Question: What is your start to your Christmas season? Before or after Thanksgiving?

Text: Isaiah 9:1-7

9:1 Nevertheless, <u>that time</u> of *darkness* and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be *<u>filled with glory</u>*. ² The people who <u>walk in darkness</u> will see a *<u>great light</u>*. For those who live in a *<u>land of deep darkness</u>* a *<u>light will shine</u>*.

- Repeated theme of Isaiah: ***<u>Darkness and Light</u>***

Key uses of "Darkness":
- A time of hopelessness or despair
- A state of spiritual depravity, spiritual death, or blindness.
- A form of judgment

Key context for the darkness in Isaiah 9:1
- Isaiah 7: King Ahaz—his fear of Syria and Israel, for not aligning against Assyria
  - Rather than turn to God in faith, King Ahaz turns to Assyria
- Isaiah 8: Assyria would annihilate Syria and Israel…and come against Judah.
  - Rather than turn to God in faith, Judah turns to mediums for guidance.
- Judah's spiritual darkness has turned them away from the might of God and turned them toward God-substitutes.

Is 8:20 Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the *<u>dark (spiritual darkness)</u>*. ²¹ They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They will look up to heaven ²² and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and *<u>dark despair (time of hopelessness)</u>*. They will be thrown out into the *<u>darkness (judgment)</u>*….

Is 9:1-2
   Is 9:1 Nevertheless, <u>that time</u> of *darkness* and despair <u>will not go on forever</u>. (Here God offers hope…) **The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be *<u>filled with glory</u>*. ² The people who <u>walk in darkness</u> will see a *<u>great light</u>*. For those who live in a *<u>land of deep darkness</u>* a *<u>light will shine</u>*.**

- Zebulun and Naphtali are northern regions around Galilee.
- This region would be the first to be annihilated by Assyria…but would be the first to see the glory of the "light" given by God. It is in the region of Galilee that Jesus would be born and primarily spend his time ministering.

Is 9:3-5

³ You will <u>enlarge the nation of Israel</u>, and its people will <u>rejoice</u>. They will <u>rejoice</u> before you as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder. ⁴ For you will <u>break the yoke of their slavery</u> and <u>lift the heavy burden</u> from their shoulders. You will <u>break the oppressor's rod</u>, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian. ⁵ The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire.

- The same nation that will experience war and annihilation—can look forward in hope to the coming ultimate victory.

CHILD motif that runs through Isaiah:

- 7:14 "…Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means God with us).
- 9:6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.
- 11:1 ¹ Out of the stump of David's family <u>will grow a shoot</u>— yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root. ² And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Is 9:6-7

⁶ For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called:
   Wonderful Counselor,
   Mighty God,
   Everlasting Father,
   Prince of Peace.
⁷ His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!