

Week 15: Isaiah 9:1–7: Jesus: The Light Who Overcomes the Darkness

Hook



Main Point: Jesus is the Messiah promised long ago in the Prophets, the Prince of Peace who overcame darkness and brings eternal peace to His people.

Q: What were your Christmas Eve traditions growing up?

Q: What are some of your favorite Christmas Eve memories?

Q: What traditions have you continued – or started – with your own family?

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at Prestonwood is a tradition for tens of thousands of people across Dallas/Fort Worth. The evening always culminates with one memorable moment: the lighting of the candles. But the thousands of candles throughout the room aren't all lit at once. It all begins with a single flame bringing light into a dark room.

There is a reason light is such a fitting picture of Christmas. Long before the star appeared over Bethlehem, long before the shepherds saw the glory of the Lord shining around them, and long before Jesus was born, God promised that a Light was coming.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God spoke to people surrounded by darkness and promised: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:2).

Christmas is the story of that promised Light coming into the world.

Week 15: Jesus: *The Light Who Overcomes the Darkness (Isaiah 9:1–7)*

Book

Main Point: Jesus is the Messiah promised long ago in the Prophets, the Prince of Peace who overcame darkness and brings eternal peace to His people.

Q: How are life and light connected in the natural world? How about in the Gospel?

Q: What would it feel like to be walking in darkness and suddenly see a great light?

Christmas is a time of light. We have lights on the tree, on the house, on our cars, on our ugly Christmas sweaters. Christmas lights date back to the use of candles to decorate Christmas trees in 18th-century Germany. But theologically, it goes further back than that – to the light of the ancient star of Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus, the light of the world Himself, on that first Christmas. Looking at Christmas lights can remind us that Jesus, the light of the world, came to us at Christmas.

Advent is Latin for “coming.”¹ It is the time of the year we remember and celebrate the coming of Jesus to earth. While the world prepares for the coming of Santa Claus, God’s Word gives us something much greater to hope in. The hope of Christ is not the “I hope I get that new puppy” kind of hope. The Greek word we translate as “hope” in Scripture means “a joyful and confident expectation.”² It’s not a wish or a dream. The hope of Christ is a confident expectancy. Isaiah gave God’s people reason for this kind of confident hope: Those walking in the darkness of judgment and oppression would see “a great light” (Isaiah 9:2). That promised light was Jesus, the Messiah, who entered our darkness to bring salvation and who will one day establish His perfect peace.

When Isaiah was writing, the people were living in a time of great darkness, in fear of Assyria, the violent superpower of the day, who could have conquered them at any time. They were worried about a physical enemy, a physical darkness. But the prophets repeatedly warned of a more important issue – the nation’s spiritual darkness. They worshipped false gods, mistreated the poor, and lived however they wanted to live, with no respect for God’s Word. They were looking for someone to save them from Assyria; they needed something even greater – deliverance from their sin. It was into this situation that God said the people living in darkness would see a great light.³

Many Jewish people in Jesus’ day also misunderstood the kind of deliverance they needed most. They read verses such as Isaiah 9:4 and expected a Messiah who would free them from the oppression of the Romans. But Jesus came to fight a much bigger enemy; He came to fight evil itself. His battle was spiritual – to deliver the world from “the domain of darkness” and bring us into His kingdom of light so whoever believes in Him can walk in the light (John 8:12; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13).

While the other Gospels are more narrative, the opening of John is deeply theological. John wrote that Jesus is the light of men that shines in the darkness “and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). The opening of John echoes Isaiah’s prophecy: Jesus is the great light seen by those walking in darkness. The Greek verb translated “overcome” (*katalambanō*) can mean “to seize,” “to master” or “to overcome.”⁴ John’s point is that the darkness cannot extinguish or defeat the light of Christ. Light and darkness are not two equal forces engaged in an uncertain struggle – light always wins. And we see that through Jesus’ death and Resurrection, as He has secured the decisive victory over sin, Satan and death. One day, He will bring that victory to its complete and visible fulfillment.

Isaiah described what that completed victory will look like. The Messiah will break the yoke of oppression, and the boots of battle and bloodied garments of war will be burned because they will no longer be needed (Isaiah 9:4–5). The nations will “beat their swords into plowshares” (Isaiah 2:4), and the Prince of Peace will reign over a kingdom of perfect and everlasting peace. Until then, spiritual conflict continues, which is why Paul calls believers to put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10–20). Yet we do not have to wait for Christ’s future kingdom to begin experiencing His light, joy, hope and peace. Even now, those who belong to Christ can walk in the light because they are “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

That doesn’t mean we will never experience darkness. We still face disappointment, grief, fear and temptation. We live every day in a spiritual battle between light and darkness, between good and evil (Ephesians 6:11–12). But good and evil are not equal powers – the outcome of the battle is certain. Christmas reminds us that the light of Jesus has entered the darkness and cannot be overcome. Through His death and Resurrection, Jesus has already secured the decisive victory, and one day He will bring that victory to completion. The Light has come, and darkness did not overcome Him. Through Him we are “more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37). When we are walking through a dark place, we can trust that the Light of the World is walking with us, shining His light into our situation. In a dark world, we can walk in the light because we carry the light with us everywhere we go. We do not have to fear the darkness. Isaiah didn’t stop with the promise that light would overcome the darkness. He pointed us to the One who defeated the darkness, the promised Prince of Peace.

Q: Where do you see darkness in the world around you? How can you bring the light of Christ into those situations?

Q: How can Christmas be a time of spiritual light, too, not just physical light?

Isaiah 9:6–7 and Luke 2:1–20 [Read]

Talking Point 2: Jesus is the Prince of Peace who brings eternal peace.

Q: In what ways is the story of the birth of Jesus surprising for a prince who would rescue His people and rule forever?

Q: How is the angel's song to the shepherds consistent with prophecy of Isaiah?

Q: What are the other titles we see for the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6-7? How does Jesus perfectly fulfill them?

Isaiah promised the birth of a prince, a son of David, who would save them all. This is what "a son will be given to us" means: He is a gift for all the people (John 3:16). The people of Isaiah's time put hope in this future king who would conquer their enemies and finally give them peace. It would not have been unusual to speak of the birth of a prince in this way, as being "given" to the whole kingdom. In the ancient world, when a prince was born, great celebration and fanfare followed – festivals, processions, offerings, religious rituals. He would have had the best medical care and the most luxurious accommodations. A message would have been sent throughout the kingdom announcing his birth.

By contrast, Jesus was born in a borrowed stable in an obscure village, wrapped in rags, without even a midwife, and with animals as the only witnesses. His birth was announced by angels, but they appeared only to some random shepherds, not anyone of importance. A star illuminated the place of His birth, but the only ones who noticed it were foreign magi. Not a typical birthplace for a prince, especially one promised hundreds of years earlier and foretold to be their Savior.

Isaiah 9 describes this future king who would deliver His people from their oppressors and a people who would celebrate as though bringing in a harvest or winning a war. This made Him both their provider and the warrior, both terms used to describe God's role for His people in the Old Testament. This description of the promised Son who would be given to us highlights both Jesus' humanity and His divinity:

- *unto us* – Messiah is a gift to us, His people. He will be given to us and born among us, as one of us. He will be a human being, God-made-flesh.
- *a child is born* – God came down as a child in a humble state, a statement of Christ's humanity and His humility. Jesus did not come immediately as a conquering hero; He came as a baby, dependent on His parents for everything.
- *a Son is given* – This emphasizes Christ's divinity and humanity together. His role as the new king, son of God, the King of Kings and son of the David, king of the covenant with Israel. Christ's unique nature is 100-percent God and 100-percent human. John 3:16 says the same thing: God *gave* His only Son to us.
- *and His name will be called ...* – In the ancient world, a person's name often communicated something about his character, identity, or reputation. These four titles reveal the extraordinary nature and character of the promised Messiah. Most strikingly, He is called "Mighty God," explicitly identifying Him as divine (Isaiah

10:21). Though He would enter the world as a humble infant, this Messiah would be God Himself.

We will look in more detail at all four names from Isaiah 9:6 in Talking Point 3 below, but the overall focus in this passage is on His government of peace. The angel's song in Luke 2:14 is also focused on peace. God's covenant with David was that when Messiah finally came, God would give Him "rest from all his enemies" (i.e., peace) and this kingdom of peace would last forever (2 Samuel 7:8–16).

The promise of Christmas is a promise of both eternal peace in heaven and peace in our spiritual lives today. The peace Isaiah promised isn't just the absence of conflict or war. It is what happens when the darkness is finally defeated and everything is restored to the way God intended it to be. That is biblical *shalom*. It means wholeness, well-being, completeness and flourishing. *Shalom* encompasses physical health, emotional well-being, harmony, justice, goodness, righteousness and fullness of joy. This is what we imagine heaven will be like, but Scripture promises we can experience a foretaste of this peace even in our lives today when we walk with Jesus.

The Hebrew word for "government" refers to "rule" or "dominion." If we want peace, we must allow Jesus to have dominion over our lives.⁵ Paul promised we don't have to be anxious about anything; we can offer up all things to the Lord, and He will give us a supernatural peace "that passes all understanding" (Philippians 4:6–7). When we live in the true *agape* love of Christ and speak the truth in love, we can experience peace in our relationships because we become *peacemakers*, not just *peacekeepers* (Matthew 5:9). When we walk by the Holy Spirit, He grows the fruit of peace in our lives. A life of abiding in Christ is characterized by *shalom* – peace, well-being, wholeness and flourishing.

Q: How have you experienced supernatural peace from God?

Q: What spiritual disciplines can you practice to develop greater *shalom*? How can you work to bring *shalom* to the world around you?

Isaiah 9:6 (yes, again) and Matthew 1:20–23 Read]

Talking Point 3: Because God is with us, we can walk in the light even in a dark world.

Q: What do these names for the Messiah tell us about Him?

Q: What do they tell us about why we can put our trust in Him?

In Scripture, names often reveal character, identity or calling. Isaiah's four titles do more than distinguish the promised child; they reveal why He is worthy of our trust. He is the perfect King who succeeds where every merely human ruler fails.

These four names describe who this coming king would be. The king they had been waiting for. The king who would save them. The king who would succeed where all others had failed. The perfect king who would trust God and follow Him, leading the nation in peace and blessing. The Light who would defeat the dark:

- *Wonderful Counselor* – His wisdom is supernatural and beyond human understanding. Jesus is Himself the wonder of God made flesh, and He rules with perfect wisdom.
- *Mighty God* – This name equates Jesus with God Himself, asserting His divinity and supporting the theology of the Trinity. “*Mighty God*” also portrays Jesus as the mighty warrior who defeats His enemies. Through His death and Resurrection, Christ conquered sin and death; when He returns, He will bring that victory to its complete and visible fulfillment.
- *Everlasting Father* – The title can be rendered “Father of Eternity.”⁶ It does not confuse Jesus with God the Father; it describes the Messiah as the eternal, fatherly ruler and source of eternal life. His kingdom and care for His people will never end. Adam was the father of humanity, but all he brought was death. Jesus brought eternal life, succeeding where Adam, the physical father of humanity, failed (Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 15:22).
- *Prince of Peace* – The word “prince” means ruler or leader and does not diminish Christ’s deity. This name isn’t necessarily making a statement about Jesus as a prince while God the Father is king; Jesus is also called “King” (Matthew 27:11). He is the King whose righteous reign will finally end oppression, defeat darkness, and establish everlasting peace.⁷

Jesus was given to us to fight a spiritual battle with evil and bring peace and eternal life. This is why He came; this is the Gospel. This purpose is found way back in Isaiah, hundreds of years before Christ actually came. Isaiah said the same thing as the classic “salvation verse,” John 3:16: Jesus is the Son *given to us* so everyone who believes in Him will have *eternal life*. Jesus is the ultimate Christmas gift from God.

In the Christmas story, Mary was also promised a Son. But He was not just a promise for her; her Son was for the whole world. In Matthew, the angel gave two more names for this child: *Jesus* (“the Lord is salvation”), because He would save His people from their sins, and *Immanuel* (“God with us”), because He would be God-made-flesh dwelling among His people (Matthew 1:21–23). The prophecy that He would be called Immanuel also comes from Isaiah, just two chapters earlier (Isaiah 7:14). At that time, Assyria was conquering the whole world, and the king of Judah was trying to decide if he would make an alliance with Egypt, try to fight Assyria, or become their vassal state. Isaiah kept assuring him to trust that “God is with us.” He didn’t need to turn to other human kings for protection; God would be their savior, their protector, their king.

In Isaiah’s day, the people faced a battle with a human superpower nation. But Jesus came to fight the kingdom of darkness. This is the same supernatural battle we face

every day. One day, we will live in the kingdom of nothing but light in heaven (Revelation 22:5). But for now, we are citizens of heaven living on earth. We are children of the light living in the world of darkness (Philippians 3:20). Yet we can have confidence that we will overcome because “God is with us.” Not just *with* us, but living *inside* us. One day, darkness will be gone forever because God will dwell with His people in the new creation. But we don't have to wait until then to walk in the light. Christ has brought us out of darkness, and His Spirit now lives within us, empowering us to live as children of light. This is the outflowing of the message of Christmas: The light came and defeated the darkness; because the light lives in us, we can shine His light into the darkness.

When we walk in peace, love, joy and all the Fruit of the Spirit, we shine the light of Christ into the world for all to see (Matthew 5:14–16). In this dark world, we live as ambassadors of His kingdom of light (2 Corinthians 5:20). Our faith can shine so brightly that it invites the world to taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8).

Q: Where are you facing darkness right now, and how does knowing that God is with you change the way you face it?

Q: How can shining the light of Jesus start with just one action, conversation, or prayer?

Q: What is a practical way you can shine the light of Christ into someone else's darkness this Christmas?

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Took

Main Point: Jesus is the Messiah promised long ago in the Prophets, the Prince of Peace who overcame darkness and brings eternal peace to His people.

Think back to the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service we talked about at the beginning. It starts with one flame in a dark room. But that flame doesn't stay in one place.

One candle lights another. Then another. The light moves from person to person, row to row, until thousands of candles are burning. What began with one light changes the entire room.

That's a beautiful picture of the message of Christmas. Jesus came into a world of darkness as the Light of the World. The darkness could not overcome Him. And now, those who belong to Christ have been called to walk as children of light and shine His light into the darkness around us.

One light may seem small against a world filled with darkness. But light was never meant to hide from the darkness – it was meant to shine in it. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14).

This Christmas, when you see the candles glowing during a Christmas Eve service or the lights shining on a Christmas tree, remember what they represent: The Light has come. The darkness has not overcome it. And now we have been sent to shine His light into the world.

CHALLENGES

THINK: Where do you see darkness in your life or in the world around you? How does knowing that God is with you give you confidence to walk in the light? Consider where God may be calling you to shine the light of Christ this Christmas through your words, actions, relationships or witness.

PRAY: Pray for those who are still living in spiritual darkness, that they would see the light of Christ and be brought into His kingdom of light. Ask God to make you more aware of the spiritual battle around you and to help you faithfully walk as a child of light. Pray that His Spirit would reveal areas of darkness in your own life and empower you to shine the light of Christ into the world around you.

ACT: Identify one person in your life who may be walking through a dark season or who does not know Christ. Intentionally shine the light of Christ into his or her life this

Christmas. Encourage, serve, invite to church, share the hope of Jesus, or simply make time to be present with this person. Ask God to give you an opportunity to point him or her toward the Light of the World – and then act when He does.

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advent>

² Joseph Henry Thayer, s.v. “ἐλπίς,” *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. See also William D. Mounce, s.v. “ἐλπίς,” *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*.

³ H. D. Spence-Jones, *Isaiah, Vol 1, The Pulpit Commentary* (New York, NY: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1890).

⁴ William D. Mounce, s.v. “καταλαμβάνω (*katalambanō*),” *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), accessed September 16, 2026, <https://www.billmounce.com/greek-dictionary/katalambano>.

⁵ John N. Oswalt, *Isaiah: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 162.

⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 247.

⁷ John Goldingay, “The Compound Name in Isaiah 9:5(6)” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Volume 61, No. 2* (April 1999), 239–44.