**Isaiah 9:1-7 Nevertheless the gloom *will* not *be* upon her who *is* distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed *her, By* the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. 2The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. 3You have multiplied the nation *And* increased its joy; They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As *men* rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian. 5For every warrior’s sandal from the noisy battle, and garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning *and* fuel of fire. 6For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.**

 We’ve returned to Isaiah this evening. We are in Isaiah 9. Had we read Isaiah 8, we’d have read about the coming invasion of Israel by Assyria and the impact that the Assyrians will have on all the countries, including Judah. Isaiah 8 is a dark and forbidding prophecy that leaves those who hear it devastated and distraught. The times look very hopeless and foreboding. The people have been warned and warned and now the time has arrived when God will use the Assyrians to execute judgement upon the rebellious Israelites. Isaiah tells of the people consulting mediums and fortune tellers, but never looking to the one true God that holds their future in His hand. They curse their kings and curse their God and look upward and shake their fist at the heavens… and then Isaiah 8:22 says Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness.

 This is the place that Isaiah 9 picks up. Isaiah 9 is not a prophecy of doom, but a prophecy of the Greatest Hope the world could ever hope for… It is a prophecy of Jesus! Verse 1 says “Nevertheless the gloom *will* not *be* upon her who *is* distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles.” Tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali suffered greatly as they were close to the northern border. Invasions took this path. They were often the first to be attacked and bear the brunt of war.

 Verse 2 The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. In Matthew 4, Jesus has just been tempted and banished Satan. In Matthew 4:12-16 we read, “Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death
Light has dawned.” Christ came as the Light to those who had suffered the most! The Assyrians started the gloom here and Jesus brings the Light – a Light in Galilee. Understand that Jesus is starting His earthly ministry there.

Verse 3 You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy; They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. The joy of the harvest has the idea of peace after conflict or joy found in celebrating a worship feast. It is a truly joyful time when the people are glad, with a clear heart. Philippians 3:1 uses similar words to refer to rejoicing in the Lord, Romans 14:17 uses similar words to express the joy of the Holy Ghost. The understanding here is there will be peace in the Lord through this Light that has come to Galilee.

Verse 4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian.Jesus will break the yoke of people’s burden – while the people of the day may have thought of the burdens that their conquerors had placed on them, Jesus was referring to the yoke of sin. We cast off the yoke of sin when we believe in Jesus. **As in the day of Midian** – this is a referral to the story of Gideon and his 300 men. It’s meant to communicate that the victory will be from God – not military – It will be a Spiritual victory in Christ. And that’s exactly what His Victory on the Cross was!

Verse 5 For every warrior’s sandal from the noisy battle, and garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning *and* fuel of fire. When Jesus establishes His Kingdom, the victory will be complete and decisive. Weapons of war, garments soaked with blood, heavy boots on the soldiers feet will be cast into the fire and burned up. There will be no more use for things of war when the Prince of Peace establishes His Rule.

Verse 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 28:29 says - This also comes from the Lord of hosts, Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance. John 6:68 Peter calls Jesus our ultimate counselor when it says - But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” John 1:1 reminds us that Jesus is our Mighty God – they are One in the Same - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jesus was announced as the bringer of peace to the earth by the angels in Luke 2:10-14 - When the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

Verse 7 Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isaiah let’s us know the answer to the question asked by John the Baptist and so many down through time. Matthew 11:2-3 And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” Jesus confirmed it then and He confirms it still today – as the church, that started with 11 disciples standing on a hill and looking up, as He ascended, continues to grow all these years later. Disciples make disciples and, when the final times come, there will be no end of His Kingdom. Satan will be cast into Hell and those who stirred up nation against nation will be no more

The Old Testament affirms the authenticity and authority of Christ through and through. Won’t it be a glorious day when we all kneel in the presence of Jesus knowing that all the tongues that refused to confess have now confessed and all the knees that refused to bow have bowed? Though there are many things we don’t understand, we live by Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. We don’t know when or how… but we do know Who… we will focus our faith on following Him in all we do.