



LC STUDY GUIDE
“Peace Be With Us”
 The Passage: Isaiah 9:1-7
 Nov 27 – Dec 10

Introduction

Welcome to our new Advent series, “Peace Be With Us.” The time of Advent has historically been an invitation to prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christmas. As a Christian community, we want to pause and reflect on our uncertain times, consider the similarities and differences of such times in Scripture, and meditate on and apply the power of Christ’s peace for all people.

Today, we want to look at the prophetic words of Isaiah and open our hearts to what they might mean to us:

Isaiah 9:1-7

¹ 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.

⁶For 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.

⁷Of 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.

○ – Take a few moments to read the passage again privately. What part of the passage caught your attention? Which parts feel familiar? Which don't? Which verses raise questions?

○ – Some context: Isaiah was written with the Assyrian army threatening to invade Israel. The people are not only afraid of the threat but of the coming destruction of their nation. (See verses 8:19-8:22 for immediate context.) Yet there is hope. Identify the themes and words of hope that can be found in the first 5 verses.

I – The first five verses are pivoting from the coming destruction described at the end of Chapter 8. Yet, there is hope for all the people, from the farmer (verse 3b) to the soldier (verse 5). Why do you think Isaiah mentions them?
(The farmer represents provision and the soldier represents protection. And these are two primary functions, among others, that a conquering army would take control of. A demonstration of hope against a more powerful army shows faith in a Deliverer that will restore the nation of Israel, as He is the ultimate provider and protector.)

○ – Verse 6 begins with the oft-quoted words, “For to us a child is born ...” What words and concepts speak to you in verses 6-7?

I – Isaiah is prophesying a returning king from the line of their greatest king, David. Why do you think Isaiah chooses to emphasize “child,” the portion of Jesus' life the Gospels write least about?

(Several probable reasons include:

- *Children represent promise, hope, and future.*
- *It implies the Messiah will not have victory given to him by his father but will be bringing his own victory.*
- *Isaiah brings attention to the extraordinary and miraculous way Jesus will be born.)*

A – As previously mentioned, Israel is under the threat of coming violence and Isaiah uses “Prince of Peace” as a key designation of the promised child. In our present day American context surrounded by different threats, how can we live as people who have surrendered to the “Prince of Peace?”

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
 - b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
 - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
 - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
 - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.