

Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 30, Isaiah 9, Messianic Themes

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This is Dr. Marv Wilson in his teaching on the Prophets. This is session 30, Isaiah 9, Messianic Themes.

Alright, I'm ready to begin.

Let's have a word of prayer, please. Lord, we look to you because we know you have the strength, and we don't. You have the wisdom, and we fall short.

You have the master plan and we put one foot in front of us at a time. Pray that we will have confidence in you, that we have a future with you, that the good work you've begun within us you will continue to perform. Teach us more about what it means to walk by faith, not simply by what we see around us.

Help us to believe. We read of King Ahaz, the king of no faith, where Isaiah encouraged him to believe, even in the midst of dire circumstances. So, give us that ability I pray, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Alright, today is Wednesday and we have on Monday our next, you're reading Isaiah? I hope so. One through twenty-seven.

That will be our next focus together. Read it carefully, specifically any insights into the prophet, his personal life, any repetitious phrases, things like that, particularly focus on. Now, what I'd like to do today is to focus on beginning chapter nine, which is one of our messianic passages.

As we said in a number of lectures back, Isaiah is the most messianic of all the prophets. That's why he is sometimes referred to, at least in terms of the prophecy, as the gospel of Isaiah, because God's good news is announced through the coming of the Messiah. One of those passages is in chapter nine, and I'd like to work our way through the first seven verses first thing today.

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who are 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. Now, when we hear this in its original setting, this region of the Galilee, what is in this case referred to in verse one, not just the Jordan, but the way of the sea.

Now, more typically in Scripture, the way of the sea is the Via Maris, up Route 95, hugging the coast, as the Romans called it. But in this context, and there are a few

other places in the Bible, where the way of the sea refers to Kinneret, also known as Galilee. And along this area there were major trade routes that carried on up to Damascus and so forth.

The whole area is referred to as an area of Gentiles. In Old Testament times, this area tended to be much more open to Gentile corruption. We saw this in Hosea, for example.

The push of Baalism. Baal was the god of the Phoenicians and the Canaanites, but there was a mixture of nations up in the Galilee.

The closer, I think, you got to Jerusalem, the more religious and the pure, religiously speaking, you tended to find. But Galilee tended to be defined as an area which, bordering on these other nations, opened itself up certainly to idolatrous practices. Certainly, see that in 198, that great battle we referred to up here in the northern part of the land, not too far from Dan, at Banias, where the Seleucids, worshipping the god Pan, and the Ptolemies had a clash.

And, of course, the Seleucids controlled from that point on. And so, this beautiful area of water and trees at the foot of Mount Hermon was ideal for pagan worship, nature worship, and so forth. So, this was Galilee of the nations.

The announcement here is that this area had been ravaged, and Jesus was from Nazareth, which was right here in the Jezreel Valley. Jesus grew up in Zebulun, which is mentioned in verse 1 here. Two sons of Jacob had tribal territory up here in the Galilee, where Jesus spent an awful lot of his life.

Jesus and his teaching ministry were up in the Galilee much of the time. Jesus had disciples, where Jesus comes from growing up in Zebulun because his father was deployed apparently up in that region as part of a stonemason team construction worker. And so, he grew up in Zebulun, which was contiguous to the tribe that controlled the whole west side of the Sea of Galilee, which was the tribe of Naphtali.

What tribe are you reminded of whenever you go to a post office in Israel today? Naphtali. Why Naphtali? Because of Jacob's prophecy of his kids. 49th chapter of Genesis.

Thank you. Got one. It says Naphtali will be like a stag or a young deer.

In the United States, we choose the eagle for stamps or the decal of our post office, where things are supposed to fly quickly. I suspect that in Israel, the logo is chosen from one of Jacob's sons who is supposed to run. And so, the male runs, not flies. Okay, that's Naphtali.

He controlled this region immediately to the west of Kinneret. Kinneret. Kinner, Hebrew for harp.

Eleven, twelve miles long, about eight miles wide, the harp, H-A-R-P, shaped lake. A.K.A. Gennesaret or Galilee. But in Old Testament times, it was Kinneret.

And so, the headquarters for Jesus and his disciples was Capernaum. That was in Naphtali. Peter came from Capernaum.

Do you want to visit his house? He was a fisherman right on the sea. All right. So, this is the region where Jesus grew up, where he chose his disciples from, Zebulun, Naphtali, which in the opening line of chapter 9 says, had been in gloom, in distress.

Why? Well, just one quick reference to 2 Kings: during the early part of Isaiah's ministry, 2 Kings 15:29 talks about the destruction of Pol, or Tiglath-Pileser III, as he is called, in this particular region. 2 Kings 15:29 says, in the time of Pekah, king of Israel, this P-E-K-A-H guy you've just been reading about in chapter 7, a couple of chapters earlier, who was king of the northern kingdom, says the king of Assyria came and took a whole bunch of these cities, including Hathor. And he took Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali.

And what did he do with the people? He deported them. Tiglath-Pileser III instituted this deportation policy. First major monarch to institute of conquered people and taking them captive to another region.

So, in Isaiah's own day, Tiglath-Pileser was going to overrun the Galilee. Would he ever come and overrun Isaiah's area? At least Assyria would come and overrun his area. We know that.

Around 701, Sennacherib took all the 46 walled cities of Judah, which is where Micah and Isaiah were spending their time. So, Zebulun and Naphtali, these two tribes that settled in the area, were overrun. It was a time of distress, darkness, and the humbling of this area.

Now, notice the contrast. But in the future, the Lord is going to honor Galilee in this particular area. And, of course, Matthew wanting to make these wonderful connections between the Hebrew Bible and what was happening with the life and ministry and teachings of Jesus.

He dips into this passage, and so in Matthew 4, starting with verse 12, it says, When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum. So, he leaves Zebulun, that's Nazareth, and goes to Capernaum, that's Naphtali.

And then the verse says, Which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah. Land of Zebulun and the 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, those living in the land of the shadow of death; the light has dawned. And then Matthew says, from that time on, Jesus began to preach, Shuv, turn around, go back, repent, for the Malchut Hashemayim, the kingdom of heaven is here.

In some way, Jesus brought in his life, in his teachings, this unique reign of God. This takes charge over sickness, demons, and death. And displayed the power of God.

John had been announcing that, and now Jesus comes to this rather pagan area of Galilee. The New Testament writers make the connection. What was happening in Jesus's life was a way of fulfillment here.

For the people who formerly, in Isaiah's day, saw the dark cloud of the Assyrian army in the region of Galilee, now had seen the light. And, of course, the light here implies the light of the gospel. So, I've talked then about Zebulun, I've talked about Naphtali, we've talked about Capernaum as a major city in Naphtali, we've talked about the Via Maris in this case, a major trade route coming right up through the Galilee.

The light to the nations. In what sense was Jesus this great light, which came to the people living in the land of the shadow of death, to them that light had dawned? Well, here again, we have these two texts in Isaiah, 42.6 is one, where it speaks, in one of our servant's songs, of being laor goyim, a light to the nations, God's servant, to open the eyes of those that are blind, to free captives from prison, to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. This is God's servant.

And while Israel herself had that unique commission to bear the Torah to the world, to be a light to the world, Jesus is now going to be the ultimate expression of that, not in the corporate sense as Israel was, but now more specifically, as the one who was God himself. Now, same language, 49.6, I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. This is God's servant, the eved Yahweh.

I'll talk about that more later. And so, Jesus is the personal one who personifies that light to the nations. In Jesus' ministry, as predicted by Genesis 12, Abraham, through you all the nations are going to be blessed.

And through Jesus, that comes. As Jesus came, not simply to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but had a ministry that exceeded that as he moves into the Samaritans and others, where we anticipate this in Luke's Gospel especially. All right, what else goes on here? He seems to anticipate, as now he's talking messianically, of this one who would multiply or enlarge the nation and increase their joy.

This could either be the nation being enlarged in the age of the Messiah through either Jewish believers or the expanded Abrahamic family through Gentiles who join Jewish believers through the olive tree connection, through the wild branch connection to the olive tree, where the nation becomes enlarged as the people of God become, as God's promise to Abraham says, you will be a great nation, and that nation made up of believing Jews and believing Gentiles. And they rejoice before you as a nation rejoices at the harvest. And then, he moves to some other dimensions of the messianic age.

And he starts with this idea before he comes to these four names of the Messiah. He goes back to the period of the judges. And he says, 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 brute used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for fire. Now this is the prelude, this is the antechamber leading up to this For unto us a child is born passage. The language starts with Gideon, one of the good guys.

Several of the judges were really good. But Gideon was certainly one of the best, who with just a handful of men, 300, though he started out with 32,000, was able to do great exploits through faith according to Hebrews, the book of Hebrews in the New Testament. He defeats the enemy.

He brings peace to the land. All of this is Judges 6 through 8. If you want to read the whole narrative there of the defeat of these Midians that came off the Saudi Arabian desert with their huge camels, walking through the areas of planting that the Hebrews or Israelites had at that time. And so, they were scared by these huge animals, which are described as coming like hordes of locusts.

So, there must have been hundreds and hundreds of these camels coming in to oppress the land at the time of Gideon. But there was a sudden destruction that will be meted out to the enemies of God as he's making a transition here, referring to the suddenness of Midian being able to overcome, as you will notice in chapter 7 of Judges, starting with verse 22. I just read you those verses.

When 300 trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on every other with their swords, and the army fled. And they pursued the Midianites. And Gideon sent messages through the hill country of Ephraim, saying, come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them.

And so forth and so on. And so, he routed the Midianites. And this part of the cyclical kind of history we find in Judges.

As the people cry out to God, God sends us Shophet, a military hero, warrior figure. We call them Judges, but they didn't wear black robes with a gavel in hand. These were people of the fighting aristocracy who were drafted to repel foreign invaders.

And so, Isaiah predicts God will destroy the Assyrian army and their oppressive yoke. And, of course, that did happen in 701. If you're familiar with the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, how 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, somehow, by the power of the angel of the Lord, whatever that means, Herodotus says it was like a plague spread by the rats that went through the camp.

But it was a very sudden defeat. And he moves from this 701 defeat, as they had Jerusalem all surrounded, to move into one who is also going to be referred to as a battle champion, as a warrior. And this is the Messiah figure.

So, just as Assyria would be supernaturally defeated by a miracle, not by the strength of the army of Judah because they did not do it. In fact, Hezekiah was all shaken up and worried because of those 46 walled cities of Judah that Sennacherib had already taken. This was a divine intervention by God to overcome that Assyrian threat.

He then transitions into this: what God does for Judah will be true through the coming of a Messiah who will lead to a period of universal peace through the coming of this ruler through the line of David, which verse 7 says, because He's going to sit on David's throne. Now, he brings this idea of peace in by referring to the accouterments of warfare. Bloody garments will be destroyed.

The warrior's boot also. And the equipment of soldiers was consumed by fire. The implication itself here is war will cease.

It takes us back to chapter 2. Swords beaten to plowshares, spears into pruning hooks, associated with the Messiah's coming. Of course, not His first coming where He inaugurates this, but here I think He's hinting at an earthly peace which will not come until all the enemies of the God of Israel are overcome and banished. The final overthrow of all opposing powers.

So, what happened in Sennacherib's case is simply a foretaste of a greater victory to come through this final overthrow of all opposing powers. And this comes through the birth of this child who is given four names. Who is going to have an everlasting reign and a reign which will know war because of what verse 5 indicates.

Now, if you look at the end of the Bible, Revelation, of course, makes a lot of allusions to passages in the Old Testament. The one place in the Bible which refers to the great and final climactic battle of history is Revelation 16.16 where it talks about

Har Megiddo, the mound or the hill of Megiddo. As many of you know, in this word Armageddon, you see the word Megiddo.

And there is Megiddo, which was a little past as the armies historically all the way back to 1400 B.C., when King Thutmose brought armies up Route 95 and then came inland to Megiddo. And through that narrow pass, because of the Carmel Range, you had to go inward. It was a place of great battles, clashings, and ambushes.

As late as 1917, we had one there at the close of World War I. So, King Josiah met his death at Megiddo, receiving some arrows as he was out there in his chariot trying to stop Pharaoh Necho from coming up Route 95, heading up to aid the crippled Babylonian army up at Carchemish. And that became one of the great climactic battles of history at Carchemish because never again is Assyria a superpower. Fades out of existence because Egypt was not able to get there in time to assist the largely crippled Assyrian armies, and Babylon now takes over the driver's seat.

So, Megiddo was this place of conflict. And so, it's used in the book of Revelation to represent that final battle, the mother of all battles. It provided an imagery representing then this final clash of good and evil.

It's interesting how you take one little verse in the scriptures, the only place where the word Armageddon is mentioned in the Bible, and this has an influence upon our unabridged English dictionaries. If you look the word Armageddon up in an English dictionary, it represents obviously that final clash between good and evil, that final battle where good will triumph. In this particular case, God triumphs.

And this is in connection with God's final establishment of his kingdom upon this earth as all foreign forces opposing him are overcome. And while scholars greatly debate how the expression Armageddon is to be understood, how literally, how symbolically, it becomes a code word that enters the English language. I remember reading in the New York Times that if we don't control this particular nation in the Middle East, Armageddon will be on our doorstep.

Well, to read the New York Times, you have to understand what Armageddon means. It's a loan word in the English language. Who, what is Armageddon? To know biblical history.

So, the implication here is that through the Messiah and the culmination of Messiah's reign, particularly when he returns to this earth, this climactic battle of history depicted here, associated with this ultimate time when David's greater son reigns and rules on this earth with justice and righteousness for this time forth and forevermore. How is this accomplished? The zeal of the Lord will accomplish this. Now, I want to talk a little bit about the names of the, or titles of the Messiah here.

Who is the one who is going to be born? Interestingly, the Hebrew language here uses the perfect tense. For unto us a son has been born. It's happened.

This is what scholars refer to as the so-called prophetic perfect. That is, there are places in the Hebrew Bible, hundreds actually, of places in the prophets where an event which is actually future to the prophet himself, he views it as having already happened. It's like in 1 John.

John sometimes uses what we call the epistolary aorist. While we might read it in our English Bibles as I am writing to you, the Greek literally says I have written to you, putting himself in the position of the reader. So, this child, it's a fait accompli in the mind of the one who is writing, but in our English translations, for unto us a child is born.

It hasn't happened yet in Isaiah's day, but it is projected as the so-called perfect, referring to completed action. In this case, not in relation to the past, but in this, in the mind of the writer. The names or titles here describe the character of this Messiah.

King James kind of caused some confusion by readers. This being the 400th anniversary of the King James, we might think there were five titles. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

You got five. Most of your modern translations of the Bible have two words for each title and a total of four titles, which I do think is preferable, looking at the structure of the poetry. Now, the first title is, he will be called Wonderful Counselor.

You'll see in a footnote here an alternative reading, or Wonderful, Counselor. I remember some of those meetings in the NIV where people would debate, and again, that was a minority vote, and everybody in the translation committees that worked on the NIV, I would say almost to a person, were reared on the King James version. I mean, it was the version prior to the NIV.

The New Testament of the NIV was finished about 1970, and the Old Testament, 1978. The RSV began coming out in the 1950s, but it's interesting, in those days, the RSV was not widely and immediately endorsed by the evangelical community. I mean, there were a number of theological issues that were of concern, and so there was a tendency, if you're going to memorize scripture, you stick to the King James translation.

The expression here is literally Wonder of a Counselor. That is, somebody wonderful in counsel. The word behind wonderful is this word *pele*, who a decade or two ago was the world's greatest soccer player, a guy from South America, not to be confused.

This pele is used of God in his acts. For instance, crossing the Reed Sea, Israel comes out of Egypt, Exodus 15:11. That experience is described as a pele.

Or the plagues in Egypt, and the Psalms are described in that sense of wondrous. And by wondrous, we're referring to what is miraculous, usually. These signs and wonders.

And so, the indication is something supernatural. He is wonderful in counsel and renowned for his great wisdom. Whether this refers to Jesus and the wisdom tradition associated with Jesus, his ability to teach by use of parables or other means, Sermon on the Mount, or simply the fact that the New Testament says that people were astonished at his words and his doctrine, or that he could say it was said of old, and he would tell them what it was, but I say unto you, this one would be wondrous in counsel, beyond the ordinary.

The second title, Mighty God, has been greatly debated. It's El Gibor in the Hebrew. It could be translated as a great hero.

The word El can refer to God, as well as one who is great. The more traditional understanding of this is that it is a divine title for the Messiah, who in the Christian tradition obviously is divine; El is used for God; it's a shortened form of God, which you're already familiar with. Michael, Joel, Daniel, Ezekiel, Bethel, so it means God.

The more important word here to describe him is the Gibor, which connects us to the earlier part of this chapter. A Gibor is a mighty one, a champion on the field of battle, a hero. What does Gabriel's name mean? Hero or champion, or mighty one of God.

Gabriel. Where does Gabriel show up? In the Gospels. Okay.

The nice Hebrew name for that angel. The mighty one of God, the hero of God, the champion of God. Giving an announcement of the one who would be El Gibor, if you will, in his life.

So, this particular messianic title, this mighty hero, the strong or mighty one, or military leader, connects us with this idea: when he comes, all enemies are going to be abolished. Now, one of the themes we've been reading in the prophets again and again and again is when the Messiah comes, when the day of the Lord, the Yom Yahweh, arrives, it will mean the destruction of all enemies, judgment upon those who oppose God, the vindication, the salvation of God's people. So, this divine hero Christology, if you will, this battle champion picture, the one who will secure the final victory.

His divine power as a warrior is stressed. A third title, the everlasting father, literally father of eternity, stresses the fact that this one will be enduring. Kings come and go, they have term limits.

Father in the Bible, like son, can refer to a category of something. Abraham is Ben 75, when he begins his ministry. He's the son of 75 years, which in our English translation of the Bible, it's simply one who is 75 years of age.

Ben can refer as in bar, bar mitzvah, son of commandment. What it really means is not a literal son, but one who is described or takes on the category of embracing the commandments of Judaism. Barnabas, Barnabas, that's Aramaic for son of encouragement.

What's Barnabas mean? Not literally a son of encouragement, he's an encourager. What 2 Corinthians 1:3, God is father of mercies. Not literally father of mercies, but rather one who has the attribute of mercy, the character, a characteristic of being merciful.

So, whether it's son or father, it's a typical Semitic way of expressing, as James does, God is the father of lights. So, this one would have this enduring quality. He would be everlasting, enduring in his nature.

The Messiah, indeed, is eternal in his being. If we link this to the prologue to John's gospel, he is the eternal law gospel. We take all of these things and put them together.

And he is the one who gives eternal life to others. So, the eternity or enduring nature is certainly stressed here. Reminding us of the Ehey-asher-Ehey.

I am, or I will be who I will be. Or, as Revelation puts it, the one who was, the one who is, and the one who is to come. So, you have that language.

Or as Moffat in his French translation translates, Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh, Yahweh, as Le Eternal, the Eternal One. Alright, this is the son of David, who will be compassionate, a protector, and an enduring one, who will also be associated with bringing peace. And so this idea of Sar-Shalom.

The emphasis here is upon Shalom, which means his rule will bring whatever Shalom means, which is wholeness, perfection, harmony, friendship, and soundness of condition. When two Israelis talk to each other today on the street, Ma Shalom-Cha, how are you doing? Literally, how is your soundness today? How is your health? Shalom, the Hebrew verb, means to have it all together. In that sense, Shalom means perfect, complete, entire.

And so, when the Messiah comes, everything that's out of whack is going to be mended. It's what the book of Acts refers to as the time of restoration, of bringing things into the right relationships and right conditions. And the sound condition of righteousness on earth, which is part of this Shalom, soundness, completion, absolute perfection, safe and sound, tranquility, both externally and internally, is what Messiah would bring in relationship between man and God and human beings to each other.

So, Shalom would be personified. The rabbis sometimes use the word Shalom as a synonym for the Almighty. So, He is described here sitting upon the throne of David.

David's name is the first name mentioned in the New Testament in Matthew 1. And how does Luke, in his prologue to his Gospel, pick up on this same theme, doesn't he? Announcing this one, the annunciation of the G-bor El, or El G-bor. It's Gabriel in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel, was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. Oh, there's Evelyn again.

It mentions the house of David. And this champion, this great one, says to her, Don't be afraid, Mary, which, according to Rabbi Yossi Lipsker, is the most frequently found commandment in the Bible. Fear not.

You will have a son. He will be great. The Lord will give to him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom.

There will be no end. Then, of course, she really flipped out at that. How can this be? I'm not even married.

So, that was a double-take right there. Big time. But it's all tied in with the same language here.

How has this happened? Well, what does verse 7 end with? The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. So, the language here, some of it more directly applies to the first coming of the Messiah. Some of it is more directly to the second coming.

Most of the names relate to both because there is an inaugurated eschatology. There are these already, but not yet. There are these arabons.

These partial experiences will be cashed in on, if you will, in far greater measure at the end. So, these are the titles of the Messiah that are found in chapter 9.

Next time, I'll talk about chapter 7, which is our virgin birth passage drawn on by Matthew chapter 1. And that will be our focus on Friday.

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