

The Coming Light

1. Tell of a rescue operation you have witnessed or heard of that made a significant impression on you. What made it so memorable to you?

Invitation to Pray: Ask the Lord to reveal Himself and His will for you as you open His Word.

In dangerous times, God used three very special names to promise Judah His sure deliverance from their enemies (chapters 7-8). At the same time, it's clear that a day of reckoning is ahead for them as well. But wrapped up in one of the names, Immanuel, God gives an ultimate promise of rescue and blessing that is beyond all imagination.

Scan quickly back through Isaiah 8, words aimed at Israel but meant for Judah to hear.

2. Isaiah 8:16-22 shows two different responses in times of peril, Isaiah's and Israel's (and to a degree, Judah is pictured here as well). Tell briefly what you observe.
3. How do the descriptive words of vv. 19-22 give us insight into what sin is and what it does in human lives?

Read Isaiah 9:1-5. In the Assyrian attack that was still just ahead, the areas mentioned in 9:1 (located in the northeast corner of Israel) would be the very first to experience invasion and deportation. Although from Isaiah's perspective this event was yet to take place, notice he uses the past tense in this opening verse. This tells us that he is now being taken far into the future. (There are great prophetic details in this section which we will investigate later in the study.)

4. The opening of Isaiah 9 tells us to expect something new or surprising.
 - a. In 9:1-2, how are these future people initially described, before any help comes? (Note similarities to 8:21-22.)
 - b. Verses 1-5 show God's intent for these people in this kind of situation. List what you see happening. (Note contrasts with the end of chapter 8.)

5. The darkness and distress Isaiah saw in his own day would still surround the people in this future time, and for all the same basic reasons. Yet as you have read 9:1-5:
 - a. Who alone is shown at work here, desiring and accomplishing these things?
 - b. Why is this significant—what do you think this teaches the people of Isaiah’s time and us?

Note: You may enjoy scanning Judges 7, the story of the defeat of Midian referred to in Isaiah 9:4. As you read, consider why God chose to remind them of this particular story here.

In a measure, these first verses of Isaiah 9 speak of God’s promised destruction of the Assyrian army and empire. But some even greater, infinitely more far-reaching future events are in view. **Continue on by reading Isaiah 9:6-7.** The opening word ‘for’ tells us we are about to see the real bottom line for the ultimate promises made in verses 1-5.

6. Back in Isaiah 7:14-16, what encouraging reminder was God giving to Judah by using the name Immanuel (‘God with us’) in their time of trouble?
7. There were further amazing truths contained in this name. What is going to happen? Isaiah 9:6a and see Matthew 1:18-23, Luke 1:26-33, Hebrews 1:1-3. (Later passages in Isaiah will have much more to say about Jesus’ life and work.)
8. How will God “honor” or “make glorious” the area of Galilee in the future? Isaiah 9:1, Matthew 4:12-17. (To **dig deeper**, note again Luke 1:26-27, then Matthew 2.)

Isaiah 9:1-5 ultimately foresees final deliverance and earthly pre-eminence for God’s embattled people. But as we’ve seen, vv. 1-2 also picture the time of Jesus’ first coming, when not only the Jewish political situation was dark (under Roman occupation, no word from God for 400 years, no sign of Messiah), but their spiritual condition was even darker and more deadly. Though the time for the nation’s glorious reign was still far off, Jesus had come to accomplish something even greater for them and all the world, and He still offers it to all who believe today!

9. What are some ways He has fulfilled the promises in vv. 2-4 for us? See also Colossians 1:12-14, John 8:34-36, I Corinthians 15:24-26.

Whether our personal bent is to chase after unrighteousness or self-righteousness, every human being has turned away from God and trusted his own strategies instead. The result has always been darkness, bondage and destruction, and the only answer has always been God Himself. He is light and life, and to have Him with us and in us is what we were created for! To our great blessing and joy, He's a God who continually pursues us, even into our darkness. In Christ Jesus, God Himself drew near and gave all that He is forever to all who put their faith in Him.

10. Take a close look at what is revealed about the Savior in Isaiah 9:6. Tell what your Lord is teaching you as you look at each line. As any phrase or name especially touches you, tell why it particularly applies to your life today.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given

And the government shall be upon (rest upon) His shoulders

And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor

The Mighty God

The Everlasting Father

The Prince of Peace

Note: Scholars point out that “Everlasting Father” might be better translated “Father of eternity”, based on the common Hebrew idiom of calling the possessor or source of a thing its ‘father’. Others would add that the phrase emphasizes both the eternity of the Son as well as His tender protective compassion and care. This phrase does not teach that the Son is the Father. The relationship between the Persons of the Trinity is mysterious, but the distinctions are clearly and repeatedly drawn throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

11. Read and enjoy the wonderful certainties found in verse 7. Why is all of this so sure?

“The zeal of the LORD Almighty” speaks of God’s holy fervor, power and passion for righteousness and for His people. “Zeal” contains the idea of jealous desire for exclusive relationship, as in a marriage. Human jealousy can be selfish and destructive possessiveness but God’s zeal and jealousy for His people are blessed, pure and worthy. W.E. Vine writes “His zeal is a fire of indignation against all who mistreat His people and a fire that burns with such a love for them and zeal for their welfare that it must consume all unfaithfulness in their midst.”

Read Isaiah 9:8-21. Remember that God had singled out Israel to know Him intimately, to rely on and receive His constant miraculous protection and blessing, and to share this glorious relationship with their own children, each other and the surrounding lost world He loved. This section not only describes the state of the northern kingdom in Isaiah’s time, but it shows a pattern God’s people had so often followed during their centuries in the Land.

12. From these verses, briefly sum up what you see Israel choosing and becoming.
vv. 8-10
vv. 11,13

vv. 16-17

vv. 18-21

13. Way at the beginning of this downward spiral they experienced failure and painful destruction as their false gods and allies failed to protect them in time of attack (v. 10). Yet depending on their response, that experience could have turned out to be one of the best, most merciful things that ever happened to them. Why?
14. The Lord of Isaiah 9:1-7 is the same Lord of Isaiah 9:8-21. From what you have learned of Him, what do you think is behind His actions in this ending passage?
15. Take time to look back over this entire passage and study. What do you want to most remember this week?