

Session 28

KNOW JESUS

Isaiah 9:1-7

Memory Verse

For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

– ISAIAH 9:6, CSB



Know Jesus

THEOLOGICAL THEME: Isaiah prophesied about the birth of Jesus years in advance to give God's people hope for a different future.

CALL TO ACTION: Consider the attributes of Jesus highlighted in the text/message. Prayerfully consider one attribute to share with a lost and searching person in your life.

Waiting is a part of life. We wait for babies to come. We wait for doctor appointments. We wait for the next season of our favorite show to be released. We wait for our favorite sports to start back. We wait to attend an event or for the opportunity to buy tickets. We wait for our vacation to begin.

Some waiting is filled with positive anticipation while some is fraught with dread. When we know the outcome is going to be something positive, waiting is more enjoyable. When we expect the outcome will likely be hard or negative, the wait can be grueling. The experience of waiting is also affected by the length of time required. Waiting for a clear amount of time is often more bearable than waiting for an extended or even unknown period.



What is the longest you have waited for something and what was it?



What is the hardest thing you've waited on? The most exciting?



How does knowing the length of the wait time affect your perspective?

Session Summary

Studying a traditional Christmas message at a different time gives us insight into the truth about Jesus's birth and how it applies to our lives. We all have things we are waiting on that sometimes cause us to question the Lord. This passage reminds us that God will do exactly what He says He will do. Even though Isaiah spoke about Jesus coming to earth as a man years before it happened, every word was factual and fulfilled just as he said. Though they didn't know when it would come to pass, the people believed what God said and it gave them hope for the future.

Now, we anticipate the second coming of Jesus with hope and joy because we know God will keep His promise. Though we don't know the day or time this will happen, believers can live secure in relationship with Jesus and trust all we know to be true about Him as described by Isaiah. We wait with anticipation as we believe the Lord.

1. The Hope (Isaiah 9:1-2)

Up to this point, Isaiah warned Israel about the consequences they would experience due to their rebellion and idolatry. Previous chapters record grave warnings of the coming Assyrian invasion and consequent defeat the Israelites in the Northern Kingdom would face. Imagine the disbelief, fear, angst, stress, and worry these dire predictions would bring. Knowing of negative events in advance can be harder than being taken by surprise because you have more time to build dreadful anticipation.



What does it teach you about God that He didn't leave the people without hope? What does it teach you about God that the hope He spoke of would not bring direct relief for the current generation?

The coming invasion would be terrible and especially devastating for the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun. It is notable that the region of Galilee would be overtaken when the Assyrians invaded from the north but was going to receive a special blessing in the coming of the Messiah. The humiliation Israel would suffer as they were invaded by their enemies would be turned to respect and honor at a future point.

? When have you experienced hope from the Lord in a time of difficulty?


Terrible days and times would come, but God offered hope amid the doom and gloom. Although God is just and allows His people to reap the consequences of our sin and rebellion, He always provides a path to the hope of right relationship with Him.

In this passage Isaiah referenced the light coming to the darkness. On this side of the New Testament, we know Jesus is “the light of the world” (John 8:12), and He was the One Isaiah spoke of. Isaiah could not have known exactly how the Lord would fulfill this promise of light and special blessing to the region of Galilee, but the people could trust God’s promise that it would happen. Living on this side of the cross, with full access to the completed Scriptures, we see the perfect fulfillment of all God said through Isaiah and the hope that arrived with Jesus.


? Application: What are you waiting on the Lord for with hope? How are all of God’s people waiting with hope at this point in the story of God’s redemption?

2. The Joy (Isaiah 9:3-5)

Joy and gladness would accompany the ministry of the promised Messiah. Given that the people were in a time of invasion and battling for their land, it makes sense that they envisioned a political or military leader who would come and bring military victory over their enemies. Even the language in these verses lends itself to that type of imagery.

 **The people had misguided expectations about Jesus. What are some wrong ideas people have about Jesus today?**

Though Isaiah's words may not have had the implications the people expected, it was clear a great change would come by the hand of the Lord. Isaiah described a time when the harvest would pay off and the people would again enjoy the bounty of the land. Again, Isaiah used language of enjoying the spoils after a victory to describe the way in which God would secure victory on behalf of His people.

 **How does future hope encourage you to persevere through difficulty now? What future hope empowers all followers of Christ to continue for His sake in the world?**

“The day of Midian” (v. 4) was a reference to the account of Gideon defeating Midian in unlikely circumstances against all odds. God was encouraging them that they too would experience the great joy and complete victory that Gideon enjoyed with the defeat of Midian (Judges 7). This was another reminder of God's past work in the lives of the people of Israel that would bolster their confidence of His power and work in their current difficulty.

These different promises of coming joy each have correlation to the spiritual work Jesus does in the lives of believers. Breaking the yoke of burden, or the rod of the oppressor, describes the complete victory we can experience through faith in Christ. Although the Israelites would hear these promises and connect them directly to political and military victories, we have hope today that whatever is happening in this world, we will share in complete victory through Jesus. This victory was not secured through earthly military dominance but by the spilled blood of Christ on the cross.

? Application: What does the way Jesus secured victory for His people teach you about the way He wants you to live in the world?


3. The Glory (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Although this familiar passage is widely quoted at Christmastime, it has many implications and applications for our lives throughout the year. Isaiah painted a picture of the glory to come when the Messiah finally appeared. Even though these words were written centuries before Jesus came to the earth, they gave a robust description of the One to come.


? Which of these descriptions of the Messiah stand out to you? Does anything strike you differently as you consider these titles outside of the context of the Christmas season?

Isaiah's words pointed to the Messiah who would come as a child. He would be Immanuel, God with us. The Messiah would be fully God and fully man. In time, that perfect man died as the substitution for our sin and brought restoration for the brokenness in this fallen world. Viewing the words of Isaiah in relation to the complete work of Scripture gives further meaning and clarity to what he said. Those who heard it in real time didn't have the benefit of knowing all the details about how this powerful prophecy happened exactly as it was predicted.

The prophetic reference to the government being on His shoulders will ultimately be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns to earth at His second coming. Just as these verses gave believers in that day hope, they give believers today hope to cling to when the world is difficult and hard.

 How does the anticipation of the second coming give you hope for daily life?


We are in a waiting period as the people were in Isaiah's day. Although we may want God to fulfill His promises now or at least know when they are going to come to fruition, we can rest assured that every promise of the Lord will come to pass just as He said. In the meantime, we can abide in our Messiah, the One described in Isaiah 9. Jesus is your Wonderful Counselor. Listen to Him and take direction from Him. He is Almighty God. Nothing is beyond the scope of His power, and you can trust Him to do the impossible. When you feel tired or worn down you can rest in the arms of your Everlasting Father. Instead of giving in to stress or anxiety about your circumstances, allow the Prince of Peace to minister to you and turn your heart toward Him.

 Application: Where do you feel most in need of God's counsel, power, comfort, or peace today?


Conclusion

Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 9 was not only meant to point to the events of Christmas but is truth for every day. Through Isaiah, the Lord spoke words of promise to the people of the coming Messiah. This provided hope for Israel, despite the coming hardship of exile and oppression. Though it would be generations before this came to pass, they believed and trusted God would do what He said. The Israelites raised future generations to know these words and to hold tightly to the hope found in them.

As the world continues in sin and evil seems to prosper, we cling to the promised hope of Jesus's return. Just as Isaiah prophesied about the birth of Jesus, he also spoke about the return of Jesus that we look forward to today. Every word of the Lord will come to pass, and we can cling to the promised hope we will experience when Jesus Christ comes back to establish His kingdom finally. Until that day, we wait with anticipation and the assurance all of this will happen in God's perfect timing.

 How would your life look different if you lived each day in true anticipation of the return of Christ? How can you seek to make that a focus moving forward?

 How can our group encourage and remind one another of the hope we have in Christ?

 Who can you have a gospel conversation with by sharing from today's passage?

Memorize

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- Isaiah 9:6, CSB