

LESSON TWO

TITLE Advent – Peace

SCRIPTURE Isaiah 11:2-10

MEMORY VERSE

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

MAIN IDEA OF TEXT

The promised Messiah will be God's instrument to bring peace on earth.

BEGIN this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

TEACHER TIP

Start your lesson by telling a story that relates to the main idea of the lesson to grab the attention of your participants. In this section, we have provided you with two options, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: "SILENT NIGHT"

The origins of "Silent Night" go back to the 1800s and two Austrian men, Josef Mohr and Franz Xaver Gruber. Ryan Reeves writes about the hymn for *The Gospel Coalition*:

The lyrics to "Silent Night" were written by Josef Mohr, a man whose name was unloved in his home town of Salzburg. Mohr was one of three illegitimate sons to Anna Schoiberin, while his father, Franz, was a mercenary soldier who eventually abandoned the family. To make matters worse, Josef's godfather was the town executioner.

Perhaps due to his mother's poverty, the curate of the local Catholic cathedral took Josef in as a foster child. Josef had a proclivity toward music, which was encouraged by the church, and he eventually decided himself to pursue the priesthood. He was ordained August 21, 1815, and was sent to Oberndorf, just north of Salzburg. He there met Franz Xaver Gruber, a local schoolteacher who would become organist at Old Saint Nicholas Church the following year.

Gruber came from equally humble origins, and himself took comfort in his music. The friendship of the two is what led to the creation of Silent Night.

"Silent Night"—or "Stille Nacht" in the original German—was created because Mohr needed a carol for worship. On Christmas Eve of 1818, Mohr visited Gruber with a poem he had written a few years earlier. Gruber quickly arranged the song to be played on a guitar with a choir because the church organ was broken. That evening at Midnight Mass, Gruber strapped on his guitar and led the congregation at St. Nicholas in the first rendition of "Silent Night."

Let's watch a traditional version of the song by the group Celtic Women and reflect on the lyrics that speak of the peace that only Christ can give us.

(Play clip of *Silent Night* by Celtic Women: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kf16EBNTxGI>)

*Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child,
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace*

*Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Savior is born!*

Christ the Savior is born

*Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth*

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *In what ways is this hymn successful in presenting a picture of peace and delight brought by Jesus at his birth?*
2. *Why would Josef Mohr understand a desire for peace?*
3. *What can make peace hard to come by during the holiday season?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text: The portrait painted with lyrics from the hymn Silent Night is serene and idyllic, but Jesus's coming into the world was anything but serene and idyllic. At the time of his birth, King Herod viewed Jesus as a threat and wanted to kill him by ordering the death of all male children in Bethlehem under the age of two (Matthew 2:16). Jesus may not have been born into a literal war zone, but his birth did not go unnoticed by those in power who were willing to go to great and cruel lengths to hold on to the throne.

Not much has changed since Jesus's birth. Hostility and violence still run deep in the human heart. Peace may have been achieved in places and for a time but it has never lasted long. We've seen the opposite play out over centuries and there seems to be no end in sight. But Isaiah gives a vision of a time when the hostility and violence that mark humanity will be replaced by the peace that God's Messiah will bring when he returns to fully restore God's kingdom and reign over his creation.

OPTION 2: THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE

One of the most memorable events of World War I was the Christmas Truce which occurred on Christmas of 1914. Nearly 100,000 British and German soldiers took part in the truce, agreeing to a ceasefire along the Western Front. On Christmas Eve, Germans placed Christmas trees and candles in their trenches while singing Christmas carols. The British sang back to the Germans their own version of Christmas carols. On Christmas the next day a truce was declared and, upon hearing of it, one of the British soldiers lifted his head above his bulwark in the trenches and proceeded to walk into No Man's Land. Soon soldiers from both sides made their way onto No Man's Land to meet, exchange gifts, and participate in impromptu soccer matches.

For the briefest of moments on that silent Christmas Day no gun shots or artillery could be heard. Hostilities ceased and the British and German

soldiers were able to celebrate Christmas together in peace.

(Play clip from Sainsbury's ad 1914: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWF2JBb1bvM>)

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *The Christmas Truce is a powerful story because the characters act in a way that is contrary to what's expected, especially in the middle of war. Think of a time when someone acted contrary to what you expected and offered you peace instead of conflict. Have one or two people share.*
2. *How would you define peace in your own words? What are the essential elements that are necessary for peace?*
3. *What would peace in your life look like if you could achieve it? How would things be different?*

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2

SET THE STAGE

TEACHER TIP

In this section, you will find the historical, cultural, and literary context you need to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

1. The Messiah's relationship with God and godly character (vv. 2-5)
 - a. The Messiah's relationship with God
 - i. The Spirit of the Lord will empower and guide him (v. 2).
 - ii. He will fear God and delight in him (v. 3a).
 - b. Descriptions of the Messiah's godly character (v. 3b-5)
 - i. He will judge with righteousness and justice (v. 3b-4a).
 - ii. He will judge for the sake of the poor and needy (v. 3b-4a).
 - iii. By his words he will defeat his enemies (v. 4b).
 - iv. He will act righteously and faithfully in all he does (v. 5).
2. The kingdom reign of the Messiah will be marked by peace (vv. 6-9)
 - a. The natural world in God's creation will experience the peace that the Messiah brings; predators will no longer kill prey (v.6-9a).
 - b. The worldwide reign of the Messiah will begin a new era when all have the knowledge of who God is and what he does (v. 9b).
3. The extent of the Messiah's reign and influence (v. 10)
 - a. The Messiah will establish his forever reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (v.10a).
 - b. Nations will come to the Messiah and he will establish his throne, restore God's order, and rule and rest after he has brought peace to the earth (10b).

CONTEXT

The beginning of Isaiah (1:1-23) paints a grim picture of the state of Israel. They have lost their way and turned to sin rather than to God. Despite this, God will move forward with his plan and honor his promises to Abraham and David to bless all nations through Israel. The Messiah will be Israel's true king; all other kings in Israel and Judah—even David—failed to be a truly righteous and just king. But the Messiah will succeed by every measure and be the king who will save and redeem God's people, not by the shed blood of soldiers on the battlefield but by his own shed blood as a sacrifice for sin.

FALLEN CONDITION & GOSPEL RESPONSE

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

Peace is hard to find in this life, and even when it is found it is fleeting.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

God brings perfect peace through Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who will one day completely restore God's order and rule.

TEACHER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your class through the process of Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the teacher, work through all the exercises below to ensure you gain a good understanding of the text.

We can divide this week's passage into three main sections:

1. Description of the Messiah (vv. 2-5)
2. Peace brought by the Messiah to God's kingdom (vv. 6-9)
3. The establishment of the Messiah as king and his peaceful reign over the nations (v.10).

Isaiah 11:1 describes a shoot that will rise out of the stump of Jesse, the father of King David. From this shoot will come a fruit-bearing Branch (the Messiah). This is a clear reference to the promise God made to David that the Messiah would come from his lineage and reign on God's throne forever (2 Samuel 7). Isaiah is drawing a connection between God's promise to David and the Messiah figure to come (vv. 2-10). By making this connection, Isaiah is once again showing us that God has a plan and will fulfill all his promises. He orchestrates all times and events for his glorious purposes.

Let's take a look at this week's passage and discuss what's in the text and how we are to respond to it.

- 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—
- 3 and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

- 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
- 5 Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

- 6 The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

- 7 The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

- 8 The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

- 9 They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,

for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples;
the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: RETELLING THE STORY

Read through the passage once and, when finished, (1) turn to the person next to you and retell the story in your own words or (2) write a short summary of the passage in your own words.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: UNDERLINE THE VERBS

Read through the passage three times and, on the third reading, circle the verbs. Remember that verbs are action words that usually follow the subject of the sentence.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: CROSS-REFERENCING SCRIPTURE

Isaiah tells us that when the Messiah comes, he will bring God's peace with him. Read the following passages about God's peace. What do each of these passages say about God, his peace, and how we have access to it?

Isaiah 26:3

John 16:33

Romans 5:1-5

Philippians 4:6-7

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATION

What is it that motivates the Messiah to act and be obedient to the mission God called him to?

How does motive affect the resolve and action of the Messiah?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: USING ANOTHER TRANSLATION

Read Isaiah 11:2-10 in *The Message*. In what ways does this translation help your understanding of the passage? In what ways does reading the passage in this translation connect with you emotionally?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: PARALLEL PASSAGES

Look up Matthew 28:18-20 and Romans 15:8-12. Read the passages and compare them with Isaiah 11:10. What do these passages tell us about

God's heart for the nations? How can they help us remember our call to live on mission to reach others with the good news of Jesus Christ?

TEACHER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God is calling them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: Where in your life would you like to experience more of God's peace?

QUESTION 2: How does peace or lack thereof in a person's life impact family and friends?

QUESTION 3: What could you do this week to reflect more on the future and the peace that Jesus, the Messiah, will bring to this earth? How might that change your perspective on your present circumstances?

QUESTION 4: What can we do as a church family to share and spread more peace among ourselves and with those outside our church community?

QUESTION 5: What is a creative way to share the peace of Christ with someone else? (Maybe it's getting together with friends to go caroling, making a gift that will encourage someone going through a hard time this Christmas, helping someone to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life by enjoying time out in nature or time in solitude, silence, and prayer.)

4

CHALLENGE

TEACHER TIP

End your time of study with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

Who is this Messiah God promised to send to save and redeem his people? What is he like? What will he do? Isaiah 11:2-10 gives us insight into the spirit-filled power and godly character of this figure who was sent on a rescue mission to this world. Isaiah shows us that the Messiah will accomplish his mission and take his seat on the throne to rule over God's kingdom. The result of the Messiah's conquering of his enemies will be true peace over all God's creation and world-wide knowledge of God as Creator, Savior and King.

Humanity may strive to bring peace on earth through diplomacy and better relations between nations, but there is only one who is capable of doing what we have failed time and time again to do. Jesus, the Messiah king, came to this earth to bring peace between God and man, and he accomplished that through his death and resurrection. Through Jesus, we have been reconciled to God and have peace with him (Romans 5:1-11). We have gone from being God's enemy to being his friend, from having God as our Judge to having him as our Father.

The good news this Advent season is that Jesus Christ is our peace in all circumstances. If you're lacking peace, Jesus offers his to you. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). And there will come a day when true and lasting peace will be established—when Jesus returns and sets things right and makes all things new.

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 Those who are victorious will

inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

Revelation 21:1-7

A peace that's bigger than your circumstances is available to you today—even now—and you have access to it because of Jesus. You can also look forward to that glorious day when Jesus will reign over the nations as the Prince of Peace.

LET'S PRAY

COMMENTARY

ISAIAH 11:1

D.A. Carson, in his commentary from the *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, comments on the meaning of the terms 'shoot' and 'stump' used in Isaiah 11:1 to describe the origins of the Messiah:

A shoot ... from the stump. The forest of arrogant human evil has been cut down, and here in contrast is a "Branch" coming out of a stump one would think lifeless. Yet this seemingly weak thing is clearly the king of a universal kingdom. Probably this Messianic use of "Branch" accounts for its similar use in Jeremiah (Jer 23:5; 33:15) and Zechariah (Zech 3:8; 6:12). stump. A different Hebrew word than that used in 6:13, but the sense is clearly the same: out of judgment comes hope, and the weakness of God is greater than the strength of humans (c.f. 53:2). Jesse. Also in v. 10, may be used in place of David in order to push the promise back further than merely the house of David, which was at that moment corrupt. It implies a future "new David."

ISAIAH 11:2

In the *New American Commentary*, Gary V. Smith explores the relationship between God and the Messiah by pointing to Isaiah's descriptions of the Messiah and the fact that God equips and empowers the Messiah for his work within the context of an intimate relationship:

This Davidic individual will experience God's abundant blessing on his life. Israelite history causes one to expect that God would give his chosen kings a special measure of his spirit so that the king will follow God's ways (1 Sam 10:6, 10; 11:6; 19:9; 20:23). As the Spirit of God rested on his servant David in the past (1 Sam 16:1-13; 2 Sam 23:2), so the divine Spirit will dwell or "rest" (נָחַ) on this new Davidic Branch, enabling God to use him in a special way. Three pairs of explanations define the Spirit's impact on the character and abilities of this person. First, the Spirit's influence will affect the mental abilities of wisdom and understanding as well as the moral ability to make right choices in judicial decisions (11:3; 1 Kgs 3:12, 28). Although the focus is on the internal capacity to perceive the relationships between factors and consequences, this gifting was aimed at the practical enabling of this future leader to rule with God's wisdom (11:3-5), not just to create an extremely smart person. Wildberger contrasts these two characteristics by relating wisdom to handling problems of daily living, while understanding is the ability "to see beyond the details of a particular situation, make an appropriate assessment, and come to conclusions about necessary decisions." This new ruler will not make the foolish mistakes of Ahaz who acted based on what made sense from a shortsighted, human, political perspective.

Second, the Spirit of God will equip leaders with gifts related to the practical accomplishment of tasks. Because God will guide him, this person will give counsel ("wonderful counsel" in 9:6), devise amazing plans, and have the power to carry them out. This equipping does not relate to military planning alone (cf. 36:5), but would certainly include it (see 11:14-16). His action stands in contrast to Ahaz (2 Chr 28; Isa 7:1-13) and the Assyrian king (10:5-14), who made arrogant and unwise plans with the main purpose of surviving militarily rather than honoring God by trusting in his power (cf. 7:1-25).

Third, God will grant this person experiential knowledge of God that will be characterized by a fear of God. These two factors, knowledge and fear, point to an intimate relationship between this ruler and God.

Through the work of the Spirit and his close contact with God, this new leader will allow God to speak through his words and reveal himself through his actions. These are characteristics of an ideal charismatic royal leader who trusts God. These are the kind of spiritual leadership qualities that believers should use as a model when they are looking for godly leadership even today.

ISAIAH 11:3B-5

Unlike other rulers who oppress the poor and make them suffer, the Messiah will show compassion to the poor because justice, righteousness, and faithfulness are essential parts of the Messiah's character and nature of his reign. Such are the insights on the Messiah from John A. Martin in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*:

As world Ruler, the Messiah will judge the world (cf. 2:4). But He will not be like an ordinary judge who may be swayed by superficial knowledge. He will judge impartially and in righteousness. The needy and the poor will not be oppressed by Him as they often are by human leaders (10:1-2). The oppressed will be the beneficiaries of His justice, and the wicked will be slain. His reign will be characterized by righteousness (11:5; cf. 9:7; 16:5) and faithfulness as if they were integral parts of His clothing, as a belt and sash.

ISAIAH 11:6-9

R.C. Sproul, in his commentary in *The Reformation Study Bible*, speaks of the peace that the Messiah will bring. It will be so magnificent that animals with an instinct to attack and kill will instead act as protectors for those that were once their prey.

Carnivorous animals, remade with natures that protect what they formerly devoured, effectively portray the wonderful peace on earth in the new age ruled by the Messiah (see 2:4). The devouring nations, such as Assyria, will no longer assault God's people. The vision corresponds to reconciling love already visible in the church (Eph. 2:14-18), which will be consummated in the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:4, 24-27).

ISAIAH 11:10

Isaiah 11:1-10 is replete with imagery depicting the Messiah. One significant image that the prophet returns to in verse 10 is the 'Root of Jesse,' which refers back to the 'root' and 'stump' mentioned in verse 1. John Calvin and William Pringle, in *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, present a glorious picture of this root growing so tall that it catches the attention of the nations and they flock to it:

[Isaiah] again returns to the person of Christ, and repeats the same comparison which he had introduced at the beginning of the chapter, that of a root or a branch springing from a decayed trunk, of which no trace appeared; and he foretells that the Gentiles, who formerly abhorred the Jews, will henceforth bow before their King with lowly homage. This might be thought to be altogether incredible, and unquestionably the promise was ridiculed for many centuries, because such a gathering together was to be expected rather when the kingdom remained and flourished than when it had been cut down. But it was necessary that it should be cut down, so that it might

afterwards sprout again, and that the glory and power of God might shine in it more brightly than in its flourishing condition. Who would have seen with the eyes of men that the branch would rise to such a height as to be seen by all nations, and to direct the eyes of all men towards it?

John C. Ortland Jr., in his commentary on “Isaiah” in the ESV Study Bible, cross-references this verse in Isaiah with Romans 15:8–12 and Paul’s desire to reach the Gentiles with the gospel:

Paul quotes this verse in Rom. 15:12 to describe his ambition to reach the Gentiles with the gospel: he sees himself as living in the messianic time the OT expected, in which the Gentiles would come to know the true God, and thus his own ministry involved spreading Messiah’s rule among the Gentiles. a signal for the peoples. See Isa. 11:12; 49:22; 62:10. glorious. Lit., “glory,” i.e., the place where God’s presence is conveyed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

John Calvin and William Pringle, *Isaiah*, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

D.A. Carson, *Isaiah*, NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible.

John A. Martin, *Isaiah*, The Bible Knowledge Commentary.

John C. Ortland Jr., *Isaiah*, The ESV Study Bible.

Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, The New American Commentary.

R.C. Sproul, *Isaiah*, The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version.