



1: HOPE (Advent)

Advent begins with **HOPE**—and not the wishful kind, but the confident expectation that God will do exactly what He promised. Long before Jesus ever walked the shores of Galilee, Isaiah spoke of **a great light** that would rise in the very place Israel most associated with loss, gloom, and Gentile influence; and that **promise** became a **Person**.

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teachingnotes

* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

The term **ADVENT** is derived from the Latin word *ADVENTUS* meaning “coming” or “arrival.” Early Christians who used this term in appreciation of the 1st coming of Jesus and anticipation of the 2nd coming of Jesus - His birth & His future RETURN.

HOPE - a word of anticipation, often used when looking forward to better days - exactly what was being spoken by the prophet Isaiah to the people in the middle of difficult days.

Isaiah 9:1

Nevertheless, the gloom of the distressed land will not be like that of the former times when He humbled the land of **Zebulun** and the land of **Naphtali**. But in the future **He will bring honor to the way of the sea**, to the land east of the Jordan, and to **Galilee of the nations**.

Zebulun and **Naphtali** are 2 of the 12 tribes of Israel (Northern Israel), the first area enemies of Israel would have to conquer to move further south into Israel. Many lives were lost here over the years, a place of **gloom** and **distress**. **Galilee** was located on the international trade and travel route passing through Israel, so the Galileans profited from the trade and the taxes collected from caravans and travelers passing through their region. Because of this, there was a lot of mixing between Jews and Gentiles - which many Jews further south didn't appreciate.¹

Further, Galilee had a large population of both Jews and Gentiles around the Lake. The Gentile region known as the “Decapolis” - “10 Cities” was on the East and Southeast side of the Sea/Lake of Galilee, and Tiberias (named after the Emperor) had a large Gentile population. As such, this place, “Galilee of the nations” wasn't even considered as a place the Jewish Messiah would come from.

John 7:41–42 Others said, “This is the Messiah.” But some said, “**Surely the Messiah** doesn't come from Galilee, does he? Doesn't the Scripture say that the Messiah comes from David's offspring and from the town of Bethlehem, where David lived?”

And yet, 700 years before the birth & ministry of Jesus, Isaiah prophesies that this region called **Galilee** - the perpetual black eye of Israel - would become the place where God would honor...**Galilee of the nations**.

Isaiah 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen **a great light**; **a light** has dawned on those living in the land of darkness.

In the future, this area of Northern Israel would be the first to see **a great light**. This wasn't just HOPE for the Jewish people, but also for Gentiles since many Gentiles lived in these regions - hence the phrase, “Galilee of the nations”. Isaiah not only speaks to *WHERE* this great light is to be seen, but also *WHO* this light really is.

Isaiah 9:6 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**.

There would be **a child born, a son**. Second, **the government will be on His shoulders**. Whoever this is would be different than other leaders who left the business to others while they lived in kingly comfort. This **child** - who would grow into a KING - would fulfill His duties of justice, protection, and provision for His people.

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Note: the NET translates this as “Extraordinary Strategist”. The Hebrew term suggests it should be translated literally as “one who counsels wonders”, referring - in context - to a King who is a great military strategist.² We should recognize this King as much more than *a therapist* who helps us solve all our problems, but *a Conquering King* whose plans will not be thwarted - Someone with unmatched wisdom, whose enemies can't thwart, trick, or conquer.

¹ J. Carl Laney, “Galilee,” ed. John D. Barry et al., The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

² Biblical Studies Press, The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible (Biblical Studies Press, 2005).

MIGHTY GOD

No Israelite or Judean king was ever identified as “Mighty God.”³ Jehovah’s Witnesses are quick to say, “Yes, Jesus is called ‘Mighty God’ but not ‘Almighty God’.” This claim falls on its face when we see that Yahweh is also called “Mighty God (’ēl gibbôr)” in Isaiah 10:21 and Jer 32:18.

- So, this CHILD, this SON, is also Yahweh God!

EVERLASTING FATHER

These 2 terms - EVERLASTING & FATHER - point to the Promised King as the **Everlasting**/Eternal - **Father**/Creator - the Source of Life - the Provider & Protector of His children. Isaiah’s ancient audience would have to wrestle down the idea that the CREATOR OF ALL - the EVERLASTING FATHER - was somehow coming to Earth, as a child.

PRINCE OF PEACE

There IS a future time coming when this King WILL bring **peace** in the eternal kingdom with no more death, no more war, and no more sin, but the **Prince of Peace** would first come to make PEACE between God and man, reconciling the enemies of God and giving them PEACE in their SOULS (2 Cor 5:17-18), that should lead to peace between people.

Isaiah 9:7

The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness **from now on and forever.** The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

Isaiah writes that once the Promised King comes, He will be large & in charge, seated **on the throne of David**...from that time on and **forever!** And **the dominion** of this king’s kingdom will expand well beyond the borders of Israel. “The empire of grace will forever expand.”⁴

WHO could meet all of these qualifications? A male child born, who becomes “a great light” starting in Zebulun & Naphtali - Galilee of the nations; a king who reigns over David’s kingdom forever, a kingdom that spreads over the whole earth; a king who will be known as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

WHO could meet all of these qualifications?

Matthew 4:13-16

He left **Nazareth** and went to live in **Capernaum by the sea**, in the region of **Zebulun** and **Naphtali**. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: Land of **Zebulun** and land of **Naphtali**, along the road by the sea, beyond the Jordan, **Galilee of the Gentiles**. The people who live in darkness have seen **a great light**, and for those living in the land of the shadow of death, **a light has dawned**.

The Promise of HOPE - future for Isaiah’s audience, present for Matthew’s audience, and both a past/present HOPE for us! Jesus IS the HOPE the Scriptures spotlight.

This is Good News! But...it’s only good news...if people hear it in time. And...it’s only good news if you respond in time - don’t wait too late!

❓ Who are you PRAYING FOR? Who are you SHARING the HOPE of Jesus WITH?

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156).

³ John N. Oswalt, Isaiah, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003), 160–161.

⁴ Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. and R. Kent Hughes, Isaiah: God Saves Sinners, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 100.

Discussion questions

These discussion questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.

Understanding the Context

1. Why were the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali considered places of gloom and distress in Isaiah's day?
2. How does understanding the history and geography of Galilee of the nations help us appreciate Isaiah's prophecy more deeply?

Seeing Jesus in Isaiah 9

3. Isaiah says a "great light" will dawn in a land known for darkness. How does Matthew 4 show this prophecy fulfilled in Jesus?
4. Which title from Isaiah 9:6 stands out to you most—Wonderful Counselor / Extraordinary Strategist, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, or Prince of Peace—and why?
5. What does it mean that the coming child is not just empowered by God but identified as God (Mighty God, Everlasting Father)?

Hope in Jesus Today

6. How does Isaiah's message of hope to a suffering people mirror our need for hope today?
7. Where do people around us commonly look for hope, and how does that hope fall short compared to Christ?
8. How does Jesus bring light into the darkness of your life right now?

The Kingdom That Keeps Growing

9. Isaiah says the King's dominion will be vast and "its prosperity will never end." In what ways do you see Christ's kingdom expanding today?
10. How does the eternal nature of Jesus' kingdom give you confidence in uncertain times?

Peace Through the Prince of Peace

11. What's the difference between worldly peace (like the 1914 Christmas Truce) and the peace Jesus gives?
12. How has Jesus brought peace into your relationship with God—and how does that shape peace with others?

Responding to the Message

13. The sermon noted that the Good News is only good if people hear it in time. How does that truth challenge the way you pray, share, and live this week?
14. Who is someone in your life walking in spiritual darkness who needs to see the light of Christ through you? What is one step you will take this week to share the HOPE of Jesus with them?

Personal Reflection

15. Where are you personally needing HOPE—real, God-given hope—this Advent season?
16. How would your week change if you lived like Jesus truly is your Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace?