

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

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

WORD: Isaiah 9:1-2 part 1; by Nancy

the Advent series "It's Now," is on Isaiah 9:1-7. Isaiah was spoken 700 years before Jesus' birth, during a time when Israel was in turmoil, failing to obey God's commandments.

Despite Israel's disobedience, God's promises remained, and prophets like Isaiah spoke of future hope and restoration.

Main Points:

- **God is a Redeemer and Restorer** – Even when things seem hopeless, like Israel's exile, God promises redemption. Nancy highlights how the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, once humbled and taken into exile, was later honored by Jesus through his ministry in the region, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy.
- **God's Word is for All People** – Jesus' message was not just for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles (non-Jews), as seen in the spread of his ministry in Capernaum, a city with a diverse population. The gospel is for everyone, including us today.

Application – remember these two truths: God is a redeemer who restores, and his message is for all people.

Even when we face difficulties that seem out of line with God's promises, we can trust in his ability to redeem and restore. His word is alive and relevant to us now. Remember Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, the connection between the Old and New Testaments and that God's promises extend to all nations. Jesus' birth, while a historical event, brings hope and joy that are very much alive today.

Part 2; by Vern; Light vs Darkness

The Effects of Darkness; darkness robs us of hope

Continued...

Yet, hope is one of the three enduring aspects of our faith (1 Corinthians 13:13), and the prince of darkness will always aim to extinguish it.

What Does Light Do?

Light transforms: Photosynthesis // Sunlight drives the global systems that sustain life // Illumination: It reveals what's hidden, helps us navigate, and lets us see things as they truly are.

In the Bible, light is tied to vision: : Jeremiah 1:11 & Zechariah 5:1-4 "What do you see?" // Matthew 13:16-17 blessed because their eyes see...

Choosing the Light John 8:12.

Following Jesus requires an active decision // His light makes manifest what is real, revealing who or what is against us and who is for us // Choosing Jesus allows us to embrace a life of fullness and purpose.

Our Call to Be Light Matthew 5:14-16 , John 7:38

When we let God's light shine through us: it illuminates our own lives, dispelling the darkness // we see others in need and bring light to their situations // It brings hope

Conclusion: Darkness is inevitable in life, but it need not define us. By embracing Jesus as the light, we find purpose in pain and the ability to shine His hope to a world in need. This reflection encourages an active decision to follow Christ, embody His light, and live with hope, peace, and joy found in Him.

WORSHIP: Endless Light / All Hail King Jesus / King of Kings / Great are you Lord/Gratitude

Words:

- Please listen to the testimonies from Vanessa and Adam from the baptism Sunday (just after the kids song in the online service) and pray for them.

