

HOPE IN SPITE OF DARKNESS Sunday School- August 12, 2012

Unifying Topic: GOD PROMISED A RIGHTEOUS LORD

Lesson Text

I. The Transition From Darkness To Light (Isaiah 9:2)

II. A Time Of Joy (Isaiah 9:3-5)

II. A Timeless Rule (Isaiah 9:6-7)

The Main Thought: 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. (Isaiah 9:6, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Discouraged people look for hope. Where can we find hope? Our hope is found in the coming Messiah who established a just and right kingdom.

Lesson Aim: To hear Isaiah's words as a warning of future invasion as well as a promise of deliverance by the Messiah.

Life Aim: To teach students about the hope they have in Christ and His kingdom.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

HISTORY:

Israel has turned from the Lord. She has ignored the repeated warnings of God's previous heralds. The cup of God's wrath has become full. The nation will be cast aside. The house of David will be rejected. The land will be ravaged, the cities destroyed, the people left desolate. The proclamation of a message of doom is the unhappy task of God's Prophet. However dispersed, among the repeated words of warning and destruction are brief messages of hope for those remaining hearts that have not turned from the Lord. Isaiah's preaching is to harden more and more hearts of those who have turned away from the Lord and at the same time set aside and strengthen a remnant unto Himself. Chapter nine verse one serves as a transition between the prophecy of gloom and darkness of Chapter eight because the light is promised in Chapter nine.

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. – After the prophet has thus painted the people as without morning dawn, but darkness, he says, "*Nevertheless*", meaning on the other hand; yet; however; even sothere will be light; there will be hope. Now, God promises, there will be no more gloom/darkness/dimness for "*her who was in anguish in earlier times.*" Who is this? It is the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali. Because they had walked in the darkness of rejecting the Word of God; they dwelt in the land of the shadow of death; they were carried captive to Assyria (2Kings 15:29). These were two of the twelve tribes of Israel, and their inheritance of the Promised Land was up north, next to the Sea of Galilee. They suffered greatly at the hands of the Assyrians who had annexed these two areas around 732 B.C.

LESSON:

Isaiah 9:2 The Transition From Darkness To Light

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. God's promise was that at this time this area would be made glorious. How would this be? The people who had formerly walked in darkness would see a great light. And the light that they would see would be Jesus. These were also the territories in which Jesus grew up and often ministered; this is why they would be "*filled with glory.*" When Jesus came into the region of Galilee, the people who had walked in darkness were suddenly bathed in the light.

Isaiah 9:3-5 A Time Of Joy

9:3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: — At the dawning of the light to come, Israel will be multiplied. God will make of the true Israel a great host. Though the nation has multiplied, though it has been

diminished by one sore judgment after another, they haven't come out of the situation to be joyful because as the conversion of the nations is prophesied, there are those that joy has not increased, i.e. sickness in the body has not changed and sometimes that joy has not increased with a lingering illness, but you know that God is able to heal, set free, and deliver. It's one step at a time. Yet, joy comes only at the time of harvest or when the spoil is divided. So if those that have not received the light, their joy have not increased, for the gospel, when it comes in, its light and power brings joy along with it, and those who receive it aright, do rejoice.

9:3b...they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. They will rejoice before God. And their joy will be great as joy in the harvest, joy over blessings received, and joy as when men divided the spoil, joy over evil that has been averted and victory that has been won. The "*harvest*" and "*spoils*" of war are figures of speech, but the joy is not merely figurative. Victory and triumph await the people of God. They will rejoice according to the time of harvest, the time when the hard work has paid off and the bounty comes off. They will rejoice as men rejoice when they divide the spoil, with a celebration of victory, as in the locker room of a championship team.

9:4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, —The Prophet continues with the reason for their joy. Call it three reasons: The yoke, the staff, and the rod are broken. These are different phrases, expressive of the same thing; the bondage and slavery of the law, sin, and Satan are broken because of the light. The Assyrians would impose a yoke on the Israelites, but God would break that yoke off. "*The yoke of his burden*" is the curved piece of wood which is a symbol of servitude; that with which he was burdened; "*the staff of the shoulder*" is actually the whole upper back which is expressive of subjection and servitude which strikes his shoulder, and "*the rod*" is an instrument used for beating, punishment or correction. There is total victory when the great light of Jesus breaks burdens and oppressors. The real burden of all nations is sin and its corruption; departure from God, and all the consequences upon those who turn from Him.

9:4b...as in the day of Midian. However, "*as in the day of Midian*" they will no longer be under the rod of their oppressors. i.e., remember when Gideon got an entire victory over the Midianites, with a few unarmed men, by the sound of trumpets, and breaking of pitchers, (Jdgs.7:16-22). ¹You don't have to be great for God to use you. You don't necessarily have to have a lot of people to accomplish great things for God. If you feel small, powerless, and insignificant, you might be just the one God is looking to use.

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. Whereas other battles were usually won with a great deal of noise and by the expense of much blood, this shall be done silently and without noise. This victory which God's people shall have over all their enemies shall be more terrible to their adversaries, whom God will utterly consume, as it were by fire. The very garments of war and attire for battle shall be food for the fire, useful only for burning. Verse 5 of The Message Bible reads: "*the boots of all those invading troops, along with their shirts soaked with innocent blood, will be piled in a heap and burned.*"

Isaiah 9:6-7 A Timeless Rule

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. ²That which was predicted in the previous verses is given as a reason of the victories. Birth indicates the beginning of something. The end of war depends on the coming of a person, a royal person yet one never explicitly called a king here. He would appear as a child. God would not defeat Israel's enemies by using larger more powerful armies, but it would be through the influence of a child to be born. For our benefit, the Prophet saw in vision the darkness and gloom of the nation, and saw also the Son that would be born to remove that darkness, and to enlighten the world. Not that the child—the Messiah was born when the Prophet spake, but in prophetic vision, as the events of the future passed before his mind, he saw that promised Son, and the eye was fixed intently on Him.

³"*A child is born*" brings to mind His humanity. "*A Son is given*" calls to mind His Deity and His Death. Even though Jesus was the "*Son of Man*", He was also the "*Son of God*". Notice that the Son is given. That which is given already exists. The little phrase "*is given*", which literally means "*to be delivered up*", reminds us that this God-man came into the world for a singular purpose. He came into this world to deliver Himself up as the ransom for sin on the cross of Calvary. The word rendered "*government*" here, (mis'rah), means His Empire, His Principality. "*And the government shall be upon his shoulders*" - Here the government on Messiah's shoulder is in marked antithesis to the "*yoke and*

¹ <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/23%20Isa/1999/23Isa09a.htm>

² <http://bible.cc/isaiah/9-6.htm>

³ http://www.sermonnotebook.org/old%20testament/Isa%209_6.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

staff of the oppressor on Israel's "*shoulder*" (Is. 9:4). He shall receive the kingdom of the earth from the Father, to vindicate it from the misrule of those to whom it was entrusted to hold it for and under the Most High, but who sought to hold it in defiance of His right; the Father asserts His right by the Son, the "*Heir of all things*," who will hold it for Him (Dan.7:13, 14). The rule of His Empire and Principality will be on the neck of Jesus. This will be fulfilled in the Millennium, when Jesus Christ will rule the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 20:4-6, Ps. 72, Is. 2:1-4, Is. 11, Is. 65:17-25, Zech. 14:6-21). ⁴Gayle Erwin writes about the government God promises, both ultimately and right now:

- What might such a government look like? First of all, it would look like its King. Politicians of this day look for what they can get from you. **Jesus** looks for what He can do for you.
- Leaders of this day surround themselves with servants. **Jesus** surrounds us with His servanthood.
- Leaders of this day use their power to build their empire. **Jesus** uses His power to wash our feet and make us clean and comfortable.
- Leaders of this day trade their influence for money. **God** so loved that He gave . . .
- Generals of this day need regular wars to keep their weapons and skills up to date and insure their own advancement. **Jesus** brings peace and rest to hearts.
- The higher the plane of importance one reaches in this world, the more inaccessible he becomes. **Jesus** is Emanuel, "God with us", very accessible.
- Leaders of this day are desperate to be seen and heard. **Jesus** sought anonymity so He could be useful.
- Obviously, Jesus is not (*obviously seen*) in charge of the halls of Washington, London, Moscow, Baghdad, Paris or Bonn. So, how can we ever believe the "government will be upon His shoulders"?
 - Actually, His government shows its workings in wonderful ways. Whenever I see someone who miraculously leaves a life of drugs or alcohol and is restored to his family and work, I can see that he is now governed by God.
 - Whenever I see loving Christians gently caring for orphans and those rejected by family, I know I am watching people governed by God.
 - Whenever I see people eagerly learning the Bible and joyously praising, I know they are governed by God.
 - Whenever I see people give up lucrative careers simply to go and share the Good News of Jesus, I know they are governed by God.
 - When I see pastors carefully teach and lead the flock God has given them, I know they are getting signals from the great King.
 - When I see people leave family to live and teach in distant lands because they love the people who have not heard, I know they are governed by God.
 - So, indeed, the government is alive and working. Often silently, mostly unseen. We can be and are, by choice, governed by God. Hope and joy and peace and rest cover its subjects. Justice, mercy and grace, amazingly coexist. I like this Kingdom. The borders are open. Come on in.

His name will be called... Commentators differ to the number of names.

- The Messiah is Wonderful: The glory of who He is and what He has done for us should fill us with wonder. He has inconceivable methods of assisting us, and because His power is far beyond what we are able to conceive. You can never really look at Jesus, really know Him, and be bored. He is Wonderful, and will fill your heart and mind with amazement!
- The Messiah is our Counselor: Jesus is the One fit to guide our lives, and should be the Christian's immediate resource as a Counselor. Jesus can help you in your problems. Though a child, He has no need for counselors. He alone counsels those without counsel. He has a plan for man's salvation. His plan is laid in eternity. It is a plan according to God's love and mercy; faultless discernability.
- The Messiah is our Mighty God: The God of all Creation and glory, the Lord who reigns in heaven, the One worthy of our worship and praise; absolute authority!
- The Messiah is our Everlasting Father: The idea in these Hebrew words is that Jesus is the source and author of all eternity, that He is the Creator Himself. Here we clearly see how the throne of David, which is to be forever, is to be preserved. It will seat a ruler who Himself is Eternal; endless longevity.

⁴ <http://www.studylight.org/com/guz/view.cgi?book=isa&chapter=009>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

- The Messiah is our Prince of Peace: He is the One who makes peace, especially between God and man. It is only those who have grace that has peace. Rather than a warring monarch, He who is the Mighty God will be a benevolent Father, bringing a peace that will be eternally established in His kingdom; enduring tranquility.

9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end... — ⁵His princely rule shall perpetually increase and be unlimited. It shall be multiplied; the bounds of His kingdom shall be more and more enlarged, and many shall be added to it daily. His peaceable and happy government shall be extended to all the ends of the earth.

9:7b...upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom – He that is the Son of David shall reign upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, which He is entitled to. God shall give Him the throne of His father David, Luke 1: 32, 33. ⁶Unlike David's kingdom that had been greatly weakened from within and without, His kingdom will continually increase. Unlike David's rule that came to an end, His kingdom shall have no end. Everything is, and shall be, well managed, in the kingdom of Christ, and none of His subjects shall ever have cause to complain. He shall reign henceforth even for ever; not only throughout all generations of time, but, even when the kingdom shall be delivered up to God even the Father, the glory both of the Redeemer and the redeemed shall continue eternally.

9:7c...to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever – Unlike David's kingdom, as great as it was the Messiah's kingdom is a perfect kingdom of justice and righteousness forever. *Justice* is that part of Law which condemns. *Righteousness* is that part which absolves (to declare free). In the kingdom of Christ the ungodly are condemned, the godly are justified, saved, set free from sin and death. God Himself has undertaken to bring all this about.

9:7d The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. –The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. "*Luther speaks of God's zeal as love mixed with hate or an angry love. He will do as He has promised. He will rise up and consume all who set themselves against His people.*" The title "*Lord of hosts*" says several things about the nature of God and about His creation. It emphasized God's ultimate power over the whole universe and every living creature, where God showed intense love for His people, a kind of jealousy by which He is determined to protect them at the great expense of any who interfere. The prophecy concerning the light, the child and the king is fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus can be Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace for everyone now.

SUMMARY:

It's time to come out of the darkness into the light. Jesus is the One who will bring this light. Zebulun and Naphtali have walked in darkness in the land of the shadow of death long enough.

The nations will be multiplied and the joy will be like the rejoicing in the time of harvest and over plunder taken in war. God breaks all human oppression as in the day of Midian (where Gideon achieves an improbable victory over Midian by the power of God [Jdgs.6-7]). Eventually the Lord will free Israel from bondage to Assyria, Babylon, and every other foreign power that has oppressed her. The world will no longer need the accessories of warfare because a time of universal peace will follow the return of Christ.

Isaiah presents the events as if it were the time of the child's arrival and an expectation of what He will achieve. Isaiah sees an increase of Jesus' rule and dominion; and describes His domain as with peace. During the Millennial reign of Christ, our Savior will rule and reign over all the earth. The government will rest on the shoulders of the Prince of Peace. And there shall be no end of either His government or of His peace. And this peace; this peaceful government shall be established and upheld with justice and righteousness. Isaiah focuses this Messianic hope on an heir of David who would extend His rule from Israel to include all the Gentiles. The virgin's Son will be the rightful heir to David's throne and will inherit the promise of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam.7:12-16; cf. Ps.89:1-37; Matt.1:1). This is going to happen because the Lord of hosts has dedicated Himself to do it! The final victory is a miracle. The battle is not ours but God's (2Chro.20:15).

APPLICATION:

Will you take God at His Word and allow the hope He sends to bring you into the light? There is hope in spite of darkness because of the promise He gives—a Righteous Lord. Remember, in His Presence there is peace because He has already worked all things out for our good.

⁵ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc4.ls.x.html>

⁶ <http://www.wlsessays.net/files/DobbersteinIsaiah.pdf>