

3 Prophecies for the Birth of Jesus, Part 3, A Child Shall Be Born

Isaiah 9:1-7

Quentin Smith, December 26, 2021

Well, good morning Grace Fellowship. We are in the building, Dwayne and I, and missing you. We were planning to have the reading of God's word the praying together and just being together. But I trust you had an amazing day yesterday, just for those of you who were able to be with family contemplating that blessing, the joy that we have and this morning I want to complete the series that Jeremy and I have done on some prophecies around the birth of Christ and have called the sermon "A Child Is To Be Born." And without further ado, I want to get into the passage and if you would, open up your Bibles to Isaiah chapter nine. We are going to read the first seven verses.

But there will be no more gloom for her he was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.
You shall multiply the nation,
You shall increase their gladness;
They will be glad in Your presence
As with the gladness of harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
For You shall break the yoke of their burden in the staff on their shoulders,
The rod of their oppressor, as at the Battle of Midian.
For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult,
And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.
For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,
On the throne of David and over his kingdom
To establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness
From then on and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

I want to say today that we are going to have an extended introduction to the message to try and set the context for our passage. But even before we get into that, I want to make three observations, I want to talk about three things or three realizations that you may or may not be able to identify with, but I think you will. The first is that we have a tendency to read our Bibles in a disconnected way. We think of the Old Testament as distant, we think about Old Testament characters as "them". We think about it as a time and a people that we read about but we don't always identify with. We think about them somewhat academically; we know about these stories, but we find it really hard to relate because our worlds, we think, are so different. I want to challenge that today. In the

New Testament, we do a very similar thing, although it's more familiar and closer to us, and it mentions Jesus. So it seems more relevant and closer to our understanding and ability to identify with. But I really think there is a definite “them and us” distinction that we make in our minds.

And the problem is that that can lead us to not relate to the people in the Word of God and think they are not really real people, but merely sources of encouragement, and information to really support our own selfish pursuit of doing church and faith. We look upon them as examples of what not to do, and what we would never have done if we had been in their shoes. If I'd been oppressed as a slave in Egypt and seen all the plagues and walk through the Red Sea, I would never have grumbled about Manna and quail. What were they thinking? If I had seen Jesus heal, I would have no doubts. I would have been on fire, I would not have been able to be intimidated. What was Peter thinking? But let me tell you today there is no “them and us”. It's just us. We are all one; we are linked as God's people; different times in history, but the same realities. And so our experience is not that different.

So when we read about an Israel who was disobedient and unfaithful and worldly and apostate, honestly, can you say that that's any different to the world in which we live? And we have to make similar choices to decide to be obedient and faithful, despite our culture. And when Isaiah warns at the beginning of His ministry, in 739, BC, about a punishment that is to come, that is Babylon 134 years later. We can relate because we know that there's a promise of judgment coming upon this particular world as well. It's an ultimate judgment, to final judgment. It's a judgment from which there will be no escape, there is no back button, or undo button that we can press once that judgment begins. And so we find Old Testament faith saints, with no ability to justify themselves before God. Recognizing that they are guilty, as charged, nowhere else to go, believing forward to the Messiah, forgiveness of sin by faith in God, believing the message, believing forward to Jesus, just as we believe backwards, to that same Jesus, the same Messiah. And we're saved by that same faith in Him. We are the same people with the same heart that Jeremiah said was more deceitful than all else and desperately sick. And so suddenly Isaiah becomes very relevant to us. It's a different era. But really, it's the same struggles, the same heart, the same need for a Saviour.

And the question right off the bat is, do you believe that? Do we feel and know and understand and live with the burden of our sin enough to know that our situation is desperate, that there is nowhere else to go but to God? Or use that woman who had the hemorrhage for 12 years that nobody could help her with? She had no alternative place to go and she was so desperate that she just had to get close enough to Jesus just if she could touch his garment. Are you blind Bartimaeus? Who cried out Jesus, Son of David, “Have mercy on me!”

Second observation is that throughout the Bible, warning and encouragement are juxtaposed. That means they sit side by side. Sometimes it's in the same book, sometimes it's in the same chapter, sometimes it's in the same verse. And an example of that will be Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.” And again, the next application for that observation is, will you respond to those passages? The challenge to us of “Do you believe?” And “Will you respond?” is the same challenge that God put to Israel from Isaiah. Nothing has changed in 2700 years. Because there is no distinction. There is no “us and them.” It's the same timeline.

The third observation, briefly, is that good news is always brighter against the backdrop of bad news. In Isaiah chapter nine, verse one, the first half of it says, “But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish.” The implication of course, is that there was gloom and there was anguish. But how bad was it? We need

to know that in order to understand the next few verses in our text for today. And to truly understand that, we need to go back in Isaiah, and I'm going to take you back today, as part of this introduction, to chapter one. I'm going to work through it with you because it illustrates my three observations. And in case you think the Old Testament can't relate to our lives today, you will see our society you, will see our culture, and perhaps even you'll see yourself being described. And you'll also see the warning and the encouragement. So open up your Bibles, a few pages back to chapter one, starting in verse two.

Listen, O heavens, and here, O earth;
For the Lord speaks.

As we go along, I'm going to stop and make some application. So be prepared for that. When somebody of influence and important speaks, the room goes quiet. When the Lord speaks, He speaks with ultimate authority over the heavens and the earth. And the question that I have for us today is, am I listening? Do I hear when God says, Listen? Carrying on in verse two:

Sons I have reared and brought up,
But they have revolted against Me.
An ox knows its owner
And a donkey it's masters manger,
But Israel does not know,
My people do not understand.

One of the most shameful things in biblical times was for a child to rebel against a father or a parent. Children could be stoned for that. And he says that even beasts know and recognize and appreciate their caregivers in the home that is provided by their owners or master. But Israel was ignorant, rebellious, hard hearted, proud. Keep reading in verse four:

Alas, sinful nation,
People weighed down with iniquity,
Offspring of evildoers,
Sons who act corruptly!
They have abandoned the Lord,
They have despised the Holy One of Israel,
They have turned away from Him.

This is the status sinful, burdened, weighed down by sin. Isaiah says it's multi-generational. And that's really important because how you are in your life has an incalculable influence on your children's lives. We know that you can save them. But they can see that you are normal. And that you struggle and that you're sinful, but that you repent, and that you are authentic, and that you search for God. And they know if you are for real or not. But Israel has abandoned God, they've despised Him, they've turned away. And let me tell you, when you walk away from God, and you abandoned faith, you create a vacuum. And that vacuum will be filled with something. And ultimately, unusually, it's fleshly idolatry. We continue in verse five:

Where will you be stricken again,

As you continue in your rebellion?
The whole head is sick
And the whole heart is faint.
From the soul of the foot even to the head
There is nothing sound in it,
Only bruises, welts, and raw wounds,
Not pressed out or bandaged,
Not softened with oil.

Isaiah uses a medical analogy of illness that is just throughout the body to describe the consequences of rebellion. Like a cancer that has metastasized, eating away at the entire body, like bruises and wounds that are not treated. And so they fester. And the infection engulfs the whole person, they become septic from the soul of the foot to the head. We would say head to toe. The hardest faint with no strength. There are physical consequences of sin. We know that you drive drunk, you have a car accident, you're going to be hurt. You use substances. You're going to destroy your life, physically in the body. But there are consequences from the psychological and soul perspective as well as a conscience that is troubled and that weighs you down, makes you miserable, and fraught with anxiety and depression, stress, hopelessness, desperation. And it's not unlike David in Psalm 32. When he was holding on to his sin with Bathsheba, he says, "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. Day and night, Your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer." That's the consequence of sin; a consequence of moving away from God and not having a conscience that has been cleared.

In verse seven,

Your land is desolate,
Your cities are burned with fire,
Your fields--strangers are devouring them in your presence;
It is desolation, as overthrown by strangers.
The daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in the vineyard,
Like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.
Unless the Lord of hosts
Had left us a few survivors,
We would be like Sodom,
We would be like Gomorrah.

Not only are there individual consequences, but there are national consequences that are about to come down upon Israel that Isaiah is foreshadowing. Babylon is coming, destruction. And like a shelter in the vineyard surrounded by all of the grapes, his imagery is beautiful. And like a watchman's hut, in the center surrounded by a field of cucumbers that he had to watch and make sure that animals didn't come over the enemy didn't come and steal. So Israel would be besieged, outnumbered, surrounded, hopelessly dominated, and overwhelmed as a punishment, as a discipline for where they were. And then this... if God had not provided a few survivors, they would be like Sodom and Gomorrah, completely annihilated.

We're starting into verse 10, God has had enough and he goes after their worship, because it's insincere. Verse 10 says,

Hear the word of the Lord,
You rulers of Sodom,
Give ear to the instruction of our God,
You people have Gomorrah.
“What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?”
Says the Lord.
“I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams,
And the fat of fed cattle;
And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.
When you come to appear before Me,
Who requires of you this trampling of my courts?
Bring your worthless offerings no longer,
Incense is an abomination to Me.
New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.

He says they don't go together. You're sinning on the one hand, but you come solemnly to gather on the other hand, going through the motions. It's just they don't mix like that like water and oil.

In verse 14 it says,

I hate your new moon festivals in your appointed feasts,
They have become a burden to Me;
I am weary of bearing them.
So when you spread out your hands in prayer,
I will hide my eyes from you;
Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen.
Your hands are covered with blood.

You see, the sacrifices, though they were multiplied, didn't mean anything to God, because they didn't mean anything to them. And that's called going through the motions. Their offerings were worthless. Their gathering was an offense. He says it was a trampling of his courts. It was an abomination. The festivals and feasts He hates. So He stops listening to prayers even when the hands are spread and the prayers are long, and they sound so good, He stops listening because their hands are covered with blood. And that's a sign of guilt. Guilty of idolatry and unfaithfulness. And you know, if you were a fly on the wall, everything would have looked like a normal day coming to worship. Nobody would know that during the week they were entertaining sin. And God says, stop pretending! I'm not listening! But here comes the encouragement; here comes the way out of such a hopeless situation. Verse 16 says,

“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight.
Cease to do evi,
Learn to do good;

Seek justice,
Reprove the ruthless,
Defend the orphan,
Plead for the widow.

In short, God says the way out of that situation is to realize and repent. Stop doing what you are doing. Start doing what you are supposed to have been doing. Make It Right. Put off evil. Put on good. But I can't let go of my pornography. I have tried so hard. I can't. I can't stop being angry. The Bible says you can. The Bible says remove and that Hebrew word means to turn aside, turn away. Cease that word means stop. Just stop. It's not complicated. But God also directs us to something profitable, which helps that process of turning away and ceasing.

He says you replace it with something good. You replace evil with doing good. And he says learn to do good and it's the same message that Jesus had. He said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls." Folks, are we teachable? You want to seek justice, reprove the ruthless, have an influence, defend the orphan, plead for the widow--people who cannot repay.

Verse 18 says,

"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord,
"Though your sins are as scarlet,
They will be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They will be like wool.
If you consent and obey,
You will eat the best of the land;
But if you refuse and rebel,
You will be devoured by the sword."
Truly the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

What a wonderful invitation come now, let us reason together. This is not hard to understand. Those sins that he talks about are as scarlet. That's a reference to the blood on their hands; the guilt from sin. Scarlet is a bright red color, implying that the blood is fresh. Crimson is a darker red, the color that old blood goes when it dries. And the imagery here is that you have been sinning and you've got old blood on your hands because you've been doing it for a long time. But you continue to send in this fresh blood on your hands with ongoing guilt. What amazing imagery. But if you consent, meaning if you're willing, and obey, those sins, all of them, Scarlet and crimson are gone. In their entirety, that certificate of debt will be gone, and it will go well with you. But if you don't, if you refuse, and rebel, you will be destroyed. And that is a guarantee because the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Well, I think you can see and I hope you can see that the parallels to our lives are stunning. There is no us and them. God is speaking to us today, just as strongly as He spoke to Israel 700 years BC. So that's the introduction that brings us now to our text.

That's the bad news that Israel lived with, and that we live in. So what's the solution? What is the good news? Let's go back to our text in Isaiah chapter nine. And if you're making notes today, I want to talk about three realities about Jesus from this text.

And the first is that Jesus is prophesied back to verse one, but there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish. In earlier times, He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt. But later on, He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Galilee, of the Gentiles.

I'm going to put the PowerPoint on now because I think it's important to try and understand this first point that Jesus is prophesied because they bill in the Naphtali. On the left side there are highlighted with two red arrows. And those are two of the areas of land assigned to the tribes of Israel. They lay to the west and the northwest of the sea of Chinnerly Earth, as the Sea of Galilee was known at that time. But by Jesus's time Zebulun and Naphtali are the area known as Galilee. And Galilee, is where the two towns of Capernaum and Nazareth are located. And if you look at the map on the right, it's the pink area that is Galilee, just west of the Sea of Galilee. And there was a highway running through that area near the Sea of Galilee to get to the Great Sea, which is what the Mediterranean Sea was known as. And hence that area was known as the way of the sea.

Secondly, when Isaiah says that God treated this area with contempt, he means that God caused them to be dominated by the Gentiles, in 876 BC, and again in 740 BC, this whole region was captured and dominated by gentiles, by Assyria. sovereignly ordained by God as punishment, for their lack of faithfulness. And hence this area was not only as the way of the sea, or by the way of the sea, but also as Galilee of the Gentiles in our chapter nine verse one. And for that whole period of time there was gloom and anguish because there was suffering under the domination of a foreign nation. Something that God had caused. But--don't you'd like those biblical buts--- Verse One says later on, He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, the Galilee of the Gentiles. It means but the Messiah is coming. And when He does, there will be no more gloom, no more anxiousness, no more anguish, because He will make it glorious, the implication being by His presence and so comes our first prophecy about the Messiah and that is that He would come from this area and He would have to remove the gloom and make it glorious. Remember, it's 700 years before this happens. But you're saying to yourself, hang on a second, I thought he was from Bethlehem. How could it be Nazareth, or Calpurnia? Well, there are several prophecies that were fulfilled at the time of Jesus's birth and early life. And we are briefly going to look at one for today. He was to be born in Bethlehem in Judea. And you'll remember that when Herod inquired of the chief priests and the scribes of the people as to where the Messiah would be born, they were very clear that it was to be in Bethlehem in Judea. And they quoted Micah five verse two, which says, "And you, Bethlehem land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you shall come forth a ruler, who will shepherd my people Israel." And we know about the circumstances with the census that caused that prophecy to come true.

Just to think about that for a minute, how Joseph living with Mary in Nazareth, had to travel south to Bethlehem while she was very far along in her pregnancy. They had to travel 90 miles; that's about 150 kilometers, on a donkey. And those of you who have had children or who are pregnant, will recognize that by 36 weeks, it's hard to get out of bed. So this was no easy road. And I also wonder if you've ever put this together, that the role of the government edict was essential in fulfilling that prophecy. They had to obey that edict in order to fulfill that prophecy and be in God's will. And one day, I'm going to ask Joseph, if that ever dawned upon him, or if he just did what was necessary at the time, unaware that God was actually fulfilling a prophecy 700 years before.

Secondly, though, when Herod found out that the Magi had eluded him, Matthew two, verse 13, tells us that the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child in his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to destroy Him. And so Joseph got up, took Jesus and His mother.” And while it was still night, he left Egypt. We're not sure how old He was exactly. But they're they lived until Herod died. So probably, they stayed there for two or three years. And this was to fulfill the prophecy of Hosea 11 verse one, “And out of Egypt, I called my son.”

Thirdly, when Joseph is told by the angel in a dream that it is now safe to return, because Herod has died, he arrives back in Judea, but he's anxious. Here, it had been wicked enough to kill all the male infants in Bethlehem, who were two years old and younger, around the time of Jesus's birth. And then before he died, he killed his own son Alexander. Once he died, his other son, Aristobolus took over and was ruling in Judea and he had slaughtered 3000 Jews when he took the throne. Now, I want you to compare that in those circumstances to what we go through. But Joseph, when he returns back was afraid, and quite rightly so. And he was unwilling to go back to Judea. And so he went to Galilee, and he settled in Nazareth, where he had lived before. And that's where Jesus then grew up, which is how he became known as Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus who was from Nazareth. And that's something that Matthew tells us was spoken of through the prophets. In Matthew 2:23, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” And interestingly, when Jesus confronts Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul relates that he asked Jesus, “Who are you? Lord,” and Jesus says, “I am Jesus the Nazarene whom you are persecuting.” So that's the third prophecy and sign.

The fourth one is that once Jesus starts His ministry, and He's finished being tempted by Satan in the Judean wilderness. I want you to open up to Matthew chapter four, to be filled in on what happened. Matthew four, verse 12 through 16.

Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
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.

And of course, that is the fulfillment of our passage of Isaiah chapter nine verse one. Want do you to think about that? It's been estimated that the chances of a ruler being prophesied to be born in Bethlehem is about one in 300,000. We've talked about four if you take eight of the prophecies from the Old Testament about the Messiah, and eight of those were to become true. As Jeremy mentioned in his previous sermon, the odds of that happening have been calculated and estimated to be one times 10 to the 17th power. So if you ever had any doubt about Jesus, I hope that these fulfilled prophecies dispel them because there is no way that they could have happened by random accident.

Point number two, Isaiah nine verse two, “The people who walk in darkness, will see a great light, those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.” The first thing that Jesus does is He chases out darkness. If any of

you have tried to move around and walk when it's pitch black, and I'm sure we all have, you'll understand how difficult that is. You don't even remember in your own house sometimes where the furniture is exactly located. Imagine living that way, forever fumbling. Uncertain. We're not talking about the darkness of a Canadian winter, he's talking about spiritual blindness. Living for yourself. And the metaphor of darkness is meant to depict sin and hopelessness and judgment. And Jesus dispatches that it's removed when he comes in and it's dispatched by the presence of light. You know that darkness is simply the absence of light. But darkness disappears when light comes. And so John eight verse 12 says that Jesus says He is the light of the world. He chases away all of that darkness. He who follows Jesus will not walk or live in the darkness, but will have the light of life. And so Jesus describes Himself as a person of the light. And so when it talks in Isaiah about people who walk in darkness will see a great light, that means that they will see Jesus.

Secondly, He brings gloom to gladness. He causes nations to prosper. He multiplies them not only in number but in gladness. And he likens that gladness to the gladness of harvest, the end of months of hard work and the reward of the harvest; or the reward of a battle that has been fought for a good reason. And there's a spoil at the end of it for the battle-weary soldiers, the joy that the actual fight is now done. What a relief. I survived. And now I get a chance to share in the booty because we were victorious. But I want you to see something: where is that gladness found? In verse three it says that they will be glad in His presence. It's the presence of Jesus that brings gladness.

Thirdly, He brings freedom and peace. You will remember that God has caused them to be ruled and oppressed and burdened by Syria, and Babylon is yet to come. But ultimately, he will free them. For you shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, as at the Battle of Midian. For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle to molten the cloak rolled in blood will be for burning fuel for the fire. He's going to do away with war. And he'll bring peace. And there'll be no doubt that it is He who did it because he references the Battle of Midian. And that's the battle in which in the book of Judges, Gideon, gathers around him 32,000 soldiers. God says there's too many. And all those who are afraid go home. So it's down to 10,000. God says this too many. And eventually, Gideon with 300 Men, routes at the Battle of Meridian. And the reason was, so that they could not boast about having done anything. There could be no glory thieves. And so it is when Christ comes, He does this. And they will be no glory thieves. The vestiges of battle the accessories of warfare, the cloak that was worn, that was blood stained, and the boots that were worn in the battle will be burned, they're no longer needed, and no longer needed in this in this kingdom of peace and freedom. So not only has Jesus prophesied, but Jesus will transform.

But the third point is that Jesus will rule. And I want to talk about the nature of His rule, and the fruit of His rule. Verse six, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us. And the government will rest on His shoulders, and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on, and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

It may sound obvious, but the nature of His rule will be completely in keeping with who He is as a ruler. The nature of your parenting is completely consistent with who you are as a person. And we can tell the nature of His rule by the names that He is known by, first of all, the nature of His rule will be ruling as one who is worthy, because His name is wonderful. Now, I know that we're used to talking about it as being wonderful counselor. But there was a thought that struck me from the book of Judges and simply put in Judges chapter 13. Israel had

suffered for 40 years under Philistine rule. As part of God's judgment, again, the cyclical calling of judges who would relieve the suffering, and then they would be unfaithful again and go back into suffering and God would call another judge.

In Judges 13, the angel of the Lord that is Christ, that's a Christophany. He appears to Minoa and his wife who have been infertile, and announces that she will bear Samson, who will deliver Israel as a judge. And Minoa said to the angel of the Lord, what is your name? So that when your words come to pass, we may honor you. But the angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask my name? Seeing it is wonderful." And ultimately, we know that Manoah and his wife, watch while the lord sends the flame of the altar, and they fall to their faces to the ground, saying, "We will surely die, for we have seen God." So I think it's fair to say that if Jesus calls His name wonderful that we can too. That same word is able to be translated incomprehensible. It's the same word in Psalm 139, that says, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is too high, I cannot attain it." The idea being it's incomprehensible. So, Jesus is going to rule as wonderful. His power and His glory will be incomprehensible. And that lends a whole new dimension to the word when we describe something next time as wonderful.

Secondly, He will rule as when He was wise; He was a counselor and a teacher. He knows all things therefore He is the counselor. Romans 11:33 says, "Oh the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways. For who has known the mind of the Lord or who became His counselor?" How do you counsel somebody who is the supreme counselor? God has no counselor. Jesus and God are the wonderful counselors. Isaiah two verse three says, "And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in his paths.'" That's the idea. That's the whole purpose of teaching and counseling is that you learn about God's ways, so that you walk in His path.

Thirdly, He will rule as one who has authority because He is mighty God. John 14 verse nine says, "Jesus says to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.'" And he goes on in John chapter 10, verse 30, to say, "I and the Father are one." That is authority. See, just like Israel, our generation has huge authority issues. It starts as a parent child issue. Paul says, obey your parents in the Lord that it may go well with you. But if that doesn't happen, those children grow up to be parents who don't understand authority, and they have children, who are even more removed from the understanding of authority. And although it begins with parents, it then trickles down to teachers, and coaches, and police officers and governments, all of which are opportunities to practice obedience that we might ultimately understand what it is to obey God. Philippians two verse 10, says that every knee will bow on heaven and earth and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Jesus already has and will wield all authority. There won't be a question as to whether somebody bows the knee.

Fourthly, He will rule forever as an eternal or everlasting father. And although Jesus is the second member of the Trinity, He is in essence, as we said, one with God so He has all the attributes of God including eternity. Firstly, He will rule in peace because he is the prince of peace. He will judge between the nations; He will render decisions for many peoples. "They will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war." Ephesians 2:14 says, "For He Himself is our peace." And when the angels announced His coming in Luke two verse 14, they said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is well pleased." But the fruit of His rule is that it's guaranteed to be permanent, and increasing in peace, and justice and righteousness.

Again, Luke chapter one with the announcement before He is born, the angel says He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.

Well, we've said that we read our Bibles in a disconnected way, as if somehow it's us and them. And we've seen that there really isn't that distinction. We've said that Israel's condition is our condition. And that allows Paul to say to us, and to the early church in Ephesians, chapter two verse one, that you were dead in your trespasses and goes on to say that we all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh of the mind, and were by nature, children of wrath, even as the rest. Paul makes no distinction. But God stepped in. He promised a Saviour, and that Saviour is Jesus who transforms our darkness into light, our sadness into gladness in His presence and our battles into peace. And He promised that the Saviour will rule because he is wonderful, and in comprehensible, and He'll rule as our counselor, and He will rule as mighty God, and he's our Eternal Father, a prince of peace. And we talked about how He was prophesied and how He came, and He was born as a child. But let me tell you folks, that when He comes again, he's coming of King as King of kings and Lord of lords. And when God speaks and tells us that, He tells us to listen and to hear. We want to do that.

And so that begs the question, Is He your government and ruler and authority? Do you submit to Him as the ultimate authority? You will. One day everybody will, whether they believe or not, but the blessing is, if you submit and humble yourselves now instead of deciding that you know it all, He is your wonderful and incomprehensible Counselor. Are you teachable? Are you being taught His ways so that you can walk in His paths? Is he Mighty God to you? And I want to be really clear about this. He is mighty God and always will be and how you feel about that will never change that reality. But who you understand him to be will determine how you interact with Him. Is he your eternal Father? Will you live in that Abba Father relationship for eternity? Is your hope in a kingdom where there will be no end to the increase and have perfect peace and justice and righteousness?

If He is your hope then I praise God and you ought to as well. If he's not my friend, then you are in danger. Can I beg you this morning to recognize the weight of your sin? You know that you sin. You know that there is a nagging hopelessness, you know that there is a relentless call to decide what to do with Jesus. And as we've seen from our passage, God is going to punish sin because sin is a manifestation of arrogance. It's a sign that you think that God is irrelevant. He's not going to leave that unpunished. You will feel His wrath unless you bow your heart and humility.

So can I beg you this morning to be reconciled to Him? To recognize Him as Lord and Savior. To ask Him to forgive you. Do have that burden of sin that is nagging at you? The burden of sin about which you can do nothing. You cannot reinvent yourself and become good or worthy in any way. It's never been that way. Your situation is desperate, you can only come to the cross that this child ended up on because of your sin and my sin and leave your sin there at the foot of Him who satisfied God's wrath completely on your behalf. The wages of sin is death. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let me finish by saying this in the words of the song: "Jesus was born, so that you could be born again."

Let's pray. Father, we want to thank you for this passage. For the reminder, Lord, that there is no distinction between us and them. That Father, throughout the ages you have called to us. You have pointed out our sin, you

have convicted us so that there is no doubt that we are guilty. But then, Father, you have given us a great and good news as an antidote to that bad news. And that is that we can be saved. Or we can only be saved through the Saviour that was prophesied, whose name is wonderful, a counselor, who is Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, who is coming again. And so Father, I pray that you will bless those who hear this message today and that you would transform them by changing their heart by helping them to understand and come to you in humility, to receive forgiveness of sin and the promise of a hope of eternity. So that your second coming, Lord Jesus, would be something that we anticipate with joy instead of fearing. So Father, thank You for Your word. Thank you for how it enriches us and encourages us. We pray that you would continue to do work in all of our hearts. In Jesus name. Amen.

Well, thank you for tuning in today. Trust that you are going to have a wonderful day as you contemplate more of these things. If you would like to know more about us, please look up Grace Fellowship Church on the internet, and you'll be directed to our website where you can see the resources and learn more about our church. Have a wonderful day.