



Isaiah 9:1-7

The Child with Many Names

There has probably never has an age been more complicated and confused than the day in which we live. We go searching for wisdom and knowledge and are overwhelmed by the sheer volume we find. We don't know what to believe or who to believe any longer. We play mind games that begin with, "Well, define for me what you mean by . . ." Since when did dictionaries go out of style? Where do you turn for wise counsel this late in the game? Is there a wise counselor who can illumine our way?

There is a sense of pervading gloom and helplessness the world over. Many leaders of the world feel helpless at the rapidly changing political and economic circumstances. Political and economic rules have changed. We feel helpless at bringing about changes in a world gone mad. Is there no one who can give us power and strength to do what we need to do?

There is no sense of security in our world. No one leaves their homes unlocked any more, even in small towns across the nation. We have lost our sense of security. Very few people believe in the justice system. One person with power and money is treated one way, the common man another way. One man lies and commits perjury in a federal court and gets away with it, while thousands of others go to prison. Violence, crime, political intrigue, lack of integrity spell dome to security of the individual. The whole system will break down. Is there not someone who can give us eternal security in a day of insecurity?

We live in a day of restlessness. We have listened to twenty second sound bites, and thirty second commercials so long that we are restless if someone wants to speak to us more than a couple of minutes. We run to another job, a second home, another hobby, another spouse, another toy, etc. We can't stop and enjoy the moment. We get instant boredom because we are restless at the core of our personality. Is there someone who can give us peace? Is there someone to whom we can turn in our crazy mixed up confused, insecure, restless world and find peace?

The Hebrew prophet Isaiah lived in a day of political and spiritual confusion and madness. Gloom and doom filled the air. There was a sense of helplessness as the Assyrians knocked on the front door. Like ours, insecurity and restlessness filled his day. Isaiah chapters seven and eight opens with a faithless king. King Ahaz of the Southern Kingdom of Judah refused to put his trust in the Lord God to save Judah from the hands of the Syro Ephramidic coalition. Except for the prophets of Yahweh, it was a time of spiritual poverty in Judah.

The prophet Isaiah described the spiritual conditions of his day in 8:19, 21 – 22. "When they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they

whisper and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? . . . They will pass through the land hard pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward. Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be driven away into darkness."

It was a night without end in Judah. Spiritual darkness penetrated the land. It was a night without morning. These were deeply troubling times filled with crisis and panic. The events in this chapter take place probably after Tiglath – pileser of Assyria invaded Syria and Ephraim in 734 – 32 B. C. "Gloom" filled the land. The nation was in a state of spiritual darkness and political distress all over the land.

The whole northern region had suffered from the "scorched earth" policy of the invading Assyrians. Northern Galilee which cut across Naphtali and Zebulun, especially felt the extreme devastation of the Assyrians.

This spiritual darkness was the result of persistent unbelief. How strange that those who think they are in the light when indeed they dwell in perpetual darkness. Such was the condition of Israel and Judah. Gloom encircled the Promised Land.

Judah had fallen into a night without morning. It was a time of crisis and panic. Darkness fills the land, and now judgement was coming because of unbelief. "They will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward. Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be driven away into darkness."

This kind of darkness is a frightening description of sin. The lost person thinks he is in the light when indeed he dwells in perpetual darkness. Spiritual darkness adds to the all encircling gloom. However, on this background of dark judgment and unbelief is painted a beautiful picture of salvation for a sinful people.

THE GLORIOUS SALVATION FOR A SINFUL PEOPLE (9:1-5)

There is light instead of darkness (v. 1-2).

With poetic beauty in verse two the prophet expands on the first suggestion of the coming of the Messiah in 7:14.

"The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them."

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God's presence is equated with light in the Bible. "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5b). The great light that will appear is the Messiah. Seven hundred years later Jesus began His ministry right here in this area of Galilee. Light includes every possible blessing that the age of the Messiah can bring. Jesus stood in the Temple and declared, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Do you find yourself groping in blind, spiritual darkness? Our society is reeling from the effects of unfaithfulness to the LORD God. We worship idolatrous images of materialism, and prostitute ourselves to any deity that will make us feel good and give in to our desires and wants. We have lost our hope in this spiritual darkness. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

To those who trust in the Lord there is joy instead of gloom (v. 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."

Because of the coming of the Messiah, there will be "gladness" and joy before the Lord. Joy exults in Him, His power and His presence. The Lord is the source of their joy.

Do I speak to someone who is covered with a thick cloud of all pervading gloom? Here is hope in the only one who can lift us from our gloom and doom. Even from a Roman prison cell, the Apostle Paul could "rejoice" in his chains. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

There is freedom instead of oppression (v. 4).

Isaiah addresses the cause of the rejoicing. They rejoice because the Lord has broken their chains. He has set them free.

Do I speak to someone who feels like they are bound with chains? Isaiah said,
"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."

Jesus entered the synagogue in Nazareth and the attendant handed Him a copy of scroll containing Isaiah 61:1 and He began reading it. Luke records the scene in Luke 4:18-19).

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

There is peace instead of war (v. 5).

Do you wonder when will the inner war in your soul will ever end? Listen to the prophet,

"For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult,
And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire."

THE SAVIOR OF THE SINFUL PEOPLE (9:6-7)

This is the same child foretold in 7:14.

The birth of this child is a gift of God. He is a Child, but He is also a Son. From early time, the Messiah was recognized as son of David, a legitimate heir to David's throne and the Son of God. He will in some significant way appear on the scene as a child and will "be born" as human beings are. Yet, He will "be given." He is a Son par excellence. He is truly unique.

God incarnate! That is the only way it could be accomplished. This is how the Apostle Paul came to understand it. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation . . . For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him. . . that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:15, 19-20, 26-27). The expected king will be human and divine. He will be God-man. He will have attributes of God and characteristics of man. He is not some grotesque figure of science fiction, but the very perfection of love.

Moreover, this child will occupy a position of dignity—"the government will rest on His shoulders" (Vv. 6b, 7). This child will become a righteous ruler who will fulfill all the expectations of the family of King David (Cf. II Sam. 7:13-16). The Child is to be a King, a Ruler, a Sovereign. However, He will not be merely a human king. Clearly, He is the Messiah, the Anointed of Yahweh. The ancient Jewish Targum explicitly identified this person in Isaiah as the Messiah.

What kind of child is this?

Isaiah describes for us the character of this child.

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR—Literally He is "wonder of a counselor." He gives comfort and strength throughout time and eternity. The Messiah is Himself a "Wonder." The word refers to what God has done, not man. He is God Himself. This Child is a Wonder. He will rule with unfailing depth of Wisdom. He will not need counselors or a cabinet; He is Himself Counselor. The emphasis of His name is on teachings, character and life. He will be most efficient in planning, formulating action to carry out His plans. He is one counseling wonderful things.

Do you need wisdom in this hour of need? One wag said, "A wise person seeks much counsel. A fool listens to all of it!" Here is the counselor worthy of the name. He doesn't burnout. He is always on call. He is infinite wisdom. Come and humble your heart and listen to Him. Jesus, the Wonderful Counselor, asked, "Why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). He is worthy of our loyalty because His counsel goes beyond the human limitations.

Jesus issues an invitation to all who are in need of a wonderful counselor to come to Him. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is

am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

MIGHTY GOD —He is full omnipotence; El —the strong One. Literally He is, the "God hero." He is the Mighty God. El gibbor always refers in the Old Testament to God as Absolute Deity. The Messiah is all — powerful, living, true God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. Christ is the mighty El. Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The Messiah is God Himself and He is able to save all who trust in Him. He has nothing less than the full omnipotence of God at His command. What He devised He is able to achieve. Let Jesus Christ be the "Mighty God" in your life.

ETERNAL FATHER —He is everlastingly a Father. He is loving, paternal, concerned, tender, faithful, wise, guardian, provider and protector. Ps. 103:13, "Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him."

For those individuals in our day who struggle for a positive father image here is one who is worthy of the name. You can have perfect security in an intimate love relationship with your heavenly Father. The Apostle Paul admonishes us in Romans 8:15-18 with these words: "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." Here is a father worthy of the name who will never leave you or forsake you.

PRINCE OF PEACE —He rules over His people with peace. The peace He gives is eternal. He is the embodiment of peace, therefore He rules over His redeemed people as a Prince bringing peace. In a post resurrection appearance Jesus said to His disciples, "My peace, I give you." The result of His coming into our hearts by faith is perfect peace. Romans 5:1 reads, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He gives us His indescribable peace the very moment we put our trust in Him.

CHRIST THE FULFILLMENT OF THE CHILD WITH FOUR NAMES

The Child to be born is Jesus.

The physician Luke recorded his investigation, "'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant" (Luke 1:68-69).

Matthew was writing to Jewish people to share with them the good news of the coming of the Messiah. He began his introduction, "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham . . . Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah." "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him . . . And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel. "' (Matt. 1:1, 16; 2:1-2, 6).

You can not over look the powerful conclusion drawn by the rabbi Saul of Tarsus, "a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit

flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:1-4).

SOME ABIDING PRINCIPLES

- When you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you have a Wonderful Counselor. Are you looking for someone who will clear up your confusion and give you wisdom? Have you lost the Wonder of Christ? Stir up the coals; restore your love for His wonder. Lord Jesus, will I see you today? Feel like you are going through desolate times of spiritual poverty? You have a Wonder Counselor. Get into His Word; listen to the wonder of His counsel. There is only one person to turn to when you come with the deepest questions of life.
- When you believe in Jesus Christ, you are trusting in the Mighty God. Do you feel helpless in a confused and angry world? Are carrying a heavy burden which is too heavy for you alone to carry? The Mighty God is your strength. There is nothing, which He cannot carry out. He is able to save all who trust in Him.
- When you believe in Jesus Christ, you have an Eternal Father. Do you feel orphaned? Feel like no one cares? Do you feel insecure? You have one who always loves, concerned, committed to what is best for you. One Father will never leave you or forsake you. He gives us eternal security.
- When you trust in Jesus Christ, you have the Prince of Peace as your ruler. Is there a storm brewing in your heart? Are you anxious and restless? Here is the only one who can give you deep inner peace. Need a shepherd for stormy days? Let Him be your Prince.

You can learn how to put your faith in Jesus Christ as the Rock of salvation in [A Free Gift for You](#).

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