

Isaiah Chapter 9

9:1-5

The dimness of Israel's rejection was especially prevalent in the northern tribal areas of Zebulun and Naphtali, which would suffer greatly under the Assyrian invasion.

Galilee is named and identified with the nations (Gentiles).

To those in the darkness of the North, God promises to send a great light, which is quoted (in Matthew 4:15-16), as being fulfilled in Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

The prophet sees these events as though they were already happening.

Thus, he predicts the future with certainty, as though it had already come to pass.

Isaiah 9:1 "Nevertheless the dimness [shall] not [be] such as [was] in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict [her by] the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations."

“Zebulun ... Naphtali ... Galilee”:

Zebulun and Naphtali on the northern border in Northeast Galilee west of the Jordan River were the first to suffer from the invasion by the Assyrian king (2nd Kings 15:29), marking the beginning of dark days for Israel.

In earlier times, the days were to be full of gloom, but later on God would transform that gloom into honor.

The New Testament applies this prophecy of Galilee's honor to the time of Jesus Christ's First Advent (Matthew 4:12-16).

Matthew 4:15-16 quotes Isaiah 9:1-2 directly.

Ultimately, its fulfillment will come at His Second Advent when the area is free from the yoke of foreign invaders

This chapter is encouraging them.

Even though God has allowed them to be overrun with the Assyrians, there is the promise of Messiah coming and bringing the Light to them.

Notice, the word "dimness" which means the light did not go completely out.

It was darkened by their disobedience to God, but did not go out.

Isaiah 9:2 "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

A great light: The coming of the Messiah is synonymous with the coming of light to remove the darkness of captivity (42:16; 49:6; 58:8; 60:1, 19-20).

2 Corinthians 4:4 "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

This is most assuredly speaking of the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only will his Light shine on those of Judah and give them the power to be, but it will shine on the Gentiles as well.

The world was in a terrible state when the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Light, came.

He came to bring the Light.

John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

This Light is available to whosoever will.

Isaiah 9:3 "Thou hast multiplied the nation, [and] not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, [and] as [men] rejoice when they divide the spoil."

"Multiplied the nation":

Once again the LORD confirmed His covenant with Abraham to multiply his physical descendants as the sands of the seashore (Genesis 22:17).

The blessings of God had been on the Hebrews, always.

From time to time, when their sins became great, God would partially remove the blessings.

In the fuller sense, they belonged to God, and He blessed them as His children.

It seemed they were never satisfied.

Their joy was more in material things, instead of in Him.

The harvest spoken of here, is the harvest of the crops in the fall.

They had a feast of harvest at that time.

Their joy was in things and not in God.

There will be a great harvest of the wheat at the end of the world.

Isaiah 9:4 "For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian."

"Broken the yoke":

eventually the LORD will free national Israel from bondage to Assyria, Babylon, and every other foreign power that has oppressed her.

When the Lord Jesus Christ (their Messiah) comes, He will set the captives free.

True worship of the Lord sets everyone, who practices it, free.

I have always said the reason they did not recognize Jesus as their Messiah, is they were expecting a mighty warrior king like David had been.

Jesus sets us free from the bondage of sin and death.

His freedom is not an outward freedom, but a freedom of the soul and spirit of man.

Isaiah 9:5 "For every battle of the warrior [is] with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but [this] shall be with burning [and] fuel of fire."

"Burning and fuel of fire":

The world will no longer need the accessories of warfare because a time of universal peace will follow the return of Christ.

The battle they were familiar with was a battle of the flesh.

The battle familiar to them had shed blood, and was a noisy battle of physical strength.

This battle will be a battle in the spiritual.

Jesus baptizes with fire.

His sword is the Word of God.

His battle is fought for the soul of man, not for earthly plunder.

Verses 9:6-7

The Gift-Child in this passage is the same divine Child as Immanuel.

Again, using the prophetic perfect, the prophet sees Him as though He were already born.

Wonderful, Counselor is actually one term in Hebrew.

A wonder is indicative of a miracle.

Counselor is often used in parallel with king (Micah 4:9).

Plus, miraculous counsel is given by this God-like King.

The mighty God (El Gibor) is the strongest of these titles.

In Isaiah; El is always used of God and never refers to man.

Gibor means "Hero".

Together they describe One who is indeed God Himself.

Everlasting Father literally means Father of eternity.

He alone is the source of eternal life.

Prince of Peace indicates that the mighty God will be a benevolent ruler bringing eternal peace on earth through the establishment of His kingdom.

Thus, the obscure figure of Immanuel is now brought to clear light: He is Himself God incarnate!

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

"Child ... Son":

These terms elaborate further on Immanuel, the child to be born to the Virgin (7:14).

The virgin's child will also be the royal Son of David, with the rights to the Davidic throne (9:7; Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:31-33; 2:7, 11).

In fulfillment of this verse (and Psalm 2:9), the Son will rule the nations of the world (Revelation 2:27; 19:15).

“Wonderful ...Counselor”:

In contrast to Ahaz, this King will implement supernatural wisdom in discharging His office (2nd Samuel 16:23; 1 Kings 3:28).

"Mighty God":

As a powerful warrior, the Messiah will accomplish the military exploits mentioned (in 9:3-5; 10:21; Deut. 10:17; Nehemiah 9:32).

"Everlasting Father":

The Messiah will be a Father to his people eternally.

As Davidic King, He will compassionately care for and discipline them (40:11; 63:16; 64:8; Psalms 68:5-6; 103:13; Proverbs 3:12).

"Prince of Peace":

The government of Immanuel will procure and perpetuate peace among the nations of the world (2:4; 11:6-9; Micah 4:3).

The child, spoken of here, is the Lord Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin and God.

He would be Immanuel (God with us).

The Son of God would become the Savior of all mankind.

1 Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

We must accept Him as our Savior, for Him to save us.

The government of the earth will be upon His shoulder, when He reigns on the earth for 1000 years.

The power He has is unlimited.

Philippians 2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"

All persons and things are subject unto Him.

The fact that the Word of God took on the form of flesh and dwelt among mankind on the earth is Wonderful.

He was God in the flesh of man.

The counsel of the Lord Jesus is beyond comparison.

We can put our trust in Him.

"Mighty God", lets us know that He was truly God.

He was God the Word in heaven.

When He came to the earth to save us from our sins, He was God the Son, mighty in works and deeds.

"Everlasting Father" shows the eternity of the One we call Jesus.

He and the Father were One in the Spirit (read 1 John chapter 5 verse 7).

This is beautiful in its application.

We are even told that we can be one with them, if we accept Jesus as our Savior.

There is only one King of Peace, and it is Jesus.

When Jesus comes into your life, He brings perfect peace.

This is the peace that passes all understanding.

It is peace in the midst of a troubled world.

Isaiah 9:7 "Of the increase of [his] government and peace [there shall be] no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

"Throne of David":

The virgin's Son will be the rightful heir to David's throne and will inherit the promises of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalms 89:1-37; Matthew 1:1).

The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is His church.

Christianity started with Jesus and truly has spread to all the world.

Jesus is the Judge of all the world.

His judgment is just.

The wonderful thing is that Jesus has done it all for us.

We do not have to earn our salvation by good works.

Salvation in Him is a free gift.

The only thing we must do is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive His salvation.

Verses 9:8-10:4

This poem tells of great warning calamities sent by the Lord that have gone unheeded by Israel.

The same refrain recurs 4 times (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4), dividing it into four strophes.

Verses from Chapter 9:8-12:

The prophet warns Ephraim "northern Israel" that she cannot rebuild with the bricks that are fallen down.

This refers to the invasion of Israel by Tiglath-Pileser (in 732 B.C.).

All hope of rebuilding the northern kingdom will finally be lost.

His hand is stretched out still means that God's hand of judgment is still stretched out in anger to punish Israel.

Isaiah 9:8 "The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel."

We now see a return to the more immediate prophecy.

The word sent to them was a warning from God.

The more severe warning was for Israel, but Judah was also warned.

Isaiah 9:9 "And all the people shall know, [even] Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,"

"Pride and stoutness of heart":

Israel's downfall was her feeling of self-sufficiency, whereby she thought she could handle any eventuality (verse 10).

Their pride was possibly, one reason they did not repent and come to God.

They have begun to believe that their victories were because of their own strength, instead of giving God credit.

This is definitely not for Judah alone, but for Ephraim and Samaria as well.

Isaiah 9:10 "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change [them into] cedars."

We see the arrogance of these people.

They are forgetting where their victories came from.

They are putting their faith in their own ability to build back.

They have forgotten the following Scripture.

Psalms 127:1 "(A Song of degrees for Solomon).

Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh [but] in vain."

They are puffed up with pride.

Isaiah 9:11 "Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;"

"Adversaries of Rezin":

The Aramean or Syrian king's enemies were the Assyrians.

God must teach them a lesson.

The word "therefore" shows us that the Lord setting up the adversaries against them is because of their pride.

They believe they do not need the LORD, and He will show them differently.

Isaiah 9:12 "The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still."

"His hand is stretched out still":

The outstretched hand will punish (5:25), beyond what the people had already experienced.

Israel has turned its back on the LORD.

The LORD Himself causes these enemies of Israel to form a partnership and come against Israel.

Notice, even though this happens, the LORD is still reaching out to Israel.

Even though the LORD is angry, He still will save them, if they will look to Him for help.

Verses 9:13-21

“The people turneth not unto him” means they refused to repent and turn back to the LORD.

To "turn" means to repent (Hebrew shub), with the change of mind that results in a change of direction.

Branch and rush means "palm branch and bulrush".

The leaders are specifically condemned for misleading the people.

Isaiah's words here are reminiscent of his message (in chapter 3).

Isaiah 9:13 "For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts."

The enemies of Israel are not on the side of the LORD of hosts.

This is happening to Israel because of their disobedience, but God still loves them.

Isaiah 9:14 "Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day."

The LORD will cut off the rich and the poor.

The leaders (head), and the prophet of lies (tail), will be affected by this punishment from God.

One day here, is meaning the short time of the war to overtake them.

Isaiah 9:15 "The ancient and honorable, he [is] the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he [is] the tail."

We did not need the explanation above.

Isaiah explains it himself.

The ancient and honorable is speaking of the prophets who are bringing truth.

Isaiah 9:16 "For the leaders of this people cause [them] to err; and [they that are] led of them [are] destroyed."

The aggravated wickedness of Israel extended to all classes, even the fatherless and widows" (verse 17), who often were the objects of special mercy (1:17).

Israel was led into idolatry by their spiritual leaders.

They even mixed pagan rituals with their worship of God.

Jeroboam included worship of the calf.

Those of Judah had not slipped that far, but were guilty themselves to a lesser degree.

Isaiah 9:17 "Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one [is] an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still."

God's wrath allowed wickedness to cause a society to self-destruct.

A senseless mutual exploitation resulted in anarchy and confusion (see verse 20).

The young men were a joy to the Lord, when they served the One True God.

God's blessings on His people come, when they are obedient to Him.

If they are not obedient to Him, they bring a curse upon themselves.

A hypocrite is someone professing one thing and doing something entirely different.

They were professing to be God's children, but they were living evil lives.

Even though God was so angry with them for their sin, He still wanted them to repent and turn back to Him, and He would have blessed them.

He was still reaching out to them.

They were just not reaching out to Him.

Isaiah 9:18 "For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up [like] the lifting up of smoke."

Sin is very much like a fire started by a very small match.

The first sin may not be too serious, but sin brings on more sin.

The condition of a person living in sin (who has not repented), gets worse and worse.

Each time they sin, their conscience is dead.

They become more and more evil with each sin.

The person who throws a lit match down in the forest does not intend to start a forest fire, but that is the end result.

Isaiah 9:19 "Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother."

"No man shall spare his brother":

God's wrath allowed wickedness to cause the society to self-destruct.

A senseless mutual exploitation resulted in anarchy and confusion (see verse 20).

The wrath of the LORD has caused this terrible happening.

The people will be destroyed in the wake of the wrath.

"No man will spare his brother" speaks of a time when even friends and relatives will be against each other.

They will be lacking in natural affection.

Isaiah 9:20 "And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:"

This is not speaking literally.

This does not actually mean human flesh.

It means the man turns against his neighbors on the right and left.

He destroys his friends who were the only help he had, since he had turned on God.

Isaiah 9:21 "Manasseh, 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."

Joseph's two sons (Manasseh and Ephraim), had engaged in civil war with one another before (see Judges 12:4), and united only in their opposition to Judah.

Ephraim and Manasseh were Hebrews, the same as Judah. They had banded together to come against Judah.

God would forgive Ephraim and Manasseh the same as He would Judah, if they would repent and come to Him.

God is willing.

They were not willing.

Isaiah Chapter 9 Questions

1. What does "dimness" in verse 1 mean?
2. What had caused the Light to dim in their lives?
3. What does "A great light mean"?
4. Who is this speaking of?
5. Who had blinded the minds of them which believe not?
6. Who had the blessings of God been upon?
7. God blessed them as His _____.
8. What had they put their joy in, rather than God?
9. When the Lord Jesus Christ came, He set the _____ free.
10. What harvest is verse 3 speaking of?
11. Why did they not recognize Jesus as their Messiah?
12. What was the difference in their battle and the battle of Jesus?
13. The Son of God would become the _____ of all mankind.
14. When will the government of the earth be on the shoulders of Jesus?
15. What does the name "Everlasting Father" show us about Jesus?
16. Who is the only King of Peace?

17. What is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ?
18. Salvation in Him is a _____ gift.
19. What does verse 8 return to?
20. Why did Ephraim not repent and come to God at this time?
21. What do we see in the statement "We will build with hewn stones"?
22. Who is sending Rezin against them?
23. Are the enemies of Israel on the side of the LORD?
24. Why is God letting this happen?
25. Who are the head and tail?
26. Who caused these people to err?
27. How far had their false worship gone?
28. Wickedness burneth as the _____.
29. Through the _____ of the _____ of _____ is the land darkened.
30. Is verse 20 speaking of cannibalism?
31. Who are the two in verse 21 against Judah?