

Is. 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, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

The word “nevertheless” is not in the original, but is a proper connector to the preceding thoughts. This verse is continuing the thoughts from the last chapter. (Chapter and verse separations were inserted by men at a later time to help locate passages more readily.) This seems to be saying that the people who were first captured by Assyria (the land of Zebulun and Naphtali that were part of the Galilee) must have considered their situation totally hopeless.

Is. 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.
Is. 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.

The prophet seems to be saying that those who would first experience the hopelessness and despair of God’s judgment will at some time in the future “see a great light.” Matthew 4:15-16 quotes this portion of Isaiah and indicates that Jesus would be that light. Jesus’ ministry was greatly focused in the area of the Galilee, the land where they were feeling despair as a nation at the time of Isaiah’s prophecy. I think Isaiah is saying that although the number of Israelites will multiply and seem to be prospering, they will not experience true joy, exceeding gladness and pleasure. They will rejoice in accordance with their circumstances—was the harvest good? Were the spoils of war great?

The Believer’s Bible Commentary, by MacDonald, made the statement that when Jesus came the first time, He was the light to His people; when He comes the second time, He will bring joy to His people.

Is. 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.

Isaiah is letting the people of Judah know that they will again break the yoke of oppression just as they did of old. The time being referenced is related in Judges 6. The Lord delivered Israel into the hands of the Midianites for seven years. Finally, they called out to the Lord for help; and He delivered them miraculously through the leadership of Gideon and 300 chosen men in such a way as to ensure that they knew it was God who had delivered them.

It jumped out to me as I was reading through this account in Judges again, that the reference was to deliverance after 7 years of oppression. I can’t help but make the connection to a similar time in the future after the 7-year tribulation.

Is. 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.

This seems to be saying that the ultimate deliverance of Israel from its enemies will involve fire instead of the type of warfare they were used to—that of hand to hand combat and its associated chaos, noise and great bloodshed. This would seem to be a reference to Armageddon. The Hebrew for *burning* references cremation, which certainly connects with atomic warfare.

Is. 9:6 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.

Is. 9:7 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.*

Isaiah begins to speak of the deliverer to come—Jesus, the Son of God, Who will come to rescue Israel once for all at Armageddon. He will be born as a child, a human, a male. The Son is a gift from God the Father.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

As I was reading a book by Ravi Zacharias, The Lamb and the Fuhrer, I came across a statement that applied here that took me to another level of understanding.

"The child is born...the Son is given. Do you see the difference? The Son was not born. I am the Son and I eternally existed in relationship with My Father."

Jesus came to earth in the form of a child, a human. Why? What did that involve?

Hebrews 2:6-10 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Verses 6 and 7 in the Hebrews passage establish men as a creation "a little lower than the angels" in the hierarchy of creation. Then verse 9 tells us that Jesus "was made a little lower than the angels." This means that Jesus, the Son of God, willingly became a man to "taste death for every man" and bring "many sons to glory."

Hebrews 2:16-18 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

These verses tell me that Jesus was made “like unto His brethren.” “In all things” I think means that He came to earth the perfect man in the same way that Adam was first created. He chose to lay aside His Divine power and authority and live according to the leading and empowering of the Spirit. (See comments in Journal for Philippians 2:7.) I believe this ability to live according to the leading and empowering of the Spirit is the same status we now enjoy as believers today. Only by living a sinless life as a man could He qualify as the acceptable sacrifice for man’s redemption that was necessitated by the fall into sin of the first Adam. That is why Jesus is identified as the “last Adam” in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians.

1Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

I found a quote from David Guzik’s commentary that struck me: “That Jesus is both God and man tells us that man really is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and that perfect humanity is more compatible with deity than we imagine. It says that our problem is not our humanity, but our fallenness. To say ‘I’m only human’ is wrong, because Jesus was fully human yet perfect. It is more accurate to say, ‘I’m only fallen.’ But remember that the humanity that Jesus added to His Divine nature was not the sinful humanity we commonly know, but the perfect humanity of Adam and Eve before the fall.”

“The government shall be upon His shoulder” – This is speaking of the time that Jesus will rule on earth as King as the Son of David.

His character will cause us to identify Him by many names:

- “Wonderful” – marvelous, a miracle, perform. First of all, this seems to reference His birth. His birth was a miracle; He was born of a virgin. It could also have reference to His ministry on earth—a doer of miraculous, marvelous things.
- “Counsellor” – to advise, to guide. He is already serving in that capacity through the scripture and the Holy Spirit. When He rules in the millennium, scripture declares that His advice will be eagerly sought by the masses compared to the small percentage comprising the church that seek Him now.
- “the mighty God” – These words are descriptive of His power, and the fact that it is the power of God, the greatest power. Although the article

“the” is not in the original, I think it is clearly understood. There is only one God, and Jesus is that God.

- “the everlasting Father” – The Father who will never die, Who encompasses eternity. This is yet another title that declares the unity of Father and Son.
- “The Prince of Peace” – prince = captain, keeper, lord, master, ruler. Peace = safe, well, health, prosperity, rest. He is the one who can ensure our safety, health, wealth, and contentment—both physically and spiritually. During His reign on earth, the world will experience a time of peace such as it has never yet come close to knowing.

Once Jesus assumes His throne on planet earth in His kingdom, His time of government will never end. There will be no elections, no alternatives. Although many will rebel and join Satan at the end of the first 1,000 years of His reign (the millennium), those in rebellion will be immediately defeated, and never again will an enemy of Jesus be allowed in His kingdom.

Revelation 20:7–10 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

What are the characteristics of His kingdom? It will be ordered (stable, prosperous, perfect). It will be established according to God’s law and will reflect morality, virtue and prosperity according to His law. Its foundation and constitution are such that never will sin be allowed to prosper within its confines. It will continue for eternity, time without end. How will this be accomplished? By God’s zeal, His jealousy, His envy. God will not share His authority with another. He was very clear about this early in the history of the nation of Israel.

Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

Is. 9:8 The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.

Again, the words of Isaiah change from encouragement to warning of judgment to come—specifically directed at Israel, the northern kingdom.

Is. 9:9 And all the people shall know, *even* Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,

Is. 9:10 *The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.*

Ephraim is another reference to Israel, the northern kingdom, as the dominant tribe, and Samaria was the capital of Israel. The people will recognize this judgment as from the Lord, but they evidently think it is not going to last very long—after all they are God’s chosen people. In their pride and arrogance they will plan to rebuild their kingdom so as to be better and stronger than ever. What had been built of bricks would be replaced with buildings of hewn stone; where there had been an abundance of sycomores, they would replace with fields of cedars.

Satan is so successful in deceiving us and blinding us to the truth staring us in the face. Once we choose listen to his lies and deceptions the first time, it becomes easier to deceive us the second time and on and on. Because of our pride and arrogance it isn’t long before Satan doesn’t even have to enter the picture; he can just sit back on the sidelines and watch us destroy ourselves by thinking we don’t need God.

I can’t leave this section without making reference to the amazing teaching of Messianic Rabbi Jonathan Cahn. In His book *The Harbinger*, he crafted a fictional story to illustrate how events associated with the attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, mirror this prophecy and should serve as a warning to our nation regarding coming judgment. I must say that I am astonished at the reaction of many in the Christian community that are intent on attacking the messenger rather than acknowledging the serious implications of his message. As did the prophets of old, he is declaring a message of the need for repentance and turning to God in faith and obedience in light of coming judgment. The message is consistent in every way with the truth declared in scripture. I highly recommend this book.

Is. 9:11 *Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;*

Is. 9:12 *The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

As Isaiah begins to warn of the defeat of Israel, the point is made that it is the Lord who will “set up” (make strong, exalt) their enemies.

The enemies of Rezin are going to join forces against Israel. We learned in chapter 7 that Rezin, the king of Syria, was an ally of the king of Israel. Assyria attacked Damascus and killed Rezin. Assyria then became an enemy of Israel and would join forces with the Philistines to destroy Israel; like hungry lions devouring their prey. (This makes me think of the current connection of Syria and the Palestinians.)

The last phrase of verse 12 is repeated several times in upcoming scripture. The solemn warning it carries is that this will only be part of the judgment God is going to inflict on His people; there will be more to come.

Calvin makes this comment: “When there is no repentance, it is unreasonable to expect that God will yield to obstinate men, as if he were vanquished; and the consequence is, that he prepares himself for inflicting severer punishment.... This rebuke applies not to the Israelites only but to us also. Already hath the Lord chastised the whole world by various afflictions, so that hardly any part could be exempted from distresses and calamities. And yet all appear to have obstinately conspired against God, so that, whatever He does, they cease not to retain their former character, and to carry on their wicked courses. Justly, therefore, might the Lord address to us the same expostulation, and assuredly he addresses us by the mouth of Isaiah; and we ought not to look for another Prophet to threaten new chastisements, seeing that our case is not different from that of the Israelites, and we are involved in the same blame with them.”

Calvin lived in the 1500's; how much more valid is the application today.

Is. 9:13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.

The sad thing is that the people will incur further judgment because they refuse to turn to the Lord in repentance for deliverance from His wrath. Do not parents employ the same logic? Would they let continued disobedience go unpunished?

Is. 9:14 Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.

Is. 9:15 The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

Is. 9:16 For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err; and *they that are led of them are destroyed*.

Isaiah now speaks of more severe judgment to come. He first speaks of the fate of those who are responsible for the spiritual leadership of the nation—1) those who were older and held positions of honor and leadership and 2) the prophets who should have been sharing the message of God but were speaking lies—the head and tail respectively. The word for “err” implies that the people were seduced by their leaders.

That is such an applicable truth concerning our world today, not just America. People in leadership have a powerful influence on a majority of the people they lead. Those to whom we should be able to look with respect for leadership are leading us astray. The prophets would equate to those in spiritual leadership today. False religion is still dominant in our world as a whole, and their leaders command great respect. Sad to say, in the “Christian” world, many who claim to be church leaders are going against the truth of scripture—saying that the Bible just contains God’s words but you can’t believe it all—and blatantly repudiating God’s word (accepting homosexuality and abortion).

Is. 9:17 Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one *is* an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

Although God holds those who should have been leading and directing the people responsible, He does not ignore the responsibility of the individual—no matter their station in life. Everyone, from the young men to the fatherless and widows, has been found to be hypocrites (soiled / defiled by sin) and evildoers (good for nothing, wicked). Their hearts are reflected by their words.

Matthew 12:34 ...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Again, the sad statement that there is more judgment to come.

Is. 9:18 For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up *like* the lifting up of smoke.

Isaiah compares the spread of evil to a burning fire. As the flame burns the kindling, it gathers more strength and spreads more quickly until there is a major forest fire sending up clouds of smoke into the heavens. This reminds me of a verse in Galatians.

Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Is. 9:19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.

Is. 9:20 And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

Is. 9:21 Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: *and they together shall be* against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

The Lord is the One bringing this time of darkness and judgment on the land, but it is really the people that are responsible for their own destruction. Because of the hard times, the selfishness of men will cause them to turn on each other. One tribe will attack another in an attempt to meet their physical needs. Yet, not one word is uttered in repentance before the Lord. Because of their lack of repentance, there will be yet more judgment to come.

“they shall eat...his own arm” – The arm represents strength and power. Sin destroys. The people are destroying themselves through their sin.