

THE DAWN FROM ON HIGH

Take-Home 1: A Light in the Darkness (Isaiah 9:1-7)

WHAT WE FOUND

Isaiah's "people who walked in darkness" were not a metaphor. Verse 1 names Zebulun and Naphtali, Galilean lands caught in the first Assyrian blow; we found the catastrophe itself in 2 Kings 15:29, which names Galilee and all the land of Naphtali among the territories carried off. Into that occupied, deported, lamps-out geography, Isaiah spoke a promise: the land that went dark first would see the great light first.

And the light was not an army. It was a child, born and given, with the government on his shoulder and four throne names no ordinary king could carry: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. The guarantee behind it all: "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."

Then we watched Matthew pin the promise to a map. Jesus began his Galilean ministry in Capernaum, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, and Matthew took up our very passage: "light has dawned" (Matthew 4:16). The promise had an address, and God kept it. That is the pattern the Church hears everywhere in this story: God begins where the blow fell first.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine

"The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New." That single sentence is the method of our whole study: Isaiah hides Christmas, and Matthew unveils Isaiah.

Quaestiones in Heptateuchum 2.73, as quoted in CCC 129

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: St. Jerome

Jerome says, in substance, that Isaiah deserves to be called an evangelist rather than merely a prophet, because he tells the mysteries of Christ so clearly he seems to describe what has already happened. This week we heard why.

Prologue to his Commentary on Isaiah

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: St. John Henry Newman

"Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom, lead Thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home; lead Thou me on!" Newman wrote this in 1833 on the voyage home from Sicily, becalmed and unsure of everything. It is an Advent prayer for anyone still in the dark, asking for one step of light.

The Pillar of the Cloud (Lead, Kindly Light), 1833

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1. Each evening, when the first Advent candle is lit (at home or in your imagination), say Isaiah 9:2 aloud from memory. One candle, one verse, every day.
2. One morning this week, pray Zechariah's canticle, the Benedictus (Luke 1:68-79), slowly. Underline every word about light and dawn.
3. Do the one act of light you named at the end of our session. Small counts. Light usually starts small.

MEMORY VERSE

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined." (Isaiah 9:2)

MY GUESS (SEAL IT)

WHAT WAS ISRAEL ACTUALLY WAITING FOR?

Write your honest answer below. Fold this section over, seal it with tape, put your name on the outside, and bring it back next week. We will open these together at Session 3. No one reads it before then, including you.

Name (outside the seal): _____

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read Isaiah 40:1-11 once, slowly. Bring your Bible and your sealed guess.

Catechism references from this session: CCC 129, 522, 524, 712.