

Isaiah 9: 1-7 (New International Version)

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 Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan-

2 The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death ^[a]
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 men 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.

6 For 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, ^[b] Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase 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.

Footnotes:

- a. [Isaiah 9:2](#) Or *land of darkness*
- b. [Isaiah 9:6](#) Or *Wonderful, Counselor*

OASIS: Hope for the Nation (Isaiah 9: 1-7)

Possible Starter question: **As we look about at our world, what are some of the reasons or ways that it feels significantly GLOOMY?**

Transitional idea/comment: **People really do have a gloomy outlook—and for legitimate reasons. However, in today’s passage, we are going to consider a decisive factor, an ironic turning point that challenges the gloom!**

- Pray for the Holy Spirit’s leading (if you haven’t already prayed)
- Read text either aloud or silently (or both).

Overview question: **What are some repeated words or ideas in this passage?** (darkness, light, rejoicing, war, alternative kingdom, etc.)

First section—verses 1-5:

- O What do you learn about their experience of gloom?
- O What has the Lord promised to do? What differences will it make for the people?

Note: Zebulun and Naphtali were the first two of the tribes of Israel that fell to conquering Assyria within months of Isaiah’s meeting with Ahaz (see Is. 7: 1-9). Yet this promise is that they will be the first part of Israel to see the glory of God!

- O What are some of the contrasting words or ideas that distinguish the gloomy times from the future time to which Isaiah is prophesizing?
 - I How might Isaiah have hoped that the people would respond or feel about these contrasts and this prophecy? What other reactions do you suspect were there also?

Second section—verses 6-7:

- O Now we come to the decisive factor, the turning point? What (who) is it and what makes it surprising or perplexing?
- O What do we learn about who this person is (his character, identity)?
- O What do we learn about what he will do (his actions, the difference he will make?)
 - I What do you find in these two verses that sparks hope in you?

Summary and application:

I In what way/s does this passage contribute to the Christmas story?

A What are the insights about hope that you want to embrace?

A What are some practical ways that you can express or extend that hope to your friends, colleagues and neighbors?

Pray for that personal reality and those opportunities to share hope.

Alternative: Offer prayers of Advent praise that spring from Is. 9.

Text is on other page or www.Biblegateway.com

- a. BIG idea: HOPE
 - b. Key verses: your choice!
 - c. Today's text is prophecy, with allusions to the past but clear emphasis on God's promises about the future. Notice how the discontent of "their present" can prepare the way for the desire for the future. While God will do it (and has!), the question remains the same, will be decide to align ourselves with God's design.
 - d. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge).
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Advice to leaders:

- a. Complement your OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? What do others of you see/think?)
- b. Always reword questions in wording that is comfortable for you (if the question doesn't make sense to you, then drop it.)
- c. When you ask questions, how quickly do people answer or respond? How long do you wait? (avoid answering your own questions).
- d. Pace the study—move on—conclude strong, ending with "**difference making**" application.
- e. Determine the core questions you will ask (and know which ones to skip if pressed for time)
- f. Secondary or parallel texts—be very discreet and sparing in your usage (can distract or de-power).
- g. If you are utilizing this "on-line" study and not part of OASIS, I recommend that you get the IVP one volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary (21st Century Edition). It is well worth the \$40 or whatever it costs.