



This week at MRC we continued our advent series in Isaiah.

We began by considering that the idea of darkness in the bible often carries with it both an idea of evil actions or situations (the darkness of behaviour), as well as foolishness or ignorance (we're in the dark as to what to do about it) - both associated with a distance from God.

In our passage from Isaiah 9v2-7 God turns on the light as he promises his people a kingdom and a king

(1) it's the kingdom we long for

We noted a number of aspects of this kingdom

1. It enlarges. That in itself is extraordinary as the Assyrians, having just carted off the the Northern Kingdom of Israel in exile, are looming. And yet God promises that they will grow.
2. It will be a place of joy because they are before him - there will be a relationship and intimacy.
3. It will be a place of freedom - God reminds them of his track record with Midian
4. It will be a place of peace - battle garments no longer needed at all!

That kind of a kingdom will need an amazing king...

(2) he's the king we long for

The jaw-dropping truth that Isaiah reveals is that this king will have divine attributes. He will be God and man. He will be the source of light in the darkness both in terms of his righteous rule but also his wisdom and insight.

We noted that this is a perfect (and perhaps unsurprising) fulfilment of the kingship theme through the scriptures. The plan had always been for God to be his people's king and they only received a human king because they wanted to be like the other nations - a king who is both human and divine, although extraordinary, works perfectly.

Matthew 4 quotes these verses as Jesus comes onto the scene and yet he comes not with pomp and ceremony but rather quietly. His kingdom is not seen in powerful military might but rather transformed lives and 'blessed are the Poor in Spirit'.

To a people who think they are enlightened but are mostly confused and in the dark, the light of Jesus is what we need.

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Here are a few questions to help your group begin to engage with this passage:

- In what ways has this year felt particularly dark to you?
- What aspects of the kingdom that Isaiah describes do you most look forward to?
- What aspects of the Isaiah's description of Christ do you value most?