

“Christmas and Music Go Together”

Isaiah 9:2-7

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Can you imagine Christmas without music? I certainly cannot. I am not sure what I would listen to for three or four months. You see, I start listening to Christmas music soon after Labor Day. I’ve even been known to play it during the lazy, hazy days of summer. I just play it softer then so my family will not commit me to an institution for the musically disturbed.

Christmas and music naturally go together, don’t they? This is because religion and music go together, especially religious celebrations.

The crowning of a new king in ancient Israel was cause for a celebration that always revealed the best songwriters in the land. Songs of hope would be sung during the ceremonies that would lift the sights and spirits of the people. In all likelihood, Isaiah 9:2-7 was one of those songs.

Was Isaiah writing about someone other than Ahaz or Hezekiah, though? Were these words ultimately meant for God’s own son who would become the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? I think so and am glad that this song is now a significant part of our Christmas celebrations, for it tells us how the Messiah was to come, who would send him and what he would be like. Let’s examine it this morning as we usher in the Advent season with songs of hope that lift our sights and spirits, too.

How was the Messiah to come? “For unto us a child is born” (9:6). The Messiah would come into the world as all humans do. He would be born as a baby so that he could identify with us and experience challenges, temptations, and problems common to all people as they grow and develop.

Who would send the Messiah? “To us a son is given” (9:6). The word “given” assumed there would be a giver, and there was. The God of creation would now become the Lord of redemption by sending His own son into our world to save us from our sins.

John certainly reinforced this idea with those immortal words, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life” John 3:16. The Messiah would be a gift to us from God.

What would the Messiah be like? Isaiah had a four-fold reply to this question with the exalted titles mentioned in this poetic passage. First of all, he would be a **wonderful counselor**.

Have you had a chance to watch Dr. Phil yet? If you had told me three months ago that one of the most popular shows on television would revolve around a counselor giving advice to troubled people, I would never have believed it. Yet, that is exactly what Dr. Phil McGraw does. With his notoriety and exposure, I suppose he has become America’s counselor.

What do you look for in a counselor? Three things top most lists. We want a counselor who listens to us with compassion, confronts us with the truth, and helps us to see our choices clearly so that we can make wise and responsible decisions. The Messiah would possess all three qualities and Jesus certainly did. Look how he handled the

woman at the well in John 4:1-26 and the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-11. See why Isaiah referred to him as a wonderful counselor?

Secondly, he would be a **mighty God**. No challenge would be too great for him to overcome and no enemy too big for him to conquer, not even death, hell and the grave. No force, visible or invisible would be greater and this proved to be true on Easter morning. No wonder Isaiah referred to him as a mighty God.

Thirdly, he would be an **everlasting father**. He would be a loving and faithful parent that would love us at our best and worst, always striving to encourage, teach, and guide us. Never would he abandon us, even when we disappoint him. Is there a better example of this than the story of the Prodigal Son found in Luke 15: 11-31? Isaiah was right to refer to the Messiah as an everlasting father.

Fourthly, he would be the **prince of peace**. He would have the ability and authority to grant tranquility to troubled people and wholeness to fractured people. He would possess and give to others a “peace that passeth all understanding” to which Paul so insightfully referred in Philippians 4:7.

In addition, he would teach and model a lifestyle that would promote “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” He would show people how to break down barriers, reconcile differences and heal wounds. Isaiah was correct in labeling the Messiah as the pioneer of peace, individually and corporately.

Yes, I am grateful that Christmas and music go together and that this ancient song is also a Christmas song. It needs to be, for it lifts our sights and spirits and gives us eternal hope.