

Isaiah 9 “ Is Christmas really Relevant?”

1. Intro

- a. There is this phenomenon on a Sunday morning where if you are standing in the lobby there can be a song playing in there while a different song is being sung in the auditorium. These two songs hit in mid-air and create what is called dissonance... It's this feeling of though both songs are being sung right they sure don't sound good together.
- b. Sometimes this can happen in life... wet socks... I think that sometimes this can happen with Christmas... Especially around the phrase “Are you in the Christmas Spirit?”
- c. What does this mean? Cindy Lou Who spends an entire movie looking for the answer...
- d. In that movie it means growing a furry green guy's heart three sizes in one night.
- e. In our context It often seems to be some assemblance of nostalgia, gratitude for family, excitement of giving and getting gifts, and ugly christmas sweaters all thrown into a crock pot.
- f. In that vain, you can move from “What is the christmas spirit? To Why can't i get in it? To is Christmas even relevant?”
- g. As we continue our series on when it doesn't feel like Christmas... Let's look at a passage from the prophet Isaiah...As you guys are turning there, reminder that the Book of Isaiah is a collection of narrative stories and prophecies delivered to Israel in a trying time for them. Having been used to being

a power as God's people, they were now being dwarfed by Godless nations.

- h. As John Oswalt said when analyzing this time “ *Is God truly the Sovereign of history if the godless nations are stronger than God's nation? Does might make right? What is the role of God's people in the world? Does divine judgment mean divine rejection? What is the nature of trust? What is the future of the Davidic monarchy? Are not the idols stronger than God and therefore superior to him?* ”
- i. God is going to answer these questions and more... and as he is speaking to these questions through His prophet, He issues a prophecy about how He will come through.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

3

You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

4

For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

5

For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood

will be burned as fuel for the fire.

6

For to us a child is born,

to us a son is given;

and the government shall be upon[d] his shoulder,

and his name shall be called[e]

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7

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.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

2. Christmas is relevant because of Brokenness

a. EXPL:

- i. Before we dive into what the Prophet is foretelling, let's understand the context of what He is saying.
- ii. "Out of Context" twitter accounts
- iii. So what is the situation Isaiah is speaking this prophecy into.
 1. "The people who are walking in darkness"
 2. This is speaking of the state of God's people.
 3. This section of Isaiah (7-9) is speaking about God's presence with Israel despite their continued rejection.

4. Culminating in the ruler King Ahaz, who when surrounded by Syria and the northern kingdom had a choice of what to do. God through Isaiah told Ahaz that He would protect Judah. Even offering to give him a sign to prove it. Ahaz rejected the sign and ultimately rejected God by trying to manufacture security through an alliance with Assyria. God's people wouldn't recover. As God would allow the one whom Ahaz allied with to "Like a barber uses a razor" shave this nation down.
5. This prophecy of a perfect future rulers comes to Israel as they are experiencing brokenness through broken rulers.
6. Why is Christmas Relevant? SAY POINT HERE?

b. ILL:

- i. Hallmark Christmas Movies... I could write the plot right now.... There is always some miscommunication that you can see coming for almost the whole movie... It finally builds to this moment and the couple split... A part I like to call the Broken Middle... When usually a wise friend, father, tells them it was a misunderstanding... ..which feels like the best news in the world to them... rushing back to be together and share a PG kiss under mistletoe.
- ii. Israel as a nation was sitting in the fallout of the mistake. If we are going to understand the beginning of the Christmas Spirit we have to

understand that the starting point isn't the happy ending. It's the broken middle.

c. ARG:

- i. Ok what should this mean for us?? The World is fundamentally broken...
- ii. We are still in many ways inside the broken middle.
- iii. We see wars where those made in God's image are slain.
- iv. We see families whose thanksgiving tables were torn in two because of the results on November Tuesday Night.
- v. We see globally the mistreatment of women and children as second class citizens rather than participants of God's purposes and plans.
- vi. We see brothers and sisters who are put to vile and cruel deaths for simply proclaiming that Jesus is lord.
- vii. Is Christmas Relevant? Yes!! Because this world is still deeply broken..

d. APPL:

- i. As we connect to the Christmas Story we need to mourn and lament the brokenness of our world.
- ii. The route to a proper advent begins with lament.
- iii. How do you lament?
 1. _____ shouldn't be this way.
 2. Lord please Help
 3. Even in this I trust you.
- iv. Wars
- v. Inequality in our justice system

vi. Illness

3. Christmas is relevant because it gives us someone to long for

a. EXPL:

- i. As the prophet is issuing this prophecy let's look at how he describes this coming King.
- ii. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon [d] his shoulder, and his name shall be called [e] Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, 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. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.
- iii. Government on his shoulders- Israel had God as it's King, but longed to be like other nations...brokenness followed through broken kings... God is saying He will return them to as it should be. This promised savior will return to lead the government justly and rightly..
- iv. Wonderful Counselor- In the Hebrew this is best understood not as the world's greatest therapist, but rather as the wisest person you could ever receive counsel from. Not only is this coming King just and steadfast. He is wonderfully wise.
- v. Mighty God- That this King would have the very power and might of God. The same power that parted the red sea, made the sun stand

- still, slew Goliath would be wielded by this King. Just, Wise and Strong.
- vi. Everlasting Father- Up until now, you could be describing an insightfully powerful cold, distant dictator. But God through Isaiah shows that our relationship with this ruler won't be one of distance but relationship. That won't fade or wither away with time.
 - vii. Prince of Peace- This King through all these qualities above would also bring peace.
 - viii. What a list! Why is Christmas relevant? SAY POINT HERE
- b. ILL:
- i. Turkey Trot...No training... but i'm trying to impress the family... about mile marker two... start cramping... about mile marker 4 I start chanting in my head "pecan pie... mashed potatoes... mac and cheese."
 - ii. I needed something to look forward to.. To make the pain not feel ultimate.
- c. ARG:
- i. Think about what these words must have felt to God's people.
 - ii. A just king... after countless kings had been corrupt and led them into corruption.
 - iii. A wise king... after Ahaz and other kings had made poor choices over and over again.
 - iv. A mighty king... after being swept away by the armies of the godless.
 - v. An everlasting father... after seeing Kings come and go... seeing the height of David's reign come crashing down within a few generations.
 - vi. The Prince of Peace... after being through countless wars and what felt like unending strife.
 - vii. The prophecy wasn't catchy words to put on a christmas card... it was the very hope that God's people needed and longed for.
- d. APPL:
- i. The relevancy shouldn't end with them.
 - ii. We still need this King
 - iii. As we lament and experience the brokenness this world has to offer. We ought to long for the finish line.
 - iv. We ought to be longing for Jesus to come back.
 1. For the government to be thrust upon His shoulders as conquering King.
 2. To lead with wisdom and righteousness as our wonderful counselor.
 3. To lead with the power to overthrow sin and injustice once and for all as our mighty God.
 4. To lead relationally so that no one need feel alone, unseen, or isolated ever again.
 5. To lead peacefully so that we might know the World as it should be not as it has been.
 - v. We aren't longing for some generic Hallmark ending, we are longing for what the world was always supposed to be but sin had tarnished and broken.
 - vi. We are longing for wholeness or as Sally Lloyd Jones says for the dark things to be made light and wrong things to be made right.
 - vii. And we aren't longing for some generic religious teacher who fits a archetype. We are

longing for the King, groom and savior we so desperately need.

4. Christmas is relevant because we get to rejoice.

- a. You see this prophecy and many others in Isaiah has what is called a dual fulfillment. Meaning in aspects it has already been fulfilled but we are still waiting for others.
- b. Which means that this Christmas not only do we get to lament and long, we get to rejoice.
- c. We get to rejoice that there was a child born who was God in Flesh immanuel.
- d. We get to rejoice that a wonderful counselor came, who taught in a way that the most seasoned in the synagogues marveled at. Who showed a better way to live.
- e. We get to rejoice that a man came who performed miracles so miraculous that they could only be described as being done with the very power of God.
- f. We get to rejoice that a man came who through his death, and resurrection earned those who would trust in him not a "guest pass" into His father's house but established them as fellow Sons and daughters for all eternity. Because of this man our status with the Father is not in jeopardy, it is everlasting.
- g. We get to rejoice that a man came who brought lasting peace between God and man through paying the price for our sins. He made him who knew no sin to become sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God.
- h. Can we rejoice together in who this savior is?

- i. Christmas is relevant no matter in which way you need to respond this morning.
- j. Maybe you need to lament
- k. Maybe you need to allow yourself to long for Heaven and long for Jesus.
- l. Or maybe you need to allow yourself to remember and rejoice over who we sing these songs about.
- m. Maybe you need to trust him as your savior. You can do this.