

**Sermons**  
**A Child Is Born, A Son Is Given! (Part 3)**  
**Isaiah 9:1-7**  
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I don't know about for you, but for me music is really one of the highlights of the Christmas season - songs that we love but only really get to sing one little time of the year, one little part of the year. The truth is, if you were to come to my home, you would find that as well, that music is a big part of the celebration of the Christmas season. You'd hear everything from the strains of "I'll be Home for Christmas", to the new Michael Bublé Christmas album, to the majestic sounds of Handel's Messiah.

Really, this morning, we come to a passage that finds its roots, for most Americans I think, not in the Scripture but in Handel's Messiah. Because it was in 1741, that a 56-year-old German composer, by the name of George Frederick Handel, composed his oratorio, "The Messiah". He wrote the 256-page score in 24 days. He ate almost nothing during those 24 days. And some of you will appreciate this - he subsisted almost entirely on coffee. In one of the great choruses of the Messiah, Handel included the greatest, I think, Old Testament Christmas prophecy, the prophecy from Isaiah 9. Because of that chorus in "The Messiah", many in the western world have heard the words of Isaiah 9:6-7.

For our brief time together this morning, I invite you to turn there again with me as we conclude what has been a wonderful three-week journey through this text. But this morning I just want to center our thoughts on one verse. Let me read for you the heart of the prophecy in verses 6 and 7. And if you weren't able to be with us and you want to catch up, you can do that online, **but** I think there'll be enough here for you **to** catch up with us this morning.

Isaiah 9:6. Isaiah writes, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to

uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”

The heart of this passage is that God will rescue those who believe in Him through a most unusual child. Last week, we saw in verse 6, His unique person - really a most unusual child. First of all, notice, He is a male child - “For a child...” **The** Hebrew word for child **is a** male - “a [male] child will be born to us...” Jesus’ birth was to be a normal human birth. His conception was miraculous, but His birth was to be a normal human birth, just like ours. This child was to be **a** human being.

But he would be more. He would also be a divine Son. Verse 6 goes on to say, “a son will be given to us...” This boy will be a gift of God’s grace to sinners. And there is a hint in that phrase that “He’s given to us”, that He’s going to be a unique Son. Only in the prophecies of the New Testament and statements of the New Testament does it become clearer that He will be God’s Son because, in Luke 1:32, the angel Gabriel announces to Mary, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High” - the Son of God.

But verse 6 goes on to say He’ll be a powerful king: “And the government will rest on His shoulders...” The power and right to rule will rest entirely with this child. He will exercise sovereign authority over everything and everyone in the universe. In other words, He’ll grow up to be the King of kings, the king of all.

The rest of verse 6 describes this king’s supernatural character. Notice Isaiah says, “And His name will be called...” In other words, not so much this will be the label with which people will address Him, but this will be His character. This is what He’ll be like. He will be a “Wonderful Counselor”. Literally, the Hebrew is “a wonder of a counselor”. His wisdom, the counsel He gives, is far above all human wisdom; it is supernatural wisdom.

He’s also called “Mighty God”. This makes it very clear who this child will be because Isaiah never uses the word translated “God” here, for anyone but the true God. This king will not only be a male human, He will be Mighty God.

He'll be the "Eternal Father". That doesn't mean He will be the first person of the Trinity, that He will replace God the Father. Instead, this expression **describes** Christ's attitude, His disposition toward His people. Now and forever, this King will act toward His people like a Father. He'll treat them with care and compassion. He'll provide for them. He'll be like a father to them.

Verse 6 finishes by saying He'll be the "Prince of Peace". He will have an unlimited capacity to bring peace and sustain peace wherever He is - externally in the world at large and internally in every heart. He is the Prince that brings peace. He provided peace with God. He gives peace of God in the heart and, someday, He will bring truly peace on earth, in the political sense, as the entire earth lives under His sovereign rule.

The major point here is that God, in this whole passage that we've studied together (verses 1 to 7), is that God will rescue those who believe in Him from sin and its consequences, through a most unusual child, a great king who was to be born.

Listen, on this Christmas morning, understand that we celebrate not the birth of a baby. We celebrate the birth of a king. So many of our Christmas carols capture that theme - "The King has Come", "Joy to the World, Our King Has Come". That's the point! And the gospels make it clear that this child, this unusual Son, was in fact Jesus of Nazareth. He came to rescue His people from their sins by His life and by His death in the place of sinners as a substitute. And now, He rules over a spiritual kingdom, the church, and every heart that bows before Him. But one day, it won't be merely a spiritual kingdom. One day, He will return, He promised, and establish a literal millennial kingdom on this renewed planet. This planet we call home, terra firma on which we live today, will be renewed and restored and Jesus Christ Himself will reign. And then, after those thousand years, the Scriptures tell us He will reign over a new earth. He will destroy this one, in its entirety, and He will create, by His word, a new one which will be our eternal home. And He will reign there forever.

Verse 6 tells us who this king will be. Verse 7 tells us what His reign will be like. In verse 6 we have seen His unique person, but on this Christmas morning I want us to reflect, just for a few moments, on His unique reign in verse 7. Look at verse 7 again: “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore.”

In context, this verse looks ahead to the literal, physical reign of Christ on this planet and, eventually, on a new heaven and a new earth. But the prophet here highlights for us several qualities of our king’s reign. We celebrate the birth of a king. So, what do we anticipate His reign to be like in our lives now and someday, literally, on this planet in the future. What will His reign be like?

I want you **to** know this with me in verse 7, several qualities of our King’s reign. First of all, His kingdom is an uncontainable kingdom. It’s an uncontainable kingdom. Verse 7 says, “There will be no end to the increase of His government...” Now, we’re not talking about no end in the sense of time. That comes later in the verse. Here he’s talking about no end to its extent, to its growth, to the expansion of this kingdom. It can’t be contained. It’s without boundaries. Most kingdoms - most earthly kingdoms have boundaries, to establish their rule. Jesus’ kingdom cannot be contained.

David had prophesied that in Psalm 2, didn’t he, when he has God saying to His Son, “I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.” Not one continent on this planet, not one remote island, will one day be out from under the reign of Jesus Christ. Compare Jesus’ reign with the greatest of world empires. Think about the extent of the Kingdom of Babylon or of Medo-Persia or of the Greeks or of the Romans. Jesus’ kingdom will far surpass them.

Look at Daniel 2. You remember in Daniel 2; Nebuchadnezzar has this image - vision of the great world empires of human history. And it’s pictured like a great image. Verse 34 - here’s what the dream was he had. After he saw that image, representing the world powers and empires that would come, verse 34: “You continued looking [in your dream] until a stone was cut out

without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.” So, here comes a stone and crushes this great complex of world empires. Down in verse 44, Daniel explains. Here’s what it means: “In the days of those kings [that is, the last confederacy of the old Roman empire in the end times, in the days of those kings] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [every human kingdom will cease], but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands...” In this image **the** mountain represents **the** sort of background control of God over **these** world empires. And out of God’s sovereign control is cut this stone, representing our Lord Jesus Christ. And he goes on to say, “it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold [all of the other kingdoms represented there], the great God has made known to the king [Nebuchadnezzar] what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.” Look back up in verse 35 what this kingdom will do. It crushed all of them. The wind carries all human kingdoms away but (the end of verse 35): “But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” There’s no boundary, no limit.

Think about that compared to most world kingdoms. Think about the last world kingdom. What was the last true empire our world has known? It’s really back in the 1800s - **the** British Empire. In its day it was said, “The sun never sat - never set, rather, on the British Empire”. Today, while she still has influence in the world, her global empire has crumbled. But Jesus’ kingdom will never stop increasing. It’s a vast empire that will include every inch of this planet and eventually every intelligent being in the universe will acknowledge Him as King.

Let me make it more personal. Every single person sitting here this morning will one day acknowledge Jesus Christ as King. It will either be with a loving, humble heart that has already come to love Him and follow Him and adore Him, or it will be as a defeated enemy who lived your life as your own king and someday are crushed by the King who is to come and will be forced to bow and acknowledge that He is in fact the rightful King of everything, including you. But in the end, there won’t be a single stray molecule in the universe. That’s what Isaiah is saying.

On a personal level, this point is extremely encouraging for every true Christian because, remember, this is a quality of Jesus' reign. It's uncontainable. This is not only true of that future physical kingdom, but it's true of the spiritual kingdom in our hearts and lives today. This means that Jesus' spiritual reign over my soul can't be contained. It can't be limited. It will continue to grow and increase until, someday, every dark corner of my heart will be fully under His dominion and under His rule. The prayer that we often sing will someday be true. Remember the song that Seth has taught us? "Oh, Great God, of highest heaven, occupy my lowly heart. Own it all and reign supreme, conquer every rebel power. Let no vice or sin remain, that resists your holy war. You have loved and purchased me, make me Yours forevermore." The fact that Jesus' reign is a kingdom that cannot be contained, means that prayer will be fulfilled in the heart and life of every true Christian. Jesus' kingdom is uncontainable.

There's a second quality in this verse. It's a peaceful kingdom. Notice: "There will be no end to the increase of ... peace". The Hebrew word for peace is "shalom". Obviously, it means no more wars. It also means that within His kingdom there'll be no internal strife, no bickering, no more rancoring over politics. Won't that be a wonderful thing? There'll be none of the internal unrest that has rocked our world even this year. In fact, it's been so much a part of this year that I noticed Time magazine has declared the Person of the Year to be the protester from the Arab Spring to the Occupy Wall Street movement. Listen, in Jesus' kingdom, there will be no more war and there'll be no internal strife, no politics.

But this word means more than that. This word for peace includes the ideas of safety and prosperity. In fact, one translation translates it this way: "immeasurable prosperity". Those who belong to His kingdom will experience complete well-being, complete peace, complete safety, complete spiritual, and, someday, external prosperity in the future. That's true in the future but, spiritually, those things are true right now. If you're in Christ, this is how Jesus' reign over your heart is today. It is a peace-producing reign. Even in this sinful world, even through hard and difficult circumstances, even in unsettling times, our souls can experience the peace of the reign of Jesus Christ. Whatever happens around us, whatever happens to us, under the reign of our

King, we can still enjoy true peace and true spiritual prosperity because wherever He reigns, that's what He produces. His is a peaceful kingdom, a kingdom marked by shalom.

It's also, thirdly, a legitimate kingdom. A legitimate kingdom. Verse 7 goes on to say, "[He will reign] on the throne of David and over his kingdom..." Now, why does Isaiah include that here? Well, there are a couple of reasons. First of all, in our fallen world, kings and rulers often come to power illegally - through voter fraud (like we've seen in several countries around the world even this year), through military coups, through unjust wars in which one powerful country subdues another and takes over its leadership. Jesus' reign will not be like that. He will be the lawful, legitimate King. He is the royal son of David, the rightful heir to sit on David's throne.

And God promised He would be the one, all the way back in the time of Jacob. More than 1500 years, in fact, about 1800 years before Christ, God gave Jacob this great prophecy and he prophesied over Judah, the son through whom the Messiah would come. Listen to what he said in Genesis 49:10: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh [the One whose right it is] comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples." God says from Judah and, ultimately, from Judah's descendant, David, the rightful king will come. And Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of all of that.

God told David in 2 Samuel 7: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." To Mary, the angel Gabriel said in Luke 1:32, "the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David..." Understand, Jesus is no usurper. Jesus is not part of some cabal. He alone has the right to rule.

And, again, let me take this from that future reign of Christ to today - right now. As we celebrate this Christmas morning, the One **whose** birth we celebrate today, is the only One who has the right to be the King of your heart and life. He is your only rightful King. And either He is in charge, truly in charge of your life this moment, this day, or there's a usurper on the throne. There's someone who has no right to make all the decisions, making them. Perhaps it's you. His kingdom is a legitimate kingdom.

Fourthly, it's a lawful kingdom. Verse 7 goes on to say, "... [He will] establish it [His kingdom] and to uphold it with justice and righteousness..." Jesus will both found His kingdom, and He'll maintain it by justice and righteousness. The word justice means making legal decisions that are fair and impartial. Righteousness means doing what is right, making decisions that are based not upon the capricious will of the one making the decision, but based upon law. Although human government is a divinely created institution because rulers are sinful and fallen, they often abused and misuse their power. They are unjust and unrighteous in how they carry out their rule. This is true of our entire planet.

I don't know if you saw it recently or not, but the organization called Transparency International recently published their corruption, government corruption, index for 2011. Did you hear about this on the news? The index annually ranks countries by their levels of corruption as determined by expert assessments and various other tools. It ranked 178 countries in our world - 178 countries. It ranked them from 10, meaning they were clean of corruption, to zero, meaning they were highly, completely corrupt. 178 countries. Where do you think most of the countries in our world fell on that corruption index? Less than 50 of the 178 countries scored above 85. 78 of the countries were ranked lower than a 3. What that means, folks, is we live in a world where the rulers of the world, the governments of our world, are filled with corruption. But that's not how it will be with Jesus' reign.

Look over at chapter 11, Isaiah 11. Notice how Isaiah further develops this idea. Verse 1: "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse..." He pictures Israel like a great tree that God has cut down in judgment. And out of that stump, comes a little shoot who's the Messiah. "And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him..." He's speaking of the Messiah. "The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD [now watch this], and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear..." Most human rulers, all human rulers, only have their senses to pick up information. And sometimes they can be misled. They can be deceived. They can be hoodwinked to what's really going on. Not Him! He's not going to make a decision that way. He sees things as they are. Verse 4: "But with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the



afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also, righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist.” This is what His reign **will** be like.

But folks, again, this is how Jesus rules us as His people today. Do you understand that Jesus is sovereign? He is sovereign over your life but He’s also not capricious. He’s not impulsive. You aren’t like a little plaything that He just enjoys putting through difficult times and seeing how you squirm. He’s not unfair and unjust. In fact, He is always just. He always does what’s right. And, of course, what is right is nothing but a reflection of His own holy character. It’s who He is. He can’t help but do that.

His kingdom is also, fifthly, an eternal kingdom. Verse 7 goes on to say, “From then on [from when He becomes King] and forevermore...” You know, early in human history, the rallying cry for the people who had a king was, “Long live the King! Long live the King!” Why was that? Because people understood that when a good king reigned for a long time, it brought peace and stability to their own lives. Sadly, that’s not always been true. It’s not always been true that good kings have lasted. The reigns of some of the earth’s best rulers have been short. And the peace they brought was only temporary. Even the greatest empires have come to an end. Babylon, Greece, Rome - all lie in the dustbin of history. But our King’s reign is different. His kingdom will never end.

In fact, keep your finger here, and turn over to Luke. Luke 1 and look at what the angel Gabriel said to Mary. A few moments ago, the ensemble sang for us, “Mary, Did You Know?” There were some of those things Mary didn’t know, had no way of knowing, but she knew this because Gabriel told her, before she ever conceived this child. Verse 32: “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David [now watch verse 33]; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom [not merely over **the** Israelites but over all the earth, over a new heaven and a new earth, His kingdom] will have no end.” The fact that our king reigns forever separates Him from all other human rulers, even the greatest of them.

As I was studying this, this week, my mind went back to a story I read at one point - perhaps, when I read the biography of Louis the 14th of France, one of the greatest monarchs of European history. In fact, he was even known as "Louis the Great". Louis the Great wanted even his funeral to reflect his greatness. And so, before his death, he told his chaplain, his personal chaplain (Massillon was his name) that after his death, he wanted to lie in state in the great cathedral of Notre Dame, there in Paris, in a golden coffin. And at his funeral service, he instructed that the entire cathedral of Notre Dame was to be without candle, without light, except for one lone candle sitting at the head of his coffin, expressing his greatness - a visual picture of the greatness of Louis the 14th of France. When Louis the 14th did die, Massillon did exactly all that the king had commanded and directed him to do. At the funeral, as you can imagine, for one of the greatest kings Europe ever knew, the cathedral was absolutely filled with the great leaders of Europe. Thousands waited in silence as they looked at that great golden casket with that lone candle standing there at its head, representing the greatness of Louis the 14th. Massillon did everything as he was instructed until then. He walked up on the platform, the stage area, as he came to the pulpit where he was to speak. With the whole crowd hushed in the darkness of that cathedral, he leaned over, and he snuffed out the candle. And through the relative darkness of the cathedral of Notre Dame, Massillon said, "Only God is great!" We might add, "And only our Lord Jesus Christ's reign is forever".

Again, for each of us individually, there's great hope here, because, if Jesus has become our King, then the reign that He has begun in our lives, in our hearts, will never end. He doesn't become King of something and then lose control of it. He is forever a king. There's nothing that you or I can do to unseat Him, to remove yourself from His control. He is now, and always will be, your King if you belong to Him. Only Christ and His kingdom are eternal.

There's one last quality in verse 7. It is an unstoppable kingdom, an unstoppable kingdom. The kind of government and the reign that Isaiah describes, here in verses 6 and 7, isn't that exactly what we all want? Wouldn't it be wonderful if our next President had all of these qualities? But tragically, when it comes to the rulers of this world, it's just a dream. It's an empty hope. And regardless of who's elected next November, we will face this reality soon enough. Even when good rulers want to make good changes, often, they lack the power and the

authority to bring lasting change, but that's not true of Jesus and His kingdom. It is unstoppable. It's unstoppable because it is guaranteed by God Himself.

Look at the end of verse 7: "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this." First of all, look at God's name there: "Yahweh of hosts". The word "hosts" simply means armies. Here He's called the God of the armies of heaven. He has endless resources at His disposal. He doesn't run out of a military budget. The Hebrew word for "zeal" literally means to burn red. It describes someone's face burning red with emotion. When it refers to God, this word can refer to God's intense devotion or passion for His own honor or His deep love for His people and jealousy for their loyalty. Here I think Isaiah probably means both of those ideas. Yahweh who has the command of the armies of heaven at His disposal, has an intense devotion to the ones He loves and to His own honor. And that intense burning devotion God has to His people and to His own honor, guarantees this will happen. It's absolutely guaranteed.

On this Christmas morning, as we celebrate the child that Isaiah prophesied, we celebrate His birth. Understand that that child is Jesus Christ. He is the King. That's why we sing those words. He is my rightful King. He is your rightful King.

So, how should you respond to the reality that Jesus is King? Well, first, don't forget why the King came. Isaiah makes that very clear in the rest of His prophecy. He came, first, to rescue us from our sin and to rescue us from the king from whom we belong by birth - Satan himself. According to Isaiah 53, this king would accomplish our spiritual rescue from sin by dying as our substitute, enduring the wrath of God in the place of every sinner who would ever believe in Him. But the benefits of that death only come to those who will turn from their sin and rebellion and put their faith and trust in their King, in King Jesus. The bottom line is this: you must not only acknowledge Jesus to be the King, you must own Him as your King, because even though he's King, you can live in rebellion against Him. And perhaps you are. The only way to come into right relationship with Him is to give up your rebellion and submit yourself to Him.

If you're already a Christian, as we've been learning from our study in the Sermon on the Mount, you already belong to the spiritual kingdom over which Christ rules. He is your King. Let me

ask you: do you treat Him that way? I mean, each day, do you acknowledge Jesus Christ's right to rule you? As you live your life and face the constant decisions of life, do you find yourself asking, "What does my King want me to do?" How should I think? How should I speak? How should I treat others, including my family? How should I do my job? How should I work at school? How should I use my time? What entertainment should I allow? What should I read? What should I laugh at? What friends should I choose? Do you find yourself evaluating everything in your life against what your King wants? Jesus' kingdom is not a democracy. We're not in charge. We don't even get a vote. He is our sovereign King. Today, we celebrate the birth of our rightful king.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for this magnificent prophecy. On this Christmas Day, seal it to our hearts. Lord, remind us that we're not here to celebrate the birth of a baby. We are here to celebrate the birth of a king, our rightful king. Father, for those of us who by Your grace have come to acknowledge Him as King, I pray that You would enable us to worship Him throughout this day and in the year ahead. And may we submit our wills on a daily basis. May we acknowledge, each day, His right to rule everything in our lives. And Father, for those who're here this morning, who're still living as king of their own domain, king of their own lives, Father, I pray that today they would acknowledge their rebellion against their rightful king and bow their knee finally to the lordship of Jesus Christ. In whose name we pray, Amen!