

Isaiah 8:19 – 9:7 (New International Version, ©2011)

¹⁹ When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. ²¹ Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. ²² Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

9 ¹ ^[a] Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

³ You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.


⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

a. [Isaiah 9:1](#) In Hebrew texts 9:1 is numbered 8:23, and 9:2-21 is numbered 9:1-20.



Oasis: Ancient Longings Expressed
Isaiah 9

Preface: Welcome to our 7th LC Bible study in our sermon series “Living God’s Story.” This year we are working our way through the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. So fasten your seat belt—it is quite a ride! These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading.

***Study’s BIG idea:** The coming of the Messiah is something for which we yearn—and Isaiah helps prepare us for the Christmas gift that is the real life changer!*

(n.b. Isaiah’s prophetic ministry occurred from 740BC to 700BC and his audience was the southern kingdom of Judah. During this time, the northern kingdom compromised its faith in the LORD, and lost portions of its land (734) and then lost its national existence (722). Isaiah challenges the southern leaders and people to pursue their spiritual longings.)

Possible starter question: It is pretty easy to look forward to something—to get excited about a vacation, a special event, a celebration or a big day. In a similar but more profound way, there are some things in life for which we deeply yearn. What comes to your mind as the kind of things/experiences for which you yearn?

Transitional comment: In today’s passage, the Prophet Isaiah taps into the Hebrew yearnings. He gives voice to their deepest pains and needs—and provides God’s assurance of what they can look forward to as God’s story continues to unfold.

(Ask someone to pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study, opening ours eyes and hearts.)

Let’s listen as our passage is read: Let’s read it in 3 segments. Who would like to read the first chunk (8:19-22)? The second chunk (9:1-5)? And the final part (9:6-7)?

Personal time to re-read and ponder: Take several minutes to read this again on your own. Look for repeated words and ideas. What key contrasts do you see? How do the three paragraphs progress?

Study Discussion of first segment, Isaiah 8:19-22:

- O What are some of the repeated words and ideas in this paragraph?
 - I What do you think is the tone or mood portrayed?
- O In this initial paragraph, Isaiah identifies some of the various problems and troubles the people of Israel are experiencing. What are the issues? What are the results or consequences that Isaiah mentions?
 - I What do you think are the root issues or underlying problems causing their plight?
 - A Which of these problems and troubles are true today?
 - A If Isaiah were describing our society or church today, what might he add about our discontent and plight?
 - A Which ones most gnaw at your life or experience?

Section II, second segment, Is. 9:1-5:

O What contrasts do you notice in this paragraph?

(n.b. Zebulun and Naphtali were tribes in the northern kingdom, and were among the earliest tribes to fall to Assyria. Interestingly, even though the kingdom wasn't re-established, Nazareth and Galilee would become places of great honor in the emerging story. See John 1:46.)

O What changes can be anticipated?

I What yearnings of the Hebrew people do you think Isaiah is tapping into?

I Which yearnings do you share?

A What yearning would you add to this (view it as your Christmas list—your LC's prayer list)?

Section III, third segment, Is. 9:6-7:

O In what ways does Isaiah describe God's provision for making the changes (the change agent)? Talk about the "who" and the richness of names and characteristics.

I What characteristics are most meaningful or thrilling to you?

Summary:

What aspects of Isaiah's prophecy have been fulfilled in the birth of Jesus?

A Which of our/your yearnings are addressed by Jesus' coming? Which yearnings will only be partially met on this side of heaven or until Christ returns?

A Which characteristic/s do you need to tap into this Christmas season, as you seek to more deeply connect with God's provision of Jesus Christ?

A Prayer together: Pray for one another—praising God for his story—his story of intervention into the gloom and doom of the world, and the trouble and problems of people, including our own.

Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

- a. Key verse: Is. 9:2a: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light..."
- b. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge)
- c. Special thanks to Steve Hamilton for his super model, in leading our LC through this passage 2 weeks ago.

Advice to study leaders:

- a. Complement OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- b. Determine the core questions you'll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- c. Always reword questions in words that are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then discard it.) You want to "own" each question.
- d. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- e. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- f. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- g. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching," rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- h. I recommend the 1 vol. New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century ed, IVP). Well worth \$35.