



5 DAY DEVOTIONAL

WK 1-2 Adventus Christus | Light Has Dawned (Isaiah 8:16-9:6)

Day 1: The Promise of Light in Deep Darkness

Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7

Isaiah prophesied to a people walking in deep darkness—a darkness not merely physical, but spiritual. King Ahaz had led Israel into idolatry, sacrificing even his own children to false gods. Yet into this horror, God promised light would dawn. Not gradually, but suddenly—a flash so brilliant it would cause people to shield their eyes. This light came through a child born in Bethlehem. Today, you may feel surrounded by darkness—broken relationships, addiction, loss, or despair. Remember that Christ's light doesn't slowly seep in; it breaks through powerfully. Where are you consulting darkness instead of light? Turn your face toward the Son. He has already conquered your deepest night.

Day 2: Hope That Anchors the Soul

Reading: Hebrews 11:1-6; Isaiah 8:11-17

The Hebrew word "kavah" describes hope like a cord stretched tight to its breaking point—tension mixed with expectation. Isaiah experienced this as he waited for God while his nation spiraled into judgment. Biblical hope isn't wishful thinking; it's confident anticipation anchored in God's character and promises. You may hope for healing, reconciliation, or provision, but these temporal hopes find meaning only when rooted in eternal hope—Christ himself. Isaiah declared, "I will wait for the Lord...I will put my trust in him." Even when God seemed to hide His face, the prophet's hope remained unshaken. Your circumstances may feel unbearable, stretched to the breaking point. But your hope in Christ cannot break because He is the unbreakable anchor.

Day 3: Peace That Transcends Understanding

Reading: John 14:25-27; Isaiah 9:6-7

Shalom means more than the absence of conflict—it means wholeness, completion, all life's complexities aligned as God intended. Before Christ, true shalom was impossible because sin fractured our relationship with our Creator. The Prince of Peace came not to eliminate every earthly problem, but to restore what matters most: peace with God. Romans 5:1 declares that through faith, we have peace with

God through Jesus Christ. This vertical peace then flows horizontally into our circumstances. You cannot manufacture shalom through better circumstances, relationships, or achievements. It begins with reconciliation to your Maker. Jesus said, "My peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives." The world's peace depends on favorable conditions. Christ's peace transcends chaos, war, and personal storms because it's rooted in His unchanging presence.

Day 4: Emmanuel—God With Us

Reading: Matthew 1:18-25; Isaiah 7:10-14

Seven hundred years before Christ's birth, God promised King Ahaz a sign: a virgin would conceive and bear a son named Emmanuel—"God with us." This wasn't just prediction; it was God's answer to humanity's greatest alliance of enemies: sin and death. We cannot defeat these foes alone. So God Himself stepped into our darkness, not as a conquering warrior king, but as a vulnerable infant. The power of God is so superior to every bully swaggering through history that He defeats them by becoming a child. Emmanuel means God didn't just send help—He came Himself. He entered your suffering, your temptation, your humanity. You're never alone in your darkest valley. The God who spoke galaxies into existence chose to be with you intimately, personally, redemptively.

Day 5: From Darkness to Light

Reading: John 1:1-14; Ephesians 5:8-14

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light." This is the gospel message—transformation from death to life, darkness to light. John parallels Genesis: "In the beginning was the Word...In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind." Just as God's first creative act was separating light from darkness, His redemptive act through Christ brings spiritual light that darkness cannot overcome. Paul urges, "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Perhaps you've been consulting the world's wisdom, only to find deeper darkness. The world cannot illuminate what only Christ can. Your heart is an "idol factory," constantly worshiping something. Direct your worship toward the Light. Stop consulting mediums, self-help, or worldly solutions. Christ has come. The light has dawned. Step into it today.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. Isaiah prophesied 700 years before Christ's arrival, yet God fulfilled every promise. How does understanding God's faithfulness in prophecy strengthen your hope during seasons of waiting?
2. Pastor Nick describes darkness as not just physical but spiritual, stemming from sin and brokenness. What are the shadows of darkness you see in your own heart or community, and how does Christ's light address them?
3. King Ahaz and the people of Israel turned to idols despite being called to be a light to the nations. What modern idols (wealth, identity, comfort, technology) compete for your worship today?
4. The Hebrew word 'kavah' describes hope as a cord pulled tight with tension and expectation until it breaks. Where in your life are you experiencing this kind of tension while waiting on God?
5. Shalom means completeness and restoration, not merely the absence of conflict. How does understanding peace as wholeness rather than comfort change how you pursue peace in relationships and circumstances?
6. Pastor Nick draws parallels between Old Testament Israel and the American church today, suggesting both turned from being lights to the nations. In what ways has comfort and prosperity made us less dependent on God?
7. Isaiah saw God's glory and was immediately convicted of his sin before being called to mission. How does beholding God's holiness transform both our worship and our willingness to serve?
8. God's answer to the darkness and terror of the world was a child born in a barn, not a powerful warrior. What does this reveal about God's power and his methods of bringing redemption?
9. Pastor Nick states you cannot have true shalom unless you first have peace with God. For those who have that restored relationship, how does that foundational peace affect every other area of life?
10. Isaiah warned against consulting mediums and the world for answers instead of God's instruction. Where are you tempted to seek counsel from sources that lack the light of Christ, and what would it look like to consult God first?



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

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Key Takeaways:

1. The light of Christ is both our eternal hope and eternal peace that outshines the darkness of this world.
2. Hope (Yakal/Kavah) - anticipating a future better than the present
3. Peace (Shalom) - wholeness and completion, not just absence of conflict
4. Christ as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy

Discussion Questions:

1. Pastor Nick mentioned two Hebrew words for hope: "yakal" (to wait) and "kavah" (tension like a cord about to break). Which word better describes your current experience of hope? Why?
2. Read Hebrews 11:1. How is biblical hope different from worldly hope (like hoping for an Amazon package or a Christmas bonus)?
3. Shalom means "wholeness" or "completion," not just the absence of conflict. How does this definition change your understanding of peace?
4. Pastor Nick said, "You cannot have shalom unless you have shalom with God." Why is vertical peace (with God) necessary before horizontal peace (with others and circumstances)?
5. Isaiah prophesied during a time of deep spiritual darkness in Israel. The pastor drew parallels to modern American culture. Where do you see our culture "calling evil good and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20)?
6. Pastor Nick mentioned that people in darkness often "consult mediums and spiritists" (Isaiah 8:19). What are modern equivalents of consulting darkness instead of light?
7. Read Isaiah 9:6-7. Jesus came as a vulnerable child, not a conquering warrior. What does this tell us about God's power and His ways?
8. The pastor asked: "Are you walking in darkness? Are you consulting darkness instead of light?" How would you honestly answer this question in different areas of your life (relationships, finances, decision-making, etc.)?
9. Pastor Nick stated, "If you are a follower of Christ, you have resilient hope in the face of all circumstances." What makes Christian hope resilient when circumstances don't change?
10. Read John 14:27. Jesus says He gives peace differently than the world gives. What's the difference?