

Sermon Growth Guide



November 30, 2025

In the Dark Streets

Isaiah 8:19-9:7

Key Verse: “The people that walked in the darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined” Isaiah 9:2

Big Idea: Leaders and people refuse to trust and seek signs from God, so God takes the initiative to give them a sign: Jesus, the sign and the Son of God, is born to bring light into the darkness.

Foundations

This text is part of Isaiah’s prophecy (Isaiah 6-9) to Ahaz the young fearful king of Judah. Ahaz is fearful of invasion by Assyria assisted by the kingdoms of Aram/Syria and Ephraim/Israel. What is he to do?

Isaiah meets the trembling young king on the northern road out of Jerusalem, a place where northern armies would come if they invaded Judah (Isaiah 7:3-4). There Isaiah confronts Ahaz and implores him to ask a sign from the LORD to assure him and the people that God would protect them. Ahaz refuses (7:12). In response Isaiah, with a play on words in Hebrew, says, “If you do not amen (God) you will not be amen-ed (by God)” 7:9.

After this encounter the LORD takes the initiative for Ahaz and his people through the signs of two sons and a third promised son of David who will deliver the people. The names of the sons of Isaiah are both plays on words: Immanuel, “God is with us” 7:14, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, “Quick is the booty, Speedy is the prey” 8:3. Finally, the LORD promises a third son, this time not a son of Isaiah but a son of David (9:7) who is like no son that has ever been born. The prophecies of Isaiah against Ahaz for a sign, which come in the sons Immanuel and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, become the precursors for the special son who will bring all people of out darkness and into light. This son we now know is Jesus, the Son of God.

Understanding God’s Word

Reading the prophecy of Isaiah to Ahaz takes some familiarity with history of the 8th century BC, when Judah was being threatened not only by the super power of the day, Assyria, but also by the bordering mini-powers Aram and Ephraim. These historical peoples become the context for God to speak into our history, for the Word to become flesh and well among us (John 1:14).

Applying God’s Word

How has God challenged us to seek for signs? Do we like Ahaz refuse to ask for signs and thus don’t trust God to work in our histories? The biblical Ahaz becomes the epitome of distrust. We don’t want to be like Ahaz, and yet we all are. We lack trust in God even when the Holy Spirit challenges us to trust. The Good News is that in spite of our distrust God acts in trust and faithfulness to us when he sends his son Jesus to walk in our histories.

Witnessing God’s Word

No one trusts anyone any more. In a culture of fake news, Internet avatars, and the rise of Artificial Intelligence how can we trust? God’s Word in Isaiah and finally in the Word become flesh in Jesus is firm ground, light in the darkness, and genuine intelligence and love. The Good News of a trusty God we can share in a culture of distrust.