

Session 4

December 26, 2021

THE KING WHO REIGNS FOREVER

Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:26-33

Remember, this chapter of Isaiah begins with an encouragement. The dark oppression that would come upon the land would not last forever. Rather, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness” (Is. 9:3). That was a message to Israel, but it foreshadowed the message to us all: the birth of Jesus—the light of the world—would break through the darkness of sin. He would ultimately redeem mankind, and reign as King forever.

The promise of a king (Is. 9:6-7). These verses are filled with characteristics of the coming Lord. But all are united by a single theme: *authority*. In verse 6, the union of His humanity and deity is also pictured: this great king would come up among men, a child born *for us* (His humanity). Yet He would be a gift given *to us* (His deity). His purpose would be to rule and to reign, bearing the strains of governing as a yoke upon His shoulders. His name is rich with qualities. *Wonderful counselor* was separated into two titles in earlier translations (emphasizing His majesty) but most often joined as a couplet in later versions (emphasizing His wisdom). Either way would be allowed by the language, and both are accurate descriptions. That He is an intimate counselor does not negate the fact He is still *Mighty God*. He is the *Eternal Father*, yet reigns as a *Prince of Peace*. No ruler could want more than a kingdom characterized by peace and prosperity for his people. Hence this great eternal Sovereign is filled with compassion and benevolence toward His own. While verse 6 describes the King, verse 7 describes His Kingdom. The language emphasizes the *abundance of increase* in both its size and in prosperity. His kingdom will be reminiscent of the reign of David, in both lineage (see Luke 1:27) and greatness. And like David, King Jesus will build and sustain His kingdom on the godly principles of justice and righteousness; and continue that standard for now (on earth) and forever (in heaven). For reflection: *I take the Bible as literally as I can. In the three offices of the Messiah (prophet, priest and king), Jesus has fulfilled the first two literally, but He has not yet reigned as king in a literal sense. That is one reason I believe in a literal millennial reign of Christ on earth, in order to fulfill that final messianic role (RLE).*

The coming of the king (Luke 1:26-33). Six months into the pregnancy of her cousin Elizabeth, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. Again, the historian Luke points out all the pertinent details identifying who exactly this chosen vessel was. Time, place, and relatives are all included as well (vv. 26-27). We Baptists have always been cautious in our treatment of Mary. Although they deny it, Catholics venerate her to the point of worship, heretically elevating her as a “co-redeemer” and “co-mediator” with Christ and offering prayers to her as the *Blessed Mother*. Evangelicals often run in the opposite direction. But Mary is worthy of the honor Gabriel expounded. She was the favored one; the chosen maiden by which God the Son would enter the realm of humanity. The details of her conception and delivery were also made clear. Just as Elizabeth’s son would be named John (rather than Zechariah, after his father), Mary and Joseph’s son would be named Jesus (*the Lord is salvation*), because He would “save His people from their

sins” (Matt. 1:21). To the already startling news she received, Gabriel added God’s divine plan for her Son. As the Son of the Most High (v. 32), He would fulfill not only the prophecy of Isaiah, but the dreams of all Israel. He would be the long-awaited King who would reign on the throne of David...forever! For reflection: *To best understand Mary’s perception of all this, and her humble reaction to it, read Mary’s beautiful song of praise at the end of the chapter, vv. 46-55.*