



Isaiah 9:1-21

A Son is born ~ The Wonderful One ~ The Lord Judges Arrogance and Oppression ~ Judgement Coming to the Leaders ~ Israel's Tribes Turn Against One Another

Put your seatbelt on! We are entering into one of the most well-known, frequently quoted sections of Isaiah. There is extraordinary revelation in these 21 verses. If we dig in, pay attention and learn from each other, tonight could be a game changer for the who are hungry to embrace Isaiah's story with faith for today and hope for the future.

In the first part of Isaiah 9, King Jesus is revealed and extolled. "Those who walked in darkness **c** have seen a radiant light shining upon them. **d** They once lived in the shadows of death, but now a glorious light has dawned! (v. 2) The Lord then reveals some of his glorious titles: "The Wonderful One! The Extraordinary Strategist! The Mighty God! **k** The Father of Eternity! The Prince of Peace!" All this delights the heart of "the Lord Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies." You really get the sense that God's love is all over this revealing.

Next, come a re-cap of the reasons why the tribe of Israel went through dissension and in-fighting severe enough to eventually split them up. Through it all, God's love remains strong and there is never a question that he will restore them to himself.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 9:1 But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.</p> <p>² 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>³ You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.</p>	<p>a 9:1 This was the region that first went into captivity during the Assyrian invasion in 734–733 BC. Yet this land was the first to enjoy the blessings of the ministry of Jesus, for his works were done among them. Their "honor" would be to host the life and miracles of the Prince of Glory, the Messiah. Isaiah is prophesying the ministry of Jesus that would reverse the curse over that region. In the place where devastation had robbed hope, he will appear. He chooses the places in our lives where we have the most disgrace and shame, and there he shines his light. Our past failures become prophecies of a future victory.</p> <p>b 9:1 That is, Gilead or Transjordan.</p> <p>c 9:2 See Isa. 8:20; Ps. 82:5; 107:10.</p> <p>d 9:2 Just as darkness and night have boundaries (Gen.1:4), so the Lord will cause gloom to end and the shadows to flee. He is the one who says, "It will last this long and not a day longer." God begins in darkness and brings darkness into the day. The darkest thing in us will be bathed in his glory-light.</p>	<p>Isaiah 9:1 No more gloom for those who are in distress! Although the Lord greatly humbled the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, a he will one day bestow upon them great honor—from the Mediterranean eastward to the other side of the Jordan b and throughout the Galilee of the gentiles.</p> <p>² Those who walked in darkness c have seen a radiant light shining upon them. d They once lived in the shadows of death, but now a glorious light has dawned! e ³ Lord, you have multiplied the nation and given them overwhelming joy! They are ecstatic in your presence and rejoice like those who bring in a great harvest f and those who divide up the spoils of victory! g</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>⁴ 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. ⁵ 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>⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.</p> <p>⁸ The Lord has sent a word against Jacob, and it will fall on Israel; ⁹ and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart: ¹⁰ “The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place.” ¹¹ But the LORD raises the adversaries of Rezin against him, and stirs up his enemies. ¹² The Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.</p> <p>¹³ The people did not turn to him who struck them, nor inquire of the LORD of hosts.</p>	<p>e 9:2 See Isa. 55:8; Matt. 4:15–16; Eph. 5:8. This glorious light includes Jesus’ teachings, his miracles, and his pure life lived before the Father. Jesus Christ is a light of rescue for the lost, comfort for the hurting, wholeness for the broken, and escape for the captive. It is the light of joy, the light of revelation, the light of deliverance. Jesus’ birth signals an end of night and the beginning of morning.</p> <p>f 9:3 As the light of Jesus shines on the earth, it will bring in a harvest of joy and rejoicing. The people of God are about to arise and spoil the kingdom of darkness, even as Israel spoiled Egypt and went out rejoicing. God will cause our joy to overflow like those distributing loot after a battle. Great will be the conversions, the increase, and our rejoicing. Many sons will be brought into glory as the increasing Light of Dawn appears (Heb. 2:10). With both harvest and victory in battle, people rejoice in what God has done.</p> <p>g 9:3 The Masoretic text reads “You have magnified joy to everyone who receives the Light.” A sign of the moving of God among us to fulfill this promise is an outbreak of joy! He fills our mouths with laughter as a sign that the great ingathering of the harvest is here (Ps. 119:162; 126). The phrase “They are ecstatic in your presence” refers to the heart of worship God is releasing today. The gospel will always bring joy, and those who receive good news will rejoice (Ps. 67:4; Acts 8:8). This is the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles. The two great joys of the human heart come at a time of harvest and a time of victory. Human celebration at these two times knows no bounds. As the increase is brought in, victory is experienced. What greater joy is there in heaven and earth than when souls are saved?</p> <p>h 9:4 Or “burdensome yoke.”</p> <p>i 9:4 The words chains, yoke, and rod all represent oppression and bondage.</p> <p>j 9:6 The “child” speaks of Christ’s humanity, and the “son” points to his eternal deity. This son would be born in a time of darkness, but he will bring the light of a new day to the hearts of men.</p> <p>k 9:6 Or “the God of battle” or “Champion-God.” See Ps. 45:3.</p> <p>l 9:6 The Hebrew word for “prince” is sar, formed from two Hebrew roots: a verb meaning “to wrestle, to fight and another verb meaning “to rule or to govern (as royalty).” So combined, the Hebrew word sar is “warring prince.” Sarah, the feminine version of Sar, can be translated “a princess who is a warrior.” It is possible to render v. 6 as “A Wonderful Counselor is the Mighty God! The Everlasting Father is a Prince of Peace.”</p> <p>m 9:7 Or “His authority will continually expand.” The Hebrew word misrah, found only here in vv. 6 and 7, can be translated “empire, governmental authority, dominion.</p> <p>n 9:7 The Hebrew word shalom can be translated “peace, prosperity, wholeness, and success.” Perhaps all of these concepts are included in the shalom Christ brings us.</p>	<p>⁴ For you have broken the chains h that have bound your people and lifted off the heavy bar across their shoulders, the rod the oppressor used against them. You have shattered all their bondage, i just as you did when Midian’s armies were defeated. ⁵ Every boot of marching troops and every uniform caked with blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.</p> <p>⁶ A child has been born for us; a son has been given to us. j The responsibility of complete dominion will rest on his shoulders, and his name will be: The Wonderful One! The Extraordinary Strategist! The Mighty God! k The Father of Eternity! The Prince l of Peace! ⁷ Great and vast is his dominion. m He will bring immeasurable peace and prosperity. n He will rule on David’s throne and over David’s kingdom to establish and uphold it by promoting justice and righteousness from this time forward and forevermore. The marvelous passion o that the Lord Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies, has for his people will ensure that it is finished!</p> <p>⁸ The Lord decreed a word against Jacob, and it brought calamity upon Israel. ⁹ And all the people of Ephraim and Samaria knew of it. Their hearts filled with pride and they arrogantly boasted, ¹⁰ “Our brick walls may have crumbled, but we will rebuild them with dressed stones. Invading armies may have cut down our sycamore trees, but we will plant cedars in their place!” p ¹¹ So the Lord Yahweh stirred up their enemies and strengthened Rezin’s foes, q and they came against the people. ¹² Syrians r on the east, Philistines on the west—they came with bared teeth s and devoured Israel. Yet despite all this, his anger did not subside, and his hand of judgment is poised to strike them again. ¹³ For the people did not repent and turn “to the one who struck them or seek the Lord Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies.</p>

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<p>¹⁴ So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day—¹⁵ the elder and honored man is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail; ¹⁶ for those who guide this people have been leading them astray, and those who are guided by them are swallowed up. ¹⁷ Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men, and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows; for everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.</p> <p>¹⁸ For wickedness burns like a fire; it consumes briars and thorns; it kindles the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke. ¹⁹ Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts the land is scorched, and the people are like fuel for the fire; no one spares another. ²⁰ They slice meat on the right, but are still hungry, and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied; each devours the flesh of his own arm, ²¹ Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim devours Manasseh; together they are against Judah. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.</p>	<p>o 9:7 Or "intense devotion." See 2 Cor. 11:2.</p> <p>p 9:10 Their attitude is basically "Even if God sends judgment, we will start over and be stronger and more prosperous than before," not realizing that God will not lift his hand of judgment until they humble their hearts.</p> <p>q 9:11 That is, the Assyrians. The Septuagint reads "the enemies of Mount Zion."</p> <p>r 9:12 Or "Arameans," a confederacy of Aramaic-speaking people known as Aram (modern-day Syria).</p> <p>s 9:12 Or "with their whole mouth."</p> <p>t 9:19 The Hebrew word n'étam is a hapax legomenon taken from an Arabic word for "dark." Its Hebrew meaning is uncertain and could be rendered "scorched," "shaken," or "darkened."</p> <p>u 9:20 This is a figurative way to describe civil war. Although they all belonged to Israel's tribes, they are now turning against one another.</p> <p>v 9:20 Or "They ate the flesh of their own arm." This could be a figure of speech for harassing and destroying one another. See also Jer. 19:9.</p> <p>w 9:21 See 2 Chron. 28:6–15.</p> <p>x 9:21 Or "his hand is still reaching out."</p>	<p>¹⁴ In a single day, the Lord Yahweh cut off from Israel both head and tail, palm branch and reed. ¹⁵ The elders and dignitaries are the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail. ¹⁶ The leaders have led them astray, and the citizens are left in confusion. ¹⁷ That is why the Lord did not show pity to the young people or have compassion on their orphans and widows. For everyone was godless and did evil and each mouth spewed out wickedness. Therefore, the Lord's anger has not subsided, and his hand is poised to strike them again.</p> <p>¹⁸ Surely wickedness burned like an out-of-control fire, consuming thorns and thistles. It set ablaze the thickets of the forest with flames swirling upward in columns of smoke. ¹⁹ The land was scorched t because of the anger of the Lord Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies. The people themselves became fuel for the fire, and no one showed compassion toward another. ²⁰ With their right hands they snatched what belonged to others, yet remained hungry. With their left hands they stole food, yet they were starving u and even ate their own offspring! v ²¹ Manasseh devoured Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh, and together they turned against Judah. w Yet despite all this, the Lord's anger has not subsided, and his hand is poised to strike them again. x</p>

- Bible Knowledge Commentary ~ John A. Martin

• THE FUTURE DELIVERANCE OF THE NATION (9:1-7)

In these verses Isaiah spoke of the coming Deliverer who will effect the changes in the nation of which the prophet had been speaking. The Messiah's coming will lead the nation into joy and prosperity, which had been lacking for years. His coming will fulfill the promises to Abraham and David about the prosperous kingdom. The "child" motif again is evident (v. 6; cf. 7:14-16; 8:1-4, 18). The Child will grow up to be the Deliverer (9:7), not a sign (8:18) of deliverance but the Deliverer Himself. He will effect the changes necessary for prosperity and spirituality to come to the nation.

- 9:1. A time will come when gloom and darkness (8:22) will be a thing of the past. The gloom on the northern section of Israel came because of discipline. God humbled ... Zebulun and ... Naphtali for a while. Though Isaiah was probably using these two tribal names to represent

the Northern Kingdom, it is striking that Jesus' upbringing and early ministry was mostly in that very area near the Sea of Galilee. His presence certainly "honored" that area. In 732 B.C. this northern portion of Israel became an Assyrian province under Tiglath-Pileser III, thus humbling the people there and putting them in gloom. Under Gentile domination, that area was called Galilee of the Gentiles.

- The way of the sea describes a major international highway running through this region. This is the only place where the Bible used this phrase, but it appears often in Assyrian and Egyptian records. The invading Assyrian soldiers took that route when they invaded the Northern Kingdom. From that area the Messiah will arise and will wipe away the gloom and darkness brought on by Gentile domination.
- 9:2. With typical Hebrew parallelism the prophet described the effect of the Messiah on this northern part of Israel. The people were in darkness (cf. 8:22) and in the shadow of death. Then they [Vol. 1, p. 1053] saw a great light and light ... dawned on them. Matthew applied this passage to Jesus, who began His preaching and healing ministry in that region (Matt. 4:15-16).
- 9:3-5. You probably refers to God the Father, who will lead the people from spiritual darkness into light (v. 2) by sending the Child (v. 6), the Messiah. The light will increase their joy like the joy at harvesttime or the joy of winning a battle and dividing the plunder. "Joy" is another emphasis of Isaiah's, mentioned more than two dozen times in the book. This will be a supernatural work of God much like the nation's deliverance when Gideon defeated Midian (Judges 7:1-24; Isa. 10:26). It will be like taking a burden off one's back (9:4). At that time, after the Child-Messiah will come, the implements of warfare will be destroyed (v. 5) because in His reign of universal peace implements of war will not be needed (cf. 2:4).
- 9:6-7. Here Isaiah recorded five things about the coming Messiah.
 - 1. He was to be born a Child. The implication, given in parallel style, is that this Child, a Son, was to be born into the nation of Israel (to us) as one of the covenant people.
 - 2. He will rule over God's people (cf. Micah 5:2) and the world (Zech. 14:9). The government will be on His shoulders figuratively refers to the kingly robe to be worn by the Messiah. As King, He will be responsible to govern the nation. In Isaiah's day Judah's leaders were incompetent in governing the people. But the Messiah will govern properly.
 - 3. He will have four descriptive names that will reveal His character. He will be the nation's Wonderful (this could be trans. "exceptional" or "distinguished") Counselor, and the people will gladly listen to Him as the authoritative One. In the kingdom many people will be anxious to hear the Messiah teach God's ways (2:3). He is also the Mighty God (cf. 10:21). Some have suggested that this simply means "a godlike person" or hero. But Isaiah meant more than that, for he had already spoken of the Messiah doing what no other person had been able to do (e.g., 9:2-5). Isaiah understood that the Messiah was to be God in some sense of the term.
 - This Deliverer will also be called the Everlasting Father. Many people are puzzled by this title because the Messiah, God's Son, is distinguished in the Trinity from God the Father. How can the Son be the Father? Several things must be noted in this regard. First, the Messiah, being the second Person of the Trinity, is in His essence, God. Therefore He has all the attributes of God including eternity. Since God is One (even though He exists in three Persons), the Messiah is God. Second, the title "Everlasting Father" is an idiom used to describe the Messiah's relationship to time, not His relationship to the other Members of the Trinity. He is said to be everlasting, just

as God (the Father) is called “the Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9). The Messiah will be a “fatherly” Ruler. Third, perhaps Isaiah had in mind the promise to David (2 Sam. 7:16) about the “foreverness” of the kingdom which God promised would come through David’s line. The Messiah, a Descendant of David, will fulfill this promise for which the nation had been waiting.

- The Messiah is also called the Prince of Peace, the One who will bring in and maintain the time of millennial peace when the nation will be properly related to the Lord. Together, these four titles give a beautiful picture of the coming Messiah’s character (Isa. 9:6 includes the first of Isaiah’s 25 references to peace.)
- 4. The Messiah, seated on David’s throne (Luke 1:32-33), will have an eternal rule of peace and justice. His rule will have no end; it will go on forever (cf. Dan. 7:14, 27; Micah 4:7; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15). Following the kingdom on earth, He will rule for eternity. He will maintain righteousness (cf. Jer. 23:5), as His rule will conform to God’s holy character and demands.
- 5. This will all be accomplished by the zeal of the LORD Almighty. The coming of the millennial kingdom depends on God, not Israel. The Messiah will rule because God promised it and will zealously see that the kingdom comes. Without His sovereign intervention there would be no kingdom for Israel.
 - Apparently Isaiah assumed that the messianic Child, Jesus Christ, would establish His reign in one Advent, that when the Child grew up He would rule in triumph. Like the other prophets, Isaiah was not aware of the great time gap [Vol. 1, p. 1054] between Messiah’s two Advents (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12; and see comments on Isa. 61:1-2).
- EXILE FOR THE NORTHERN KINGDOM (9:8-10:4)

After giving a glorious description of the coming Messiah, who will usher in the kingdom for the nation and whose reign will last forever, Isaiah focused on the nation in his day. Some have questioned why Isaiah placed these verses here. But, characteristic of this great prophetic writer, he alternated the message of judgment with the message of blessing. In contrast with the Messiah’s future reign of justice and righteousness (9:6-7; 11:4; 16:5; 28:6, 17; 32:16; 33:5; 42:1, 3-4; 51:5), the nation in Isaiah’s day was ruled by leaders who did not care about the people under them (cf. 5:7).

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- ISRAEL JUDGED BECAUSE OF ARROGANCE (9:8-12)
 - 9:8. Though Isaiah was writing to the nation of Judah he often used the Northern Kingdom of Israel (also called Jacob) as an example of the fact that God judges His sinful people. The message was one of coming judgment on the North. When these words were written, the Northern Kingdom was already in some disrepair (v. 10a). The coming fall of Israel (in 722 B.C.) should have warned Judah that God is active in the affairs of His people. Judah should have realized that she too would be destroyed if she persisted in the activities that characterized the North.
 - 9:9-12. The coming judgment on Israel would be widely known, but it would not be enough to turn her back to God. Ephraim, one of Israel’s largest tribes, often represented the entire Northern Kingdom (cf. 7:2, 17). Samaria was the Northern Kingdom’s capital city.

Apparently Israel's inhabitants felt that they would experience only a temporary setback (the bricks have fallen) and in proud confidence thought they could rebuild. In fact they felt that they would be able to make their nation better than ever. But this was not to be the case. They were going to be squeezed by Rezin's foes (Rezin was the king of Aram, 7:1, an ally of Israel). Those foes were from the east (other Arameans; Rezin was king of part of Aram) and Philistines from the west (cf. 2:6). This was the Lord's doing. But even this judgment did not appease God's wrath because the people continued to refuse to deal with their sin. So God would continue to chasten them. This section (9:8-12) ends with a refrain which is repeated three more times in the following verses: Yet for all this His anger is not turned away, His hand is still upraised (vv. 12, 17, 21; 10:4). This repetition heightens the effect of God's intense anger and underscores the certainty of continued judgment.

- THE ENTIRE NATION JUDGED (9:13-17)

- 9:13. The prophet lamented that even though the Northern Kingdom had suffered at the hand of God, they still had not returned to Him. So their continued refusal would lead to more judgment. Israel was like a child who stubbornly refuses to obey his parents and therefore is punished more severely.
- 9:14-17. Israel's refusal to turn to God would result in the most severe judgment imaginable. The whole nation, from rich to poor and from old to young, would be cast aside. Both head and tail (v. 14, explained in v. 15) is a merism, a figure which gives opposite extremes to include the whole spectrum. Elders (the head) and false prophets (the tail), guides and those who are guided, and young men ... the fatherless ... widows—these were all ungodly and wicked and therefore would be judged by God. On the refrain in verse 17b see comments on verse 12.

- A DESCRIPTION OF WICKEDNESS (9:18-21)

- 9:18-21. The people's wickedness (cf. v. 17) is pictured as burning them up like a huge fire with a large column of smoke. The judgment would come not only from God (v. 11) and from enemies of the nation (v. 12), but also from within. The nation would destroy itself by its own wicked deeds. People would oppose each other (v. 19), devour each other (v. 20), and even entire tribes will be in conflict (v. 21). On the refrain in verse 21b see comments on verse 12.

- **Discussion Questions:**

1. Chapter 9 starts with this announcement from the Lord: "No more gloom for those who are in distress! ... He will one day bestow upon them great honor—from the Mediterranean eastward to the other side of the Jordan and throughout the Galilee of the gentiles." Up to this point, Isaiah's prophecy has pretty much been "bad news." Have you ever had Jesus give you bad news and then follow it by good news (sounds like a lead-in to a joke!)? How did you feel about getting both?

2. Verse 2 says, “Those who walked in darkness have seen a radiant light shining upon them. They once lived in the shadows of death, but now a glorious light has dawned!” What specific excitement is the exclamation point at the end of this sentence pointing to? What is the light and what makes it glorious?

3. What is the “complete dominion” referred to in verse 6? How will that state of complete dominion effect the lives of Jesus followers who are on the Earth at that time?

4. It is obvious from verses 8-13 that there is a high price to be paid for not turning to the Lord in times of correction. What practical advice would you give to a friend who felt like they had screwed up and we’re being called back to relationship with God?

5. There is a vivid description of terrible conduct between people in verses 18-21. It says, “The land was scorched because of the anger of the Lord Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies. The people themselves became fuel for the fire.” How might we become “fuel for the fire” in our nation regarding the abortion issue? If we aren’t fuel for the fire, what are other options available to believers and how can we shift thing in our culture that direction?