

“The Light of Salvation”
Isaiah 49:1-7

Introduction: Pg. ____

I love the words to the song we just sang together: “O Come Let us Adore Him.” That is what the Christmas season is all about.

O come, all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of Angels!

O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord

The Christmas season invites us to take in, to behold — more of Christ! Whatever it takes... Scripture... Songs... Devotional Books... Prayer... Community Groups (Isaiah 42: Light of justice. Came to make all wrongs, right. To restore our broken world to the way things ought to be!)

The opening words of Isaiah 49 strike a similar chord:

49 Listen to me, O coastlands,
and give attention, you peoples from afar.

Jesus deserves global attention! But we, like the people these words addressed, so often divert our attention away from God.

That’s why they were in desperate need of a new horizon... a breaking of light into their physical despair and spiritual darkness.

Chapter 48 tells us they...

- lived hypocritically, denying God’s truth though they confessed his name. (Verse 1)
- their disposition was one of stubborn obstinance before God (verse 4).
- They practiced idolatry, placing their hope in false gods (verse 5).
- God describes them as treacherous and rebellious (verse 8)
- Ultimately, they forfeited their peace and blessing because they ignored God’s loving direction (verses 18-19)

This dark backdrop sets the stage for God to send his hero in 49...

Read Isaiah 49:1-7

I want to give you three truths about this new horizon Jesus brings.

1. The New Horizon of Jesus arrives with surprise (1-2).

First, we see God’s surprising plan for the servant’s entrance into the world. Verse 1: “The Lord called me from the womb...”

- This servant is called from the womb with a divine assignment and purpose.
- The Lord, God the Father, will be the one to name this servant before he was born into the world.
- If we rewind to chapter 7 of Isaiah, we discover the depth of this surprising birth...

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” - Isaiah 7:14

Then we fast forward 700 years and find a virgin named Mary, chosen to bring God’s Son into the world. Matthew 1 explains:

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).” - Matthew 1:21-23

There we have the two explanations for his earthly name and Title he would be called. Jesus: means God saves. Immanuel: means God with us.

Who would have dreamed God would become a human being?

T: He not only came in a surprising way, he accomplished his mission through a surprising method.

Jesus advances his agenda and wins the victory, not through military power, but by the words of his mouth, by the force of truth.

- Look at verse 2: "He made my mouth like a sharp sword." His words are sharp. They are effective. They cut to places in our souls no one or nothing can touch or satisfy!
- His word is like "polished arrow," rubbed free from imperfections, that it might fly accurate and hit the intended target. Even from afar...
- That the sword and arrows are hidden away refers to God's timing in revealing Jesus prophetic ministry of speaking God's truth about God's kingdom to the world. [[As Paul says in Gal 4 ("When the fullness of time had come...")]]
- APP: Have the words of Jesus changed you? Have you experienced the freedom that comes from the truth of Christ?

T: The New Horizon arrives with surprise. #2.

2. The New Horizon of Jesus dispels the darkness (3-4).

Dispels means it chases darkness away! Jesus puts darkness on the run! But darkness does not go down without a fight. I love vv 3-4 because we can so easily identify with them. Here's the progression: God is with me. The world is dark and difficult, but God is with me!

Verse 3 shows us the intimacy shared between God, the Father and God, the Son. Security comes from knowing our identity. Knowing our identity comes from hearing God's voice.

- "You are my servant." Jesus came to give his life away. That's love. He loves because he is love.
- "Israel."
 - While we would expect "Israel" to refer to the nation, that can't be true for two reasons: 1) God addresses an individual: "And he said to *me*." 2) The entire Book of Isaiah and the entire Bible reveals, Israel could not save Israel. They needed God's grace and salvation.
 - They failed on their primary responsibility: to "glorify God" - to point to and light up his greatness and worth.
- "In whom I will be glorified."
 - That's why God sent the True and Greater Israel, the true and Greater Servant, Jesus Christ. He is the radiance of God's glory (Hebrews 1:3). He always perfectly reflected the perfections of God.

[[We hear echoes of these words in Matthew 3:17 (Baptism), Matthew 17:5 (Transfiguration), and John 12:28 (The week of his death: Jesus prayed - "Father, glorify your name" Then a voice from heaven comes: "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."]]

We read verse 3, and we might assume Jesus would experience a smooth, painless, trouble free, always victorious mission.

But *verse 4* shows us Jesus experienced the same dark and difficult world we deal with day by day. He knew frustration and pain.

- "I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity."
- Think about the life of Jesus. Go read Matthew 16-17.
 - Aside from being opposed, targeted and ultimately crucified by the religious leaders of his day...
 - Often... his disciples did not get it. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees..." (Matthew 16:5ff; He had already fed crowds of 5000 & 7000 from a few loaves of bread)
 - ... and stood in his way: "Get behind me Satan." (Matthew 16:23)
 - ... and failed to live in the power he gave them: "O faithless and twisted generation! How long I am to be with you?" (Matthew 17:17)
- No one understands your difficulty and darkness in life, relationships, or the workplace like Jesus!

But Jesus fought through the darkness by fighting for vision. It's always in the looking up...

- "Yet . . ." There is confidence in God. "Surely my right is with the Lord, and my recompense (reward) is with my God."
- How can he have this confidence? Because God is sovereign and God is our strength.
- Keep looking up!

T: Jesus came from heaven to earth to dispel the darkness, not just in our small, tiny, microscopic lives, but in the entire world. That's what we see in vv. 5-7.

3. The New Horizon of Jesus lights up the world (5-7).

Verses 1-2 show us the method of his mission. Verses 3-4 reveal the challenge of his mission. Verses 5-6 tells us about the scope of his mission.

Verse 5. His first priority was to restore the people of Israel to a right relationship with God. This is what salvation is! "to bring Jacob back to him."

Verse 6. His ultimate priority is to do the same thing for the entire world! I love the wording of verse 6.

- "It is too light a thing" This is way too small. It is "beneath the [Servant's] dignity and capacity." You don't call up Bobby Flay to make you some instant oatmeal in the microwave, and you don't devise a regional mission for the global Messiah.
- Jesus will be "a light for the nations." Why? "that [God's] salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
- Alec Motyer says the Hebrew more accurately reads, "that you may be my salvation to the ends of the earth."
- Jesus is not simply the instrument that communicates salvation. He is salvation. Salvation is in him. (Acts 4:12)

Two dominant thoughts here...

1) God desires a real relationship with every person on the planet. [What.]

- There is no human being your eyes will ever see that is not on God's mind. There is no person you will bump into on the train, encounter in your workplace (can you believe it?), or break a sweat with at the gym for whom God's heart does not passionately burn to take them out of a place of spiritual darkness and death into his light and life!
- This is true for the person you see in the mirror every day. Somebody needs to hear these words: "God loves you! He has poured out his love toward you. He has given you the greatest gift by sending his Son into the world that you might receive it and enjoy him and treasure him and live the life you've always longed to live.

2) God desires for every person on the planet to hear the gospel and be saved. [How.]

- Jesus is a light for the nations. Who knows Jesus is not an American god? Who knows Jesus was not white?
 - We constantly want to make god after our image, sometimes we do this literally...
 - One children's Bible I've read with my kids depicts a white Joseph with a red beard married to a white Mary with a white baby Jesus...
 - I don't want my kids thinking Joseph immigrated to Israel from Ireland! Joseph and Mary were not white. They were brown Middle Easterners and birthed a brown baby!
 - If you have a nativity scene or ornament with a white Jesus, get out your paintbrush and darken his skin! If you want to... :)
- What's the point? God is a global God! Jesus lived, died, and rose from the grave (his resume is better than all other apparent gods - that's why I'm a Christian)... he did all of that so that he could fulfill the vision captured in Revelation 7:9-10. Jesus will redeem people from every people group on the planet.: "**After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'**"

This is why our church not only has a heart to see all of Boston know Jesus but all of the world!

- This is why we are sending a Team to South Asia in May. This is why we support missionaries in the least reached areas of Africa and Asia.
- Look at this Map of the World... **PIC OF **GLOBAL STATUS OF EVANGELIZATION MAP****
- Where you see all of the red, orange, and yellow dots, you see what the International Mission Board (an agency we partner with and support) calls an Unreached People Group.
 - A "people group" is an *ethnolinguistic group* with a common self-identity that is shared by the various members.
 - They consider a people group unreached (UPGs) if less than 2% of them are evangelical Christians.
- Redemption Hill Church will not be ambivalent about Jesus instructions to "make disciples of all nations" from Boston to the ends of the earth.

Here's the point of Isaiah 49.

The Point: Jesus is the new horizon over Boston & the world, bringing salvation to all people!

Conclusion:

Have you experienced his salvation? Have you stepped into a real, undying relationship with God by opening your arms and receiving the gift God offers you in Jesus Christ. No one else can heal you. No one else can bring you the hope, joy and peace your heart longs for. Say "Yes" to him today.

**Have you experienced his salvation?
Are you experiencing his salvation?**

Freedom... Freed from the chains of despair, for a new and lasting hope.
 Freed from the chains of selfish greed, for a new generosity.
 Freed from the chains of crippling fear, for a courageous love.

**Have you experienced his salvation?
Are you experiencing his salvation?
Are you spreading his salvation?**

Don't be moved by guilt. Be moved by love!
Don't be moved by pressure. Be moved by joy!

“It is not so much that God has a mission for his church in the world, but that God has a church for his mission in the world...mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission—God’s mission.” - Chris Wright