

The Coming King
Isaiah 9:1-6

December 23, 2018

1 But there will be no gloom for those who were 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 will make 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 lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. 3 You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. 4 For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. 5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Today's message is shorter than usual to allocate time for the special music.

I'm now going to ask you to imagine once again. Imagine hearing this Scripture for the 1st time around 700 BC. The context is very important. It is a time of the exile. The nation is divided between north and south. The prophet Isaiah is located in the south. He is in Jerusalem. If you are hearing this Scripture for the first time and you are living in the world 700 years before Christ what you receive is hope. You hear the words "there will be no gloom." This is good news! In exile there is nothing but gloom. The whole environment is full of worry, stress, anxiety, hopelessness, despondency, and desperation. So, you don't just hear the words. No, the words have a serious impact on you as they resonate in your head. You reflect upon them and carry them in your heart.

When you receive the word of God you get these wonderful concepts. God will make the land glorious, the people will see the light, and the enemies will be defeated. A child is born. A son is given with divine authority. He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Though you are conquered, held captive, defeated by a more powerful nation, and oppressed, you have hope and you reflect upon this hope.

Now imagine you are living here on earth in a different time. This time it is during the life of Jesus. You are part of the crowd and you get to see Jesus with your very own eyes, alive, and in person. You hear all the buzz about Jesus - the miracles and the lessons. Some people exalt him and praise him. Some others criticize him. At this time the words of Isaiah may be perplexing. Around you there are some people that use parts of Isaiah to understand the life and ministry of Jesus. And for those who believe, the words of Isaiah resonate within them and they reflect on what those words may mean. A child is born. A son is given with divine authority. He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

You know something truly amazing is happening. You may not understand it all at this place and time but what you do know is that the God who acted in Jesus is the God who acted in Isaiah. The God of Israel's past is the God of Israel's present. This is the one true God who we worship here today in this sanctuary. Now you don't need to imagine. Now here we are. The gloom is gone. We have the good news - the best news ever. A child is born. A son is given with divine authority. He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. We have God acting on our behalf offering salvation to us. We have the love of God given to us. We have the hope, peace, joy, and love of God.