

# HOPE HAS A NAME

## **Introduction:**

***Isaiah 9:1-7***

Isaiah 9 rings most familiar to many Christians when they think about Old Testament prophecies concerning the birth of Christ. You may not have known where it is, but between Handel's chorus in *Messiah* and Linus' monologue in *Charlie Brown Christmas*, these words are very familiar to us. Unfortunately, as John MacArthur says, this passage is like an ornament we pull out of the attic around Christmas time. Through our small group study this week and this month's sermon series, *Hope Has A Name*, we will see the significance of this promise for Isaiah's original audience and the hope we have today in its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

## **This week's main point:**

**God replaced gloom and darkness with joy and hope through the birth of a child.**

This passage starts off a little puzzling if we are not familiar with ancient geography! This passage refers to two locations in Israel, "Zebulun" which means 'dwelling' or 'habitation' and "Naphtali" meaning 'the one that struggles or fights'. When this passage begins by saying that God is bringing contempt (or scorn) to the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali he is addressing the unbelief of his people. The very ones that he dwelt among were also the ones fighting against his rule and love. So through judgement ("Jordan"), he will bring his hope to the nations. Verse 2 says that "those in darkness have seen a great light." This light will bring joy, remove oppression, and end suffering. The light will come as a child who is a Governor, Counselor, God, and Prince.

This passage does not have any commands, only a promise. God called Abraham to be a channel of blessing to all people. The temple was intended to be a house of prayer for all the peoples. David's kingdom was meant to be a light to all nations. But where all of these failed, this child, Jesus, would fulfill God's promise to rescue people from all nations and establish a new kingdom. Christmas celebrates the inauguration of all God's promises fulfilled.

## **Sermon Response Question:**

1) In the sermon, Pastor J.D. discussed how God is the Wonderful Counselor. Share something from the sermon that will help you approach God as the Wonderful Counselor.

## **Read Isaiah 9:1-7.**

## **Bible Study Questions:**

2) As a group, remind one another of the context Isaiah 9 was written in and read Isaiah 8:11-22. What is the spiritual state of God's people when this prophecy is given?

3) Go through verses 9:1-5 and make a list of all the words that point to darkness or pain. How are these words and themes different than when we saw them in chapter 8?

# HOPE HAS A NAME

4) What do we learn about Jesus in verses 6-7?

5) Of these names and facts listed in question 4, which encourages you most? which gives you the most hope? Why?

6) What does it mean that the “government shall be upon his shoulder,” that “there will be no end to his increase or peace,” and that he will both “establish and uphold” this kingdom?

7) How has Jesus, the promised child of this passage, fulfilled this prophecy and made the dark world “light up”?

## ***Application Questions:***

8) This week’s sermon addressed the tension many people feel about Christianity, and Christmas in particular. What does the Bible have to say to real people in real situations? How do you struggle to connect God’s promises, like in Isaiah 9:6-7, with the real circumstances you face in your life?

## ***Prayer:***

- Thank God for acting on your behalf to shatter the yoke of oppression through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- Invite him to show you how to live joyfully this week, in absolute gratitude.