

ADVENT #2
Isaiah 9 - WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Christmas texts begin in Gen 3:15, but Isa has more than any other prophet. Advent links our hearts from Genesis to Isaiah to Christ.

EX: Simon and Garfunkel had many hits but one song was not too familiar -= Seven O'clock News/
Silent Night

A combo of the song and Aug 3, 1966 news events – disputes over civile rights. MLK plans for speech in Chicago, Richard Speck trial update, Protestors re: house committee on Vietnam; death of Lenny Bruce, former VP Nixon speaks about Vietnam war.

It was an effective contrast of darkness and light in society as a whole.

A similar contrast of darkness and light is reflected in the context of Isa ch 8 and 9.
Darkness is gathering for the people of God in chapter 8, and the light of hope is seen in chap 9.

REVIEW from last week, the 5 E's of Christmas.

Let the joy of Christmas give you a 5 E focus in your life.

Exalting the Father

Embrace the Son

Equipped by the Holy Spirit

Encouraging His followers

Expressing the Good News of the Gospel of the kingdom

Today we'll look at a well known passage from Isa 9

Isaiah 9

1 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 Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

2 The people who walk in darkness

Will see a great light;

Those who live in a dark land,

The light will shine on them.

3 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.

4 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.

5 For every boot of the booted warrior in the *battle* tumult,

And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.

6 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.

7 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.

CONTEXT

Motyer:

In Isa 7 the prophet defines the believing remnant as the people with hope.

Chap 8 22 speaks of the coming suffering of the people of God. There is a gloom of anguish, and they will be thrust into thick darkness.

Isaiah 8 ended in the darkness and gloom of a corrupt and wicked people who were seeking occult wisdom from mediums and rejecting the wisdom of God, people who were roaming the earth in angry despair and cursing God. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali, Galilee of the nations (Gentiles), is called a humbled land, a “people walking in darkness,” a people living “without hope and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12). (Exalting Christ in Isaiah)

Now here in chap 9 he unpacks the hope in detail:

V 1-2 Darkness is reversed

V 3-5 oppression ends, along with suffering and enmity

v. 6-7 a Wonder Child who is God ushers in the never-ending kingdom of David .

The hope is built on the action of God:

v. 4 the enemy is defeated

v. 5 the child has been born

v.6 He is in himself all that his people need: The Wonderful Counselor, supernatural in wisdom, is God himself who has come with victorious power, fatherly care, and a Princely administration of Peace.

There is freedom instead of oppression. It is a great reversal and the dawn of Hope. It is a message centered on the birth of a baby – v 6.

The prophet did not see this Wonder Child himself. His life and work were to be in the future. But so great was the baby, so mighty in prospect, so sufficient in every need that what he would yet accomplish could be spoken of as already achieved there and then by his birth.

In Matthew 4:12-16 Jesus leaves Nazareth to go to Capernaum in the region of Naphtali and Zebulun. This speaks of the fulfillment of a portion of Isa 9 and 42 – Those areas had suffered under Assyrian rule and the Jews in the area hoped for liberation from Gentile rule. “The People in darkness saw a great light.”

But there is more to this Child, who is an everlasting king.

In the ancient days, when a king took the throne, he was given throne titles, and this is what is done for Christ. The titles are to outline his mission.

EX: the throne titles would be the tweetable message that would lay out his agenda similar to what Presidents do in their Inaugural address or State of the Union speech.

The difference is that these throne titles are given before the baby is even born yet they explain who Jesus was and why he came.

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR – two aspects

WONDERFUL – used 13 times in OT and most often refers to the wonders of God:

Ex; 15, Ps 77:11,14; 78, 88, 89, 119, Isa 9, 25; Dan 12

EX: The idea is not “wonderful” as in “I know her/him. She/he is a wonderful person.” That is an exaggerated way of saying that the person is, nice, reliable, kind, likeable, etc.

Isaiah is not saying, "You will really like this counselor; he's wonderful." Yes, that may be true, but it is so much MORE than that. In the Bible, 'wonderful' carries the sense of doing the miraculous or supernatural, i.e. the wondrous works of God.

We see this in many of the texts where the word 'wonder' is used. (6382 from 6381)

Exo 15:11

10 You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11 Who is like You among the gods, O Lord?

Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?

Ps 77:11 I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.

Ps 78: 12

11 They forgot His deeds And His miracles that He had shown them.

12 He wrought wonders before their fathers In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

Ps 89:5

5 The heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord;

Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones.

In Judges 13:18 we have another interesting use of this word "wonder" and "wonderful." The angel of the Lord meets Manoah and Manoah asks his name. And the angel replies, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?" That is to say, it is so far above our natural capacity ever to comprehend; there's something supernatural and transcendent about it. (6383 from 6381)

This deeper and broader understanding of 'wonderful' is appropriate for Jesus.

The commentator E.J. Young gets at the point here rather well. He says, **"The Old Testament usage of the word compels us to the conclusion that it here designates the Messiah not merely as someone extraordinary, but as one who in His very person and being is a wonder. He is that which surpasses human thought and power. He is God Himself."**

Consider Jesus, the Eternal Word made flesh, God with us.

His conception was supernatural.

His birth was announced by angels.

As a boy, he grew in wisdom and stature in favor with God and men.

His ministry was characterized by miracles that displayed his power over nature, sickness, and Satan. He left people in awe and wonder so that it was said "He does all things well. He makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Jesus was not just 'wonderful' in the sense that he was inspiring. He provoked a sense of wonder and awe in the people around him by his presence and power.

It would take a Wonderful savior to bring the light of life into a dark world.

Isa 9:

2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light;

Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

Jesus knows that He is the great light as he says in **John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."**

The SECOND PART OF THE TITLE IS **"COUNSELOR"**

As with 'wonderful', this term is deeper and broader than the way we use the term 'counselor'.

Jesus is not our personal therapist who tries to help us come to some solutions with our life issues.

He is the King on the Throne.

In the ancient and modern world, Kings and Presidents have counselors or advisors. Some display wisdom and some are simply foolish.

The affairs of men and nations often turn on the counsel of certain key leaders. World history is filled with the poor judgement of the so called 'best and brightest' as they've led nations into pointless wars and moved societies toward misguided social or economic policies.

EX: when the best and brightest decided that there were too many people in the world, they promoted lower birth rates. As is typical with collectivist rule, they forgot to ask, "Then what?" Lower birth rates mean fewer babies, thus adults in the future to carry on the civilization that has survived for 100's or 1000's of years.

And now some nations find themselves on the edge of cultural extinction within a few generations.

So much for the wisdom of human counselors who ignore the Creator and creation mandates.

WE LIVE in a time when trust in elected officials, civic, and governmental institutions is on the decline. That may be the only thing that has bipartisan agreement in our society today.

Yet, there remains a human temptation to trust in the wisdom and power of man, i.e. our own schemes and agenda.

This was true at the time of Israel, so the Psalmist wrote...

Psalm 20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the Lord, our God.

Isaiah 11 echoes that call to trust in THE LORD – Yahweh who will raise up a righteous ruler with a spirit of wisdom and a spirit of counsel and strength.

1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

**2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.**

This is a picture of the Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge – Col 2:3.

"Veiled in flesh the godhead see, Hail the incarnate deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel"

He is truly a Wonderful Counselor for us because he took on our humanity. You can go to him and find a friend of sinners and one who shows compassion for the weak, hurt, and lonely.

Heb 4:14ff He knows our frame and our weakness. He was tempted yet without sin so He can sympathize with us.

16- Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Christ has come in the flesh, he died for our sin, He rose for our salvation, He ascended to the right hand of the Father so that we may draw near to the throne of Grace.

Friends, **Exalt in and Embrace the Wonderful Counselor.**

Draw near with confidence because He cares for you.

THE TABLE

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How does the tension between Isa 8 & 9 set up the Incarnation narrative and arrival of Christ?

In what ways is Christ “Wonderful?”

Why do we need a ‘wonderful’ Savior?

How does Jesus fulfill the role of Counselor?

What unique qualifications does he have to be our Counselor?