

## CHRISTMAS 2016:

The Context Of Isaiah 9:6

Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-7

Slide Rule

INTRO: Over the past 20 some years I have spoken at the Christmas season on Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2. And this year I wondered what I should share since I don't know how many more Christmas messages I will do, if any. I have been very enriched in dealing quite thoroughly with the biblical seasonal days of the year, including the non-biblical days of Epiphany and New Years Day.

I had the thought of taking some OT prophecy to the birth of Christ. And after seeing the verse for the second time that the decorating committee had put up I decided to study this verse for a message. Every year still, in various places, George Fredrik Handel's Messiah is performed, as it is in our own city of Edmonton. One of the great moments of that performance is when they come to the Hallelujah chorus and everyone in the audience rises to their feet. That is done because King George, when he heard this part of the performance rose to his feet. When the king stands all stand. Somehow I cannot picture heaven being without music and singing by the saints. Revelation 15:3 speaks about singing in heaven, and I'm wondering what it will be like.

Well, Isaiah 9:6, the verse on the wall behind me is in Handle's song. References to the book of Isaiah are mentioned 8 times in Handle's Messiah. The book of Isaiah is an incredible book. As I began to look at this, I thought I must outline my message, the Context and the Content of Isaiah 9:6. It was too much for a message and the context is so important to an understanding of this great prophecy that we will just look at that this Christmas day.

Look at our verse up on the wall: For unto us a Child is born,  
Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His  
shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

As we consider the context, let me make some general comments on the book of Isaiah. Someone has noted that, as the Bible has 66 books; Isaiah has 66 chapters. And as the Bible comes in two parts, the Old and New Testaments; so the book of Isaiah comes in two parts. The OT has 39 books, and Isaiah has 39 chapters in the first part. The fortieth chapter, like the fortieth book in the Bible begins to speak comfortably to His people. And so, as the NT begins with the 40th book of the Bible, so Isaiah's second part begins in the 40<sup>th</sup> chapter.

Pastor Joe and I have recently been doing the course, Bible Interpretation. From the rules established from the Bible itself, we would learn that this passage is not directly written to us, just as the rest of the book is not. It was written to God's people the Jews, and this book was especially addressed to Judah. But it is written at a very crucial time, because Judah, though she had seen what happened to the northern kingdom is toying with the same sins.

In our rules on Bible interpretation, we learned as well that a passage cannot now mean to us what it did not mean to the original hearers. It may be applied in different ways, but it only has one meaning, and that one meaning is the meaning we seek to interpret. You see, the meaning is one, but the applications may be many. But in making applications we must be careful to get the real meaning first.

Now let me put Isaiah in his time. If we go back to the time of Christ, that is 2,000 years ago; and then we go back about 740 years before that, we are at the time of Isaiah. He began to prophecy in the days of Uzziah. Uzziah died during the early days of Isaiah's preaching. Then he prophesied through the days of the kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The wicked king Manasseh had reigned some years when Isaiah died. Isaiah rubbed shoulders, Charles Ryrie says, with royalty and gave advice to leaders. He warned against making alliances with foreign nations and called on the nation to trust in God.

Now the name Isaiah means, "The Lord is salvation." Israel, through disobedience would learn that when you forsake God, no one but the Lord is able to save you. That is what we must all find out some day as well, if we don't discover it while we are in this life.

So we begin a look at the context prior to the prophecy that we are considering.

## I. ISAIAH 1

Turn to Isaiah 1. During his time the prophets warned Israel, the northern kingdom, and Judah, the southern kingdom again and again. But Israel would not listen, and maybe early, or around the middle of Isaiah's time, the southern kingdom was taken captive by Assyria. Does anyone know the year the Assyrians came and took them captive? It was 722 BC.

Well, Judah, the southern kingdom saw what happened to the northern kingdom, and for all the warning, they could not hear. Let us look at the state of the nation, as Isaiah begins his prophecies.

1 ¶ The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2 ¶ Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me;

3 The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider."

4 Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward.

5 Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints.

6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.

7 Your country is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire; Strangers devour your land in your presence; And it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, As a hut in a garden of cucumbers, As a besieged city.

16 ¶ "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil,

17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;

20 But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

You get a pulse of the nation here. Listen again to verses 2-4:

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me;

3 The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider."

4 Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward.

They are living in sin on every hand, and yet go to church, so to speak. And the Lord says, in verses 12-13, "When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons,

the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.” We are in such a time. What must God not say of many who meet on Sunday morning?

The Lord said to them, “The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master’s crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” Do the animals not know better than many in our day? You see, in a measure at least, where they were is where we are. Surely we should take warning.

## II. ISAIAH 2

But go now to chapter 2. We’ll read verses 1-4:

1 ¶ The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

You see, he is addressing the southern kingdom.

2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD’S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it.

3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

You see, Isaiah is not without hope. There is a better day coming. What he is speaking about here is the kingdom of God which John the Baptist and Christ said was about to arrive when they preached. But once more Israel failed God and the promised kingdom was set aside for another long time. So Isaiah calls them to repentance in verse 5: 5 O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD.

But before that better day comes, something happens between the present of Isaiah's day and that future. So in verses 5-9, he returns to the present and describes the state of the nation once more. Listen to how much it sounds like today:

6 ¶ For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with eastern ways; They are soothsayers like the Philistines, And they are pleased with the children of foreigners.

7 Their land is also full of silver and gold, And there is no end to their treasures; Their land is also full of horses, And there is no end to their chariots.

8 Their land is also full of idols; They worship the work of their own hands, That which their own fingers have made.

9 People bow down, And each man humbles himself; Therefore do not forgive them.

And then in verses 10-12, he describes what is to happen in the future before the millennium comes, because of their disobedience. Before the hope for Israel will be realized, there will come a time of darkness such as this world has never seen. It is described in horrific words in many Scriptures. Look at verses 10-12:

10 ¶ Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty.

11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

12 For the day of the LORD of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up—And it shall be brought low—

### III. ISAIAH 3-5

But what happens before that day of darkness comes? Look at chapter 3 verses 9-12:

9 ¶ The look on their countenance witnesses against them,  
And they declare their sin as Sodom; They do not hide it.  
Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon  
themselves.

10 "Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them,  
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

11 Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, For the  
reward of his hands shall be given him.

12 As for My people, children are their oppressors, And  
women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause  
you to err, And destroy the way of your paths."

Then the Lord pleads with Israel to turn, and then He  
describes what will happen to their women who walk around  
with all kinds of jewelry and finery. It will all be made  
to stink. Not a real Christmas subject.

In chapter 4 Isaiah speaks about the time when the Lord  
will wash away the stench from the daughters of Zion. And  
we go to chapter 5.

In chapter 5 Isaiah gives a parable of a vineyard, which  
pictures Israel. And the Lord did everything needed to be  
done, but it did not produce. So look at verses 3-4:

3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,  
Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.

4 What more could have been done to My vineyard That I  
have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring  
forth good grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes?

We go now to verses 5-7:

5 And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My  
vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be  
burned; And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled  
down.

6 I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug, But  
there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command  
the clouds That they rain no rain on it."

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.

And in the rest of the chapter he proceeds to pronounce 6 woes on Israel.

The first woe is to land-grabbers 8-10. Do we know anything about that?

The second woe is against alcohol consumption 11-17. Look at verses 11-12:

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them!

12 The harp and the strings, The tambourine and flute, And wine are in their feasts; But they do not regard the work of the LORD, Nor consider the operation of His hands.

Do we know anything about this?

Of the third woe, 18-19, Ryrie says, "Woe to the blasphemous...who pull their idol of sin along, taunting God to act as if He can."

Verse 20 has the fourth woe, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Let me tell you something about these people. They think they are calling good, good. But they are calling good that which is actually evil. When they put darkness for light, they think the darkness is light.

Verse 21 has the fifth woe, "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!"

Verses 22-23 have the sixth woe, 20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!



21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink,

23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away justice from the righteous man!

Then in verses 24-30 the Lord tells them what He will do. He will whistle, and the nations that hate Israel will come and they will demolish them.

Isaiah lived to see this happen to the northern kingdom. The horrors of how they were treated is not something we want to talk about on this day, but God would no longer spare them. Isaiah was not around to see this happen to the southern kingdom, but in 586, they too went into captivity. And never, to this very day, was the nation really ever reestablished to its former glory. And in the time of Christ, it was fully under the dominion of Rome.

#### IV. ISAIAH 6

But not all is gloom and doom, and in chapter 6 God commissions the prophet Isaiah. Go to 6:1:

6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 ¶ So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.

7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

9 ¶ And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'

10 "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed."

11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate,

12 The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

13 But yet a tenth will be in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump."

How long was Isaiah to prophecy? Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant. Why would that be? Because Israel refuses to repent.

## V. ISAIAH 7

As Charles Ryrie outlines this book he outlines chapters 7-12 which are now before us as prophecies related to the coming of the Messiah. We must skip some of this but turn to 7:14. It is familiar to us from common verses used at Christmas. It says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give

you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

Now this prophecy has what is called a near and far fulfillment. It had a fulfillment in Isaiah's day. Let us read verses 14-16:

14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

15 "Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

16 "For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.

Was there a virgin who had a child in Isaiah's day? No. The woman who was a virgin at that time the prophecy was given became Isaiah's wife, and when she bore that child she was no longer a virgin. And before the child born in Isaiah's day was the age indicated here, the land they feared, Assyria was forsaken by both her kings.

But turn now to the book of Matthew. You see, there are rules, established in Scripture that guide one's study of prophecy. And this is a prophecy that has, what might be called a far and near fulfilment. So Matthew, in recording the conception of Mary wrote this in 1:18-23:

18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

So here we have the fulfillment of this prophecy made some 700 years before that. That would be like somebody who made a prophecy in the 1300's, in the dark ages, and it was fulfilled in our time. When Mary conceived, this prophecy reached its far fulfillment.

## VI. ISAIAH 8

We are getting closer to our prophecy now. In chapter 8 we have the birth of another son called, not Immanuel, but Maharshalalhashbaz. This son's name means, "Speed the spoil, or Hasten the Booty. So look at 8:4, 4 "for before the child shall have knowledge to cry 'My father' and 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria."

So we have another son, and before he gets to be of any age, another great prophecy, also indicated by his name is fulfilled.

Now it was a time when there was all kinds of talk of conspiracy going around. So look at 8:12-13:

"Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.

13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread."

You see, with all conspiracies that may be true, we need to remember that God is still on the throne, and He alone is to be feared. In 14-22 more trouble is prophesied because they are going to sources outside of God. So look at verse 18-20:

20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Whenever anyone goes to someone or something outside of the Word of God, it is because there is no light in them. This holds true for modern Christian counseling that goes to Fraud and Skinner and such like. A literal reading here is that there is no morning in them. They never come to the light part of the day. They constantly live in darkness. And we close this chapter with reading 21-22:

21 They will pass through it hard pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

22 Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness.

So, because the nation has sought for help and advice outside of the Lord Himself, they are doomed to walk in darkness.

## VII. ISAIAH 9

So we now go to the nearest context of Isaiah 9:6. So look at 9:1-2:

1 Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles.

2 The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

Again we have a prophecy. So turn to Matthew 4 for its fulfillment. John the Baptist has been preaching and preparing for the Messiah, the Christ. So look now at verses 12-17.

12 ¶ Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. (Where did He go? To the place of our prophecy here.)

13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,

14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

16 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

There is our prophecy being fulfilled! Israel walked in darkness. There was no morning, no dawn for them. But Isaiah says, "Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed..." And by this he means the northern part of the land of Israel, the area of Galilee. And what is most interesting is that when Jesus began His ministry, He spent most of His time in the Galilee area. This area was closest to the Gentile nations, and the seaport brought in people of all kinds. This is Galilee of the Gentiles. Yet it seems to me in my studies that the Jews in the Galilee area were the most godly of the Jews. Here Christ chose most of his disciples and spent most of His ministry time.

Now look at verses 3-5:

3 You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy; They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian.

5 For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.

If you are using the KJV you will notice that it says, "You have multiplied the nation, and not increased its joy..." I won't take time to explain, but I believe the correct translation is, "You have multiplied the nation, and increased its joy..." And in the time of Christ, this had fulfillment as well.

It is now that we are ready to look at our prophecy. You see, two sons have been born and were prophetic by name. And now, the land of the Galilee area is experiencing great joy, because the Messiah, the fulfillment of the first son has come to the Galilee area.

And why was the joy of the nation increased? Why was the despised area of Galilee, Galilee of the Gentiles, seeing a great light. Why did those who walked in darkness see a great light? Why did those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death have a light shone upon them?

With those questions look now at Isaiah 9:6, because, or "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." There is the reason for the joy! The life of Christ shone a light upon the Galilee area. Yes, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given!"

Now notice that 700 years before Christ, this prophecy said, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a son is given." That is not written in the future tense. It was a present tense prophecy. Prophecy may even be written, for various reasons, in the past tense and we do not have time to explain those here.

But notice that the tense changes after those first two lines: "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."

Christ has come. The first part of that prophecy has been fulfilled. But as I interpret the prophecy, when it says, "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", this has not been fulfilled yet.

CONCL: Well, in conclusion, today we commemorate the day when a Son was born to Israel, a Child was born to them. You see, they rejected Him, and then He was given to us, the Gentiles too. And now we have been in the Church age for 2,000 years.

You see, two sons were born whose names were prophetic. Both the far and near fulfillment of Gimanuel have happened. But as I see it, the far fulfillment of Maharshalalhashbaz has not yet happened. But even today, the spoil, the booty hastens. This time is almost on us and a time of darkness will come. And if we are correct in our eschatology; we could be raptured out of this world this year, this month, this very day.

If that would happen, the booty and spoil of this world would come. And then, in just over seven years more, the time would come when Gimanuel will be called, "Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 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."

All of this will happen as surely as the first part of the prophecy the prophecy of our text was fulfilled and as sure as we are here.