

(Topics and Lead-in Below)

Isaiah 9

TUNE: For Unto Us (from Handel's *Messiah*; alt.)

♩ = 72

F B♭ D C7 E C7sus F E C F F A B♭ B♭ A Gm7 B♭6 B♭

1. Dark - ness and shad-ow grip the earth. See the light! The day is
 2. For un - to us a Child is born, Un - to us a Son is

C A7 C# Dm Dm A Dm Gm7 Gm9 C

dawn - ing! See the light! The day is dawn - ing!
 giv - en, Un - to us a Son is giv - en.

F B♭ D C7 E C7sus F E C F F A B♭ B♭ A Gm7 B♭6 B♭

Dark - ness and shad-ow grip the earth. See the light! The day is
 For un - to us a Child is born, Un - to us a Son is

C A7 C# Dm Dm A Dm Gm7 Gm9 C G7sus C

dawn - ing! See the light! The day is dawn - ing! Taste the
 giv - en, Un - to us a Son is giv - en; And the

WORDS: Ken Bible, adapted from Isaiah 9:1-7
 MUSIC: George Frederick Handel and Ken Bible

FOR UNTO US
 Irregular

joy and feel the free - dom! Peace is com - ing, And all
 gov - ern - ment shall be up - on His shoul - der; And all

na - tions will call Him Won - der - ful Coun - sel - or, The Might - y
 na - tions will call Him Won - der - ful Coun - sel - or, The Might - y

God, The Ev - er - last - ing Fa - ther, The Prince of Peace.
 God, The Ev - er - last - ing Fa - ther, The Prince of

Peace, The Ev - er - last - ing Fa - ther, The Prince of Peace.

Chords: B \flat , C, Dm, C/E, C \flat /E, F, B \flat , F/C, C, F, B \flat /F, F, E/C, E/A, F, B \flat /F, F, E/C, E/A, B \flat , B \flat /F, B \flat , E/A, Gm \flat , B \flat /F, C \flat /E, F, B \flat \flat , C, C \flat , F, B \flat , E/A, Gm \flat , B \flat /F, C \flat /E, F, B \flat \flat , C, C \flat , F

TOPICS: Advent; Christmas

LEAD-IN: *The people walking in darkness
 have seen a great light...
 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.
 (Isaiah 9:2, 6, NIV)*

LEAD-IN DEVOTIONAL READING:

The Blessings of the King

Hear God's words through Isaiah the prophet:

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. 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 the 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 at 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.
Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.
(Isaiah 8:19 – 9:5, NIV)*

Isaiah spoke these words from God to a people who refused to trust Him. They preferred a religion more accommodating to their lifestyle, more touchable, more socially acceptable, one that catered to their desires. In troubled times when they needed help, they turned to another country, or another god, or to their own abilities or wealth. They consulted mediums, looking to the dead for help. Does any of this sound familiar?

The opening paragraph of today's scripture describes the fate of all who worship "gods" that are not God. They feed on what can never satisfy them. The result is hunger, fear, darkness, anger, gloom, and ultimate disappointment. Desperate, they curse all authority. They ignore God their entire lives, then when tough times come, they blame Him. Rejecting Him, they have separated themselves from the only source of life and all that is good.

But look at the first word in the next paragraph of scripture: "nevertheless". God doesn't reject us when we reject Him. His love pursues us. He doesn't wait for us to deserve His gifts, or even to seek them. He longs to bless us, and He will not give up.

His blessings would begin among those who had suffered the most. Zebulun and Naphtali were the northernmost tribes of Israel, near the Sea of Galilee. Because of their location, they were the first to be attacked by invaders, who often came from the north, and they were the most subject to corruption from surrounding heathen nations.

Jesus was raised in this area and spent most of his life there. He grew up in Nazareth, as an adult moved to Capernaum, and began His ministry in the region of Galilee. (See Matthew 4:12-16.)

God was determined to lift these deluded, oppressed people. His words are bursting at the seams with promised blessings.

Imagine those who had long been engulfed in darkest gloom, now suddenly bathed in beautiful sunlight!

Imagine those consumed with anger and need, now caught up in utter joy—joy that surpasses even our greatest times of abundance and jubilation!

Imagine those long enslaved and oppressed, now suddenly set completely free! It would be as exhilarating as when Gideon delivered them from the Midianites, in Judges 6 & 7.

Imagine all the tools of war, conflict, suffering, and death being destroyed in one massive bonfire, never to be used again!

God was longing to give them a glimpse of a happiness that was beyond their imagining. Our world and our entire lives have been darkened by separation from God. We have no experience to help us grasp the light, the joy, and the freedom that our loving God plans to lavish on His people.

All these blessings would come to us in one perfect and surprising Gift!

Consider this:
*Focus on knowing and following
Jesus Christ.
All God's blessings are coming to us
in Him.*

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