From Darkness to Light: The Glory of the King, Part1

**Isaiah 9:6–7** 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

*The Glorious Character of The King: From Condescension to Coronation*

**Isaiah 9:6–7** 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

If we remember Ahaz was given permission to ask for a sign of faith and he was told to make it “as deep as Sheol or high as heaven” (7.11). Although Ahaz reneged on this request, God took matters into His own hands and gave a sign which would indeed be so deep and so high as to ground the work of redeeming His people in the transcendent power of God. In this entire passage there is an ascending intensification of the Child-King and His Kingdom as we move from “Counselor” to “Prince” and to the Davidic throne of consummate glory. But it all begins with a “child” (יֶ֫לֶד).

“A Child” (signifying deepest condescension)

In order for the glorious character of the King to be known, notice that first, He must make it known. He must condescend, come down to us, reveal himself to us, make His nature and character known. Man has no ability to reach up to God on his/her own. There is no path made by philosophy, logic, mysticism, meditation, technology or ritual that will ever grant mankind access to God apart from a supernatural act of divine condescension. To add to this doctrine of divine condescension, notice the Trinitarian contours of thought here. The “child” is “given” (v.6). The Father so loved the world that He “gave” us His Son. Jesus however, makes it very clear that His coming was also *voluntary* (John 10.18). Later, Isaiah will make clear that this same Immanuel phenomenon will be an act of Spirit endowment so that the gift of the Messiah is a triune act of redemptive grace (cf. 42.1).

“Wonderful Counselor”

The theme of divine “counsel” and the Messiah is later developed again as that which will characterize the person and ministry of the Messiah who is Spirit-endowed and abundantly supplied with wisdom and knowledge for the purpose of ruling and governing God’s people as well as judging the wicked:

**Isaiah 11:2** 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

The Messiah will share in the same divine wisdom of Yahweh *as* Yahweh, because He is Yahweh! He will come with counsel that is wonderful and wisdom that is great and ultimately incomparable:

**Isaiah 28:29** 29 This also comes from the Lord of hosts, Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great.

As mankind is taken out of darkness and into God’s marvelous light, the origins of that enlightenment is tethered to the coming of the Messiah and His incarnation, His preaching and teaching, and His self-disclosure to Israel and through the Church, to the rest of the world (cf. Mt. 28.19-20). Indeed, He who enlightens every man, came into the world as that exclusive light of the kingdom of God, and of eternal life (two great overlapping realities). That eternal life was proffered to sinners who despite being so plainly enlightened by Him, inevitably “hate the light” and “love darkness”:

**John 1:5–10** 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. 9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

As Calvin points out, we must also recognize that what is being here described is the special, salvific privileges and blessings being given to God’s people, those upon whom the light of Christ would dawn shining forth the truth of His glory and the marvel of His grace. How therefore may we understand the privilege of He who is the “Wonder-Counselor”? There are at least three ways by which His glorious counsel may be understood all of which may be properly understood in keeping with Isaiah’s context, *Messianically*. Through Him comes the light of truth, the light of salvation, and the light of the kingdom.

*Messianic Counselor of Truth*

*Frist*, we should point out the ontological nature of these claims. God *is* His counsel! In other words, what we think about in terms of God’s mind, God’s thoughts, God’s truths as rooted in God, *is* God! God’s thoughts are to be identified with His *being*. That is why His thoughts are as infinite as He is, eternal as He is, and as incomprehensible as God himself is:

**Romans 11:33–36** 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

This is why, only the Spirit can fully search out the thoughts of God (cf. 1 Cor. 1.10); they infinitely cohere with God himself! Thus, all truth that God chooses to reveal originates with God and His infinite wisdom. As the “Wonderful Counselor,” Jesus informs us from the bottomless depths of His infinite omniscience and exhaustive wisdom, as the Wisdom of God himself (cf. Prov. 8.22ff; 1 Cor. 1.24). Paul teaches this very thing:

**Colossians 2:2–3** 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

From the revelatory perspective, with this saying, Jesus is the sum total of God’s wisdom as it has been revealed in Scripture. The Torah, the Wisdom literature, the Psalms, the Writings, the Prophets etc. Scripture as an exposition of the mind of God breathed out by God (2 Tim. 3.16), is now found in the revelatory epicenter of the prophesied and incarnate Christ who went so far as to call himself, “The Truth” (ἡ ἀλήθεια). Repeatedly, this association with wisdom and knowledge in conjunction with the Lord Jesus Christ is found in the NT:

**1 Corinthians 1:24** 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

**1 Corinthians 1:30** 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

**Ephesians 1:17** 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

**Colossians 1:9** 9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

*Messianic Counselor of Salvation*

*Second*, as the “Wonderful Counselor,” Jesus’ “counsel” is also wonderful. When Jesus arrived on the scene, almost immediately, His divine counsel began to sound forth. Even as a child, others heralded His message. From angels (cf. Lk. 1.26ff.), His mother (Lk. 1.46ff.), shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem (Lk. 2.8ff.), and Anna the prophetess (Lk. 2.36ff.), and of course John the Baptist, His forerunner (Lk. 3.15ff.). Even the Gentiles, the Magi from the distant reaches of the East proclaimed His royal glory at His birth (Mt. 1.18ff.). In His first public sermon in Nazareth, people were “wondering as the gracious words which were falling from His lips” (Lk. 4.22). His counsel was light; illuminating the way of salvation, the way of repentance and the way of the kingdom. Thus, Jesus’ self-disclosure was that He was “the Light of the world.” He did not merely bear witness to the light, He was and is the *Light* (9.2); the light of God, light of truth and salvation which also carries with it a serious moral injunction both for the world and for the Church:

**John 8:12** 12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

**John 9:5** 5 “While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”

**John 9:39** 39 And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.”

Isaiah is not at all ignorant of the gravity of Jesus’ illuminating mission but foretold of the redemptive glory of this Wonderful Counselor who would usher in the light of a new day; a day of visitation to illuminate the way to the blind and light for those shackled in the dungeon of their sins. As He releases them from the bondage of their sin, He also binds them fast to His own righteousness by becoming a covenant for them. With the arrival of this Messianic Counselor would come the new covenant with all of its redemptive glory promising to usher forth a new creation (Is. 42.1-9). Notice the structure of this text:

The Spirit-endowment of the Messiah for the mission to the Gentiles:

“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 “He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. 3 “A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 “He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.”

The Sovereign authority of Creator-Lord who ordains all things (thus, the unfolding of redemptive history is at His command):

5 Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it,

The Covenant Servanthood of Jesus who will usher in the new creation:

6 “I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, 7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison. 8 “I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. 9 “Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you.”

*Showing us the need for salvation:*

Like Isaiah 9, Jesus agrees with the light and darkness motif of Scripture to capture the spiritual condition of man that what is needed is for light to shine. This light/darkness motif remind us of the great gain and great peril of the gospel. That Jesus offers himself as the chief end of man for salvation, to be enjoyed by men, to be delighted in by men, to be enthralled by His everlasting counsel to worlds unknown but also to be warned of Him:

**2 Corinthians 4:4–6** 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake. 6 For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

*Showing us the ground of salvation:*

If His people are to be redeemed, it would come at a great and mighty cost (cf. 1 Pet. 1.18-19).

**John 12:20–24** 20 Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; 21 these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22 Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

**John 12:31–33** 31 “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” 33 But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

*Showing us the way of salvation:*

**John 11:25** 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

**John 14:6** 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

*Showing us the nature of salvation:*

**John 17:3** 3 “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

*Showing us the crisis of salvation:*

**John 12:44–50** 44 And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 “He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. 46 “I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. 47 “If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. 49 “For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. 50 “I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

Remarkably, this text is the fulfillment of Isaiah vision of the divine Messenger of God, sent by God on covenantal mission to deliver His people who are longing for Him and who wait expectantly for His return (Is 9.2; 42.4). But with the hope of His coming comes the crisis of faith. The crisis of His word for, if we do not receive His word we reject it, if we do not receive Him we reject the One who sent Him. *The whole world therefore is set in antithesis*. We are either with Him or against Him, we either receive His counsel or we reject Him, we either see Him as a “Wonder” or treat Him like a fool (cf. 1 Cor. 1.18, 2.6-8). He *is* Wonderful, He is Counselor, He is Illuminator and Revealer of God’s light but if we will not listen to the Light, we will remain in ever-increasing darkness and how great is that darkness (cf. Mt. 6.22-23)?

*Messianic Counselor of The Kingdom*

*Third*, the ultimate light that dawned in Christ was seen in His counsel or His teaching of the *kingdom*. Jesus situated all that came before Him in terms of a messianic theology, eschatology, prophecy, sings, promises, and covenants in the context of the kingdom. Not only was Isaiah’s entire prophecy here of Christ a prophecy of kingship, it is thus an eschatological prophecy paving the way of the kingdom of God that dawned in Christ. With the arrival of the King the kingdom came with Him. Here is precisely where most people failed and still fail to understand the person and work of Jesus Christ. Just as His initial coming was not in the final eschatological fullness of new creation, so too, His kingdom comes in power but it does not come in the fullness of power. That awaits a future installment of the kingdom, the final installment at the parousia (cf. Mt. 26.29). That is why as much as Jesus could speak of the presence of the kingdom now (cf. Mt. 12.28), He also teaches us to pray for the coming of the kingdom which is a reference to the eschaton and the coming of new creation (cf. Lk. 11.2). It is not the rehearsal of this creation, it is not the renovation of this creation, or the enhancement of this creation which is passing away (cf. 1 Cor. 7.31; 1 John 2.17; 1 Pet. 3.9-13). It is the new creation. The new creation in fact is the key that unlocks the eschatology of Isaiah (Is. 65.1ff.). If we fail to see the connection between the new creation and the Davidic promises of Isaiah in relationship to the Messiah; we will have either an over-realized eschatology (e.g. Post-millennialism) or an under-realized eschatology (e.g. Pre- millennialism). Neither will do. Only if we see the King and the kingdom in the proper tension of an *already-not-yet* dynamic will we see the kingdom properly. Although Jesus ushers in the new creation, this inaugural event does not progress and climax in the present age, the kingdom consummation awaits the final conflict between Seed and serpent, saints and sinners, Christ and antichrist- a conflict for *Har Magedon* supremacy, the mountain of God, the place of absolute power and authority in the realm of heaven and earth.