

**Text: Isaiah 9:6-7 (Pew Bible, pg.683)**

**Title: “Keeping Hope Alive” Pt.2**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Let's open our Bibles to Isaiah 9:1. As you're turning I'll just remind you that our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is Tuesday at 6pm. It will have a special Cowtown feel to it. Next Sunday we'll have regular Bible Study at 9:45 and just one service at 11:00am and we will share together in the Lord's Supper. My series is entitled “Keeping Hope Alive.” In Israel there was little hope. The prophet Isaiah saw the day when the Northern Kingdom would be attacked and utterly decimated by the Assyrians. But he saw beyond that to the day that God would raise up a deliverer. Stand as I read Isaiah 9:1-7.

In Isaiah's day people struggled to keep hope alive, and the same thing is true today. So many people today have lost hope that they can survive ... a failing marriage ... a boring job ... an addiction ... a cancer diagnosis ... and much more. But God speaks promises that inspire hope in us. Hope is the confidence that God has greater and better things ahead for us.

Now the first five verses of our text tell us about the **PROMISE OF HOPE**: the hope of light coming into the darkness; the hope of joy coming into the despair; the hope of victory coming to the defeat. That's the promise of hope. But the next verses describe the **PERSON OF HOPE** ... the person who would bring that hope.

Let me take you on a little biblical journey here so that you can see the full picture of this one who would deliver such hope, and how the promise is fulfilled. I said last week that there is probably a dual fulfillment to this prophecy: an immediate fulfillment in a king in Isaiah's day and a future fulfillment which we know pointed to the birth and coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. My aim is to challenge you to think deeply about Jesus in all of His fullness, and how He fulfills this prophecy.

**Isaiah 9:6 - For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Actually this is one long name. Each part of the name would probably be ascribed to a king in the hopes that that is, indeed, what he would become.

**“Wonderful Counselor”**: World leaders need wisdom ... lots of it. Most leaders draw advisors or counselors around them to help them make decisions. But this leader would possess in himself all the wisdom he needed to take the government on his shoulders. And this king would be called “wonderful” counselor. People would stand in awe of His exceptionally wise leadership.

**“Mighty God”**: Now Israel was were like our Dallas Cowboys ... more losses than wins. And their leaders had been little more than impotent tyrants. So there was a longing for a Messiah who would fight for them in the battles they faced. Now it's hard to imagine that name being given to an earthly king because it was a name by which God revealed Himself in

the OT. But there was the hope in the people that a man could be so endowed by God that he would his reign would be as mighty as God's reign.

**“Everlasting Father”**: This ruler would be a fatherly ruler whose care for his people would last forever and ever. He would not be a hateful tyrant, but a loving father.

**“Prince of Peace”**: This leader would have such extraordinary power and influence that he would usher in a era of peace for the nation. No enemy would dare attack them and upset that peace.

**Isaiah 9:7 - Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.**

So Isaiah saw a child born and a son given who would grow to become a king whose appearance would bring hope to a struggling nation. The name by which he would be called would reflect all that the nation needed him to be. However, whoever it was (and we're not told who that ruler was), there's no way they could completely fulfill the potential wrapped up in the long name ... and Isaiah knew it.

You see, no earthly king, president, dictator, prime minister or any other ruler in history has been able to perfectly lead their own country, must less the whole world. The government is placed on the shoulders of men and women, and they cannot shoulder it completely. They may have a measure of success, but eventually fail because they are, at best, human beings.

**ILLUSTRATION** – This is reflected in the approval ratings of our nation's leaders. Sometimes it goes up, but most of the time it is declining. Why? People have hopes when a president is elected that he will solve our problems. But no single human being can ever provide the hope that people need.

So these names could never be fulfilled in a single human being. No, Isaiah saw God's Messiah coming. God pulled back the curtain of history and allowed Isaiah to see not just the immediate, but 700 years into the future when a Child would be born and a Son given who was Christ the Lord.

**QUOTE**: G.K. Chesterton once wrote: “Behind the debris of our self-styled, sullen supermen, there stands one gigantic figure of one person, because of whom, by whom, in whom, and through whom alone mankind might still have hope: the person of Jesus Christ.”

This where all of history is going. Kings rise and fall. Kingdoms rise and fall. But Isaiah sees something here that we must know: An Eternal King will step onto the stage of human history, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the child born and the son given. So this prophecy was not only partially fulfilled in Isaiah's day, it was fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus.

Now the Bible says that Jesus came to His own (the Jews), but His own people did not receive Him. Jesus was the child born and the son given. He was to Israel the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace ... the Messiah. But Israel totally missed it.

So it first this looks like a failed mission by God to place His king over Israel. It appears that God sent His Son to be Israel's king, to follow in the glorious line of King David and to establish a reign from the throne of Israel that would rule the world. But what happened? The child was born to them and the son was given to them. He wasn't born in the king's palace, but in a farmer's barn. He grew up quietly, like a tender sprig of grass grows unnoticed out in the yard. But then He began to make bold assertions. The Kingdom of God had come, and He was the King of the Kingdom. By the miracles He performed and by the message He preached He demonstrated that the Kingdom of God had come among them. But it wasn't what Israel expected. He didn't emerge as a military conqueror (as Israel expected) but as a suffering servant. And Israel didn't coronate Jesus as King; they crucified Him as a criminal. And apparently after just 33 years on this earth, the Child born and the Son given died and was no more, or at least they thought.

What they had a hard time seeing is that King Jesus came first to deal with our sin problem. If He was to reign, the first enemy that would have to be destroyed is sin, and the death that results from our sin. But Israel didn't see that.

But then strange reports began to circulate ... reports that this Jesus who was crucified was raised again. There were even eyewitnesses as the resurrected Jesus appeared to hundreds of people. Then just six weeks later the risen Lord Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives with many of His followers and He told them about His Kingdom. The disciples were still confused. They had come to believe that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Christ sent from God. Why didn't He just stay and establish His Kingdom visibly and gloriously now? In Acts we are told of the expectations of the disciples when they heard Jesus explain this:

**Acts 1:6 - So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"**

They thought, "Come on Jesus! Do it now. Come and restore the Kingdom to Israel." But Jesus didn't do that. He didn't come and reign ... He left. And the disciples watched as Jesus was carried up into heaven, ascending beyond their sight into the clouds. But where did He go? God would reveal it to them later through the preaching of the apostles who talked about the power of God ...

**Mark 16:19 - After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.**

The writer of Hebrews explained it this way:

**Hebrews 1:3b - After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.**

The Apostle Paul talks about the power of God...

**Ephesians 1:20 - which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,**

**Ephesians 1:21 - far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.**

Friends, this is why we treasure Jesus today. We now understand where Jesus went after His death and resurrection. The King is alive and He is ruling and reigning this very moment, even if His throne is far away in the heaven.

So at Christmas we can't just see the Incarnation alone. We have to see the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ. But there's one more part to this ... the Consummation ... the Second Coming of Christ.

But will we ever get to see Jesus as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace on this earth? Will we ever see the government of the universe on His shoulders? Well friends, this is where Jesus' first coming and His second coming connect. Remember after Jesus' resurrection when the disciples saw Jesus ascend to the right hand of the throne of God, an angel spoke to them:

**Acts 1:11 - "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."**

There's a day coming when the invisible reign of Jesus will become visible. You see, when Jesus came the first time, born in barn in Bethlehem, no one recognized Him. As He taught truth and lived a perfect life, no one recognized Him. When He died on the Cross for the sins of all people, no one recognized Him. Even His followers abandoned Him. Even after Jesus was resurrected from the dead, victorious over sin and death, people still didn't get it. But one day He's coming again. And in that day ...

**Philippians 2:10 - at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,**

**Philippians 2:11 - and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

One day all angels, all humans, all powers in the universe will be asked "Who is Lord of all?" And every tongue will respond, "Jesus, Son of God." Only a minority of us will admit that we believe that today. But the day will come when the One and Only King whom God recognizes will be acknowledged by every tongue ever created.

So the story isn't over. One day Christ will return, and in that day He will be displayed in all His glory for who He really is: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace ... reigning over all the earth. And for the first time the world will have a leader who can truly bring hope.

Now why do you and I need to know this? What Jesus will be then, He is already now. And that's why we worship Him and that's why we yield to Him. And that's why we can trust Him personally. This is what helps us keep hope alive.

**Isaiah 9:6a - For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.**

The shoulders of Jesus are strong enough to bear the weight of the running of the entire universe; and they are strong enough to run your life, if you will let Jesus do that. He can shoulder everything you put on Him. That's what we learn from the names or titles by which the Messiah is known.

**ILLUSTRATION** - You know, we live in a day of specialization. If you have a problem with your health, you no longer typically just "go to the doctor." You'll probably go to a specialist ... your pediatrician, your dermatologist, your cardiologist or whatever. Well, I'm grateful that Jesus isn't into specialization, in the sense that he handles only one thing. Instead, in the person of Jesus Christ you find all you need and so very much more. Jesus doesn't make referrals. He helps you personally.

## **1. CHRIST IS OUR COUNSEL WHEN WE ARE CONFUSED.**

**Isaiah 9:6 – “And he will be called ... Wonderful Counselor”**

Just think of what wisdom is required to orchestrate every microscopic particle, every force of nature, every detail of every nation on the earth, not to speak of the running of the whole universe. And God is orchestrating your life today with the very same wisdom. Will you look to Him for that? Will you seek His counsel in prayer before you make any important decision? Will you look to get His wisdom in His Word as you order your life?

So Christ is our counsel when life gets confusing.

## **2. CHRIST IS OUR STRENGTH WHEN WE ARE WEAK.**

**Isaiah 9:6 – “And he will be called ... Mighty God”**

Here is one of the great truths of the Christian faith. God is revealed in three persons, not three separate Gods, but God in three persons, the blessed Trinity. And Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, completely God. When that baby was born in Bethlehem's manger that was God stepping into the human experience. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, as the Bible says.

**Colossians 2:9 - For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,**

So this child born in Bethlehem's manger is Mighty God. And He is stands ready to give you victory in the battles you face in life. Christ has the power to save you from a life of sin. He has the power to keep you. He has the power to help you overcome temptation. And He has the power to overcome our greatest enemy, death. Allow Him to be the Mighty God He really is.

Christ is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God ...

### **3. CHRIST IS OUR HELP WHEN WE ARE IN NEED.**

**Isaiah 9:6 – “And he will be called ... Everlasting Father”**

It's interesting that the Son, here, is called “Father.” Why is that? Because Jesus came to perfectly represent the Father to us.

**John 14:9 - Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.**

Christ is the “everlasting Father.” You know our earthly fathers will not always be with us. Sometimes they may even fail us ... but not our heavenly, everlasting Father, whom we see in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a father forever whose love never changes.

**ILLUSTRATION** - I think one of the most vivid images of a father I've ever seen came back in the 1992 Olympics when British track star Derek Redmond pulled up lame in the middle of his 400-meter race. He fell to the ground in agony with a torn hamstring. As the medical attendants were approaching, Derek Redmond somehow managed to get to his feet and sort of hop down the track ... he had to finish the race. As he reached the back-stretch a large man in a tee shirt came out of the stands, pushed aside a security guard and ran to the side of Redmond on the track, literally holding up the runner with his massive arms. It was Jim Redmond, Derek's father. He said, "Son, you don't have to do this." Derek replied, "Yes I do." His father replied, "Well then, we'll do it together." And there with the son's head buried in the shoulder of his father, the two finished the race together.

But there's something else.

### **4. CHRIST IS OUR PEACE IN THE CHAOS OF LIFE.**

**Isaiah 9:6 – “And he will be called ... Prince of Peace”**

Remember Isaiah's prophecy first came to Israel, a nation caught in the middle of war. They were in turmoil. Enemies surrounded them, and the prospect of victory was slim. But the prophet comes to say, “Sure the hour is bleak; but the day will come when God will raise up a leader ...

**Isaiah 9:7 - Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.**

Now Messiah Jesus is not only the national Prince of Peace, but a personal Prince of Peace. When the angels announced the birth of Jesus they proclaimed “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

The Bible promises that when we put our trust in God that...

**Philippians 4:7 - The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

And we need this peace in the face of so much that can cause us to worry and be anxious.

**ILLUSTRATION** - When Mr. Anxiety knocks at the door, Prince of Peace answers, “May I help you?” “Yes, I want in. I've come to disturb this person's heart. He has cancer. She's got family problems. His business is struggling. She's got a tough decision to make.” Prince of Peace replies, “Sorry, I can't let you in. You see, this person is a child of God. He has prayed about this matter. She has put this in God's hands. I am the Peace of God, set at the door of this heart to guard it. You can't come in here.”

The shoulders of Jesus can handle the running of the universe. Will you place your life on His shoulders today?