

## A Prophecy of Hope (Isaiah 9:1-7 & Matthew 4:12-17)

30-Nov-25

### **Isaiah 9:1-7**

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

<sup>2</sup> The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness  
a light has dawned.

<sup>3</sup> You have enlarged the nation  
and increased their joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as people rejoice at the harvest,  
as warriors rejoice  
when dividing the plunder.

<sup>4</sup> For as in the day of Midian's defeat,  
you have shattered  
the yoke that burdens them,  
the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor.

<sup>5</sup> Every warrior's boot used in battle  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be destined for burning,  
will be fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it

with justice and righteousness  
 from that time on and forever.  
 The zeal of the Lord Almighty  
 will accomplish this.

## **Matthew 4:12-17**

### **Jesus Begins to Preach**

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— <sup>14</sup> to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>15</sup> “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,  
 the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,  
 Galilee of the Gentiles—  
<sup>16</sup> 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.”

<sup>17</sup> From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

There’s a **sermon outline** for you to take **notes**.

Please have your Bibles open at **Isaiah chapter 9** verses 1 to 7

Let me **pray** first.

Let’s pray...

## Intro

Today is the **1st Sunday of Advent**.

### [Slide – Advent]

Advent means “***the coming of a notable person.***”

For Christians, it’s the coming of our Lord Jesus — the Son of God and Saviour of the world — whose first coming we celebrate each year on the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day.

On this 1st Sunday of Advent our theme is a **Prophecy of Hope**.

### [Slide – Prophecy]

A **prophecy** is a declaration of what will happen in the future.

Over the years, many human predictions have been epic failures:

- The Titanic’s builders claimed “***God Himself could not sink this ship!***”
- In 1961, Sir Harold Spencer Jones said travel to the moon was impossible — eight years later Neil Armstrong proved otherwise.
- In 1946, the head of 20th Century Fox said people would get tired of watching TV every night.
- And most of us will remember the year-2000 predictions that civilization would collapse – once the new millennium began!

Thankfully, **Biblical prophecy is nothing like that.**

In Scripture, prophecy is God revealing His will, His plans, His teaching, His purposes and His promises — and **what God promises always comes true**, in His own perfect way and timing.

In our Old Testament reading, the prophet Isaiah gives a **prophecy of hope** - written 700 years before Jesus' birth.

### [Slide – Hope]

We often use the word “**hope**” to mean *wishful thinking*:

“I hope I get the job... I hope it doesn't rain... I hope my team wins.”

There's no certainty in any of these – is there?

But when the Bible speaks about hope, it means a **certain hope** — something God guarantees.

### Context (Isaiah 9:1–2 and Matthew 4:12-17)

Here's the **situation/context** in Isaiah's day:

### [Slide-Context]

Syria (Aram) and the Northern Kingdom of Israel formed an alliance to resist the growing power of Assyria to the North. They pressured the Southern Kingdom of Israel -Judah - to join with them. But King Ahaz of Judah refused and, instead of trusting God, he foolishly asked Assyria for help (2 Kings 16; Isaiah 7–8).

In much of the Old Testament story, God's people again and again failed to trust God; often rebelled and worshipped false gods.

Because of this disobedience, darkness and distress came - especially on the northern tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali — they were the first regions to be invaded by Assyria. Their situation felt hopeless.

But then we come to Isaiah 9:1...

Isaiah gives hope from God. He says, even though the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali suffered first, **they** will also be the first to see a **great light** (v 2) — This great light is - God's answer to their darkness.

Who is this great light?

Our New Testament reading gives the answer.

[If you keep your finger in Isaiah chapter 9 – and now turn to Matthew 4:12-17]

Matthew 4:12–17 tells us that the light Isaiah spoke of is **Jesus Himself**.

Matthew shows - v13 - that Jesus **deliberately moved** to the region of Zebulun and Naphtali - to – v14 - fulfil Isaiah's prophecy and He begins His ministry there.

And when Jesus begins preaching, saying in v17: “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near,*” Jesus invites people to step out of the darkness of sin and rebellion against God - and step into His light.

People step into His light by **repenting** — admitting their sin, saying sorry for that sin and turning back to God — and then trusting and following Jesus. In doing so people step out of fear, sin, and despair and begin to live in His light and His hope.

And this message isn't just a message for the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. It's a message for everyone.

Our own nation of Australia — where most do not know Jesus — need Jesus, the **light**.

Our **whole world** needs Jesus, the light.

Every person needs to repent and come into the light of Jesus.

Perhaps you are some one here today – who just came to the service because you like all things Scottish and love the bagpipes.

Will you recognize that Jesus is the Light of the world – and come out of the darkness of your sin and come into His light?

(pause)

So Jesus is the great Light shining into our dark sinful fallen world.

But Isaiah doesn't stop there.

He goes on to describe **what this promised light, Jesus,** will do for people.

[\[Turn back to Isaiah 9 – vv3-5\]](#)

### Joy and Liberation (Isaiah 9:3-5)

#### **[Slide-Joy and Liberation]**

In verses 3-5, Isaiah uses **joyful images** to show the joy and liberation that Jesus brings. Isaiah describes: the joy of **an abundant harvest**; the joy of **dividing the victory spoils after a war**; the joy of **the yoke of heavy burdens being lifted from people**; and the joy of **burning soldiers boots and bloodstained uniforms** because a war is over.

#### Application:

For us it means

Just as Israel rejoiced at a “**great harvest**”, we can rejoice because in Jesus, God has provided a **harvest** of everything we need — forgiveness, mercy, grace, love, purpose, and hope.

The joy of “**dividing the victory spoils of war**” reminds us that Jesus has already won the battle we could never win — victory over sin by His death on the Cross, victory over death and Satan by His resurrection. This means we can live in joy from Jesus’ victory, not our own efforts.

The joy of “**heavy burdens being lifted**” reminds us that through Jesus, we are freed from the burdens of guilt, shame, fear, addictions, and freed from the power of sin. Jesus, the Light, lifts what we cannot lift ourselves.

The “**burning of soldiers boots and bloodstained uniforms**” shows that the battle is over – Jesus has victory – and through Him, we have peace with God — and because of that, we can live at peace with each other.

Jesus, the Light, brings joy and liberation – I pray we feel joyous this morning!  
(pause)

### Jesus’ Identity through His Titles (Isaiah 9:6)

Isaiah is still not finished though...

V6 – Tells us a child is to be born – a Son is given

Of course this child is Jesus. Isaiah’s prophesying the birth of Jesus 700 years ahead of time

### **[Slide-V6]**

And Isaiah says **Jesus has some very special titles**

- **Wonderful Counselor**
- **Mighty God**

- Everlasting Father
- And Prince of Peace

Let's unpack these titles one by one...

## Wonderful Counselor

### 1<sup>st</sup> title – Wonderful counselor

#### [Slide-v6-Counselor]

In Hebrew it literally means “*supernatural extraordinary advisor*”

According to the Apostle Paul in Colossians 2:3 – he says - *in Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

Jesus is a treasure chest of wisdom and His wisdom surpasses all others – it even exceeds the wisdom of the wisest man in the Bible, King Solomon! (Matt 12:42)

In our recent study of Mark's Gospel – we've saw Jesus tie the religious leaders in knots with His answers to their questions!

The people were amazed at the authority of Jesus' teaching (Matthew 7:28-29) because He had divine authority.

He described Himself as “*the Way, the Truth and the Life*” (John 14:6). In other words, He is the Way to Heaven; He tells the Truth about Heaven; and He gives eternal Life now - leading to Heaven!

He knows what people are thinking (John 2:24-25)

He understands our suffering because He also suffered (Hebrews 4:15-16)



He guides His people like a shepherd and says “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me*” (John 10:27)

He speaks God’s very words - He says “*The word you hear is not mine, but the Father’s who sent me.*” (John 14:24)

And Jesus’ counsel continues now – because He send the Spirit of truth to teach and guide His people (John 16:13-15)

#### Application:

As tomorrow is the 1<sup>st</sup> of December – if you were to read Luke’s Gospel – 24 chapters – 1 chapter each day – by Christmas Eve – you will have read ALL of Jesus’ wise counsel – and that will **prepare your heart to welcome Jesus for Christmas Day!**

Alternatively – You could read just one verse a day for 24 days [[For those who get a printed or emailed copy of the sermon – I’ve listed some suggested verses for you](#)]

**As Charles Spurgeon points out – it was the evil counsel of Satan in the Garden of Eden that tempted Adam and Eve to sin – so it’s only right and fitting that it should be wise godly counsel from Jesus that fixes everything!**

## Mighty God

### 2<sup>nd</sup> title – Mighty God

#### [Slide-v6-God]

Calling the child to be born “**Mighty God**” means that Jesus is **truly divine**.

He possesses all the power, authority, and strength of God Himself.

Though born as a human child, Jesus is God incarnate, able to save, protect, and rule with sovereign power.

The title Mighty God confirms that salvation and deliverance come not from human might, but from the divine strength of the Lord Himself.

The Bible says that **Jesus is the Word of God**

John 1:1 says - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:14 says - *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

It's like **Jesus is the walking talking Word of God!**

But more than that

According to Isaiah 7:14 – this child to be born will also have the title

“**Immanuel**” – **which means God with us**. [Our last hymn this morning – is O Come, O Come, Immanuel]

And more than that...

According to the Apostle Paul – he describes Jesus this way - in Colossians 1:15-17:

*<sup>15</sup> The Son [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

And not only that – as we read the 4 Gospels – we read how Jesus healed the sick; cast out demons; calmed a storm, walked on water, turned water into wine; fed 5000 people with 5 loaves and two fish; and raised people from the dead and so on – **All things that ONLY GOD can do!**

And even when Jesus died on that cruel cross – death couldn't hold Him down - He rose again.

And when the risen Jesus appeared to the doubting Apostle Thomas and showed Thomas His wounds – Thomas doubted no more - and declared that Jesus is “***My Lord and my God!***” (John 20:28)

### Application

For us it means

Because Jesus is Mighty God – **we can trust Him completely** – because - He can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20) – nothing is too hard for Him (Jeremiah 32:17)

Because Jesus is Mighty God – **we must submit to Him as the King of our lives!**

As Jesus says: ***Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.*** (John 14:23)

## Everlasting Father (v6)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> title – Everlasting Father

#### [Slide-v6-Father]

The idea in these Hebrew words is that Jesus is **the source and author of all eternity, that He is the Creator Himself**. It does not mean that Jesus Himself is the Person of the Father in the Trinity.

Rather - it is a **metaphor describing Jesus' fatherly role over His kingdom!**

His role as father (protector and provider for us His children) continues forever.

This title also means that Jesus as - God the Son – has the same Godly characteristics as - God the Father!

Colossians 2:9 says *“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”*

Hebrews 1:3 says *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the **exact representation of His being**, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”*

Jesus Himself says ***“I and the Father are one.”*** (John 10:30)

Jesus also says ***“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me...”*** (John 14:9-11)

### Application

Because Jesus is Everlasting Father – **we can be confident that we are under His protection and care.**

Jesus assures us that: <sup>27</sup> *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* <sup>28</sup> *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.* (John 10:27-28)

We can be sure that – Jesus will “*never leave us and never forsake us!*” (Hebrews 13:5) and we can be sure that “*as a father has compassion on his children, so Jesus will have compassion on us*” (Psalm 103:13)

## Prince of Peace

### 4<sup>th</sup> title – Prince of Peace

#### [Slide-v6-Prince of Peace]

When we talk about Jesus being the **Prince of Peace** – we are not talking about peace in a military sense – where a war is stopped

**Jesus brings peace between humans and God** – because the relationship between God and humans has been broken since Adam and Eve first sinned. But the Apostle Paul says in Colossians 1:19-20 - *God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Jesus, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

As the Christmas Carol says:

*Hark! the herald angels sing,*

*“Glory to the new-born King;*

*Peace on earth, and mercy mild;*

*God and sinners reconciled.”*

But there's more

Jesus also **gives peace when we face trials** – He says - ***“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*** (John 16:33)

When we are weary with life – Jesus invites us - <sup>28</sup> ***“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*** (Matthew 11:28-30) – and when we do come to Jesus – we get His peace in our hearts!

### Application

Because Jesus is the Prince of Peace – we can have **peace in our hearts** – no matter what is going on in our lives – no matter what is going on in this fallen world – because we KNOW Jesus has paid for our sins – and we are forgiven and right with God - and we also KNOW Jesus has bought us a ticket to Heaven! Perhaps you are someone here this morning – who has a family member or a friend that you are estranged from?

Maybe you have to say sorry to someone?

Maybe you have to forgive someone.

**The Hebrew word for peace is shalom** (שָׁלוֹם) – and it means far more than just the absence of conflict. It describes **complete wholeness, well-being, flourishing**, and **everything being as God intends it to be**. It means peace with God, peace within ourselves, peace with others, and peace with creation. Can we offer that shalom peace to people this Christmas?

As Jesus has brought peace to us that first Christmas, can we bring that peace of Jesus to others?

Can we reach out this Christmas and say to people, Christmas is all about the Prince of Peace – it is a time for reconciliation – with God – and with others?

### Jesus' Eternal Righteous Kingdom (Isaiah 9:7)

#### **[Slide-v7]**

Finally Isaiah – in verse 7 – describes what this coming child – Jesus' - Kingdom looks like:

- It's a Kingdom - **without end – an everlasting Kingdom!**
- It's a Kingdom - **that fulfils a promise that was made to Israel's greatest King – King David** – 1000 years before Jesus. That promise was- that there would always be a descendant of King David on King David's throne – Jesus fulfils that promise as the forever King!
- It's a Kingdom - **that upholds justice and righteousness** – Jesus will govern with perfect fairness and moral integrity
- It's a Kingdom **of peace and security**

#### Application

For us it means...

#### **[Slide-Application]**

Because Jesus' Kingdom is eternal and righteous – **we know it's an unshakable Kingdom** (Hebrews 12:28) – and so we can live with the assurance that no

matter what trials come our way – **we have the unshakable certain hope of Heaven**

And as citizens of His kingdom, **we are called to live under His lordship**, following Jesus' commands and modelling His character – *seeking His Kingdom first* (Matthew 6:33) and *whatever we do in word or deed, we do it in the name of the Lord Jesus* (Colossians 3:17).

Although Advent celebrates Jesus' first coming.

Remember, we are waiting for His second coming – and we don't know when that will be – so...

As Christmas approaches, this is a wonderful time to live openly as Jesus' ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). At Christmas it's a lot easier to bring Jesus into our conversations – and it gives us the opportunity to tell people what Christmas is really all about!

So let's reflect the light of Jesus into other people's lives; let's share the certain hope of Heaven we have because of Jesus; and let's gently point others to the King whose birth we celebrate — the One who can bring them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Let's pray...

Father, thank You that into our darkness the light of Jesus has shone. Thank You for the hope promised in Isaiah and fulfilled in Jesus. Lord Jesus, our Wonderful Counsellor and Prince of Peace, guide us, strengthen us, and fill us with Your peace. Help us to walk in Your light and live under Your good and loving rule. Send us out with hope in Your kingdom and confidence in Your promises. In Your name we pray. Amen..



## Appendix – One verse per day

### **1 December — Isaiah 9:2**

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.”

### **2 December — Isaiah 9:6**

“For to us a child is born...”

### **3 December — Isaiah 7:14**

“The virgin will conceive... and will call him Immanuel.”

### **4 December — Micah 5:2**

A ruler will come from Bethlehem.

### **5 December — Malachi 3:1**

“See, I will send my messenger...” (John the Baptist foretold)

### **6 December — Luke 1:26–27**

The angel comes to Mary.

### **7 December — Luke 1:30–31**

“You will conceive and give birth to a son...”

### **8 December — Luke 1:34–35**

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you...”

### **9 December — Luke 1:38**

Mary’s response: “I am the Lord’s servant.”

### **10 December — Luke 1:46–47**

Mary’s song: “My soul glorifies the Lord...”

### **11 December — Luke 1:68–69**

Zechariah’s prophecy: “He has raised up a horn of salvation...”

### **12 December — Luke 1:76–77**

John will prepare the way of the Lord.

### **13 December — Matthew 1:20–21**

“You are to give him the name Jesus...”

**14 December — Matthew 1:22–23**

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said...”

**15 December — Luke 2:1–3**

The setting for Jesus’ birth.

**16 December — Luke 2:6–7**

“She gave birth to her firstborn, a son...”

**17 December — Luke 2:8–10**

“Good news of great joy...”

**18 December — Luke 2:11**

“Today... a Savior has been born to you.”

**19 December — Luke 2:13–14**

“Glory to God in the highest...”

**20 December — Luke 2:15–16**

The shepherds go to Bethlehem.

**21 December — John 1:1**

“In the beginning was the Word...”

**22 December — John 1:14**

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

**23 December — Galatians 4:4–5**

“God sent his Son... to redeem.”

**24 December — 1 John 4:9**

“God showed his love... by sending his one and only Son.”