

III. Advent in Biblical Perspective

The Messiah King

“Mighty God”

Isaiah 9:1–7

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This is God’s Word. It’s inerrant, inspired and sufficient. Isaiah 9:1–7 says [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.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

The church calendar is certainly not binding for us for there is only one holy day, one holiday that is binding upon believers and it’s the Lord’s Day every week but the church calendar does provide us some instruments and information as we bring festival focus upon the Incarnation of Christ, Holy week, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit of God – these are glorious things to use for emphasis, instruction, focus and for discipling God’s people. In our case it’s also a bridge where we can talk with people and take Christ across that bridge to them, but now I’m into four decades of advent sermons and celebrations and there is glory in repetition but there is opportunity for exploration of various ways to present things to further the depth, breadth, height and width of your joy in the Lord.

There is this spreading new thing in the Advent season throughout the evangelical church and in some PCA churches where they are introducing a Sunday during the Advent season to focus on lament. The name they have given this is Blue Christmas and if anyone like me is thinking about Elvis Presley then we should be coming under church discipline right now. It is known as Sundays of lament. I think I understand the motivation and I believe there is a place for lament in the Christian life for various reasons, which I’m very aware of that and it’s appropriate. There is certainly much to lament about but as I read the prophecies of Jesus in the Bible, it is the Advent and the Incarnation that are presented with joy that our laments had been answered by God’s grace in His Son.

For eight chapters Isaiah has laid out the lament – the unfaithfulness of God’s covenant people and where it has led them under the hand of a sovereign God and then in the short prophecy given to us in Isaiah 9:1–7 here is God’s answer. Our answers only bring further lament but His answer brings ten thousand joys – joys beyond anything that we could

contemplate, anticipate or even imagine in Jesus Christ. Here is the glorious emphasis – joy to the world, rejoice Immanuel, shepherds rejoice for a Savior has been born to you, unto us a Son is given, unto us a Child is born – this is the One who brings the joy of salvation, the joy of a Savior who cannot fail you, will not fail you and will bring all of His from their sin, gloom, lament and despair into His joy forevermore. He is our Joy. Immanuel – God with us.

Isaiah has outlined the promises that this Messiah King will accomplish and the promises that will be enjoyed in His Kingdom. Gloom shall be displaced with glorious joy. The dominion of sin will be defeated by His glorious grace. Darkness will be dismissed by His glorious light. He will establish His Kingdom and the government of that Kingdom will be on His shoulders. This Kingdom shall know no end.

After this prophecy of Isaiah, Israel is going to be swept through by the Assyrians as they take ten tribes away into almost oblivion, slavery and bondage. In about 100 to 115 years that empire will dissipate and another empire – the Babylonians – will sweep in and they will take up the last two tribes yet to be taken. They will make desolate Jerusalem and destroy the Solomonic temple as they take away all of its furnishings. They will make several other trips to bring more into slavery and oppression out of Israel. Then in about 130 to 140 years they are gone and then sweeps the Medo-Persian empire. In a little less than 100 years they will be gone and then sweeps in the Greek Empire and then in less than 75 years they'll be gone. Then sweeps in the Roman Empire and it will eventually be gone. Every nation/empire that has ever existed knows an end but His Kingdom and the increase of His Kingdom knows no end and is forever. The reason is because it rests on the shoulders of this Messiah King. Any and all who would oppress – Satan, sin, the world, the flesh, etc. – He will break their yoke. He will destroy their rod and set free His people from their oppression. He will be their Liberator, their Emancipator. He is a marvelous King.

There are marvelous prophecies. For instance, the mouth for all of those kingdoms that would come in to oppress His people for hundreds of years and then 700 years more that will sweep in through Naphtali and Zebulun, the land of Galilee. From that same place a village named Nazareth, that same land Capernaum will now come the light that dispels the darkness, the Redeemer from that same land who wins the victory over Satan, sin, hell, death and the grave. So once the land that was the mouth way of oppression, now becomes the gateway that heaven may come down and life and joy may fulfill our souls. What glorious promises, but who is this King?

He was a Child who was born – humanity, fully human. He is a Son and that's anticipating John 3:16 which says *[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.* Here is full deity. Here is the Incarnation. Here is Immanuel – God with us, God one of us, God among us, to take the place for us that we might have His emancipated victory. Who is this Messiah King? Is He able? A Child King, a Son King, of the line of David – which means He's from a forgotten tribe, Judah, a forgotten family line of Jesse. From a forgotten line of kings that no one is writing about, except holy Scripture, will be His adopted father and appointed mother – Mary and Joseph.

This Messiah King's name (singular) shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isn't that four names? No, He has one name, for this is the Christ, Jesus the Messiah, Immanuel God with us. His name is above every name. His name when called upon shall surely save and every knee shall bow. Yet here are four descriptive, arranged, interdependent, intra-dependent throne names. Those throne names describe His

name. He has many more titles than this. Do you know how many titles Jesus has in the Bible? I would say most don't but there are 280 names and titles of Jesus. Isaiah has Spirit inspired arranged the four titles that build on each other and the first one he gives us is that He is the Wonderful Counselor.

When you hear Wonderful Counselor don't think therapist. This is a throne title. This is a title of one in the court. This is usually the person who is second in command. There are three of them who are types of Christ who are in the Bible – Daniel, Nehemiah and Joseph. They all served as chief advisors – counselors to the king. One of the measurements of that day of that king was who their counselor was. There were three things in the profile of a regal counselor. One, was wisdom. Two, he was a strategic thinker. Three, he was trustworthy. He is loyal and not in it for himself. He is in for the king and for the people the king is responsible for. So, this is a titled office.

What is this Isaiah text telling us about this? That Child King, that son of David, has come as the Son of God and the Son of man, into this world and this Immanuel needs no counselor. He is His own counselor. Romans 11:33–35 says [33] *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!* [34] *“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?”* [35] *“Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?”* His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are above our thoughts. This glorious Counselor is wisdom personified. John 1:14 says [14] *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

This Jesus is not only incomparable with wisdom but of wonder. The Hebrew word translated wonderful means full of wonder. It means overflowing with wonder. There is no one who has wisdom like Him. He is above us and so glorious is His wisdom, the world counts everything from Him as foolishness, but to those who believe and are spiritual it is wisdom. The world says the preaching of Him is foolishness – going, dying, humbling oneself, laying aside glory, manifesting power through humiliation – is all foolishness according to the world. But this One has the absolute strategy – how will I remove my gloom, sin's dominion, sin's penalty of death, shame, and guilt, make the nation a royal nation that's increase is unstoppable and the praise of God and this Kingdom will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea?

According to Isaiah it will be like the days of Midian – get away 30,000, 3,000, give Me 300 for it is the sword of the Lord and Gideon. Gideon's sword was the Lord, so give Me a clay pot, a torch and a shout because the battle is the Lord's. This One who comes in foolishness and weakness to the world is the wisdom of God personified and He has made a way when there was no way for us to be saved. John 14:6 says [6] *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

Jesus not only has the wisdom, the strategy and the trustworthiness to be His own counselor and fulfill all those promises, but He will accomplish it even though the world seek to deride it. Let the world deride or pity but we will glory in His name, our Wonderful Counselor. He is the One who made this way and then when you're saved by what He has accomplished at that cross, He then begins to work in you and you receive the presence of the Wonderful Counselor as He becomes your way with His truth and He becomes your life. Jesus is not my religious additive and He will not negotiate that. He does not offer to become a part of your life for He says you have to die to yourself and then He becomes your life.

It's one thing to have wisdom, to have a strategy, to be loyal and to be trustworthy, but can He deliver? The books of history are filled with warriors and generals who had great plans

but they couldn't bring it home. They couldn't accomplish it. They had everything outlined on the blackboard but they couldn't do it. Can that Child King laying in that stone cattle trough in a dying town of Bethlehem, in a remnant nation and a forgotten line of kings, do it? Can He fulfill the promises through this strategy that He will humble Himself to the point of an atoning death on a cross, found in appearance as a man? Therefore, Isaiah says He is the Mighty God, who is strong in battle. This is the One who has come.

I say to you joy, joy, joy, ten thousand joys, yes, for there is a resounding voice that has come down from heaven. He is able for this One whom you look at in that manger, this is the Warrior King, El Shaddai, I Am God Almighty. He is the One who spoke and all the worlds came into existence. The One in that stone trough is the One who upholds the world by the Word of His power. He is God's final Word, God's spoken Word to save His people from their sins. This Word has become flesh. The whole creation from His spoken Word from nothing came something and the something exists to declare His praise and glory and He gives life and breath to all of humanity.

This is the One who is the Word that has become flesh and God has finally spoken in His Son. This is the One who has ascended and when He returns all the enemies He has defeated He will destroy them. He will roll up His enemies and their weapons and from the tumult of battle will cast it into the everlasting fire. When He comes one little Word shall fell all His enemies who will be slain by the breath of His coming. He has already come and defeated them. He is the Mighty God who has come to save us from our sins. This is God Incarnate – the Incarnation. I want to leave you with a couple of thoughts and then a takeaway.

Let's go back into the historical setting. When Jesus came the remnant of Israel that was still there gathered around Jerusalem, in Judah and Judea, they were longing like wave after wave after wave of the empires that came against them for they wanted to break the rod of the their oppressors but they didn't trust God's promises and His prophecies. They will find a way so some of them in the Bible are called Herodians who wanted to make a coalition with Herod thinking that would get it done. Then there were the Zealots who wanted to use the weapons of the world to get rid of the oppression. They thought they could accomplish it with worldly wisdom, worldly weapons and the anger of man. Then there were the Sadducees who were embarrassed by the intelligencia of the Greeks compromising Biblical truth for they didn't attempt a coalition; they just promised a cultural accommodation and sacrificed some doctrines that the world might find offensive. Perhaps that will help us get it done. Then there were the Pharisees who were called conservatives and while they were arrogant and self-serving in righteousness their ministry existed to help God get done what He was going to do and they were walking pragmatists. Their thinking was 'do we need to go make a deal with Pilot to kill this Jesus? No problem, we can make a deal there.' They were the epitome of the end justifying the means.

God's answer is not – I need a coalition so My people need to get a coalition for Me. God's answer is not accommodation or negotiation. God's answer was the Incarnation – the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God has come to save and His is the battle. His is the victory and we are the spoils of the harvest of this Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God who then becomes all of our origin, the Eternal Father as King. In Him is peace forever – Prince of Peace. How will we get rid of sin's gloom, darkness, death, dominion? We can't. He does and He needs no help from us, but we proclaim an Incarnation. Our God has come to save and is mighty to save. Rejoice O people of God with joy, joy, joy, even ten thousand joys.

Joy to the world. Joy – this is the season, not for lament for this is the season to proclaim the answer to lament. The Lord has come to the world. God so loved the world He gave His Son and in this world of rebellion and sinners, He will bring His people from every tribe and nation into His Kingdom and that government shall know no end as all the empires of this world will do and His Kingdom will never stop increasing. That government is a forever government because the zeal of the Lord will accomplish this and the zeal of the Lord is His Son. His passion was to go to that cross to fulfill it and from the throne He will come to consume it into glory.

The world is divided but we can show the joy of being one in Christ – a people who were not a people who have become the people of God. The world is in despair and goes from one idol to another, so maybe this experience, this purchase, this possession, this title, this will be the answer. I want to invite you to this Savior today. He has come to you. It is not a coalition or a negotiation, it's a surrender and you will find in Him more joy than you can ever account. His saving grace is glorious, even in a broken world. He will lift you up. He will bear you up and then He will take you up as He has gone to prepare a place for you. I plead with you to come to Him.

If you're reading this today and you don't know Him, I have been right where you are – I hadn't come to Christ, even while attending church all my growing up years. If you have not come to Christ for a personal saving relationship whereby Christ isn't an additive to life, He is your life. If you don't make that commitment today, I want to give you another invitation – I would invite you to contact me and tell me what promises does the world, Satan, sin would keep you from coming to Him. Share with me what you think bring joy instead of Him who is our joy.

As the poet Mary D. Power says;
*Worldlings prize their gems of beauty,
cling to gilded toys of dust,
boast of wealth and fame and pleasure;
only Jesus will I trust.*

I will take any amount of time to talk and pray with you about what is keeping you from a commitment to Christ. I want you to know the Joy that has come to the world, because the Lord has come.

Here is the takeaway. The Incarnation brings to us the King, who is able to emancipate all of His people from the incarceration of Satan and their sin. This King is one of a kind for there is no other King like this. He is able to break the rod and free you from the yoke of sin. He removes the guilt, shame, dominion of sin and He is the One who gives you life evermore. He is the One whom you look at as the Child Warrior King in that stone trough that 33 years after dying an atoning death will be placed in another stone trough and He will not stay there because this King wins the victory. And He is risen!

This King that you see wrapped in cloths will be stripped of a robe in order to give you a garment and robe of righteousness. As He is stripped of that on a cross then He clothes you with a robe that is impeccable as He takes away your sin and gives you life evermore. Here is the One through the government and the people of His Kingdom will rest on His shoulder as it increases and knows no end. The reason this government can rest on His shoulder is because there was a cross that He bore on those shoulders to set us free and displace our gloom, death, and despair as He broke the bonds of our sin.

Here is the One who defeats the enemies at the cross. This is the Mighty God who bound the strong man, who removes the guilt and shame of our sin. This is the Mighty God who was separated from the Father and became one of us to bear our sin to drink to the bottom all of the wrath of God for all the sins of all of His people for all of eternity. This is the Mighty God who has come to win the battle for us, not because He needed us but because He has loved us. This is the One who relentlessly and continually will bring the glory and majesty of salvation by grace in humbling Himself and this is power – the power of the Lord.

Hear Him standing after the victory of the resurrection proclaiming the satisfactory atonement as He won the victory over sin and the zeal of the Lord will now gather all of the sinners (His people) from all the nations to Himself as He says to us from Matthew 28:18–20; [18] *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Why can you go? It is because you wait to receive the Spirit of God, which is the same Spirit that was in the womb whereby He came forth – it is the same Spirit who was with Me in the Galilee, that sent Me to the cross, who brought My body out of the tomb and that Spirit from the Throne I now give to you and you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You have the power to kill sin, to pursue Christ, to pursue the lost for Christ, to love one another and not with the love of the world that is always counting the marks that it receives but the love that takes its joy in the joy of giving because of the One who gave Himself for us. He gives to us the power of grace that is greater than sin. He gives you the power of the Gospel that sets sinners free. He gives you the power of prayer where you call upon the Lord and He can do abundantly all that we ask or think according to His perfect will. He gives us the power of the cross. That is your message – to preach Christ and Him crucified where the love of God met the holiness of God, satisfied the justice of God to save sinners by the grace of God to the glory of God.

This God is an awesome God. This is our God who is mighty to save. I love that hymn *Power In the Blood* and I think we should sing it more for it says;

*There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r
In the blood of the Lamb;
There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r
In the blood of the Lamb.*

It is the power of the Kingdom and the power of our God. I also love that Getty hymn titled *The Power of the Cross* which says;

*Oh to see the dawn of the darkest day
Christ on a road to Calvary.
Tried by sinful men, torn and beaten then
Nailed to the cross of wood.*

*This the power of the cross,
Christ became sin for us, took the blame bore the wrath
we stand forgiven at the cross.*

*Oh to see the pain written on your face.
Bearing the awesome weight of sin.*

*Every bitter thought every evil did.
Crowning your blood stain brow.*

*This the power of the cross,
Christ became sin for us, took the blame bore the wrath
we stand forgiven at the cross.*

*Now the day light flees, now the ground beneath
quakes as its maker bows his head
Curtain torn into, dead are raised to file.
Finished. The victory cry.*

*This the power of the cross,
Christ became sin for us, took the blame bore the wrath
we stand forgiven at the cross.*

*Oh to see my name written in the woods.
For through your suffering I am free.
Dead are crushed to death, life is mine to live.
Won through your selfless love.*

Now we are emancipated from our incarceration to sin's darkness, gloom, death, despair and dominion. We stand forgiven at the cross. I don't see thorns on His head. I see the weight of my sins in thought, word and deed, that's what I see weighing down upon Him. He is the Mighty God able to save. The love of Christ now compels us – His passion, the zeal of the Lord now becomes our passion. Oh how I long to see, when there, your name. Will you long to see teammates, classmates, workmates, neighbors and friends – their name written on the hands of our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Everlasting Father that they may know the Prince of Peace? Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments together in Your Word. Please speak to the hearts and lives of Your people. I pray O God that You would lift up and encourage Your people that they might see their Savior afresh, somewhat anew even but see Him in His glory, grace, power and might to save. Then God for those reading this who have not yet come to Him, may they leave the momentary exhilarations of sin and the promises of the powers of the world and come to Christ in whom is life and joy for Him, not the happenstance of happiness in the world, but solid joys and lasting treasure in Christ, Amen.

Power Point

Life Takeaway

Joy to the World the Lord has come!

The Incarnation brings to us the King who is able to Emancipate all of His people from the Incarceration of Satan and their Sin.

Our God is Mighty to Save!