

CHRISTMAS IN ONE VERSE

Text: Isaiah 9:1-7 (key verse: Isaiah 9:6)

Isaiah 9:1-2 is mirrored in Matthew 4:12-17. The promise of light coming from darkness is the promise of the coming Messiah. This is also echoed in Isaiah 60:1-3. Zebulun and Naphtali were some of the first of the northern tribes of Israel to be carried away into captivity; however, they were not held in high regard upon their return. In the time of Christ Galilee was populated by many Gentiles, thus the reference to where Messiah would come from: "...Galilee of the nations" (Isaiah 9:1b) "...Galilee of the Gentiles..." (Matthew 4:15b). Among the Pharisees of Jesus' day, this was a place swarming with unclean Gentiles (John 1:46). Christ the Messiah was coming to all people.

I. THE INCARNATE PURPOSE

"For unto us..." "...unto us..."

Incarnate refers to Christ becoming flesh. John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Years later, John was still marveling at the incarnation (I John 1:1 and 2).

Think of it! We are the purpose for Christ's incarnation. II Corinthians 8:9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Romans 5:6-8 tells us that we have no strength to save ourselves. While yet in our sinful state, God had mercy on us and left Heaven to die for our unrighteous souls! Ephesians 4:18b declares that we are, "...alienated from the life of God..."

Compare Isaiah 1:6 to the words of Jesus in Mark 2:17. What a Savior! What love! What salvation! Hebrews 2:3: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."

II. THE MIRACLE BIRTH

"...a child is born..."

Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Matthew 1:23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

We are poisoned by the original sin, committed by the original man. I Corinthians 15:22:

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Since Adam’s transgression all descendants are defiled. Therefore Christ, the Word had to come not by man, but rather by God Himself. Jeremiah 31:22b: “...for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.” I Peter 1:23: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

III. THE IMMANUEL GIFT

“...a Son is given...”

This means the Son was in existence before the Christ-child was born. John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Colossians 1:17:

“And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. Hebrews 1:6: “And again, when He bringeth in the Firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” And the angels did exactly as was prophesied. Luke 2:14: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Matthew 1:23b: “...and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Christ is the shoot or branch from the root system of Jesse (David’s father). Isaiah 11:1: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” And yet, we see Jesse descends from the root of Messiah. Isaiah 11:10: “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious” (Luke 20:40-44).

IV. THE PERFECT GOVERNANCE

“...and the government shall be upon his shoulder...”

One day when Christ comes to rule the earth, a perfect government shall come. Isaiah 11:6-8 gives us a preview of what we have to look forward to in the kingdom to come on the earth. Until then, we who know Christ have the blessed privilege of Christ governing our lives with our burdens on His shoulder. Psalm 32:8: “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye.” (Matthew 11:28-30).

V. THE AWESOME ONE

“...Wonderful...”

The shepherds were full of wonder as they came from audience with Christ, the Little King, and the people had a similar response by just hearing about the birth of Christ. Luke 2:18: "And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds."

Christ was the very essence of wonder. Those who beheld Him and His words and works were caught up in His wonder (Luke 4:22; Luke 8:25).

A few years ago, Gramma and I took the Matthews' kids to the park. Christopher and Cara were too young to self-propel themselves on the swings, therefore I did what every doting grandfather would do—I pushed them. They kept asking me to go higher and so I did something that thrilled them to the max—I pushed their swing high enough that I could run under them. They loved it and you might have already guessed the next words out of their mouths: "Do it again!" Before long, I was wet with sweat and I kept doing it again and again. In his book entitled *Orthodoxy*, G. K. Chesterton said, "Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again" and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we." Children do not lose the wonder of the simplest joys. When the famed evangelist Gypsy Smith was in his eighties, he was asked what was the secret of his ministry. His reply was, "I have never lost the wonder." How can we lose the wonder when we behold our Savior?

VI. THE ADVOCATE

"...Counsellor..."

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus will never lead us astray. He may lead us through detours, dead ends and at times, dry holes, but all along we are on a journey that is not a mistake but all part of His master plan. I love the words of the song that says, "I'm trusting to the unseen hand that guides me through this weary land and some sweet day I'll reach that strand, still guided by the unseen hand."

Have you ever said that you just needed to talk to somebody? Well our Counsellor is available and He is ready to talk. He'll give you direction

for the right journey, correct you from the wrong path and/or give you assurance you are centered in the will of God. "...His name shall be called ...Counsellor..." (Isaiah 9:6).

VII. THE SUPREME SOVEREIGN

"...The Mighty God..."

Jesus is the God of creation. But not only that, He is the mighty God. There is nothing too hard for Him. God questioned Abraham, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?..." (Genesis 18:14). God asked Jeremiah, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27). The Lord answered the question ten verses earlier: "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jeremiah 32:17).

VIII. THE PERPETUAL PARENT

"...The Everlasting Father..."

There will never be a time in the life of a child of God that they need ever lose closeness with God. This is true for children, parents, grandparents and singles. Psalm 68:6a: "God setteth the solitary in families...." In the family of God we are never orphaned. Psalm 27:10: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." Through the years we become more inextricably and even mystically united to Him in such a way that He is appreciated as our Everlasting Father. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him" (Psalm 103:13). "...For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

IX. THE ABSOLUTE ARBITER

"...The Prince of Peace."

Chaos reigns in the earth. In Christ however there is peace. The one attribute I can testify that identifies what it's like to be saved is that I have peace. The world tries to counterfeit what only Jesus can give. That's why our Lord said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

-Pastor Pope-