

A First Church Christmas: An Ancient Christmas - The Child

Scripture: Isaiah 9: 1-7

Questions

1. Pastor Rob joked about it officially being the Christmas season, so even the holdouts can start celebrating! Who in your group just put up decorations on the day after Thanksgiving? Anyone still not put any up? Be sure to identify the Grinchiest person in the group. :)
2. Let's pray together that as we study the child who is the Prince of Peace that peace will reign in our hearts through Him even today.
3. **Major point: Christmas shows up even in the darkness.** The context for Isaiah 9 is the impending exile of the people of God. The news of a child who would sit on the throne of David was a massive light in that darkness. During World War I in 1914 at the Western Front, with the armies deeply entrenched in their battle lines, Christmas showed up. On Christmas Day, the soldiers laid down their weapons, met in the "no man's land" between the trenches, and celebrated together. They recognized their shared humanity, their need for peace at Christmas, and they shook hands, sang songs, and even kicked a ball around together. Has anyone heard that story before? Can you believe that happened? How do you think it played out? How does this demonstrate the unique feel of Christmas?
4. **Let's get our facts straight.** Did Isaiah prophesy before, during, or after the exile? (before) Was Isaiah a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel, or the southern kingdom of Judah? (Judah) Is Isaiah considered a major or a minor prophet? (major) Can you name two other famous passages in Isaiah? (many options, like chpt 53 of the suffering servant, chpt 7 on the virgin birth, chpt 6 on vision of the throne room, chpt 40 on soar on wings like eagles, chpt 61 which Jesus reads in the synagogue about himself)
5. **Jesus is Wonderful Counselor.** In what ways has Jesus been a wonderful counselor to you in your life? Have you seen Him speak wisdom into someone's life around you?
6. **Jesus is Mighty God.** Notice that this prophecy could never apply to a mere human king since Jews only believe in one God, unlike their pagan neighbors. Therefore only Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, could fulfill this requirement. Why do you think the Pharisees were confused about Jesus' divinity if Isaiah had already predicted that the Messiah would be called Mighty God?
7. **Jesus is Everlasting Father.** Pastor Rob mentioned the title of "Abba" as an informal name for God, similar to Dad. How easy is it for you to think of God as "Dad"? When you pray and picture God, is He more fatherly or more kingly? Is he more supernatural and majestic in your mind's eye or ready to give you a hug?
8. **Jesus is the Light of the World!** If we follow him, then like Matthew 5 says, we are the light of the world as well. Which of your neighbors needs an invitation from you to come to Christmas Eve service? Which service are you going to?
9. Close in prayer together.