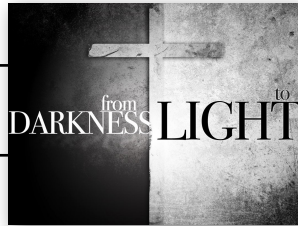


Overcome Darkness

"The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine." Isaiah 9:2 NLT



- What was the darkest time in your life?

Israel was in a period of darkness. The Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, and they were devastated. Isaiah 9:1 says, "*The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled...*" The northern kingdom of Israel referred to themselves as **Zebulun** and **Naphtali**, two of the tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel (Judges 6:35). Matthew referred to Isaiah 9:1-2 in Mt. 4:13-17 applying it to Jesus Christ.

The references to **darkness** and light are figurative language (metaphors). The Hebrew word for darkness has several metaphoric meanings: "gloom, despair, sorrow, misery, chaos, spiritual blindness, evil, judgment, obscurity or a lack of clarity." The Hebrew word for **light** is a metaphor for the Messiah, God, righteousness, life, purity, ethical illumination, truth, and guidance. The context usually indicates the shade of meaning.

The New Testament uses **darkness** and **light** as metaphors like the Old Testament (see 1 John 1:5, 7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 2:9).

Isaiah chapter 9 teaches us that the Messiah/Christ is our hope for overcoming the darkness of sin and corruption.

Central Lesson:

Christ is our hope for overcoming the darkness of sin & despair

Isaiah 9:1-2 depicts Christ's **1st coming** as seen in the NT Gospels. Isaiah 9:3-7 depicts Christ's **2nd coming** as seen in Matt. 24-25; Rev. 19-20.

1. The Messiah/Christ **LIMITS** the time of darkness (9:1) and gives **HOPE** for a better day (9:2).

"1 Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine."

The northern tribes of Israel were suffering under the Assyrian captivity, but that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. In the future, the Messiah/Christ will appear, and the darkness will end. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali (northern Israel) will be filled with Messiah's glory. **Today**, our darkness and despair will **not** go on forever. Christ brings hope and his glory. Christ is our hope for overcoming the darkness.

2. The Messiah/Christ blesses and gives reason for **REJOICING** (9:3).

"3 You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice. They will

rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder."

In the future, at the end of the Tribulation period, Christ will return and rescue Israel from the attack of the nations (Zechariah 14). As a nation, Israel will recognize that Jesus is the promised Messiah (Zech. 12:10). Afterward, Christ establishes the Millennium and will rule over Israel and the nations. He will turn their time of darkness into rejoicing. **Today**, Christ can turn our darkness into rejoicing if we fully surrender to him as our Lord and King.

3. The Messiah/Christ **BREAKS** bondage and **LIFTS** burdens (9:4).

"4 For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian."

In the future, Christ will free Israel from the world's hostility and lift their burden. **Today**, Christ can break the bondage (additions, etc.) that enslaves us and lift our burdens if we surrender to him as our Lord.

4. The Messiah/Christ will **END** conflict (9:5).

"5 The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire."

In the future when rules over the earth during the Millennium (1,000 years reign), Christ will usher in world-wide peace and all weapons of war will be destroyed (Isaiah 2:4). **Today**, Christ ends conflict when he is in control of our lives. We cause conflict when we act from our fleshly, sinful nature.

5. The Messiah/Christ will provide everything we **NEED** to overcome the darkness (9:6) including **peace, fairness, and justice** (9:7).

"6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!"

Isaiah states that four names will characterize Christ's future reign during the Millennium. These names show how he will help people overcome the darkness. **Today**, he will help us in the same way.

(1) **Wonderful Counselor** — the source of wisdom to guide our lives.

(2) **Mighty God** — the source of power to do His will.

(3) **Everlasting Father** — the source of eternal life.

The Hebrew is more literally "Father of eternity." The Jews used the word "father" to mean "originator, source." Example: Her. 12:9 "*the Father of our spirits.*" Eph. 4:6: "*Father of all.*" John 8:44: "*The devil...the father of lies.*"

(4) **Prince of Peace** — the source of peace.

Central Lesson: Christ is our hope for overcoming the darkness of sin & despair

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior.
- ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study.
- ▶ Attend a small group.
- ▶ Read the Bible.
- ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.