

Isaiah 9:2-3, 6-7

- 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.
- 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.
- 7 His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

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- Isaiah here moves from judgment to promise. And OH! what a promise it is!
 - These verses are some of the most difficult to interpret in the entire Old Testament, and there are many differences of opinion concerning how they should be translated—much less how they should be interpreted.
 - What is clear to me is that Isaiah’s prophecy contrasts the fear, the despair, and the darkness the covenant people suffered as they were tossed and tormented by pagan nations with the coming triumph of hope.
 - The Working Preacher adds:
“*[T]he deeper issue is something that almost every believer struggles with at one time or another: Divine silence, and the seemingly interminable wait for divine action.*”
 - I couldn’t help but remember what Jesus said about “birth pangs” in Mark 13.

- 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.*

- Those who “walked in darkness” refers to Galilee specifically and Israel and Judah in general.
- This prophecy is set during the reign of of the weak and wicked Ahaz—always under the fear of foreign domination or destruction.
- The “darkness” undoubtedly includes the devastation left in the wake of the armies of Assyria. See Isaiah 8:21-22:

- 21 *They will pass through the land,
greatly distressed and hungry; when
they are hungry, they will be enraged
and will curse their king and their
gods. They will turn their faces
upward,*
- 22 *or they will look to the earth, but will
see only distress and darkness, the
gloom of anguish; and they will be
thrust into thick darkness.*

- They had been wandering in the “valley of the shadow of death” (Psalm 23:4; Job 3:5;) but now there is good news to tell!
- The brightest light often emerges from the deepest darkness!
- The prophet sees the people returning to their God and their covenant faith!
- There are obvious parallels here to the later emergence of Jesus Christ in Galilee.
- To the mind and heart of the Christian, this prophecy, though set in the present, was only fulfilled 700 years later!

- 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.*

- The joy is not only spiritual, but a joy in prosperity and in population growth.
- The promise of God to Abraham is fulfilled!
- The prophet foreshadows the increase in believers when the great light of Christ comes to the nation.
- Israel is exalted, as even Gentiles turn to the Lord.

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.*

- There cannot be a kingdom rebirth without the birth of a king!
- No earthly child or king could ever fulfill these lofty and majestic expectations. Isaiah is filled with prophetic inspiration and speaks words of life that transcend all time and circumstances.
- Jewish and Christian scholars agree that vs. 6 refers to the coming Messiah.
- The Hebrew for God used here is *El*, and it is only ever used in the Old Testament in the highest sense of deity or God-ness.
- Note that every attribute of the Trinity is here represented.
- The Hebrew for “everlasting father” could be translated the “eternally faithful father.”

7 *His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

- The sense of verse 7 is that the reality of the kingdom will be made ever more manifest, and that there will be a regenerative quality about it.
- We're still waiting for the “endless peace!”
- In what ways do we experience in Christ a peace that never ends?
- The legitimacy of the Lord's reign is not found in power, but rather in the moral and ethical imperatives of justice, righteousness, and peace.
- This is the first mention in Isaiah that the emerging Messiah will be of Davidic lineage.
- The “zeal” of God could be translated as a “jealous love.”