

“NEVERTHELESS”*or***THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING**

Then we come to chapter nine, verse one. The opening word is “Nevertheless!” Oh, what a word! When the Lord God is talking about well-deserved wrath and judgment, I love to hear him say, “Nevertheless!” Whenever God says, “Nevertheless,” he is saying, “There is still hope. I will yet be merciful. In wrath, I will remember mercy.”

Matthew Henry wrote, “In the worst of times God’s people have a *nevertheless* to comfort themselves with, something to allay and balance their troubles.”

- I rejoice to say with David, when I behave as a brute beast before my God — “*Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand*” (Psalm 73:23).
- Whenever my soul is smarting under his chastening rod, I am thankful to remember that my heavenly Father declared — “*Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail*” (Psalm 89:33).
- Though, like the nation of Israel, we often provoke the Lord to wrath, it is written — “*Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry*” (Psalm 106:44).
- Though often we believe not, we are assured of God’s faithfulness still — “*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*” (2 Timothy 2:19).
- And though we see all things here dissolving and coming to an end — “*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*” (2 Peter 3:13).

I am thankful for that huge word of comfort — “NEVERTHELESS!” That is the title of my message tonight. — “NEVERTHELESS!”

Back here, in Isaiah 9:1, this word, “*Nevertheless,*” was a truly blessed word of hope for Israel and Judah. Isaiah was inspired of God to inform the nation that though the judgment he spoke of was sure, it was not to be the forerunner of greater judgment, but the forerunner of great mercy.

(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 (Under Tiglathpileser — 2 Kings

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

15:29), and afterward did more grievously afflict *her* by the way of the sea (Under Shalmaneser — 2 Kings 17:5), beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.”

The prophet of God has been describing the judgments of God which were to come upon apostate Israel. The nation would be engulfed in spiritual blindness, cut off, and left desolate in their unbelief and hardness of heart. Yet, while pronouncing God’s judgments upon the apostate nation, the faithful prophet took great care to comfort and cheer God’s elect remnant.

In this ninth chapter Isaiah prophesied that these times of Israel’s greatest darkness and desolation would also be times God’s greatest blessing and most abundant grace upon his people, for the times of which he spoke were the times of Christ’s coming to redeem and save his people. The days of which Isaiah prophesied are these gospel days, when God’s true Israel must be gathered out of the Gentile nations, as Paul explains in Romans 11:25-26.

(Romans 11:25 -26) “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (26) And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

Proposition: Our text is a prophecy of the blessedness of Christ’s coming.

We know that this is the proper interpretation of Isaiah 9 because the Holy Spirit specifically tells us so in Matthew 4:12-17.

(Matthew 4:12-17) “Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; (13) And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: (14) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, (15) The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;* (16) The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

shadow of death light is sprung up. (17) From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Isaiah 9:1-5 speaks of the blessedness of Christ’s coming to the earth in human flesh to accomplish redemption for us and of the blessedness of his coming spiritually, in saving grace, by the power of his Holy Spirit, to apply that redemption and all its benefits to chosen sinners. **Who knows, it may be that you are one of those people spoken of in this prophecy!** Perhaps today these words will be fulfilled in our very midst.

Divisions: When the Lord Jesus Christ comes in saving power and grace, our text tells us that he brings five great blessings of grace with him. Here, then, are **The Blessings Of Christ’s Coming.**

1. The Lord Jesus Christ gives light to those who sit in darkness (v. 2).
2. He multiplies the citizens of the Holy Nation, the Israel of God (v. 3).
3. The Lord Jesus brings joy to those whom God has broken (v.3).
4. The Son of God gives liberty to those who are in bondage (v.4).
5. He who is the Captain of our Salvation brings victory through grace to every believer (v. 5).

LIGHT FOR DARKNESS

The Lord Jesus Christ gives light to those who sit in darkness (v. 2). Here is a description both of man’s nature and of God’s grace. Isaiah tells us what man is by nature and what God does for chosen, redeemed sinners by his grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(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.”

All men and women, by nature, live in total spiritual darkness. There are no exceptions to this fact. Humbling and offensive as it is to human flesh, the fact remains that no man or woman by nature possesses even the very slightest perception or understanding of spiritual truth.

The Jews were God’s professed people, but they lived in utter darkness. They had the law, the prophets, the sacrifices, the priesthood, the temple,

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

and the ceremonies of divine worship. They read the law every sabbath day in their synagogues. They studied the Word of God in meticulous detail. There has probably never been a people more well trained in religious *orthodoxy* than the Jews during the days of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Yet, when Christ came, they did not have a clue as to the meaning of the Scriptures. They were engulfed in total spiritual darkness (Matthew 22:29).

(Matthew 22:29) “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”

Illustration: Nicodemus (John 3:3-8)

We are no different. — “*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light*” (Ephesians. 5:8). When Christ came to us, we were darkness. Some of you are yet nothing but the embodiment of darkness. Everything in you is darkness, utter darkness! Though blessed with the privilege of hearing the gospel preached three times a week, every week of your lives, though you have been raised under the constant influence of God’s Word, though you have heard it from your youth up, at home, in your Bible classes, and from this pulpit, you still cannot see the kingdom of God. Like fish hatched and raised in a cave, you have no eyes with which to perceive light. Like a blind man walking in an open field, though he looks straight into the face of the noonday sun, he cannot see it, so you who are yet in darkness cannot see the Light of the Sun of Righteousness, though it is shining all around you (1 Corinthians 2:14).

(1 Corinthians 2:14) “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

I am not talking now about illiterate, unsophisticated men and women. I am talking about all men and women. I am talking about you. **It is utterly impossible for the natural man to see anything of a spiritual nature apart from divine revelation.** Though you may be perfectly instructed in doctrinal truth, you know nothing spiritual unless God himself teaches you. **You are totally blind to the things of God.**

- The Depravity of Your Heart (Matthew 15:19).
- The Glorious Character of God (Exodus 33:18-19).

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

- The Necessity and Nature of Christ’s Atonement (Romans 3:24-26).
- Salvation by Grace Alone (Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

Men and women are blind because, since the sin and fall of our father Adam, and our sin and fall in him, we all — “Dwell in the land of the shadow of death.” Man by nature is spiritually dead (Romans. 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Ephesians 2:1-3). We are all dead men; and we all live and walk in this place called “*the land of the shadow of death.*” That is a pretty good description of this world. Man, by nature, dwells in “*the land of the shadow of death*”...

- Separated from God.
- Alienated from God.
- Utterly Helpless.
- Totally Ignorant of His Condition.

Illustration: *The Valley of Dry Bones* (Ezekiel 37)

But when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to sinners in saving power and grace he gives them the Light of Life. — “*Upon them hath the light shined!*” If you see the things I am talking about and rejoice in them, — “*Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.*” God does not allow all men to hear the gospel. And he does not cause many who hear it to understand it. — “*Many are called, but few are chosen.*” If you now see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, if you now see...

- The Corruption of Your Heart...
- The Glory of the Cross...
- Salvation by Grace Alone...

You see because the Light of the World has shone in your heart, because God has caused you to see. Salvation comes to men and women by the will, purpose, and power of God alone, by his free and sovereign grace in Christ (Matthew 11:20-25; John 1:11-13).

(Matthew 11:20-25) “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: (21) Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

(22) But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. (23) And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. (24) But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee. (25) At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

(John 1:11-13) “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

And that salvation comes, at God’s appointed time, through the light of the gospel, — by the instrumentality of gospel preaching (1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Timothy 1:9-10).

(1 Corinthians 1:23) “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;”

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:”

MULTIPLIED PEOPLE

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes in saving power he multiplies the citizens of the Holy Nation, the Israel of God. — “*Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy*” (v. 3). The prophet, here, is talking about a time when God diminished the physical nation of Israel greatly. Yet, though he destroyed the physical nation and gave no joy to the physical

“NEVERTHELESS”*or***THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING**

seed of Israel, he multiplied the Holy Nation of his elect (1 Peter 2:9). This Holy Nation, spoken of by Peter, is the Church of God’s elect, the Israel of God. **Peter says of us, with an obvious reference to our text here in Isaiah**, — “*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*”

In both Isaiah 9 and 1 Peter 2, the Holy Spirit is telling us that **Christ has enlarged the borders of Zion to include Gentiles as well as Jews**. I am fully aware that the number of God’s elect never increases or diminishes. God chose his own elect in Christ before the world began. Their number can never be changed. It is always 144,000. Never 144,001. Never 143,999. But always 144,000! Not one name shall ever be written in or stricken from the Lamb’s Book of Life, which was written by the finger of God according to the election of grace and sealed by his purpose before the world began. **But I know this, too...**

- God’s elect are not known by us, or anyone else in this world, until they are called out of darkness into his marvelous light by his grace (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5).
- God calls his elect to life and faith in Christ by the gospel (2 Thessalonians . 2:13-14).
- God does not send his servants to preach the gospel in vain (Isaiah 55:11; 1 Corinthians 15:58).

Wherever God sends his Gospel he sends his Son; and wherever God sends his Son, it is that he may “*multiply the nation*” of his elect.

And whenever Christ comes in saving power and grace to chosen sinners, the first thing that happens is not an increase of joy but a flood of sorrow. — “*Thou hast not increased the joy!*” Our Lord’s first works of grace in our souls are painful, sorrowful works; but they are necessary. He works conviction in us that he might work repentance in us. He breaks our hearts and squeezes from us the humble, contrite confession of sin. **Conversion is a painful process.** As I will show you in a minute, it is joyous in the end; but it is painful, sometimes very painful in the process.

- Christ sends his Spirit to strip away our righteousness, that he might clothe us with his righteousness.
- He condemns us by his holy law and slays us, that he may give us life and free us by his grace.

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

- He humbles us, that he may exalt us.
- He makes us hunger and thirst for righteousness, that he might fill and satisfy us by his grace.
- He causes us to seek him, that we might find him.

THEN JOY

Then, blessed be his name, our all glorious Savior brings joy to those whom he has broken by his grace (v. 3). The brokenness, contrition, hunger, thirst, and seeking, which are sometimes looked upon by men as conditions of grace, are not conditions of grace at all. These things which cause sinners to look to Christ are themselves works of grace which he has wrought in his elect, that he might work in us the experimental joy of grace spoken of in the latter part of verse three.

(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.”

There is no contradiction in the text. If God graciously breaks your heart in repentance, he will cause your heart to rejoice in faith; and there is no joy in this world like that which Paul calls the “*joy of faith*” (Philippians 1:25).

- It is like the joy of a full harvest after a long summer.
- It is like the joy of victory with complete, bounteous spoils after a long battle.
- But it is the joy of full harvest for which someone else did all the labor, and the joy of complete victory and spoils which someone else won.

This joy of faith which God gives to his elect is the fruit of the Spirit. It is not something men work up. It is not just emotionalism. This joy is the work of God’s grace. **What is it? It is...**

- The Joy of Complete Forgiveness (Psalm 51:7-12).
- The Joy of Perfect Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).
- The Joy of Gracious Adoption (1 John 3:1-2).
- The Joy of A Good Hope Through Grace (Lamentations. 3:1-26).

BLESSED LIBERTY

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

When he comes to chosen, redeemed sinners in saving grace and power, the Son of God gives liberty to those who are in bondage (v. 4).

(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.”

As Gideon delivered Israel from the Midianites, not by might, nor by power, but by the power of God’s Spirit (Judges 7:15-25), so the Lord Jesus Christ brings his people into “*the glorious liberty of the sons of God*” by the irresistible power and grace of his Holy Spirit. It is written, “*If the Son therefore shall make you free you shall be free indeed!*” Let me take just a minute to tell you about the freedom Christ brings to sinners in bondage.

The freedom he gives is freedom from...

- The Curse and Dominion of God’s Holy Law (Romans 6:14-15; 7:4; 8:1; 10:4).
- The Torments of A Guilty Conscience (Hebrews. 9:14; 10:22). — The Apostle tells us, in Hebrews 10:2, that once sin has been purged there remains no more conscience of sins. — “*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water*” (Hebrews 10:22).
- The Tyranny of Satan
- The Dominion of Sin (Romans 6).
- The Love of This World.
- Christ Jesus also gives his people the liberty of free access to and acceptance with the holy Lord God as their Father (Hebrews 4:16; 10:19).
- And the Son of God gives his people a blessed liberty and freedom from the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15).

VICTORY THROUGH GRACE

Now, read verse 5.

(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.”

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

Here the prophet of God, speaking by divine Inspiration, tells us that when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to chosen, redeemed sinners in his sovereign, saving grace and power he brings victory to every believer, victory through grace. Again, like Gideon’s victory over the Midianites, the victory of grace is won not by the noise of rattling sabers, roaring guns, and dying warriors; but by the might and power of his Spirit. It is a victory accomplished by the work of God in the hearts of his elect, “*with burning and with fuel of fire*”. That is to say, **with the burning of conviction and with the fuel of the fire of gospel preaching.**

- The Lord condescends to use earthen vessels to accomplish his work (2 Corinthians 4:7).
- Our Lord saves his elect by the light of revealed truth, by the Word of truth, “*the gospel of your salvation.*”
- He saves his people with nothing but the blast of a trumpet, the gospel trumpet.
- And the work is altogether his work.

Victory is ours by the irresistible grace and power of God the Holy Spirit in Christ. He gives it to us when he gives us faith in Christ. We are more than conquerors in him, because “*Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world*” (Romans 8:28-39).

(Romans 8:28-39) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) What shall we then say to these things? **IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?** (32) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, **HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?** (33) **WHO SHALL LAY ANY THING TO THE CHARGE OF GOD’S ELECT?** *It is* God that justifieth. (34) **WHO IS HE THAT CONDEMNEETH?** *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (35)

“NEVERTHELESS”

or

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST’S COMING

WHO SHALL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Application: This is what the Lord Jesus Christ does for sinners when he comes in saving grace and power. He gives...

1. Light to them that sit in darkness.
2. Increase to the family and kingdom of God.
3. The blessed joy of faith.
4. The glorious liberty of the sons of God.
5. Victory over sin, Satan, death, hell, and the grave.

Blessed Son of God, come to chosen sinners this hour. Give light to them that sit in darkness. Increase your kingdom greatly. Bring poor, weary, heavy laden sinners into the great joy of faith, faith that only you can give. Give chosen, redeemed sinners the joy of the glorious liberty and victory of grace, for the glory of your own great name.

Amen.