

Isaiah Chapter 9 v 1 - 7

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Date: 23 December 2018

Preacher: Peter Robinson

- [0 : 00] Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you. Thank you.
 When we read in the Gospel of John, we're told about this Jesus. Christmas is God with us.
- [2 : 23] That was the message the angels came to bring to those shepherds on that night. Wonderful news that there was a newborn king, Christ the Lord. We're going to stand and sing our very first carol this evening.
 It's 196 angels from the realms of glory. Wing your flight or all the earth. Let's stand and sing. Thank you. Thank you.
 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. It is. Yes. Thank you. This and creation saw it, and proclaim thy soul is found.
 Come, love and worship, presently for thee.
- [3 : 31] Come, love and worship, worship Christ the new Lord be.
 Let us see my fields of light, watching all your past my eyes. Come, love and worship, presently for thee.
 Come, love and worship, presently for thee.
 Come, love and worship, presently for thee. Come, love and worship, presently for thee.
 Let us come, be true repentance, In the will to never's place.
- [4 : 43] Justice now revokes a sentence, Mercy calls thee, great will change. Come, love and worship, presently for thee.
 Come, love and worship, presently for thee.
 You may be seated. Well, let's come to God in prayer together. Ask God's help and blessing on our time this evening.
 Oh Lord our God, we are so grateful for every opportunity to remember your love and kindness to us. But especially we thank you that when we think of the coming and the birth of your son, the Lord Jesus, We are especially, we are especially shown the reality that you're the God who loves us not just in word, in thought or emotion, But the God who loves us in action.
 The God who stepped down into our world. The God who came to where we are to rescue and to save us. We thank you that you're not a God who stands aside.
- [6 : 09] Not a God who is indifferent or unconcerned about the lives of the people of this world. For you are our maker and creator. And you are the God who is our provider. The one who blesses and provides for us every good thing.

But we thank you that in Jesus we have the greatest provision. The greatest gift. The greatest blessing. For we have you yourself come to us.

The gift of your son. And we pray Lord as we sing these carols. As we hear these Christmas readings. As we think about Christ's coming. That first Christmas.

So we pray Lord that for us. The coming of Christ may have a real impact. A significance. Like perhaps never before. That this Christmas we might know the real joy of which the angels sang.

Good news of great joy for all the people. And all the people included us. And all I pray that like the shepherds. Who heard that good news. We might leave what we're doing.

[7 : 10] And immediately go and find out for ourselves. And enjoy the realization that there is God who loves us. So we pray help us then in this time.

Bless each one. Help us we pray. In Jesus name. Amen. Now, through the evening, through the afternoon, we're going to have a series of readings, the usual nativity readings, and also we're going to have some musical pieces by various singers, glad to know I'm not one of them, and the choir as well.

But just to say, I'll get the notices out of the way, that following our time of carols and readings and thinking about Christmas, there is food and refreshments downstairs, and please do stay and help us eat them.

Not just mince pies, we put on an invite, warm mince pies, but people in this church get carried away. As soon as you say warm mince pies, no, we've got to have sausage rolls, we've got to have sandwiches, we've got to have cakes, nothing by half measures, so please do stay and share with us in that.

And also to say that if you are able, please come and join us on Christmas Day, that's just the day after tomorrow, Christmas Day at 11 o'clock in the morning. We've got a brief all-age service, an opportunity again, more carols, a few presents to be shown off, if you bring a present to show.

[8 : 32] Just a brief time, around 45 minutes, to celebrate and mark the birth of Jesus, and we'd love to have you with us then. And then back next Sunday, we'll be meeting again, as usual, 10.45 and 6, to which, all these things, you're very welcome.

So I'm going to ask Fee, she's going to come and read our first reading from Matthew, sorry, from Luke, I beg your pardon, Luke in chapter 1. Listen along, and these words I'm sure will be familiar.

Thank you. In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent an angel, Gabriel, to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.

The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, Greetings, you who are highly favoured, the Lord is with you. Mary was greatly troubled at his words, and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High.

[9 : 44] The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever. His kingdom will never end. How will this be, Mary asked the angel, since I am a virgin?

The angel answered, The Holy Spirit will come on you. And the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth, your relative, is going to have a child in her old age.

And she, who was said to be unable to conceive, is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail. I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. May your word to me be fulfilled.

Then the angel left her. Thank you, V. Let's stand and sing our next carol. It's in the book, and it's number 211.

O Little Town of Bethlehem. How still we see thee lie. 211. O Little Town of Bethlehem.

[10 : 56] How still we see thee lie. Abide. In the spring, the silent stars go by.

Yet in the dark streets shine, The everlasting light. The old sand.

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph.

But before they came together, She was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph, her husband, was faithful to the law, And yet did not want to expose her to public, He had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, And said, Joseph, son of David, Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, Because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

[12 : 04] She would give birth to a son, And you were to give him the name Jesus, Because he would save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet.

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, And they will call him Emmanuel, Which means God with us. When Joseph woke up, He did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him, And took Mary home as his wife.

But he did not consummate their marriage Until she gave birth to a son, And he gave him the name Jesus. Thanks, John. Now, we've got a special treat.

It's lovely to have Marnie with us. And she's going to come with Rachel, And a few others, I think. And they're going to come and sing a song for us. So, over to you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[13 : 20] Dear Network of Israel musicals and diamond guitar and hovering ginger amor It's Outing Christmas Day A humble Margaret Dear Allahwan Music Is Amen ollum How awesome and mysterious the Lord of heaven draws near to us.

This is Emmanuel. The hands that once split night from day, now feebly clutched a blade of pain.

This is Emmanuel. For God's sake, how small and weak, the word of God must learn to speak.

This is Emmanuel. This is the God seen by our eyes.

The love of the Father made known in Jesus Christ. This is our God worthy of praise.

[14 : 48] The love of the Father revealed on Christmas Day. The shepherds come and bow to him.

The Lamb who takes away our sin. This is Emmanuel. For God has entered time and space to show the world his endless grace.

This is Emmanuel. The love of the Father revealed on Christmas Day.

This is our God worthy of praise. The love of the Father revealed on Christmas Day.

vocabularyal call song. Emmanuel, Emmanuel. Our God is with us now.

[16 : 07] Emmanuel, Emmanuel. Emmanuel, Emmanuel. is with us now.

This is our God, seen by our eyes, the love of the Father, made known in Jesus Christ.

This is our God, worthy of praise, the love of the Father, revealed on Christmas Day.

The love of the Father, revealed on Christmas Day. I know we don't usually clap, but I think that deserves a clap.

And all the singers will get a clap, I think, tonight. You only practice that today? Yeah, so they only actually got together and sang today, so that's pretty good. So if you've got a christening, a wedding, something like that, and you want to hire them, I'm sure they're quite reasonable, reasonably priced, but that's lovely.

[17 : 27] Thank you for that. Well, let's sing another carol together, shall we? A silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright. 213. In our song books, 213.

213. The sleep, the sleep, the night, only night, holy night, holy sky, glory, dry, CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Alleluia. Christ the Savior is born.

Christ the Savior is born. Silent night, holy night.

Son of God, last pure night. Radiant peace of my holy face.

[19 : 59] With the dawn of redeeming grace. Jesus, Lord, have I heard.

Jesus, Lord, have I heard. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Our next reading is from Luke in chapter 2 and Brenda's going to come and read that for us now.

Thank you, Brenda. Luke chapter 2, verses 1 to 20. In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

[21 : 12] He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While we were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

She wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger because there was no room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, do not be afraid.

I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today, in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you. He's the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger. Suddenly, a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.

[22 : 39] And when the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that's happened, which the Lord has told us about.

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby who was lying in the manger. And when they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told to them about this child.

And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying God and praising him for all the things that they'd heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Thanks, Brenda. Now we've got another musical item from Emily, Poppy, and a few others again, I think. You're going to come and sing for us?

[23 : 40] Some of the cousins too, is it? Great. Over to you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Is there to bring peace to us all? All who have journeyed to Bethlehem, All those in sunshine, their beautiful day, Our sure voices don't let him wait, Just for this one let the world await.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews?

[25 : 54] For he saw his star when it rose, And I have come to worship him. When King Herod heard this, He was disturbed, And all Jerusalem with him.

When he had called together all of the people's chief priests And teachers of the law, He asked them where the Messiah was to be born. In Bethlehem in Judea they replied, For this is what the prophet has written.

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, And by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler, Who will shepherd my people, Israel.

Then Herod called the Magi secretly, And found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search carefully for the child.

As soon as you find him, Report him to me, So that I too may go and worship him. After they had heard the king, They went on their way, And the star they had seen, When it rose, Went ahead of them, Until it stopped over the place where the child was.

[26 : 57] When they saw the star, They were overjoyed. On coming to the house, They saw the child with his mother Mary, And they bowed down and worshipped him. They opened their treasures, And presented him with the gifts of gold, Frankincense and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream, Not to go back to Herod, They returned to their country by another route. Look to the skies, There's a celebration, Lift up your heads, Join the angels' song, For our creator becomes our saviour, As a baby born, Angels amaze, Bow in adoration, Glory to God in the highest land, Send the good news out to every nation, For our hope has come.

Worship the king, So see his brightness, Worship the king, His wonders tell, Jesus our king is born today, We welcome you, Emmanuel.

Wonderful son, So almighty God, Father forever, The prince of peace, There'll be no end To your rule of justice, For it shall increase, Light of your face, Come to pierce our darkness, Joy of your heart, Come to chase our gloom, Star of the morning, A new day dawning, Make our heart your home, Worship the king, Come see his brightness, Worship the king, His wonders tell, Jesus our king is born today, We welcome you, Emmanuel.

Quietly he came as a helpless baby, One day far he will come again, Swift through the skies he will burst with splendor, On the earth to reign, On the earth to reign, Jesus our God, Let your manger lowly, Now in my life let your will be done, Living my flesh by your spirit holy, Till your kingdom comes, Worship the king, Come see his brightness, Worship the king, His wonders tell, Jesus our king is born today, We welcome you, Emmanuel.

[30 : 10] Well I think all of us, Would only too willingly admit, That we hide from one another, We hide our true self, From others, We never really say exactly, What we think, In a conversation, We hide our true feelings, We hide our true thoughts, We hide behind the words that we say, Because we only say the words that we think, That people want to hear, And we do hide our feelings, Don't we?

As men particularly, Of course we're told that from a young age, We're expected to hide our feelings, Our sorrow, Our grief, Our anger, But even our own happiness, Even our joy as well at times, It's only under the most extreme pressure, Only under the most extreme circumstances, Do we find, That we are open, With one another, About our feelings, Otherwise, Many of us are like a winkle, Inside its shell, Locked in, With only a small protective screen, For the world to see, I think we all agree, That we hide from one another, And we are not able to be thoroughly open, With one another, But I've said that we hide from God, That's a different matter altogether, Have I any evidence that we hide from God?

Well I would say that Christmas is a perfect example, Of how we hide ourselves, From the true and living God, Think about it, At Christmas, We hide Jesus, We hide him away, In all the trimmings, And the trappings, And the celebrations of Christmas, We put him to one side, As far away as possible, As we can, We hide him behind the Christmas tree, That we love with its decorations, And tinsel, And flashing lights, We hide him behind the deck, We hide him behind the turkey, And the parties, And the drink, We hide him behind the crackers, And the presents, Think about it, Have you seen anything, Of God, In Christmas, Over these past weeks, On the TV?

Nothing, He's hidden away, And so we don't say, Happy Christmas, We say happy Xmas, Let's get Christ, Out of Christmas, We prefer to think of, Santa, As the central person, Of Christmas, Rather than the son of God, And, Even worse, And it makes my flesh creep, We say, Talk about happy holidays, My kids know, That when there's a particular advert, Comes on the telly, Which sings happy holidays, I have to turn off the mute, To make sure I don't hear it, But we're hiding, Aren't we?

Why are we doing all these things? Why are we piling all these things? We're piling them over the manger, Over the stable, Over the son of God, When else would you think, Of celebrating, Somebody's birthday, Without, Inviting the person, Whose birthday it was?

[33 : 18] We do it at Christmas, Because we're hiding, From God, But there's more proof, I would say, That shows that as a society, As people, We are hiding from God, Think of the enormous influence, And growth of atheism, Around about us, Everywhere we turn, There's this agenda, That's driving, And telling us, There is no God, There is no God, There is no God, Everywhere we turn, Why is that?

Why do people insist on, Forcing us, Or trying to prove to us, That God doesn't exist, Why so much fuss, About something, That doesn't exist, You don't hear, A lot of fuss being made, Telling us, And convincing us, There's no Loch Ness monster, Or telling us, And convincing us, That there's no Bigfoot, Or no mermaids, We know none of those things exist, So why are we so concerned, To prove that God doesn't exist, It's because he does, We're hiding from him again, In one sense, What we're doing is, What children do, When you play hide and seek, You know what they're like, They'll go and find like, Behind a chair, And they'll put their hands, Over their eyes, I can't see you, So you can't see me, That's being an atheist, It's simply putting our hands, Over our faces, Pretending that we can't see God, Therefore he can't exist, But he does, We don't want God to exist,

That's why we hide from him, We act in this way, Towards God, We cover over those things, That speak of him, Like Christmas and Easter, With all sorts of other things, We hide behind atheism, But also many of us, Hide behind, Our own gods, Gods that we've, Invented as it were, Gods that we, Are suitable to, We want a God, Who we can believe in, But he mustn't interfere, With our lives, He mustn't, Tell us what to do, By his laws, He's got to let us, Choose our own way, He's got to, Really let us do what we want, But just be there, For emergencies, Just be there to help us, When things are difficult, We definitely don't want, A God who keeps a record, Of our sins, A God who sees, All the things that we do, In the way we speak, And think, And act, We want an imaginary, Type of God, A God who will, Lay us all into heaven, No matter how we've lived,

Unless we're really, Really bad, A God who, Sort of sweeps, Our sins under the carpet, Turns a blind eye, To the wrong things, A God who's, On standby, Like the emergency, Fire extinguisher, Or, The police, At the end of 999, But we don't want them, Every day, Just when it suits us, From time to time, Why do we hide, From God, Like this, The same reason, That Adam and Eve, Hid from God, Those years before, Listen to the words, Again of Adam, I heard you in the garden, And I was, Afraid, Because I was naked, And I hid, From you, Adam and Eve, Knew God better, Than anybody else, As I said, They enjoyed, A wonderful relationship, With him, A friendship with him, In that garden, In Eden, They talked with him, And met with him, It was beautiful, It was lovely, But now they were afraid,

They were afraid of God, Because, We're told, They knew that they were naked, They were bare, They were exposed, Not just outwardly, But inwardly, They had sinned against God, They had taken of that fruit, That God had forbidden them to eat, They decided they knew better than God, And they decided that their lives, Could be lived on their own terms, Without reference to God, That's what sin is, It isn't just those terrible, And awful things, That we see on our screens, We have man's inhumanity to man, Of wicked people, Doing wicked things, Sin is something of the heart, Something within every one of our hearts, That says, My way, Not God's way, What pleases me, Not what pleases God, I just want him, At the end of the phone, The end of the prayer, But not in my life, You see, They were exposed before God, They knew that God saw into their hearts, And they saw that they were lawbreakers, He saw that they were traitors to him, He saw that they had rejected his love,

[38 : 01] And his goodness, And they decided upon their own selfish desires, If that's the sort of God, That the Bible talks about, If that's the true God, Then no wonder that we are afraid of him, No wonder that we want to hide from him, We don't want a God who sees in our sins, And a God who judges us, According to how we've lived, And spoken, And thought, We don't want to meet this God, He is too terrifying, But that's why Jesus came into the world, Jesus Christ, The very Son of God, Came into the world, He knows that we cannot bear to face him, As we are, And the reality is this, We cannot bear to face him as we are, Because dear friends, If you and I were to face God as we are, Sins and all, All of our pride,

All of our rebellion, All of our selfishness, All of those things within us, Which we hide as well from, And hide from others, Then we would be utterly destroyed, We would be utterly lost, He knows so much about us, But it's because he knows so much about us, That he came, Because he knows that that sin, Which eats away in our lives, That sin that ruins our relationships, With one another, And with him, That selfishness, That breaks loving, Families, That sets neighbour against neighbour, And friend against friend, All the chaos, All the horror, That we see around about us, All comes from the heart, Which says my way, Not God's way, What I want, Not what God wants, Jesus came, For that very reason, Remember we heard in the reading, He will be named Jesus, Why?

Because that name Jesus means, The Lord saves, He will save his people, From their sins, He will save us, Not only from the guilt of sin, And the punishment of sin, For God is just, But saves us from the very power, And the effects of sin in our lives, The effects of sin in our relationships, With one another, And the effect of sin, In our relationship with God, He came that we might meet God, Without fear, But we might rather meet him in friendship, That we might be restored to him, And know him as our loving, Gracious, And good God, Jesus came to reveal God, As he truly is, Not the God of fairy tales, Not the God of our own imagination, Not the God that we want, But the God that is true, And the God that we need, He came to bring his presence, Into our world, To walk among us, And live among us, And experience life,

Don't think for a moment, That the God of whom I'm talking, Is a God who somehow, Has no understanding, Of the sorrow, And the grief, And the heartache of life, For this God walked amongst us, And knew all those things, In greater measure, Than any of us have known, For when he died upon that cross, He went willingly, In your place, So that you could be forgiven, So that you could come out of hiding, Into the warmth of the presence, Of the Son of God, So you could come out, From that fear, And shame, And guilt, So that you could receive his pardon, And enjoy his smile, Not just in this life, But forever, How are you hiding from God?

How long can you hide from him? He sees you, He knows you, He doesn't, He isn't ignorant of everything about you, He knows everything, What's the point of hiding?

[42 : 08] What's the point of staying, As it were, In the dark, With our hands over our eyes, Hoping that God will leave us alone, And that somehow, Our vain, Our empty hopes of life after death, Will be fulfilled, Don't we people who live in a real world?

Take your hands away from your eyes, See the glory, The beauty, The loveliness of Jesus Christ, The Son of God, And see that he came for you, That he might bring you into the light of his love, That he might bring you into the friendship of God, That he might bring you into life everlasting, You see Jesus was given a very special name, Wasn't he?

Not just Jesus, That he will save his people from their sins, But also Emmanuel, Which means God with us, We've lived so much of our lives without God, That we're used to it, And we think that for him to be part of our lives, Would ruin it, But the opposite is true, God with us, Is what makes life worth living, God with us, Is what gives purpose and meaning, All the things that we seek to fill our lives with, Are evidence and proof that we are empty, That all those things, That we have to keep repeating again and again, To show that we have nothing of substance, To fill us, And make us, Joyful, God with us, Is God with us, Not at Christmas only, Or Boxing Day, Or New Year's Day, But every day of the year, And until you experience, God with you,

Through faith in Jesus' son, Then everything that you taste, Everything that you have, Is simply a hiding of yourself, From that which really gives life, Jesus Christ is coming again, There's no doubt about that, Just as his coming, That very first time, Was something that God had promised, Right from the beginning, In Genesis, All the way through, Read your Bible, You'll see again and again, Promise after promise, There's a Saviour coming, I am coming, A Messiah is coming, But he said he's going to come again, He's going to come again, And everything hidden, Will be revealed, And there's a terrifying picture, That the Bible paints for us, Of those who are not ready, For Jesus' coming, They will say, Mountains cover us, Hills hide us, They're not ready, To meet with God, Because their sins,

Have not been dealt with, And they've not received, The forgiveness that Jesus bought,
You see you can only hide, For so long, And then will come a day, When everything will
be made known, Dear friend, Let me urge you this Christmas, More than ever before, To
think seriously about these things, Let me urge you, To think seriously about, Your
standing with God, The evidence that Christ, Came into this world, Is pile upon pile of
evidence, The reality that God is in this world, You cannot dispute, Unless you hold your
hands, Over your eyes, He has come for you, To come out of the darkness, And into the
light, We'd love for you, To find out more, About this Jesus, We've got two little books
here, Which you're free to have, Free to take, One is, This is Christmas, Very little, And
easy to read, One is called, The greatest gift, They're free, At the back, Please take one,
Please read one,

[45 : 53] If you've never thought, Seriously about these things, If you, Are hoping that this sermon,
Is going to finish very soon, That you can have the food, And get away, Please don't,
Please, Make this Christmas, A Christmas to remember, For all the right reasons, That
God, In Christ, Came, To you, I'm going to, Give up, ■ faithful, Joyful, And tiver,
comparison, TheSam cosas, O God, O God, To see the world, Right, TheSamay ■■■
plays, I look at this gospel, It's a drawing of it, And come to you, King of angels, O come,
let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

God of God, light of Christ, O the apostles and the mercy of God, There we go, the
autumn of creation, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, In Christ the
Lord.

Sing words of angels, sing in exultation, Sing holy citizens of heaven the earth.

Glory to God in the highest O come, let us adore Him Christ the Lord Let's close by
singing We Wish You a Merry Christmas to one another, okay?

We wish you a Merry Christmas We wish you a Merry Christmas We wish you a Merry
Christmas And a Happy New Year The tidings we bring to you and your King We wish you
a Merry Christmas And a Happy New Year Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you