
Lesson Overview

Biblical Passage	Isaiah 9:1-7
Supporting Passages	Genesis 3:15; Micah 5:2; Isaiah 49:1-6, 53:1-12, 55:5
Memory Verse	Isaiah 9:6
Biblical Truth	God's prophets spoke of the Messiah's coming for centuries before His birth.
Context	<p>This lesson continues to introduce Jesus and allows students to see a glimpse of the promise of Christ in the Old Testament. Students will discover that Jesus fulfilled the words of many prophets. Believers can take delight in knowing that since Creation God had been preparing the world for the birth of Jesus Christ.</p>
Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will examine how Jesus' birth fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about the Savior made centuries before His birth.• Students will verbalize why they can have confidence that Christ's identity as the Savior is true.
Prayer Suggestions	<p>As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray that students will understand more clearly that God prepared for His Son's coming by sharing specific details of Jesus' life hundreds of years in advance.• Pray that students' faith will increase as they realize how clearly God spelled out His promises and how completely Christ fulfilled them.• Pray that God will help you convey the incredible consistency of the prophecies and Christ's fulfillment of them so that students are both amazed and inspired.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation

The tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel suffered greatly at the hands of the invading Assyrians, who eventually overthrew Samaria in 722 B.C. Through Isaiah, who began his ministry in about 740 B.C., God sent the Israelites a message of comforting hope. The humiliation of their affliction would come to an end, and honor would come through a great King yet to be born. This King from the line of David, whom Christians now know as Jesus Christ, would rule forever in peace, wisdom, justice, and righteousness.

Is it legitimate to seek Jesus in the Old Testament? Jesus taught that the answer to this question is an unqualified "Yes." On several occasions, Jesus pointed out that the Old Testament told of His coming and His redemptive work (Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:27, 24:44; Jn. 5:39; Heb. 10:7). Peter informed his readers, "The prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow" (1 Pet. 1:10-11).

When people study the Bible, they find predictions of Jesus' birth and ministry in the Old Testament and the fulfillment of these predictions in the New Testament. This lesson will look into one of the most important and stirring of the messianic prophecies.

Importance

This passage teaches that **The Future is in God's Hands**. Although Jesus referred to the past as evidence of His coming, Isaiah clearly prophesied to the people of Judah that God had their future in hand. He would send the messiah in His own way and in His own time to fulfill the purpose of the redemption of all people, both Jew and Gentile alike. The effects of Jesus' coming provided hope for those who were lost in sin. Likewise, the fact that Jesus came offers us the hope of salvation and eternal life. We also carry the hope that Jesus will one day return and claim His people.

This passage also touches on other Essential Truths: **Jesus is God and Savior** and **Salvation is by Faith Alone**.

Interpretation

King **Ahaz** was one of the most wicked kings of Judah (the southern kingdom). During Ahaz's reign, the prophet **Isaiah** spoke God's words to him and to Judah, warning them to take notice of what God was about to do in Israel (the northern kingdom). God wanted the people of Judah to turn from their wickedness and self-

centeredness and avoid punishment and destruction. God knew, however, that the nation as a whole would not repent. They would choose to live in darkness rather than in God's "light" as revealed in the "law and testimony" (Is. 8:20). Through His prophet Isaiah, God promised that Judah would experience His judgment.

Even though His judgment would come, God promised eventual redemption for His people who remained faithful to Him. That promise would not be fulfilled in the current generation, but centuries later through Christ.

Isaiah 9:1 The opening words of this chapter relate to the prophet's words in Isaiah 8:16-22. Isaiah wrote that "in the past" God had "humbled" the regions of **Zebulun** and **Naphtali**. This refers to the judgment of God on the northern kingdom because of its rebellion. These two tribes represented the entire nation of Israel. Before God humbled them, Israel had entered into an alliance with Syria. Israel hoped this alliance would help the nation withstand the military campaigns of the Assyrians. Israel also sought the help of King Ahaz of Judah. But Ahaz refused to join the northern alliance in their fight against the Assyrians. As a result, Israel turned its aggression against Ahaz and Judah. Ahaz in turn requested help from Assyria instead of trusting the Lord as Isaiah had advised. Although the Assyrians did help Ahaz and Judah, they eventually turned on them as well.

Zebulun and Naphtali were located in the central northern area of Israel. The two areas received the first and hardest blows from the mighty Assyrian army. The Assyrians invaded them under the command of **Tiglath-Pileser**. These events are chronicled in 2 Kings 15:29. The Assyrians deported many people and also conquered people from other areas. These areas were considered an inferior part of the mighty Assyrian Empire.

The outlook for Israel was extremely bleak. Gloom overshadowed the region as a result of God's discipline. But Isaiah prophesied that eventually the "gloom" would be gone. The two areas stricken first would "in the future" be the first to receive God's grace and healing. The **honor** that would come from God to this region was seen centuries later during the early ministry of Jesus. He had grown up in **Nazareth** and began His ministry in **Capernaum**. Both these towns were in the region of Galilee. Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy when He moved to and began His ministry "in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali" (Mt. 4:13-16).

Isaiah 9:2 Isaiah spoke to God's people in Judah. They had rejected God's ways and followed their own evil thinking. They were "walking in darkness." They were certainly in the dark spiritually because of their sin, but they were also facing darkness because of the coming conquest of invading armies. The darkness was because of their disobedient choices. They eventually learned that wasn't a pleasant place to be.

God promised He would bring a "great light." This illumination would come from the One who is "the light of the world"—Jesus Christ (Jn. 8:12). The New Testament is filled with references to light through Jesus Christ (Lk. 2:32; Jn. 1:4, 3:19; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:12; 1 Thes. 5:5; Heb. 10:32; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Jn. 1:5, 1:7).

After the invasions, God's people probably felt forsaken. They may have felt as if they were living in the "shadow of death." Centuries later, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, described Israel as people who were "living in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Lk. 1:79).

Isaiah 9:3 The word "nation" in this verse refers to those who had been shown God's mercy. Isaiah said the people would experience great joy after their time of punishment and grief. God's people would be like those who "rejoice." It would be like the celebration at the "harvest" or like dividing the spoils ("plunder") after a battle. The nation would be "enlarged." This may refer to others who would join them as a result of experiencing God's light.

Isaiah 9:4-5 Isaiah prophesied freedom for God's people in a time when foreign invaders had enslaved them. The prophet recalled the monumental victory over Midian (Jdg. 6-7) and noted that Israel's future deliverance would be similar.

The “yoke,” “bar,” and “rod” were farming tools used to control oxen or other animals when they were plowing or pulling a load. These terms were also used to describe oppression on a conquered people. God’s people experienced this under the domination of the Assyrians and later under the Babylonians (Is. 58:9). God promised that the oppression would be “shattered.”

Through His prophet, God also promised that all evidence of warfare would be destroyed. The “warrior’s boot used in battle” and the blood-stained clothing would provide “fuel for the fire.” In place of suffering and death would come peace and security.

While the oppression of God’s people would eventually end, Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled through Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, He destroyed the yoke of sin that kept people hopeless.

Isaiah 9:6 The Hebrew verbs used in this verse and in verse seven emphasize a finished action. When Isaiah spoke these words, he was speaking of a future event as if it were already completed.

The prophet spoke of a “child” who would be “born” to God’s people, a “son” who would be “given” for a special purpose. These words reveal His humanity; He would be born like other humans. Yet Isaiah also revealed Jesus’ divinity; He would be a gift from God’s hand. The divine child would come initially to God’s people, the descendants of Israel. However, He would be given to all of humanity—“to all who [receive] him, to those who [believe] in his name, he [gives] the right to become children of God” (Jn. 1:12).

The reference to “the government . . . on his shoulders” could refer to His rule or authority. He is not mentioned as a political king. By that point in Israel and Judah’s history, the kingship was generally corrupt. He would, however, be a ruler, particularly in a spiritual sense.

The Hebrew word translated as “government” is found only in Isaiah 9:6-7; it is not the same as the word used elsewhere in the Old Testament to refer to a political ruler. Even so, Jesus is the King of Kings (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14, 19:16) who fulfilled God’s promise that David’s throne would be “established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16).

Consider the titles Jesus was given. The Hebrew word translated “Wonderful” means “extraordinary.” It is also sometimes translated as “miracle” or “miraculous.” It is usually used in reference to God or His work. The Hebrew word translated “Counselor” is related to the word for “design.” It denotes qualities of wisdom essential for a just ruler. The phrase translated “Mighty God” could also be translated “Divine Warrior.” This title stresses Jesus’ power to carry out all He intends to do. The phrase translated “Everlasting Father” has no precedent in the Old Testament. It seems to refer to a compassion for those who are helpless. It might also refer to His guidance and correction of His people. The phrase translated “Prince of Peace” indicates the circumstances that Christ’s ministry will bring about: lasting **Peace**.

Isaiah 9:7 Isaiah stressed that this Ruler’s “government” or Kingdom would continue to “increase.” There would be “no end” to His peace. His coming would establish His Kingdom, which continues to expand today (1 Cor. 15:25-28). His everlasting Kingdom would fulfill the promise God made to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-13. That promise said David’s descendants would always rule Israel’s throne.

The prophecy said “justice and righteousness” would characterize His Kingdom. This refers to honesty, faithfulness, and integrity, all characteristics of God Himself. Isaiah promised it would happen as a result of God’s “zeal.” In His sovereignty as “Lord Almighty” (or “Lord of Hosts”), He will ultimately bring about the fulfillment of the Kingdom He has promised. The promise of a coming Son clearly points to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He embodies all these divine characteristics and is eternal Ruler over all.

Implications

The Word (Jesus) brought light to humanity. He is the revelation of who God is and how God wants people to relate to Him. Throughout history, people have sought enlightenment to improve their quality of life. Some have found it through faith in Jesus Christ, while others have refused to believe in the One who shines in the darkness. How has Jesus Christ opened your eyes to see clearly who God is and how He wants to relate to you?

Jesus not only created life, but also gives life to those who trust and accept Him. This type of life is more than mere existence. It refers to spiritual life—knowing God and experiencing His power to transform your heart. What could you say to a student who is dissatisfied with life and is seeking meaning?

Jesus is the central unifying figure of the Bible. Yet throughout history, many people who have studied the Bible (such as the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day) have missed its testimony concerning Jesus. The whole biblical witness points to the fact that Jesus came to earth as the Son of God to provide light about God's plan for salvation. Through Jesus God offers eternal life to those who will believe in Him. Throughout the Christ series, be alert to the opportunities to present Jesus as Lord and Savior to your students.

Teaching Plan

Connect

Review Questions

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.

Print one copy of the “Review Questions” activity sheet for your use.

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide the context for today’s lesson.

Master Teacher Option: God’s View

(10 minutes, moderate set-up)

Students will view images that illustrate God’s view of the “big picture.”

Create a presentation with five slides. On the first four, show a small section of a picture, making sure that the sections provided do not give away the complete image. On the fifth slide, include the entire picture.

Show the first four slides of your presentation to students. Encourage students to guess what image these few slides present. After students have made a few guesses, explain that understanding the entire picture is difficult when we only have a few glimpses of the finished product. Ask: **Have you ever seen a builder or an artist at work and wondered what they were making? When did you realize what the finished product would look like?**

Emphasize that we often can’t realize what the end product will look like until it is almost finished or completely finished. Show the complete picture to students. Explain that, although we can only see a few pieces of the puzzle, God always controls the “big picture.” Conclude by saying: **Today we will take a look at God’s big-picture view as the arrival of His Son was prophesied to a people who didn’t yet understand the entire storyline.**

Explore

Master Teacher Key Study: His Arrival Foretold

(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will study Isaiah 9:1-7 to examine the prophecies that foretold the coming of Christ. Print one copy of the Master Teacher Key Study for your use. Provide a copy of the Student Worksheet and a pen for each student.

Learning Goal: Students will examine how Jesus' birth fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about the Savior made centuries before His birth.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then, use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Isaiah 9:1-7.

Transform

Deeper Discussion

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Learning Goal: Students will verbalize why they can have confidence that Christ's identity as the Savior is true.

Use the following questions to lead students in a discussion:

- **How do you see darkness in the world?**
- **Can you see any way that darkness can be removed without the hope that Jesus brings Why?**
- **How do you see the world as a place of slavery?**
- **How can slavery be conquered through salvation?**

Divide students into twos or threes and encourage them to discuss things that cause them to question whether Jesus is the Son of God. Then, encourage students to discuss how they can accept the identity of Christ as Savior as truth. Encourage students to close by praying that God will strengthen their confidence in Him and clear any doubts they might have about the identity of Christ.

Master Teacher Option: What About My Future?

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss the implications for their future based on God's perfect record for keeping His promises.

Provided pens and paper for students. Also, create a presentation slide listing the following verses: Deuteronomy 4:29, Matthew 5:7, Matthew 5:9, John 3:26, and Hebrews 13:5.

Learning Goal: Students will verbalize why they can have confidence that Christ's identity as the Savior

is true.

Pass out a pen and paper to each student. Ask: **How does truly trusting that Christ is our Savior affect how we view God's care for us?** After responses, instruct students to list some situations in their lives that might tempt them to forget that God cares for them. While students work, display the presentation slide you have prepared. If desired, enlist five volunteers and assign each volunteer one of the verses from the slide to read aloud. If your group is too large, read the verses yourself. After the verses have been read, invite volunteers to share something they have written or to share a possible situation that makes trusting God's care difficult. After each volunteer shares, lead students to discuss which of the five verses just read might be helpful in dealing with the problem. Emphasize that each verse is a promise in which God shows extreme care for us by fulfilling His promise to provide a Savior for us so that we could have a relationship with Him.

Challenge students to adopt one of these promises as a personal assurance. Encourage students to pair up and discuss how trusting in these promises might affect their decisions or views regarding issues such as self-worth, money, dating, and questions about the future. Close by leading students in prayer that they will be able to depend on the promises God has given them through Scripture as they remain confident in their faith.

Take Home Activity

Family Devotion

(10-15 minutes at home, easy set-up)

Distribute copies of the Family Devotion to students and encourage them to share the devotion with their family.

A copy of the Family Devotion will be included in your lesson PDF download.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Use these questions to review the content from Lesson 1: "His Identity in Scripture"
The correct answer for each question is printed in **bold, italic font**.

1. What name for Jesus is unique to John's Gospel?
 - a. ***the Word***
 - b. Lord of Lords
 - c. Prince of Peace
 - d. Messiah

2. Where was Jesus in the "beginning"?
 - a. not yet born
 - b. everywhere
 - c. ***with God***
 - d. none of the above

3. What was Jesus' role in creation?
 - a. He had no role because He was not alive yet.
 - b. ***All things were made through Him.***
 - c. He observed God from afar.
 - d. Jesus actually created the world without God's help.

4. What did John call the life that was in Jesus?
 - a. bright
 - b. everlasting
 - c. perfect in its fullness
 - d. ***the light of men***

5. John said, "The Word became _____ and made his dwelling among us."
 - a. God
 - b. fishers of men
 - c. ***flesh***
 - d. Jesus

HIS ARRIVAL FORETOLD

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Introduction: There is meaning in a name. The Savior of the world was called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Each name carries with it a promise for all who believe that God sent His Son to us. Do you know what your name means? Many people choose names for specific reasons. Some of you may be named after one of your parents or grandparents. David means “beloved.” Smith refers to workmen like blacksmiths or silversmiths. Every name has a meaning. Parents buy books and think long and hard about what they will name their children.

1. God promises light in place of darkness (Isaiah 9:1–2).

Biblical Background: The prophet Isaiah told of God’s Messiah, one who would come as “light” to offer hope to a people desperate for the salvation that only God can provide. As a result, God’s people would no longer wander in darkness. Although the northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali had already been conquered, God promised that their lands—the land of Galilee—would one day be honored (v. 1). Isaiah prophesied that a great light would suddenly illuminate those sitting in darkness (v. 2), foretelling the location and the coming of Jesus (see also Mt. 4:14–16).

Illustration: Many children and even adults have a fear of being stuck in darkness. The fear comes not from the darkness itself, but from worrying about what’s lurking in the darkness that cannot be seen.

Application: As the light, Jesus comes into our darkness—those things in our lives that lurk unseen in the shadows—and guides us out of the dark through His light. Through His light, Jesus removes the fear and the hopelessness.

2. God promises salvation in place of slavery (Isaiah 9:3–5).

Biblical Background: Isaiah used two images to describe the joy people would feel when they received His salvation and were released from the bonds of slavery to sin. First, they would feel joy through the relief and release of hearing that they had won a war. Second, the people would feel joy through the security and promised rest of finally gathering the year’s harvest (v. 3). Since the Assyrians literally yoked their captives together like animals, the people were accustomed to the yoke of slavery and would suddenly feel the freedom of being released from it (v. 4). Isaiah emphasized that the bloody garments stained by war would be burned, ushering in a new period of peace (v. 5).

Illustration: You may already be looking forward to graduating from high school. Think about it . . . no one’s going to tell you when to get up in the mornings, or what to do all day, or question where you’re going. Sounds great, right? Yeah, but it’s also just not true. No matter where you’re headed after graduation, you’ll have expectations to meet, jobs to fulfill or classes to attend, work that’s demanding . . . Life can be difficult and demanding. Everybody dreams of a time when they will be free from the expectation and demands of others, free from the burden of doing what others require of you.

Application: Sin can be like that . . . holding us captive, while not allowing us to live the kind of lives we want to live. God promised salvation that would free us from the captivity of sin and allows us to live the kind of life we were intended to live.

3. God promises a King who will reign forever (Isaiah 9:6–7).

Biblical Background: God revealed through Isaiah that the Messiah would establish a Kingdom that would be eternal. A child would be born who would take upon His shoulders the government of all and would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, and Prince of Peace (v. 6). By fulfilling this prophecy, Jesus' birth demonstrates that **The Future is in God's Hands**. This King, born of the line of David, will reign forever (v. 7).

Illustration: Throughout history, the throne of the king has been passed only to the next in line, usually the firstborn son. As God's firstborn and only Son, Jesus alone was able to fulfill the role of King who came to us to usher us into His Kingdom.

Application: Jesus is the promised Messiah. He has come, the promise has been fulfilled, and we live with the hope that He will return.

Conclusion: Many people live their lives without any hope for the future. They've given up on life because they've not found or experienced anything worth living for. However, as believers, we can trust God to keep His promise of a Messiah who has died in our place to set us free from sin, and His promise of a future life with Him in eternity.

LESSON 2

HIS ARRIVAL FORETOLD

Biblical Passage: Isaiah 9:1-7

Memory Verse: Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

1. God promises _____ in place of darkness (Isaiah 9:1-2).
2. God promises _____ in place of slavery (Isaiah 9:3-5)
3. God promises a _____ who will reign forever (Isaiah 9:6-7).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you see darkness in the world?
- Can you see anyway that darkness can be removed without the hope that Jesus brings Why?
- How do you see the world as a place of slavery?
- How can slavery be conquered through salvation?

JESUS IS . . .

Wonderful Counselor	Mighty God	Everlasting Father	Prince of Peace

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT . . .

“There was no identity crisis in the life of Jesus Christ. He knew who He was. He knew where He had come from, and why He was here. And He knew where He was going.”—*Howard Hendricks*

LESSON 2

HIS ARRIVAL FORETOLD

Biblical Passage: Isaiah 9:1-7

Have a family member shuffle a deck of cards and place it facedown. Then, have another family member try to guess what card has been placed at the top of the deck. Then, reveal the actual card. Continue this game with others trying to predict the outcome. Lead the family to discuss the probability of predicting each card. Then, have a family member read: **For us, a prediction is a guess. But God gave His prophets special predictions to tell His people. And God fulfilled all that was predicted.** Next, have a family member remove the four kings from the deck and show them to the others, saying: **The greatest fulfillment of biblical prophecy came in the form of the King of kings.**

Read Isaiah 9:1-7. Explain that God wanted His people to turn from their wickedness and self-centeredness and avoid punishment and destruction. Share that God promised two things through Isaiah that Judah would experience following His judgment: (1) the eventual redemption for those who remained faithful to Him; and (2) that His promise would be fulfilled centuries later through Christ.

Explain that Isaiah spoke of a child who would be born to God's people, a son who would be a gift from God, given for a special purpose. Share that the divine child would come initially to God's people, the descendants of Israel, but that He would be given to all of humanity—"to all who [receive] Him, to those who [believe] in His name, He [gives] the right to become children of God" (Jn. 1:12).

In a world where people make predictions every day, most of which fail to happen, we may find it difficult to trust the prophecies in God's Word. Unlike people who make predictions but have little control over whether or not those things happen, God has the power and authority to bring all of His prophecies to fulfillment. Have another family member read: **When we search in the Bible, we find ways Jesus' birth and ministry were predicted in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament, which means we can fully trust God and His Word.**

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

- Search online for how many prophecies were given in the Bible, and how many of them were fulfilled by Jesus. Does this surprise you? Why?
- Does knowing that Jesus' birth was foretold centuries before He was born help you see God's plan for the world? Why?
- How is our faith made stronger by Jesus' fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies?
- Close by praying that God will strengthen your family's faith through the knowledge that Jesus fulfilled prophecy.