

BOWING BEFORE OUR KING

The sermon started by Isaiah is completed by Jesus. The gospel on Jesus' lips is the gospel of the kingdom. In fact, Matthew has this passage in mind as he introduces us to the public ministry of Jesus.

MATTHEW 3:13-17 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—¹⁴ to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— ¹⁶ 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." ¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

The Sermon on the Mount is saturated in kingdom language. Let's look at two passages in particular.

MATTHEW 6:9-10 This, then, is how you should pray: " Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

MATTHEW 6:31-33 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

1. What are some of the ways Jesus fulfills the prophecies of Isaiah 9:1-7?
2. According to these verses, how should we respond to our King?
3. According to Isaiah and Matthew, what can we expect when we follow him as king and place our burdens on his shoulders?



360 DISCUSSION 12.04.16

THE COMING KING | ISAIAH 9:1-7



Many of the stories we heard while we were growing up were stories of kings and kingdoms. True kings. Noble kings. Good-hearted kings. In some cases kings who were in exile, as the people suffered under the cruel tyranny of ignoble kings.

While the biblical story strikes some of the same familiar notes, at its heart is an altogether different story. It is a story because it explains why things are as they are. It is far more than a story because it is true. True in every sense of the word. In the highest and best sense of the word. It is a story of a king and a kingdom. It is a story about the rightful heir to the throne. But it is not the king who is in exile, it is the people who have rejected the king and as a result are in an exile of their own doing.

The story of Christmas is at its heart a story of a people waiting for a king. The king we rejected in the garden. The king we have held at arms length for most of our lives.

We hear whispers of the coming king from the prophet Isaiah nearly 700 years before Jesus was born. If you have your bibles turn with me to Isaiah 9. We will read verses 1-7.

A GREAT REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

As Isaiah pens these words the nation of Israel is on the brink of sliding into utter darkness. Although Isaiah has warned them and pleaded with them to turn back to God they have refused to listen and are oblivious to the calamity that is about to befall them.

Rather than trusting in the God of Israel, their king has turned to foreign God's and a strategic alliance with Egypt. The heavy tribute they pay the king of Egypt has left the nation impoverished, and in the end Egypt will not be able to deliver the security they paid such a great price to secure.

In the first few verses of chapter 9, Isaiah breaks from his prediction impending doom, to highlight the hope that awaits the nation on the other side of that doom. Israel's reversal of fortunes will be even more dramatic than her spiral into darkness. Isaiah describes this reversal of fortune in four movements.

VERSES 1-5: 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 honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.³ 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.⁴ 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.⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

1. What are some of the outstanding features of Israel's reversal of fortunes?
2. Why do you think Isaiah pauses to deliver this message in the middle of prophesying Israel's impending doom?
3. How do we experience similar reversals in fortune through the gospel?

THE COMING KING

This great reversal in Israel's fortunes does not come as a great national victory but as a gift in the form of a small child. He is everything we are, even in our weakness and vulnerability, but he is so much more than we are. While he comes in the weakness of a child, he embodies all the power of God.

VERSES 6-7: 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.

⁷Of 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.

1. It is interesting that a rod is broken from Israel's shoulders in verse 4 and the government is placed on his shoulders in verse 6. What are some of the things that currently rest on our shoulders that we need to give over to Jesus?
2. The coming king is given four royal titles. Why is each of these significant? How do they uniquely qualify him to be king? Which of these is most important to you right now? Why?
3. What would happen if our reversal of fortune depended on our zeal for God rather than God's zeal for us?