

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, Dec. 18, 2011

Passage: Isaiah 9:1-7 Part III

Memory Passage: Isaiah 9:6-7 (We will memorize these verses over 4 weeks)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) Because we will not have Sunday school (and thus no Green Sheet) for Christmas Day we will finish our look at Is. 6:1-9:7 by examining chapter 9 as well as the 3rd & 4th names given to Jesus in 9:6.

(b) **Read Is. 9:1-7 & Matt. 4:12-17.** Why does the mood suddenly shift in v. 1? To what does “the former time” and “the latter time” refer (remember that Isaiah uses what are known as “prophetic perfects,” i.e. the English past tense is used to describe future events because they are divinely spoken through God’s prophet and are sure to come to pass)?

(c) What is this “great light” that has shined on God’s people and what was the “deep darkness” in which they once walked? How does Matt. 4 help us to understand the ultimate meaning/fulfillment of this prophecy? Given the Messianic setting of these verses, how has/will God “multiplied the nation” (see, for example, Is. 54:1-3)?

(d) *Family:* Find a place in your home that is completely dark (a closet, perhaps?), or if no such room exists in your home, have blindfolds for each person in your family. The idea is to have them experience pitch-blackness and the confusion that can come with such an experience. Lead your family in a discussion about emotions they felt (fear, disorientation, confusion, uncertainty, etc.) & what they thought (I wanted out, I did not want to move, I greatly desired a light, etc.). **Then Read Is. 9:1-2** and explain that God was disciplining Israel by giving them into the hands of the Assyrians because they ignored calls to repent (such as Is. 2:5). Their sadness and confusion is spoken of here as “walking/dwelling in darkness,” but there will come a day when God will provide a Leader who will cause their darkness to be overcome with Light. Now **Read Matt. 4:12-17** and teach your family that the fulfillment of these verses happens when Christ dies on the cross to overcome sin for those who repent of their sin and believe in His name. Those who are outside of Christ “walk in darkness” but those who are in Christ “have seen a great light!”

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 9:1-7.** The increase of the nation’s joy is given a 3-fold description in vs. 4-7 (marked by the word “for” that begins each verse). Briefly describe each reason for joy.

(b) What does Isaiah intend to convey about God’s coming victory when he compares it to “the day of Midian?” How are they similar? (See Judges 6-7 for Gideon’s victory over the Midianites). When will this victory be ultimately fulfilled?

(c) What characteristics of this Child-King inform you that Isaiah is not ultimately referring to a human king? Explain the phrase, “of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.” What does this increase have to do with the throne of David (see Gen. 49:8-12, 2 Sam. 7:8-16)

(d) How should these verses encourage you in & influence your (a) walk? (b) trust? (c) evangelism? (4) joy?

(e) *Family:* **Read Judges 7.** As you read, stop every paragraph or so to summarize the story and check for your family’s comprehension. You might want to have them draw another comic strip/graphic novel to illustrate the story. Emphasize the fact that God decreased the army to 300 because He was jealous for His own glory (7:2), and that He was faithful to deliver the victory that He promised. Then **Read Is. 9:4** and ask your family, “How will God’s future deliverance of His people about which Isaiah writes compare to ‘the day of Midian?’” Help them to see that the point of the allusion to Midian is to show that God gave complete victory, just as He said He would, and He used a very small army to accomplish His purpose for His glory. Here, the Messiah will accomplish the ultimate victory that God promised, and He will use a very small child to accomplish His purpose for His glory. Both deliverers (the 300 & the Child) would be suspect in the world’s eyes, but then God would get all the glory when He accomplish what He promised through His wisdom & strength alone.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 9:6-7.** Meditate for a few moments on the 3rd name given to Jesus, our Messiah, “Everlasting Father.” Write down the questions that initially come to your mind and be ready to share them with your group on Sunday. What are your initial answers to these questions: (1) How is Jesus the Son, the 3rd person of the trinity, to be the Everlasting Father? (2) What divine actions does this name bring to mind?

(b) This name for Jesus is not a Trinitarian statement. The Son and the Father and the Holy Spirit are 3 distinct persons while remaining one God. This name is a revelation of the loving care, concern, & protection Jesus provides His people. Just as a father cares for his children and a king cares for his subjects, Jesus cares for His children. **Read and meditate upon Psalm 103** writing down all the activities that demonstrate v. 13 to be true: “As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.”

(c) Next, for every compassionate act you found in this Psalm, consider how Jesus provided it for you through His work on the cross. For instance, He provided the forgiveness of all of your sin (v. 3) and redeemed you from the pit (v. 4) by His death on the cross. This exercise should cause you to erupt in praise and thanksgiving for the everlasting (your salvation is secure forever) Fatherly care Jesus provides for you.

(d) *Family*: Lead your family through (a), (b) & (c) above. Have each family member make their own list as you make one on your white board. Use 2 columns, one for the promise and one for Jesus' provision of the promise. Remember that all of these shows of Fatherly compassion are expressions of our Triune God's perfect character.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 9:1-7.** We will turn our focus on the 4th name given to Jesus in our text, Prince of Peace. What promises of peace do you find in 9:1-7? What bearing does peace have on the Messiah's Kingdom (v. 7)?

(b) **Read Is. 53:4-6, Luke 2:14, 19:42, John 14:27, 16:33, Rom. 5:1, Eph. 2:11-22, Col 1:18-20, 2 Thess. 3:16.** As you read, write down everything you learn about Jesus and His work as the Prince of Peace. Then write several applications that follow this format: "Since Jesus is my Prince of Peace I will/will not _____."

(c) *Family*: Have everyone in your family who reads take turns reading the verses in (b) and make a list on your whiteboard of what you learn about Jesus being the Prince of Peace. Then help your family to understand the most important peace that Jesus brings is the peace brought between God and man through His work on the cross to bring salvation to His people. This is an excellent time to preach the gospel again to yourself and your family!

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 9:6-7.** Focus on the last phrase of these verses, "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this." Considering all of what you have learned from this section of Isaiah during the last several weeks, what does this phrase tell you about the power of God? About the will of God? About His ability to carry out what He plans?

(b) **Read Is. 26:11-13, 37:32, 42:1-13, 59:15-21, & 63:15-19.** These passages contain the other uses of "zeal" in Isaiah. As you read, (1) write down everything you learn about God's zeal, & (2) write down how these truths bolster your faith and trust in God and can be used to preach the gospel to yourself when you are tempted to doubt God and His ways.

(c) *Family*: **Read Is. 9:6-7.** Spend this lesson reviewing the four names for Jesus we have studied during the past several weeks. Ask your family what they remember about each name, and help them remember by recounting the main points of truth & application for each name. Then remind them that the character of Jesus the Messiah and the way He works in His kingdom should fill our minds during the Christmas season. It is not the gifts, the lights, the food, or the family that is most important (as great as they are!), but the baby Jesus: "For unto 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."

DATE: December 18, 2011

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Jesus Our Everlasting Father