

Jesus is Our Peace

December 4, 2022

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Isaiah 11:1-10

Session Outline

1. The Person of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-2)
2. The Character of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:3-5)
3. The Peace of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:6-10)

Theological Theme

Jesus was born to bring God's perfect and everlasting peace over all creation. Christians should recognize and know that Jesus is "our banner" of everlasting peace.



Leader Guide

Jesus is Our Peace

Introduction

Think back to your past holiday celebrations. Did you spend time thinking about what would happen over Christmas? Did you make lists of things you wanted as gifts and plan out how much fun you would have while celebrating Jesus's birthday? Anticipating the details of the celebration can be as fun as Christmas itself because we look forward to it so much.

Have you ever thought about how much anticipation plays a role in the way we respond to different things? We can experience great joy in thinking about what is coming. Then, we can experience even more joy when the event takes place. We can also rejoice as we reflect on what we were anticipating. Consider how much the people of God looked forward to the coming Messiah. The prophecies about Jesus in Isaiah are some of the most pointed and brought much needed hope. Though it was still some time until Jesus arrived, every detail of the coming Messiah would happen just as predicted.

- ❓ What is something that you anticipated for a long time?
- ❓ How did that anticipation affect your enjoyment of the event?


Session Summary

Chapter 10 of Isaiah paints a picture of the Lord's plans and includes a description of how the Lord, in His judgment, would cut down the nations much like cutting down the trees of Lebanon. He would wipe out the nations and leave the stumps behind like a forest that had been razed.

Then the Lord shared in chapter 11 about His plans to send a Messiah. He continued with the tree analogy and beautifully prophesied about Jesus Christ coming to earth through the line of Jesse. This reaffirmed God's promise to David that the Messiah would come from his line. No detail is ever overlooked with God. He fulfills His promises to the last letter. When Jesus returns, He will bring true and lasting peace.

1. The Person of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-2)


Using the illustration of chopping down trees in a forest and leaving stumps, the Lord described His plan. As only God can do, He was planning to bring life and victory out of something dead and lifeless. This prophecy was about Jesus Christ growing from the line of Jesse. It is interesting to note that God said Jesus would come from Jesse instead of King David, even though it is the same line. This may have been to stress the humble nature of Jesus.

 How do these verses point to the unexpected nature of the coming Messiah? Why was this important?

The fact that Jesus would grow as a rod from a stump signified God's power to bring life from death. Nothing is impossible with God, and He is not limited by the condition of a nation or a people. The fact that a new shoot would grow from a dried out, withered, leftover piece of wood spoke to God's faithfulness to His promises, even when circumstances may not look favorable. The Davidic dynasty would continue as the Lord promised though it appeared impossible.

The Lord went on to describe exactly what the Messiah would be like. He made it clear that this rod from a dead stump wouldn't just barely survive but would be fully alive. These verses go on to name seven—the number of perfection and completion—characteristics of God that would be fully present in Jesus.

The seven aspects of the Spirit listed that Jesus would possess reflected His deity. They are characteristics that indicate His lordship and power. The wisdom of Jesus would be evident in His interactions on earth. Over and over in difficult and tricky situations, Jesus responded in wisdom. There is nothing we go through in this life that Jesus doesn't understand. He lived as a man and endured the same temptations that we do (see Hebrews 4:15). He is perfectly suited to be our High Priest, and we can trust Him in all things.

 What are some ways you need the characteristics of Jesus listed in these verses?

Other characteristics listed include counsel, might, knowledge and fear of the Lord. He is our perfect counselor, and we can go to Him in every situation. Jesus has the power to do anything. He knows everything about our situations and about us. Jesus has the knowledge that we don't have but we need, so we can trust Him even when we don't understand. The fear of the Lord is a vital characteristic as it reminds us that Jesus kept Himself in submission to God the Father and showed Him perfect

Two Different Paths

Assyria's destiny was in direct contrast to that of the Davidic throne. The Lord would chop down the Assyrian empire, but He would cause a new ruler, the Messiah, to spring up from Jesse's family tree. Energized by the Lord's Spirit, this King would possess wisdom, executive ability, and loyalty to the Lord, all of which are necessary to rule in a just and effective manner. His legal decisions would be based on truth, not superficial appearances. He would defend the poor and suppress the wicked. His kingdom would be one of justice, equality, and peace, where the strong no longer prey upon the weak.

honor in all things. Though this list is not comprehensive of all God's characteristics, they are grouped as a perfect set of seven to show the fullness and perfection of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.



Application: Where specifically do you need to turn to Jesus as Counselor and Helper today?

2. The Character of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:3-5)

We are called to be like Christ in how we live our lives here on earth. Studying the specific aspects of His nature is a good measuring stick for us today. Naming the seven characteristics of the Spirit of God that are present in Jesus stresses the need for us to know even more about who Jesus is so that we can continue to grow more like Him daily. We will never reach perfection like Jesus, but we should continually aspire to grow more into His image.


Nothing pleased Jesus more than doing the will of the Father. When He faced the temptation to seek glory for Himself or to give in under the pressure of the moment, He always chose to surrender His will to God's. How well do we do that? Do we also delight in doing the will of the Father, or are we more often pushing our own agenda and hoping the God will bless it? There is a big difference in the two. Jesus showed us what it meant to live life perfectly submitted to God and not to self.




How hard is it for you to submit to God instead of fulfilling selfish desires? What makes this difficult?

Jesus did not make judgments based on circumstances or what people said. He focused on righteousness and truth in all things. It is easy for us to make snap judgments based on what we see in an instant, or based on what someone else says, without knowing all the facts. Jesus modeled seeking justice for all people. This mindset is countercultural in a society where people tend to be more focused on self than justice for all.

The "scepter from his mouth" referred to the power of Jesus's spoken word. He only needs to announce judgment, and it happens. That is unmatched power. Jesus keeps righteousness and faithfulness wrapped around Him like a belt. All He does or says is wrapped in these two important aspects of His nature. Righteousness can be defined as right living, whereas faithfulness speaks to how true He stays to His own character. He never makes choices or decision to act against His nature as God.


-  Why are righteousness and faithfulness important? How are we to display these characteristics in our lives?

Jesus came to earth as the promised Messiah, and He lived perfectly. His display of the qualities and characteristics of God help us know God better and show us how we should strive to live. How concerned are we with living in a way that reflects the nature of Christ to those around us? It is far easier to do and say whatever we choose than to submit and surrender our will to the Father. Jesus showed us how to live, and we are called to know Him and to strive for righteousness as He did. If it matters to Jesus, then it should matter to us.

-  Application: What action can you take to show care for someone else today instead of focusing only on your own needs or desires?


3. The Peace of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:6-10)

When Jesus comes back to reign it will be a different world. He is the Prince of Peace, and all the earth will recognize this truth. Even nature will be different. The passage lists some of the changes that will be evident when Jesus reigns. Wild animals will no longer be predators and prey. Rather, they will be plant eaters and reside in peace with each other. Things as we know them will be turned upside down.


-  What does the predator and prey being at peace with each other say to you about the peace Jesus will bring?

Can you imagine a world where a little child will be safe around animals considered dangerous today? This kind of power is foreign to us and only accompanies the Messiah. In His reign, not only will animals be at peace with each other, but the way they relate to humans will also change. In the reign of Christ, knowledge of the Lord will cover the whole earth and it will be glorious.

Through Isaiah, God promised that when Jesus returned the glory of His reign will not be for the Jews only but also for the Gentiles. Referencing Jesus as a signal or banner to stand for the people is about gathering the people and drawing them together. Just as a leader might hold a banner or flag up in a huge crowd of people so that his group recognizes where to go and who to follow, Jesus is our banner. He calls us to Himself and unites both Jew and Gentile in peace.

 How does Jesus bring together people who might not naturally be at peace with one another?

Thinking about when Jesus's return to earth recalls when He came the first time. As we celebrate Christmas, may we remember that Jesus was born to bring God's perfect and everlasting peace as King over all creation. No matter what we might get caught up in during the Christmas holiday, it is imperative that we remember who we serve and why we celebrate. When we stay focused on Jesus and how He lived, we will live under Jesus as "our banner" of everlasting peace. That peace makes all the difference, and the world needs to see it starting in God's people.

 Application: How might you reflect the peace Jesus brings to people around you this Christmas season?

Conclusion

God's plan for the world was to send Jesus. God promised to send the Messiah, who would come from a dead and useless stump. This reminds us of the unlimited power of God. The Messiah will come with humility and display the characteristics of God to the world. The seven qualities grouped together in the beginning of Isaiah 11 stress the fullness and perfection of Jesus Christ.

The description of Jesus in this passage also gives examples we can strive to emulate in our own lives. By recognizing the specific ways Jesus surrendered to the Father, we can be motivated to trust the Father's will as He did.

In this time of year that we celebrate and focus on Jesus's birth, it is vital that we remember and celebrate the peace He brought through His life, death, and resurrection. We also anticipate His return to earth and the fact that peace will reign over the earth when He comes again. Let's be people who spread His banner of peace to those around us as much as possible.

- ❓ How have you experienced the peace of Jesus?
- ❓ Is there anything in your life that is keeping you from experiencing His peace? How might you turn that over to Him?
- ❓ Are you an instrument of peace to those around you? How can you be an instrument of God's peace where you work, live, and play this Christmas season?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for sending Jesus to redeem the world and bring us peace. Confess the ways you have missed out on living in peace, and commit to doing whatever it takes to represent the peace of Jesus in your life.

Additional Resources

- *Gifts of Grace* by Jared Wilson
- *Be Comforted* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Exalting Jesus in Isaiah* by Andrew Davis

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



DxD This Week

Call to Action

Have you experienced the peace of Jesus? Is there anything in your life that is keeping you from experiencing His peace? Are you an instrument of peace to those around you? How can you be an instrument of God's peace where you work, live, and play this Christmas season?

For Next Week

Session Title

- Jesus is Our Hope

Main Passages

- Isaiah 35:1-10

Session Outline

1. Restoration Will Come (Isaiah 35:1-2)
2. The People Will Flourish (Isaiah 35:3-7)
3. Highway of Hope (Isaiah 35:8-10)

Memorize

*Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.*

-Isaiah 11:1

Historical Context of Isaiah

Purpose

Isaiah's message is relatively simple. First, Isaiah accused God's people of sin: rebelling against the one who made them and redeemed them. Second, Isaiah instructed these sinners to reform their ways and act obediently. Third, Isaiah announced God's judgment on the people because of their sin. Finally, God revealed his future restoration of the people, or at least of the faithful remnant that survived the judgment. As part of the restoration of God's people, Isaiah foresaw both judgment on the nations (chaps. 13–23) and a future turning of the nations to God (2:1–4). The first part of the book (chaps. 1–39) emphasizes sin, the call to repentance, and judgment; the second part (chaps. 40–66) emphasizes the hope of restoration.

Author

The book presents itself as the writing of one man, Isaiah son of Amoz. The superscription to the book dates his prophetic activity as spanning the reigns of four kings of Judah: Uzziah (783–742 BC, Isaiah's call is dated to this king's last year, 6:1); Jotham (742–735 BC); Ahaz (735–716 BC); and Hezekiah (716–686 BC). On Uzziah (Azariah) see 2Kg 15:1–7; 2Ch 26:1–23. On Jotham see Kg 15:32–38; 2Ch 27:1–9. On Ahaz see 2Kg 16:1–20; 2Ch 28:1–27. On Hezekiah see 2Kg 18:1–20:21; 2Ch 29:1–32:33. Not much is known about Isaiah apart from his prophecy.

Isaiah's authorship of the whole book has been vehemently contested in the modern period. Many scholars have argued that the historical Isaiah could not have written chaps. 40–66. For those who believe that God knows the future and can reveal it to his servants, it is not problematic that God through Isaiah predicted the rise of Babylon, its victory against Judah, the exile, and the return.

Setting

Uzziah's reign was a particularly prosperous time in the history of Judah, but storm clouds were on the horizon. Assyria was on the rise again in the person of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BC). The Assyrian king threatened to engulf Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel. After the death of Tiglath-pileser, his successors, Shalmaneser and Sargon, defeated the northern kingdom in 722 BC and deported its citizens. This event brought Judah even more under the shadow of that great empire. Isaiah 37:38 suggests that the prophet lived until the death of Sennacherib in 681 BC.

Special Features

Isaiah was an eighth-century BC prophet. His book is the first of the Prophets in the English canon and the first of the Latter Prophets in the Hebrew canon. Isaiah is powerful in its poetic imagination, intriguing in its prophetic vision, and complex in its structure. One can never read or study the book without gaining new insights into the nature of God and our relationship with him. The authors of the New Testament read the book of Isaiah in light of the coming of Christ and realized that this prophet anticipated Messiah's coming with remarkable clarity. For this reason they quoted or alluded to Isaiah more than any other Old Testament book.

Extended Commentary

Isaiah 11:1-10

11:1 Judgment in Isaiah is often described as a cutting down of trees (6:13; 10:33–34). The stump of Jesse indicates that the Davidic line has also been cut down, but the tree is yet living. The shoot that springs up shows that David's line will have new life. It will be restored and will once again bear fruit. The association of the stump with Jesse rather than David indicates that there is a new beginning here, a going back to origins, and a distancing from the later corrupt kings of Judah. The continuation of the Davidic line is an indication of the grace of God based on the covenant of kingship with David: "Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever, and your throne will be established forever" (2Sm 7:16). As redemptive history progressed, the new Davidic dynasty was not realized in later Davidic descendants like Zerubbabel (Ezr 3; Zch 4), but in Jesus Christ.

11:2 The shoot is different in character than other descendants of David, most of whom were self-seeking, fearful, and cruel. The Spirit of the Lord will characterize this descendant. The Spirit will fill this leader with wisdom: the ability to rule, and strength: the power to rule. Scripture makes it clear that the Spirit brings wisdom (Ex 31:3; Dt 34:9) and that wisdom leads to productive and just rule (1Kg 4:29; Pr 8:15–16).

11:3 The fear of the Lord is the basic characteristic of a wise, godly person (Pr 1:7). The fear described here is not terror but awe. This wise, Spirit-filled person will not judge according to external appearances, but he will cut to the heart of the truth.

11:4 The wicked kings of Israel and the Near East exploited and took advantage of the weak (the poor and the oppressed), but this king will rule with justice and protect their rights.

11:5 The term translated belt (Hb *'ezor*) refers to an intimate piece of apparel. The idea is that these two fundamental characteristics of covenant fidelity will be an integral part of the future Davidic king's character.

11:6–9 The future rule is described in Edenic terms where there is no animosity among God's creatures. The knowledge of the Lord will permeate this future ideal world ushered in by the shoot of the stump of Jesse.

11:10 The root of Jesse is a variant reference to what is called the "stump of Jesse" (see note at v. 1). Of course, the stump would include the root of the tree, but perhaps this way of referring to the image is a way of emphasizing the hidden life that remains. The root of Jesse is here a banner, which refers to a standard around which an army rallied. This same Hebrew word is used in 5:26 (translated "signal flag"). There the signal flag was a rallying point for the nations as they assembled to attack God's people. Here the banner is a rallying point for the regathering of the remnant.¹

References

1. *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017).

Author Bio

Jared Wilson (Gifts of Grace)

Jared C. Wilson is assistant professor of pastoral ministry at Spurgeon College, author in residence at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and general editor of *For the Church*. He is a popular author and conference speaker, and also blogs regularly at Gospel Driven Church, hosted by the Gospel Coalition. His books include *Gospel Wakefulness*; *Gospel Deeps*; *The Pastor's Justification*; *The Storytelling God*; and *The Wonder-Working God*.

Warren Wiersbe (Be Comforted)

Warren W. Wiersbe, former pastor of the Moody Church and general director of *Back to the Bible*, has traveled widely as a Bible teacher and conference speaker. Because of his encouragement to those in ministry, Dr. Wiersbe is often referred to as “the pastor’s pastor.” He has ministered in churches and conferences throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Central and South America, and Europe. Dr. Wiersbe has written over 150 books, including the popular BE series of commentaries on every book of the Bible, which has sold more than four million copies. At the 2002 Christian Booksellers Convention, he was awarded the Gold Medallion Lifetime Achievement Award by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Dr. Wiersbe and his wife, Betty, live in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Andrew Davis (Exalting Jesus in Isaiah)

Dr. Andrew Davis (Ph.D. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY) is senior pastor of First Baptist Durham, NC, where he has served since 1998. In 2005 he also joined Southeastern Seminary as Visiting Professor of Historical Theology. He presently serves on the board of The Gospel Coalition and is a trustee of the IMB. He is the author of *An Infinite Journey* and *An Approach to the Extended Memorization of Scripture*. He and his wife Christi reside in Bahama, NC, and have five children.