

Message Study Guide

(Scriptures & quotes from this week's message are available on [thorncreek.church/live](http://thorncreek.church/live))

**Warming up**

1. When you think of Christmas, what thoughts come to mind?

**Digging Deeper & Application**

Take your time reading the scripture given. If possible look up the verses in different versions and pause at each verse and discuss it.

2. Isaiah 9:6 is one of the most popular Christmas verses. Do you know the story behind this verse?
3. Approximately 700 BC, Israel was facing Assyria. For 300 years, from 900 B.C. to 600 B.C., the Assyrian Empire expanded, conquered and ruled the Middle East, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, and parts of today's Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Since around 1250 B.C., the Assyrians had started using war chariots and iron weapons, which were far superior to bronze weapons. These tools and tactics made the Assyrian army the most powerful military force of its time, both doctrinally and technologically advanced.
4. This quote from Historian, Simon Anglim, helps us understand the strength of Assyria, "While historians tend to shy away from analogies, it is tempting to see the Assyrian Empire, which dominated the Middle East from 900-612 BC, as a historical forebear of Nazi Germany: an aggressive, murderously vindictive regime supported by a magnificent and successful war machine. As with the German army of World War II, the Assyrian army was the most technologically and doctrinally advanced of its day and was a model for others for generations afterwards. The Assyrians were the first to make extensive use of iron weaponry [and] not only were iron weapons superior to bronze, but could be mass-produced, allowing the equipping of very large armies indeed."
5. The prophet Isaiah warned Judah about the coming invasion from Assyria (The invasion happened in 722 BC). Isaiah chapter 8 describes the condition of Israel as they face Assyria. Please read Isaiah 8:21-22.

6. QUESTION: Have you ever felt like you had a problem in your life that was like an Assyrian Army? If comfortable, please share with group.
  
7. While Isaiah chapter eight is filled with despair, Isaiah chapter nine, is filled with hope. Approximately 700 BC, these words were written. It was written in the shadow of an Assyrian invasion. Please read Isaiah 9:1-7. Compare with Matthew 4:13-16.
  - a. As you read these seven verses, what verse stood out and why?
  
  - b. Which verse means something to you and why?
  
8. What are the four names that are given to Jesus? This is more than identity, this is the very nature of Jesus Christ. So in Jewish culture, the NAME is not only about identity, but it's the very nature of that person. Which name of Jesus do you need to experience today?
  
9. Please read Romans 8:35-37.

**Application**

Below are some of the points shared in the message. Discuss how they apply to your life.

- It doesn't matter how dark of a place you find yourself. Depression, addiction, lust, anger, hurt, are no match to the penetrating light found in Jesus Christ.
- God will use the bloodstained wounds from your past as fuel for His purpose in your life.
- And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.