

The Light Has Dawned: Anticipating Christ

The Promise of Hope / Isaiah 9:1–7
Sunday November 30, 2025

Isaiah 9:1–7 NIV

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Introduction

- Light is most visible and beautiful against darkness. This is true for all of our Christmas lights, it's also true for Isaiah's prophecy.
- Advent begins with an honest look into darkness so we can see the glory of Christ's light.
- Judah faced deep spiritual and societal darkness; Advent invites us into their waiting and hope.

The declaration of Hope (vv. 1-2)

- "There will be no more gloom for those in distress...The people walking in darkness *have seen* a great light."

- “Prophetic perfect:” literary technique that describes something that is so certain to happen that it’s written in past tense
- Those currently in darkness will see a great light. What is this light? It is not a star, army, king’s reforms, or Judah shaping up. It’s a child!

The Salvific work of God (vv. 3-6)

- God reconciles and reunites a fractured nation
- Their rejoicing comes from the abundance found in his presence, not in material
- This rejoicing is not merely conceptual. It includes practical, tangible outworkings:
 - Freedom from oppression (v. 4)
 - Not only freedom from oppression, but supernatural freedom, in the same way God himself beat the Midianites
 - Cessation of war (v. 5)
 - More than a ceasefire, a world where violence becomes unthinkable
 - Messianic ruler (v. 6)
 - The child of promise, the “Great Light” referred to earlier

The names of the child (v. 6)

- The names contain two natures, human and divine
 - Wonderful Counselor
 - Wonderful brings to mind the miraculous works of God
 - Counselor would cause the hearers to think on elders, or those who advise the king
 - Mighty God
 - Mighty was a common word to refer to human warriors (such as when God called Gideon a mighty warrior; Judges 6:12)
 - God is the Hebrew word “el,” the most common word for deity
 - Everlasting Father
 - Everlasting is a trait held only by God
 - Father brings to mind human relationships, care, provision, protection
 - Prince of Peace
 - Prince as an earthly title, human position
 - Peace which emanates not from war (see v. 5), but from the Prince themselves.
 - Full God, fully man, one person. Two natures, one child.

The Eternal Kingdom (v. 7)

- There will be no end to greatness and peace in his government.

2 Samuel 7:12–13 NIV

When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

- No instability, corruption, injustice, or manipulation
- Righteousness without exhaustion, justice without end

Advent Remembrance

- Tish Harrison Warren. *Advent: The Season of Hope (Fullness of Time)*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2023.
- Warren speaks on *three* Advents, instead of the normal two:
 - The first Advent of the Incarnation
 - The final Advent of the second coming
 - The *present* Advent in the sanctifying work of Christ in His Church
- Four practices to guide your time in Advent this year:
 - *Stillness in Prayer*. Remember that God is doing the work in this prophecy, and has done the work in the cross. Trust in the finished work of the cross as you slow down and listen for God. Let yourself pause in your prayers and simply be.
 - *Weekly fast*. Whether edible, digital, or otherwise, intentionally remove something from your life that you might grow your dependence on the Lord. Trust in the Lord's bountiful provision for you.
 - *Generosity*. Let your hope in Christ become tangible for those around you this season. Trust in God's provision for you over your own ability to provide for yourself
 - *Simplicity*. In this season that pulls on your time and demands your presence and attention, intentionally set aside time to rejoice in the presence of God by saying "no" to some things.
- There are many other practices that could be added in, and not every practice will be helpful for everyone or the same kind of helpful. Take time to discern what God might call you to this Advent season to reorient yourself further around Him.

- One practice, done with intention, can turn your Advent from frantic scrambling to holy longing.
- Christian stillness, fasting, generosity, simplicity, these are grounded in hope that is not a sort of “toxic positivity,” but rather we are able to face the darkness honestly while trusting in God’s triumph.
 - The accomplishment of the great promises of Isaiah is not through our own ability, but through “the zeal of the Lord Almighty” (v. 7)
- God’s kingdom is eternal and unshakable, and fulfilled in the person of Jesus.
- The promise continues from His birth through His life and death. Through the work of the cross, Jesus divinely subverts the brokenness of creation through bearing our sin and shame, conquering death itself, and bringing us new life now through his Spirit as a guarantee of the eternity to come.
- May we slow down, and rest in the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.
- When we turn to Jesus, we don’t simply get a ticket to heaven. We are given a Promise of Hope, a shining light, the great dawning sun, who empowers us to work the good works of God into this world even now, that we might be a people of great light, the light of Christ, carrying Christ’s hope into a world still longing for that hope.

“There, peeping among the cloud-wrack above a dark tor high up in the mountains, Sam saw a white star twinkle for a while. The beauty of it smote his heart, as he looked up out of the forsaken land, and hope returned to him. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach.”

J.R.R. Tolkien. *The Return Of The King : Being the Third Part of the Lord of the Rings*. Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

- May the beauty of Christ smite *our* hearts, that as we look into the darkened world, hope would hold fast to us.