

Isaiah 9:6-7

- unto us a child is born / only God can establish peace -

Author: Evert Jan Hempenius

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Introduction

- ❖ What every president should read and know...!
- ❖ What every Christian leader must take at heart...
- ❖ What every Christian must read and see the light of God's grace...
 - *And not only during Christmas*

“For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

- ❖ Presidents, leaders, Christians need to turn for counsel to the Wonderful Counselor.
 - Everyone needs good advice in important matters.
- ❖ He is the mighty God and the Prince of Peace. He will establish peace, by justice and righteousness.
 - This peace is not established by the absence of war or the suppression of violence. This peace is not protected by CCTV and security services, but by promoting shalom.
- ❖ He is also the everlasting Father.
 - A President, Christian Leader and a Christian must reflect this godly attitude, in showing him- or herself as a father, a mother, a brother, and a sister towards others.

- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Book of Isaiah. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ Isaiah 9:1-7 is part of Isaiah 7:1-12:6:¹
 - The names of children play an important role and contain a prophetic message (highlighted).

Whom shall we fear and trust? God or Assyria?	
Isa 7:1-2	Historical Situation – Judah and Jerusalem are threatened by the King of Israel and the king of Aram. Ahaz, the king of Judah turns to Assyria for help.
Isa 7:3-9	First prophetic Word: Trust the Lord and not Assyria The son of Isaiah, Shear-Jashub = a remnant will return
Isa 7:10-25	Second prophetic Word: I will give you the “Sign of Immanuel,” Assyria will be like a razor. The virgin will give birth to a son Immanuel = with us is God
Isa 8:1-22	The Word of God for Isaiah and his prophetic commission: “fear the Lord.” The prophetess will give birth to a son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz = quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil
Isa 9:1-7	For to us a child is born. <i>Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.</i>
Isa 9:8-10:4	God’s judgment upon Israel
Isa 10:5-19	God’s judgment upon Assyria, the rod of the anger of the Lord
Isa 10:20-34	A remnant will return. Don’t fear Assyria.
Isa 11:1-16	A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—

¹ Oswalt, J. (1986, p. 61-62).

	<p>the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord— and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.</p> <p>He will gather the remnant of Israel.</p>
Isa 12:1-6	<p>A song of deliverance and trust.</p> <p>The anger of God has been turned away.</p>

- Isaiah 9:1–7 issues a reminder that God can reverse his punitive acts of judgment and use a Davidic descendant to initiate his rule of *justice, righteousness and peace.²
- Note the role of children in these chapters.
- ❖ Matthew refers to Isaiah 7-12 twice:
 - Matthew 1:23 > Isaiah 7:14;
 - Matthew 4:15-16 > Isaiah 9:1.

Form and structure

- ❖ Isaiah 9:1-7 has the character of a song.

<i>Promise: (verse 1)</i>	But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish.
<i>Looking at the past</i>	In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
<i>Promise for the future:</i>	but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.
Song of Deliverance (9:2-7)	
<i>Joy for the people: (verse 2-3)</i>	<p>“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.</p> <p>You have multiplied the nation;</p>

² Williamson, H. G. M. *Isaiah: Book of*. In: Boda, M. J. & McConville, G. J. (Eds.) (2012, p. 365).

	<p>you have increased its joy;</p> <p>they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.</p>
<p><i>Three reasons for this joy (verse 4-7)</i></p>	<p>(1) 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.</p> <p>(2) For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.</p> <p>(3) 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.</p>
<p><i>This will be established by God</i></p>	<p>The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”</p>

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

Historical context

- ❖ Ahaz was king of Judah and the son and successor of Jotham. Ahaz was 20 when he became king of Judah and reigned for 16 years (2 Kings 16; 2 Chron 28).
Immediately upon his accession, Ahaz had to meet a coalition formed by northern Israel, under Pekah, and Damascus (Syria), under Rezin. (See also 2 Kings 15:37.) These kings wanted to force him to join them in opposing the Assyrians under king Tiglath-Pileser III.,³ who was threatening

³ Further information: Tiglath-Pileser III. (n.d.). Retrieved December 07, 2016, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiglath-Pileser_III

the Northern Kingdom. To protect himself, Ahaz called in the aid of the Assyrians. Tiglath-Pileser sacked Damascus and annexed Aram. The population of Aram was deported and Rezin executed (2 Kings 16:9). Tiglath-Pileser then attacked the Northern Kingdom and "took Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, and Hazor. He took also Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and deported the people to Assyria." Tiglath-Pileser records this act in one of his own inscriptions.⁴

Verse 6

- ❖ Wonderful counsellor = “פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ”: (*wonder of a counsellor, king’s adviser* 2 Sam 15:12; 1 Chron 27:33; 2 Chron 22:4; 25:16; Ezra 7:28; 8:25; Isa 19:11; cf. Mi 4:9, also Is 1:26, Job 12:17; — in these three, of importance for people; so also Is 3:3; Pr 11:4 = 24:6; cf. Job 3:14, and particularly Isa 9:5 *wonder of a counselor, of the ideal ruler, predicted. More generally, counselor, adviser.*⁵
 - Counselors were very important for the king. The king needed advice in all important matters. King David had very good counselors, like Ahithophel (who sided with Absalom; 2 Sam 15:31, 34) and Hushai (2 Sam 15:32-34).
- ❖ **Mighty God** = “אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר”: attribute of God especially as fighting for his people.⁶
 - “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great **God, mighty and awesome**, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing” (Dt 10:17-18).
 - “The Lord your God is with you, **he is mighty** to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing” (Sef 3:17).
 - “Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and **mighty**, the Lord **mighty** in battle” (Ps 24:8).
 - “Now therefore, O our God, the great, **mighty** and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come upon us, upon our kings and leaders, upon our priests and prophets, upon our fathers and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today” (Neh 9:32).
 - “Now, therefore, our God, the great, **the mighty, and the awesome God**, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come

⁴ Pritchard, J. B. (1969, p. 269).

⁵ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 419).

⁶ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p.150).

upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day” (Neh 10:32).

- ❖ Everlasting Father = “אָבִי”: **2.** of God as *father of his people*, who constituted, controls, guides and lovingly watches over it: Dt 32:6 Je 3:4, 19; 31:9 Is 63:16; 64:7 Mal 1:6; 2:10 (*also*: Ex 4:22; 19:4; Dt 32:11 Ho 11:1); especially God as *father of Davidic line* 2 S 7:14.
 - **7.** figurative of *benevolence & protection* (Job 29:16); of Eliakim Is 22:21; perhaps also of gracious Messianic king (Isa 9:6) *everlasting father*.⁷
- ❖ Prince = “שָׂרָא”: **3.** specifically military, = *captain, general*.⁸
- ❖ Peace = “שְׁלוֹמִים”: **completeness, soundness, welfare, peace**.⁹ This peace means well-being for everyone.

Verse 7

- ❖ Judgment = “מִשְׁפָּטִים”: **judgment, justice**.¹⁰
- ❖ Righteousness = “צְדָקָה”: **1. righteousness**, in government: **a.** of judge, ruler, king. **b.** of law. **c.** of Davidic king, Messiah.¹¹
 - **Justice and Righteousness.** In common with some other parts of the OT, the first half of the book of Isaiah stresses the need for ‘justice and righteousness’ in various spheres of life. There are some dozen occurrences of this word pair. It is concerned with all aspects of social and political life. Isaiah 1:21-23 is a very good illustration. The royal child whose birth is announced in Isaiah 9:6–7 will restore both.¹²

Exposition

Verse 1-5

⁷ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p.3).

⁸ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977. p. 978).

⁹ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 1022).

¹⁰ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 1048).

¹¹ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, p. 842).

¹² Williamson, H. G. M. (2012, p. 374). Isaiah: Book of. In M. J. Boda & G. J. McConville (Red.).

- ❖ **“The people who walked in darkness.”** This darkness is caused by war, oppression and persecution, inflicted by the Assyrians and the political-military circumstances. There is no shalom, no peace, no well-being, but fear. There is no future for the children. This darkness is described in the previous chapters and in verse 3.
 - **“Those living in the land of the shadow of death.”** There is only one thing sure: death is impending sooner or later.
- ❖ **“Have seen a great light.”** This is the light of deliverance, freedom, and peace, the light of life and future blessing.
 - This deliverance will cause **“great joy.”** This joy is compared to the joy of a good harvest.
- ❖ **“For as in the day of Midian’s defeat.”** This refers to the defeat of the Midianites by Gideon and his three hundred men (Jdg 6:1-8:22).
 - The yoke of oppression will be broken.
 - There will come an end to war and terror.

Verse 6

- ❖ **“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.”**
 - This child is a gift from God (Ps 2). He will be the “Immanuel”, God with us. God is faithful to his promises. **“The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this”** (verse 7).
- ❖ **“And the government will be on his shoulders.”** God will give him this authority to rule his people.
- ❖ **“And he will be called.”** By God and by the people.
 - **“Wonderful Counselor.”** King Solomon is a good example from the Old Testament. He taught and showed the people wisdom. (1 Kings 3; several proverbs and Ecclesiastes have been ascribed to him. King Hezekiah promoted the wisdom of his predecessor and forefather Solomon (Prov 25:1).
 - The Kings of the Old Testament several counselors to advise them in all matters of importance. These counselors might be compared to ministers.
 - This **“wonderful counselor”** received the wisdom of God.
 - **“Mighty God.”** This title must be understood against the background painted in verse 4 and 5. The mighty God will deliver his people from oppression and the (threat of) war.
 - The first reference is to the oppression by the Assyrian army (2 Kings 5:15:29). There will come an end the war, because “every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.”
 - The main reference is to the deliverance by God from the oppression caused by the Midianites during the days of Gideon (Jdg 6:1-8:22).

- **“Everlasting Father.”** He will be like a father for his people. God is the heavenly Father, promoting justice, righteousness, mercy, grace, and forgiveness. He will take care of the widows, the fatherless, and the aliens (Deut 10:18; Ps 72).
 - **“Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.”** This will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ will be given all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18).
- **“Prince of Peace.” “Establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”**
 - “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (Isa 32:17).
 - “Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven” (Ps 85:10-11).
 - Compare Micha 5:1-5: **“And he will be their peace.”**
 - Within the context of the Book of Isaiah, Isaiah 42:1-7 reflects the same promises.
- ❖ **“He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom.”**
 - This promise is still confined to the people of Israel and the boundaries of the Davidic Kingdom, but in the New Testament era, it will be extended to the ends of the earth.

Application

The Gospel according to Matthew and Isaiah 9:1-7

- ❖ Matthew 4:12-17:
 - “When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: **‘Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.’** From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”
 - Matthew only cites Isaiah 9:1-2. The Jewish hearers of his gospel could probably recite the other verses to out of their memories. They knew Isaiah 9:6-7, one of the great Messianic prophecies, by heart. Why didn’t Matthew present Jesus as the “wonderful counselor”? The unfolding of his Gospel will show that Jesus

really is the “wonderful counselor”, “the mighty God” and the “prince of peace”. This will be made fully clear after the crucifixion and the resurrection:

- “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” (Mt 28:18-20).
 - He is the “Mighty God,” who received all authority in heaven and on earth. Especially in Revelation of John, he is presented as the Mighty God.
 - “But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom’” (Heb 1:8).
○ Worship Him!
 - He is the “Wonderful Counselor,” who has taught his righteousness, mercy, grace and wisdom. He council goes beyond human wisdom.
 - “And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30). “Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3).
○ Listen to Him!
 - He is the “Everlasting Father,” who has promised to be with his disciples always, to the very end of the age.
○ Trust Him!
 - He is the “Prince of Peace,” who will establish his Kingdom, the Kingdom of peace.
 - “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father” (Eph 2:14-18).

○ Find rest!

- Matthew didn't quote verse 3-5 because he didn't want to suggest that Jesus would be a deliverer like Gideon (Midian; Jdg 6:1-8:22) and deliver the people from the oppression by the Romans.
- ❖ According to the same Gospel, Jesus is the true heir of King David (Matthew 1:1; Isa 9:7):
 - "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1)
 - "All the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?'" (Mt 12:23).
 - "The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Hosanna in the highest!'" (Mt 21:9).

Christian leadership

- ❖ Christian leadership in the church and in the society must reflect these characteristics of the Son, then they will be true representatives of the "Prince of Peace." Therefore:
 - Christian leaders must look for wisdom, which is a gift of the Spirit and is a fruit of knowing the Son.
 - "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict" (Lk 21:15).
 - Christian leaders must act in the strength of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Christian leaders must act as a tender loving father, who knows his children.
 - Christian leaders must promote peace and well-being in the church, in Christian families and in the society.
 - They can do this by teaching justice and righteousness.

Extra

- ❖ It is interesting to compare the character of the Son according to Isaiah 9:6-7 with character traits of a dictator or a president who strives for absolute power and presents himself often as "a father for the country."

Leadership and Tyranny:¹³

A superficial analysis may show that leaders and tyrants share many characteristics. Tyrants often appear at first as strong and effective leaders. Perhaps this explains why so many tyrants

¹³ More information: Emotional Competency - Tyranny. (n.d.). Retrieved January 14, 2017, from <http://www.emotionalcompetency.com/tyranny.htm>

attain leadership positions. This chart can help us discern the differences and avoid the costly mistake of granting unchecked positional power to a tyrant.

Leaders	Tyrants
Visionary; holds a clear, compelling, well thought-out, and constructive vision for the future. Focused while maintaining a broad perspective.	Visionary, but fixated on a narrow view. Narrowly focused.
Determined; they persistently pursue their goal and are undaunted by obstacles and setbacks.	Relentless, tenacious, unyielding, rigid, close-minded, dogmatic, and stubborn.
Influential; communicates passionately to engage people.	Influential, charismatic, captivating, engaging.
Passionate; remains committed and focused on the goal with heart and soul.	Obsessed; the goal is all that matters. It must be achieved at all costs.
Increase trust . Followers are intrinsically motivated and provide enduring support.	Increase fear . Followers are extrinsically motivated and support ends when the coercion ends. Often resentment endures.
Enthusiastic.	Zealot.
Connected with others.	Separate from others. Isolated, alone and apart.
Empathy for others. Humble.	Apathy for others. Arrogant.
Healthy self-esteem. Accurate and realistic self-appraisal. Solicits and accepts feedback and criticism.	Low, or fragile-high self-esteem. Egotism, narcissism, or even psychopathic. Inaccurate and Unrealistic self-appraisal. Avoids and rejects criticism and all but overwhelmingly positive feedback.
Primarily concerned for the cause, the organization, and the people being lead.	Concerned only for the self.
Broadly and ethically principled. Fair and generous.	Unprincipled or narrowly principled. Selfish.
Responsible .	Irresponsible .
Internal Locus of Control	External Locus of Control .
Consistent, reliable, logical, authentic, well	Volatile, whacky, irritable.

adjusted, and emotionally stable.	
Realistic.	Optimistic.
Listens and dialogues .	Monologs, lectures, preaches and engages in tirades.
Respects reciprocity and symmetry .	Strongly asymmetrical.
Open, communicative.	Secretive.
Concerned with substance.	Concerned with image.
Evidence -based.	Dominance -based.
Considerate	Invasive, intrusive, and obnoxious.
High, relevant, consistent, and attainable performance standards.	Perfectionist, demanding, inconsistent.
Provides helpful and balanced feedback.	Critical and demanding.

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