

## ***Isaiah Part 7: “To us a son is given...”***

### **Isaiah 9 v 1 to 10 v 4**

#### ***For to us a child is born (Isaiah 9 v 1 to 7)***

“In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea... Galilee of the nations” (v 1) – the Assyrian invasion would be terrible for the Jewish people, but especially for the northern regions of Israel, ‘the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali’. In this context, the promise in this verse is all the more precious: the northern regions (‘Galilee of the Gentiles’) were the most severely ravaged when the Assyrians invaded from the north. The promise is that this land, once ‘brought into contempt’, will one day enjoy a special blessing: the northern tribes, who were the first to suffer from the Assyrian invasion, will be the first to see the light of the Messiah (v 2). Matthew 4 v 13 to 16 quotes this passage as clearly fulfilled in the Galilean ministry of Jesus...

- Why does Isaiah talk about a “great light” (v 2)? What – or who – is that light? See John 8 v 12.

“You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy” (v 3) – the ministry of the Messiah will bring joy and gladness to Israel, “as with joy at the harvest”, and as men “divide the spoil” in celebration of victory. “As on the day of Midian” (v 4) – this refers to Gideon’s victory over Midian in Judges 7 v 19 to 23, the same kind of joyful victory that the Messiah will give. The reference to every ‘boot’ and ‘garment’ being “burned as fuel for the fire” (v 5) means that the battle is over and the victory complete. Each of these promises – the great joy, the breaking of ‘the yoke of his burden’ and the ‘rod of his oppressor’, and victory over all enemies has spiritual application to Jesus’ work in *our* lives – these things are ours in Jesus! See Ephesians 2 v 6.

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given” (v 6) – as a *man*, Jesus was born as a babe (“child”) in Bethlehem; as the only *Son of God*, Jesus was ‘given’ to the world God loves (John 3 v 16).

- “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (v 6) – how do these titles describe Jesus’ character? What does Isaiah say about his future kingdom (v 7)?

(i) Jesus the Messiah is *Wonderful*: the glory of who he is and what he has done for us should fill us with wonder, filling our hearts and minds with amazement; (ii) Jesus is our *Counsellor*: Jesus is the one who can guide our lives, and help us with our problems; (iii) Jesus is the *Mighty God*: the God of all creation and glory, the LORD who reigns in heaven, worthy of our worship and praise; (iv) Jesus is the *Everlasting Father*: he is the source and author of all eternity, the Creator himself; (v) Jesus is the *Prince of Peace*: he is the one who makes peace, particularly between God and man.

“Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end” (v 7) – the reign of the Messiah will last not merely 1,000 years, though the Millennium is a special aspect of His reign: there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah, and he will rule for all eternity (Revelation 11 v 15). “On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness...” – Jesus will rule on David’s throne, and over his kingdom (that is, Israel). This is a fulfilment of God’s covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7 v 13, and Gabriel’s promise to Mary in Luke 1 v 30 to 33.

All this may sound too good to be true, but “the zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this” – the LORD of all heavenly armies has promised to accomplish this word, and part of it has been fulfilled already. Jesus can be the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace for everyone now. One day, these offices will be imposed upon the world; for now, they are real for all who put their trust in Jesus...

***[MORE OVER...]***

## ***Judgment on arrogance and oppression (Isaiah 9 v 8 to 10 v 4)***

This section is in four parts, each part concluding with “For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still”. One could call this section ‘The judgment of the outstretched hand’...

### *1. Isaiah 9 v 8 to 12: Because of their arrogance and pride, Israel will be defeated by her enemies.*

“Who say in pride and in arrogance of heart: ‘The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones...’” (v 9, 10) – in their pride, the leaders and the people of the northern kingdom of Israel said, in effect: ‘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.’ “But the LORD raises the adversaries...” (v 11) – because they believed they would be able to weather the storm of attack and then rebuild, God would send successive waves of enemies against Israel (“The Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west”). The destruction of Israel would be complete, and their proud promise to rebuild would not be fulfilled.

### *2. Isaiah 9 v 13 to 17: Because they refuse to repent, their leaders will be overthrown.*

“The people did not turn to him who struck them, nor inquire of the LORD of hosts” (v 13) – each episode of judgment was followed by Israel’s refusal to turn to the LORD. They were like dumb animals that resist even more when they are beaten. “So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed...” (v 14) – the leaders in Israel will be ‘cut off’, which means they will be killed. The expression ‘palm branch and reed’ has a similar meaning to ‘head and tail’. A palm branch grows upward and refers to high and important people; a reed grows in muddy marshes and refers to the lowest elements of the population.

### *3. Isaiah 9 v 18 to 21: Because of prevailing wickedness they will attack each other.*

“For wickedness burns like a fire” (v 18) – Isaiah sees the wickedness of Israel as a raging wildfire, swift, uncontrolled, and devouring everything it touches. “The people are like fuel for the fire” (v 19) – this wildfire of God’s judgment is fuelled by the people’s wickedness. “No one spares another” (v 19) – in graphic detail, Isaiah describes the carnage that one Israelite will inflict on another. The wildfire of God’s judgment burns, and God simply lets the evil, hateful passions of men burn wild among themselves. Manasseh and Ephraim (v 21) were the principal tribes in northern kingdom, willing to unite against Judah (2 Kings 15 v 37). Since no repentance is forthcoming from the northern kingdom of Israel, the Lord’s hand of judgment will continue to be outstretched unrelentingly, and will result in their captivity.

### *4. Isaiah 10 v 1 to 4: Because of social injustice, they will be exiled and slain.*

“Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees... to turn aside the needy from justice” (v 1, 2) – this describes one of the symptoms of apostasy, where judges issue unrighteous decrees to legalize oppression of the poor and fatherless. Today many judges are godless people. They are in no position to judge, until they recognize that they are representing God. God is saying to the judges: ‘You are to represent *me*, but the day is coming when I am going to judge *you*.’ “To whom will you flee for help... Nothing remains but to crouch among the prisoners or fall among the slain” (v 3, 4) – all God needs to do, to bring extreme judgment on Israel is to withdraw his protection. In effect, God declares, ‘Without me you have no hope before your enemies’...

*Prayer – Lord, we are humbled and awed as we consider your judgments against pride, stubbornness, hatred and injustice. Help us to learn from these judgments, and help us never to behave in ways that are arrogant or oppressive. Help us always to remember that ‘to us a child is born, to us a son is given’ – that as a man, you, Jesus, were born as a baby in Bethlehem, and as the Son of God, you have been given to the world, and that you are indeed Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Amen.*