

Receive the Child King - Isaiah 9:1-7

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[0 : 00] With that, we're going to jump into the text. We're going to be in Isaiah chapter 9, as Pastor Josh just read for us. And as we look at this text, I just want to encourage us. We have worked our way through the Advent series.

We've seen the beauty of Christmas from the lens of a coming King who will reign and rule over all the earth. But specifically, He will reign and rule over His people, His children, that receive Him through repentance and faith.

And we saw this King predicted and promised in 2 Samuel 7. We saw a picture of Him as the priestly King and the conquering King that would be.

But now, finally, in this climactic text, we're going to see the child King. An image that is countercultural to so many concepts of what a King should be.

To that, I have a question for you. If you had the possibility to sit down with the main directors and creative writers of Marvel or DC, and you're sitting in a room with them, and they ask you, we need a new superhero, and we need you to help us with that.

[1 : 13] What type of superhero would you come up with? Now, I know me. I'm a big fan of Batman. So I would make some sort of superhero that's like Batman. A vigilante who parades the streets at night taking care of the scum of the city.

That would be, I love Batman. That would be something that I would create. Maybe some of you here today, you're like, you know what? I love Superman. Anybody see that new trailer? It looks interesting. Okay? That's like a different take on Superman.

Maybe some of you in here are like, no, I'm more of a Gardner-is-the-Galaxy type of guy. I'm going to go after that. But regardless of what the scenario is, you have the opportunity to create a superhero. Let me suggest to us that not one of us in here would say, I got it.

You ready for this? Got your pens ready? Get this a baby. And the baby's born, and they put him in its table. What do you think? That would probably not take off.

That would not be high on the list of superhero pitches to one of those companies. And yet, Isaiah 9 is a chapter completely dedicated to this incredible superhero king who will come, who will be the king of all kings, and he's presented to us as a child.

[2 : 28] So let's jump into our text, and let's see what in the world the Lord is doing through this unbelievably countercultural concept of what a king and a hero should be. So let's jump right into verse 1.

We're actually going to read verse 1, kind of set up our context a little bit. We're in the book of Isaiah, and the book of Isaiah is about a prophet named Isaiah who is sent by God to go and judge, slash warn, slash preach, slash encourage the nation of Israel who's in their sin.

And so in specifically chapter 9, we have a backdrop of calamity, yet providence. And in the book of Isaiah, God uses this man named Isaiah to go and preach repentance to the nation.

Specifically, he goes to a man named King Ahaz, who was king of Judah at the time, and he warns King Ahaz in chapter 6, God is going to bring you down because you do not trust in him.

You understand that? That's chapter 6. Then in chapter 7, God promises a new king from the line of David. There's a verse, it's fantastic. It says, His name shall be called Emmanuel, and he will be born of a virgin.

[3 : 43] That's in chapter 7. I'm going to bring you down in your wickedness, and then God's going to replace you with a future king named Emmanuel, which means God with us. And that king will be coming in the form of a baby, and he will be born of a virgin.

That's the prediction. But then in chapter 8, this is just this roller coaster. This is not how Isaiah works. Highs and then lows and then highs. Chapter 8, God declares that Israel would fall to the great nation of the Assyrians as judgment against their rebellion.

And with that, we come to chapter 9. Isaiah is a book of synchronized extremes, meaning this. God repeatedly threatens exile, while also repeatedly promising deliverance and rescue.

And if you read the book of Isaiah all the way through, you will see that is true. That the Lord seems to threaten exile for the sins of the people, but then in the next breath, here's a great, wonderful restoration and promise that I'm going to bring you out of that.

And then right back to, repent from your sins because I'm going to judge you. And then right back to, but I will give you a hope in a new land. That's how Isaiah works. It just goes back and forth. It's like a pendulum. But here's what I want to encourage us with as we get into chapter 9.

[4 : 59] God's judgment on sin and his discipline of his people is actually an act of love.

So too, God's mercy towards sinners and rescue, even though they are undeserving, is also an act of love. And love guides all the doings of God.

Even if we fail to see it through our feeble and warped temporal perspective, be assured, brothers and sisters, that your God relates to you in love, be it discipline or grace. And that's the context of verse 1.

So let's read it. But there will be no gloom for her who has it in English. For 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, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

There it is, that discipline yet mercy in the first verse. And it sets up our context. You're about to go into exile. And the Assyrians will destroy your city and take you into slavery.

[6 : 10] But now we jump into verse 2. In verse 2 through 7, the rest of our text is a prophecy. And it's doubling down on that prophecy in chapter 7 about Emmanuel.

The baby who will be born of a virgin whose name meets God with us. And so here it is. The doubling down of this prophecy about a child king. Let's read verse 2. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. And the truth from verse 2 is this. That amidst exile, both literal and spiritual, for Israel it was literal exile coming.

For us it's spiritual exile away from God because of our sin. Here's the truth. Verse 2 is teaching us that Jesus brings a light of rescue to those who are in darkness.

And this is the gospel. That this king, this child king would come to bring those who are in darkness out of their darkness through his divine light.

[7 : 15] Maybe you're hearing echoes of the gospel of John which we will finish our service with today. That in the gospel of John, John says, In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

And then John continues to describe this word, Jesus, the coming king, as the one who brings light into the darkness. And life to men.

There's a movie that me and my wife watched about a year ago that stuck with us. Maybe you've seen it. It's called 13 Lives. It's fascinating. I actually really encourage you to go watch it because I don't know.

I was talking with another pastor about this. I don't know that I've ever seen any cinematic piece of art that more accurately displays the gospel. And it has nothing to do with Christianity.

But yet you can see it from that lens. It's called 13 Lives. And it's about a rescue of 13 boys from Thailand who got trapped in a large cave after a sudden monsoon, which happens in that region, flashed the area and flooded the cave.

[8 : 19] These 13 boys went into this cave after soccer practice one day, went deep into the cave expecting to come back out soon. After about an hour of journeying into the cave, flash floods started, a monsoon started, and completely filled the cave with water.

They're trapped miles in. And here's what happened. After nine days, trapped in this cave, completely flooded with no food, flashlights that are out of battery.

And nine days, they were in utter darkness in that cave. And during those nine days, 90 professional rescue divers and the efforts of thousands of people all across the world, rescue teams from the highest levels from all over the world, came to this cave, sat down, and figured out how they were going to get these boys out.

It's a little bit of a spoiler, but here's what happens. The dive from the start, the entrance of the cave, all the way into where the boys were, all underwater, all, the entire dive, took five hours.

A five-hour dive to get to where they were. The rain was not letting up. This water would be there for at least another month. They would die.

[9 : 35] So here's what happened. But they figured out a way to map out the cave through diving and coming back, diving and coming back, putting all these ropes through the entire cave to continue to get further and further.

Every single dive, these divers risked their entire life. And eventually, here's what happened. In nine days of utter darkness, seeing nothing, no food, thankfully they had water, one of the divers finally makes it to where they're at.

And the description of the boys is unbelievable. After nine days of seeing nothing but darkness, they finally see a faint light under the water come toward them.

And the head pops out. First face they've seen in nine days. And it's a rescuer saying, hello boys, we're here to get you home. Here's what happens in the story.

They eventually devise a plan. The only way to get those boys out was to sedate them with anesthesia. Five hours underwater, there's no possible way those boys would not freak out. I would freak out.

[10 : 40] And then you panic underwater, you're dead. So they sedated all 13 boys, one at a time. Individual divers took them out of the cave. And here's the most unbelievable part of the story.

All 13 boys lived. Five hour dives with these boys who are sedated. But not without cost.

Two divers died in order to make this happen. And why do I share this story? Well, you read verse 2 and you see this picture of somebody coming into darkness for people that have gotten themselves into this situation.

Israel had gotten themselves into a place where they were about to head into exile because of their rebellion and refusal to repent. You and I got ourselves into the greatest mess we could have possibly gotten ourselves into by returning, or excuse me, by rejecting God, placing ourselves on the rule of our own lives and trusting in our self to deliver ourselves.

Sin. And here's what Jesus does. He's the king that comes into the darkness and we as his people in our sin, dead in our sin, see Jesus coming and it's a great light, like a light coming for the first time in nine days, it appears.

[11 : 58] That's what the coming of Jesus is like. That's what Christmas is like. And what I want to encourage us with here is this, that God does not leave those that find themselves in the darkness to themselves.

Like divers appearing out of the infinite darkness with headlights shining, hope to the lost, Jesus promises to come upon the scene, to shine light on a hopeless situation and to rescue people even at the cost of his own life.

What a marvelous savior we serve. In other words, here's what verse two is all about. When we get stuck in our own mess, Jesus pulls us out. What a great king. Now let's move on to verse three.

Verse three says this, you have multiplied the nations, you have increased its joy. They rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. Verse three is about this, joy is ours at his coming.

Now there's two words you're going to see throughout all of this chapter. From verse two to seven, there's two words that are repeated, images that are meant to convey the reality of the child king.

[13 : 02] And here are the two words, joy and peace. These two words are repeatedly thrown at us as if to say the inscriptions on the king's throne when he comes are going to be joy and peace.

And we see from Isaiah chapter nine that there's a reason that in Christmas when you watch the windows as you go by the stores and you see the commercials on TV, even secular society recognizes Christmas is a time of joy and peace.

You see those words everywhere you go in Christmas. that actually in proclaiming that the world unknowingly proclaims the very reality that is God's kingdom.

Joy and peace. What is joy? According to verse three, joy is pure delight of the soul. The highest experience of the human heart. Think of it this way, joy is the feeling of being truly satisfied.

Now happiness is the feeling of being satisfied with the Snickers bar. But joy is the feeling of being satisfied in the deepest part of who we are, our very soul. That I have no longer any need, any want.

[14 : 14] All that I am is content in all that I have received. That is joy. And so in some ways if we describe it this way, unless we experience Jesus himself, we will never experience true joy.

And that's what Christmas is all about. To bring us that joy. That's what verse three teaches that Israel would one day have that joy. But then we see in verse four and five, there's a little bit of a shift of the tone.

It's kind of stark, but let me guide us through it hopefully. Verse four says this, for the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder, for the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as in on the day of Midian.

For every boot of the tramping warrior and battle to molt and every garment rolled in blood will be turned or burned as fuel for the fire. You may be asking, who's the he of this? Is this the king?

The yoke of the king's burden? His rod? His boot? His cloak soaked in blood? No, it's actually referring to the nations that are oppressing Israel.

[15 : 15] In this context, maybe Assyria or maybe even spiritual oppressors. But here's the reality of what verse four and five are teaching. It's teaching about this king, what he would do.

Verse four and five teaches that by Jesus' rule, or his coming rule, all wars and all strife will cease. What a wonderful promise.

I think the world is tired of war and yet we continue to plunge head first into it, don't we? Whether it be our nation or other nations, it's just a reality of living in a broken world.

And yet here's the great promise in verse four and five, war will be no more. Strife will end. And violence will be gone at the coming reign of this king.

How do we know that? Well, war itself is symbolized, is being done away with. Look at verse four. What do you see? You see a yoke, a staff, and a rod.

[16 : 14] These are three images of war and bloodshed. Those three images, specifically in verse four, are objects used by oppressors to subdue their conquered enemies.

And what does it say happens to those things? All of the yokes, the whips that are used to subdue the conquered nation, aka Israel conquering, excuse me, Assyria conquering Israel and using these tools to take them under oppression.

What happens to them? According to the coming reign of Jesus, he will do what to them? He will break all of those things. But not only that, verse five has similar images.

And here are the two images in verse five. Every boot of the tramping warrior and every garment rolled in blood. Garment meaning cloak, which is something that armies would wear in battle.

So secondly, not just the objects used to subdue enemies, but also the very objects used in war will be destroyed. Boots in bloody cloaks.

[17 : 15] Verse four and five is a picture of the coming king, Jesus, who will bring an eternal calm over the earth. A final hushing of all strife.

An era of rest and peace that will finally come upon the inhabitants of the earth as it was in the day of Eden before the first rebellion against God.

It's almost as if verse four and five is comfort and tranquility spoken to Israel. Even though you're about to go into exile, Emmanuel is going to come and he will quiet all of the war, all of the violence, all of the strife.

It's a picture of Jesus' kingdom. That through his reign and his rule, peace will be the marker of his kingdom. I think we have to ask a question here.

We are so quick to solve the world's problems on our own, aren't we? Specifically, I want to ask the question, how are we trying to force peace on the earth ourselves?

[18 : 29] And don't get me wrong, we can be peacemakers. Jesus says this in the Beatitudes that we are to be peacemakers. So that means we speak kind words and we refuse to react to inflammatory comments or actions with inflammatory comments and actions.

We are patient with people. Absolutely, we should be about these things, but we are kidding ourselves if we think that we can bring lasting peace to this world.

Maybe trusting in the nations of the world to enact justice and wipe out evil is something that we fall prey to. or being impatient with a family member or friend who you want reconciliation with but who isn't responding to your forgiveness and pleas for reconciliation.

So trying to force that. We will be at peace. I've been that person. Or how about this one? Attempting to overcome evil with evil. Revenge, retaliation, retribution, three things that are not to be named among Christians.

For they were not named among our Savior. Here it is in verse 4 or 5 that the child king would come and he would do these things for us. Peace, rest, tranquility.

[19 : 41] Something that the world has never seen which is why his kingdom is like any other which leads us to verse 6. Here's the climactic verse of the prophecy and in some ways the climactic verse of all of Advent.

Here is the miraculous mystery. For to us a child is born and to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty, God, Everlasting, Father, Prince of Peace.

Again, what superhero would you craft to break the boots, break the clothes, break the rods, shut down and destroy all violence and war?

I think someone like Clark Kent or Roy Rogers would be a better choice, right? They've got power. This is what's so amazing about Advent and so amazing about Christmas.

The king who's specifically tasked with bringing this lasting peace on earth is God's son come as a little innocent precious baby.

[20 : 54] Jesus' ministry on earth was all about overthrowing the status quo. It was all about taking that which people think is and flipping it on its head by pronouncing the kingdom of God saying things like love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Those are foreign concepts to the world. Jesus is preaching the reality of God's kingdom to a world that has subverted it by corrupting it. And here's another example of God's reversal of the way that we think things should be.

No, no, no. This king that's coming is not just going to fall out of the sky with a sword with a broad shield and with armor to just start wiping people out. No, see, this king would come as a baby.

The ultimate picture of humility. And this baby is not just going to come as a baby. It's going to be born in an animal stable in a food trough to a modest, unassuming, yet godly couple, Mary and Joseph.

There he is. That's the one. Are we surprised that the world in many ways was not ready to receive this king? Now, there are some who did receive him well, the wise kings and beyond.

[22 : 12] But there's also people like Herod that decided, I will enact a genocide to prevent this king from coming. So I want to do something real quick to reinforce that verse 6 is really the crux of Advent.

That Jesus comes as a baby, a child, and that child is king immediately by the virtue of the fact that he is God. Let's turn to Luke 2 with me.

We already read it once. We're going to read it again. We have to read Luke 2 a few days before Christmas here. And we're going to read Luke 2 through perhaps a fresh lens.

Remember I mentioned the picture of peace and joy in Isaiah 9. Well, here's what we're going to do. We're going to read Luke 2. We're going to read just verse 1 to 14 together. And as we do this, I want you to try and pay attention to this.

That the picture of the incarnation of the Messiah King, the long-awaited one from Israel, from God to Israel, is this. Images of peace and rest, not violence and bloodshed.

[23 : 18] So let's look. Here's the coming of the king. Luke 2, 1 to 14. It says this, In those days, the decree went from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And they were there. The time came for her to give birth, and she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

And the angel said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

[24 : 21] And this will be a sign for you. And you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was an angel, a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest.

And on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased. What images do we see? A baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in the manger.

As Tina just shared recently, how many of you moms or grandparents have been in the hospital and held that baby? Not a picture of violence or bloodshed or rage or war, it's a picture of beauty, peace, and joy.

So we see a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and then we see this, the angel says to the shepherds who are predisposed to fear, here's the kingdom of God coming through Jesus, the angels say, fear not.

Christmas is not a picture of fear, it's a picture of fears being dispelled. Fear not. Then we see another comforting, peaceful, joyful picture and the angel saying, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.

[25 : 44] A savior who is Christ the Lord, the Messiah, the one who delivers. And then again you see this second picture of you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

A peaceful, restful image. And then finally you see this last image, a multitude of the heavenly hosts, angels, in the sky, in heaven, praising God, singing sweet hymns.

And then finally the great benediction on earth, peace among those with whom he is well pleased. The reign and rule of this child king is marked by peace and joy.

Rest. We don't see violence, anger, aggression, or warfare. Just the love of a mother with her new baby, angels singing sweetly, the pronouncement of joy and peace to mankind.

And that is what Advent is all about. This is what Christmas is all about. Rejoicing and resting in the child king. And here's what God does.

[26 : 52] He gives Jesus, the coming king, four titles. These are titles you may be well familiar with, but the titles here teach us that Jesus is the king of peace. So let's work through them together.

First is wonderful counselor. What this means, this title, was referring to and predicting in the coming king was this, that Jesus is a child who will grow, as the text, the scriptures say in the gospel of John, I believe, that he grew in wisdom and in stature.

That this Jesus comes as wisdom from God, a wisdom that has never before come onto the earth. Even in the days of Solomon, the most wise man that's ever lived, he's like a puny speck compared to that wisdom that is Jesus.

In fact, in 1 Corinthians, Paul literally says Jesus is the wisdom of God. Fully God, fully man, and in that reality, Jesus comes with all the wisdom we would ever need for life and godliness.

Even the wisdom to repent of our sins and trust in God for salvation and deliverance. See, the gospel that you and I have received through this king only is received with godly wisdom.

[28 : 04] A godly wisdom that says, I need rescue. I am not enough. And I trust in Jesus. But then secondly, we see a second title which is Mighty God, which refers to the fact that Jesus would demonstrate the power of God on earth.

Yes, to heal. Yes, to cast out darkness and infirmities. But ultimately, yes, to absorb the powers of evil and darkness and on that cross take our sin.

That takes great power, God power, to do that. No sinful man could have ever gone to a cross and taken and absorbed all the wrath of God on our behalf. But yet, the mighty God, Jesus, the king, does.

only the might of God can cause the sins of the world to fall on one man and also, only the might of God can lead to Jesus Christ raising in newness of life.

But here's what's so amazing, all of that power through the mighty God, Jesus, the child king, all of that power unto salvation comes through the gospel to us to receive and enjoy, which is why Romans 1.16 says this, I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

[29 : 24] The mighty God full of all power, the very power to accomplish the work of the gospel, Paul says, that is the power that you get as a believer and that's the power that leads to salvation, mighty God, Jesus.

But then thirdly, we see a term, this one's a little interesting, everlasting father. Is this suggesting that the incarnate son, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, becomes the father?

No. Instead, here's what this is teaching, that Jesus would become a father to a fatherless nation, a nation that has chosen their own way, gone into exile, and has rejected king.

Jesus comes as the people's sacrificial king and establishes a love that transcends all time through his divine work. and in so doing, he becomes a father of a nation.

Jesus cares for us and sacrifices for us like a good father does. And dads out there that have children, you can relate with this. What does a good father do for his children?

[30 : 32] He leads them by the hand, he cares for them and loves them, and if the need arises, he sacrifices himself for them. an everlasting father, one who will not just give his life, but will always be our good, kind shepherd father.

But then fourthly, and here's the big one, the prince of peace. Finally, the climactic title is given to this child king which defines all else. A title that describes the entire life of Jesus Christ of Nazareth on earth.

If you take a little bit to read one of the gospels, or all of the gospels, it's clear that Jesus establishes a kingdom that is based on the merits of peace, not oppression.

Which is why Jesus goes from place to place, town to town, person to person. And what does he do? He brings life, and light, and peace wherever he goes.

Yes, this is not the king that the Jews wanted, and were expecting. They weren't wanting a king of peace, they were wanting a king of violence, of aggression, of oppression.

[31 : 42] And Jesus comes not to bring more of what the world already has, and it's sin. He comes to bring that which God has, that we are in need of. True peace. Listen to Colossians 1, 18 to 20 that we just recently preached through.

And he, Jesus, is the head of the body, the church. He's the beginning, the firstborn of the dead, and in everything, he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, listen to this, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Jesus, the child king, born into this world to make you at peace with God the Father. His kingdom is a kingdom of peace.

So lastly, we read verse 7. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there it is, there will be no end on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Literally, as you rest this Christmas week, I want to encourage us to rejoice and rest in the kingdom of peace that the child king brings.

[33 : 06] As you rest, literally, this Christmas week, I know I will be. Food, lounging about on the lazy boy, watching college playoff, building that a thousand piece puzzle, playing board games, baking treats, whatever it is that your traditions are.

I know that I like to rest, to literally sit my butt down and do nothing. And if that's you as well and you're planning on taking a lot of rest to this break, here's what I would encourage you to do.

Thank God as you rest doing whatever it is that you find yourself doing, thank God that you no longer strive for peace. Thank God for the child king that came to bring your heart joy.

Thank God for the ability to even rest and have it be a fulfilling joy like we talked about. A rest that is true rest. my heart, my peace, my soul still knowing that Jesus has conquered all death, all earthly powers, all oppression and he has cast his net of his kingdom far and wide.

That all who believe in him will enter into that rest. That all that believe in him will walk in this kingdom of peace as peace bearers and bringers. And finally the last application for us is as we rest and rejoice in this child king and his kingdom of peace that we would actually be peacemakers.

[34 : 39] Being a citizen of the kingdom of peace means that you are one who possesses peace which means you are one that has peace to give. So whether it be giving gifts this Christmas season, helping out by serving, loving others, or witnessing to that person that you know lacks peace.

maybe consider a text this Christmas day or Christmas Eve to that person that has been striving for peace but has not found it in Jesus simply praying for them and asking for them to consider Jesus.

We have a kingdom of peace and a child king that subverts all expectations of what a king was. let's receive him together this Christmas.

So if you would stand with me. I'm going to ask the following words.

Let's say together in perfect harmony I'd love for you to respond with this. Come King Jesus establish your kingdom of peace. Let's say together. Come King Jesus establish your kingdom of peace.

[35 : 53] That's wit to come forward is going to lead us in a time of Lord's Supper. Let me pray for us real quick. God thank you so much for establishing your kingdom of peace. For being the God who saw the rage and oppression and violence of the world and decided I will send my king my Messiah to calm all strife.

Lord I pray this Christmas that we be encouraged that the words peace and joy would be on our lips and on our hearts that we rest truly rest in the great work of Jesus Christ the coming king the one that stills our hearts and makes us right with God the father by the blood of the cross.

We love you Lord and we pray that we would be peace bringers on this earth true citizens of your kingdom Lord by the virtue of the fact that you have saved us you have given us peace may we live that peace out and that rest out in the world in the pray amen