

Small group optional guide: Advent series: It's Now!

## UP; we grow in our love for Jesus through His word and worship

WORD: Isaiah 9:5 by Claire

Isaiah's prophecy, written during a time of darkness and despair for Israel under Assyrian oppression, declares that war and its tools—boots, bloodied garments, and weapons—will be destroyed, symbolizing the end of conflict.

**The Promise of Peace:** Despite the darkness, Isaiah promises that God will establish a new era of peace through a Son, who will rule an eternal, righteous kingdom. This vision is echoed in Isaiah 2:4, Zechariah 9:10, Psalm 46:9, and other Scriptures, which describe the cessation of violence and war.

**God's Sovereign Power:** True deliverance comes not from human effort but through God's intervention, as seen in biblical miracles (e.g., the Red Sea, Gideon's victory). Jesus' coming exemplifies this, bringing salvation through humility and divine power.

**An Upside-Down Kingdom:** Contrary to expectations of a military saviour, Jesus established His kingdom through sacrificial love, dying on the cross to reconcile humanity with God. Colossians 1:19-20 and Romans 5:1 emphasize Jesus' role in bringing peace through His death and resurrection.

**Living Out the Kingdom:** Christians are called to reflect this peace and love in their lives, following Jesus' example. This includes believing in Him, loving one another, and demonstrating love through action, even amidst a world still plagued by conflict.

**Future Hope:** While universal peace is not yet realized, believers hold onto God's promises of a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:3-4, 2 Peter 3:13), where righteousness and peace will prevail.

Isaiah's prophecy is a beacon of hope, reminding us of God's

Continued...ultimate plan for peace and reconciliation. As followers of Jesus, we are invited to live differently, loving one another and embodying God's peace in anticipation of His eternal kingdom.

Isaiah 9:6, by Ricky

Let's compare ancient and modern perspectives on the Messiah and how Jesus surpasses them.

**Expectations vs. Reality: *Ancient Perspective:*** The Messiah was expected to be a royal, military leader—a wise, powerful king born into wealth, destined to lead God's people to victory and restore peace through might.

***Modern Perspective:*** Expectations might centre on wisdom, fairness, or peaceful leadership but still often miss the radical humility and sacrifice of Jesus.

**The Promise of a Messiah:** Isaiah's prophecy builds on Old Testament promises (e.g., Genesis 3:15, 2 Samuel 7:12-14) that describe the Messiah as a descendant of David, Abraham, and Judah, bringing hope and salvation.

**Jesus as the Fulfilment:** Isaiah 9:6 reveals attributes of the Messiah, fulfilled in unexpected ways through Jesus: "*A Child is Born*": Not a royal palace birth, but humbly in a manger (Luke 2:7). "*A Son is Given*": Jesus, heir to the eternal throne, calls believers co-heirs in His kingdom.

*"The Government on His Shoulders"*: He bore the weight of the cross and humanity's sin (John 19:17). "*Wonderful Counsellor*": He taught with divine authority (Mark 1:21).

*"Mighty God"*: Accessible yet powerful, healing and transforming lives (Luke 8:43-48). "*Everlasting Father*": A protector who offers eternal life (John 10:22-30). "*Prince of Peace*": He brings lasting peace through reconciliation with God, not military victory (John 16:32-33).

**Jesus Defies Expectations:** He is greater than any imagined warrior-king or earthly leader. His kingdom is built on humility, love, and eternal life, offering peace and hope to all who follow Him.

## UP (continued...)

Isaiah starts the first line of this verse with For to us a child is born, and the second line to us a son is given. Jesus came for you and me, He came to lead us from Darkness into Light, to lead us from Death into Life. And that is For Now as much as it was for those hearing Jesus speak 2000 years ago.

**WORSHIP:** Hark The Herald Angels Sing / Raise A Hallelujah / King of Kings / The Creed (This I Believe) / Hope and Glory

## IN; we connect and learn to love one another

On Sunday we shared the news that Kev and Kris Defriend believe that God is calling them to move up to the Midlands. They are such a significant couple, not just because Kev is an elder but because of the blessing that they bring to JCC, from Pastoral care, Kids work, Freedom in Christ to the personal blessing they are to so many individuals and families.

While we will miss them we also celebrate knowing that God is calling us to “Go” and while that will not mean leaving JCC for most, we love seeing the faith and obedience that Kev and Kris are walking out.

Please pray for them, for our eldership team, for God’s hand to be on them as they continue to seek God’s direction, and pray for our church, that we would all receive faith for them and for ourselves and 2025 where we will go and be witnesses of Jesus, in our communities.

## OUT; we reach out to show people outside of JCC that God loves them

Alpha starts 29<sup>th</sup> January! It will be in the Haven Centre in Crawley Down but it is open to everyone anywhere.

Please write a list of people that you want to see saved; consider praying every day at 1230pm, that God would move their hearts to say yes to your invite.

86% of all alpha attendees are down to a personal invitation. (and there have been over 20 million since alpha started!)

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January during the week of prayer, we will be doing outreach in Crawley Down, please consider joining us!

**You're  
invited  
to Alpha.**

Crawley Down

