

After Darkness, Light

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[0:00] Isaiah chapter 8, we'll begin reading at verse 16, and we're going to read into chapter 9, and we'll end at verse 7. Isaiah chapter 8, verse 16.

Bind up the testimony and seal up the law among my disciples. I will wait for the Lord who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him.

Here am I and the children the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty who dwells on Mount Zion.

When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living, to the law and to the testimony? If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land. When they are famished, they will become enraged and looking upward will curse their king and their God.

[1:08] Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom. And they will be thrust into utter darkness.

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 Gentiles by way of the sea along the Jordan. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light on those living in the land of the shadow of death.

A light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy. They rejoice before you as people rejoice the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder.

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.

[2:12] Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. 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.

Of the increase 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. In a city park in the heart of Geneva, Switzerland, there is a limestone monument to the reformers, the Protestant reformers.

It's called Reformation Wall. And there is engraved in stone the motto of the Reformation, After darkness, light.

[3:20] After darkness, light. Now, for centuries, Europe had been plunged into the depths of darkness, superstition, false religion, that kept the word of God out of sight and buried.

And then in the 16th century, God sovereignly and graciously turned on the lights by revealing his word to men who then proclaimed it boldly.

And at the entrance of his word, light sprang throughout Europe and dispelled the darkness. After darkness, light.

Now, that's what Isaiah is prophesying here before us in Isaiah chapter 9. In the face of great darkness that was settling over the nation of Judah in 732 BC, its king and people alike had rejected God's word, both his promises and his commandments.

They were turning instead for guidance to fallen human wisdom and even to muttering mediums and spiritual occultists. It was dark in Judah.

[4:45] For every step away from the scriptures, from the word of God, is a step into deeper darkness. And Isaiah says it's going to get darker still when the Assyrians invade Judah, sweeping over the whole land like a flood, slaughtering, destroying, and taking captives into exile.

Judah will find themselves then indeed in the dark without any light. Looking up, they will find that God has hidden the light of his face and turned his back on them.

And they will curse God. And looking down on the earth, they'll not find any help there either. But we'll see only distress, darkness, and fearful gloom.

And they will be thrust into utter darkness. Verse 22 says at the end of chapter 8. Now, if we have eyes to see, we'll see ourselves in the people of Judah.

Because every last one of us have gone astray. We have turned each one to his own way, not God's way. We've rejected God's commands and God's promises, and we've gone our own way.

[6:00] Just like sheep that stray. We didn't like the light. We didn't want the light. We didn't choose the light. We hated the light.

And we loved darkness. That's what Jesus says in John 3. This is the verdict. Light has come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

For everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. Well, that's us.

Hating, rejecting the light. Lost. Wandering into ever-increasing darkness. Heading for outer darkness.

In hell. A night that knows no dawn of day. Now that's how chapter 8 ends. Only distress, darkness, and fearful gloom.

[7:02] But chapter 9 begins, After darkness, light. Light. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in the land of the shadow of death. A light has dawned. So here is light in the midst of darkness. Here's good news in the midst of bad news.

Here's a gracious promise from God's own word surrounded by threatening judgments! From His word. Here's the triumph of God's grace over human sin and failure.

And right in the midst of it is Emmanuel. God with us. A supernatural sun born in a supernatural way.

The light of the world dispelling all this darkness that we have got ourselves into. So there's a surprising reversal going on in this passage.

[8:07] Light where there was only darkness. Maybe you've visited a cave and you've seen what darkness is. And every time you go there it's dark. And then one day it's light.

Now that's something. Where there was darkness and only darkness now there's light. There will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

No more night for those who were walking in darkness. Well let's dig in and learn more of this light after darkness. The first thing we need to see is that the future will not be like the past. Notice the tenses in verse 1.

Nevertheless there will be no more gloom. Future. For those who were in distress. Past. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun in the land of Naphtali.

But in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles by the way of the sea along the Jordan. Now those are all different names for the same parcel of ground.

[9:13] This land that had that had been humbled with darkness distress and gloom is to be honored in the future. It's the land of Zebulun and Naphtali.

Two of the most northern tribes in Israel. And as such that meant that they were the furthest from the temple down in Jerusalem. They were the closest to the heathen nations and to Gentiles who indeed lived in the land and influenced them.

They were a despised humbled part of the land. Indeed Nathaniel would ask can anything good come out of Nazareth? That's Galilee of the Gentiles.

That's this land. Despised. Humbled. But perhaps more than any other reason why Isaiah speaks of them as having been humbled in the past is because this area had been the first to feel the brunt of the invading Assyrians as they came down from the north.

Having invaded Aram they now came down into the land of Israel and the first to feel the brunt of their force was the land of Zebulun and Naphtali.

[10:26] And even now as Isaiah is prophesying that area had already been overrun by the Assyrians. Their towns and their land devastated and their people taken away into captivity.

So the first dominoes of the tribes of Israel are fallen. They're already fallen. They have been humbled indeed. Now notice the activity is all God's both the humbling and the honoring.

Isaiah says in the past he humbled them. This is over it's already happened. Assyria has come and he God humbled them and deservingly so.

They sinned against him. They despised his commandments and his promises and so he humbled them. He brought the Assyrians down upon them. He God humbled them.

He hid his face from them for when the Assyrians came and they looked for help he did not help them. He turned them over. to their oppressors.

[11:33] But in the future he will honor them. Now that's amazing. Whatever that honor will look like we can know this that it it was undeserved.

It was grace. Whatever that honor and we'll see what it looks like. But we can know that it was not deserved. They deserved eternal humiliation and gloom and distress and outer darkness forever. but in grace God will give to these ill-deserving ones honor and glory. Now that's no small thing to reverse the fortunes of a people from being humiliated to being honored.

From being down to being up. From being in the lowest of darkness and gloom to being honored. Now how will he do it? the very last phrase tells us in verse seven.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. Now no time is given as to when this will take place. When will God honor this land that has been humbled?

[12:42] But what we have spelled out in the rest of the passage is this honor. What it will look like. The great reversal that God will accomplish. And so the next point is that there will be light instead of darkness.

The people walking in darkness, verse two, have seen a great light and on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. Now why are these people walking in darkness?

Well because they rejected the light and refused to walk in the light of the Lord. We will not have this book to order our lives.

We will go our own way and every step away from the word of God is a step into further darkness.

So that's why they're walking in darkness.

They have rejected the light of the Lord, him and his word. Now to walk in darkness is to live in darkness.

[13:44] It's every day to live in the darkness of sin without the influence of the light of God's truth affecting the way that you live, the way you think, the way you process life, the way you the choices you make, the things you do.

It's to be guided by sight alone, human wisdom alone, which is darkness. That's walking in darkness to live as if the Bible had only blank pages, as if God never spoke to men.

That's to walk in darkness. It's to live without any true hope of heaven when they die. The day of their death holds only the darkness of the grave and hell, and every day its dark shadow is cast over them as hell yawns to swallow them up at their death.

No hope at all. That's what it means to walk in the dark. It's to live as if there was no God. And to live without God is to live without hope.

It's to be darkened in your understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in us due to the hardening of our hearts. Ephesians 4, 18.

[15:05] The darkening of our minds. We don't see. We have rejected the light, and it's only in his light that we see light. William Wilberforce was a member of the British Parliament and worked many years to abolish slavery in England.

He was a good friend of William Pitt, the prime minister at the end of the 18th century. And once Wilberforce asked the prime minister to go with him to church to hear a certain gospel preacher. And Pitt agreed, but he was unimpressed, we're told. Now, under the preaching of the gospel, Wilberforce had felt, quote, his soul rise to heaven.

But Pitt said afterwards, I haven't the faintest idea what that man was talking about. He was walking in the darkness right in the midst of the shining light of the gospel.

No light. He saw no glory in Jesus Christ. He saw no wisdom in his laws. He saw nothing amazing in his gospel that he would want to repent and stop going his way and come to Christ and to follow him, to come to know him and to walk in his light.

[16 : 34] He was in the dark. Living in the darkness is living under the wrath of God and the consequences of sin that wreak havoc upon us.

And that's how they were living in this region of Galilee of the Gentiles. There in Naphtali and Zebulun, indeed the whole land for that matter. They were walking in a perpetual night, 24 hours a day.

And that night went on for centuries. And then one day the darkness was shattered. By the dawning of a great light, it happened some 750 years after this prophecy of Isaiah.

Matthew tells us how the long night ended in chapter 4 of his gospel. Jesus of Nazareth was 30 years old. He's just been baptized, gone into the wilderness, tempted of the devil, and now he's starting his preaching ministry, stepping out of the obscurity, into the public light, to start preaching. Listen how Matthew tells it. Leaving Nazareth, he, Jesus, went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah.

[17 : 56] Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, 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, and from that time on, Jesus began to preach, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. Now, Matthew leaves no question as to what this great light is and who the people are that were walking in darkness.

The great light is the Lord Jesus, the long expected Messiah, and what an honor it was in the land of Naphtali and Zebulun to have the Son of God walking your streets, doing amazing miracles, calling men to repent of their sins and to enter the kingdom of God through faith in Him.

Honor has now come to the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, these who had once been humbled and were the first to feel the brunt of the Assyrian invasion are now honored by being the first to see the great light as the Son of God is on a mission to invade this world.

He makes their land his headquarters from which he sends the light of the gospel into the whole world. Later, this very ordinary looking man will walk into the temple in Jerusalem and say something very unordinary.

[19 : 35] He will say, I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Great light indeed. The light is a person. It's the Lord Jesus here is light for our darkness and life for our death. In Jesus, the great light.

And he's not just the light of the Jews. He is the light of the world. And that's good news for you and me, that he is light for us. Judas Savior is the Savior of the world.

The one who will bring the light of life to the land of Zebulun and Naphtali will bring it to all the world, to all the nations as it was promised.

And so people's living in darkness will see a great light. Now, when Jesus was still an infant in his virgin mother's womb, John the Baptist father prophesied this way about him, that because of the tender mercy of our God, the rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

[21 : 06] Without him, we were living in darkness, but Jesus is the rising sun who is shining his light on us, living in darkness, the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

Yes, the people living in darkness have seen a great light. What a reversal. Light where there was only darkness. Now, the next thing that he will bring, enlarge nation and increase joy in verse three. You have enlarged the nation and increase their joy. First, the nation has been enlarged. That was God's promise. to Abraham that I will make a view a great nation, not a puny nation, a great nation with a multitude of descendants.

But the nation was to be humbled by the drastic reduction in their population. They had been like the sand of the seashore in number, but the casualties of war and famine would reduce them to a mere remnant of what they had been.

We've already seen in Isaiah that they would be reduced to a tenth and even then the tenth would again be ravished. We've already read in Isaiah that men would be so scarce that seven women would be pleading for one of them to marry them all.

[22 : 40] Humbled because of their sin, the nation depopulated, but with the coming of the light and the light that the Lord Jesus a great reversal will happen.

God will enlarge the nation. And when the light of the world came, not only did Jews come to the light, but many Gentiles came as well.

For you see, it was God's plan that in bringing his light into the world, that the nations, the Gentiles would be brought into the true Israel of God, grafted into the same root, Jesus Christ.

And in that way, the nation was greatly enlarged. Gentiles became heirs together with believing Jews, members together of one body, sharers together in the promise in Jesus Christ.

Fellow citizens with God's people, members of God's household. And as the Gentiles came to faith in Christ and belong to Christ, they became Abraham's seed.

[23:52] The nation was greatly enlarged. And it's still being enlarged. You remember in one day, it was enlarged by 3,000 on the day of Pentecost. And it's continuing to be enlarged.

As boys and girls, men and women, put their faith in Jesus Christ, the Israel of God expands. Until one day, gathered around the throne from every language, nation, tribe, and people will be a multitude that no man can number.

Indeed, the nation has been enlarged. And what else? Joy has been increased. Verse 3 goes on to say, as the light shatters the darkness and the nation is enlarged, their joy will be increased.

Here, the reversal is from the fearful gloom at the end of chapter 8 into this great joy. You've enlarged the nation and increased their joy.

They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. One of the happiest times of the year was harvest time.

[25:03] Indeed, it was kind of like getting paid once a year. That was a good day as you came to harvest. And so joy was abundant on harvest day.

And so it was as well on the day when the men came back from battle alive and victorious and dividing the plunder.

We can perhaps some of you can remember the ticker tape parades in New York as the soldiers came home. The great joy of victory. Well, maybe we would liken it to the joy of a team winning the Super Bowl and you see them just ecstatic with joy afterwards or someone winning the lottery and has won five million dollars and their joy knows no bounds.

Here's a people rejoicing just like that. Only it's not a lottery or a Super Bowl or an earthly harvest or an earthly battle. It's these people who once were in the saddest gloom.

They're now rejoicing as men do in harvest and dividing the plunder. Why? Because they've been saved. They've been delivered. And there is a joy in the Lord that is like the joy that the world has in harvest and in military victory.

[26:45] These people were in the deepest gloom, but a day was coming when there would be no more gloom. That's how the chapter nine starts.

No more gloom. Only joy and increasing joy forever. Oh, weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning when the light dawns.

There will be great joy. Disciples of Jesus, does he not bring you joy like nothing else? Is it not great joy to know that your sins not in part, but the whole were nailed to his cross and you bear them no more?

Is there not great joy in having this father that we sang about this morning who loves us and has taken us into his arms? To have the son of God ever living for us and to have the spirit of God in us. There's great joy in being saved, the salvation of the Lord brings great joy to those who have tasted. Indeed, Isaiah will prophesy again in chapter 12 with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

[28:06] And yes, when God saves us, there is great joy and we could see that. And when Paul and Silas brought the gospel to Philippi and there was that man in deep gloom and distress ready to take his own life and after believing the gospel, the Bible says the jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them.

He was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God, he and his whole family. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there and when the gospel and its benefits came to that town, we read in Acts 8, 8, so there was great joy in that city.

So one of the things that's coming is this great joy, gospel joy, not only joy for our own salvation but joy to see others saved.

There's joy in heaven over one sinner that repents and we share in that joy when we see others repenting, turning from their way, coming to the Savior. from gloom to great joy.

Do you know that joy? Have you tasted, have you drawn water from the wells of salvation in Christ? He's the well. Well, the next great reversal is liberation from bondage.

[29:31] In verse 4, for as in the day of Midian's defeat, you, God, have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of the oppressor, so these people had been groaning under the burdens and miseries of a life of slavery.

They had known it in Egypt. They would know it under Assyria. They would know it under Babylon, under many nations that would rule over them. But the Lord graciously will shatter the yoke, the bar, and the rod of their oppressors.

This is cause for joy, but it also points to a greater bondage by far, and that's the bondage to sin, because whoever sins is a slave of sin, and it's that bondage that is pointed to here.

It's the greatest liberation of all to be set free from sin that enslaved us, and that ruined our lives, and was taking us to hell. So this liberty, this liberation is likened to the day when God set his people free from the Midianites.

It takes us into Judges chapter 6 to 8 when Israel was being oppressed by the Midianites and a great army of 135,000 men were coming against Israel and Gideon was God's little freedom fighter with his 32,000 against the 135,000.

[30:56] And God told Gideon, you have too many men. And he whittled them down to 10,000. He says, you still have too many men. You may think that it was you and your 10,000 that won the victory.

And so he whittled them down to 300 against 135,000. That's 450 warriors against one Israelite soldier.

And God says, now we're ready. Now we're ready and no one will ever think that it was your might and power that won the victory. But it's not by your might and power but by my spirit says the Lord. And so they went and surrounded the camp of the Midianites with torches. But the light was hidden in clay jars.

And they had trumpets in one hand and the torches and jars in the other. And the signal was given and they broke the clay jars. And what happened?

[32:03] Out of the darkness, light. And that light shone all around the camp and the trumpets blew and God created a panic in the Midianite camp.

And they woke up out of the sleep and they started killing each other off. And the Lord won a great victory for Israel that day. Liberty from their oppressors.

God and the God and the God deliverance from bondage is coming. A deliverance of bondage to sin that could no more be broken by yourself than Gideon's 300 men by themselves could have defeated the 135,000 Midianites.

No, human strength is of no help whatsoever here. Only God's almighty power can save from sin's oppression. So God reveals his own glory by saving sinners with absolutely no help from them. That's coming. A great liberation in which we share in the plunders and fruits of victory of a battle that we did not fight ourselves.

[33:28] A greater than Gideon is coming. And so following this victory he goes on to speak in verse five of total peace. Not only victory over our enemies but the end of war altogether.

Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning will be fuel for the fire. The very accoutrements of war the very clothing the uniforms that men put on to fight with will be burned.

Why? Because they'll be unnecessary there will be no more war. The deliverer will establish a perfect and worldwide peace. We've already seen that in Isaiah's prophecy chapter 2 that they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

They won't need them anymore. Nations will not take up sword against nation nor will they train for war anymore. You know the world is talking about peace today.

I say they're talking about peace but they're training for war and that's the way it will be until this one comes until the light comes and shatters the darkness and brings true deliverance and takes away the very root of war which is man's sin.

[34:51] Well by now all the drums were rolling in this great crescendo of interest. I've told you ahead of time who this great light is, what the cause of joy is, what the cause of peace is, what this liberation is.

Isaiah hasn't told them yet. He just keeps building and building. Who is this great deliverer who brings honor and light and joy and liberty and peace for to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders.

How unlikely. A mere child. A child is the answer to all our dangers and fears and needs. Oh, but what a child.

That virgin-born child of chapter 7, that Emmanuel, God with us. The son given to the world by God because he so loved us that he gave his one and only son that believing on him, we might not perish but have everlasting life.

He was the son of God, but he's also the son of David. He's the king who will shoulder all the responsibilities of government. The government will be on his shoulders and he will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom.

[36 : 19] That throne of David that had been threatened with extinction. We're going to wipe out the line of David and put a son of Tabil on that throne. Oh, no. God's word says no.

There is coming a son who will be a son of David who will sit on the throne of David and that throne that was threatened with extinction. He will establish it.

He will uphold it and not by oppression and tyranny as the kings of men but with justice and righteousness and not for a mere 40 or 50 years like other human kings but from that time on and forever and ever for his kingdom is an eternal kingdom and endures from generation to generation and of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end and that child will be called wonderful counselor now how important is good counsel for the wise decisions of any nation well this king doesn't surround himself with wise advisors he himself has wonderful counsel so much so that he's called wonderful counselor indeed hidden in him are all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom he's wise in his rule oh king ahaz follows the folly of human wisdom and leads the whole nation to destruction and death but this king is wonderful in counsel and leads the nation into life and joy and peace oh then follow him dear friend follow him and he will be called mighty god because he is god he is emmanuel god with us with divine power to wipe out all of his and our enemies he's mighty to save all who trust in him so trust in him you people and he will be called everlasting father because he will rule over his kingdom with a father like compassion not as a tyrant but as a father has compassion upon his children so the lord has compassion on those who fear him he's a kind protector with tender care oh then rest in his love dear brother and sister and he shall be called the prince of peace because he is a prince he's a king and he's bringing peace like none other he makes war cease by removing the cause of war have you thought of that that's why there will always be war until

Jesus comes again because he will remove the cause of war which is sin the same thing that causes war in your members and with your family and in your marriage and in sin greed and pride and all sin he is the prince of peace he removes the enmity that stood between God and man so there's no more war vertically and there's no more war and enmity between man and man and there's no more war in here nothing but the peace of God that passes understanding where does it come from the prince of peace who through his blood makes peace with God and peace with man and peace in our own hearts what a king what a kingdom this is the only king for us indeed he's born for us it is to us this king is is common it's to us this child is born and there is in him every single thing that we need it's in him what you need is in him he has light for your darkness he has joy for your gloom he has liberty for your bondage to sin he has peace for your war with

God and men will bring bring his people life and light joy and peace have you bowed to that king have you received these glorious benefits from him you need this king you need this salvation the light has come now come to the light three closing applications first of all here is the triumph of [41 : 47] God's grace over man's sinful nature Judas people and her king had forfeited God's help and favor they walked out on God in his covenant they went their own way they rejected his word and his rule they trusted in man rather than God and they forfeited the very sovereignty of their nation they became a puppet nation to the Assyrians and the Babylonians and all the other nations that ruled over them and yet the message of Isaiah in chapter 9 1 to 7 is that God in grace would deliver his people and would give them a king of David who would rule in righteousness and peace and would set them free and bring prosperity to them so the promise that Ahaz refused to believe God in grace fulfill in the virgin son it's amazing that God would do this for sinful

Judah who deserved us to go walking right on in their darkness into outer darkness forever God God will interrupt them he's writing a story in which he will come and will bring light to them who

love darkness God is determined to act in grace for the sake of his name yes he'll bring the rod of the Assyrians down upon them hard yes it will get dark and gloomy but darkness is not to have the final word with Judah man sinful failure is not to have the final word with God's elect his grace his grace will triumph at last so my friend if you have anything of light after your darkness you mark it all down to the triumph of God's grace in Christ he has not dealt with us according to our sins but according to the merit found in his son the second application is that his light dispels our darkness in a most amazing way how does our darkness get dispelled by the light well this child who is the light of the world would keep the law of

God perfectly for us all through his life and then at the age of 33 would go to a cross and enter into our darkness and our despair and bloom do you remember how he turned to his disciples in Gethsemane and said that his heart was weighed down with anxiety even to the point of death oh now he takes upon himself our sins our fears our sorrows our sadness he bears all of it to the place of punishment when he comes to calvary and he stretched out on that cross what happened at noon kids it grew dark as night when usually it's bright there was darkness and what was on the outside was just a picture of what was happening inside the soul of the son of God when his own father hid his face from his son there was nothing but darkness and gloom and distress and sadness and wrath and anger this is the light of the world walking in darkness our darkness that we might have the light of life and walk in the light of the

Lord what an amazing way that he brings light to us who are in darkness for for us the father's hidden face for us the bitter cry my God my God why have you abandoned me the darkness was to bring us light that's the only deliver for the wrath of God it's the deliver we need for our problem tomorrow morning is the deliver we need for all of our problems in life so so do we get the picture here are the dreaded Assyrians on the move and the northern territories of Israel have already been humbled and devastated and against the onslaught of the Assyrian flood Isaiah talks about the birth of a child what we're talking about real swords

Isaiah we're talking about real nasty men who love blood and like to pile up the heaps of skulls that they leave behind in the cities they devastate and you're talking that is what you have to come just to talk about a birth of a son in some unspecified distant future what does that have to do with my need now as I see the Assyrians bearing down upon us there's an important lesson in this for us Isaiah is saying that in all your times of distress our great need is a look at Emmanuel in all of our troubles be the Assyrians financial health problems family problems our great need is to get a clear view of our

[47 : 42] Emmanuel who he is wonderful counselor with wisdom for us mighty God with power for us everlasting father with unbelievable tender care and love for us prince of peace to bring peace in the midst of our problems what you need is a look at Jesus it sounds so simple it sounds so so beneath the problem it's real blood up here and it's to look to Jesus yes that's what he's telling us look to Jesus and this prophecy about Jesus was sufficient to sustain the godly in this terrible ordeal it was coming over them as Assyria was starting to flood their nation bringing darkness and distress there was light enough in this promise to keep hope alive in their darkness there was light enough in this promise to keep!

trusting in God's word and not trusting in man to keep them rejoicing in his coming deliverance to keep them from walking in the ways of the people around them from fearing what they feared and from trusting what they trusted and from going to the things that they went to for guidance and if that was true 400 700 years before Jesus birth what is it for you and me brothers sisters think of what we've got we've got all 66 books this this king has come the child has been born he is seated right now on David's throne he's upholding it he's ruling for our good and he's set us free from our sin and he's brought us peace with God and he has made us rejoice in his so great salvation and we have all this light shed upon our path that in our troubles we might look and live we might look and find strength in the

Lord himself it's by fixing your eyes on Jesus that our faith your faith is strengthened it's by studying him his names study his names wonderful counselor mighty God everlasting father prince of peace and all the other names given to him study his character his works his offices as prophet priest and king his promises faith grows by looking to Jesus joy grows by looking to Jesus peace grows by looking to Jesus liberty grows by looking to Jesus it's all found in him the light that dispels the darkness so refuse to look at your problems without looking at Jesus in them no matter how dark it is in your life there's always light for a look at the Savior so turn your eyes on

Jesus look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim yes problems as great as Assyrian armies will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace would you sing that with me from the overhead stand and sing with me oh soul are you weary! in trouble no light in the darkness you see there's light for a look at the Savior enlightened more abundant may may Thank you.

[51 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[54 : 29] Thank you.

Father, we're so thankful for the word that cannot fail, this promise that we've read again this morning of you sending your son into the world.

to never let him far from our minds, far from our eyes, but ever to be running this race looking to Jesus, the one who has authored our faith and who will finish it and who finishes it with our eyes upon him.

So come and help us in our weakness, in our fears, in our sadness, in our bondage to look up to him. We thank you for your word and for the realities of it in our life.

We praise you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.