

The Secret to Understanding The Book of Isaiah

Studying the Book of Isaiah, I just wasn't understanding what the messages are all about. I'm not sure why, I guess the author and I have no chemistry. So I switched over to the Message version, and voila, I think I get it now.

See if you can too:

Isaiah 9 (MSG)

A Child Has Been Born—for Us!

But there'll be no darkness for those who were in trouble. Earlier he did bring the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali into disrepute, but the time is coming when he'll make that whole area glorious— the road along the Sea, the country past the Jordan, international Galilee.

²⁻⁷ The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light.
For those who lived in a land of deep shadows—
 light! sunbursts of light!
You repopulated the nation,
 you expanded its joy.
Oh, they're so glad in your presence!
 Festival joy!
The joy of a great celebration,
 sharing rich gifts and warm greetings.
The abuse of oppressors and cruelty of tyrants—
 all their whips and cudgels and curses—
Is gone, done away with, a deliverance
 as surprising and sudden as Gideon's old victory over Midian.
The boots of all those invading troops,
 along with their shirts soaked with innocent blood,
Will be piled in a heap and burned,
 a fire that will burn for days!
For a child has been born—for us!
 the gift of a son—for us!
He'll take over
 the running of the world.
His names will be: Amazing Counselor,
 Strong God,
Eternal Father,
 Prince of Wholeness.
His ruling authority will grow,
 and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings.
He'll rule from the historic David throne
 over that promised kingdom.
He'll put that kingdom on a firm footing
 and keep it going
With fair dealing and right living,
 beginning now and lasting always.
The zeal of God-of-the-Angel-Armies
 will do all this.

God Answered Fire with Fire

8-10 The Master sent a message against Jacob.
It landed right on Israel's doorstep.
All the people soon heard the message,
Ephraim and the citizens of Samaria.
But they were a proud and arrogant bunch.
They dismissed the message, saying,
"Things aren't that bad.
We can handle anything that comes.
If our buildings are knocked down,
we'll rebuild them bigger and finer.
If our forests are cut down,
we'll replant them with finer trees."

11-12 So God incited their adversaries against them,
stirred up their enemies to attack:
From the east, Arameans; from the west, Philistines.
They made hash of Israel.
But even after that, he was still angry,
his fist still raised, ready to hit them again.

13-17 But the people paid no mind to him who hit them,
didn't seek God-of-the-Angel-Armies.
So God hacked off Israel's head and tail,
palm branch and reed, both on the same day.
The big-head elders were the head,
the lying prophets were the tail.
Those who were supposed to lead this people
led them down blind alleys,
And those who followed the leaders
ended up lost and confused.
That's why the Master lost interest in the young men,
had no feeling for their orphans and widows.
All of them were godless and evil,
talking filth and folly.
And even after that, he was still angry,
his fist still raised, ready to hit them again.

18-21 Their wicked lives raged like an out-of-control fire,
the kind that burns everything in its path—
Trees and bushes, weeds and grasses—
filling the skies with smoke.
God-of-the-Angel-Armies answered fire with fire,
set the whole country on fire,
Turned the people into consuming fires,
consuming one another in their lusts—
Appetites insatiable, stuffing and gorging
themselves left and right with people and things.
But still they starved. Not even their children
were safe from their rapacious hunger.
Manasseh ate Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh,
and then the two ganged up against Judah.
And after that, he was still angry,
his fist still raised, ready to hit them again.

So there's the answer: when we just don't comprehend what the scriptures are trying to tell us, try switching, temporarily, to another version!

Isn't it remarkable that we live in an era with multiple versions of the Bible. There's really no excuse people can make anymore as to why they don't read it. The only one that could possibly be true is that they simply don't believe in it.

I pray we never, ever, become like that.

I hope you have an amazing day!!

- Jack