

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Isaiah Chapter 9 — The Great Light and the Prince of Peace

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Isaiah Chapter 9 begins in darkness.

The land has suffered.

Zebulun and Naphtali have been humbled.

Foreign powers have brought fear and oppression.

The previous chapter ended with:

Distress.

Gloom.

Deep darkness.

But Isaiah 9 opens with one of the Bible's great reversals.

Darkness will not have the final word.

A light is coming.

The people walking in darkness will see:

“A great light.”

Those living under the shadow of death will experience:

A dawning.

Hope.

Joy.

Deliverance.

Freedom.

Then Isaiah explains why.

A Child will be born.

A Son will be given.

The government will rest upon His shoulders.

He will be called:

Wonderful Counselor.

Mighty God.

Everlasting Father.

Prince of Peace.

His kingdom will not be temporary.

His peace will not expire.

His throne will be connected with David.

His rule will be established through:

Justice.

Righteousness.

Forever.

The first section of Isaiah 9 therefore presents one of the clearest messianic pictures in the Old Testament.

The chapter then turns sharply.

After the glorious prophecy of the coming King, Isaiah returns to the sin of Israel.

The people are:

Proud.

Unrepentant.

Misled.

Corrupt.

Violent.

Divided.

They experience judgment but refuse to return to God.

Therefore the repeated statement appears:

“Yet for all this, His anger is not turned away; His hand is still stretched out.”

The people respond to discipline not with repentance but with greater pride.

They say, in effect:

We will rebuild.

We will recover.

We will come back stronger.

But they speak without God.

They trust:

Their own determination.

Their leaders.

Their strength.

Their pride.

As a result, wickedness spreads like fire.

The nation begins consuming itself.

The central truth of Isaiah 9 is:

Into the darkness of human oppression, sin, pride, and failed leadership, God promises the coming Messiah—the great Light and Prince of Peace—whose righteous kingdom will endure forever, while those who reject God and persist in arrogance experience the consuming consequences of their own rebellion.

I. GLOOM WILL NOT LAST FOREVER

Isaiah 9:1 — Galilee Will Be Honored

“Nevertheless, the gloom will not be as great as it was in the past, when the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. In the future He will honor Galilee of the nations, the land along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan.”

The word:

“Nevertheless”

is important.

Isaiah 8 ended with darkness.

Isaiah 9 says:

Nevertheless.

God is not finished.

Zebulun and Naphtali had suffered greatly under foreign invasion.

Yet the very region that experienced humiliation would later experience extraordinary honor.

The place of darkness becomes the place where light appears.

Cross References

Matthew 4:15

Matthew quotes Isaiah and identifies the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali, along the way of the sea and in Galilee, as the region connected with Jesus' public ministry.

2 Kings 15:29

During Pekah's reign, the king of Assyria captured northern territories including regions associated with Naphtali and carried many inhabitants into exile.

Matthew 4:13

Jesus left Nazareth and lived in Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee, in the region associated with Zebulun and Naphtali.

Spiritual Principle

God can bring His greatest light into places that have known deep darkness.

Key Truth

Past humiliation does not prevent future grace.

II. A GREAT LIGHT DAWNS

Isaiah 9:2 — Light in the Shadow of Death

“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.”

Darkness represents:

Sin.

Oppression.

Fear.

Confusion.

Judgment.

Hopelessness.

Then:

Light appears.

The people do not create the light.

It dawns upon them.

Cross References

Matthew 4:16

Matthew declares that people living in spiritual darkness saw a great light when Jesus began ministering in Galilee.

Luke 1:79

Zechariah speaks of God's coming salvation as light shining upon those living in darkness and under the shadow of death, guiding them into the way of peace.

John 8:12

Jesus declares Himself to be the Light of the world and promises that those who follow Him will not continue walking in darkness but will have the light of life.

Spiritual Principle

Christ does not merely show people where the light is.

He is the Light.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When God sends light, darkness no longer has the right to define the future.

III. GOD MULTIPLIES JOY

Isaiah 9:3 — Joy Like Harvest

“You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before You as people rejoice at harvest time, as warriors rejoice when dividing plunder.”

The emotional atmosphere changes.

Chapter 8:

Fear.

Gloom.

Darkness.

Chapter 9:

Joy.

The joy is compared to:

Harvest.

Victory.

Abundance.

Cross References

Psalm 126:5

Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy, showing how God can transform sorrow into celebration.

Psalm 4:7

God can place greater joy in the heart than people experience merely from material abundance.

Luke 1:14

The birth connected with God's saving work would bring joy and gladness, and many would rejoice because of what God was doing.

Spiritual Principle

God's salvation produces joy deeper than circumstances alone can create.

IV. GOD BREAKS THE YOKE OF OPPRESSION

Isaiah 9:4 — Like the Day of Midian

“For You have broken the yoke of their burden, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor—just as You did in the day of Midian's defeat.”

The people were burdened.

God breaks:

The yoke.

The bar.

The rod.

Isaiah points back to Gideon's victory over Midian.

That victory was remarkable because God deliberately reduced Gideon's army.

The lesson was clear:

Deliverance came from God.

Cross References

Judges 7:22

When Gideon's small force sounded its trumpets, God caused confusion in the Midianite camp so that the enemy turned against itself and fled.

Isaiah 10:27

Isaiah promises that the burden and yoke of the oppressor will eventually be removed from God's people.

Judges 6:1

Israel suffered under Midian because of rebellion, and the nation experienced severe oppression before God brought deliverance.

Spiritual Principle

God does not need overwhelming human strength to break overwhelming oppression.

Key Truth

The same God who defeated Midian can break modern yokes.

V. THE EQUIPMENT OF WAR WILL BE BURNED

Isaiah 9:5 — The End of Battle

“Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, fuel for the fire.”

The picture is not merely victory in one battle.

It points toward the ending of war.

Military equipment becomes unnecessary.

Boots:

Burned.

Bloodstained garments:

Burned.

Why?

Because the coming King brings peace.

Cross References

Judges 7:22

God brought supernatural confusion upon Midian so that the enemy army destroyed itself and Israel was delivered.

Nahum 2:3

Nahum describes warriors, weapons, chariots, and the violent appearance of an army prepared for battle.

Ezekiel 39:9

After divine victory, weapons are gathered and burned because they are no longer needed for war.

Spiritual Principle

God's final peace is not merely the pause between wars.

It is the end of the machinery of war.

VI. THE PROMISED CHILD IS BORN

Isaiah 9:6 — Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

This is one of the greatest messianic prophecies in Scripture.

A child is:

Born.

A Son is:

Given.

He is genuinely human.

Yet His titles point beyond ordinary humanity.

The government rests upon:

His shoulders.

Not:

Ahaz.

Not:

Assyria.

Not:

Any earthly empire.

His names reveal His character.

Wonderful Counselor

His wisdom is beyond human limitation.

He gives perfect counsel.

Mighty God

The coming King possesses divine strength and identity.

Everlasting Father

This title speaks of His enduring, father-like care and royal protection toward His people.

It does not collapse the distinction between the Son and God the Father.

Rather, it describes the Messiah's eternal, compassionate rule.

Prince of Peace

He brings the peace humanity cannot produce for itself.

Cross References

Luke 2:11

The angels announce that a Savior has been born who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 1:32

The angel tells Mary that her Son will be great, will be called the Son of the Most High, and will receive the throne of David.

John 14:27

Jesus promises His disciples a peace unlike the peace the world gives and tells them not to let their hearts remain troubled or afraid.

Spiritual Principle

The answer to the world's darkness is not ultimately a program.

It is a Person.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The government of the universe rests safely upon shoulders strong enough to carry it.

VII. HIS KINGDOM WILL NEVER END

Isaiah 9:7 — The Throne of David Forever

“Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord of Heaven’s Armies will accomplish this.”

Every human government ends.

This kingdom does not.

Its foundation is:

Justice.

Righteousness.

Its duration is:

Forever.

Its guarantee is:

God Himself.

Isaiah does not say:

Human determination will accomplish this.

He says:

“The zeal of the Lord of Heaven’s Armies will accomplish this.”

Cross References

Luke 1:33

The angel declares that Jesus will reign over the house of Jacob forever and that His kingdom will never end.

2 Samuel 7:13

God promised David that his royal line would be connected with an enduring kingdom and throne.

Daniel 7:14

The Son of Man receives authority, glory, and a kingdom over all peoples, and His dominion is everlasting and cannot be destroyed.

Spiritual Principle

Christ's kingdom does not depend upon human permission for its survival.

Key Truth

Every earthly kingdom expires.

The kingdom of Christ does not.

VIII. GOD SENDS A WORD OF JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL

Isaiah 9:8 — The Message Falls on Jacob

“The Lord has sent a message against Jacob; it will fall on Israel.”

Isaiah shifts from messianic hope back to present rebellion.

The same God who promises salvation also speaks judgment.

His Word is not empty.

It:

Falls.

Accomplishes.

Exposes.

Cross References

Amos 6:1

Woe is pronounced upon those who live carelessly and confidently while ignoring approaching judgment.

Hosea 5:5

Israel's pride testifies against the nation, and that pride contributes to its downfall.

Proverbs 16:18

Pride comes before destruction, and arrogance prepares the way for collapse.

Spiritual Principle

God's promises should comfort the faithful and warn the rebellious.

IX. ISRAEL RESPONDS WITH PRIDE

Isaiah 9:9 — Arrogance in Samaria

“All the people will know it—Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria—who say with pride and arrogance of heart:”

God sends judgment.

But instead of humility:

Pride rises.

The problem is not merely external confidence.

Isaiah identifies:

“arrogance of heart.”

Cross References

Proverbs 16:18

Pride moves directly toward destruction when it refuses correction.

Hosea 7:10

Israel’s pride testifies openly against the nation, yet the people still refuse to return to the Lord or seek Him.

Obadiah 1:3

Pride deceives those who feel secure and convinces them that no one can bring them down.

Spiritual Principle

Pride can turn warning into defiance instead of repentance.

X. THEY PROMISE TO REBUILD WITHOUT GOD

Isaiah 9:10 — “We Will Rebuild”

“The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with dressed stone; the sycamore trees have been cut down, but we will replace them with cedars.”

This sounds like resilience.

But in context:

It is rebellion.

They do not say:

We will repent.

We will seek God.

We will humble ourselves.

Instead:

We will rebuild bigger.

Better materials.

Greater strength.

Their response to judgment is self-confidence.

Cross References

Amos 5:11

Those who built impressive houses through oppression were warned that they would not enjoy what they constructed.

Job 40:12

God challenges Job to look upon everyone who is proud, humble them, and bring the wicked low, demonstrating that only God possesses complete authority over arrogance.

Isaiah 2:12

The Lord has appointed a day against everything proud, arrogant, and self-exalted, and all of it will be brought low.

Spiritual Principle

Rebuilding without repentance only rebuilds the conditions that produced the collapse.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Resilience without humility can become another form of rebellion.

XI. GOD STRENGTHENS THEIR ENEMIES

Isaiah 9:11 — Judgment from Multiple Directions

“But the Lord will strengthen Rezin’s foes against them and join their enemies together.”

Israel assumes it can recover by its own strength.

God says:

Enemies will rise.

Again:

God remains sovereign over nations.

Cross References

2 Chronicles 28:18

Philistine forces attacked towns in Judah and occupied territory during the period of national weakness.

2 Kings 16:6

Rezin recovered territory and drove Judean influence away from an important strategic area.

Judges 2:14

Because Israel repeatedly abandoned the Lord, He allowed enemies to overpower them and permitted raiders to plunder them.

Spiritual Principle

Human confidence cannot shield people from consequences God has appointed.

XII. ISRAEL IS ATTACKED FROM EAST AND WEST

Isaiah 9:12 — God’s Hand Is Still Stretched Out

“Arameans from the east and Philistines from the west will devour Israel with open mouth. Yet for all this, His anger is not turned away; His hand is still stretched out.”

Israel is surrounded.

Enemies come from:

East.

West.

Then comes the repeated refrain:

“His hand is still stretched out.”

Here the outstretched hand is a hand of continuing judgment.

Why?

The people remain unrepentant.

Cross References

2 Chronicles 28:18

Philistines invaded towns and surrounding regions, exploiting Judah's weakness.

Isaiah 9:21

The chapter later repeats that God's anger remains because internal violence and rebellion continue.

Judges 10:9

Israel's enemies crossed into the land and oppressed the people severely because of continuing rebellion.

Spiritual Principle

Consequences that do not produce repentance may be followed by stronger consequences.

XIII. THE PEOPLE STILL DO NOT RETURN TO GOD

Isaiah 9:13 — Discipline Without Repentance

“But the people have not returned to Him who struck them, nor have they sought the Lord Almighty.”

This verse explains the repeated judgment.

God's discipline has a purpose:

Return.

Seek.

Repent.

But they refuse.

Cross References

Amos 4:6

God brought hardship upon Israel, yet repeatedly says that the people still did not return to Him.

Hosea 7:10

Israel's pride stands against them, but despite their distress they do not return to the Lord or seek Him.

Jeremiah 5:3

God disciplined the people, but they refused correction, hardened themselves, and would not return.

Spiritual Principle

Pain does not automatically produce repentance.

Key Truth

The right response to divine correction is not greater stubbornness.

It is return.

XIV. GOD WILL REMOVE HEAD AND TAIL

Isaiah 9:14 — Leadership Judged in One Day

“So the Lord will cut off from Israel both head and tail, both palm branch and reed, in a single day.”

The imagery includes:

High and low.

Influential and insignificant.

Leadership structures will collapse.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 28:44

Under covenant judgment, Israel would fall from a position of strength until others rose above them.

Isaiah 9:15

Isaiah immediately identifies the head as respected elders and the tail as false prophets.

Amos 2:14

Under judgment, even the swift, strong, and powerful would lose their ability to escape.

Spiritual Principle

No social position creates immunity from God’s judgment.

XV. FALSE PROPHETS ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM

Isaiah 9:15 — The Head and the Tail

“The elders and honored men are the head, the prophets who teach lies are the tail.”

Isaiah interprets the symbolism.

The leaders:

Head.

The lying prophets:

Tail.

False spiritual leadership is especially destructive because it gives religious authority to error.

Cross References

Micah 3:11

Judges take bribes, priests teach for payment, and prophets speak for financial gain while falsely assuming God guarantees their security.

Jeremiah 5:31

Prophets speak lies, priests misuse their authority, and the people actually prefer the corrupt arrangement.

Jeremiah 14:14

God says false prophets are speaking lies in His name even though He did not send, command, or speak to them.

Spiritual Principle

A lie becomes especially dangerous when it is preached in God's name.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not assume a spiritual title guarantees a truthful message.

XVI. MISLEADING LEADERS DESTROY PEOPLE

Isaiah 9:16 — Leaders Confuse the Path

“Those who guide this people mislead them, and those who are guided are destroyed.”

Leadership has consequences.

Bad guidance is not harmless.

It affects the people who follow.

Cross References

Matthew 15:14

Jesus describes blind guides leading blind people, warning that when both lack true sight, both eventually fall into the same pit.

Jeremiah 23:1

God pronounces judgment upon shepherds who destroy and scatter the flock entrusted to their care.

Micah 3:5

False prophets lead the people astray, shaping their message according to personal advantage instead of truth.

Spiritual Principle

Following the wrong guide can still lead to real destruction even when the follower is sincere.

Key Truth

Sincerity cannot make false direction safe.

XVII. CORRUPTION HAS SPREAD THROUGHOUT SOCIETY

Isaiah 9:17 — Every Mouth Speaks Folly

“Therefore the Lord takes no pleasure in the young men, nor does He show compassion to the fatherless and widows; for everyone is ungodly and wicked, every mouth speaks folly. Yet for all this, His anger is not turned away; His hand is still stretched out.”

Ordinarily:

Orphans.

Widows.

Vulnerable people.

Receive special emphasis in divine compassion.

The language here underscores how thoroughly corruption has spread through the society under judgment.

Isaiah says:

Everyone is ungodly.

Every mouth speaks folly.

This is a description of widespread rebellion, not a denial of God’s general compassion toward the vulnerable.

Cross References

Jeremiah 9:6

The people live surrounded by deceit and refuse to know the Lord because deception has become normal.

Job 8:13

Those who forget God and live without genuine faith eventually discover that false hope cannot endure.

Jeremiah 23:11

God says both prophet and priest have become corrupt and that wickedness has even entered places associated with worship.

Spiritual Principle

Sin can spread until corruption becomes socially normal.

XVIII. WICKEDNESS BURNS LIKE FIRE

Isaiah 9:18 — Sin Becomes Its Own Conflagration

“Surely wickedness burns like a fire; it consumes briers and thorns, it sets the forest thickets ablaze, so that it rolls upward in a column of smoke.”

This is one of Isaiah’s great pictures of sin.

Wickedness is not static.

It spreads.

Like fire:

It catches.

Consumes.

Expands.

Destroys.

Cross References

Malachi 4:1

The coming day of judgment is compared to a burning furnace in which arrogance and wickedness become like dry material consumed by fire.

Isaiah 10:17

The Holy One is compared to a flame that will burn and consume what stands under judgment.

Jeremiah 21:14

God warns that He will kindle a fire of judgment according to the fruit of the people's actions, and that fire will consume what surrounds them.

Spiritual Principle

Sin is rarely content to remain small.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A tolerated spark can become a consuming fire.

XIX. THE LAND IS SCORCHED UNDER JUDGMENT

Isaiah 9:19 — People Become Fuel for the Fire

“By the wrath of the Lord Almighty the land will be scorched, and the people will be fuel for the fire; they will not spare one another.”

Judgment and human wickedness combine in devastating consequences.

The people turn upon one another.

Social unity collapses.

Cross References

Jeremiah 15:2

God describes severe forms of judgment including death, sword, famine, and captivity.

Micah 7:2

Faithfulness disappears, violence fills society, and people begin hunting and exploiting one another.

Zephaniah 1:18

Silver and gold will not rescue people in the day of divine judgment, when the land is consumed under God's righteous wrath.

Spiritual Principle

A society that abandons love and truth eventually begins devouring itself.

XX. EVEN CONSUMPTION DOES NOT SATISFY

Isaiah 9:20 — Hungry After Devouring

“On the right they will devour, but still be hungry; on the left they will eat, but not be satisfied. Each will feed on the flesh of their own offspring.”

This is horrifying imagery.

The central point is:

Insatiability.

They consume.

Still:

Hungry.

They devour.

Still:

Unsatisfied.

Extreme judgment and social breakdown lead to unimaginable conditions.

Cross References

Leviticus 26:29

God warned that severe covenant judgment and siege could become so desperate that people would consume even their own children.

Ezekiel 5:10

Ezekiel warns Jerusalem of horrifying conditions under siege because of persistent rebellion.

Lamentations 4:10

During Jerusalem's devastation, hunger became so severe that conditions reached horrifying extremes.

Spiritual Principle

Sin promises satisfaction but repeatedly increases hunger.

Key Truth

What cannot satisfy spiritually will always demand more.

XXI. THE TRIBES TURN AGAINST ONE ANOTHER

Isaiah 9:21 — Manasseh Against Ephraim

“Manasseh will attack Ephraim, and Ephraim will attack Manasseh; together they will turn against Judah. Yet for all this, His anger is not turned away; His hand is still stretched out.”

The chapter ends with:

Brother against brother.

Tribe against tribe.

Then:

Together against Judah.

Sin has destroyed:

Unity.

Compassion.

Loyalty.

The repeated refrain closes the chapter:

“His hand is still stretched out.”

Cross References

Galatians 5:15

Paul warns that if people continually bite and devour one another, they should take care that they are not eventually consumed by one another.

Isaiah 9:12

Earlier in the chapter, God declared that judgment had not ended because rebellion continued.

Isaiah 9:17

The same refrain appears again because widespread wickedness remains unrepented.

Spiritual Principle

Division becomes self-destructive when sin replaces covenant love.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A people that continually devours one another eventually becomes too weak to stand together.

XXII. EIGHT GREAT LESSONS FROM ISAIAH 9

1. Darkness Does Not Have the Final Word

Galilee moves from humiliation to light.

Principle:

God can bring hope into the very place where suffering has been deepest.

2. Christ Is the Great Light

Matthew applies Isaiah's prophecy to Jesus.

Principle:

Humanity's deepest darkness requires more than information; it requires Christ.

3. The Messiah Breaks Oppression

The yoke is shattered.

Principle:

God's salvation brings true freedom.

4. The Promised Son Is the Prince of Peace

His names reveal:

Wisdom.

Divine power.

Enduring care.

Peace.

Principle:

Everything humanity ultimately needs is found in the righteous King God provides.

5. Christ's Kingdom Is Eternal

His government has no end.

Principle:

Do not build ultimate hope on governments that cannot last.

6. Pride Prevents Repentance

Israel wants to rebuild without returning to God.

Principle:

Self-confidence can become a barrier to spiritual recovery.

7. False Leaders Multiply Destruction

Corrupt leaders and lying prophets mislead the people.

Principle:

Bad leadership can turn personal sin into national disaster.

8. Wickedness Eventually Consumes Itself

Sin burns like fire and turns people against one another.

Principle:

Rebellion eventually destroys the community it promised to liberate.

XXIII. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT CHRIST

Isaiah presents the Messiah as:

Child.

Son.

King.

Counselor.

Mighty God.

Everlasting Father in royal care.

Prince of Peace.

The prophecy combines:

Human birth.

Divine identity.

Davidic kingship.

Eternal rule.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Child born in Bethlehem is the King whose government reaches eternity.

XXIV. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT LIGHT

Light is not merely:

Knowledge.

Optimism.

Human progress.

The New Testament identifies this light with:

Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Principle

Christ enters darkness rather than merely commenting on it from a distance.

XXV. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT JOY

God increases joy like:

Harvest.

Victory.

The joy comes after:

Darkness.

Oppression.

Fear.

Key Truth

God's joy is not dependent upon pretending sorrow never existed.

It can arise from deliverance through sorrow.

XXVI. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT PEACE

The Messiah is:

Prince of Peace.

Peace flows from His righteous government.

It is not merely the absence of conflict.

It is the presence of:

Justice.

Righteousness.

Order.

Wholeness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Peace cannot be permanently separated from righteousness.

XXVII. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT GOVERNMENT

Government rests on the Messiah's shoulders.

He rules with:

Justice.

Righteousness.

No human government perfectly achieves this.

His will.

Spiritual Principle

Every human ruler should be measured beneath, not beside, the righteous rule of Christ.

XXVIII. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT PRIDE

Israel experiences loss.

Instead of repentance:

They boast.

“We will rebuild.”

Pride turns warning into self-assertion.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Before rebuilding what fell, ask why God allowed it to fall.

XXIX. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT REPENTANCE

Verse 13 explains the continuing judgment:

“The people have not returned.”

The issue is not merely that judgment happened.

It is that repentance did not.

Spiritual Principle

God’s correction should move us toward Him, not make us more defiant.

XXX. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT LEADERSHIP

Leaders can either:

Guide.

Or:

Mislead.

False prophets can:

Speak truth.

Or:

Teach lies.

Leadership matters because followers are affected.

Key Truth

The quality of leadership often becomes the direction of the people.

XXXI. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT FALSE PROPHECY

The false prophet is called:

The tail.

Why?

He follows corruption instead of leading people toward truth.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A prophet who tells people only what they want to hear has stopped leading and started following.

XXXII. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT WICKEDNESS

Wickedness burns like fire.

It begins:

Somewhere.

Then spreads:

Everywhere.

Spiritual Principle

Sin is never as private as it first appears.

XXXIII. WHAT ISAIAH 9 TEACHES ABOUT DIVISION

Manasseh fights Ephraim.

Ephraim fights Manasseh.

Both attack Judah.

This is what happens when:

Self-interest.

Hatred.

Fear.

Sin.

Overtake covenant loyalty.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When people lose their common devotion to God, they often turn their strength against one another.

XXXIV. THE GREAT LIGHT AFTER GREAT DARKNESS

The chapter begins beautifully.

Darkness:

Then light.

Humiliation:

Then honor.

Oppression:

Then freedom.

War:

Then peace.

This is the pattern of messianic hope.

Spiritual Principle

God often introduces His greatest promises against the darkest backgrounds.

XXXV. THE GOVERNMENT ON HIS SHOULDERS

Human leaders sometimes speak of carrying heavy responsibility.

Isaiah pictures the Messiah carrying:

Government itself.

He does not collapse under its weight.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You do not have to carry what belongs on Christ's shoulders.

XXXVI. WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Human counsel can be:

Limited.

Biased.

Mistaken.

Christ's counsel is:

Perfect.

Wise.

True.

Spiritual Principle

Bring decisions first to the wisdom of the One who cannot be confused.

XXXVII. MIGHTY GOD

This title sets the promised Son apart.

He is not merely:

Strong king.

Gifted leader.

Great teacher.

The prophecy assigns Him a title of divine power.

Key Truth

The Messiah's ability to save is rooted in who He is.

XXXVIII. EVERLASTING FATHER

In ancient royal language, a righteous king could be described as a fatherly protector of his people.

Here the Messiah's care is:

Enduring.

Faithful.

Protective.

The title describes His relationship to those under His reign, not a confusion of the distinct persons of the Trinity.

Spiritual Principle

Christ rules His people with enduring care, not cold authority.

XXXIX. PRINCE OF PEACE

Humanity seeks peace through:

Treaties.

Power.

Diplomacy.

Weapons.

Economics.

The final and perfect peace comes through:

The Prince of Peace.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Peace is secure when the Prince of Peace is on the throne.

XL. NO END TO HIS KINGDOM

Every empire in history has:

Risen.

Expanded.

Declined.

Ended.

Not Christ's kingdom.

Spiritual Principle

The wisest eternal investment is in the kingdom that cannot expire.

XLI. THE DANGER OF “WE WILL REBUILD”

There is nothing inherently wrong with rebuilding.

The problem is rebuilding:

Without repentance.

Without God.

With greater pride.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not rebuild the wall while preserving the crack that caused it to fall.

XLII. THE HAND STILL STRETCHED OUT

This phrase repeats.

Judgment continues because:

Rebellion continues.

God's discipline has not produced repentance.

Spiritual Principle

Do not force God to repeat a lesson by refusing to learn from the first warning.

XLIII. THE FIRE OF WICKEDNESS

Sin burns through:

Individuals.

Families.

Communities.

Nations.

What people call freedom can become destruction when it abandons God's moral order.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never warm yourself beside a fire that is burning down your own house.

XLIV. CHRIST AND THE DARKNESS

Matthew sees Isaiah 9 fulfilled when Jesus ministers in Galilee.

This matters.

The great Light is not abstract.

It has:

A face.

A voice.

A name.

Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Christian hope is centered not merely in better conditions but in Christ Himself.

XLV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What region had previously experienced humiliation?

The lands associated with Zebulun and Naphtali.

Question 2

What would happen to that region in the future?

It would receive special honor and become associated with the dawning of a great light.

Question 3

How does Matthew understand this prophecy?

Matthew connects it directly with Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

Question 4

What does the great light represent?

In the New Testament fulfillment, it points to Jesus Christ bringing salvation into spiritual darkness.

Question 5

Why does the nation rejoice?

God brings deliverance, freedom, and blessing like the joy of harvest and victory.

Question 6

What does the reference to Midian mean?

It recalls Gideon's victory, in which God demonstrated that deliverance came through His power rather than superior human strength.

Question 7

Who is the Child of verse 6?

The prophecy points to the coming Messiah and finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Question 8

What four titles are given to Him?

Wonderful Counselor.

Mighty God.

Everlasting Father.

Prince of Peace.

Question 9

How long will His government last?

Forever.

There will be no end to the increase of His government and peace.

Question 10

What guarantees the fulfillment of this promise?

The zeal of the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

Question 11

What was Israel's response to judgment?

Pride rather than repentance.

Question 12

What did they mean by rebuilding with dressed stone and cedar?

They confidently intended to recover through their own strength and improve what had been destroyed without humbling themselves before God.

Question 13

Why did God continue His judgment?

The people refused to return to Him or seek Him.

Question 14

Who were responsible for misleading the people?

Corrupt elders, leaders, and false prophets.

Question 15

How does Isaiah describe wickedness?

Like a spreading fire that consumes everything around it.

Question 16

How does the chapter end?

With violent division between the tribes and the repeated warning that God's judging hand remains stretched out.

XLVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Isaiah 9 asks several searching questions.

Where Is There Darkness in My Life?

Do I believe Christ can bring light there?

Am I Looking to Christ as My Counselor?

Or am I making major decisions without His Word?

Do I Believe He Is Mighty Enough?

What problem have I mentally made bigger than Christ?

Am I Resting in the Prince of Peace?

Or am I seeking peace only through circumstances?

What Am I Rebuilding?

Am I rebuilding with repentance?

Or merely with greater determination?

How Do I Respond to Correction?

Humility?

Or:

Pride?

Who Is Guiding Me?

Are my spiritual leaders faithful to Scripture?

Am I Following Someone Merely Because They Sound confident?

Do I test their teaching?

Is Wickedness Spreading Anywhere in My Life?

What spark needs to be extinguished before it becomes a fire?

Am I Contributing to Unity or Devouring Others?

What do my words produce?

Peace?

Or conflict?

XLVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“When Darkness Is Deepest, Look for the Light God Has Promised”

Isaiah does not deny the darkness.

He names it.

But then:

A light dawns.

Principle:

Biblical hope does not pretend darkness is absent; it declares that darkness is not final.

XLVIII. FROM GALILEE TO THE KINGDOM

The prophecy begins in:

Galilee.

Then expands to:

A kingdom without end.

Christ's ministry begins in what many considered an insignificant region.

Yet His reign reaches eternity.

Spiritual Principle

Never judge the importance of God's work merely by how small its beginning appears.

XLIX. A CHILD BORN, A SON GIVEN

Two phrases.

A child:

Born.

A Son:

Given.

The language beautifully presents both:

Humanity.

Gift.

The Messiah enters history through birth.

Yet He is also given by God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Christmas is not merely the birth of a remarkable child.

It is God giving the promised Son.

L. THE THRONE OF DAVID

God made promises to David.

Isaiah says:

The Messiah will sit upon David's throne.

The promise is not abandoned.

Spiritual Principle

God remembers covenant promises long after humans have forgotten them.

LI. JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS FOREVER

Human rulers often struggle to combine:

Power.

Justice.

Righteousness.

Christ does so perfectly.

Key Truth

The kingdom of Christ is powerful without being corrupt and righteous without being weak.

LII. PRIDE THAT MISREADS JUDGMENT

Israel sees fallen bricks.

Instead of saying:

“We sinned.”

They say:

“We will build better.”

That is spiritual blindness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A stronger replacement is useless if the original rebellion remains untouched.

LIII. LEADERS WHO MISLEAD

Isaiah places responsibility upon:

Leaders.

And:

Followers.

Leaders mislead.

Followers are destroyed.

Spiritual Principle

Choose teachers carefully because direction eventually becomes destination.

LIV. WHEN SIN BECOMES A WILDFIRE

Wickedness consumes:

Briers.

Thorns.

Forests.

Then:

People.

This imagery shows escalation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Deal with sin while it is still a spark.

LV. THE GREAT CONTRAST OF ISAIAH 9

The chapter contains two kingship pictures.

One:

The perfect King.

Christ.

The other:

Corrupt human leadership.

One brings:

Light.

Peace.

Justice.

Righteousness.

The other produces:

Misleading.

Pride.

Violence.

Destruction.

Spiritual Principle

Isaiah is teaching us where final confidence belongs:

Not in human rulers.

In the Messiah.

LVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Isaiah Chapter 9 begins where many people sometimes feel they are living:

In darkness.

The land has been humbled.

Fear has spread.

Oppression has been heavy.

The future looks uncertain.

Then God says:

Light is coming.

That light is ultimately revealed in:

Jesus Christ.

The New Testament takes Isaiah's ancient prophecy and points directly to Jesus ministering in Galilee.

The people walking in darkness:

See Him.

The Light has dawned.

Then Isaiah gives us the reason for hope:

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.”

A Child.

A Son.

A King.

Wonderful Counselor.

When you do not know what to do:

Look to Him.

Mighty God.

When the burden is too heavy:

Trust His strength.

Everlasting Father.

When you need enduring care:

Rest under His rule.

Prince of Peace.

When your heart is troubled:

Come to Him.

His government has:

No expiration date.

His peace has:

No final boundary.

His justice cannot be corrupted.

His righteousness cannot decay.

His kingdom cannot collapse.

That is the hope of Isaiah 9.

But the chapter also gives a warning.

It is possible to experience correction and refuse repentance.

Israel says:

“We will rebuild.”

That sounds courageous.

But courage without humility can become pride.

Do not merely rebuild what sin damaged.

Deal with the sin.

Do not say:

“I will recover.”

Without also asking:

“Lord, what must change?”

The chapter also warns us about leadership.

False leaders can destroy people.

False prophets can sound spiritual while teaching lies.

Therefore:

Test those you follow.

Test the message.

Stay anchored in God’s Word.

Finally:

Remember that sin burns.

One tolerated spark can become a forest fire.

Deal with:

Bitterness.

Greed.

Pride.

Falsehood.

Hatred.

Division.

Before they spread.

And when darkness seems strongest:

Look again toward Galilee.

The Light has dawned.
When the world appears unstable:
Look toward the throne.
The government rests on His shoulders.
When peace seems impossible:
Remember the Prince of Peace.
And when every earthly kingdom changes:
Remember:
His kingdom has no end.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for sending light into our darkness.
Thank You for Jesus Christ.
Thank You that the people walking in darkness have seen a great Light.
When our lives feel dark:
Turn our eyes toward Christ.
When we do not know what to do:
Remind us that He is our Wonderful Counselor.
When we feel weak:
Remind us that He is Mighty God.
When we feel abandoned:
Remind us of His everlasting care.
When our hearts are troubled:
Remind us that He is the Prince of Peace.
Father, thank You that the government rests upon His shoulders.
Forgive us for trying to carry what belongs to Him.
Teach us to trust His rule.
Thank You that His kingdom is built upon:

Justice.

Righteousness.

Peace.

And that His kingdom will never end.

Father, protect us from pride.

When You correct us, help us repent instead of merely becoming more determined to rebuild in our own strength.

Give us humility to ask:

What are You teaching us?

What must change?

Father, protect us from false leaders.

Give pastors, teachers, and leaders courage to speak truth.

Expose lies spoken in Your name.

Give Your people discernment.

Keep us from following blind guides.

Father, put out the fires of wickedness in our hearts.

Extinguish:

Hatred.

Bitterness.

Pride.

Jealousy.

Greed.

Lust.

Division.

Do not let small sins become consuming flames.

Make us people of:

Light.

Truth.

Peace.

Righteousness.

And when the world around us seems dark, may our lives point clearly toward Christ.

The Child born.

The Son given.

The King forever.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” — Isaiah 9:6

Central Truth

God answers the darkness of sin, oppression, fear, and failed human leadership with the promised Messiah—Jesus Christ, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace—whose righteous kingdom will never end, while unrepentant pride and wickedness ultimately consume those who refuse to return to God.

Isaiah 9 in One Sentence

Isaiah announces that a great Light will dawn in Galilee through the promised Messiah, whose eternal government will bring justice, righteousness, and peace, while warning that Israel's pride, false leadership, refusal to repent, and spreading wickedness will bring continuing judgment and self-destruction.