

Isaiah

Noble Prince of Peace

Lesson #5 for January 30, 2021

Scriptures: Isaiah 9-12.

1. Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, who supervised the creation of the first atomic bomb, appeared before a U.S. Congressional Committee. They inquired of him if there were any defense against the weapon. ‘Certainly,’ the great physicist replied.
“ ‘And that is-’
“Dr. Oppenheimer looked over the . . . audience and said softly: ‘Peace.’”—Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1985), p. 989.
Peace is an elusive dream for the human race. It has been estimated that since the beginning of recorded history the world has been entirely at peace only about 8 percent of the time. During these years, at least 8,000 treaties have been broken. During the half century following the end of World War I, which was supposed to be the *war to end all wars*, there were two minutes of peace for every year of war.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath, January 23.[§]
2. In order to understand these few chapters from the book of Isaiah, we must understand something of the conditions of Judah and Israel in the days of Isaiah.

Isaiah 8:21-22: ²¹The people will wander through the land, discouraged and hungry. In their hunger and their anger they will curse their king and their God. They may look up to the sky ²²or stare at the ground, but **they will see nothing but trouble and darkness, terrifying darkness into which they are being driven.**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Isaiah 8:21-22). New York: American Bible Society.[†]

3. People had turned away from God so far that they were sacrificing their own children to pagan deities. They were trying to communicate with the dead through occult practices. King Ahaz took much of the gold and silver out of Solomon’s Temple to try to pay Tiglath-Pilezer III of Nineveh/Assyria to get him to attack Syria and Israel so that those nations would not attack Judah!
4. What kind of a message do you think God would try to send to Isaiah in that situation?

Isaiah 9:1-5: ¹ There will be no way for them to escape from this time of trouble.

The land of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali was once disgraced, but the future will bring honour to this region, from the Mediterranean eastwards to the land on the other side of the Jordan, and even to Galilee itself, where the foreigners live.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.

They lived in a land of shadows,
but now light is shining on them.

³ You have given them great joy, LORD;
you have made them happy.

They rejoice in what you have done,

as people rejoice when they harvest their corn
or when they divide captured wealth.

⁴ For you have broken the yoke that burdened them
and the rod that beat their shoulders.

You have defeated the nation
that oppressed and exploited your people,
just as you defeated the army of Midian long ago.

⁵ The boots of the invading army
and all their bloodstained clothing
will be destroyed by fire.—*Good News Bible*.*

5. What an incredible contrast between those last few verses of Isaiah 8 and these first verses of Isaiah 9. In fact, the chapters from Isaiah 8:21 through Isaiah 12 go back-and-forth between terrible disasters with God “punishing” His people to marvelous hopes for a future restoration. How do you suppose these messages were received by the people of Jerusalem at that time?

6. Why do you suppose that Isaiah 9:1 starts out by mentioning the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali?

7. Note that when King Ahaz of Judah asked Tiglath Pilezer III to attack Israel and Syria, he did.

2 Kings 15:29: It was while Pekah was king that Tiglath Pileser, the emperor of Assyria, captured the cities of Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, and Hazor, and the territories of Gilead, Galilee, and Naphtali, and took the people to Assyria as prisoners.—*Good News Bible*.*

8. We do not need to guess about Isaiah 9:1 because Matthew 4:12-17 gives us the answer.

Matthew 4:12-17: ¹² When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he went away to Galilee. ¹³**He did not stay in Nazareth, but went to live in Capernaum, a town by Lake Galilee, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali.** ¹⁴This was done to make what the prophet Isaiah had said come true:

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
on the road to the sea, on the other side of the Jordan,
Galilee, land of the Gentiles!

¹⁶ The people who live in darkness
will see a great light.

On those who live in the dark land of death
the light will shine.”

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach his message: “Turn away from your sins, because the Kingdom of heaven is near!”—*Good News Bible*.*†

9. And it is very interesting to notice that the good news which came when Jesus began His work in Galilee was not limited to Galilee.

Matthew 4:23-25: ²³ Jesus went all over Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the Kingdom, and healing people who had all kinds of disease and sickness. ²⁴The news about him spread through **the whole country of Syria**, so that people brought to him all those who were sick, suffering from all kinds of diseases and disorders: people with demons, and epileptics, and paralytics—and Jesus healed them all. ²⁵Large crowds followed

him from **Galilee** and the **Ten Towns**, from **Jerusalem, Judea**, and **the land on the other side of the Jordan**.—*Good News Bible*.*†

10. Jesus, of course, grew up in Galilee. But, when His ministry began, He moved from Nazareth to Capernaum. We know much about His one year of ministry in Galilee. It was the time when He chose His disciples and began training them for what was coming. In Galilee, He was more removed from the power of authorities in Jerusalem, and thus, a little safer.
11. Surely, those who heard Isaiah's words—in fact, Isaiah himself—must have wondered when the marvelous delivery would come which is spoken about in Isaiah 9! And how would it come?

Isaiah 9:6-7: ⁶ A child is born to us!

A son is given to us!

And he will be our ruler.

He will be called, “Wonderful Counsellor”,

“Mighty God”, “Eternal Father”,

“Prince of Peace”.

⁷ **His royal power will continue to grow;**

his kingdom will always be at peace.

He will rule as King David's successor,

basing his power on right and justice,

from now until the end of time.

The LORD Almighty is determined to do all this.—*Good News Bible*.*†

12. Doesn't this seem like a contradiction in terms? How could a Baby Boy born to us be “Wonderful Counsellor” (or Counselor), “Mighty God,” “Eternal Father,” “Prince of Peace”?
13. Last week, we studied about the birth of that baby. We suggested that the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 had a dual application: One in the days of Isaiah; the other, the birth of Jesus.
14. It is interesting to notice that the lesson for this week mentions the birth of Immanuel but does not suggest who that was in the days of Isaiah. Isaiah, of course, did have two “prophetic” sons: Shear-Jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz.
15. But, clearly, the prophecy in Isaiah 9:6-7 cannot refer to anyone except the Baby born to a virgin in Bethlehem. As we read through Isaiah 9&10, we note that this brief notice about a Baby comes in the midst of terrible punishments falling upon the disobeying Judeans.
16. Had other Old Testament prophets said anything about this Messiah to come? Notice this very interesting passage from *The Desire of Ages*. This is the story of the people, rejoicing as Jesus made that triumphal entry into Jerusalem five days before His crucifixion!

As they question, “Who is this?” the disciples, filled with the spirit of inspiration, answer this question. In eloquent strains they repeat the prophecies concerning Christ:

Adam will tell you, It is the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head. [Genesis 3:15]

Ask **Abraham**, he will tell you, It is “Melchizedek King of Salem,” King of Peace. Genesis 14:18.

Jacob will tell you, He is Shiloh of the tribe of Judah. [Genesis 49:10]

Isaiah will tell you, “Immanuel,” “Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The

everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 7:14; 9:6.

Jeremiah will tell you, The Branch of David, “the Lord our Righteousness.” Jeremiah 23:6.

Daniel will tell you, He is the Messiah. [Daniel 9:25-26]

Hosea will tell you, He is “the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is His memorial.” Hosea 12:5.

John the Baptist will tell you, He is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29.

The great Jehovah has proclaimed from His throne, “This is My beloved Son.” Matthew 3:17.

We, His disciples, declare, This is Jesus, the Messiah, the Prince of life, the Redeemer of the world.

And **the prince of the powers of darkness** acknowledges Him, saying, “I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.” Mark 1:24.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 578.2-579.6.††

17. Clearly, someone in that crowd had become familiar with the Old Testament prophecies.

18. But, at the time Jesus was born, the situation was very different.

An angel visits the earth to see who are prepared to welcome Jesus. But he can discern no tokens of expectancy. He hears no voice of praise and triumph that the period of Messiah’s coming is at hand. The angel hovers for a time over the chosen city and the temple where the divine presence has been manifested for ages; but even here is the same indifference. The priests, in their pomp and pride, are offering polluted sacrifices in the temple. The Pharisees are with loud voices addressing the people or making boastful prayers at the corners of the streets. In the palaces of kings, in the assemblies of philosophers, in the schools of the rabbis, all are alike unmindful of the wondrous fact which has filled all heaven with joy and praise—that the Redeemer of men is about to appear upon the earth.

There is no evidence that Christ is expected, and no preparation for the Prince of life. In amazement the celestial messenger is about to return to heaven with the shameful tidings, when he discovers a group of shepherds who are watching their flocks by night, and, as they gaze into the starry heavens, are contemplating the prophecy of a Messiah to come to earth, and longing for the advent of the world’s Redeemer. Here is a company that is prepared to receive the heavenly message. And suddenly the angel of the Lord appears, declaring the good tidings of great joy. Celestial glory floods all the plain, an innumerable company of angels is revealed, and as if the joy were too great for one messenger to bring from heaven, a multitude of voices break forth in the anthem which all the nations of the saved shall one day sing: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2:14.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 314.1-2.†

19. We know that Jesus was not an ordinary human being. He was the Creator of everything. (John 1:1-3,14; Colossians 1:15-17; 2:9; Hebrews 1: 1-3) This Jesus came not only to save us, but also to become an eternal part of the human family. “Unto us a child is born”.... Forever! (Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 28:18-20)

20. When the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit planned together for the salvation of the

human race, They knew how difficult it was going to be to deal with Satan's rebellion.

When Christ came to our world, Satan was on the ground, and disputed every inch of advance in his path from the manger to Calvary. **Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father.**—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*,* February 18, 1890, par. 2; *1888 Materials** 533.2.† Compare *Selected Messages*, book 1, 406.2-407.0 [which has capitalization differences only]. [This is from Ellen White's morning talk at Battle Creek, Michigan, January 29, 1890.]‡

21. The major task that Jesus had when coming to this earth was:

[At Christ's coming,] the law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and **God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes....**

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* January 20, 1890, par. 6,9.†‡

22. But, having read those marvelous words about the coming Messiah which in Isaiah's day was still 700 years in the future, we must turn back to the reality in Isaiah's day.
23. While Isaiah 9:1-7 is a marvelous promise of a future Messiah to come, the rest of the chapter is very scary. How are we to understand *the wrath of God* as described in Isaiah 9:8-10:2? Would the Lord actually stir up "their enemies to attack them"? (Isaiah 9:11, *GNB**) They were not ready to repent. (See Isaiah 9:13.) And "the wickedness of the people" burned "like a fire that destroys thorn bushes and thistles...." (Isaiah 9:18, *GNB**) "You are doomed! You make unjust laws that oppress my people. That is how you prevent the poor from having their rights and from getting justice. That is how you take the property that belongs to widows and orphans." (Isaiah 10:1-2, *GNB**) [A few sample comments about the people's condition!]
24. Read Isaiah 9:8-10:34. While people were boasting of how they would strengthen fortifications and build stronger walls, "everywhere in the country people snatch and eat any bit of food they can find, but their hunger is never satisfied. They even eat their own children!" (Isaiah 9:20, *GNB**) God went on to describe how awful things were and what was going to happen. In

Isaiah 10 God through Isaiah warned the people of Judah that after Assyria had conquered Syria and Israel, Assyria would attack Judah as well.

Isaiah 10:28-32: ²⁸ The enemy army has captured the city of Ai! They have passed through Migron! They left their supplies at Michmash! ²⁹They have crossed the pass and are spending the night at Geba! The people in the town of Ramah are terrified, and the people in King Saul's town of Gibeah have run away. ³⁰Shout, people of Gallim! Listen, people of Laishah! Answer, people of Anathoth! ³¹The people of Madmenah and Gebim are running for their lives. ³²Today the enemy are in the town of Nob, and there they are shaking their fists at Mount Zion, at the city of Jerusalem.—*Good News Bible*.*

25. Don't these words sound like Isaiah was reporting on an actual attack? It seems like the Assyrian military was coming very close to Jerusalem itself. How do you understand those verses?
26. But, God promised that a faithful few would survive and come back and that Assyria would be punished. How would you compare those "punishments" as spelled out in Isaiah with what was prophesied in Leviticus 26:14-39?
27. What was happening in this context? Had God lost His temper? Was He attacking His chosen people? What would you have done if you had been God under those circumstances? Did God need to lash out and punish His people? **Or, did God simply step back from those who did not want Him anyway, thus, leaving them to reap the inevitable and awful natural consequences of their own evil behavior and rebellious choices?**
28. God has granted us, as human beings, freedom and liberty. Without freedom and liberty, we could not have love. And God's kingdom is built on love. So, He decided that we must be allowed freedom. So, what happens when we choose against Him? **These chapters give us just a little hint about how God will allow us to face the consequences of wrong decisions, pain, suffering, fear, turmoil, and so forth.** Have we learned our lesson?
29. Then, in Isaiah 11&12, again, we have marvelous promises.

Isaiah 11:1-9: ¹ The royal line of David is like a tree that has been cut down; but **just as new branches sprout from a stump, so a new king will arise from among David's descendants.**

² The Spirit of the LORD will give him wisdom,
and the knowledge and skill to rule his people.

He will know the LORD's will and honour him,

³ and find pleasure in obeying him.

He will not judge by appearance or hearsay;

⁴ he will judge the poor fairly and defend the rights of the helpless.

At his command the people will be punished,
and evil persons will die.

⁵ He will rule his people with justice and integrity.

⁶ Wolves and sheep will live together in peace,
and leopards will lie down with young goats.

Calves and lion cubs will feed together,
and little children will take care of them.

⁷ Cows and bears will eat together,
and their calves and cubs will lie down in peace.
Lions will eat straw as cattle do.

⁸ Even a baby will not be harmed
if it plays near a poisonous snake. [Will there be any in heaven?]

⁹ On Zion, God's sacred hill,
there will be nothing harmful or evil.

**The land will be as full of knowledge of the LORD
as the seas are full of water.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

30. Isaiah 11 goes on to say that God's exiled people will actually be able to return. He spelled it out in some detail. They would even conquer their enemies on both sides, east and west.
31. We need to identify this "shoot" that comes from "the stump of Jesse." (Isaiah 11:1, *NRSV**) Why is that new ruler from the tribe of David called "the root of Jesse"? (Isaiah 11:10, *KJV**) That Shoot or "Branch" is also mentioned twice in the book of Zechariah. (Zechariah 3:8; 6:12) So, who is that Shoot who will come out of what appears to be a dead stump? This shoot coming up from a stump might remind us of the story of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4. But, this prophecy about the root of Jesse appears again.

Revelation 22:16: "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. **I am the root and the descendant of David**, the bright morning star."—*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*.^{*} (1989). (Revelation 22:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.[†]

The description fits only Jesus Christ, who is both "the root and the descendant of David" (*Rev. 22:16, NRSV*). Christ came from the line of David (*Luke 3:23-31*), who was descended from Adam, who was the "son of God" (*Luke 3:38*) in the sense that Christ created him (see *John 1:1-3, 14*). So, Christ was David's ancestor, as well as his descendant!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Wednesday, January 27.^{†§}

32. It is interesting to notice that this new Ruler will not only restore peace in the Middle East, but also He will restore peace between wolves and sheep, leopards and goats, calves and lion cubs, cows and bears! All the evil that has taken place in our world will eventually be reversed by this Baby who turns out to be "the lion of the tribe of Judah." How will He accomplish all that? "The land will be as full of knowledge of the LORD as the seas are full of water." (Isaiah 11:9, *GNB**) To know God is to love Him!
33. Read Isaiah 12:1-6. This is a short psalm. It is a song of praise because of God's deliverance. It should be compared with Revelation 15:2-4.
34. Jesus Christ has not only dealt with sin and provided us salvation, but also He has broken down the wall or barrier between Jews and Gentiles, between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, and eliminated the reasons for keeping them enemies.
35. But, Jesus did more than just solve the problems on this earth.

John 12:32-33: ³² [Jesus said:] "**When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to me.**" ³³(In saying this he indicated the kind of death he was going to suffer.)—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

36. When John quoted Jesus saying, "**I will draw everyone to me,**" that included the entire universe. How do the life and death of Jesus bring together beings in the entire universe? His life, His death, and His resurrection answer the questions and accusations that Satan had

brought against God, starting in heaven itself and, later, coming down to this earth.

Christ was the one who consented to meet the conditions necessary for man's salvation. No angel, no man, was sufficient for the great work to be wrought. The Son of man alone must be lifted up; for only an infinite nature could undertake the redemptive process. Christ consented to connect himself with the disloyal and sinful, to partake of the nature of man, to give his own blood, and to make his soul an offering for sin. In the counsels of heaven, the guilt of man was measured, the wrath for sin was estimated, and yet Christ announced his decision that he would take upon himself the responsibility of meeting the conditions whereby hope should be extended to a fallen race.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* March 5, 1896, par. 6.

37. If you read carefully through Isaiah 11, it seems like some parts of that chapter are talking about the first coming of Jesus. However, other parts are talking about the second/third comings. It is clear that Isaiah—and others—saw those events as if they were a single event.
38. It is clear that many of the Jews in Jesus's day thought that He would come as a mighty Conqueror to free them from Roman rule and to conquer the world. A misreading of Isaiah 11 might lead one to come to that conclusion.
39. **Have we accurately understood the prophecies about the second coming and the third coming?** Do we understand what happens at each one of those major events? Or, are we misinterpreting the events as did the Jews? When God's chosen people finally face the time of trouble and the seven last plagues, might they think they are in the same kind of problems that Isaiah and those with him in Jerusalem were facing?
40. Isaiah spoke a great deal about *light*. John 1 also does. We have already noticed how terrible conditions were in the times written about in Isaiah 8:20-22.

In Isaiah's day the spiritual understanding of mankind was dark through misapprehension of God. Long had Satan sought to lead men to look upon their Creator as the author of sin and suffering and death. Those whom he had thus deceived, imagined that God was hard and exacting. They regarded Him as watching to denounce and condemn, unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there was a legal excuse for not helping him. **The law of love by which heaven is ruled had been misrepresented by the archdeceiver as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they should be glad to escape.**—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 311.1.†

41. But, we are now looking from this end of history. We can see clearly that when the Messiah came, He offered us the glorious light of salvation, not deliverance from the Romans.
42. So, what did the Jews in Jesus day do with those prophecies in Isaiah 9&11?

In the later centuries of Israel's history prior to the first advent it was generally understood that the coming of the Messiah was referred to in the prophecy.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 688.4-698.0.
43. We have already noticed all the things that Old Testament prophets had spoken about the coming Messiah.
44. Could we ever deteriorate again into a condition where people claiming to be God's faithful people are consulting wizards? The occult? And mediums?

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