



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Christmas 2023 – Light Has Come

I. The World is a Dark place

- A. Evil and suffering
 1. Violence, injustice, abuse of power, homelessness, refugees fleeing oppression, family discord
 2. Ignorance
- B. Where should we look for help? (Ps. 121:1-2)
 1. **“I lift up my eyes to the mountains — where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Make of heaven and earth” (Ps. 121:1-2)**
 2. The Living Bible renders it: “Shall I look to the mountain gods for help? No! My help is from [the LORD] who made the mountains!” (Ps. 121:1-2 Living Bible)
- C. Where are you turning? – Who are the “gods” that people are looking to – the so-called experts to solve our problems? – Isa. 8:21-22
 1. Looking to scholars, scientists, politicians, celebrities, social media influencers (what qualifies them to give advice?)
 2. Looking to wealth, financial markets
 3. Looking to technology, our own intellect
- D. Nobel Prizes every year
 1. Peace Prize – what is the result?
 2. Platitudes that have not produced any positive results:
 - a. “We need to work together for world peace and unity.”
 - b. “We can overcome poverty, injustice, violence, war...”
- E. The belief that we can save ourselves has only left people remaining in darkness

II. What is the hope?

- A. First honest realization – things really are this bad – we can’t heal or save ourselves
- B. But God gave the hope – **Isa. 9:2; Matt. 4:16**
- C. What was the great light? John 1:9; Isa. 9:6
 - a. A child is born, a son is given – he will be called Mighty God, Everlasting Father
 - b. He is born as a human yet he is God, the eternal – both human and divine

D. As a human he became one of us

1. Knowing and experiencing human life

- Born in poverty, disadvantaged, social and political oppression
- Family life, hard work, poverty, suffering humility, rejection, despair
- He became enmeshed in our human condition, knowing our darkness

2. Yet at the same time he came as light, to be the light, the unique light – John 8:12

E. What does Jesus as light bring?

1. He brings light to darkness

2. As light He produces life – living things need light to grow, to produce life

3. As light He helps us see what is true and what is real

4. Clarity to who God is, what God is doing, and where God is leading us

5. As light He brings beauty and joy

“All joy is really found in God, and anything you do enjoy is derivative, because what you are really looking for is *him*, whether you know it or not. Timothy Keller

– Jesus brings new life to spiritual death

– Jesus heals our spiritual blindness– when people enter a relationship with Jesus, we see things from a different perspective

– “He is the light when all other lights go out.”

III. How to receive this light?

A. Jesus, the Son has been given as a gift – Isa. 9:6

B. Receiving this gift requires swallowing our pride.

C. Real meaning of Christmas –

1. We are lost, unable to save ourselves

2. Only the death of the Son of God, Jesus, the child born, the son given for us can save us.

3. Admit we are sinners

D. After the quote of Isaiah in Matt 4:16, what follows in v. 17

- Repent, admit wrong, make a 180 change in direction
- Make this a Christmas to remember – receive Jesus as your light.
- Repent and believe the gospel.