

Zealous for Our Salvation • Part Two

Isaiah 9:6–7

[v.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. **³** You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. **⁴** For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. **⁵** For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **⁷** Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.]

Oh the difference the Messiah makes! From the darkness of God's judgment in chapter 8 to the Light of Jesus' coming in chapter 9! We move from distress to joy, gloom to glory, thick darkness to great light... These are absolute polar swings. It is the reversal and undoing of the curse of sin. It's recovery of what was lost. Good news for you today! He makes no less radical change in the life of the one who comes to him now in faith and repentance than when Isaiah foretold his coming and salvation almost 3000 years ago. All that God provided in the coming of Christ then is available to you now. His call this morning is as it was in Isaiah's day: "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." It is not that the living water that Jesus gives is without cost. It is that Jesus paid the entire cost for your life and gives life freely, right now, to all who hear and respond to his invitation.

PRAY: Lord, the well of salvation is open and flowing like a mighty river in this room today, in our nation, and in all nations. By the convicting and saving power of the Holy Spirit, let every soul drink deeply of the living water found in Christ, and eat of the Bread of Life. Call the dead to life, the sinner to repentance, the broken to wholeness, and the poor to infinite riches in Christ. Open our eyes that we may see, and our hearts that we respond.

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1. The King Has Come!

Isaiah 9:6a — For to us a child is born, to us a son is given

Born is the King of Israel... He is the final and enduring King, but he is unique from all others kings. He is both born and given. Born in his humanity; given in his deity. Jesus is fully man and simultaneously fully God. Why this mysterious incarnate deity? **3 reasons, as the catechism instructs us: Why must the Redeemer be truly human? Answer: That in human nature he might, on our behalf, [1] perfectly obey the whole law, [2] suffer the punishment for human sin; and [3] that he might sympathize with our weaknesses.** He is born as every human is born.

But he is also given... from the Father. “God so loved the world that he: _____ .” As God, Jesus was given to us by the Father. Again the catechism helps us understand what is going on: **Why must the Redeemer be truly God? Answer:** That because of his divine nature **[1]** his obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective; and **[2]** that he would be able to bear the righteous anger of God against sin and yet overcome death. In his humanity he bore our sins. In his deity he defeats death as our Champion.

The government shall be upon his shoulder...

The rule and reign of Christ is certain! He is the chief executive, if you will. What he says goes. Rebellion is crushed. He is absolute! As **Isaiah 22:22** expounds the Father’s actions: “And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” Remember our memory work from last summer in **Colossians 1:**

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

As Abraham Kuyper says, “There is not one square inch in all creation where Jesus Christ does not point and say, ‘Mine!’”

Behold your King! This is our God! Look away from the fallen world and its wicked rulers and governments for help. That is what King Ahaz was doing. It is a futile to trust in human powers. Be reoriented, upheld, sustained by the rule and reign of King Jesus. His kingdom is forever!

2. The King's Character

His name shall be called...

When the bible calls our attention to someone's name, it is calling our attention to their character, the heart or substance of who they are. The name **Jesus** means, **the Lord saves**. Thus, **Matthew 1:21** — “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” So let's gaze on be transformed by the beauty of the character of our Savior in these four names

He is Wonderful Counselor

Language changes over time and meanings morph or degrade. The word **wonderful** is not a slang synonym for groovy.

Says one millennial, “I got a cool reward on my Starbucks app! Since I bought 20 cups of \$8 coffee, they are giving me a free one!” Says the other, “Wonderful! That is awesome!”

That is all very dreadful. Jesus is not a groovy Counselor because he wears sandals. **Wonderful** means **miraculous**, **supernatural**. It speaks of what is beyond human capacity; things that belong to God. The same word is used in several places in the Old Testament referring to God's supernatural, miraculous work. Here are just a couple:

Exodus 15:11 — “Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing **wonders**?”

Psalms 78:4 — Speaking of the miraculous works of God: “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and **the wonders** that he has done.

It is the eternal wisdom of God that resides in the Wonder Counselor. Jesus sees and knows what human eyes cannot see and human minds cannot know. He knows what only the maker of the human heart can know. He knows what only the Creator and Sovereign Ruler can know about. The end of John 2 gives insight into his wonderful, supernatural knowledge. **John 2:23–25** — ²³ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did; ²⁴ but Jesus did not trust himself to them, ²⁵ because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man.

He not only knows human hearts, he knows how all this going to work and how it's all going to end, because he is causing all things to hold together by the divine counsel of his will. He is determining

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the allotted periods and the boundaries of the dwelling place of all people. He brings down human kings and raises up kings according to his pleasure. The Father is superintending the subjection of all things to the Son, whom he exalts to the highest place. This is the wisdom we need to live lives that are not wasted — lives that point to the rule and reign and glory of God day by day.

Wisdom can be defined as the ability to see reality as God sees it. It is to understand what and why things are happening and then act in godly ways that are in concert with his holiness and his everlasting kingdom. Consider the folly of spending your life pursuing what will not endure in the end, or aligning your thinking and your actions with what is in rebellion to this eternal King. What hope is there for life and blessing?

Yet the spirit of Ahaz that we saw in chapter 8 is alive and well today. People continue looking to the earth, to created things, to provide answers and advance the lifestyle they pursue. This ruler, that government, that policy will provide what I need for life and blessing. Many swipe their phones to see the horoscope and read how the created stars will govern and direct their lives. All these are indicators of darkness. So as much to Isaiah's day, Mary's day, Jesus is light in the darkness of our day. He is the Wonderful Counselor generously giving God's wisdom to all who seek him.

Psalm 62:8 — Trust him at all times, all you people.

Proverbs 3:5–6 — Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Look away from the earth, look away from contrived conventional wisdom that is rooted in darkness and rebellion against Christ, and look to Christ the King, whom **1 Corinthians 1:24** tells us is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

There are others may not ignore the Wonderful Counselor altogether, but rather than Lord, regard him as an advisor. Do not seek the wisdom of God and then think of yourself as sovereign, evaluating the things of God, then determining if that vibes with your plans. That is not life-giving wisdom; that is death-producing folly. He is Lord. He rules the world with truth and grace. Do not debate, do not argue. You will neither circumvent his will nor change his mind. He comes to make his blessings known far as the curse is found. Submit to the Shepherd of your soul, the Wonderful Counselor, and experience his blessing and the undoing of the curse of sin in your life. In obeying the Lord in the way the dark world gets a glimmer of insight into what the rule and reign of Christ looks like.

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There are many of us here this morning who are in the middle of major life decisions and choices. Life and circumstances have changed. Several are making decisions about where to plant their lives and their families to be on mission with God's people.

[I appreciate the sobriety with which these decisions are being made. It shows awareness of the seriousness of being part of the body of the Christ, and the impact it will have on life's trajectory, what values are being passed on to children, what mission and even career looks like for the future.]

Some students are at the front end of seeking to know which direction to go in life, what job path to pursue.

There is an awareness among many that followers of Christ are going to face a more hostile secular world in the future, and what impact will that make on how we plan equip ourselves to move forward in faithful devotion to the King in the future. Am I even in the right career to most faithfully serve and follow my Lord...

In all these things, and with the dawn of each day, behold the beauty, truth, and goodness of the Wonderful Counselor! In your seeking, your questioning, your planning, seek the Wonderful Counselor who is Wisdom Incarnate. You cannot make a better or safer choice. He is not one voice to be weighed among many. His is the only voice that counsels you in a way that reaps eternal life and reward. His word is not to be evaluated, but obeyed. And know that he is kind and generous in revealing himself and his wisdom to those who ask in faith.

The Wonderful Counselor has a plan, and he has power to execute his plan.

He is Mighty God. Mighty God identifies him as a conquering warrior.

He is omnipotent. He is eternal. As such, in every domain, every sphere, he defeats all of his enemies, who are also our enemies. He is our champion! In Hebrews 1 (where we will feast on the word of God next Sunday), we see all his enemies made into his footstool. In Revelation 19 we see our Mighty God striking down the nations, and ruling them with a rod of iron. He is not only conquering, Mighty God, he is our conquering Mighty God, defeating our final enemy, death. Death, where is your sting? God conquered death and Hell through our Lord Jesus Christ as we are told in 1 Corinthians 15. So we are greatly helped in difficulty by this tremendously encouraging truth in

Romans 8:35–37 — ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be

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slaughtered.”³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors — super conquerors — through him who loved us.

Jesus Christ is Mighty God who conquers every foe, every enemy, delivering safely into his Kingdom!

As Wonderful Counselor, he has a perfect plan for redemption and reconciliation. As Mighty God, he has power to accomplish his plan. And as Everlasting Father, he has paternity. Paternity.

Everlasting Father

We understand the word **everlasting**, but we need to carefully understand that **Father** is not a reference to the Trinity. It is a reference to Christ giving life to his children through the new birth. Two places among many where his paternity, his bringing children to life, are noted:

Isaiah 53:10 — Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, **he shall see his offspring**; he shall prolong his days

Hebrews 2:10 — For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing **many sons to glory**, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

He will bring to life the children of God. Their lives are tied to him, because they are in him. As he lives, they live. And since he is the Everlasting Father, so those in him have everlasting life.

Prince of Peace

We mentioned last week the 2 aspects of peace: vertical peace, if you will, with God, and horizontal peace, with people from every tribe, language, people, and nations.

How is peace made? It is made when the Prince of Peace dies for his people. The kings of Israel conscripted their people to sustain and expand their reign by sending them to die in battle. This king sends no one to make peace. He gives himself on behalf of his people to make peace with God. Recall again our memory passage from last summer, Colossians 1:20 — he reconciles to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. This eternal king dies for his people, paying the penalty of sin, making peace by the blood of his cross. He is the Prince of Peace.

3. The Kingdom's Character

The Rule and Reign of This King

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end...

His reign is pervasive, overcoming, conquering, absolute. It leaves no pockets of resistance.

Illustration: Japanese soldiers in caves in the

There are many who believe they are sovereign, and that they will continue in rebellion against King Jesus. But the increase, the pervasiveness, the absolute-ness of his reign knows no end.

Every single soul will face King Jesus and will confess that he is Lord. "It is appointed to man once to die, and after that the judgement" by this Righteous Judge and Reigning King.

As we read in the Call to Worship, **Philippians 2:9-11** — **Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

His kingdom is absolute and without threat. And his kingdom is one of peace.

He makes peace with God now, ending the hostility and rebellion for those who come to him in faith and repentance now. And he ultimately brings the nations to peaceful subjection under his reign.

And concerning this peace, note that the rule of King Jesus is not one of tyranny and bondage. His rule is one of peace and freedom from the tyranny of the power and penalty of sin. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" says Jesus in **Matthew 11**. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." This is the rule and reign of the Messiah: it is the reign of peace, and it is pervasive.

Of the increase, the pervasiveness, of his reign, there will be no end.

on the throne of David and over his kingdom...

God is a covenant-keeping God. He keeps his promises forever. As we already noted, unto a son is born, and one aspect of the humanity of Christ is that David has a descendant on the throne.

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But King is not all the other kings. His kingdom is eternal. His rule and reign will not end. He will not be toppled.

He establishes his kingdom — he defines the look and character of the kingdom and kingdom citizens.

He upholds his kingdom by the counsel of his will. He is self-existent. He needs nothing. He owes no man anything, nor is he dependent on approval of any created thing.

His kingdom is just and righteous because he is just and righteous. Holiness marks his kingdom.

None of this will ever be any different. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning, the first born from the dead that in everything he may have preeminence. He is from everlasting to everlasting.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Our God will do all that he pleases. There is nothing that God wills that will not come to pass.

Salvation belongs to the Lord.

John 10:27–30 — ²⁷My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one.”

The Lord is zealous in establishing his kingdom and bringing light and life to all who come and bow to this King.

The word **zeal** is the same word for **jealous**. Listen to these words of warning to someone who is considering an adulterous relationship with another man's wife.

Proverbs 6:32–35 — He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself.

³³ He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not be wiped away.

³⁴ For jealousy makes a man furious, and he will not spare when he takes revenge.

³⁵ He will accept no compensation; he will refuse though you multiply gifts.

That kind of unrelenting jealousy is the kind of unrelenting pursuit which God seeks and saves those who are lost. He is pursuing today! But it is critical to remember:

Everything that is available in Christ is of no value to me as long as I remain apart from Christ.

It is true that eternal wisdom of God is found in Christ — wisdom to align my life and mission with what will last and give life and blessing, but apart from Christ all I have is to look to the passing earth,

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to what is spiritually dead, for insight into how to live my life. These things will ultimately be brought low before Christ, as will I, when the knee is ultimately forced to bow and confess that He is Lord. If I remain outside of Christ the death-conquering, sin-forgiving, life-giving power of Mighty God is of no value at all and I remain in the grip of sin and death.

If I am not born again into Christ I am not then adopted in Christ and remain a child of Adam. My peace has not been won by the Prince of the Peace and I remain a child of wrath.

Today, if you hear the voice of the Prince of Peace, come.

Isaiah 1:18 — “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

Isaiah 55:1 — “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Matthew 11:28 — Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Today if you hear his voice, come.

PRAY

Gospel Thread