

A GREAT LIGHT

Isaiah 9:1-7

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Introduction

Human beings, unlike other species, are cursed with a conscious awareness of their own mortality. I believe that the tragedy of the human condition is that people's awareness and true self-consciousness concerning this existential issue contributes to an ultimate irony: Human beings are both brilliant and aberrant, sensitive and savage, exquisitely caring and painfully different, remarkably creative and incredibly destructive to self and others. The capacity to imagine and conceptualize has negative as well as positive consequences because they predispose anxiety states that culminate in a defensive form of denial.

The tragedy is that the same defenses that enable us to survive the emotional pain of childhood and existential despair are not only maladaptive and limit our personal potential for living a full life, but they inevitably lead to negative behaviors toward others, thereby perpetuating a cycle of destruction. Paradoxically, ideologies and religious beliefs that are a source of spiritual comfort, relief from a sense of aloneness and interpersonal distress also polarize people against one another. Threatened by people with different customs and belief systems, we mistakenly feel that we must overpower or destroy them.

With all of the advances of science and technology, if one takes a proper look at the world situation today, one must consider it to be utter madness. Millions go hungry, genocide reaches epic proportions, ethnic strife and prejudice are omnipresent, there is mass killing in the name of religion and warfare remains a viable solution to our differences. With better, more efficient weapons and less reason, and technology outrunning rationality, human existence on the planet may well be extinguished.

ISAIAH 9:1-7

- A child, from Galilee, will transform the world.

➤ Darkness will be dispelled.

➤ Oppression will be obliterated.

➤ Government will be good.

➤ Righteousness will reign.

➤ God's promises will be proven.

Who is this child?

Jesus (Matthew 4:12-17)