

Text: Luke 2:8-20; Isaiah 9:6-7

## Introduction

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.  
The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups  
as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- If you were in the circumstances which Isaiah described in 8:22, the kind to which the promise of 9:6-7 was given, how differently might you hear that promise than in a time of peace?
- In what ways is our world today similar to and different than the world in which this prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus?
- Imagine yourself in Bonhoeffer's prison cell, under Hitler's regime, contemplating the text of Isaiah 9:1-7. How might that text strike you in a place like that? In light of this consider the quote from his thoughts on this text, *"The unseen, loving rule of this divine child over human hearts will be more firmly grounded than the visible and shining might of earthly lords."*
- How do the descriptions applied to this child born seem ironic in light of the fact that they are applied to a child? How is this consistent with God's pattern of salvation throughout Scripture?
- In what ways is the peace that Jesus brings different than what may have been anticipated? Why does it require faith?
- How is it that Jesus can offer a peace that is effective even when we find ourselves in the midst of hostility?
- How does the peace of Jesus' Kingdom address how we should engage our contemporary concerns with terror today?
- How can you utilize these truths to help you engage those in your life with the Gospel?

### I. Finally a Government Solution (Isaiah 9:6-7)

#### A. Context of Isaiah's Vision (Isaiah 8:22–9:5)

#### B. <sup>6</sup> *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *"This is about the birth of a child, not the astonishing work of a strong man, not the bold discovery of a wise man, not the pious work of a saint. It really is beyond all understanding: the birth of a child shall bring about the great change, shall bring to all mankind salvation and deliverance. What kings and statesmen, philosophers and artists, religious leaders and moral teachers have labored for in vain is now brought about by a newborn child."*

i. Luke 2:25-32

ii. Matthew 2:1-11

#### C. *... and the government will be on his shoulders.*

D. And he will be called...

i. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor...

ii. And he will be called...Mighty God...

iii. And he will be called... Everlasting Father...

iv. And he will be called...Prince of Peace.

E. Micah also describes this *Deliverer*. (Micah 5:2-5)

i. Micah 3:9-11

ii. Micah saw something Divine about this One born in Bethlehem.

F. <sup>7</sup> *Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.* (Isaiah 9:7)

i. How can Isaiah be so certain?

ii. Isaiah saw that ***the zeal of the LORD Almighty*** was the force behind His kingdom.

## II. How Shall His Government Increase?

A. Platform and Policy

B. This Peace can exist while Rome or Assyria reign in terror.

i. Peace doesn't begin with our circumstances... peace begins with God.

a) Genesis 4:17-24 (Cain's Line)

b) Genesis 4:25–5:32 (Seth's Line)

ii. Peace begins when our relationship with God is reconciled in Jesus!

C. This is not a peace that is enforced at the end of a sword, or the barrel of a gun. It is a true peace!

Bonhoeffer: *Jesus will not establish his government of peace by force, but only when people submit to him freely, and allow him to rule over them.*

Bonhoeffer: *All generations until the end of time will serve him whether they know it or not. His will be a rule over the hearts of all humankind. Thrones and great kingdoms will be strengthened or broken by this power. The unseen, loving rule of this divine child over human hearts will be more firmly grounded than the visible and shining might of earthly lords. And ultimately all governments on earth must serve the rule of Jesus Christ over all humankind. Despite all the hostility against it, this government will become greater....*