

The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! Growing into more fully-devoted followers of Christ, may this time help all: **Grow Upward** into a more mature personal relationship and commitment to Christ Jesus faithful to God's Word!

Grow Outward to neighbor and world around, learning how to love well and to lead in what matters to God - guided by God's Word, by Jesus Himself, and by the Holy Spirit!

And, **Grow Inward** to discover a more contemplative faith, enhanced by both silence and prayer!

The Scripture for Sunday, November 21, 2021

[STUDY LESSON 11]

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING:

Isaiah 9:1-7

{1} But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

{2} The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.

{3} You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

{4} For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

{5} For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

{6} For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

{7} His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

For an overview of Isaiah consider watching: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/isaiah/>

For an overview of "The Messiah" theme consider watching:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/messiah/>

1. Open (*or have someone in the group open*) with a prayer inviting the work of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts and lives of any and all to shape believers into more fully devoted following of Christ.
2. Read (*or have one or more persons read*) the passage printed above (*or from a bible*).

3. NOTES: The text seems to envision the arrival of a new age and a new ruler. The date and circumstances are in question, but Hezekiah (Southern/Judah king who arrives at the throne around near the destruction of the Northern/Israel kingdom) is a possible candidate. Hezekiah would follow the troubled leadership of his father, Ahaz, the previous king of Judah. Hezekiah would be known for sweeping reforms centralizing worship of Yahweh and prohibiting the veneration of other deities in Jerusalem's temple. A most prominent king, few, if any, compare to his righteous and faithful reign. Zebulun and Naphtali, both tribes (named after two of the 12 sons of Jacob) and geographic locations in Israel, essentially cover the region where Jesus would eventually come to grow up.
4. This passage from Isaiah is rich with optimism and hope. What phrase, image, or vision are you drawn to and most encouraged by:
 - a. No gloom for those in anguish (v. 1)
 - b. Making a glorious way by land and sea (v. 1)
 - c. Darkness to light (v. 2)
 - d. Growth, joy, the harvest and victory (v. 3)
 - e. Burdens lifted (v. 4)
 - f. Battles, warring, and conflicts cease (v. 5)
 - g. New birth of one called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (v. 6)
 - h. Peace, justice and righteousness without end (v. 7)
 - i. Other...
5. Can you speak of a season in life when hope and optimism for you waned? What was that like for you? What, if you can recall, helped infuse a change of heart and brought you out of these depths?
6. How do you react or feel about this new era being ushered in as a result of the birth of a child, a son?
7. Do you know anything of the experience of oppression (from outside or from within) as evidenced by descriptives such as a yoke, a bar, a rod, and even the boots of the tramping warriors? (*Isaiah 9:4-5*)
8. Where do you find strong foreshadowing connections between the arrival of a new "youthful" king and the coming of Jesus? Speak to some of the "connective tissue" which might be present between the prophetic voice of Isaiah here and the future/long awaited arrival of the Messiah.
9. How is your understanding of the mission of Jesus, the message of the Gospel, and even your walk of faith informed by this passage?
10. While this text seems to weigh heavily upon serving as a description of what the new era and reign will bring, does it in any way help define any promises of God?
11. Spend some time talking or reflecting upon characteristics of Jesus that emanate from this text. Where can this give way to enhancing discipleship for you?
12. What is your main discipleship "takeaway" from this text?
13. Can you identify any particular ways your Christian faith and following is being called upon to change and be more like Christ in light of this passage from the Bible (and any discussion and/or reflection that may have taken place)?
14. (*Optional*) Read the passage again. Then, take time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.