

# LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

First Sunday in Advent

December 1, 2024

*The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of the shadow of death  
a light has dawned.*

Isaiah 9:2

## We all know darkness

### 1. Beginning in Isaiah:

- 1) Isaiah knows darkness, geopolitical and spiritual
- 2) Everyone walking in or living under the “shadow” needs this promise of light
- 3) Isaiah introduces us to God’s holiness and salvation

### 2. Visualizing the message of Isaiah:

The infographic is a comprehensive visual summary of the Book of Isaiah. It features a central title 'ISAIAH' in a stylized font, with the subtitle 'Suffering-Servant-King Covenant Family of All Nations Hope for a Renewed Creation'. The main content is organized into six large panels, each representing a different range of chapters. Each panel includes illustrations of key events and figures, along with text boxes that explain the significance of those events. For example, the '1-12 JUDGMENT & HOPE FOR JERUSALEM' panel shows the destruction of Old Jerusalem and the vision of a purified New Jerusalem. The '40-48 ANNOUNCEMENT OF HOPE' panel depicts the prophet Isaiah's vision of the Messiah and the promise of a new king. The '56-66 THE SERVANTS INHERIT GOD'S KINGDOM' panel shows the inclusion of all nations into God's covenant family. A large vertical banner in the center reads 'EXILE!', which is a key theme of the book. The infographic is created by 'The Bible Project'.

created by the Bible Project

## Putting the *analogia scripturae* to work: Isaiah 9:1-7

*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—*

- <sup>2</sup> *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*
- <sup>3</sup> *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.*
- <sup>4</sup> *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.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood  
will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.*
- <sup>6</sup> *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, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*
- <sup>7</sup> *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.*

### 1. Hermeneutic keys for reading the prophets

- 1) Always begin with a commitment to read all Scripture as God's inspired word
- 2) The prophets are preparing God's people for Messiah in their message of judgement and restoration
- 3) Golden Rule: "Read the author as you would have the author read you."
- 4) one picture, multiple fulfillments

2. Isaiah has already made clear the prophetic pattern of Judah's judgement and restoration, which began with the distress of the land of the north, but this prophecy looks forward to a future restoration, one that reverses the Assyrian judgment.

3. God's 4-part provision for this restored community hints at the unexpected divine/human nature of the one who brings this "great light"

4. Isaiah refers to three of the great Old Testament promises fulfilled in Jesus: the child/offspring of Genesis 3:15; the son promise of Genesis 15:1-6; and the Davidic kingship promise of 2 Samuel 7

5. Isaiah is certain that this "forever" restoration will be a God thing

## How can Doug be so sure? (And what it means for us.)

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— <sup>14</sup> to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>15</sup> “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,  
the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

<sup>16</sup> the people living in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

<sup>17</sup> From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”  
Matthew 4 (See also the end of Zechariah’s Song in Luke 2:76-80.)

### 1. Darkness is the default where God is not at work

<sup>18</sup> The In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

<sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Genesis 1

### 2. Darkness is the result of rebelling against God and rejecting his salvation

<sup>5</sup> “They know nothing, they understand nothing.

They walk about in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

Psalm 82 (Remember the Isaiah 1:2-2:5 pattern.)

<sup>18</sup> The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

<sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Romans 1 (John also uses the darkness theme, see John 1:1-5, 3:19, 8:18; 1 John 1:5-7.)

### 3. The light Jesus brings becomes a beautiful picture of Jesus’ message of repentance

<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 1 (See also 1 John 2:8-9.)

<sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord.

Ephesians 5 (The first time “light” appears in Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians.)

## **Resources for further study**

The Bible Project's Colossians poster is available at <https://bibleproject.com/downloads/posters/>

I appreciated this "Three Things You Should Know about Isaiah" article at [2022 printing](#)

Spurgeon has series of sermons on Isaiah 9 at <https://www.biblebb.com/brefindex/isa.htm>

The ESV Study Bible has a wonderful introduction to Isaiah (Crossway, 2008) which are included in these notes.

For a refresher in hermeneutics, I recommend James Packer at

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelos/article/hermeneutics-and-biblical-authority-2/>