The Eternal King

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Preacher: Nick Lauer

[0:00] Well, good morning, church. It's good to see you all this morning. Would you turn with me to Isaiah chapter 9?! That's page 536 in the Pew Bible. Today we come to the end of our four-part Advent series that we've called Glory to the Newborn King.

Each week we've looked at a different Old Testament text that shows us something about who Jesus the Messiah is. And each week we've seen a different aspect of His glory, the glory that the Old Testament foresaw and that Jesus fulfills.
We've seen that Jesus is the humble King from Micah 5, and we've seen that He's the compassionate shepherd King from Jeremiah 23. Last week we saw that He is the victorious King from Numbers 24.
And last, today, we come to a familiar Advent text, Isaiah chapter 9, verses 2 through 7. And with our time together, I want to focus on the last verse, verse 7, where we see that Jesus is the eternal King.
It's here that we see that the reign of this humble, compassionate, victorious King will be a reign that lasts forever. He is the eternal King.
[1:21] So let me pray, and then I'll read Isaiah 9, 2 through 7, and then we'll study this text together. Let's pray. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, three in one, God above all, you alone inhabit eternity, and you fill every moment of our creaturely time with your presence and power.

Father, we ask that as we listen to your word today, you would reveal yourself to us, granting us faith that we might hear, believe, trust, and obey, and that we might honor and glorify you as you alone deserve.
We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord, the Son of the living God. Amen. All right, Isaiah chapter 9, starting with verse 2. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
Those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shown. You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. They rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
For the yoke of his burden and the staff of his oppressor, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.
[2:53] For to us a child is born, 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.

Of the increase of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it with justice and with righteousness, from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. So, it's December 21st, the shortest day of the year. Apparently, the sun is going to set this afternoon at 426 p.m. 426! Why do we live in New England when there are other places of the world where the sun does not set at 426 p.m.?
But tomorrow, the days will begin to lengthen, and in just a few short days, it will be Christmas morning when we celebrate the birth of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
[4:10] It's exciting to look forward to something. Many of us are looking forward to Christmas, to the gifts, to the time with family, to the vacation from school and work. It's a great time of year. But oftentimes, these celebrations can feel short-lived, can't they?

The excitement of the gifts, whether it's a new toy or a new set of clothes or a gadget that you've had your eye on for quite some time, the excitement fades. And pretty soon, the vacation will be over, too.

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So, it's back to work, back to school, back to the grind. Now, I don't mean to be a Grinch and a Killjoy. Holiday break hasn't even started yet, and here I am talking about how it will soon be over. My point is simply that most things in life tend to fade. Nothing good lasts forever, as the saying goes. So, you have to enjoy it while you can.

Nothing good lasts forever, so make the most of it now. But what if there were something good that did last forever?

[5:21] What if there were a reality that didn't fade or rust or lose its glow? In a world where even the best things in life tend to expire and grow old, what if the supremely best thing was unending?

Isaiah's prophecy in verse 7 points us to just that. After telling us about the light that will break into the darkness, in verse 2, and after telling us about the joy that will erupt in our sadness, in verse 3, he speaks of a coming king who will bring liberty to the oppressed, in verse 4, who will lift the burden from our shoulders and bring an end to all of our strife, in verse 5.

And this king, we're told, will be like no other king. Isaiah gives us the names by which this child will be called. And remember, in the ancient world, a name was a sign of your nature, of who you were in your essence.

So, what or who will this child be? Well, he will be named the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

So, this child then is no mere human ruler, no mere human king. But in this child, the living God of Israel, the creator and ruler of all things, has come down in human flesh to save and to reign.

[7:00] But what will come of this saving work? What will come of this saving reign? Nothing good lasts forever, right? Look at the reign of David and Solomon, Israel's greatest kings.

Their reign only lasted a handful of decades, and it was gone. What of the other kingdoms and empires of the world? What of Alexander's Greece?

What of Caesar's Rome? What of Charlemagne's France? What of Victoria's England? No woman forever. He actually says that twice in verse 7. In the first two lines we read, of the increase of his government, there will be no end. There it is. And again, in the middle of the verse, Isaiah says he'll rule with fairness and justice on the throne of his ancestor David, what? From this time forth and forevermore. So here's a king who will rule forever. Here's a kingdom that will never end. The eternal God has taken flesh in the man Christ Jesus, and this incarnate Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, in the power of the eternal

Spirit, this Jesus Christ the Messiah has lived, died, and been raised to indestructible life. And he is now seated at the right hand of the Father, from whence he will reign until all things are put under his feet, and God is all in all. The gospel proclaims a king who now rules forever in a kingdom that will never end. And in this verse, Isaiah 9-7, we're shown two things that Jesus the Messiah's unending kingdom means for us. And the first is this, Jesus' unending kingdom means our unending peace. His unending kingdom means our unending peace. Look again at how verse 7 begins, of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end.

In other words, as his kingly rule increases, so peace will increase more and more for all eternity.

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[9:54] How many mere human kingdoms or governments can honestly say that as their dominion has increased, so has peace increased? I mean, the history of human empire seems to be one long story of human pride and greed increasing to the benefit of some while resulting in the degradation of others, right?

And then, tragically, when the oppression finally becomes unbearable and people rise up to overthrow their oppressors, sadly, these newly installed rulers seem to just repeat the process. The once oppressed become the newly minted oppressors, and whatever short-lived peace may have come about is soon lost in the same cycles of greed and pride and violence.
But Jesus' kingdom is different. When His reign advances in hearts, in families, in relationships, in church communities, there peace abounds.
The kingdom of the crucified and risen one does not operate according to the principles of this world. His kingdom does not advance through coercion or through the sword. It cannot.
[11:24] And whenever the kingdoms of this world have proclaimed to advance His kingdom through coercion and through the sword, they have proven by that very act that they are not operating according to this king, but to the kingdoms of this world.

Because this kingdom advances not through coercion but through grace. Through divine forgiveness received and through forgiveness extended.
Through divine grace received and through grace extended. Through divine generosity received and through generosity extended. Jesus talked about His kingdom advancing not through territories claimed or military victories won, but how?
Through cups of cold water given to the least of these in His name. Through mustard seed acts of self-giving kindness and forgiveness and generosity.
Through solidarity with the outcast and the weak and the fatherless and the poor. Through a message of grace. The grace of His own self-giving love on the cross for sinners granting justification and new spiritual life to all who repent and trust in Him.
[12:46] You see, where His kingdom increases, peace increases. Peace between humans and God, first of all.

And peace between humans and each other as a result. And this peace is not fragile or flimsy but unending, Isaiah says.
Peace. This is not some tentative ceasefire agreement. But peace everlasting. Because it is established by the one whose very name is Prince of Peace.
But where do we find this kingdom? If we were to look for it, where do we see it? Where do we find it? Where does it take shape and live and breathe today? Well, friends, it's not in a particular nation state.
Not in a particular country or territory or global power. No. The reign of the Messiah is spreading throughout the world.
[13:56] Not in a political entity taking up the sword. But in the church. In the church. In the church. This transnational, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic community.

Who confesses that Jesus is the Christ. Israel's Messiah and the world's true Lord. The church is that people who embody and extend the peace of this King.
In our life together. And in our service to the world. And that does mean. That when churches. Do not exhibit this peace. Do not live in this peace of the gospel. Freely given and freely received. Then perhaps we've begun to forfeit our name.
As church. Just as Jesus came as servant. So the church goes forth as servant. Bringing a message of peace to all who hear.
[15:01] Now let's consider some of the implications of this. I mean consider first. That if his kingdom lasts forever.

Then that means what we do for his kingdom. Will last forever. If we seek in our families.
In our workplaces. In our communities. To live under the reign of his grace and peace. If we seek to obey him. If we seek to obey him. And honor him. As an outflow of that grace and peace.
If we live for his kingdom. And not our own. Then our works of love. And our deeds of faith. And our labors of hope.
These things we do for his reign. Will have. Eternal significance. Whether we seek peace in the name of his kingdom.

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[15:58] Wherever we do it. Wherever we seek that peace. Whether it be. In the hard work of restoring a broken marriage. Or rehabilitating a broken neighborhood.

Or simply offering kindness to a neighbor. In Jesus' name. These acts of peace. Have eternal significance. Why? Because his kingdom. Is forever.
Forever. Now we may not see exactly how. Our acts now. Are connected to the grand story.
Of his renewal of all things. But friends they are. You have your part to play. And when the fullness of this kingdom dawns.
And the earth is finally made whole again. And all things are made new. Your part in the story will be seen. And our prince of peace will be glorified in you.
[17:02] And in the part you have played. But consider another implication. Isaiah says of the increase of his government and of peace.

There will be no end. Now think. How could his reign of peace go on increasing without end? I mean when in the age to come all the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our God.
As Revelation says. When in the age to come there is no more sighing or sickness. No more death.
When shalom is restored throughout the new heavens and the new earth.
When the fabric of creation is rewoven in beauty and strength. And God is all in all. I mean on that day. Won't that be the end of the increase of his kingdom and of peace?
Ah. But don't you see. Even on that day. When the glory of God covers the earth.
[18:07] Like the waters cover the sea. Even on that day. The hearts of the redeemed. We'll only be seeing and savoring.

A tiny fraction of the infinite glory and peace of God and of Christ.
Because the beauty and glory of Christ are without end. Then the ravishing reign of his glory in our hearts will be without end.
This will be a peace that increases and never ends. I mean just think. If you can stare at the night sky on a dark winter evening.
And never get bored by the vast array of stars. If you can listen to a Mozart symphony. And constantly be amazed by the intricacy and beauty of the music.
[19:05] If you can gaze at the ocean stretching far into the horizon. And not lose your sense of wonder as the waves crash the shore. Then just imagine what it will be like.

To behold the creator. The infinitely holy God for all eternity. To commune with God without any trace of sin in our hearts.
To behold Jesus Christ in all his beauty. What joy. What peace. What unending satisfaction that will be. World without end.
And that ocean knows no bottom. So Christian. Don't be overly troubled. By the disappointments.
Or the discouragements of this fallen world. This fallen world as it is. Is not meant to satisfy your soul. But there is one who can.
[20:06] And who will. And of the increase of his kingdom and of peace. There will be no end. So as you endure the trials of this life. Fix your eyes on your eternal king.

He will be your satisfaction. Now and forever. Because his unending kingdom. Means our unending peace. But let's consider the second thing that Isaiah shows us in verse 7.
What else does Jesus' unending kingdom mean for us? Well we see in the rest of verse 7. That his unending kingdom. Means our unending security.
It's our unending security. That his unending kingdom results in. Verse 7 continues by saying. That Jesus will reign on the throne of David. And over his kingdom.
To establish it and uphold it. With justice and with righteousness. From this time forth. And forever more. So if we were to ask. What is it that establishes and upholds this kingdom?
[21:09] What makes this kingdom unshakable and secure. For everyone who takes Jesus as their king? How does Isaiah answer? Well it's not your performance.

Or your deeds. No. It's his righteousness. And his justice. There is nothing this king.
Will ever do. That is imperfect or unjust. He has established his kingdom. In perfect righteousness.
And he will uphold his kingdom.
In perfect righteousness. And it will continue to be upheld. By his perfect righteousness. From this time forth. And forever more. But it's not just righteousness.
That guarantees this kingdom. The end of verse 7. Also points us to God's zeal. Isaiah says. Isaiah says. The zeal of the Lord of hosts. The Lord Almighty.

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[22:05] Will do this. So what is this zeal? That Isaiah speaks of. Well zeal. When ascribed to God.

In the Old Testament. That's talking about God's passionate. Faithful. Exclusive. Love. For his people.
And for his glory. Older translations. Would speak of God. Using these same languages. As a jealous God. That is.
God loves his people. So intensely. That he will protect them. And keep them. And never share them. With any other false God.
God. And so the kingdom of our eternal king. Is upheld. By perfect righteousness. And by passionate love.
[23:02] And if that is true. What could shake this kingdom? If both the divine justice. And the divine love. Have established it.

And uphold it. If you are in this kingdom. What could possibly shake you? If God's righteousness. And God's zeal.
Are both for you. What could possibly be against you? What promise of God's word. Will God not fulfill.
If his righteousness. And his love. Are for you. In his kingdom. What enemy of this world. Could possibly. Prevail against you.
Would the world. The flesh. The devil. Stand any chance. Against you. If his righteousness. And his love. Are for you. In his kingdom. What trial.
[24:00] Could you not face. With courage. With hope. Even with joy. If his righteousness. And his love. Are for you.

In this kingdom. That cannot be shaken. If the righteousness of God. And the love of God. Are yours. In Christ Jesus. Is there anything to fear?
Friends. Here. Is unending security. When rains. When rains. And storms. Come. When disappointments.
Assail you. When weariness. Seems to overtake you. When your grip. Seems to be giving way. When your foot. Seems to be slipping. Here. Is the rock.
Under your feet. That will never move. Here. Is the firm hand. That will never let you go. His righteousness. Not yours.
[24:56] His love. Not yours. So friend. Do you know. Do you know. This security.

A security that doesn't depend on the size of your bank account. A security that doesn't depend on the circumstances you're going through. A security that won't ebb and flow. Or wax and wane.
But will remain strong no matter what life brings your way. A security that will not give way. Even in the face of death itself.
Do you have that sort of confidence? That sort of security? To face life. And the life to come with confidence. You can.
But it won't be found in trying to build up your own righteousness. Or multiplying your own works of love. It can only be found.
[25:56] In the perfect righteousness and love of God. In Christ Jesus. Given to you. In this kingdom. That will never end. Your sins have separated you from God.

And his kingdom. But Christ has died. So that your sins might be forgiven. And so that you can be welcomed into this kingdom. Not merely as a subject.
Not merely as a servant. But as a son. As a daughter. As a fellow heir of this kingdom. This eternal king Jesus.
This eternal king Jesus. Stretches out his hands. And commands everyone. Everywhere. To repent. And trust in his righteousness. And surrender their lives to him.
And to know. This unending kingdom. And to experience it. And to rest in it. And to rejoice in it. Forever.
[26:55] Forever. And that is the question. That Isaiah 7. Presses upon us. We have seen the unending peace.

And the unending security. That this unending kingdom brings. The question now is. Will we place ourselves. Under the lordship of this eternal king? Will we admit. That our attempts to run our lives. Our own way. Have not just been kind of a bad idea. But have offended God. And placed us under his just judgment. And will we confess.

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That Jesus is the prince of peace. The mighty God. The incarnate Lord. Who has reconciled sinners to God. Through his life and death and resurrection. And will we now.
Entrust our lives. To this eternal king. Not depending on our own works. Or efforts to gain peace and security. But trusting wholly in him. And in his finished work.
[27:54] Will we bring our lives. Under his lordship. And having done so. Will we now live. As agents of his eternal kingdom.

Will you and I live our lives. As ambassadors of this king. Will we make the pursuit of peace. In the name of his kingdom. Our agenda and our aim. Not working out of anxiety.
Or fear. Or worry. But working out of that peace and security. That his kingdom brings. Going forth in freedom. Seeking to bring his kingdom to bear.
In every sphere of life. In every corner of his creation. This kingdom will have no end. Our eternal king.
Presides over an eternal kingdom. And to know this eternal king. And to live in his eternal kingdom. That friend.
[28:51] Truly is. Eternal life. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, when we think about the concept of eternity, our finite minds stagger at the door.

Lord, how can we who are so bound to the fleeting passage of time comprehend You presiding over all of time in beautiful sovereignty? And yet, God, as we consider that in the incarnation Your eternal life entered into our fleeting world to give us a kingdom that will never end and stretch forever, God, how it brings joy to our hearts that You have acted to rescue not just Your created order, but we, Your image bearers.
Oh, Lord, help us to experience this Christmas season, this peace, this security that Your unending kingdom brings. Let us live as those who are not shaken by the affairs of this world, but who are secure in Your eternal peace.
We pray this in Your mighty name, Jesus. Amen.

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