are not new things or novel things that when Christ became a man, he is like, you know what is a good metaphor? I'm the light. No, he had revealed through the prophet Isaiah 700 years before he came to the earth that he is the light that shines in the darkness. The Apostle John writes, "The light shines in the darkness." Not just making it up then thinking of a good metaphor, but going all the way back to Isaiah chapter 9 where God had already said, "Christ is this light." Look at the context of this passage that we are in. Isaiah 9:es 1 and two. here is like the leading into it. But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun in the land of Naphtali. This is the he is the Lord. They were in this is the northern part of Palestine, the northern part of Canaan. And because they had rebelled against the Lord. The Lord had brought them into contempt. he is saying, "But there will be no more gloom. She is in anguish." In the former time, the Lord 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. Verse two, 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. And that that verb shone, it literally means flashed. it is like shined. it is all of a sudden a spotlight comes on and illuminates everything. it is not as much like a sunrise and then the sun starts shining. it is like all of a sudden they are walking in darkness and the Lord sends Christ and Christ just boom puts a light on the darkness and all the darkness is chased away. So the whole point is that Christ shines light where there was once deep darkness. But notice these two things there. Verse two is this juxtaposes light and dark. It is like, Dark, light, dark, light. But notice the state of the people at this time in particular, 700 years before Christ came to the earth, the people walked in darkness, the beginning of verse two. And then that third clause of verse two, those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness. So they walked in darkness and they dwelt in a land of

deep darkness. The walked is their personal behavior in their sin. The dwelt is all the effects of a culture and of a nation that is given over to sin. And so they dwelt in a land of deep darkness. This is their surroundings. So their actions are dark. And that leads to the land that they dwell in is also dark because what you reap you sow. If you or what you sow you reap. So if you plant sin, you are going to grow deep darkness. You walk in deep darkness, you are going to dwell in the land of deep darkness. And the whole point that he is getting at, if you read the book of Isaiah leading up to this, you go, "Yeah, I know what you are talking about, Isaiah." when he uses the metaphor of like they are in darkness and then light comes. Well, in Isaiah 2, Isaiah chapter 2, the prophet says to the people, "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord." that is chapter 2. Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. Let us walk in obedience to his word, trusting in his promises, to the glory of our God. Let us walk in the light of the Lord. And then you can go read it if you just progress to chapter 5. They are not walking in the light. And they are even worse than just walking in darkness. they are calling evil good. And they are calling good things evil. And the metaphor that is used in chapter 5 is they are putting light for darkness and darkness for light. they are walking in darkness saying this is light. They see people walking in the light and they are saying they are walking in the darkness. they are putting light for dark and dark for light. they are calling evil good and good evil. And this is the picture that Isaiah paints leading up to this passage. Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. And the people say, "No." So they walk in darkness of their own sins. They dwell in a land of deep darkness because as a result of their sins. And then in chapter 8, we have got a foreign invading army coming down from the north and Zebulun and Naphtali that are mentioned in these verses. they are the northern part of Canaan. And so an army is coming in from the north. The Assyrians are coming in invading. And so they've got that threat. they are walking in darkness. they are surrounded by darkness. And then it gets even worse because as there is a threat coming from the north to wipe them out, they are not going to God and his word for what they should believe and what they should do and how they should respond to their sin and their darkness, their cultural darkness. Because of their sin, the invading army, as a consequence of them being handed over to judgment, they do not go to God for the answer. They start going to mediums and necromancers to see this is these people will help us be delivered from this deep darkness. So the people are walking in darkness, dwelling in darkness. The Assyrian army is coming to kill them and they are shutting their eyes to God's revelation in the scriptures. And many of you will probably remember that passage in chapter 8 to where Isaiah says, "should not the people inquire of their God and stop going to mediums and necromancers trying to speak with the dead, trying to go somewhere else for truth or for deliverance? should not a people inquire of their God?" And then he says to the teaching, to the testimony, there is that great exhortation in Isaiah. Go to the scriptures. go to God's word. that is chapter 8 leading right up to here. So, they are walking in their own sin. it is resulting in the whole land is in darkness and enemies coming in to destroy them and they are shutting their eyes to God's word

and going after sorcery and witchcraft. that is the darkness that is mentioned here in Isaiah 9. I just want you to have that to understand that that is the contrast of look at the darkness that these people have plunged themselves into. Light is even available to them in God's scriptures and God's word. They would know like what do we need to do to be free from this darkness? Well, you need to repent and trust the promises. But they will not even do that. But here is the mercy of God in Christ Jesus that is revealed in this passage. You and I who are just like these people on our own. we have plunged ourselves into darkness. we have dwelt in a land of deep darkness. Enemies are coming to destroy us and we will not look to God's word for the answer. And this is all of us before we were saved. it is every one of us. But God says light. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness on them has light shined or shone. This is a great metaphor of how every single one of you who are a Christian, how you were saved. you are walking in darkness. you are living in darkness. you are going to be destroyed. an enemy is coming to destroy you, namely God, because you have made God your enemy through your sin. you are not looking to God's word for the answer. you are not looking to the gospel for how to be saved and then God overcomes all of that and just shines light in your darkness. And through somebody sharing the gospel with you, something happening like that, God shines light in your darkness and you trust Christ for salvation. This picture that is happening in Isaiah 9 is a great example of what happens to all people who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Dwelt in a land of deep darkness and then they figured out where the light was. No, God just shine light on them. John Gill, the famous 18th century Baptist commentator, says, "This is the true character of all the people of God before they were saved, who are in a state of darkness under the power of sin, shut up in unbelief, in gross ignorance of themselves and their condition, in gross ignorance of sin and the danger they are exposed to by it, of divine and spiritual things. they are ignorant of the grace of God, of the way of peace, life, and salvation by Christ, and of the work of the blessed spirit, God, the Holy Spirit. they are ignorant of the truths of the gospel. they are in the dark and can see no objects in a spiritual sense, not to read the word so as to understand it, or to work that which is good. And they walk on in darkness, not knowing where they are and whether they are going. But then a light shines in the darkness and that light is Christ. So the doctrine that you and I should learn from these verses is simply Christ stepped into the darkness to shine as the light that will never be extinguished. Christ stepped into the darkness to shine as the light that will never be extinguished. I want to point out to you just two main things in the remaining verses. you have got the context. I hope Christ shines light in the darkness and saves us from our sins. But I want you to see first of all what Christ produces when he shines as the light. that is verses 3-5. What Christ produces when he shines as the light. Verses 3-5. And then what we have in verses six and seven is how Christ shines as the light. This is all the metaphor. But when the light shines in the darkness to save sinners, what effects happen? What does that produce? What does Christ produce in and around us? And then verses six and seven is the means

by which he does shine as the light. How does Christ do it? So first of all, what Christ produces when he shines as the light. Look at verses 3-5 with me in your own Bible. 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. 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. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle to molt, and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. This is all metaphorical or mostly metaphorical language for what Christ produces when he shines as the light. So go through these with me so we can understand like what does he mean by each of these phrases. And first of all, you need to notice at the beginning of verse three, you have multiplied the nation. that is the first result of there is darkness and then Christ shines his light. First of all, you have multiplied the nation. What does that mean? Well, when Christ shines as the light, he multiplies the number of believers. You have multiplied the nation. The kingdom of God grows and multiplies and Christ shines as the light. Sinners see their utter need for salvation. They see Christ as the answer to their need, who lived without sin, who died for their sin, who arose for their salvation. and the light being shone on them. They see Christ and they trust in him for salvation. you have multiplied the nation. it is an expansive. This is the kingdom of God. This is not just the antitype of old covenant Israel. But this is the blessings that come when Christ shines as light. He multiplies the number of believers. you have multiplied the nation. The nation is growing. This is the kingdom of God. This is the church is growing. But secondly, look at the next part of verse three and see you have increased its joy. Well, that is not metaphorical. I mean, multiplied the nation is, sort of; joy at the harvest, divide the spoil. Those are all metaphorical and we have got to make sure we understand what it is saying. But increased its joy. Get it? Happy. he is making us happy. What does Christ produce when he shines light and saves a sinner like you? He produces happiness, joy, knowing that every one of my sins are forgiven. And that I stand before God the Father being accepted wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness. That I have promises that will come true because Christ has promised and he never lies. I have eternal life. I have God, the Holy Spirit at work in me to sanctify me, to convict me of my sin, to grow me in holiness. I have the Holy Spirit who has sealed me for the day of redemption. Joy, happiness. Even when you are suffering, there is joy being a Christian because God has made peace with you and you have made peace with God in Christ. So when Christ shines as a light, he produces joy. He multiplies the number of believers. But then look at the next part of verse three. When Christ shines as the light, it is not only he produces joy, which is just joy is that affection that is inward that we just call happiness. Happiness, joy. And then rejoicing is the next thing. And rejoicing is when the joy comes out in praise to the Lord. So rejoicing is when the joy that is internal comes out to praise the name of the Lord for the joy that he is given us in Christ. that is what he says next. They rejoice before you. So it is not just he produces joy. He also produces rejoicing. If you have joy in Christ, that will overflow into the rejoicing and to offering up praise to the Lord because of the

happiness he is produced in you by his mercy. They rejoice before you. Before you. that is worship language. They sing praises. They pray prayers of thanksgiving. They rejoice before you. Like what? As with joy at the harvest. I mean, I do not even think we understand. We cannot even comprehend what it was like 2700 years ago when you plant and you pray. it is like, well, if it does not grow, we might starve. If it does not grow, if the Lord does not send rain, if the Lord does not bless us, if we have locusts come through and eat everything, we might starve or we might not be able to sell what we need to to take care of ourselves. So when they had that harvest time, when the crops grew and then they were not eaten by the locusts and they all go out there and they reap it, they reap the harvest, they would celebrate. They would rejoice. Thank you, Lord, for giving the growth. Thank you, Lord, for protecting our sustenance from the devouring of beasts. Thank you, Lord, for providing for us. and they more intimately I think than understood the nature of God's provision. We should think the exact same thing. Think about the thousands of things that have to go right to get food to your table. Like all these steps that are in the way that if they go wrong, it is like we might not have any food and we should thank the Lord for his provision. But you can understand as with joy at the harvest, it actually grew. It did not get devoured and we got to get it all. It did not. Nobody set our field on fire. We did not have Samson tying torches to fox's tails and running them through. Thank you, Lord. Imagine the joy at the harvest. Or as they are glad when they divide the spoil. This is something else we pro we cannot really understand, but they definitely understood it. 2,700 years ago when you defeat the enemy, the enemy nation, and you defeat them and all their stuff becomes your stuff. You may not like that, but God likes it apparently because he uses it as the metaphor for you defeat the enemy and all their stuff is now your stuff. You may not like it, but imagine how happy you would be. You got a lot of stuff. stuff that you need, stuff that your family needs, stuff that is going to help you in the future. And that is the rejoicing as with joy at the harvest or after a great battle that you thought 50/50. I might die or I might get a lot of new stuff. Imagine the emotional swing. I might die or I might get a lot of new stuff. Like that is a huge swing. I got a lot of new stuff. if I did not die. And we got to spoil. We got to divide the spoil. that is a lot of joy. And that is the rejoicing. that is a type of rejoicing that Christ produces when he shines light on sinners. As with joy at the harvest and they are glad as when they are glad when they divide the spoil. So he multiplies the number of believers. He produces joy. He produces the overflowing of that joy into rejoicing. And then look at the beginning of verse four. 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. I mean this is metaphor for oppression, indentured servitude, slavery, the yoke of his burden. You know, a burden put on your shoulder weighing you down. And you have got to pull it along like you are an ox. That when Christ shines light, he takes the burdens off. He takes off the burdens of your sin. He takes off the burden of God's law as it pertains to trying to obey good enough to be accepted by God. He takes off the burdens of the things that oppress us. the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, being beat by a

taskmaster. You have broken them. Broken the yoke, broken the staff, broken the rod of his oppressor, broken them as on the day of Midian. The day of Midian is when the Lord used Gideon with 300 men to defeat all the Midianites. that is what Isaiah is talking about. Do you remember that story that the Lord intentionally whittles Gideon's army down to 300? Just so he says that army's too big. If you go in with that many people, you are going to think that you did it. And you are not going to realize that even with 33,000 people, if you win, it is because of my mercy and my providence. But you are going to think you did it with that many men. So he whittles it all the way down to 300. And the Lord then, as it were, says, "Okay, if you win with 300, you will realize, and remember, it is me who saved you." And so Gideon goes in with his 300 men, and the Lord gives them the victory to show that he is the one who sets his people free from their enemies, from their oppressors. that is why he brings up Midian, the day of Midian when Gideon won with 300 men. As unlikely as it may be, that is what he is saying. The things that oppress you, the people that oppress you, the yoke, the staff, the rod, the Lord's going to break them all. And it does not matter how unlikely you think it is that the Lord will set you free. As unlikely as it was for Gideon and them to win with 300 men, does not matter how hard you think it is going to be to be set free from those things that enslave you, from those sins that enslave you, from those enemies who rule over you in a tyrannical way. does not matter how difficult you think it will be, he is going to break it like he did on the day of Midian. it is done. The point is Christ when he shines as the light sets his people free from their oppressors no matter how difficult it is.

that is what Christ produces. And then look at verse five. When Christ shines as the light, he produces peace. He produces peace. that is the whole point of for every boot of the tramping warrior in battle to molt and every garment rolled in blood will be burned. Done. The warrior's boots and the garments that they wear that are rolled in blood from slaughtering, from the oppression, from the warfare that is happening. they will be burned as fuel for the fire. So, you will look at your boots that you wear for war. you will look at the garment that you wear when you go out into war that is stained with blood. And someone will say, "Hey, we need it is kind of cold. We need some fire." And they are like, "Hey, you can use my boots and my garment for the fire. I do not need them anymore." that is the point. Peace. These things that you once needed that you would need for war, they will just be burned as fuel for the fire. You do not need them. The point, the metaphor there is when Christ shines as a light, he produces peace. He produces peace. He sets his people free. He produces rejoicing from the joy that they have. And he multiplies the nation. He multiplies the number of believers. Those are the things that Christ produces. Now look at verses six and seven and see how Christ does that. How does Christ shine as this light that produces all of these wonderful effects for to us? Notice the first word in verse six for. Because so all these effects that are happening are happening. Why? Because of this what he is just saying. Because 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. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. and 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 forever more. Stop there. Verses 6 and 7 is explaining how verses 3 through 5 come true or two through five. Two is the light shines. 3-5 is this is what is produced when Christ shines as the light. in verses six and seven is this is what he is doing to produce the effects that I just mentioned in verses 3-5 because to us a child is born to us a son is given all of that so what does he say here what what should we learn from these verses look at the first part of verse six you need to first of all see that Christ shines as the light by taking on our nature and dwelling among us. Christ shines as a light by taking on our nature. Christ is God and he became a human being. Took on our nature and dwelt among us. This is why see at the beginning of verse six, what you are seeing is that Christ not only like sees the darkness and as God shines light into the darkness, but Christ sees the darkness, becomes a human being and as the light enters into that darkness,

he comes, he is born a child. For to us a child is born. it is talking about that God became a man. The Lord Jesus Christ took on our nature to be our perfect representative and he even dwelt among us. John 1:14, the word, the eternal word of God, the logos, became flesh, became a human being and tabernacled among us. that is what that Greek word is. that is that is translated dwelt. Maybe your Bible does a better job translating that, but it is literally the word, and you will probably have a footnote if you go to John 1:14. Your Bible will say it is a word for tabernacle. The word, the eternal word of God, who is Jesus, became flesh, took on our nature, and tabernacled among us.

Jesus entered into the darkness with us. that is what for to us a child is born. that is how Christ shines as a light. He takes on our nature and he dwells among us. First of all, what comfort and hope that should afford to you if you are a Christian. Christ not only like stayed in heaven and shines light. I do not want to get close to it. I do not want to get involved in it. I do not want to be near it. No, he as the light entered into the darkness in order to plunge into the deep darkness of our sins and expel that darkness through the life and death of himself. Whatever darkness you are in or you will be plugged into, believer, remember that Christ entered into this darkness to shine as the light. He will illumine the night and bring the dawn. Whatever darkness you are in, Christ is that light. And he entered into this darkness in order to save us. He is not distant. He is near. He knows what it is like. He has been tempted in every way as you are, yet without sin. He knows what it is like to be in the darkness. He knows even what the guilt of sin like when you sin and the guilt that you feel for it. He knows what that feels like though he is never sinned because he took your guilt and shame on himself and suffered under the wrath of God. So though he has never sinned, he knows what the weight the guilt of sin feels like because he took it on his shoulders and was slaughtered in your

place for it. there is nothing you can experience in this life that you cannot go to Christ with and him say, "I know what that is like." Christ has bore the weight of our sin. He has been tempted in every way as you and I are, yet without sin. Christ has been abandoned. Christ has been betrayed. Christ has been lied about. Christ has been slandered. Christ has been abused. He knows what it is like. He knows what it is like to have his own family think he is crazy and not want anything to do with him. he is going on teaching and his family comes to take him home at one point. Like, all right, Jesus, that is enough of that. we have heard some of the things you have been saying. it is time for you to come home now. Everything you can experience in this life, every bit of darkness, Christ knows what it is like and he came to shine as the light. He took on our nature, the God man has compassion. But secondly, look what Christ does as he shines as the light. How does he do it? Christ shines as the light by being given to us as our guarantor. or if you prefer the old word surety. Surety is a much better word. But Christ shines as a light by being given to us as our guarantor, as our surety, as the one who guarantees our acceptance with God. This is the whole point of the next part of verse six. To us, a son is given. he is given to us. The son that was promised in Genesis 3:15 that would crush the head of the serpent at great cost to himself. he is given to us to those who are dwelling in a land of deep darkness. Those who are walking in darkness and need to be freed from it. he is given to us as what? Not as an example chiefly. He is our example, but he is given to us as our guarantor. as the one who guarantees our acceptance with God the Father, the surety of the new covenant. Jesus was not simply given to us as an example or a model or a teacher or a prophet, though he was given to us as all of those things as well, but not merely those. Jesus was given to us to save us from our sins. He says, "Mary will bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus. I like reading it with that emphasis and remember it is like go look go look throughout the scripture or just try to recall in your mind how many times is someone named by God or by an angel that has come on the authority of God and the parents do not have the right to name them how many times very very few but here is one the angel appears to Joseph says Well, the baby that Mary has is from the Holy Spirit, and you will call his name Jesus. You do not have a choice. it is the old, it is the New Testament version of Joshua. So, when you hear Jesus, it is the same thing as Joshua. that is why it is *Yeshua* in Aramaic. It just means God saves. God is salvation. You will name him Jesus. Why does the angel say that to Joseph? because he will save his people from their sins. that is why this child is being born. he is being born to be the guarantor, the shorty of the new covenant. He will shed his blood and establish a covenant between himself and the father and all those who are connected to himself.

Christ shines as the light by being given to us. Not only taking on our nature and dwelling among us, but by being our guarantor, our surety. This is why Hebrews 7:22 says Jesus is the guarantor or surety of a better covenant. He was given to us as surety of the new covenant of grace, whereby sinners like you and me could

have all of our iniquities pardoned and full righteousness given with Jesus as our representative before God the Father. Hallelujah. To us a son is given. But look, thirdly, Christ shines as the light not just by like individual personal salvation like he takes on our nature. He dwells among us. he is given us our surety. So he is my personal Lord and Savior to use that like 90s phrase. But it is bigger than that. it is more than that. Christ shines as a light not only by being like an individual savior of sinners, but he shines as the light by establishing the kingdom of God on the earth. it is big. that is why it says in the next part of verse six, look in your Bible, "And the government shall be upon his shoulder." The government shall be upon his shoulder. This is the government of the kingdom of God on the earth that Christ came to set up. Not that he will set up someday, but that he has set up that he did set up and he is building even to this day. Christ shines as the light by establishing the kingdom of God on the earth. He takes upon himself the difficult work of upholding the kingdom of God. He does not need you. He does not need me. He does not need anyone to accomplish his purposes. He uses people like you and people like me, but he absolutely does not need us. You could die today and the kingdom of God will keep chugging along and there will not be a hitch. I could die today. Brandon could die today. Nate could die today. All of your elders could die today of this church. And the kingdom of God will keep chugging along without a hitch. The government of the kingdom of God is not on your shoulders. it is not on my shoulders. it is not on Brandon's shoulders. Not on Nate's shoulders. The kingdom of God is not on John MacArthur's shoulders. it is not on RC Sproul's shoulders. it is not on Voddie Baucham's shoulders. it is not on John Calvin's shoulders. it is not on any hero's shoulders. just Jesus, the government. Notice again, the government shall be upon his shoulder. he is bearing the weight of upholding and building the kingdom of God. he is the true man, the true hero, the true head of the church, the true Solomon who builds the temple of God, which is the church of Jesus Christ. The government shall be upon his shoulder. You should be greatly comforted with that. Why will the church never be defeated? Why will the gates of hell not prevail against the church, against the kingdom of God that Christ established on the earth? Why will more sinners keep being saved and added into the kingdom of God? Why? Because the government of the kingdom of God is on Christ's shoulders. If it were on mine, we are sunk. If it were on your biggest hero, biggest theological hero, we are sunk. But nothing will ever defeat the church. The kingdom will continue to grow because the government is on Christ's shoulder. Hallelujah. that is one of the ways Christ shines as the light by establishing the kingdom of God and upholding it. Look fourthly though, then he gets into these names. wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace. Now, Matthew Poole, the great Puritan commentator, was helpful in pointing out that this is not to be taken for a description of Christ's proper name or anything like that by which he should be commonly called. The whole point of these this four-fold name is his glorious nature and his qualities. Christ's glorious nature and his qualities. So when he is called for instance everlasting father, it is not like wait so Jesus is the father, God the father. it is like that is not what he is

talking about. he is talking about he lasts forever. he is everlasting and he is like a father to his people. he is kind and compassionate. he is not only the king, but he loves his people like a father loves his people. So it is not to confuse God the Son with God the Father, but these names are indicative of his nature, of his qualities, of his character. But this is these are some of the ways that Christ shines as light. First of all, look, and this is the fourth main thing we notice as we look. How does Christ shine as the light?

He gives the counsel we need. that is what you should learn. He gives the counsel we need. His name shall be called wonderful counselor. He gives the words you and I need to hear. Wonderful counselor. So let me give you just an exhortation in general. Look to Christ for counsel in the scriptures. he is the wonderful counselor. You can have plenty of other counselors and there is wisdom in a wealth of counselors seeking the wisdom of other brothers or sisters in Christ to help you think through. But none of them are wonderful counselors. Christ is the wonderful counselor. So look to Christ for counsel in the scriptures, believers. he is not only the counselor but the wonderful one. If you do not have a good study Bible, by the way, that helps you study the scriptures and hear from the wonderful counselor as you read the scriptures. If you do not have a good study Bible, come tell me as soon as the benediction is over after our worship, come tell me and I will get you one. I want you to have everything you need to study the scripture and to hear directly from the wonderful counselor in his word. that is the first exhortation. Keep going to the scriptures for counsel. Keep going to the scriptures. that is where the wonderful counselor speaks. But secondly, and more particular to you men, take your family to the wonderful counselor through the scriptures every day in family worship. Christ is the wonderful counselor. The mind of Christ is revealed in the word of Christ by the spirit of Christ to the people of Christ. Go to the scriptures and take your family there with you. Take your family, point them to the wonderful counselor every single day in family worship. If you do not have a family worship Bible guide, if you do not have a good study Bible, or if you are struggling in any way or you just need help in any way with family worship or if you are not doing family worship, come and talk to me as soon as we are done today. I will help you. I will give you free resources. And I want to encourage you to point your family, your wife, your children to the wonderful counselor in the scriptures. Okay? Come and talk to me today. I would love to help you and I would love to give you things to help you with that. His name shall be called wonderful counselor. We got to go to him for counsel. that is one of the ways he shines as the light. He gives the counsel we actually need. Fifthly, look though at the next name. And his name shall be called not only wonderful counselor but mighty God. Mighty God. So this child that is born, this son that is given is God. Yes. Jesus is God become man. he is the God man. It just gets even clearer and clearer the more you study the scriptures. he is God. And not only God, but the whole point is he is divine, but also mighty, powerful. Boys and girls, look up here at me. Is anything too difficult

for God? Is anything too difficult for God? Is anything impossible for God? No. Just try to think of something.

Is it impossible for God to do that? No.

I want to ask all of you to examine yourselves. Christ comes to shine as the light by using his might, his power, his strength to rescue and defend us. that is how he shines as the light. Now examine yourself. Do you act like that when you pray that Jesus is mighty God, nothing is impossible for him? Do you act like that when you pray? Or do you pray like Jesus is a wimpy God?

I think many Christians pray like Jesus is a wimp who either is not powerful enough or not kind enough. I hear many Christians pray and the prayers are just so small and so such little asks. it is like, do you believe that there are things which are impossible for God or something that you have somehow got to like make sense of how this could happen and not just pray for somebody to be healed or pray for somebody to be saved or pray for someone who is just veering off course that God would discipline them and grant them repentance and they would come back. Do you pray for those things that seem impossible to us, but knowing nothing is impossible for God? Or do you pray like he is small, like he is puny? Do you pray like Jesus, your high priest, is mighty God, not only all powerful, but do you also pray like God actually loves you and accepts you in Christ and hears your prayers through your high priest, Christ? Or do you pray like you are a nuisance? Like, I do not really want to bother you with something so trivial, Lord.

You pray like Jesus is actually mighty God. Christians hear me. If your faith is in Jesus Christ, the mighty God is who you pray to and through. Nothing is impossible for him. And you are not a nuisance to him. And he actually cares for you. So again as I will quote to you frequently that line from John Newton's hymn about prayer. Thou art coming to a king. Large petitions with thee bring for his grace and power are such none can ever ask too much. So bring your big petitions to your big God. Christ shines as a light by using his might. He loves to show off his might. He loves to show off his power. But it seems like Christians hate to ask him to show off his power. He loves to do it. that is why he whittled Gideon's army down to 300. So you guys would all know it is by my power that you are saved. So pray big prayers and trust the Lord that he cares for you. He cares for his people.

It is how Christ shines as a light using his might to rescue and defend us. Look next at the next part of verse six. he is called everlasting father. Everlasting. he is the eternal God. Father, not like God the father, but he is said he is got a kingdom. The government will be upon his shoulders. And what I think God is doing through Isaiah is helping us realize that Christ shines as the light by being more like a loving father than a distant monarch. he is more like a loving father than he is just a king who is in the palace and you do not have an opportunity to go into his court.

Like he is his compassion for you is like the compassion of a father. that is one of the ways he shines as light. But look next at the next part of verse six. here is the fourth name. He shall be called prince of peace. Again, going back to what was said at the end of verse three, that he would establish peace. And now he is called the prince of peace. he is the king of peace, the ruler of peace. Christ brings the peace that every sane person wants. He brings that peace. He brings peace between you and God through himself, through his work in our place. He brings peace between us as brothers and sisters. He brings peace internally with yourself, knowing your sins are forgiven and you are accepted by God. He brings peace. he is the prince of peace. And seventh, and finally, Christ shines as light by ever increasing the dominion of his kingdom. So, not only will the government be upon his shoulder, and he is upholding the kingdom of God, but then Isaiah returns to this. By the, it is like, by the way, I said he is going to uphold this kingdom, build this kingdom. it is on his shoulder. By the way, here is some more. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. Now, look at it again in your own Bible. it is not of his kingdom and of his government there will be no end. No, of the increase of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. It goes without saying that his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

But the point is it will never stop increasing. The kingdom of God will never stop growing. Jesus will never stop saving more and more and more people and expanding his kingdom. 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 forever more. The Davidic covenant is ultimately about the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the ways he shines as light by ever increasing the dominion of his kingdom. So let me give you some comfort to close. The nations of this world will teeter and totter.

The nations of this world will be here one century and gone the next. America has stood for 250 years and may stand for another thousand or it may fall in the next hundred.

It may fall in our lifetime. We do not know. They thought Rome would never fall and in a few years done. People think America might never fall, but in a few years we could be done.

God only knows. But there is one thing for certain that you and I can know. The kingdom of God shall stand firm through all the ages.

Christ will continue to save sinners. Christ will continue to sanctify his people. The kingdom will progressively grow in the world like a mustard seed until it takes over the whole garden. It will continue to influence the world like yeast and dough until it affects everything. Why? Because of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. Because Christ has promised. because the government

shall be upon his shoulder. So take heart Christians. Our kingdom shall never falter nor fail because we belong to the kingdom of Christ.

Make your path straight. Not only take heart because the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ will ever increase, will keep influencing, will never end. But make your path straight and dedicate your life ultimately of first importance to building the kingdom of God, to strengthening other Christians, to helping plant more churches so more people can hear the gospel and worship the Lord. Pray and labor to do your part in building up the kingdom of God. This is the only kingdom that will last. So why do not you put your effort, put your prayers towards that kingdom. that is what Christ means when he says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these other things that you get so concerned about, they will be added to you. you will be okay. Seek first the kingdom of God." that is my exhortation to you. Christ is upholding it. It will ever increase. This is how he shines as the light. So thank him for his mercy and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Now in conclusion, just look at the last part of verse seven. How do we know these things are going to happen? The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. it is just added at the very end of this section. So we go, "Wow, that sounds really great. How do we know that is going to happen? Is it dependent on you or me?" No. He says the zeal, the passion, the fire as it were within the Lord to glorify his own name by saving a people, by having a kingdom, expanding that kingdom. The zeal of the Lord of hosts, the Lord who has armies. that is what it means. Lord of hosts, the zeal for his own glory of the Lord of hosts who has all power. He will accomplish all of this.

Merry Christmas!

Let's pray. Our father, we thank you for your word. We ask you to help us best understand it and apply it. Help us to seek first your kingdom and trust you with everything. We ask you to save sinners and sanctify your saints. Purify your church. Make us more happy and holy. We ask you to heal those who are sick. to comfort those who are suffering. We ask you to correct, discipline, grant repentance to those who are straying. And to those who are striving forward, we ask you to give them strength. We ask you to receive all of these things that we do now as we continue to worship you. Receive our songs. Receive the Lord's supper, our offerings that we give, the baptism that we observe. receive all these things through Christ for Christ's sake as ways that we offer up worship to your holy name. You are worthy of it. So we offer these things up to you now for your glory, for our good. In Jesus' name, amen.