



Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Isaiah 9.2-7 | November 27, 2016

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we begin a short break from our Acts series To the Ends of the Earth, instead celebrating Advent, the good news of God's arrival in the person of Jesus.

We're calling our Christmas series Home for the Holidays, but not only because this season affords us the opportunity to reunite with family and friends. There's an even deeper, more profound reason: It is only through Jesus, the One who left His home in heaven, that we can be adopted into the family of God. May we, indeed, come home for the holidays!

II. Connecting with One Another

What is your favorite memory of "home"? Why?

If you're meeting in a group, take some time to discuss it together.

If you're meeting on your own, take a few moments to reflect upon that memory, thanking God for it.

III. Study the Text

- a. Before engaging this week's text, read Isaiah 8.11-22. It describes the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah and their response to the threat posed by the invading Assyrian Empire (c. 740-715 BC).

How have the people reacted to this threat?

To whom have they turned to learn of the future (verse 19)?

How have they responded toward God (see verse 21)?

What is their spiritual state (verse 22)?

How do you respond when you're threatened?

To whom – or what – do you turn to?

- b. Read Isaiah 9.1.

The tone shifts as chapter 9 begins. Zebulun and Naphtali were areas in Israel (the Northern Kingdom) that had been decimated by the invading Assyrians in 734-732. The suffering, death, and devastation were most severe in these areas. See 2nd Kings 15.29.

And yet, what promise is given?

- c. In the past, God "humbled" these two lands (verse 1). The Hebrew means to be "brought low" or "brought into contempt."

What purpose does humbling serve in the life of a believer? When has God humbled you?

- d. In contrast, the promise is that "God will 'honor' Galilee of the Gentiles..."  
The Hebrew means "to be made great," or "raised in status," or "made glorious."  
Look at Matthew 2.19-23 and 4.12-17, 23-25. How was Galilee "honored" by God?  
Time permitting, take a quick look at Isaiah 49.6. How are Gentiles (non-Israelites) to be honored by God?
- e. Read Isaiah 9.2-7.  
What role does light play in verse 2?  
How does it continue the themes of verse 1?
- f. To whom does the "You" of verses 3-4 refer?  
In contrast to the gloomy darkness that shrouded Israel and Judah, there will be a day when there will be light. How would this promise impact the people facing the imminent threat from Assyria?
- g. In verses 6-7, the promise is made more explicit. Here we discover the "You" of verse 3. God's divine plan revolves around a child to be born. "Son", as used here, should be understood as a title not a human filial relationship.  
In other words, "son" refers to a royal, kingly "Son" who is the Anointed One or Messiah. Saying Jesus is the Son of God actually denotes his equality with God. John 1.1-14 makes this clear. Why is this important to remember?
- h. How would you write the following phrases in your own words?  
...government will be on his shoulders \_\_\_\_\_  
Wonderful Counselor \_\_\_\_\_  
Mighty God \_\_\_\_\_  
Everlasting Father \_\_\_\_\_  
Prince of Peace \_\_\_\_\_
- i. What, according to verse 7, is the extent of his reign?  
How is it like and not like the reign of a human ruler?  
What will ensure that his reign will be as described?
- j. Look through Revelation 21.1-4, 22-26 and 22.1-5.  
In what ways do we experience the present reign of Jesus Christ?  
What dimensions of his reign are still to come in the future?
- k. Reread Isaiah 9.2-7, summarizing each verse in your own words (use as few words as possible):

- 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7: \_\_\_\_\_

l. In summary, what is our God's home supposed to look like? Try describing it!

m. How could God use you this Christmas season to make your house, neighborhood, workplace or school more like His home?

#### IV. Pray

- a. Lift up those in need in our community – those with physical needs, emotional needs, and spiritual needs – that they might find their needs fulfilled in the home of and by the family of God,
- b. Pray that your home would be a warm and welcoming home this holiday season, and that holiday parties and gatherings would point to Jesus, who left His home in heaven that we might be welcomed into the family of God,
- c. Ask God to use our holiday gatherings and Choir Concert to point clearly to His son Jesus, that throughout this season, we might invite all people to grow into a Christ-centered life in His family!