

## Isaiah 9:1-7 // Jason Gaston, Student Pastor

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Christmas is here. It's here. Many of you in here are having a heart attack right now because you just realized that you only have 2 days left to buy gifts for your kids and your spouse

Christmas stirs up many thoughts for us. Those thoughts in our lives about Christmas differ from seat to seat.

- Many of us love xmas bc we love to give
- Many of us love xmas bc we love to receive
- "..." bc we love to watch Nat'l Lampoons Xmas Vacation over and over again on TBS (that there's an RV)

Not sure if you've this or not...but Christmas is about Jesus. (See that...Jesus juked you 5 minutes into the message.)

Many of us know that there were prophecies in the Old Testament that would one day point to Jesus. We've got'em on mugs, Christmas albums, etc...

A few months ago on JD's blog<sup>1</sup>, he talked about the 322 DIRECT Prophecies in the OT that describe to us the nature and the character of the Messiah (Christ.) . 322! That's a lot.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.jdgrear.com/my\\_weblog/2013/10/how-did-the-apostles-](http://www.jdgrear.com/my_weblog/2013/10/how-did-the-apostles-)

Once we begin to look at the intricate detail to which these prophecies were made...it begins to become harder and harder to say "It was just some crazy accident."

**The CIA has a 6 layer format in identifying themselves, with very intricate details on identifying themselves with another agent in the field. It's kind of like:**

- Go to Apex
- Contact RJ Hoggard, and let him know that you are here, and give yourself the alias "Chuck Swagga Claus Reed."
- Stay in an apartment on Salem street for 6 days
- On the 7<sup>th</sup> day, go to Anna's pizza and order a Pepperoni wheel with Garlic Cheese bread...minus the garlic
- Take your bread, stand on the street corner for 4 rotations of the stoplight.
- Throw your bread down before crossing the street,
- When you cross the other side...kneel down, tie your shoe, and walk in and greet yourself as "Don Von Doom" to a guy sitting in the corner of the ice cream shop wearing Liberty Overalls.

You guys hearing the OBSERDITY in that?? *That's only 6 signs. Jesus had 322 of them.*

Today, we're going to look at one of the passages that gives insight to the character of the promised one. This passage

pointing to the birth of Christ is filled with descriptive details of his nature, of which we'll hone in on one found in **Isaiah 9**.

### Background to this text:

Rewind 700-750 years before Jesus comes in the world in his linen undies:<sup>2</sup>

- There is a dominant force rising to power in the Middle East by the name of Assyria
- All the nations of the Middle East were getting really uptight about Assyria's rise to power, they were getting nervous about how strong they were becoming
- What do they do? Form an alliance together
- They wanted Jerusalem's king in on it, a guy by the name of King Ahaz
- Ahaz did not want to do it out of pure personality clashes. He didn't like those other dudes. (ever wanted out of a business deal because the people you could partner up with were just pure scumbags?)
- So...the other nations threaten to invade Jerusalem, and put a new guy in the power seat instead of Ahaz

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<sup>2</sup> The entire historical outline was "borrowed" from Pastor JD Greear's message: *Foretold*, Isaiah 9 Part 1, December 2010

- The armies start putting together plans to make this happen
- Ahaz freaks out, like a middle school girl
- At that time...the king of Assyria comes to Ahaz and offers protection if he would join forces with the Assyrians
- Ahaz has no clue what he should do
- God sends a messenger, a prophet by the name of Isaiah to help him
- **Isaiah tells him "Don't join either side! God will protect you!"**
- Ahaz freaks out once again, and is nervous.
- Isaiah falls on his face and says "I WILL GIVE YOU A SIGN!"
- Ahaz tells Isaiah...Don't give me a sign! I don't want a sign! If God gives me a sign...that means I have to obey it.

### Stop: We do that a lot don't we?!?!?!?

- It's why we don't spend time in the word
- It's why many of us don't share the gospel with our friends
- It's why many of us run from God...because we know that seeing Him and signs from him only lead to one thing: OBEDIENCE.

But, Isaiah gives him one anyways from God

### The sign is this:

Chapter 7:14 "A virgin will give birth to a child...." (A CHILD....REALLY? I DON'T NEED A CHILD...I NEED A SOLUTION TO MY PROBLEM. Or maybe better translated today...A promise? I don't need a promise, I need deliverance.)

### Chapter 9:2-7

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a new light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest....For the yoke that burdens them, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken...(6) For unto us a child is born, unto 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, the 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."

Now here's the deal, Ahaz ends up rejecting all of the advice and signs, joins in alliance with Assyria which backfires later as they come against him later on down the road. Ahaz starts going crazy, offering up sacrifices to all other kinds of gods and

idols of all the nations, hoping...praying that one of them would come to the rescue.

When it's all said and done, Jerusalem's king, Ahaz, leads the people back into idolatry and eventually back into exile.

### Why do I tell you all of this?

Ahaz, the king and ruler over his people FAILED them. This happened to the people of God over and over throughout their history didn't it?

- Saul: Israel wanted a king like everyone else. (1 Samuel 8) they end up getting Saul which turns into a train wreck
- David? Murderer and Adulterer.
- Ahaz? Can't make a decision for the life of him!

EVERY KING they had let them down. Period. They failed them.

But here's what Isaiah does...he points the people to a king that would never fail. A better king. A true king. A king that will rule his people with great love, affection, counsel. He would rule rightly. He would be the king that Israel (and all of humanity) had been waiting and longing for. This KING would be Jesus.

This morning I want us to look at one of the characteristics of this baby that would one day be king. **ETERNAL FATHER.**

Now, this will be a bit of a switch up for many of us in our approach to Christmas. Because when we think about Christmas, we think about sweet cuddly BABY Jesus (the son.)

As “everlasting father”, this attribute brings about the most trouble to me. It’s because when I think about it from the viewpoint of the trinity, I get confused. How could the SON (Jesus) also be the father?

In the New Testament, Jesus is never referred to as “the father.” He is always referred to as the son...and he always addressed GOD as the father.

In the gospel of John alone, Jesus speaks of the Father over 75x’s. In fact, Jesus says in John’s gospel that “By knowing me, you know the Father.” Thus calling himself...THE SON.

The key to rightly understanding this piece that Isaiah talks about is *not how God the Father and God the Son relate to one another, but how Jesus (the son) would RELATE TO US!*

That throws another curve ball to some of us, because we all have fathers. *And the reality of that relationship we have with our father, you know what we do with it? we project them back on God.* That can be a good thing and it can be a bad thing. It can push us AWAY from God or it can draw us TO God.

Let’s look at a few categories of father’s that are out there. Some of us this may hit home with a bit more than others.

**(GO TO FLANNEL GRAPH BOARD.)**

### 1. Always-Could-Be-Better Father:

- This is the guy you’r really not sure if you can ever really satisfy him.
  - It didn’t matter how well you did..he’s never satisfied.
- You got 10 points in a basketball game...you should have gotten 20.
- You got a B on your report card...dad says “SHOULD HAVE BEEN AN “A.”
  - Stop right here, when I was a kid, if I brought home a B, my parents were takin me to Pizza Hut to celebrate with my personal pan pizza.

With this kind of father, you never know if you’ve done “enough.” So you always feel like you have something to prove to him.

- Naturally, what you do is you project that back on God as father.
  - No matter what you do, you always think “Have I don’t enough to SATISFY God?”
  - Would God be happier with me if I did \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Then you start comparing yourself to others
    - Well so and so prays for 11 minutes a day, and I only pray 2-3 minutes a day....God must love them more...

## 2. The Angry Dad

This dad is like a BOMB ready to explode at any moment.

- You never know what to say, or how to say things because at any moment his wrath and anger might explode at you.
- Not only that, your father always tore you down with painful words. Words filled with anger and hurt.

What happens with this type of father?

- You live in fear of him.
- You begin to withdraw and/or you begin to walk on eggshells with every little word and action.
- You don't TRUST him anymore. You begin to distance yourself away from this father.
- We do whatever we can do to make him happy...but not because we love him...but bc we fear him...and what might happen if we get something wrong.

**And we begin to project this back onto God.**

- We always feel like our every action or inaction is like lighting the fuse on God's wrath over us.
- Then, you don't trust God. You hold him at arms length or you begin to distance yourself from him
- Why? Because you begin to resent him.
- And for some of you in here, this describes your relationship (or lack thereof) with God right now.
  - You resent him. You don't trust him. But you fear his wrath and anger...so you do whatever

you can do to keep him from uncorking a can on you.

- There's no real love for him there. That love is long gone...now it's just a life lived out of fear.

## 3. ABSENT DAD

- Maybe your father was never a part of your life
  - He never showed up to a game that you played in
  - he never came to your school plays
  - He never engaged in meaningful conversations with you
    - Maybe he just stared at his iPhone all night and never asked you how your day went....

So we project this back on God

- God doesn't really care. I know he's "there" but he's got too many other things going on to care about me
- Where is God in the midst of my pain and suffering?
- Where was God when \_\_\_\_\_?

## #4. Awesome dad

- I have nothing really awesome to say about this guy...I just needed another "A" and this flannel graph image was too perfect to pass up.
- HOWEVER, this AWESOME DAD that many of you experience...he displayed to you (He was a ray of light to you) to the way that God longs to relate with his

children. Sure, he failed often, but he was a great portrait of the gospel to you.

**That's exactly what we see here, but we see a PERFECT father portrayed to us by Isaiah.**

**Rather than a "Always could be better dad", you have in Christ one who accepts you fully** NOT BASED off of what you have done (or failed to do) but based off his work done for you.

In fact, the gospel is this: that you could do nothing to earn that acceptance, but it was done for you on your behalf. (Corpse in ocean vs. floating and Jesus comes in his life raft) Ephesians 2 correctly is the corpse...not the floating.

HIS WORK SAVES YOU AND GIVES YOU COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE.

**JESUS IS NOT ANGRY, BUT RATHER "SLOW TO ANGER AND ABUNDING IN LOVE."**

Read Psalm 103:8 "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, he is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love."

- Steadfast: unwavering
  - Unwavering in what?
    - LOVE!!!
    - Not anger...LOVE
- Does that mean he doesn't discipline us?

- Are you kidding me? Let's get real here. I'm a father of 3 kids...I love my kids deeply
- But sometimes those little turd monkeys need a whoppin! WHY? BECAUSE I WANT TO SEE THEM PROSPER...and if they're sin never gets corrected and disciplined....that's poor parenting
- Hebrews 12 tells us that he disciplines us for our good....

I feel like someone in this room today just needs to hear this statement:

- GOD THE FATHER... LOVES YOU. HIS BANNER OVER YOU IS LOVE. All he longs for you to do is grab hold of it, believe it, and walk in it daily.

Every morning I tell my kids I love them before I walk out of the house. Why? Because I want them to know that their daddy is proud of them, and the words I declare over them are LOVE.

**Jesus is not absent: He is always present.**

Psal 27:10 "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in."

Hebrews 13:5 "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Did you catch that? Do you believe that?

For some of you, you've experienced great pain and suffering and you think "God, you're not here. You've left. WHERE ARE YOU!?!?"

Just a side note...and I realize I can't expound on pain and suffering in 30 seconds, but you need to hear this

The first advent (coming) that Isaiah pointed to...the coming of Christ...that coming would rescue from sin. The second coming (the one we long for and wait for) will relieve our suffering.

Your suffering is real because it's a reality of this fallen world, and our suffering should make us yearn and long for a day when God says "I will wipe away every tear from their eye."

On a cloudy day, is the sun any less far away than it was the day before? No. but the circumstances of the day make us perceive that it is. The same is true for us spiritually.

**Isaiah points to the rescue, but we long for the relief (for the sun to come out again.**

I can think of no other way to close this message and the understanding of God's nearness to us than by reading you a snippet of Danny Franks recent blog post on one of our campus pastors and his fight for his son, Charlie.

You see, Charlie was an orphan in the DRC.

*<sup>3</sup>A few months ago, a court declared Charlie a Doherty. He's Ryan and Morgan's son now. Instead of growing up in an orphanage, he'll grow up in a home with a daddy and mommy who love him, a brother and sister who spoil him, and he'll be friends with more people who have prayed for him than he can possibly count.*

*But because of some governmental glitches, Charlie can't leave the country for now. What has been promised has not yet been realized. "Home" is still a foreign concept, both figuratively and geographically. For the foreseeable future Charlie is – for all practical purposes – stuck.*

*But while Charlie can't come to his mom and dad, his mom and dad can go to him. And go to him they did. A couple of weeks ago Ryan and Morgan made the rather sudden decision to temporarily leave Durham and head to Africa. The son that is theirs is still there, and so it made no sense for them to be here.*

*They decided that the uphill journey would be more effective if they were on the ground and close to Charlie. And so – armed with nothing but a folder full of documents and a heart full of fire – Ryan and Morgan boarded a flight and promised to fight.*

*I wonder if Charlie knows what is transpiring around*

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<sup>3</sup> <http://dannyfranks.wordpress.com/2013/12/17/whatever-it-takes/>

*him?... I wonder if he realizes that before he knew he needed these parents, these parents knew he needed them, and they were willing to do whatever it took to bring him home?*

*I wonder if he'll ever realize the sacrifice they made to leave a country while pursuing a child in another? Will he know the sleepless nights they endured, the hundreds of times they looked at his picture, the thousands of times their arms ached for the baby that belonged there?*

*As Charlie snuggles up to his parents at a tiny bungalow, does he know what awaits him on the other side of this journey? Can he fathom what it will be like to spend his life being pursued, known, and loved? Can his little mind begin to imagine what life in his daddy's house will hold for him?*

*Does that little boy know that he's been given a new name? That he possesses a new identity? That he's forever protected and completely provided for? That everything that Ryan and Morgan call theirs can now be called his?*

*Later this week, Morgan will begin the journey back to America. You can imagine that it will be one of the hardest goodbyes she'll ever say. But as she reunites with her two oldest children here in Durham, Ryan will remain with their youngest on another continent. And he'll fight. He'll leave no stone unturned and no door unopened as he looks for just the right connection, just the right answer, just the right approval to rightfully*

*claim his son and join the family that awaits him. He won't come home until Charlie comes with him.*

*A father who fights. That's what Ryan is for Charlie. And that's what God is for us. We're in the middle of a season where we celebrate the One who left his home and went to a foreign land. What he didn't have to do, he chose to do. He sent his son to become one of us. To live among us. To come to our turf and dwell in our land and fight on our behalf. Before we knew we were orphans, Jesus knew we needed a Father. And the Father knew we couldn't get to him on our own.*

*So he fought. Jesus came. God wrapped himself in flesh and lived with us so we could live with him.*

*With us.*

*God with us.*

*Immanuel.*

*He fought for us then. He fights for us now. You see, Christmas isn't just a reminder of what Jesus did, it's a reminder of what he is doing. How he still fights. How he still pursues. How he still does whatever it takes to bring us home, give us a new name and identity, and help us see our Father.*

CLOSE and PRAY.



## Resources:

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- Tim Keller: Sermon, **Isaiah 9:6–7: Wonderful Counselor**
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- Craig Groeschel: Sermon, Isaiah 9:6-7
- ESV Online Study Bible. Crossway, 2008. Isaiah
- J.D. Greear sermon on Foretold: The Son Part 1&2. 2010. Summit Church
- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Isaiah Grand Rapids*: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981.
- THE IVP Bible Background, Craig S. Keener, IVP 1993.
- The Pleasures of God, John Piper. (Multnomah Books. CO)2000. Pgs. 26-27
- A Theology for the Church, Daniel Akin, B&H. 2007, pg. 487-488
- James E. Smith, The Major Prophets (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1992), Is 7:1-12:1.
- James E. Smith, The Major Prophets (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1992), Is 9:1-5.