

## Christmas Foundations: Hope

As followers of Jesus we do ourselves a disservice if we allow the understanding of our faith to start at the point when Jesus arrived or began to teach.

The arrival of Jesus is celebrated so powerfully because it inaugurated a whole new era of Grace.

We may have lost our way in a moment of sin but in a moment of grace we were shown a way home.

*But there will be no gloom for her who was 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 has made 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 dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*

*3 You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. 4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. 5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. Isaiah 9:1-5*

*17 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 4:17*

By assuming the role of Messiah it was an unmistakable claim that Jesus was the rightful heir to the throne of Heaven.

Hope is confidence and joy in the already determined result.

*6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7*

The fact that God faithfully fulfilled His promises in the past gives us hope for the present and confidence about the future.

**Advent Week 1 Reading Guide:** Sunday: *Isaiah 9:1-7*, Monday: *Isaiah 52:7-10*, Tuesday: *Jeremiah 33:12-16*, Wednesday: *Isaiah 42:1-9*, Thursday: *Micah 5:1-4*, Friday: *Isaiah 40:1-5*, Saturday: *Isaiah 40:6-11*