

I. Introduction (Open to Isaiah 9.)

A. This week I came across some royal names from history: some regal, some funny.

1. Alexander "the Great": Ruled from age 20 to 32, conquered a huge area
2. Ivan "the Terrible": paranoia; had people, including family, killed; ferocious in battle
3. Charles "the Silly" (Charles 6th of France): Had bouts of hallucinations and believed he and other people were made out of glass and could shatter at any time; even had metal bars sewn into his clothes to protect himself from breaking
4. Edward "Longshanks": Edward 1st of England, (of Braveheart fame), got this nickname because he was tall. Also, he was called Edward Hammer of the Scots, for obvious reasons if you've ever seen Braveheart.
5. Ivaylo the Cabbage, Alfonso the Slobberer, John the Babymaker

B. These names often described what they had accomplished, something unique about them and even their character. These names give us some indication of what they were like or how they ruled.

C. Most kings are given royal names as a response (to who they are or what they had done). The child (we read about) in Isaiah 9 is given names as a promise. And this promise is the anchor for our hope.

D. Leading up to Isaiah 9:

1. Isaiah 8: terrible fate for Israel because of idolatry, evil, and rebellion against God. Israel chose the way of the nations over the way of God and the nation of Assyria would come in and cause immeasurable pain and hopelessness.
2. But last week (Isaiah 9:1-3), we also saw that for people who are lost in darkness and in anguish because of their alienation from God, God Himself offers light and liberation.
3. And so our response as followers of Jesus is neither pessimism or optimism.
4. The biblical profile of disciples of Jesus is hope.
 - a. That through the good and bad, which will come, there is something more. Something more substantial than wishful thinking. Something eternal.
 - b. There is a bedrock reality that because of WHO God is, our future is not only sure, it is glorious.

E. Despite the gloom of rebellion and invasion, God gives a promise: Light and joy will now be Israel's future (vs. 1-3).

II. And now, as we pick up in v. 4, Isaiah begins to show us why and how this offer of hope and a future to the people of Earth will actually be accomplished.

A. Why will light and joy be Israel's future? (vs. 4-6) Each of these verses starts with "For ..."

1. Reason 1: All tyranny will be eradicated.

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. (Isaiah 9:4)

a. Yoke: cause an animal to bear a burden. Staffs and rods were used to beat slaves into submission. These are promised to be destroyed.

b. This verse hyperlinks to two events in Israel's history

1) Liberation from Egypt in the Exodus (slavery and abuse of the oppressor) and

2) Liberation from the Midianites led by Gideon in Judges 6-8: (miraculous victory over an unbeatable enemy ... His strength)

c. Jesus Himself alludes to Him fulfilling this verse in Matthew 11:30: "For My **yoke** is easy, and My **burden** is light." In other words: "My rule is not like those you've known (oppression) ... now kindness."

2. Reason 2: All war and violence will be ended.

For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. (Isaiah 9:5)

a. Victory won by peace

1) The effect of God's intervention is that battle-gear is no longer needed. You won't need to save your battle shoes and soldier uniforms for another battle. Even the most basic of military hardware (shoes and tunics) are now utterly useless because of this child Who will bring an eternal peace.

2) John Oswalt: "How will the Lord put an end to oppression? By putting an end to the warfare upon which oppression rests. God will not supplant oppression with greater oppression, nor will He replace warfare with warfare. Instead, He will do away with wars."

b. But HOW? If you can separate your thoughts from the familiarity with this passage or the story of Jesus, The answer is SO surprising.

1) God will end all tyranny, oppression, war, and violence.

2) If you were going to make a plan to end all this evil, what would it be?

3) How?

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. (Isaiah 9:6)

B. **How** will God accomplish light, joy, freedom, and peace? The **birth of a child**

1. This person will be human. He's called a "child" and is physically born.

2. But He will also be royal. He's a kingly Son, in the line of David (v.7)
J.A. Motyer: He is born as from human parentage and given as from God."
3. In this section of Scripture, God reveals His plans through the giving of names.
 - a. Chapter 7: Virgin will give birth; His name? Immanuel (God with us)
 - b. Chapter 8: Israel will receive the consequences of their rebellion. Isaiah is told to name his son: Maher-shalal-hash-baz; "Quickly spoil, quickly plunder" indicating that this is what Assyria will do to Israel.
 - c. 1 Kings 17: we see the historical account of this invasion and all through the book of 1 Kings we see this principle: "As the king goes, so goes the people."
 - d. But hope is not lost, because we have Isaiah chapter 9. We have a **new** King, and once again, "As THIS King goes, so will His people!"
4. Isaiah 9 child's name: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 - a. So in Isaiah 8, we see a rebellious Israel, led by rebellious kings being led into gloom and anguish, but in Isaiah 9, we see the promise of a faithful King Who will lead Israel AND the other nations of the world (gentiles) into a glorious future.
 - b. He is able to do this because of WHO He is and WHAT He is like.

III. The Names that Promise our King

A. Wonderful Counselor

1. Literally wonder-counselor. The idea being that there is a supernatural quality to His wisdom and leading. This is not mere cleverness or intelligence. He is supernaturally equipped to discern and act wisely.
2. "Counselor" not meaning "Therapist," but rather, counsel in the way of "wise counsel." This child's knowledge, strategy and wisdom will be supreme, to the extent that when He speaks His wisdom, it will evoke wonder and awe in those who receive it.

B. Mighty God

1. His power and might will be that of God's because He IS God.
2. This child is not like other children. When has a baby ever been "mighty"? When has any other child in Scripture been given the title "God"? This child will be divine.

C. Everlasting Father

1. He will lead His family with strength and care forever.
2. This "Son" will nurture the family that His Father gives Him as His Father would. (John 14: Philip "Show us the Father" ... "He who has seen me has seen the Father")

3. Everlasting: This is also different from every other child or king that has ever been. This child will be everlasting, eternal. His leading and shepherding of His family does not come and go like the lifespan of a typical earthly father. His gracious, wise, nurturing care over His people never ends.
- D. Prince of Peace: He is royalty Whose reign results in peace.
1. Prince is a royal word. It also shows a family relation to another King. So this child that is to be born is royal, because He is the Son of royalty. This will be God's Son, sitting on the throne of David, His royal great-grandfather.
 2. And the outcome of His royal rule will be Shalom; peace between God and man, and peace between all people.
 3. All that has been said up to this point coalesces into this name: Prince of Peace. This supernaturally wise, mighty, divine, loving King will bring everlasting shalom, eternal peace.
 4. These are this child's throne-names, His royal titles, but what is the name we call Him by? At this point in time it's not a surprise but let's connect the dots from a scriptural standpoint.
- E. 700 years later, the Apostle Matthew answered this question, drawing upon the prophecy of Isaiah:
- "She will bear a son, and you shall call His name JESUS [Yeshua, Yahweh Saves], for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet [Here he quotes Isaiah 7:14]: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" [which means, God with us]. (Matthew 1:21-23)*
1. We also see in v.6 that "The government will be on His shoulder."
 2. This promised King, Jesus, will bear the entire burden of world government on His shoulders alone.
 - a. All authority will be His.
 - b. And because He will wield all authority perfectly, the entire creation will benefit from the justice and mercy of the King.
 3. In His first coming, the government on His shoulder took the form of a cross.
 4. In His second coming, it will take the form of complete authority: He will sit on a royal throne and rule the world with perfect justice and peace.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Here's what it boils down to for you and me. What do you hope in?
- B. The more we know and trust Jesus' character, the more joyful confidence we will have in the future He is ushering in.
- C. I hear a lot of talk in Christian circles, sometimes coming out of my own mouth about "The world going to hell in a hand basket."

1. And while there is plenty happening in this world to make us legitimately feel that way, I firmly believe that *landing there* is completely incompatible with the teaching of Scripture.
 2. This kind of hopeless thinking is an incredibly passive, weak, and short-sighted view of God and history.
 3. Certainly there is deep wickedness and horror in this world, and if I'm reading the Scriptures rightly, it will get worse before it gets solved.
- D. But we must NEVER FORGET: It is GOD Who reigns over all things everywhere.
1. It is His divine holiness and love that is ultimately sculpting the course of history. It is HIS Character, HIS righteous wisdom and justice, HIS love and mercy that will determine the future, not those who foolishly stumble in the dark or those who oppose Him.
 2. The direction of the future is being shaped by an all-powerful King Who is both just and loving. The final outcome will be a complete reflection of His wise, mighty, eternal, fatherly, peace-making character.
- E. So why do we HOPE? Because the future of our world will be shaped by the character of our King.
1. "But have you seen the condition of our world?!" To this, my answer is, "Yes, but have you seen the character of our KING?"
 2. I think one of the mistakes we make about Christmas is NOT overemphasizing its importance, but rather underemphasizing its TRAJECTORY.
 3. The birth of Jesus set the world on a course to an unimaginably glorious future.
- F. So hope is NOT about statistics, about the odds of things getting better or worse. It's not about the possibility of pandemics, natural disasters, or the whims of political leaders. Hope is so much deeper than all that. Hope is assurance that God will prevail because His just and loving nature demands it. If God is Who He is, it can be no other way. So our hope isn't ever about the odds being stacked in our favor.
- G. Hope is anchored in the absolute assurance that God's unchanging nature will bring about God's invincible will.
- V. Communion

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-28)

- A. Our Prince of Peace is coming again. And so every Sunday that we come together, part of our practice is to share this meal that He established, remembering that “the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53)
- B. Let’s take a moment to examine ourselves as we are instructed in 1 Corinthians 11. We should confess our sin and ask our Savior to heal any wicked way in us. And then let us remember that it is HIS character and HIS work that bring us peace with God the Father, not our own. Take some moments to examine your heart and come to a place of deep gratitude to our Prince of Peace.