

The Child of Prophecy

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church. It's such a privilege to bring to you guys God's word as we continue on in our Advent series. Today we're actually going to be taking a break from the book of Matthew.

We're going to open up to the book of Isaiah. Isaiah in the Old Testament. We're going to be reading Isaiah chapter 9, verses 1 to 7.

If you are in need of a Bible, please feel free to raise your hand. One of us would be happy to grab a physical copy of a Bible that you can have and hold.

It's our Christmas gift to you. Isaiah chapter 9, verses 1 to 7. Let me pray for the reading of God's word.

Heavenly Father, Christmas is just a few days away.

[1 : 06] And we thank you for it. We thank you for the reminder that to a people in darkness, in deep darkness, you have not abandoned.

To a sinful people you have not rejected. But you have come. You have saved us. You have sent a child.

And so we pray. Over the next hour, won't you open our eyes, illuminate our hearts, our eyes to see what a glorious child this is.

A child whose name is unparalleled, unprecedented. The child we long to serve and worship for all eternity.

We want to know this child, this boy, more. So help us. Fill us with your spirit. My words are all for naught unless your spirit falls afresh and fills this room.

[2 : 17] So we need you. We need you, Father. Father, we humble ourselves before the king. And ask that you would teach us today.

So do that, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you would rise, if you are able, for the reading of God's word. Isaiah 9.

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali.

But in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light 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.

[3 : 28] For the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder, 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.

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 his government and of peace there will be no end.

On the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. It was one of the most miserable nights of my life.

[4 : 46] During my summer on missions in Indonesia, I was forced to go on this kayak camping trip. I spent six weeks at that point in the sweltering heat under the brutal sun in Indonesia.

So I packed lightly for this trip. Thinking that it would be really just more of the same. But I didn't factor in that this river that I'd be kayaking on wrapped around the mountains.

Meaning that the temperature would be significantly cooler. During the day, while kayaking in the sun, that hardly mattered. But once we pulled up onto the bank to camp for the night and the sun slowly started to set.

I started feeling colder and colder. And when it came time to sleep, even though I was in a sleeping bag, in a hammock, I was so cold that I'm pretty sure I didn't sleep more than an hour.

I was exhausted, spent from the day, but I had to curl up in a ball, shivering, chattering my teeth throughout the night. When I got up to try to see if there's anything that I could do, it was entirely pitch black.

[6 : 10] I've never seen anything really that dark. No moonlight, no starlight, no artificial lights. Just an obsidian black. I have never waited for the sun as much as I have that one night.

I lost completely all sense of time. I didn't know if I had five hours to wait or five minutes to wait. But once dawn broke, I have never been so happy to see the sun, to feel its warmth, to see its rays pierce through the darkness.

It literally sent shivers down my spine. In just a few short days, we celebrate Christmas. We watch movies, exchange gifts, gather around delicious food as we should.

But lest we forget, Christmas is joyful, jovial, not because of the festivities and the food in themselves, but because Christmas marks the in-breaking of light.

The first glow of dawn in a world long wrapped in night. For this weary world waits and waits and waits for hope, for peace, for light.

[7 : 38] Just as I waited for that sun that night. And our passage this morning teaches us that dawn indeed is coming.

And it's found in an unexpected source. In the giving of a child. Of a boy. And so, Isaiah exhorts us, we need to hope in this child who brings light to a despairing dark world.

That's the main point of my message today. And in turn, we're going to talk about the darkness, the dawn, and finally the deliverer. First, before we delve into this passage, it's important to set the context, to understand its context.

Isaiah prophesied during the 8th century BC in both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. This time period is not an era of peace, of abundance, like King David had ushered in centuries ago.

No, since then, bit by bit, battle by battle, Israel has been bleeding out, losing its wealth, its power, its glory, to its surrounding nations.

[8 : 59] And in particular, in his life, Isaiah sees God raise a prominent superpower from the east named Assyria. Because of the threat of Assyria's rising power, we read in Isaiah chapter 7, two chapters ahead, that the northern kingdom of Israel allies with a pagan nation, Assyria.

This partnership then leads the southern kingdom of Judah and her king Ahaz to ally with Assyria. So you see the northern kingdom, Israel with Syria, and the southern kingdom with Assyria.

And Ahaz promises gold and loyalty to Assyria to defend the southern kingdom. Assyria. So a vicious military force, Assyria then goes and conquers Assyria, conquers Syria entirely, and inflicts major damage to Israel.

First to the lands that belong to Zebulun and to Naphtali. But if you know your Bibles, you know that Assyria came to conquer the entire northern kingdom in 722 BC.

Bloodshed, bondage, brutality, flood the lands of Israel, plunging them into deep darkness. And it's this darkness that our passage speaks about today.

[10 : 25] Be aware that this is not the result of military weakness or faulty strategy. The problem is not that the northern kingdom chose the wrong ally. They chose Syria, not Assyria.

Throughout the Old Testament, military victory or defeat is consistently the result of Israel's right or wrong standing before the Lord.

Battles that on paper, they have no battles, no business fighting in, they win. But battles that on paper, they should have won, they lose.

So if that's the case, things don't look good for either Israel or Judah because they both turn to surrounding nations, spurning the Lord, rejecting his promises.

They ought to have remembered all the battles that the Lord had won on their behalf. They should have followed David when he wrote in Psalm 20, some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

[11 : 32] But instead, they whored themselves out. They entrust themselves to idols, to other nations. Because of that sin, Assyria or Isaiah assures that it's not just Israel on the chopping block, but it's Judah too.

He promises that Assyria will threaten Judah and devastate her. Then, even because of Assyria's sin, she too will be judged.

You see this both in Isaiah 10, 12, when he writes, when the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes.

Whether it's Syria, Assyria, Judah, or Israel, all of these nations will be judged by a holy, righteous Lord because of their sin and their idolatry.

This is a bleak picture. Not just for God's chosen people in Israel, but really for the whole of humanity. Every single one of these nations, Jew or Gentile, will be besieged, bound, broken, banished, and bereaved all because of their sin.

[13 : 02] No one is righteous. No, not one. And that problem hasn't stopped with these four nations. And the American freedom that we enjoy, we aren't under direct threat of enemies conquering our lands, pillaging our homes.

But still gloom, anguish, darkness, still plague the lands today. Why is that?

When our forefather Adam committed the first sin by eating the forbidden fruit, we were banished from the Garden of Eden. And sin came into the world and death through sin.

And so death spread to all men because all sinned. So life east of Eden is marked by this gloom, this anguish, this darkness.

Suffering, sickness, sadness mark daily life. And so much so that we forget that we actually do live in this darkness.

[14 : 14] That our eyes have grown accustomed to the darkness. us. We forget to realize that cancer doctors, police, divorce lawyers, military generals, therapists, coroners, social workers, environmentalists, security guards, they only have jobs because of the darkness of the fall.

We live in a world marked by danger. A world where women shouldn't walk the streets at night alone. Where churches need to conduct background checks for children's ministry volunteers. Where parents should second guess giving their young child a smartphone with unfettered internet access. We live in a world marked by scarcity. A world where the poor will always be among us. Where 300 million people today can be classified as chronically hungry. Where people are cut from their jobs, miss mortgage payments, and have to fend for themselves on the streets.

We live in a world marked by tragedy, by heartbreak. A world where children's size coffins are a thing. Where there are millions of divorces this past year in the states alone.

[15 : 45] And as we're sadly reminded this week where lives are cut short by gun violence and mass shootings. And it's all too easy to keep going.

2025, even with all its innovations and breakthroughs, was a painful reminder that this world is still shrouded in darkness.

2026, without final divine intervention, it'll be more of the same. The darkness doesn't just affect us from the outside, externally, but internally too.

It settles within us. What does that look like? I think one of the clearest descriptions is what pastor and author David Powelson has called the anti-Psalm 23.

Many of us know, love, cherish this psalm. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Powelson offers a striking contrast from that psalm that captures so well what this darkness looks like, what it feels like.

[16 : 52] As I read snippets of it, ask yourself honestly, do you feel that darkness? In what ways am I living out this anti-Psalm 23?

I'm on my own. No one looks out for me or protects me. I experience a continual sense of need. Nothing's quite right.

I'm always restless. I'm easily frustrated and often disappointed. It's a jungle. I feel overwhelmed. It's a desert.

I'm thirsty. My soul feels broken, twisted, and stuck. I can't fix myself. I stumble down some dark paths. I'm haunted by emptiness and futility, the shadows of death.

Death is waiting for me at the end of every road. But I'd rather not think about that. My cup is never quite full enough. I'm left empty.

[17 : 56] Disappointment follows me all the days of my life. Will I be alone forever? Homeless, free-falling into void? It's a living death and then I die.

Plunged in thick darkness, this world is groaning all together for some light to break. Groaning for some sense of reprieve, some hope, some light.

It is to these people living in this thick darkness that God addresses in this passage. And here it's glorious opening. But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish to a helpless, undeserving world.

God refuses to sit back idly. No amount of sin keeps God from manifesting his light to us. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali, which was located near the Sea of Galilee, beyond the Jordan, was previously held in contempt.

The land that first felt the lash of Assyria, but by God's grace, a former time, gloom. In a latter time, glory.

[19 : 18] And it's not just to the Jews, but to the Galilee of the nations, or if you see in your ESV footnote, Galilee of the Gentiles. For these regions of Naphtali and Zebulun, given their location right next to the border, next to these pagan nations, it's always been something of a mixing pot.

Canaanites, Arameans, Hittites, Mesopotamians, and the Hebrews, all just part of this mix. And after Assyria struck an exiled part of Israel, that part even became less pure, even more mixed ethnically, culturally, religiously, but even still to even an impure race, a mixed race, God does not hold back his light, foreshadowing that the Lord will no longer reserve his light just for his people, Israel, alone, but that God will bring the nations from the north, from the south, from the east, and from the west all to light.

This is the exact hope depicted in verse 2 when Isaiah says, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Not just darkness, darkness, but Isaiah piles on the language.

This is no ordinary darkness. Not just normal darkness when the sun sets, but a deep darkness that covers the lands 24-7.

People, especially in Boston and Cambridge, as you guys know, can struggle with seasonal affective disorders, even in a place where the sun rises every single morning.

[21 : 04] How much more to dwell in darkness day after day with no warmth of sun on our faces, no light to brighten up our homes, but just deep, depressing, dreary darkness all around.

That is our spiritual condition without the light of God. But yet still to these darkened people, God promises to shine his face upon them with his great light.

And notice the confidence of Isaiah too. Many verbs in our passage, and in this verse in particular, are written in the perfect tense. They have seen.

You have multiplied. All these events are manifestly in the future, but he speaks of them as if they have already happened. It's an example of the prophetic perfect, a feature of Hebrew prophecy that Isaiah, by the revelation of God, he knows with absolute certainty that these things will come to pass.

He knows that darkness and death will not have the day. No, it belongs to God. On top of that, instead of depopulation and dwindling away, under the threat of war, the nation multiplies, as we read in verse 3.

[22 : 31] In this, God is fulfilling his promises to the patriarchs, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. He promised them hundreds and hundreds of years ago that he would multiply their offspring to make them a great and abundant nation.

And the Lord is faithful to his promises, is he not? Is this not who our God is and what he regularly does for us? Because he keeps his promises, because of God's faithfulness, then joy, it springs up. In this one verse alone, this idea of joy, whether noun or verb form, it's repeated four times. Two of these instances harken back to the happiest of times, the happiest of times for the Israelites via the powerful effect of nostalgia.

First, the abundant harvest was a richly joyful time. As an agrarian culture, this time of the harvest determined how the rest of the year would go. If the harvest was plentiful, then what a relief, what provision.

And to celebrate, the Jews kept the Feast of Booths, which was a week-long celebration throughout the lands. Imagine if all of the state of Massachusetts, we collectively celebrated God's faithfulness to us for an entire week straight.

[24 : 04] We all took a week of work off, and we celebrated in our streets, in our squares, recounting God's abundant faithfulness to us.

Or secondly, they rejoice like when they divide the spoil. In 2 Kings 7, the capital of Israel, Samaria, is besieged.

Just when an enemy surrounds a city, cuts it off so that no food, no water, no help can go in or out. And as a result, the Israelites, they live in absolute brutal conditions.

They're so hungry, they're starving to death that they even resort to cannibalism. but by the divine providence of God, four lepers, because they have nothing else to lose, they go out of the city to the enemy, and they find not only that they have left, but that they have abandoned all their stuff.

Horses, tents, food, gold, clothing, all for the taking. Can you just imagine the joy that pulsed throughout the city that one day?

[25 : 20] This is the kind of imagery that Isaiah is invoking. And notice too that, again, many of these verbs in this passage, they're in the passive form, they're really the divine passive, which are passive verbs that make the reader fill in the blank of who the actor is, namely God.

It says, light shone on them. These will be burned. But verse three makes the doer of these actions explicit.

You, you have done this. The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, you, you have done this. So it is only fitting that Israel rejoices not before the stuff, not in the food and the riches of the spoil, but before the Lord, from whom every good gift, every perfect gift comes.

And we do the same when our value systems are rightly ordered. We rejoice not before the gifts, but before the giver, before the Lord.

And God's not done. Isaiah addresses how God breaks the chains of their bondage. Rather than just using one image, in verse four, he employs three powerful symbols.

[26 : 41] The yoke, the rod, the staff, each hammering home the inescapable weight of their oppression. Remember, there are no internationally agreed upon rules of war back then.

There's no established Geneva convention that protected the humanity of war prisoners. No, the yoke, the staff, the rod, they were instruments of forced, back-breaking labor.

Instruments of violent beatings that forced them to keep going even when they had nothing left to give. Just how liberating it would be for that yoke, that staff, that rod to be shattered by God.

And he will do just as he did in the past, decisively on the day of Midian. In this flashback, Isaiah hearkens back to Judges seven.

There, Israel is in a sorry state, completely overpowered, outnumbered by Midian. But before their battle, God cuts down the Israelite army from 32,000 able-bodied men to only 300, less than 1% of its original size.

[27 : 59] Questionable military strategy all around, but yet these 300 men have victory before the Lord. God promises in verse 5, the boot that trampled our lands and our women and our children, the garment soaked with the blood of our men, symbols of our enemies' vicious conquests, they are used then as fuel for fire.

In a great reversal, what was once used for fuel, for war, and for death, and for conquering, is now used for fuel, for fire, for warmth, for light, for life.

So we've seen the effect of this great prophecy, but how does this great reversal come? So we read of this deliverer.

The for that starts verse 6 introduces the ground clause, the reason for this light, the joy, the peace, and it comes in a most unexpected form.

It's a child, a boy. Pastor Ray Orlin once said, God's answer to everything that has terrorized us is a child.

[29 : 26] Again, just as he did with Gideon, God delights in using what is small, what is weak, in the eyes of this world to shame the strong.

He uses the foolish to shame the wise. In a world captivated by grand displays of power, by massive armies and great wealth, we're quick to place our hope in human strength, always scheming to partner up with our Assyrias, with our Assyrias.

Brothers and sisters, we ought not dismiss the little things, like your little church, or your little prayers, your little service, your little witness, and most importantly, this little child.

God uses in big ways. God deliberately chooses this weakest image, a child, to then conquer every single one of our enemies.

Sin, death, Satan. You know, it's easy to think that Christmas is a time that is tame, domesticated, safe, brothers and sisters, Christmas is the start of the revolution, the in-breaking of the kingdom of God.

[31 : 05] And who is this boy? I hope it's obvious to you here, but remember, remember the longing of the Hebrews for this Messiah.

There were at least 700 years between the prophecy that you read today and the birth of this boy. With 400 of those years being called the 400 silent years, God seemed to stop speaking to them all together.

400 years of silence. That was just five seconds of silence. What about 400 years?

So understand the momentous occasion then when Matthew breaks this prolonged silence when he writes in his gospel and the leaving of Nazareth, Jesus went and lived in Capernaum by the sea in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, should sound familiar, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.

And then he proceeds to quote this exact passage, verses 1 to 2, from this exact passage. Matthew is saying, make no mistake, Jesus of Nazareth, this boy, he is the child of prophecy.

[32 : 30] And we learn what his name will be called. And these are glorious, glorious names. Wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace.

We'll take each one of those names in turn. First, Jesus embodied otherworldly wisdom. When I was 12, I was learning about decimals and fractions and reading Harry Potter.

When Jesus was 12, he was confounding even the most learned Jewish scholars. Solomon astounded the ancient Near East with his wisdom and knowledge.

Jesus declared something greater than Solomon is here. That word wonderful is thrown around in our daily use so often that it's easy for this title to feel trite.

But this is more than just saying that Jesus was a good listener and just gave helpful advice at times. Jesus' wonderful wisdom inspired worship.

[33 : 41] friendship. Jesus wasn't just the best of human counselors, but his wisdom existed on a completely different plane, on a heavenly, higher plane. And it really is, this really is a divine title.

For later in Isaiah 28, it says, the Lord of hosts, he is wonderful in counsel. It's the Lord of hosts that is called wonderful in counsel.

What does that say about this boy? But while he is truly awe-inspiringly, transcendently wonderful, he is also a near, intimate counselor.

Someone who bends his ear to you. Cares for you tenderly. Brothers and sisters, do you need to make a big life decision and you just don't know what to do?

Do you have a problem in a relationship where you just don't know what to do? Friend, do you know that you have a wonderful counselor in Jesus Christ?

[34 : 51] Let not the first place you turn to be social media or AI or Reddit. I'm sure many of you have had this experience this past year, using AI, being amazed by its depths of wisdom.

Be not so easily impressed. Jesus has greater wisdom. So turn, ask the Lord Jesus Christ, sit at his feet and learn from him.

Study his word, for in it are the words of life. His words are lamps onto our feet and light for our paths. Secondly, this child will be called mighty God.

Here is one of the most explicit declarations in the Old Testament that the Messiah will somehow be human, but also divine and profound mystery.

Jewish commentators have historically struggled to make sense of this passage. For to them, there's absolutely no way that this little boy could be called mighty God.

[36 : 04] That would be an act of blasphemy deserving of death. So they resort to saying that this title is only metaphorical. It only refers to his mission metaphorically, that he's on a godlike mission, or metaphorically about his character, he's a godlike hero.

But just in a chapter later, this same title, mighty God, El Gabor, is used clearly to refer to Yahweh. If it clearly refers to God there, just a chapter later, we are hard pressed to keep the same meaning here.

And so what a glorious mystery that we celebrate this Christmas. How could a brittle babe be the omnipotent God?

How could a cradle contain the omnipresent Lord? How can a kid growing in wisdom and stature be the omniscient God? This is the profound mystery of Christmas, and this is the scandal of

Christmas.

Christmas. Recently, I read a news article that follows the Los Angeles Police Department and their work in stopping prostitution on the blade, which is a roughly 50-block stretch that has become one of the most notorious sex trafficking corridors in all the United States.

[37 : 34] This area is an embodiment of the darkness of the world. world. The lives of these girls are gut-wrenchingly tragic.

Terrible upbringings lead to terrible decisions, lead to terrible lives. And once they get there, it is so hard to break them free.

In fear of punishment, these girls again and again flee from the people that are trying to help them straight into the arms of the people that are trying to exploit them.

One way that the police try to catch these traffickers is by going undercover in sting operations. So, dressed as these women, female police officers walk the streets of the blade.

Can you imagine the condescension? humiliation. The humiliation. Not only that, but the danger.

One pimp attacked and knocked an officer to the ground once she was caught as police.

[38 : 51] Because of that, she was permanently injured. Her life never the same. These trained, educated, honorable women subject themselves to the humiliation to the danger to save these girls from their oppressors.

And of course, analogies fail when you press them too much, but this captures just a fraction of the great condescension of Jesus Christ. He is God.

He is Lord of Lords, creator of all things, and yet he took on flesh. And like these police officers, he entered into a broken, dark world to save us.

Not just the humiliation, but he knew the danger that was ahead of him. But this mighty God, El Gabor, was undeterred to come as a babe to save us from our oppressors, to release us from our bondage to sin and death.

Praise be to the Lord Jesus. Jesus. Though unto us a child is given, the third title is paradoxically everlasting father.

[40 : 08] He's a child called a father. Now some of you might be wondering if Isaiah is calling God the son, God the father here. Is Isaiah guilty of mixing up the persons of the trinity and committing theological heresy.

I think this is where context really is key. Isaiah isn't teaching heresy here because we have to remember that in the Old Testament, the prophets wrote in a time not where they had a developed understanding of the trinity.

It wasn't just part of their daily thinking. That Trinitarian doctrine took time for the church to define and refine. And so we need to be careful not to read a New Testament concern into an Old Testament passage.

What then does this title mean? Back then the title father was a title of political authority and of power. For example, kings would call themselves fathers of their nations.

Recall how Ahaz, the king of Judah, he covenanted with Assyria. It was clear that Assyria was the more dominant power and so Ahaz submits himself to him.

[41 : 25] And he says that the king of Assyria would be his master and father and that he would be to him a servant and son. Ahaz declared his fealty to the wrong father when he should have placed his trust in this everlasting father.

And so this title challenges us to trust in no power but the power of Jesus Christ alone. So the simple question is who do you trust?

Do you know that as Psalm 23 says that he prepares a table before you in the presence of your enemies? If a king invited you to be an honored guest for dinner, you were pampered with care and attention and more importantly you were under his protection.

Even if you were seated around your greatest mortal enemies, people who wanted your very head, no one could lay a finger on you. That is the kind of honor and protection that you child of God receive.

So when you are afraid of all the threats around you, there is no need to rely on anything, anyone else, no sources of strength. But declare like David in Psalm 53, when I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

[42 : 55] In God whose word I praise, in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? In the midst of trial, do you have this kind of simple faith in the Lord?

And if you do, you will never regret that trust. For this Father's rule and reign will be everlasting. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end.

We know the adage, absolute power corrupts absolutely. We see that time and time again. That kind of power is like a mirror.

If a man can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, you can't imagine what kind of ugliness, selfishness, perversion comes out of that man's heart.

You can't imagine what kind of selfishness and evil would come out of your heart. But unlike you and me, when Jesus forever sits on the throne of David with all power and all authority, he rules with justice, with righteousness.

[44 : 12] Unlike the tyrants of men, when he rules, not evil but peace, shalom, they overflow to his subjects.

Not just to the Jews only. For Jesus came not to be the conquering, revolutionary Messiah that the Jews were waiting for. No, it is too small a thing for this kind of king to rule only one nation.

For he came not to establish an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly kingdom like the world has never seen before. In which not just the blood descendants of Abraham will come, but the spiritual whole of God's people from every tribe, nation, and tongue, they will come to worship the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they will live in peace forever. That's exactly why Jesus' fourth and final title is Prince of Peace. All of his subjects can confidently, permanently say, the Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. In his kingdom, none of the spirit of distress, of fear, of loneliness, embodied by that anti-Psalm 23, is ever relatable.

[45 : 38] All of that will be completely foreign, alien. Alien. And that kind of peace is only possible because of the peace that he has made on behalf of sinners like you and me.

This wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace, not only did he humble himself by permanently taking on flesh, walking this dark world, but he went as far as he could possibly go.

He gave up everything that he possibly could by dying on behalf of sinners. Isaiah would then go on to predict about this suffering servant in chapter 53.

He was pierced for our transgressions. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. We were his enemies.

We deserved to be banished to live in deep darkness. I fall short of his glory every single day. But by his death that he endured, for all those who have put their faith in him, he spoke, let light shine out of the darkness.

[46 : 56] He spoke those words at the beginning of creation, and he spoke those words into our hearts. No longer are we in the dark, for he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of our beloved son, his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

By his death, Jesus has freed us from the bondage of sin and defeated our greatest enemy, Satan, and has stopped all of his accusations. And we stand justified before him, so we live eternally then with him forever.

This is the greatest news that we celebrate this Christmas. And no, this prophecy hasn't yet been fulfilled completely, fully yet.

There are things in this prophecy that Jesus hasn't yet fulfilled at the first coming. Advent derived from the Latin means coming or arrival.

The first advent of Jesus then makes us wait eagerly for the second advent. So yes, today, we are not as we should be.

[48 : 11] Yet we know by faith we are not as we will be. One day when Jesus returns with the clouds, with his holy angels, and that one day is coming soon.

The government will be upon his shoulders from that time forth and forevermore. The son of David will take his rightful place on the throne, and he will rule with justice and righteousness, and we will be co-heirs with Christ.

How can we be so sure? We know. We know the character of our God. We know that the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. The Lord is not begrudging or indifferent to do this, but he is intensely, fervently zealous to do this very work, to glorify his name by delivering his people into an

everlasting kingdom.

So brothers and sisters, the sun rose today. The sun will rise again. The sun came 2,000 years ago. The sun will come again. When he does, he will give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace.

[49 : 32] And so we sing. Oh, holy night. The stars are brightly shining. It is the night of our dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope. The weary world rejoices. For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Let's pray. Father, we thank you that you are a God that doesn't abandon a darkened people, a depressed people, a lost people. But you have pursued us.

You have given up everything possible so that we may come into the light. Help us to live in the light. Rejoice in the light.

Sing and dance in the light. And know that our future is eternal light with you. In a place where there will be no need of a sun.

[50 : 43] No need of a moon. For your glory will illuminate all. We look forward to that time. Maranatha, Lord Jesus, come soon.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.