

Immanuel: God is With Us p3

Trust Him for Your Redemption

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Bible Text: Isaiah 8:11-9:4

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Let's go to Isaiah. We'll look at chapter 8 and part of chapter 9, or rather the end of chapter 8 and part of chapter 9. Tiny Judah, the southern kingdom, is what you would consider the remnant, the true church perhaps, yet she herself has backslidden, fallen into the fear of man and into unbelief. At this point in history, the northern kingdom which is the apostate Israel who had long since thrown off any loyalty to God and have maybe a thin and cosmetic religious observance but their hearts are far from God, they are threatening tiny Judah and they have formed an alliance with the mighty Aramaeans and together they are threatening to destroy little Judah and put a puppet king on the throne there. So in fear, king Ahaz, king of Judah, instead of trusting God, looks to mighty Assyria and says, "Ah-ha, I know how I will protect us. I'll form an alliance with pagan, worldly Assyria and I'll trust her strength and she will protect me from the northern kingdom, the apostate Israel and from the Aramaeans." Well, sure enough, Assyria did march into the northern kingdom and marched into the Aramaean's kingdom and destroyed both of them and king Ahaz and all of Judah were congratulating themselves saying, "Ah-ha, it worked. It was successful. We did the right thing." They were just running around high-fiving each other all over Judah. "Look how well we made this thing work out." But then mighty Assyria in the figurative language the Scripture gives us, the mighty Euphrates river flows down the middle of Assyria. The problem about the mighty Euphrates is that if you put your trust in it, it may swallow you up too. It's an untamed river. The banks are shallow and when it floods it will engulf everything around it. So Judah, in effect, camped on the banks of the Euphrates instead of trusting in God. So Assyria, after destroying the northern kingdom and the Aramaeans, turns and marches and destroys tiny Judah and brings them almost to annihilation. The Bible says Assyria will flow into tiny Judah and the water will come up even to the neck but it will stop right there.

Now as we continue in the historical narrative, we come to chapter 8, verse 11, and we see the prophet wanting to describe in some extensive detail the unbelief and the backslidden condition of little Judah and he says in verse 11 of Isaiah 8, now, I'll go down through verse 22 and then we'll pick it up in chapter 9 in just a moment. So it's going to take about two hours and you'll just have to eat burnt roast today.

11 For thus the LORD spoke to me with mighty power and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying, 12 "You are not to say, 'It is a conspiracy!' In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it."

Wow, look at verse 13,

13 "It is the LORD of hosts whom you should fear and regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread. 14 Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught." 16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. 17 And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him. 18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. 19 When they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter," should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

Wow, what an expression. Verse 21,

21 They will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward. 22 Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be driven away into darkness.

So, I. We'll only have two points. Let me give you the outline of where we've been right quick, first of all. We're talking about Immanuel, God with us, because as God was trying to encourage Judah, even warn Judah, "Don't look to the world. Don't look to Assyria, trust me," he kept giving signs and the most prominent sign was a little boy, a little baby boy born to the prophet's young wife and his name was Maher-shalal-hash-baz which means "swiftly God is going to plunder your enemies and quickly you're going to spoil all your enemies." So in other words, God is going to take care of everything, don't lose your trust in God. And so this little Maher-shalal-hash-baz was considered the Immanuel child. He was the child that was the sign that God is with us. Of course, we know that is a prophetic picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the true Immanuel child, the ultimate fulfillment of that prophecy.

So first God told them, "I am with you. God is with you. You can trust me in your crisis." They were in this crisis, the Aramaeans, the northern kingdom, were besieging them. Then secondly, they were beginning to fail and God came in and said, "Here's what's

going to happen, Assyria is now going to turn on you and you're going to be in a terrible situation because you failed but I am God with you. I am Immanuel, trust me when you fail." Now, we come to the third installment: Immanuel, I'm God with you, trust me for your redemption. Trust me for your redemption. In verse 11 of our text here, God is speaking to Isaiah and God is simply saying to Isaiah, "Isaiah, you keep your faith. At least there must be a few in Judah who do not resort to worldly wisdom and worldly strength to help you. You stay strong. Don't say like these people in verse 12 that it's a conspiracy." In other words, they were all worried about the conspiring together of the northern kingdom and the Aramaeans to destroy them and God said, "Quit putting your focus on some so-called conspiracy out there. Am I not a sovereign God? Those kingdoms who are threatening you can do no more than I allow them to do so don't get all caught up in thinking that there is a conspiracy and after that conspiracy, you're worried about the Assyrian threat." So all of Judah beginning with king Ahaz of Judah is full of fear and having no trust in the Lord, they had fear of everything else.

You need to think on that just a moment. When you lose your faith in God, you begin to grow fearful of all kinds of other stuff. When you don't trust the Lord, fear will assault you from every side. Just a couple of quick words, let's make a parallel to our times. "Well Pastor, how do I fight this fear of what's this person going to do and what will happen to me if I stand on the word, won't these people reject me and we won't fit in anymore and we'll lose our friends or my business may struggle or 1,001 things. All this fear, Pastor, how can I deal with this fear?" It's very simple: Deuteronomy 4:10, "Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn,'" notice, "'learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'" What he's saying is they are going to have to hear the word of God. They are going to have to hear the word preached and the word proclaimed and that combats, it knocks down, it begins to defeat the fear of man and the fear of the world. Look, what he's saying is, "You better learn to fear God. That's who you ought to fear. Respect God, that's who you ought to respect. Look to God, that's who you ought to look to." "Pastor, how are we going to get there?" The preaching of the word of God is probably the primary means of you having the old fear of man and the fear of the flesh and the fear of the world dislodged out of your soul and the true fear of God planted in your soul. That's why I've often said I'd drive two hours one way to put my children and my family under the clear, strong preaching of the word of God.

Now you listen to me, some of you out there, you think that if you just have you a discipleship group and a Bible study group and a woman's Bible study prayer fellowship or something on Thursday at that might be okay, by the way, it's only okay if you've got time after you fulfill your commitment to your local church. Can I get an amen right there, church? God didn't give you, you've got a wife. You've married a wife when you join the church. You married a spouse. You made a ministry commitment when you joined the local church. Other things can be okay but that's secondary. You can do all those other things and I'm not saying that those are bad and those aren't helpful but God has not abandoned his ordained means for his people to be strengthened and sanctified and matured in the faith and he's not going to. He didn't have a plan B. I had to learn that

as a young man in the ministry. I was going to do this and I was going to do that and I was going to start these groups and I was going to start those groups. Those aren't necessarily bad and then God got me one day and he said, "Will you pour yourself into a local church? That's my plan. That's my ordained means of building my kingdom and disciplining my people and get out of your pride about doing all of this stuff you're going to do." Because listen, when I minister God's way by God's means, then he gets the credit. If I start my own groups separate from God's way and God's means, then I get some credit. But this is God's way, so God told through Moses to the people, "Look, give the people the word of God and that will strengthen them in their faith."

Look at verse 13 of our text, "It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread." In other words, they're fearing the Assyrians, they are fearing the Aramaeans, they are fearing the northern kingdom and he said, "You need to get a grasp of God who is holy." You see, they thought the Assyrians were so mighty and God said, "Have you looked at me lately?" That grieves me as a pastor because the only way people are going to know who this God is, is he's going to have to be preached correctly and thoroughly. When's the last time you heard any preacher give you any aspect of description of the holiness of God and how we ought to be in awe of him and tremble before him? That's essential so that when the world rises up and says, "Wow, look how strong we are!" you can think, "Well, wait a minute now, I've heard about somebody else. His name is God and he's holy. He's transcendent in holiness. He's the greatest of all." So if they would just think on God's holiness, they would see his worthiness and they need to look to him. If they would just get the fear of God, that means an ultimate respect and a humility before him, not an ultimate respect for Assyria, an ultimate respect for God, then they would know of his omnipotence and how strong he is. They shouldn't be dreading, that's another word he lists there, dreading the Assyrians and the Aramaeans of the northern kingdom, they should dread the holy God who will bring just retribution on all sin and unfaithfulness. One glimpse of the one true God and we would not give the powers of this world even the slightest attention.

Verse 14, if verse 13 is true, "Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel," now he includes the remnant Judah with the apostate northern kingdom Israel, "But both of them now see God as a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over." Wow, you know, one thing about God, are you listening to me, I don't care who it is, let the atheist rage, let the liberal progressives act like there is no God, there are no moral absolutes, let them act like God has not revealed truth about what marriage is and truth about what morality is and truth about what truth is. Let them act like it's not there, let them keep denying it but I'm going to tell you what: God is an unavoidable rock in your path. You can either get to that rock and bow before it and honor it or you can strike it, as he says here, and it becomes a rock you stumble over. In other words, it begins to hurt you when you don't pay attention to it or to him. He's the rock we must deal with.

So Israel, ancient Israel was meant to be God's light and God's truth to the world but she became dark in sin and in unbelief and notice what it says in verse 15, it says, "Many will stumble over them." He's talking about over Israel. "Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught." So Israel instead of showing the nations of the

world God and God's light and God's truth, she caused those who dwelled in outer darkness to stumble even more profoundly and Israel caused those who were trapped in error, doctrinal error, to be more securely held in its vice.

Then verse 16, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Notice that phrase as Judah is backslidden, the northern kingdom is apostate, the Aramaeans and the Assyrians and all of the nations of the world are in darkness and God is saying, "I'm going to have a few disciples who still hold to the word of God." "Bind of the testimony," that means seal it up and hold it secure. Keep the word of God. Listen church, God will always have a faithful remnant. He will always have a faithful remnant.

Look at verse 17, Isaiah speaking himself says, "I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him." They are looking to Assyria. They are looking to the world. I'm going to look to God. Then he says in verse 18, "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion." So Isaiah says, "Despite the widespread unbelief that is covering the land today, I'm going to seek the Lord and trust the Lord even if it's only me and a small minority who are still hanging on to the word of God."

Well, you and I live in a day of a lot of religiosity and a lot of what I call churchianity which is not true Christianity but it's not a true seeking of the Lord that we're seeing out there. It's an interesting phrase here that God says "I hide my face from them." Now wait a minute, a lot of them were using the Bible as they had it, a lot of them were using the name of Jehovah, a lot of them were still going through the rituals and the motions of the festivals and the ordinances God gave Israel but the prophet said, "Yeah, you're going through all of that but you don't understand, God has turned his face from you. God's blessing is not on you or for you." Isaiah said, "I've got my kids," remember his first boy's name, Shear-jashub. Shear-jashub was God's testimony to the nation. Oh, Isaiah would just take his kids all over Judah. He'd just take his kids around and say, "See my boys? Here's Shear-jashub, that is a remnant will remain. Here's Maher-shalal-hash-baz, that means swiftly our enemies will be plundered and swiftly we'll spoil our enemies. Can you see what God saying?" So Isaiah says, "I have gained encouragement with the word of God that came to me for the people through my little boys in their very names."

Now look at verse 19, "When they say to you," now here's what the nation has come to, here's the darkness they've fallen into, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and who mutter." So having rejected the only real source of confidence and security, they turn to the limited and supposedly less demanding idols. Don't people often do that? "Well, God's standards are a little too high for me, God's way is a little too difficult. There are some other things we can look to for guidance." That's basically what they're saying. It was common 20+ years ago, you may remember the phrase, "the new age movement." Do you remember that? The new age movement? It's just kind of a conglomeration of old ancient pagan philosophies and religions and a lot of professors were teaching it and a lot of "thinkers" and progressives were saying, "We ought to embrace these new ideas," and all the New Age movement was just old paganism. That's

all it was, just old pagan superstitions they dressed up in modern garb and modern terminology and that's kind of what's happening in Israel. They don't look to God and to God's word but they are fearful and they want some kind of hope so they are looking to mediums and to spiritists.

Now, look what happens in verses 20 and 21, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn." That's an incredible phrase. In other words he's saying, "They're looking for preachers and they're looking for teaching that is not according to this testimony." That is, they are not following the word of God. They may be using it but they're not following it. You do understand there's a great difference between using the Bible and preaching the word? You can use the Bible and promote communism if you want to and that's what he's saying, "They're not really preaching to you and teaching you according to this testimony." And then he says something interesting, "It's because they have no dawn." There hasn't been the dawning of spiritual regeneration in their hearts. There hasn't been the dawning of the new birth. There hasn't been genuine conversion so they don't follow the word of God. Here's what you find, brothers and sisters, when someone is genuinely converted, when they have had the dawning of a spiritual awakening, they have an insatiable, undeniable drawing to the truth of the word of God. They may wander here, they may wander there. They may dabble in this, they may dabble in that but God has done something in their heart and God has initiated a new spiritual hunger that's drawn to the word of God. By the way, this Spirit that reverts the soul is the Spirit that wrote the book and when that Spirit lives in you, that Spirit longs for what's written here and those are the people that say, "Pastor, it doesn't matter what it costs, it doesn't matter what it takes, give us the word of God." He says, "They don't love the word of God, they don't look to the word of God because they haven't experienced the dawn." It's an interesting way the prophet puts that. Isn't it amazing how what 7 or 800 years before Jesus was even born, this is just as applicable to the church today as anything you can imagine? We preach the Gospel so that the Spirit of God might break men's hearts and bring them to conviction of sin and lostness that they might have the dawning of the new birth and turn in repentance toward God in faith in Jesus Christ. That's what this is talking about.

Well, they weren't doing that. They were not turning to the law and to the testimony so, verses 21 and 22, "They will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged." Now, what's going to happen? They are going to "curse their king," he says at the end of verse 21 and their God "as they face upward." So they have rejected God and it's beginning to take its toll on them and on their land. By the way, that's what we're seeing in America today. The stock market's been up, of course, it was down this past week but it's been up a lot in the last year and people think, "Feeling good. Man, things are looking good." I'm going to tell you, there's some great moral failures. The foundation stones of what makes a great society have been fractured and it's just a matter of time before there's going to be a great big crash in this country. We have forsaken the truths. Look, all of Western civilization and specifically the United States of America have built their law system on the revealed absolutes of the Judeo-Christian tradition, that means the Scriptures and now today, we've become so smart we can throw all that away and we can turn to men. I think we're beginning to see

what it's like when you look to elite men to be your Savior. And when that happens, it's going to happen just like it did in ancient Israel, "They will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and when they are hungry, they will be enraged." Everybody starts getting mad because it's not working. They're not doing well. The economy is crumbling. Their children are in rebellion. Then they just "curse their king," and they say, "We've got to get a new king." No, you need to find, look, America doesn't need, we don't need a Republican president, we don't need a Democratic president. we don't need an independent president, we need to find God. There was a day when we didn't look to the government as our surrogate husband or as our surrogate parent. There was a day when Americans got on their face and said, "O God, we're independent and free people. We look to ourselves and to our God." But we've made a Savior out of the federal government. You'd better understand something: everything you depend upon controls you, has final authority over you. Well, that's what they did and then they would curse God. I wrote a little thing down,

"When things are fine, we tend to leave God behind.
When things grow sour, we sort of look to worldly power.
And when things are the worse, well, it's God we curse.
God, why did you let this happen?"

Verse 22, in the midst of their anguish because they had forsaken God, what did they do? "Then they will look to the earth." Well, heavens to Betsy, that's where they've been looking and look where it got them. But they're so darkened and so blinded, they'd just look further to the source of their present terrible condition. "Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be driven away into darkness." So as they are fading in darkness and gloom, they look to the world and they find even more darkness and gloom. How sad when men need a ray of hope, they look to a sin-darkened world and not to God.

Chapter 9, their redemption. I'll read verses 1 through 5.

1 But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them. 3 You shall multiply the nation, You shall increase their gladness; They will be glad in Your presence As with the gladness of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4 For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. 5 For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.

Now, just for reference, just the first part of verse 6,

6 For a child will be born to us.

So the prophet continues to prophesy and he turns to this glorious hope for redemption God's bringing to these rebellious, backslidden, unfaithful people whose sin has brought them into the most ruinous condition. Under redemption, let's notice A in the outline, their illumination. An illumination is coming. In verse 1, "There will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious." There is going to be a light that dawns. You know, when every human attempt to bring light has failed, that's when God brings light. He says, "There is going to be no more gloom for those who are in anguish." These helpless, hopeless, pitiful creatures are going to be offered a glorious hope." Now look, not because God must do it. When God looked at backslidden Judah, God did not say, "I have to do this." No, God said, "I'm just the kind of God that because of what I am, I choose to bring favor to the most unworthy." That's what he's saying. It's not here because Judah in her wisdom found "the key" to force God to save them. No, it's all merely out of God's grace. Listen, judgment is never the end for God's people. God never permits a humiliation for which there is not a corresponding exultation planned. "Pastor, I've gotten lazy. I've gotten cold. I've gotten indifferent and I've gotten myself in a mess. I'm hurting. I'm broken." God is humbling you but God never brings humiliation if you're his that he hadn't already gotten planned an exultation for you. Is that not good news? We do carry a cross in this world but after every cross, there's a resurrection.

So these people were in the most humbled state and they deserved it and God said, "I'm going to birth a glorious light upon them." He says there interestingly, the last phrase in verse 9, he says there is going to be a geographic region that's going to be unusually blessed. By the way, he mentions the tribe of Zebulun and the tribe of Naphtali and they were the tribes that had a responsibility over the region called Galilee. It's the region of the country that bordered the Gentile world and that's why it's called Galilee of the Gentiles. And these two tribes in this region suffered most severely under Tiglath Pileser when he marched in with the Assyrian army and destroyed Judah and so he says, "Those who are crushed the most in their very region, I'm going to do something even on the other side of the glory, even in Galilee of the Gentiles." Let's see, Jesus spent most all of his ministry in Galilee of the Gentiles. Jesus just appeared as the old song says, he was the Stranger of Galilee. He didn't come from a notable family and he didn't come from the prestige of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, he's just this guy from a rural region, the lonely places. Those who were despised, he ministered there. He was the Stranger of Galilee. This is about Jesus.

Look at verse 2, "The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them." What he's saying is that this has an idea of suddenness and isn't that the way it was? Things were just going along in dark Israel 2,000 years ago and as the people groped under the burden and the crushing weight of their sin and as transgressors of God's law, the religious authorities, all they could give them was more law. You think you're condemned? You think you're beaten down? You think you are bearing the weight of guilt? The Pharisees and the teachers of Israel would say, "Well, here's some more guilt. Here's some more law. Here's some more burden."

Under that weight of darkness, suddenly God brought a light. Jesus appeared and began teaching in that whole region of Galilee and slowly, slowly, slowly, one by one, individuals, not the elitists of the theological centers in Jerusalem but the common folks, the despised, the lowly, across the region of Galilee, even the borders around the Gentile lands, people start seeing God's light and God's hope in Jesus Christ. A light burst upon them. Notice, they didn't come to the light, notice the light came to them. He came to earth not because the earth sought him, he came to earth because the earth needed him. There is an illumination that came and this is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.

Now, look at verse 4, if you will, notice an emancipation is coming. Look at verse 4, "For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders." Now, he says "you" so he's talking about a person here. There is a light that is contained in a person, the person is the light. The person is the hope. The person is the salvation and one of the things he's going to do is break the yoke of their burden. Now, the yoke does speak of Assyria as a geographic power of the day but more fully it speaks of the law, the yoke. You know, they put that yoke on those oxen and the oxen would be locked into the burden of pulling that cart or that sled and working all day long. He said, "My people have the yoke of the law on them." He said, "But I'm sending a light of hope that's going to break that yoke off of them." We're all broken under the law. We're crushed and we're bowed down. It's overbearing and it's a damning yoke of slavery to the law and the law is the expression of God's holy character so the law is good but yet to us it's our enemy in the sense that it breaks us and crushes us and can't save us. The yoke of the law pushed our faces in the darkness of gloom and in anguish.

You may remember when the Gospel was being preached, a lot of Jews believed in the Gospel but they were struggling with hanging onto the law too. They wanted to add some works and some religion and some legalism to Jesus and so when the Gospel went to the Gentiles, the non-Jews, some of the Jewish believers, tried to force on the Gentiles, "Hey, you've got to hold onto some of our Jewish law also." But some godly men in the church rose up and said, "Now wait a minute, you don't add even the law of Moses to Jesus. Don't put that yoke and burden back on them." Acts 15:10, Peter speaking to this very issue says, "A yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear." Nobody can bear this yoke.

Now notice right here, "Pastor, what have you got?" I've got a rod. I've heard some folks haven't been listening well during my sermon. Verse 4, it speaks of the rod of their oppressor, he's going to break not only the yoke but the rod of our oppressor. Now, this did speak geographically and historically of Assyria and even Egypt but yes more, it speaks of the guilt, the condemnation and the burden of sin. What a picture. Here you are bowed down and crushed down and Satan comes over to you. All you've heard is law. "You're guilty! You're condemned!" That's what Satan does. You're beaten down. Your face is buried in the mud. "You're doomed! You're damned! You're without hope!" And then some preacher comes up and says, "If you want to get saved, do these works." You see, you don't understand, my face is already in the mud and Satan is beating me to death. I can't even lift up my head because every time I do, "You're going to hell!" That's the picture this verse pictures. I hope I'm not stretching some of your dignity this morning.

Notice what he says, "You, the light one, you, the hope one, will come and you will break the yoke." Then further in verse 4, "The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian." What does that mean? Well, the battle of Midian was the battle that Gideon fought. Gideon had 32,000 soldiers and God said, "Gideon, that's not going to work. We're going to trim this thing down and we're going to get you down to 300 soldiers." Wait a minute, that's weakness. That's tiny. That won't work. Yeah, and Jesus came in weakness. He was tiny too. So God has given us a great figure here, the great Victor, the one that's going to break the oppressor. He's going to come as a weak one, like Gideon looked at the battle of Midian. A tiny one. And while Satan is condemning you, Jesus walks up. Here's what he does to Satan, "They're no longer guilty. They're no longer oppressed. They are no longer condemned. They are no longer hopeless. They are no longer going to hell. But Satan you are." That's what that verse pictures. Wow. You say, "Pastor, you've never done anything like that." Well, I'm getting to a text that talks about an archer shooting his bows so get ready.

Look, that's exactly what this text pictures. Jesus took...look, the Bible says, let me give you the verse, the Bible says, "He will smite the nations with the rod of his mouth." Who do all the pagan nations always represent? They represent Satan's kingdom and the kingdom of the pagan nations represent Satan so he says, "Personally and individually, I'm going to destroy Satan who is oppressing you and causing your guilt and telling you you're condemned and telling you you're hopeless." What's the point? You don't look to yourself, you don't look to philosophy, you don't look to religion, you don't look to a priest or a pope or a pastor, you don't look to doing religious good works or morals or the sacraments, you look to Jesus and he frees you from the oppressor. He is the light that was coming. He is the hope that was coming.

Well, quickly let's go to celebration. Let me put my rod up. Celebration and this happens to us individually when we're converted but it's going to happen nationally for Israel and it's going to happen collectively for all the glorified church one day. Here we see it in verse 3, "You shall multiply the nation." That means as the nation was dwindling in unbelief and in oppression, especially from Assyria, there's one coming that's going to multiply God's people and hasn't that happened through the Gospel? "You shall increase their gladness." They are going from gloom and despair and anguish to gladness in their Savior. "They will be glad in Your presence." In other words, no longer will they be glad because they were wise and trusted Assyria. No, they have repented of that. Now they're glad in God. Are you glad in God? Does God make you glad? When you read his word, when you understand the truths of the doctrines of salvation, does something in you say, "Well, I'm thankful for that"? That's what he's saying will happen.

He said, "It's going to be quite a celebration. It's going to be with the gladness of harvest," the next to the last line of verse 3, "As men rejoice when they divide the spoil." Now, when they were in unbelief and in rebellion under judgment, the nation dwindled and under judgment, the harvest was meager and under judgment, the nation itself was spoil. He said, "I'm going to turn all that exactly around. You're going to prosper. You're going to have great harvest and you're going to have great spoils of victory through what I'm

going to accomplish for you." It's going to be jumping and screaming and laughing and hugging and running and singing and shouting. It's a celebration. Now, we know something of that now, we'll know it in the full later on.

"In fancy I stood by the shore, one day,
Of the beautiful murm'ring sea;
I saw the great crowds as they thronged the way
Of the Stranger of Galilee;
I saw how the man who was blind from birth,
In a moment was made to see;
The lame was made whole by the matchless skill
Of the Stranger of Galilee.

"His look of compassion, His words of love,
They shall never forgotten be;
When sin-sick and helpless He saw me there,
This Stranger of Galilee;
He showed me His hand and His riven side,
And He whispered, 'It was for thee!'
My burden fell off at the pierced feet
Of the Stranger from Galilee.

"I heard Him speak peace to the angry waves,
Of that turbulent, raging sea;
And lo! at His word are the waters stilled,
This Stranger of Galilee;
A peaceful, a quiet, and holy calm,
Now and ever abides with me;
He holdeth my life in His mighty hands,
This Stranger of Galilee.

"Come, ye who are driven and tempest-tossed,
And His gracious salvation see;
He'll quiet life's storms with His 'Peace, be still!'
This Stranger of Galilee;
He bids me to go and the story tell—
What He ever to you will be,
If only you let Him with you abide,
This Stranger of Galilee.

"Oh, my friend, won't you love Him forever?
So gracious and tender is He!
Accept Him today as your Savior,
This Stranger of Galilee."

People who walked in darkness will see a great light by Galilee of the Gentiles.

Let's stand in prayer.