

Scripture and Background Information for December 2-8

Do you notice that Christmas lights seem to go up earlier and earlier each year? That's appropriate! Several hundred years before Jesus was born, the first indication that Christmas was coming was God's promise of light!

To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for Isaiah 9:1-3, 6-7 "A Light for the Hopeless"

One of the major themes of the prophecy of Isaiah is deliverance. He is speaking to the nation of Israel during a specific time at a specific place but the themes of hope and deliverance ring in a hope for a coming Messiah. Thus, the deliverance he promises is true for a nation during a specific time, but his words of deliverance are also relevant to all of humanity.

In chapter 9, Isaiah speaks of a coming Deliverer who will bring the light of hope to people who have been living in deep darkness. The Messiah's coming will lead the nation into joy and enlightenment, which has been lacking for years. The "child" (v.6) will grow up to be not just a sign of the deliverance, but the Deliverer Himself. He will affect the changes necessary for prosperity and spirituality to come to the nation, and his deliverance will be for all people.

****Zebulun and Naphtali are areas of Northern Israel that were usually the first to be affected by foreign invasion. Thus, their gloom was usually first to appear and last to leave along with the invading armies.**

Here are the Scriptures for group discussion for this series:

December 9-15

Luke 2:8-14

December 16-22

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

December 23-29

John 3:16-21