



## CHRIST IN STRANGE PLACES

### **Into the Darkness**

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Isaiah 9:1-7

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### **Isaiah 9:1-7**

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness  
a light has dawned.  
You have enlarged the nation  
and increased their joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as people rejoice at the harvest,  
as warriors rejoice

when dividing the plunder.  
For as in the day of Midian's defeat,  
you have shattered  
the yoke that burdens them,  
the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor.  
Every warrior's boot used in battle  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be destined for burning,  
will be fuel for the fire.  
For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
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.

"Advent begins in the dark and moves toward the light—but the season should not move too quickly or too glibly, lest we fail to acknowledge the depth of the darkness."

- Fleming Rutledge, *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ*

## **Genesis 1:1-2**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

## **Psalm 139:11-12**

Even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

## **God Finds Us in the Dark**

“A prison cell like this is a good analogy for Advent. One waits, hopes, does this or that—ultimately negligible things—the door is locked and can only be opened from the outside.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## **Isaiah 9:1**

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

## **Isaiah 9:1**

In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan.

The place of our greatest darkness is the place where God wants to do his greatest ministry.

## **Exodus 3:7-8**

The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.”

## **God Is With Us in the Dark**

## **Exodus 12:40-42**

Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the Lord’s divisions left Egypt. Because the

Lord kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honor the Lord for the generations to come.

“...the Lord kept vigil...”

A watch or a period of watchful attention maintained at night or at other times.

### **God Is at Work in Us in the Dark**

God is not just watching over us, He's at work in us and for us.

“Darkness deserves gratitude. It is the alleluia point at which we learn to understand that all growth does not take place in the sunlight. Then we come to understand that God is at work in our lives even when we believe that nothing whatsoever is going on.”

- Joan D. Chittister, *Uncommon Gratitude: Alleluia for All That Is*

“...new life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark.”

- Barbara Brown Taylor, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*