

Isaiah 9:1-7

1 But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. 2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. 3 You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. 4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day

of Midian. 5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Summary

900 years before Jesus Christ was born the prophet Isaiah spoke of his arrival as being the dawning of a great light for a people in darkness. The theme of light is one that is commonly celebrated at Christmas time, offering hope of a world without chaos and darkness.

In Isaiah's day the people of Israel were stuck in 'darkness' as a result of straying from God. They sought light in earthly leaders, spirituality or other natural sources. But scripture shows that the source of true light is God, who created light (Gen 1:3), His word is a light (Ps 119:108) dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim 6:16), and even 'is light' (1 John 1:7) Therefore God says that the only way that true light can come into the world is through Himself, and this is the message of Christmas. This 'child' who will be born (Isaiah 9:6) is the Word of God Himself made flesh, the true light that has come into the world.

Whilst many may desire the peace that comes from walking in the light, we are sometimes afraid of what it might expose in our lives. Fortunately this light of the world came not only to expose but also to heal, that all darkness in us might be driven out by his glorious light.

Final Thoughts

Take time this week to dwell on the verse "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" – 1 John 1:5. What does this mean for your life?

RHC Core Values

Gospel-Centredness – To have the gospel in the centre of our ministry, and for everything we do to find its root in the gospel.

Experimental Faith – To actively seek the modern day work of the Holy Spirit, expecting him to move in our midst in signs and wonders, and to lead us to the will of God.

Theological Depth – To pursue a deep and soul satisfying knowledge and understanding of God through the Bible.

Key Points

1. The true light we all long for is only ultimately found in Christ who both illuminates and heals.

Questions

1. What is comforting about light? In what way do you long for light?
2. What is the light that you try to walk by? Is it Christ or other lesser lights that don't fully reveal the truth about life?
3. What areas of your life that are still in darkness? How does Jesus shine light on those areas?
4. God calls his people to be a light to the world (Matt 5:14). How can you do this more effectively?