



First Baptist Church At The Villages

Christmas 2019 • birth of a king • isaiah 9:1-7 • for use by groups December 8-14, 2019

MAIN POINT

The birth of King Jesus brings everlasting light into darkness and the promise of certain victory.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the best news you could get right now?

Think back to a time when you desperately needed to hear some good news.

What happened?

What helps you get through tough times?

Isaiah's audience was an entire nation who desperately needed good news. Oftentimes the role of God's prophets was to deliver warnings and judgment, but in today's passage, Isaiah relayed to God's people the greatest news they could ever receive at just the right time: the birth of a King whose reign will never end.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| have a volunteer read Isaiah 9:1-3.

According to verse 1, how was life going for Israel?

"Nevertheless" in verse 1 refers to the dejected and hungry wandering in "distress, darkness, and the gloom of affliction" Isaiah prophesied about in chapter 8 (v. 21-22). It had not been a day of good news, but here a transition took place. Hope was alive.

From verses 2-3, what hope was there for Israel? From verse 3, how significant was this news?

Why do you think Isaiah used the present tense here about a future event?

Can you live with joy in the present even though Jesus' return is in the future?

Explain.

Though He was not fully identified, verse 2 began with a poetic birth announcement for the King of Kings. The light was a sign that God had not completely given up on His people. This light is worthy of boisterous celebration, like when an enemy nation is defeated or an unusually massive harvest comes.

| have a volunteer read isaiah 9:4-5.

What two verbs are used in these verses to describe the results of the birth of the King?

The yoke, rod, and staff were instruments used to dominate people and to enforce physical labor on them. These items could also describe the heavy burden put on people by taxation or domineering rule. These tools of domination are promised to be shattered. The burning of boots and clothes of enemy soldiers signified victory in battle where spoils were dedicated to God.

Yokes of burden exist in many forms. What are some yokes that you recognize existing in The Villages and surrounding regions?

Do you think Isaiah's language here reflects the attitude of most believers today about what Jesus has done for them? Why or why not? What problems are there when we do not understand the severity of our yoke (v. 4)? The certainty of our victory (v. 5)?

Would you say you have experienced Jesus in this way, shattering the yoke and rod of your oppressor? Explain.

It seemed impossible. God's people were weak and distressed. Assyria was a world power. But as in Judges 6-7 when Gideon's small army defeated Midian by the power of God, the impossible victory over sin and death came through Jesus.

| have a volunteer read isaiah 9:6-7.

List everything you learn about Jesus in these verses.

Of these names and facts, which encourages you the most right now? Why?

What assurance did Israel have that this would be accomplished (v. 7)? What assurance do you have that God's zeal is still a factor in the world?

These four names signify the character of the Christ child: Wonderful Counselor (unparalleled wisdom), Eternal Father (love that was, is, and always will be), Prince of Peace (our beholder of peace), and Mighty God (one in power and in authority with God). In Christ and through Christ, there will be no more darkness, no more oppression, and no more defeat (v. 7). The fulfillment of this is certain; God Himself promised to accomplish it.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What comfort does it give you in your current circumstance to know that God fulfilled His promise in Isaiah through the birth of Jesus?

If Jesus shatters the oppressive yoke, then why do so many believers still seem to live in oppression? How does Isaiah 9 help you know what to do about this?

What would it look like for you to live out verse 3 this week, rejoicing before God because of Jesus?

PRAYER

Thank God for acting on your behalf to shatter the yoke of your oppression through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of King Jesus. Invite Him to show you how to live joyfully this week in absolute gratitude.

COMMENTARY

| Isaiah 9:1-7

9:1 Zebulun and Naphtali were two northern tribes hit hard by the Assyrian invasion led by Tiglath-pileser in 733 b.c. At that time, the Assyrians reduced the land holdings of the northern empire and integrated three new provinces into their empire. These three provinces were called Magiddo (Galilee), Du'ru (the Way of the Sea), and Gal'aza (the land east of the Jordan).

9:2 The Assyrian invasion brought great devastation (darkness), but the people still had

great reason to hope (light has dawned). The verbs in this section are in what is often called the “prophetic perfect.” Though the events were in the future, they are described as if they had already happened.

9:4 The type of deliverance the oracle pictures seemed impossible. After all, Assyria was a world power and God’s people were weak and crushed. Thus, the oracle alludes to the day of Midian. This refers to the events of Jdg 6 and 7 when Gideon with just a handful of troops—but with the power of God—defeated the oppressive Midianites and expelled them from the land.

9:6-7 Twice earlier in this section of Isaiah, the birth of children has been described as having prophetic significance (7:14; 8:1-4). For a third time, the reader learns of a future birth. Some commentators believe the text means that this future royal child will be a purely human descendant of David who will be proclaimed king and lead God’s people to a new level of freedom and prosperity. Both Hezekiah and Josiah have been identified as this child. However, the titles given to this child and the description of His kingdom far surpass anything that was applicable to Hezekiah or Josiah. The only feasible interpretation of this passage is messianic. This child will be given names that signify His character. He will be a sage characterized by extraordinary wisdom (Wonderful Counselor). He will have life that is never ending (Eternal Father). He will bring peace (Prince of Peace). But the most extraordinary thing of all that confirms He is simply not to be identified with a Hezekiah or a Josiah is His title, Mighty God (cp. 8:21). In the NT, Jesus is identified as the Davidic descendant who fulfilled this great promise (Mt 1:1,22-23).