

FINDING HOPE AT ADVENT

Part 1 of ADVENT. Isaiah 9:2-7.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. December 3, 2023.

TWO COMPETING STORIES

Two stories compete to explain the way things are in the world.

- The lament:
- The epic poem:

The Bible's narrative is an epic poem.

- The Bible points us to Jesus Christ, the conquering hero.
- He is our hope. Observing Advent helps us re-focus on Jesus.

ISAIAH 9:2-7

The context of Isaiah.

- Doom and gloom due to human error.
- Hope due to God's promise and fulfillment.

Three insights to clarify Isaiah 9.

- The passage describes the future in the past tense. It is certain.
- It is certain because God will do it with zeal.
- As Christians, we interpret Isaiah 9 through the lens of the New Testament. Matthew 4:15-16 links its fulfillment to Jesus Christ. He is our hope.

FINDING HOPE IN JESUS

Jesus is given four throne names, the qualities by which he reigns.

1. Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor.

- Jesus knows and understands everything. He is supremely wise.

Colossians 2:2-3 (ESV) ... Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- The wisdom of Christ is most fully revealed by the cross.

1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 23-25 (ESV) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

- The incarnate God died to end the reign of terror caused by sin, death, and the devil. That's his wisdom. That's what changes everything.

2. Jesus is the Mighty God.

- Jesus is God with us (see Isaiah 10:21).

John 1:14 (NLT) ... the Word became human and made his home among us.

- Jesus is the God who uses his might and power for our good. .

1 Corinthians 1:24 (ESV) ... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

- Jesus destroyed death and the devil by his death. He ascended. He reigns.

Revelation 11:15 (ESV) ... "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

- When he returns, Jesus will conquer the darkness in all its forms.

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 (ESV) Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

3. Jesus is the Everlasting Father.

- Jesus is our Father by adoption.

Ephesians 1:5 (NLT) God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

- Father implies: we've come home, and we're protected. Forever.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (ESV) Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. (See Jude 1:24)

- We find hope by looking to Jesus, who has us in his loving grip forever.

4. Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

- Every wrong, evil, and disordered thing will cease when the kingdom of Christ is fully revealed

Isaiah 2:4 (CSB) He will settle disputes among the nations and provide arbitration for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives. Nation will not take up the sword against nation, and they will never again train for war.

- All will be right, good, and beautiful when Jesus returns (Revelation 21-22)

FIND YOUR HOPE IN JESUS

We can write a new story with Jesus at the center.

- An epic poem in which we acknowledge pain but affirm Jesus is more powerful than our brokenness.
- Put aside unworthy “saviors.” Focus on Jesus our champion.

Use every Advent resource to re-focus on Jesus.

SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

GET STARTED

- Share your ideas to cope with the stress of the holidays.

DIVE IN

- Review the study guide. What were Peter's main ideas, insights, or Bible passages related to reading and studying the Bible?
- Why did Peter describe the story of the world as an epic poem rather than a lament? Do you agree with him? Explain.
- How did Christ's first advent change the way the world operates? For insights, look at Colossians 1:9-14, 21-23; 2:6-15). How will his second advent change the world? For insights, look at Revelation 19-22.
- How do the throne names given to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6-7 give you confidence to live in light of Christ's ultimate victory and everlasting rule? How does that confidence show up in your life?

HELP AND ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

- Discuss some practical ways (practices, traditions, activities, prayers) to turn this Advent season into an opportunity to re-energize your faith, hope, and love.

PRAY TOGETHER

Pray for the members of the small group, your pastors/elders, the Cornerstone family, and our outreach partners. And anything else the Lord puts on your mind.