

HE SHALL BE CALLED "OUR CONQUERING KING" ISAIAH 9:1-7

Jesus is a real king. Matthew's Gospel makes this explicit, introducing Jesus as "the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (1:1) and using the expression "king of the Jews" with reference to Jesus numerous times. In chapter two, at the beginning of Jesus' earthly life, the Magi from the east come to Jerusalem and ask, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him" (v. 2). The juxtaposition of Jesus and Herod suggests that Jesus is a king in the same sense that Herod is a king. And Herod evidently agrees in that he sees the newborn as a threat to his rule, so much so that when he realizes he has been outwitted by the Magi, he orders all the boys in Bethlehem two years old and under be killed (v. 16).

Messianic hopes ran high among Jews in Herod's day; many were looking for the coming "anointed one" or "messiah" who would act for God to set up a just and righteous kingdom on earth. The most widespread messianic hope in the first century was for the Davidic Messiah, the coming king from David's line who would destroy Israel's oppressors, reestablish her independence, and reign forever on David's throne. The Psalms of Solomon, a work written in Pharisaic circles in the first century B.C. reads:

"See, O Lord, and raise up for them their
king, the son of David,
at the time which you chose, O God, to
rule over Israel your servant.
And gird him with strength to shatter in

*For unto us a child is born, to us a
son is given, and the government will
be on his shoulders.*

– Isaiah 9:6

pieces unrighteous rules,
to purify Jerusalem from nations that
trample her down in destruction,
in wisdom of righteousness, to drive out
sinners from the inheritance,
to smash the arrogance of the sinner like
a potter's vessel,
to shatter all their substance with an iron
rod,
to destroy the lawless nations by the
word of his mouth,
that by his threat, nations flee from his
presence,
and to reprove sinners with the thought
of their hearts" (17:21-25)

Near the end of his earthly life, Jesus appears before Pilate, who asks, "Are you the king of the Jews?" and Jesus replies, "What you say is so" (27:11). Following Rome's judgment against him, soldiers "twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. 'Hail, king of the Jews!'" (v. 29), and above his head "they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS" (v. 37). Can there be any doubt that Jesus is a real king?

This Week's Core Competency

Eternity – I believe there is a heaven and a hell, and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom.

What comes next? What does God have in store for Christians in the future? Some believers hold the to an unbiblical, rather truncated view of things to come. They look forward to going to heaven when they die, where they expect to spend eternity with the Lord and their loved ones. But while it's true that

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Christians who die before the Lord returns will go to heaven to be with him—Paul writes: "as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord" but "would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2Co 5:6, 8)—Christians who go to heaven do not spend eternity in heaven.

The New Testament teaches that Jesus, Israel's Messiah, is destined to rule. The angel told Mary, "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end" (Lk 1:33). About Mary's child, Isaiah writes: "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders . . . Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever" (9:6-7).

Jesus is destined to rule, and his saints are destined to rule with him. After describing the return of the "King of kings and LORD of LORDS" (Rev 19:11-21), John goes on to describe Christ's reign (20:1-6); in connection with that reign, John says that participants in the first resurrection, namely the righteous, "reigned with Christ a thousand years . . . they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years" (vv. 4, 6). The notion that believers will reign with Christ during the millennium is mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:11-12: "If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him," as well as 1 Corinthians 6:2: "do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world?"

So Christians do go to heaven when they die, but following their resurrection, which occurs in conjunction with the return of Christ, they will rule with him on the earth for a thousand years. After the final judgment that occurs following the millennium, they are destined to live forever on a new earth (Rev 21), not in heaven.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Isaiah 9:1-7

1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders,

the rod of their oppressor.

5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

* Circle "nevertheless" in v. 1.

* Underline "of Zebulun" and "of Naphtali" in v. 1.

* Box the word "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 1.

* Bracket "he" in v. 1.

* Circle "light" in v. 2.

* Bracket "you" in vv. 3, 4.

* Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 6.

* Draw a line from the word "government" in v. 6 to the same word in v. 7.

* Highlight the four-fold name of the child in v. 6.

* Double underline "his government," "He will reign," and "his kingdom" in v. 7.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. In verse 1, Isaiah says, "In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali." To what is the prophet referring? (See 2Ki 15:29.)
2. Describe "the people" from the expressions "walking in darkness" and "living in the land of the shadow of death."
3. Describe the meaning of the *metaphor* "light" in verse 1 (cf., Mt 4:15-16).
4. Put what verse 3 means in your own words (see note on v. 3 **You**).
5. Explain the *comparison* in verse 4.
6. Explain the point of verse 5, referring to the fact that soldiers' boots and bloody garments will be burned.
7. What has the child of verse 6 got to do with the events in verses 2-5?
8. Explain the significance of any of the future Messiah's four names or titles.
9. What do you infer about his kingdom from verse 7?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Isaiah 7-12 is sometimes called The Book of Immanuel. The prophecies in it were given during the reign of Ahaz (7:1) at a time when Syria and Israel were allied against Judah. "The cowardly, paganized King Ahaz of Judah expected momentarily to be destroyed by those two enemy powers. Beyond that, the terrible might of the far larger and stronger Assyria threatened on the horizon. Through His prophet, God promises deliverance from those enemies but shows that the ultimate deliverance of His people can come only through the One whose name is Immanuel. In these chapters are some of the best-known prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Alfred Martin and John Marin, *Isaiah: The Glory of the Messiah*, 51).

Isaiah 9:1-7 contains one of them. It opens with a transitional verse that turned the attention of those in the prophet's day from the doom and gloom caused by the Assyrian threat, to the blessing and light provided by the messianic hope. The people of Galilee who witnessed the invasion of their land by Tiglath-Pileser III, the deportation of their neighbors to distant Assyria, and later the repopulation of their land by foreigners (see 2Ki 15:29; cf. 17:24) will one day see a great light; their dark days will pass, swallowed up by the light of a new dawn. God will intervene on their behalf like he did in Gideon's day when he single-handedly defeated the Midianites (Jdg 7:1-25) and will put an end to war.

All of this he will do through a remarkable gift-Child who is himself "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6). One commentator sums up the significance of his names: "The perfection of this King is seen in his qualification for ruling (Wonderful Counsellor), his person and power (Mighty God), his relationship to his subjects (Everlasting Father) and the society his rule creates (Prince of Peace)" (J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah*, TOTC, 89).

And he will reign from David's throne over Israel and the Gentiles with justice and righteousness forever. Of whom does the prophet speak? Clearly, he speaks of Jesus (Mt 1:22-23; Lk 2:11), who as the prophecy indicates is both God and man. We who know him celebrate his birth at Christmas.

But what about Messiah's reign on David's throne? "The New Testament makes clear that this prophecy was partially fulfilled by the ministry of our Lord in Galilee at His first coming (cf. Isa. 9:1-2 with Matt. 4:13-16). It is obvious, however, that not everything in the prophecy was fulfilled at that time. As in a number of other Old Testament passages, the two comings of Christ are brought together in one prophecy. The Old Testament prophet, standing far off from what God allowed him to see, perceived two great mountain peaks as if they were only one. He could not see the valley between the peaks—the present age between the two advents of Christ . . . The birth of the child prophesied in Isaiah 9:6 has occurred long ago, at Christ's first coming. His universal reign has not yet been fulfilled; that awaits His return" (59, 60).

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

The Message of the Passage

*Isaiah's gift-Child, Jesus, born to us on Christmas Day,
will one day rule over David's kingdom from his
throne with justice and righteousness forever.*

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22.

Describe your personal response to Isaiah's description of Jesus.

Jesus, the Savior, is a real king. What makes you think that matters?

Jesus will one day reign over Israel and the nations. Relate that fact to your future.

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **Nevertheless** The opening verse either introduces the positive message to follow or concludes the negative message that precedes. The NIV, along with many other translations, takes it the first way; the GNT takes it the second way: "They may look up to the sky or stare at the ground, but they will see nothing but trouble and darkness, terrifying darkness into which they are being driven. *There will be no way for them to escape from this time of trouble*" (8:21b-9:1 italics added).

v. 1 **Zebulun . . . Naphtali** "Zebulun and Naphtali, the two northeastern tribes of the land west of the Jordan (later known as upper and lower Galilee), were first devastated and depopulated by Tiglath-pileser. 'In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and to Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria' (2 Kings 15:29). A time of distress was the former time, the latter is one of glory, and the way of the sea, the way along the western side of the sea of Gennesaret, Galilee of the Gentile, is to be honored" (Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, NICOT, 1:323).

v. 2 **walking in darkness** The prophet is referring to people of Galilee living in darkness. "Darkness without and darkness within, ignorance, distress, misery and sin. By the Assyrian invasion the darkness may have been brought on, or possibly was simply intensified by that invasion. Far deeper than any darkness brought on by an invasion, however, was the inward condition of the nation, the plight of sin and misery in which it carried on its life" (325). The metaphor "darkness" expresses spiritual blindness and extreme distress. The editors of the NET Bible put it this way, "The darkness symbolizes judgment and its effects (see 8:22); the light represents deliverance and its effects, brought about by the emergence of a conquering Davidic king (see vv. 3-6)" (see 18sn on 9:2).

v. 2 **light has dawned** "When the prophet wrote, they had not yet seen this light, but its occurrence was so certain and vivid to Isaiah's mind that he described it as though it had already dawned" (Young, 325). "These words, in a general sense, may be descriptive of any great and sudden change in the condition of the people, especially of one from ignorance and misery to illumination and enjoyment. They are still more appropriate to Christ as the light of the world (John viii. 12), a light to the nations (Isa. xlii. 6, xlix. 6), and the Sun of righteousness (Mal. iv.2), which rose upon the world when he manifested forth his glory by his teachings and his miracles in Galilee (John ii. 11). It was in this benighted and degraded region that he first appeared as a messenger from God; and in that appearance we are expressly taught that this prediction was fulfilled (Mat. Iv. 12-17)" (Joseph Addison Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 198).

v. 4 **Midian's defeat** Verse 4 refers to God's defeat of Israel's enemies and deliverance of his people from their oppressors likened to Gideon's defeat of the Midianites (see Jdg 7:1-25). When the battle is over, soldiers' boots and their blood-stained uniforms will be burned. "At that time, after the Child-Messiah will come, the implements of warfare will be destroyed (v. 5) because in His reign of universal peace implements of war will not be needed (cf. 2-4)" (John A. Martin, "Isaiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1053).

v. 6 **Wonderful Counselor** Or "Wonderful, Counselor" (NKJV); the Heb. word trans. "wonderful" (pele') could stand on its own (J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah*, TOTC, 89). "'Wonderful Counselor' is literally 'wonder of a counselor' (cf. Judg. 13:18), though there is nothing in the Hebrew construction to prevent taking these as two separate names. This ruler's counsel would transcend merely human wisdom (cf. 11:2); He would have no need of human counselors to guide Him" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Isaiah," 2017 ed., 62, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/isaih.pdf). The Child "is Himself a wonder (cf. Judges 13:18, where God is called a wonder, passing human thought and power)" (Edward E. Hindson, *Isaiah's Immanuel*, 61).

v. 6 **Mighty God** "The repetition of this title in 10:21, referring to the Lord himself, establishes its meaning here. Translations like 'Godlike hero' are linguistically improbable, side-stepping the implication that the Old Testament looked forward to a divine messiah (see on 4:2; 53:1)" (Motyer, 89).

v. 6 **Everlasting Father** "This is not a reference to God the Father, however, but to God the Son, who will provide a fatherly kind of reign throughout eternity" (Constable, 63).

v. 6 **Prince of Peace** "This title pictures the king as one who establishes a safe socio-economic environment for his people. It hardly depicts him as a meek individual, for he establishes peace through military strength (as the preceding context and the first two royal titles indicate). His people experience safety and prosperity because their invincible king destroys their enemies" (the NET Bible, 31tn on 9:6).

v. 7 **forever** Messiah's kingdom will have no end; it will go on forever. Following the kingdom on earth (Re 20:1-4), he will rule for eternity.

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

I'm not really a New Year's resolution person. I love chocolate chip cookies way too much to bother setting myself up for that kind of failure. However, I do believe the new year is a great time to ask myself some questions; reevaluate where I am and where I'm headed spiritually, physically, and emotionally. I've been meditating on this week's passage for a few days and what stands out to me is the idea of moving from darkness to light and shattering the burden of oppression. Essentially, I'm in awe of the grace offered me through Jesus Christ. The burden of sin is so great, unbelievably heavy. Knowing Jesus paid the penalty for my sin is almost too much to bear sometimes. Who am I to be offered such grace? I catch myself forgetting that, especially in my parenting. This week I had an opportunity to offer grace to one of my children. What I wanted to do was point the big bony finger. What I needed to do was offer grace. What a relief for both of us to hear the words, "I love you. I forgive you." The yoke lifted and burden released. Grace. Do you know the saving grace of Jesus Christ? Have you shared your story with your children? Do you model the grace and forgiveness Jesus offered you to your children? I'm praying for your family to grasp how wide and long and high and deep the love of Jesus Christ is this year.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Isaiah 9:1-7

1. Who is the great light Isaiah is referring to?
2. What does the light increase for the nation?
3. How is Jesus described in Isaiah 9:6?

What Do You Think

Which of the names of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6 means the most to you and why?

What R U Going To Do

Turn off all the lights in your room. What do you see? Turn on a flashlight. Now what do you see? How is this like Jesus?

Core Comp

Eternity – I believe in heaven and hell and that one day Jesus will come again.

Memory Verse

Isaiah 9:6 – *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

KIDPIX COUPON

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Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

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30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you Belong, Become, and go Beyond as follower of Jesus Christ through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.