

Advent/Christmas texts
Bible Study class
June 18, 2017

Introduction

1. The book of Isaiah is commonly thought to be the work of as many as three writers: Isaiah 1-39, 40-55, and 56-66 are how the book is commonly divided.
2. The texts for this lesson come from the first section of Isaiah, also known as “Isaiah of Jerusalem.” Most scholars date this section to the years 750-700 B.C., a time of great political turmoil and, ultimately, the end of an era for Judean independence. (This background is fairly consistent throughout all of the OT “Advent” texts that we are considering).
3. In the midst of the turmoil, however, the prophets brought messages of hope. One challenge in interpreting these passages is to consider the question, “How helpful is a message of hope, if we don’t know if we’ll live to see it?”

Isaiah 2:1-5

1. Read the text.
2. The passage references a “day to come.” What will life look like in that day? Make a list of those attributes.
3. What is God’s role in this future kingdom? What characteristics of God can we mention, based on this text?
4. There are a few times in the year when civic holidays influence our worship themes. (Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Thanksgiving, perhaps some others). What kind of civic circumstances might make Brethren want to use these verses as a theme in worship?

Isaiah 7:10-16

1. Read the text, but begin at Isaiah 7:1. Also read Matthew 1:23.
2. Is it possible that these verses have two meanings—one for Isaiah’s day and one for Jesus’ day?

Isaiah 9:2-7

1. Read the text.
2. Note the strong contrast between verses 1-5 and verses 6-7. What is different in these two passages? In what ways are the people struggling, and how does that help them hope for something better or different?
3. How is this child described? Make a list of those attributes.

Isaiah 11:1-10

1. Read the text.
2. This is a very famous passage. Are you familiar with a famous painting inspired by these verses?
3. In what ways will the spirit be on this “shoot”? List those characteristics. How do you think they will manifest themselves in this persons life? What will that “look like”?
4. What role do these verses play in a country that values the separation of church and state?

Isaiah 35:1-10

1. Read the text.
2. What kind of world does this describe? Write down some specific ways these verses describe the world to come.
3. Have you ever seen anything close to this in your lifetime? Give examples.