

# (Isaiah) the Glory of the Messiah's Reign

by David Guzik

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*David Guzik's sermon explores the prophetic significance of Isaiah 9, highlighting the hope and joy brought by the Messiah's reign amidst darkness and oppression.*

**Duration:** 1:01:26

**Scripture:** Isaiah 1:23, Isaiah 9:1-3, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 10:1-2, Isaiah 10:4

**Topics:** "Social Justice", "Gods Judgment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the issue of unfairness and exploitation in society. He condemns those who take advantage of the weak and vulnerable, such as the poor, widows, and orphans. The preacher warns that those who have forsaken others in their time of need will find themselves without help when they face their own day of punishment and desolation. The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking justice and helping those in need, and warns that God's anger will continue until righteousness is restored.

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## Transcript

Isaiah chapter 9, beginning at verse 1. Nevertheless, the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed when at first he lightly esteemed the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward more heavily oppressed her by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan in Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, and those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. Isaiah chapter 9, begins at verse 1, speaking about the gloom.

And the gloom carries over from Isaiah chapter 8, where Isaiah the prophet was warning the southern kingdom of Judah. I don't mean to over-explain this, but I think many of us just don't think this way in our mind. We need to remember that not very long into Israel's history under their kings, you had three kings over a united Israel, Saul, David, and Solomon.

But after Solomon, there was a civil war in the nation of Israel, and the people of God divided into two different nations. The northern nation, known as Israel, and the southern nation, known as Judah. And in Isaiah chapter 8, Isaiah has been speaking to the southern nation of Judah, warning them, announcing great destruction and judgment coming upon them.

If you want to take a look at the last few verses of chapter 8, it will give you a feeling of this. It says in verse 21, and they will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry. It shall happen when they are hungry,

they shall be enraged and curse their king and their God and look upward.

Then they will look to the earth and see trouble and darkness, gloom and anguish, and they will be driven into darkness. Not a very pretty picture at the end of Isaiah chapter 8, but speaking of the darkness and the judgment coming upon the land of Judah, because they trusted in another nation, in a superpower, instead of trusting in the Lord. The invasion of the Assyrians would be terrible for the Jewish people, but especially the terror would be concentrated in the northern part of the promised land.

He says here in verse 1, the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. This was the area around the Sea of Galilee, and this northern area of the promised land was the one first and most severely inflicted by the invasions that came down from the north. And in the context, the promise of Isaiah 9.1 is all the more precious.

The gloom will not be upon her who is distressed. The northern regions of the promised land around the Sea of Galilee, called here Galilee of the Gentiles, they were the most severely ravaged when the Assyrians invaded the land. But the promise is that this land, if you look at verse 1, it says, lightly esteemed.

It seemed that this land was lightly esteemed by the Lord. Lord, you're not protecting it. You're not guarding it.

You let it get devastated by an invasion. You must not esteem this land very greatly, yet in the midst of this terrible calamity coming upon this region, God will have a special blessing for it. And look at it, verse 2, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. Yes, it's true that in these coming invasions that Isaiah was prophesying of, that the northern lands around Galilee, they suffered the worst of it. They received the brunt of the Assyrian invasions, but God had a special blessing for those lands.

They would also receive most of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Do you understand that it was around the region of Galilee and the areas and the provinces around the city of Galilee that Jesus did most of his ministry, most of his miracles, most of his teaching? Yes, he visited Jerusalem occasionally, but he was a man from Galilee. And God says, here's a special blessing for you.

You're going to see the light of the Messiah first and most brightly. As a matter of fact, Matthew chapter 4, verses 13 through 16 quotes this passage as clearly fulfilled in the Galilean ministry of Jesus. And since the majority of Jesus's ministry took place in this area, God certainly did have a special blessing for this once lightly esteemed land.

Now he's given it a special blessing and a glorious place in his plan. And then it just goes to even more joy in verse three, where it says you multiplied the nation and increased its joy. They rejoiced before you according to the joy of harvest as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

Can you get the picture there? You've multiplied the nation and increased its joy. Well, how joyful is it? There's all different degrees of joy, I suppose. There's the little tiny smile that sort of cracks your face and oh, isn't that nice? All the way to the jumping around, I can't believe it, I can't stand my seat, I'm so happy.

That's the kind of joy he's talking about here. He's talking about the joy according to the time of harvest. Can you imagine how wonderful it is when the harvest comes in, when all your hard work is fulfilled and it's paid off? You've worked for months and months planting and weeding and watering and taking care and the scraps going up.

You've driven away the pests, you've done everything you can. And now it's time for the harvest. Now it comes in.

Now your hard work is rewarded. Sure it's hard work doing the harvesting, but you're pumped, you're excited. It's like, yes, it's fulfilled now.

We're happy. That's the kind of joy he's talking about. Then he speaks of the joy as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

Here are the pictures after a battle. The battle's over and you've won and your enemies are lying slain on the ground and they've left their camp and they've left their cities and they've left their plunder. And you know what you're doing? Now it's time for them to get the plunder.

Now you're going in and you divide it up. There's a big pile of treasure that you've taken from your enemy and you're dividing it up. Friends, is that a happy time or a sad time? You're pumped, your life has been spared, you've had victory over your enemy and here's the fruits of your victory.

You're filled with joy. You know what it would be like? You know if Isaiah was writing today, what he'd probably say? It's like the locker room after the championship is won. You look, oh, hooting and hollering and the champagne's going everywhere, oh, they're all so excited, they're all so happy.

That's what he'd say it's like. The victory's won, everybody's excited, it's time for the celebration. That's the kind of joy that God wants to bring to His people because of the salvation of Jesus Christ.

He goes on here, verse four, for you've broken the yoke of His burden and the staff of His shoulder, the rod of His oppressor, as in the day of Midian, for every warrior sandaled from the noising battle and the garments rolled in blood will be used for burning and fuel of fire. He also likens this great joy, this great victory to the victory in the day of Midian. You know what he's alluding to there? I would almost ask for a response, but maybe if you knew this ahead of time, if you knew what this was ahead of time, you come up to me after and say, Pastor David, I knew what that one was.

As in the day of Midian, he's referring to the victory of the people of God in the days of Gideon, when they were oppressed by the Midianites. But friends, that was a glorious victory. That was a get excited, get up out of your chair.

The people of God were oppressed. It said that the Midianites were like a swarm of locusts all over the people of God. You couldn't even go out and do your farming out in the open because of the Midianites saw that you had anything.

They'd come and take it from you. And God raised up an unlikely man and put him in an unlikely place with an unlikely army with unlikely weapons. And he used them to accomplish a tremendous, incredible, miraculous victory.

And that was exciting times. That was joy. And he said it would be as in the day of Midian.

And by the way, the victory in the day of Midian was a complete victory. Do you notice this at the end of verse five? He talks about every warrior's sandals, the garments rolled in blood will be used for burning and fuel of fire. That means the battle's over.

The clothes of your enemies are left scattered on the field of battle, you gather them up in a pile and you burn them. That's what you do when the battle's finished and you had won. The battle's over, the victory's won.

It's time for rejoicing. Friends, each of these promises, the references to great joy, the breaking of the yoke of his burden and the rod of his oppressor and the complete victory over all enemies has spiritual application to Jesus's work in our lives. These things are ours in Jesus.

If you have a yoke of oppression in your life, Jesus Christ wants to break that burden. If you feel the rod of an oppressor, you know what a rod is, don't you? It's a whooping stick. You feel like you're on the business end of the devil's whooping stick in your life.

Friends, God wants to break that. He wants to give you this victory. Now, think about this.

This is this is Jesus's victory. When is Jesus sad? When is Jesus worried? When is Jesus afraid? You think he's fretting up in heaven right now? You think he's scratching his head? What am I going to do now? When does Jesus groan under the yoke of his burden? When does Jesus feel the sting of the rod of his oppressor? When is Jesus's victory incomplete? Friends, the risen, glorified, ascended Jesus experiences none of these things. And he has, I'm going to quote from Ephesians now, he has raised us up together and made us sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

We are in Jesus Christ, we share in his victory, we are, you know it from Romans 8, more than conquerors through him who loved us. That's the kind of victory that's mean, that's the light that's being shown. And I just love it.

In this book of Isaiah, we just got out of a picture of gloom and darkness and judgment and desolation and fear and smoke and burning in chapter eight. And then right next to it, Isaiah says, let's take a look at the glory of the Lord. Let's take a look at the power of his victory and what he wants to work in our lives.

He wants to break burdens. He wants to take away the rod of the oppressor. He wants a complete victory, a joyful victory.

And how is it going to be accomplished? Not by us, not by our efforts, not by our intentions. Friends, it's accomplished in us, but not by us. Who is it accomplished by? Look at verse six.

I'm going to read verses six and seven together. And we're going to spend a couple of hours in those two verses together. For unto us, a child is born unto us, a son is given and the government will be upon his shoulder and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace of the increase of his government and peace.

There will be no end upon the throne of David and over his kingdom to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward. Even forever, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Friends, I want you to notice the first two lines of verse six.

For unto us, a child is born unto us, a son is given. You recognize that, of course, from Christmastime and Christmas carols. But most straightforwardly here, Isaiah is using the Hebrew literary tool of repetition to emphasize the point.

The child is born, the son is given, it's emphasizing the same point at the same time we recognize the hand of the Holy Spirit in the specific wording. It means something when it says for unto us, a child is born. This glorious prophecy of the birth of the Messiah reminds Israel and it reminds us that the victory bringing Messiah would be a man.

Now, theoretically, the Messiah could have been an angel or theoretically, the Messiah could have been God without adding humanity to his deity. There are many instances in the Old Testament where God appears in human form without actually being human, as an angel might appear in human form. And God could have done that, but that's not what happened.

Friends, the child was born. Neither of those options would have qualified the Messiah to be our savior and high priest. If he was an angel, he couldn't have been our high priest.

If he was just God, he couldn't have been our high priest and our savior. No, friends, the child had to be born. And friends, what amazing mystery this is.

Think about it. There's nothing more weak, more helpless, more dependent than a child. Now, theoretically, the Messiah could have come as a full grown man, created as an adult, even as Adam was created.

Who would know? Who would care? Would the death of Jesus on the cross be any less precious to us? No, but the fullness of his work would not be the same on our behalf. My friends, he came as a child unto us. A child is born.

For Jesus fully to identify with humanity and to display in his life the servant nature that as in God, he made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond serving and coming in the likeness of man. What an amazing love for God to condescend to come as a little baby with all the limitations, with all the helplessness. But he did it unto us, a child is born.

But that doesn't tell the whole story. Also, it says there in verse six that unto us a son is given. The child would be a man, but more than a man, he's also the eternal son of God, the second person of the Godhead.

Now, theoretically, the Messiah didn't have to be God. He might have been a sinless angel or perhaps merely a perfect man like Adam. But in reality, neither of those options would have qualified the Messiah to be our savior and high priest as Jesus was.

The son had to be given. And friends, what a glorious truth. We need a perfect, infinite being to offer a perfect, infinite atonement for our sins.

We need Emmanuel. God is with us. Friends, the child could be born because the humanity of Jesus had a starting point.

When something is born, it means it wasn't there at one time, right? It had a beginning place. And friends, the humanity of Jesus Christ had a beginning. There was a time when humanity was not added to his

deity.

There was a time when it was merely the son of God, the second person of the Trinity. The son had to be given because the second person of the Trinity is eternal and he existed forever as the son, even before adding humanity to his deity. And friends, while Isaiah may have intended the repetition merely for the sake of emphasis, we rejoice in the Holy Spirit's guidance in every word.

Jesus, the Messiah, is fully man. The son is born and he's fully God. Excuse me.

The child is born and fully God. The son is given. There was a point in time when the eternal son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, added humanity to his deity.

He never became less God, but he added a human nature to his divine nature. And so became one person with two distinct natures functioning together in perfect harmony. And Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man.

And might I tell you that he remained a man eternally. Jesus did not relinquish his humanity on his ascension, but he's now a man in a resurrection body, as we one day will have. You understand what that means? It means that humanity and deity are compatible.

They're not like oil and water because they mixed in Jesus Christ. It means something that we are made in the image of God. It means that we're compatible with God.

We are not God, please. Nobody think that. We are not God, but we're compatible with them in a way that angelic beings are not, in a way that animal beings are not.

But human beings are compatible with God. It also means that there's nothing wrong with our humanity in and of itself. How many times have you said it? Well, I'm only human.

Do you understand your humanity isn't the problem? Jesus was only human and he was sinless, my friends. Now, if we would be honest, if we would be accurate, we'd say, I'm only fallen. Because that could be true of every one of us.

It's not our humanity that's the problem. It's our fallenness. Friends, if Jesus were not fully man, he could not stand in the place of sinful men and be a substitute for the punishment man deserves.

But if he were not fully God, his sacrifice would be insufficient. If Jesus is not fully God and fully man, we are lost in our sins. But he is.

He is the child who was born. He is the son who was given. Look at the promise.

And the government will be upon his shoulder. How do you feel about our government right now? This kind of turns your stomach, doesn't it? Let me tell you, I'm all for a good government. I'm all for the government that will be upon his shoulder.

Now, ultimately, this will be fulfilled in the millennium when Jesus Christ will rule the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. I can take you to Revelation. I can take you to Psalms.

I can take you to Isaiah. I can take you to Zechariah. I can take you to Jeremiah.

I can take you to Ezekiel. I can take you just about anywhere you want to go in the Bible. It speaks about this millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

So the ultimate fulfillment of this promise is still waiting. There will come a day when Jesus Christ will take the government of this earth upon his shoulders and he will rule this earth as King of the world. Friends, the government is upon his shoulder in many ways right now.

Our good friend, Gail Irwin, writes about the government God promises both ultimately now and right now. I'm going to read you a little excerpt from his latest newsletter because by the goodness of God, he was talking about this exact verse. Gail writes, What might such a government look like? First of all, it would look like it's King.

Politicians of this day look for what they can get from you. Jesus looks for what he can do for you. Leaders of this day surround themselves with servants.

Jesus surrounds us with his servanthood. Leaders of this day use their power to build their empire. Jesus uses his power to wash our feet and make us clean and comfortable.

Leaders of this day trade their influence for money. God so loved the world that he gave. Generals of this day need regular wars to keep their weapons and skills up to date and to ensure their own advancement.

Jesus brings peace and rest to hearts. The higher the plane of importance one reaches in this world, the more inaccessible he becomes. Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us.

Leaders of this day are desperate to be seen and heard. Jesus sought anonymity so that he could be useful. Obviously, Jesus is not in charge of the halls of Washington, London, Moscow, Baghdad, Paris, or Bonn.

So how can we ever believe that government will be upon his shoulders? Actually, his government shows its workings in wonderful ways. Whenever I see someone who miraculously leaves a life of drugs or alcohol and is restored to his family and work, I can see that he is now governed by God. Whenever I see loving Christians gently caring for orphans and those rejected by family, I know I'm watching people governed by God.

Whenever I see people eagerly learning the Bible and joyously praising, I know who the governor is. Whenever I see people give up lucrative careers simply to go and share the good news of Jesus, I know they are governed by God. When I see pastors carefully teach and lead the flock of God that he's given them, I know they're getting their signals from the great King.

When I see people leave family to live and teach in distant lands because they love the people who have not heard, I know that they are governed by God. So indeed, the government is alive and working. Often silently, mostly unseen, we can be and are by choice governed by God.

Hope and joy and peace and rest cover its subjects, just as mercy and grace amazingly coexist. I like this kingdom. The borders are open.

Come on in. Friends, we can be governed by God. The government will be upon his shoulders one day.

It's going to be ultimately true for everyone. Friends, it can be in your life and among you right now. The government will be upon his shoulder and his name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Now, some people have said, now wait a minute, this couldn't be Jesus because his name wasn't Wonderful. No, my friends, the idea is not that these will be the literal names of the Messiah. Instead, these are aspects of his character.

They describe who he is and what he's come to do. In the thinking of that part of the world in the ancient times, a name just didn't identify a person's tag or handle. It expressed the very nature of their being, described who they were.

Friends, these titles ought to be written down deeply in our heart. I hope you don't know my Savior merely as Jesus. Well, I want you to know the name Jesus and I want it to be sweet to you.

But do you know him as Wonderful? Do you know him as Counselor? Do you know him as Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace? You see, there's far more for you to know than just the name Jesus. And let's start with the first one there in verse 6. His name will be called Wonderful. The Messiah is Wonderful.

The glory of who he is and what he's done for us should fill us with wonder. You can never really look at Jesus and know him and be bored. He's Wonderful.

And he'll fill your heart with mind and with amazement. The word Wonderful there also has an element of the miraculous in it. He's a miracle.

He's glorious. Filled with wonder and power. Do you know that, Jesus? Not only that, he's our Counselor.

His name shall be called Wonderful. Counselor. Jesus is the one fit to guide our lives.

And he should be the Christian's immediate resource as a Counselor. Too many of us are like the woman who had the issue of blood. We go to everybody else first and find out they can't help us.

And when we've exhausted every other possibility, then we go to Jesus. Friends, Jesus wants to be your first resource, not your last resort. Jesus can help you with your problems.

Now, he may use the presence and the words of another Christian to do it. But Jesus is our Counselor. How we need Jesus as our Counselor.

Do you realize that it was by a Counselor that this world was ruined? Do you hear the sickening, deceptive counsel that Satan whispers into the ear of Eve in the Garden of Eden? He's counseling her. Let me give you some advice. Eat of the tree.

And the day you eat of it, you'll know, you'll be as gods. There's counsel, there's counsel, but it's evil counsel. Friends, it was fitting that if a Counselor destroyed this world, that a Wonderful Counselor would come to restore it.

Jesus is our Counselor, more in the sense that he's the kind of guy you make an appointment with and he helps you with his problems. You know, the word Counselor has a much larger meaning than that. It also denotes someone who sits at a council, who makes decisions among a council of people.

He's a council member. And Jesus sits at the High Council of the Godhead and takes counsel with the Father and the Holy Spirit for our good. The High Council of the Godhead brought forth your salvation.

Charles Spurgeon wrote. Hence you read in the book of Zechariah, if you turn to the sixth chapter and the thirteenth verse, this passage, quote, The Council of Peace shall be between them both. The son of God with his father and the spirit ordained the Council of Peace.

Thus it was arranged. The son must suffer. He must be the substitute, must bear his people's sins and be punished in their stead.

The father must accept the son substitution and allow his people to go free because Christ has paid their debts. The spirit of the living God must then cleanse the people whom the blood has pardoned. And so they must be accepted before the presence of God, even the father.

That was the result of the great counsel. Jesus Christ is our counselor. He sat in the High Council of the Godhead and mapped out our salvation.

Friends, the High Council of the Godhead guides our lives. Do you know that? There's nothing that happens in your life that was not, first of all, devised in eternity and counseled by Jesus Christ for your good and on your behalf. Friends, the ways of God and His providence seem so strange to us, doesn't it? For us, it seems like the outworking of God's plan is like a pinball going between the bumper, zigzagging this way and that.

What are you doing, God? No, I thought we were going this way. No, that direction. No, what are you doing, God? I don't understand any of this.

Friends, but to God, do you know how it looks to Him? It's a straight line. Because I know where I'm taking them. To us, it looks like zigzagging, going everywhere.

Backward, forward, side to side. What are you doing, Lord? God says, no, it's a straight line. I know what I'm doing.

God always directly goes to His object. And yet to us, He often seems to be going round about or in circles. Friends, can you leave God's plan in the hands of the wonderful counselor? He knows what He's doing.

But Jesus' counsel for us is also a personal counsel. It's not just that Jesus sits at the high counsel of the Godhead in heaven. But He also wants to sit across the table with you with a cup of coffee.

And hear your problems. And give you His counsel. You know, Jesus' counsel is necessary counsel.

You need it. Stop making those decisions on your own. There's wisdom in a multitude of counselors.

And that doesn't mean shopping about for every opinion you can find. Why don't you seek the counsel of the great counselor first? The wonderful counselor. Jesus' counsel is faithful counsel without any self-interest.

You ever go to a car salesman for counsel about what car you should buy? You have this funny feeling that they're not exactly a faithful counselor. That maybe there's some self-interest in there. That maybe they're trying to sell you the thing that has a better profit margin for them.

You take counsel with people like that all the time. Oh, they're ready to give you advice. But you wonder, is their advice in their self-interest or in mine? Friends, the advice, the counsel Jesus Christ gives you is always in your self-interest.

He loves you. He cares for you. He's a faithful counselor.

But he also gives us what we might call hardy counsel. Maybe you've gone to an accountant or a lawyer for advice. And they say, well, you need to do this and this and this and this.

And they're just very monotone. Well, you know, this and this and this. And then you'll be left without a penny and then everything will be gone.

You're like, what? Well, yes, I just thought you knew. Well, can't you feel a little hard for me? No, that's not my job. I'm here to lay out the facts.

I'm here to tell you what to do. I'm here to give you the counsel. I'm not here to feel for you.

Friends, when Jesus Christ gives you counsel, he feels for you. His heart is with you. It's not detached.

It's not analytical. It's not off the lawyer's pad. It's not off the accountant's ledger.

It's counsel from the heart. But, friends, Jesus' counsel is sweet counsel. You know what it's like to receive the sweet counsel of Jesus? Charles Spurgeon preached and he said, It's Christian.

Do you know what sweet counsel is? You've gone to your master in the day of trouble and in the secret of your chamber. You've poured out your heart before him. And you felt, though Christ was not there in flesh and blood, yet he was there in spirit and he counseled you.

You felt that his was counsel that was from the heart, very heart. But it was something better than that. There was such a sweetness coming with his counsel, such a radiance of love, such a fullness of fellowship, that you said, Oh, if I were in trouble every day, I might have such a sweet counsel as this.

Christ is the counselor whom I desire to consult every hour and would that I would sit in his secret chamber all day and all night long because to counsel with him is to have sweet counsel, hearty counsel, wise counsel, all at the same time. And you might have a friend who gives you sweet counsel. You turn to them in a time of trouble and say, Oh, oh, oh, put your arms around me.

Oh, oh. And then they give you advice and their advice isn't worth a nickel. But, man, they feel for you.

Oh, they're there for you. Then you've got those other friends, right? Oh, boy, they've got the advice, right? Boy, what you need to do is A, B, C, and get with it now. It's like, man, where's the compassion? I mean, where's the heart? Friends, you go to Jesus, you get everything.

You get wisdom. You get love. You get sympathy.

You get everything that you can possibly want in a counselor. And he shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God. Isn't it glorious? He's the God of all creation and glory, the Lord who reigns in heaven, the one worthy of our worship and our praise.

Could there be a more straightforward declaration of the deity of the Messiah? Yet it's amazing that some groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, try to make a distinction. Check this out. They make a distinction,

or want to make a distinction, between Mighty God and Almighty God.

As if Jesus is Mighty God, but he's not Almighty God. Scripture, there is no distinction. And did you know that both titles are used of Jesus and Yahweh specifically? Matter of fact, in Isaiah 1021, the prophet uses the exact same phrase to refer to Yahweh, and he calls him the Mighty God.

Friends, this is a clear statement of absolute deity. So what do we do with those? They reject the deity of Jesus Christ. Friends, we extend the right hand of fellowship to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, but we will not exchange Christian greetings with those who deny that he is very God of very God, who deny that Jesus Christ is the Lord God Almighty.

You might say, well, that's awfully partisan of you, pastor. That's awfully sectarian. If I look at this fine, upstanding, moral person, they just have a difference of opinion about Jesus.

You're splitting theological hairs. Why can't you put your arm around that Jehovah's Witness? Why can't you put your arm around that Latter-day Saint and say we're brothers in Jesus Christ? We cannot. We will not.

And let me tell you why. They have no right to complain of us, seeing that they charge us with idolatry. Do you understand that? We unashamedly worship Jesus Christ.

And if he is not very God of very God, if he is not God Almighty, then they rightly accuse us of idolatry. And how dare they openly call us idolaters and then act as if that can be glossed over and extend some sort of right hand of fellowship to us. Friends, if Jesus Christ is not God Almighty, this is no small issue.

This is no theological hair splitting. This determines the nature of the very God we serve. Friends, he is God.

He is Almighty God. He is the Lord God Omnipotent who reigns. And let me remind you of this, that if Jesus Christ is not God, then his death, far from being a satisfaction for sin, then his death was rightly and richly deserved.

Jesus Christ was sent to the cross because he claimed to be God. And if he was not God, then he deserved to die as a blasphemer and a criminal. And not one drop of his blood atoned for any sin of yours or of any sin of mine.

He stood before the recognized and authorized legislature of his country. He was brought before the Sanhedrin, charged with blasphemy, and upon that charge they condemned him to die. If he is not God, then he deserved it.

Friends, if he is, there is infinite atoning power in the blood of Jesus Christ, who is wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, Everlasting Father. This trips up many people. They scratch their head and say, now wait a minute, I thought he was the Son, not the Father.

How does that relate? The idea in these Hebrew words is that Jesus is the source or the author of all eternity. He is the Creator himself. It does not mean that Jesus himself is the person of the Father and the Trinity.

There is a distinction between the Father and the Son. When Jesus prayed to his Father in Heaven, he was not praying to himself. He was praying to God, the Father in Heaven.

So when it says Everlasting Father, it talks about Jesus being the source, the origin, the Creator of all eternity. And then he is also the Prince of Peace, the one who makes peace. You need life, excuse me, you need peace in your life, you need the reign of the Prince of Peace.

John Calvin wrote, whenever it appears to us that everything is in a terrible condition, let us remember that Jesus is called wonderful because he has inconceivable methods of assisting us and because his power is far beyond what we are able to think of. When we need counsel, let us remember that he is the counselor. When we need strength, let us remember that he is mighty and strong.

When new terrors spring up suddenly from every instant, and when many deaths threaten us from various quarters, let us rely on that eternity of which he is with good reason called the Father. And by the same comfort, let us learn to soothe all temporal distresses. When we are inwardly tossed by various tempests and when Satan attempts to disturb our consciences, let us remember that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and that it is easy for him to quickly soothe our uneasy feelings.

Thus will these titles confirm us more and more in the faith of Christ and fortify us against Satan and against hell itself. So here's the question. It says, and his name will be called wonderful, counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Do you call him those names? I'm not saying you know them. I'm not saying could you score well on a multiple choice test saying those titles belong to Jesus Christ. I'm saying do you call him those names in your life? Is he wonderful to you? Is he your counselor? Is he your mighty God? Is he your everlasting Father? Is he the Prince of your Peace? I think we just shouldn't leave here tonight without saying within our hearts, I'm going to call him that.

It doesn't matter to me if no one in my family, if no one at my workplace, if no one in my classroom, if no one around me at all will call him those names. I will call him that. Because it says he will be called.

I'm going to fulfill this Scripture tonight. He will be called that and he'll be called that by me. Even if no one else on this earth were to call him that, I will call him that.

And I will regard Jesus Christ as wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. That's not all. Look at verse 7. Of the increase of His government and peace, there will be no end.

Upon the throne of David and over his kingdom to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward even forever. The reign of the Messiah will not last a thousand years. Though the millennium is a special aspect of His reign.

Friends, there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah. And He will rule for all eternity. Handel wasn't quoting the Bible with this line from his Messiah.

But he knew the truth when he said, and He shall reign forever and ever. Not just for a thousand years. There's a thousand years.

It's a special aspect of His reign. That's true. But He shall reign forever and ever.

And upon where? Upon the throne of David. Jesus will rule on David's throne and over David's kingdom. That is Israel.

This is a fulfillment of God's great covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7. I don't know about you, but I think about all this that we've seen through verse 6. Here He is, the child born, the Son given, the government upon His shoulder. Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. No end to the increase of God.

We're going to reign forever and ever. Almost sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? It's like your head gets foggy. Wait a minute.

I mean, come on. Really? Really, really? I mean, yeah, it's nice on the page of the Bible. Not really in my life, right? No, look at it at the end of verse 7. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

It's almost as if God's saying, listen, I know this sounds too good to be true. I know you're thinking this can't be true in my life. I mean, it's great for some monk somewhere in a monastery.

It's great for some super saint. But no, not in my life. He says no.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Jesus can be wonderful. Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

For everyone now, the government of your life can be on his shoulders. The child can be born unto you. The son can be given unto you.

One day, these offices will be imposed upon the world. But for now, they're real for those who receive Jesus and submit to him. Thank you, Jesus.

By your zeal, perform this in my life. Now, let's take a breath and shift gears. Because in verse 8, after shining the light and the warmth on us, I mean, we're like basking in this, aren't we? It's like we've been laying out in the sun at the beach.

Oh, it's so great. Now the darkness comes over again. The gloom.

It's so interesting. Whenever Isaiah has his face upon the Lord, upon the Messiah, it's shining. It's radiant.

It's glorious. It's like, oh, unbelievable. I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up the train.

Oh, it's just spectacular. Emmanuel, God with us. The child is born.

The son is given. It's just like we're basking in it. That's what it's like whenever Isaiah is looking and talking about the Lord.

But then when he looks at man, it gets dark. He looks at Judah, and it gets dark. He looks at Israel, the northern kingdom, and it's pitch black night.

In Isaiah chapter 9, verse 8, he begins a prophecy that lasts until chapter 10, verse 4. And this section is in four parts, and each part concludes with this phrase, for all this is anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. You say, oh, isn't it beautiful? The hand of the Lord is stretched out. Isn't that sweet? No, friends, it's not the hand of his goodness.

It's not the hand of his kindness. It's the hand of his judgment. Some have called this section the speech of the outstretched hand.

And it's not stretched out to help, my friends. It's stretched out to bring judgment. Verse 8. The Lord sent a word against Jacob, and it has fallen on Israel.

All the people will know Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria who say in pride and arrogance of hearts, the bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild them with hewn stones. The sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars. Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him and spur his enemies on, the Syrians before and the Philistines behind, and they shall devour Israel with an open mouth.

For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out. The Lord sent a word against Jacob, and it has fallen on Israel. The idea is that the Lord brought a word against his people, and the word has scored a direct hit against the northern kingdom of Israel.

It refers to Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria. Do you understand that the tribe of Ephraim was the largest and the most influential tribe in the northern kingdom of Israel? So sometimes God refers to the northern kingdom of Israel by Ephraim. Remember that as we're in Isaiah.

When it says Ephraim, think northern kingdom of Israel. When it says Samaria, think northern kingdom of Israel. Because there, it's talking about the capital of the northern kingdom.

Jerusalem was the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. And he says, I've got a problem with Ephraim.

I've got a problem with Samaria. They say in pride and arrogance of heart, look at what they say there in verse 10. The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild them with hewn stones.

The sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars. Do you understand what's being said there? Bricks were inferior to carved out stones for building. Sycamores were inferior to cedars for wood for building.

And do you know what the people of Israel were saying? They were saying, let this judgment come upon us. So they knock down our houses made with bricks. Fine.

We'll replace them with houses made of hewn stone. So they knock down our houses made of sycamores. Fine.

We'll replace them with houses made of cedars. Who cares if God judges us? Whatever is torn down, we will rebuild with something better. We have nothing to fear from what God can bring against us.

Commentator Bultma says, instead of humbling themselves before the face of God on account of the many calamities that had already descended on them, they still entertained a light-hearted optimism regarding the future. What a brief but deeply psychological picture this is of an unfaithful generation, listen carefully, that keeps dreaming of better times to come and light-heartedly ignores the severe judgments of God. Is that us or what? Oh, things will get better.

Oh, no problem. Everything is on progress. Unstoppable.

We'll fix it all. Tomorrow will be better than today. Isn't it great? Oh, problem here.

Don't worry about it. We'll fix it. You got a disease? Don't worry, we'll get a vaccine.

You got a problem? Don't worry, we'll fix it. That's saying exactly what Israel said. Therefore, verse 11, the Lord said, set up adversaries because they believed they'd be able to weather the storms of attack and then rebuild.

God says, I'm going to send successive waves of enemies against you. The Syrians before, the Philistines behind. The destruction of Israel would be complete and their proud promise to be rebuilt would be unfulfilled.

And so the chorus comes at the end of verse 12, for all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. The anger against Israel's pride was not enough. There was still sin to judge.

And God wasn't ready to stop his work of judgment. So it goes on to verse 13. For the people who do not turn to him who strikes him, nor do they seek the Lord of hosts.

Therefore, the Lord will cut off head and tail from Israel, palm branch and bulrush in one day. The elder and honorable, he is dead. The prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail.

For the leader of the people, for the leaders of this people, cause them to err. And those who are led by them are destroyed. Therefore, the Lord will have no joy in their young men, nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows.

For everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. You see that in verse 13? The people do not turn to him who strikes them. Each episode of judgment is followed by Israel's refusal to turn to the Lord.

They're like dumb animals who resist even more when they're beaten. You know what I think of when I read this passage in verse 13? They do not turn to him who strikes them. I think of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.

There he is, confident in his standing before God, even though he was not right with God at all, but he was confident of it. And all of a sudden, he has an encounter with Jesus. And Jesus blinds him with a light and knocks him to the ground.

He says, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? Who are you, Lord? Now, Jesus said to Saul at that time, it is hard to kick against the goads. Do you know what a goad is? Not a gourd. A goad.

Why would he kick against a squash? What's the point of that? No, not a gourd. A goad. A goad is a very sharp stick that a farmer would use when he's behind his ox to plow.

Now, oxen wouldn't always be into the work of doing the plowing. And so the farmer would have to give him some encouragement. And the encouragement was with the goad.

And what you would do is you would go and you'd jab like the hindquarters, you know, like the ham hocks, so to speak, of the ox. You'd jab that with the goad. And what would you do if the ox would kick against it? You'd jab him harder and harder and harder.

And he'd get more of it until he'd knock it off and go where you want him to go. And that's what the Lord said to Saul. It's hard for you to kick against the goad.

So I'm jabbing you left and right. And you're just kicking against me. Give it up.

Now look at verse 13. The people do not turn to him who strikes them, nor do they seek the Lord of Hosts. God's been talking to you.

He's been telling you. He's been poking you. He's been dealing with your heart.

And you're not responding to him. What do you want him to do? Give up? Walk away? Friends, you don't want the Lord to do that. In his mercy, you want him to keep jabbing you and do it until you listen.

But God wants you to say, hey, knock it off now. Come to me now. Repent now.

Get it right now. That's how the Lord wants it to be. And he says, therefore, the Lord will cut off head and tail from Israel.

Look, it doesn't matter how high you are or how low you are. The Lord will cut you off. He'll deal with everybody this way.

But for all of that, look at the end of verse 17. For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. The judgment against Israel's impotence was not enough.

There was still sin to judge, and God wasn't ready to stop his work of judgment. Verse 18. For wickedness burns as the fire.

It shall devour the briars and thorns and kindle the thickets of the forest. They shall mount up like rising smoke. Through the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, the land is burned up, and the people shall be fueled for the fire.

No man shall spare his brother. He shall snatch on the right hand and be hungry. He shall devour on the left hand and not be satisfied.

Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm. Manasseh shall devour Ephraim and Ephraim Manasseh, and they together shall be against Judah. For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

See what it says in verse 18? For wickedness burns as the fire. The prophet sees the wickedness of Israel as a raging wildfire, unstoppable, swift, uncontrolled, and devouring everything it touches. You've seen, at least on television, a wildfire like that, right? You can't stop it.

It's going everywhere. God says, that's what your wickedness is like. It's uncontrolled.

It's destroying. It's devouring. But then he carries on the metaphor of the fire, and he says, and the people shall be fueled for the fire.

The fire of God's judgment is fueled by the people in two senses. First of all, their wickedness supplies fuel to the fire of God's judgment. If the wickedness was taken away, the fire would have no more fuel.

How do you stop a fire? Take away its fuel. How do you stop the fire of God's judgment? Take away your wickedness. And the fire will go out.

But you see, the people are fuel for the fire another way. What happens to that fuel that's in the fire? It's burnt and destroyed. And that's what's happening to God's people, to the people of Israel in the midst of the fire of the judgment.

Matter of fact, it says there in verse 19, that no man shall spare his brother. In gruesome detail, the prophet speaks of the carnage that one Israelite will afflict on another. The wildfires of God's judgment burns, and when it burns, people turn on one another.

And God merely lets the evil and hateful passions of men burn wild among themselves. Friends, God didn't need to start the fire or fan the flames. He simply took away the fire retardant that held the evil and hate-filled passions of men in check.

And then they attacked one another and devoured one another. Look at it at the end of verse 21. For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

The judgment against Israel's wickedness was not enough. There was still sin to judge, and God wasn't ready to stop His work of judgment. So now we conclude with the first four verses of chapter 10, because they connect right along in this song of the outstretched hand.

Verse 1 Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, who write misfortune which they have prescribed, to rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, that they may rob the fatherless. What will you do in the day of punishment and in the desolation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? Without me they shall bow down among the prisoners, and they shall fall among the slain. For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees. The leaders and the people of Israel were simply unfair to others. They preyed on the weak, the poor, the widows, those who needed justice.

They took advantage of those who were in need. They took advantage of those who were weak. So what does God say? Look at what he says there.

Verse 3, what will you do in the day of punishment and in the desolation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? The idea is like this. You have forsaken others in their time of need. Now who's going to help you? Others were in their time of need.

The poor, the widow, the fatherless. And you didn't just leave them alone. You cheated them.

You took advantage of them. You ground the face of the poor the best you could. So now who's going to help you when you are in your time of need? God will make sure it's no one.

He says in verse 4, it's almost frightening, without me they shall bow down among the prisoners. They shall fall among the slain. Do you know that all God needs to do to bring extreme judgment upon Israel is to withdraw his protection? Without me.

It's a terrible phrase in verse 4. Without me. The Lord declares that without me you have no hope before your enemies. They were living without God in their lives.

And so God says, okay, you'll be without me when the attackers come. He says, without me they shall bow down. The enemy that was going to come against the northern nation of Israel was the empire of the Assyrians.

And the Assyrians were well known in the ancient world for their terrible cruelty over the people that they conquered. You see, for the Assyrians it wasn't enough to win a military victory. They had to humiliate and

subjugate their conquered foes.

They took a perverse pleasure in humiliating and subjugating them. They would do everything they could to bring them low. And so God says, you've rejected me, so without me you shall bow down in humiliation and degradation before your enemies.

Chorus has said, for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is stretched out still. The judgment against Israel's injustice wasn't enough. There was still sin to judge and God wasn't ready to stop his work of judgment.

You see the repetition of that phrase? It's kind of haunting, isn't it? It reminds us that God's judgment is persistent. It moves from phase to phase until it finds repentance. Parents, you know how it is when one of your children are being real stubborn with you? And after a while you just give up.

Go ahead. God isn't like that. His justice is persistent.

You know what it means? It means that it makes sense for us to repent now. Why put it off? Why resist? Isaiah's trying to get the people ready for the coming of the Messiah. Repent now.

It's like John the Baptist, isn't he? Repent now, the Messiah's on the way. Repent now, for the Son of the Lord is coming. Let me conclude with one final thought.

Look at verse 4 again, where it says, Without me they shall bow down among the prisoners. Do you see the idea of bowing down? They're shrinking, cowering in fear before their captors. Friends, when the Assyrians captured people, what they would do is they would take them out of their homeland and take them back to Assyria.

They did this so that they would be in a new, strange place and be unempowered to do anything against their oppressors. And when they would lead them on this migration, this forced march away from Israel to the land of Assyria, literally, they would put a fishhook in their lip and attach a string to it. And they would string these people along by fishhooks on their lips.

And that wasn't all. They would strip these captors completely naked to humiliate them. And so you can see these people literally with fishhooks in their lips being pulled.

Do you know how much of a tug it would take on a fishhook in your lip to get your attention? And here they are bowed down in humiliation and shame because they're naked and brought low. It means a lot when he says in verse 4, without me they shall bow down among the prisoners. Now, did you know that one of the words in Hebrew commonly translated worship in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word shakha, it means to bow down, to reverently bow or stoop or pay homage.

But that isn't the word used here in Isaiah chapter 1 verse 4. The word used here in Isaiah 1 verse 4 is the Hebrew word kara. It isn't a good word. It means to sink, to drop, to bring low or to subdue.

Friends, might I say that either we're going to bow down to the Lord in worship. We will either shakha to the Lord in worship or it will be said of us, without me they shall bow down, kara, in suffering and humiliation. I'd rather bow down to the Lord in worship.

I'd rather reverence myself before Him. Say, O Messiah, shine your light on me. Be for me that, Lord, the Child who is born, the Son who is given.

Take the government of my life upon Your shoulder. Let me call You wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Let the government of my life be in You forever.

Establish it, Lord. I want to bow down before You so that I don't have to be bowed down in humiliation and judgment.

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