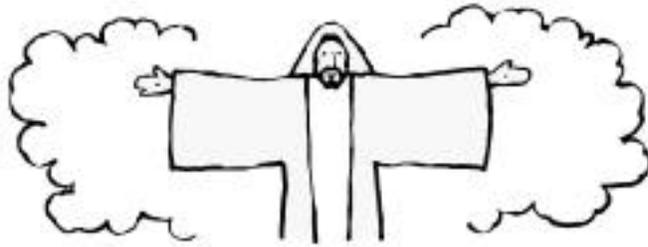


LESSON 5 *April 24–30

Noble Prince of Peace



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, who supervised the creation of the first atomic bomb, appeared before a Congressional Committee [in the United States]. 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 hushed, expectant audience and said softly ‘Peace.’ ”—Compiled by Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Rockville, Md.: Assurance Publishers, 1988), p. 989.

Peace is an elusive dream for the human race. In 1895 Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, provided for a trust to establish a prize for individuals who make an outstanding contribution to peace (Paul Lee Tan, p. 988, adapted). In recent years, however, even some winners of the Nobel Peace Prize have been involved in violent conflict. This week we’ll read about the only One who can bring true, and everlasting, peace.

The Week at a Glance: Who is the Child prophesied of in Isaiah 9? What kind of deliverance would He bring? How are both of Christ’s comings presented in Isaiah 11?

Memory Text: “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (*Isaiah 9:6, NRSV*).

**Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 1.*

SUNDAY April 25

End of Gloom for Galilee *(Isa. 9:1-5)*.

Why does Isaiah 9:1 begin with a word (“But”/“Nevertheless”) that indicates a contrast to what precedes it?

Isaiah 8:21, 22 describes the hopeless condition of those who turn to the occult rather than to the true God: Wherever they look, they will “see only distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be thrust into thick darkness” (*vs. 22, NRSV*). By contrast, there will come a time when “there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish” (*Isa. 9:1, NRSV*). The people of the Galilee region are singled out here as receiving the special blessing of “a great light” (*vs. 2, NRSV*). The nation will be multiplied and rejoice because God will have broken “the rod of their oppressor” (*vs. 4, NRSV*).

The region of Lake Galilee is depicted here because it was among the first territories of Israel to be conquered. In response to Ahaz’s request for aid, Tiglath-pileser III took the Galilee and Transjordanian regions of northern Israel, carried some of the people captive, and turned the territories into Assyrian provinces (*2 Kings 15:29*). So, Isaiah’s message is that the first to be conquered would be the first to see deliverance.

Who does God use to deliver His people? *Isa. 9:6, 7*.

When and how was the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-5 fulfilled? *Matt. 4:12-25*.

Not by accident, Jesus’ early ministry was in the Galilee region, where He gave hope by announcing the good news of God’s kingdom and by healing people, including delivering demoniacs from bondage to the occult (*vs. 24*).

Here we see a perfect example of how the Bible takes events that happened in Old Testament times and uses them to prefigure things that will happen in New Testament times. The Lord mixes images from one era with those of another, such as in Matthew 24, where Jesus mingles the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, with the end of the world.

If someone were to ask you, What has Jesus delivered you from, what would you answer? What personal testimony can you give regarding the power of Christ in your life?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

Key Text: *Isaiah 9–12.*

Teachers Aim:

1. To show how God uses different methods to call His people back to Him.
2. To convey that none are blameless but that all have hope of salvation through the provision of Christ.

Lesson Outline:

I. Wake-Up Calls.

- A. God woos His people through love and mercy.
- B. God allows punishment to fall upon His people to call them back to Him.

II. God's Provision of Salvation.

- A. God's Word points to Christ and the salvation that is found only in Him.
- B. We can do nothing but are called only to believe in God as He reveals Himself. Neither those leading others astray nor those allowing themselves to be led astray are blameless for not having a proper understanding of God's revelation.

Summary: God chooses to reveal Himself; yet, all too often our preconceived notions about how He should look and act distract us from His revelation. It is a matter of eternal life or death that, as we continue to look toward His second advent, we must not fall into the trap of being so sure of our own interpretation of the Word that we miss its very incarnation and salvation.

COMMENTARY

Introduction: Noble Prince of Peace.

The misery and rebellion God sees confirm humanity's need for a Redeemer. In the most loving and attractive terms, He reveals the nature of His plan unfolded in the Person and work of the Messiah. Those who accept salvation receive the benefits for all eternity. Those who reject it doom themselves to misery in this life and extinction in the final judgment. Meanwhile, God pleads with us all to accept the Savior (*see John 10:1; Acts 4:8-12*).

I. God's Glorious "Nevertheless."

Were justice and nature to run their course, humanity would be doomed. God's intervention constitutes our only hope. When people look earthward for hope and guidance, they "behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness" (*Isa. 8:22*). But God introduces a note of hope that splits the curtain of darkness that Satan stretches over the earth. (*Compare Isa. 9:1, 2 with Matt. 4:12-17 and Eph. 2:1-6.*)

MONDAY April 26

A Child for Us (*Isa. 9:6, 7*).

Here is the third special birth in the book of Isaiah, following mention of the births of Immanuel and Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

What is special about the Child found in these verses? *Isaiah 9:6, 7*.

Notice that this Deliverer has several names/epithets that describe Him in various ways. In the ancient Near East, kings and deities had multiple names to show their greatness.

He is “wonderful,” just as the divine Angel of the Lord described His own name to Samson’s father as “ ‘wonderful’ ” (*Judg. 13:18, RSV*; the same Hebrew root) and then ascended toward heaven in the sacrificial flame on Manoah’s altar (*vs. 20*), thereby prefiguring His offering of Himself more than 1,000 years later.

He is referred to as divine (“Mighty God”) and the eternal Creator (“Everlasting Father”; *see Luke 3:38*: “. . . Adam, son of God,” *NRSV*).

He is a King of the dynasty of David; His kingdom of peace will be eternal.

Given these attributes, who alone could this Child be? *See Luke 2:8-14*.

Some have attempted to identify him with King Hezekiah, but the description far surpasses any ordinary human being. Only one Person fits: Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God and Creator (*John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:5-17; 2:9; Heb. 1:2*), who was born to us in order to save us and give us peace. He has received all authority in heaven and on earth, and He is with us always (*Matt. 28:18-20*). While retaining His divinity, He has also become human for all time, ever able to sympathize with our weaknesses (*Heb. 4:15*). “Unto us a child is born” . . . forever!

“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, *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 406, 407.

What does this quote tell us about the character of God?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

“The Son of God, looking upon the world, beheld suffering and misery. With pity He saw how men had become victims of satanic cruelty. He looked with compassion upon those who were being corrupted, murdered, and lost. They had chosen a ruler who chained them to his car as captives. Bewildered and deceived, they were moving on in gloomy procession toward eternal ruin,—to death in which is no hope of life, toward night to which comes no morning. . . . Such was the prospect upon which the world’s Redeemer looked. What a spectacle for Infinite Purity to behold!

“Sin had become a science, and vice was consecrated as a part of religion. Rebellion had struck its roots deep into the heart, and the hostility of man was most violent against heaven. It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 36, 37.

II. “The Government Shall Be Upon His Shoulder.” (*Isaiah 9:6, 7*).

This Messianic prophecy is jostled on either side by verses that describe the raging elements of a world determined to have its own way (*see Isa. 9:3-5, 9-13*). However, God’s promise rises like a tranquil anthem above the turbulent storm.

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (*Isa. 9:6*). Christ is God’s supreme gift to the world (*John 3:16, 1 John 2:2*), not just to one family, tribe, or nation.

“The government shall be upon his shoulder” (*vs. 6; compare Isa. 22:22*). The word *shoulder* in Hebrew means a place of burden bearing. Christ is the Prince of burden bearers. He bore the Cross and all our sins on Calvary (*see 1 Pet. 2:24*). He invites us to cast our burdens on Him (*see Ps. 55:22, 1 Pet. 5:7*). In exchange, He gives us His yoke and burden—the sustaining power He imparts to His true disciples so that they might shoulder burdens in God’s service that demand more than human strength (*see Matt. 11:28-30*).

“His name shall be called Wonderful” and His testimonies are wonderful (*Ps. 119:129; compare John 14:21-23*). Because He is “wonderful in counsel” and works, He is worthy of all our praise and thanksgiving (*see Ps. 107:8, 15, 21, 31; Isa. 28:29*). Christ came as the flawless representation of how God’s truth is to be translated into human experience.

“Counselor.” In earthly governments, rulers are all too often dictators. Christ, however, does not force His will upon us. He counsels us, and His counsel indicates His desire for fellowship (*see Ps. 16:5-7, 32:8, Rev. 3:18*).

“The mighty God.” Jesus truly is God, not a mere representative of God or an exact copy of God (*see Isa. 33:22, Phil. 2:5-11, John 1:1-4, 20:28, Heb. 1:1-3*). “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed,

TUESDAY April 27

The Rod of God's Anger (*Isa. 9:8–10:34*).

This section explains Isaiah 9:1-5, which predicts deliverance for the gloomy, anguished people who had trusted in the occult and fallen prey to military conquest and oppression: “the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian” (*vs. 4, NRSV*).

Read through the sufferings of God's people as shown in the above texts. Compare the curses in **Leviticus 26:14-39**. Why did God punish His people in stages rather than all at once? What does this indicate about His character and goals?

If God had wanted to destroy His people, He could have given them up to the Assyrians right away. But He is patient, “not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance” (*2 Pet. 3:9, NRSV*). As in the period of the “judges,” God let the people of Judah and Israel experience some results of their folly, so they could understand what they were doing and have a chance to make a better choice. When they persisted in evil and hardened their hearts against Him and the appeals He sent through His messengers, He further withdrew His protection. But they continued to rebel. This cycle was repeated in a downward spiral until there was nothing more God could do.

Read through **Isaiah 9:8–10:2**. What sins are the people guilty of? Against whom have they committed them? Who is guilty among them?

What we see here, as seen all through the Bible, is the reality of free will. God made humans free (He had to; otherwise, they could never truly love Him), and freedom involves the option to do wrong. Though time and again God seeks to woo us by revealing His love and character, He will also allow us to face the fruit of our wrong decisions; i.e., pain, suffering, fear, turmoil, and so forth, all in order to help us realize just what turning away from Him leads to. Yet, even then, how often these things don't make people put away sin and come to the Lord. Free will is wonderful; we couldn't be human without it. Woe to those, however, who use it wrongly.

How has God used suffering in your own life to turn you away from a wrong course?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

underived.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

“*The everlasting Father*.” We are born again through Christ. He is the Father of our new nature (see *John 13:33*, *2 Cor. 6:18*, *Eph. 1:5*, *Heb. 2:11-14*).

“*The Prince of Peace*.” The peace that Christ offers goes beyond all understanding. Those who possess it are ambassadors for His kingdom and examples of His character. How desperately these examples are needed today. (See *John 14:27*, *Phil. 4:7*, also *Mic. 5:2-5*, *Rom. 5:1*, *1 Thess. 5:23*, see also *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28.)

Under Christ’s dominion, we experience within our heart a continual expansion of His government and peace (see *Phil. 1:9-11*, *Col. 1:9-11*).

III. The Root of Restoration.

Isaiah 11:1-10 traces the gospel blessings to the “rod out of the stem of Jesse [David’s father],” the “Branch [that] shall grow out of his roots.” Through full dependence on the Father, the Root will have wisdom, patience, counsel, and might to carry out the ministry

Inductive Bible Study

Text for Discovery: *Psalm 119:165*.

- 1 Hardhearted, stubborn, blind, prideful, presumptuous, and bold in their sin. This describes the people of Judah and Israel during the time of Isaiah. How much of what was described in Isaiah 9 and 10 exists today, even among the people of God? Do we expect God to deal with us any differently than He did with ancient Israel? Explain. What does Isaiah reveal about God’s character, and how does having this revelation keep us on the right path?
- 2 Based on Isaiah 9 and 10, outline the pattern or process God goes through in order to save us. Include His mercy, His appeal, and the outcome based on our response.
- 3 *Peace* can be defined as “freedom from or a stopping of war . . . freedom from public disturbance . . . law and order . . . freedom from disagreement or quarrels . . . an undisturbed state of mind.”—*Webster’s New World Dictionary*, second college edition, p. 1044. Satan is at war for our minds, but Scripture tells us in Isaiah 26:3 that God will “keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.” (Read also *Ps. 119:165*). What is the sum of all of these definitions of peace, and how does this sum point to Jesus as our salvation?

WEDNESDAY April 28

Root and Branch in One (*Isaiah 11*).

Who is the “shoot” that comes out “from the stump of Jesse” (*NRSV*) in **Isaiah 11:1**? See also *Zech. 3:8, 6:12*.

Isaiah 11:1 picks up on the imagery of a felled tree in 10:33, 34. The “stump of Jesse” represents the idea that the dynasty of David (son of Jesse) would lose its power (*Dan. 4:10-17, 20-26*). But there would arise a “shoot/branch” from the apparently doomed “stump”; that is, a ruler descended from David.

Why is the new Davidic ruler also called the “root of Jesse” (*Isa. 11:10*)? What sense does this make? *Rev. 22:16*.

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 (*compare John 1:1-3, 14*). So, Christ was David’s ancestor, as well as his descendant!

In what ways does the new Davidic ruler reverse the evil effects of sin and apostasy? *Isaiah 11*.

He thinks and acts in harmony with the Lord, judges fairly, punishes the wicked, and brings peace. He will bring back, restore, and unite a faithful remnant of Israel and Judah (*compare Isa. 10:20-22*). There will be a strong, united monarchy as in the days of King David, who defeated the Philistines and others. But the new ruler will be greater than David in that He will restore peace even to the essence of creation itself: Predators will no longer be carnivorous, and they will coexist in tranquility with their former prey (*Isa. 11:6-9*).

In Isaiah 11, both comings of Jesus are presented as one picture. They are tied together, because they are two parts of a whole, like the two sides of a plane. The plan of salvation, to be completed, requires both comings: the First, which already happened; and the Second, which we await as the consummation of all our hopes as Christians.

What did Christ accomplish at the First Coming that gives us such assurance about the Second Coming? What sense did the First Coming have if it doesn’t result in the Second?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

of redemption. This results in the implanting of every grace in the redeemed and the removal of sin from their lives (*see Mic. 4:8; Revelation 21, 22*). “The very essence of the gospel is restoration.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 824.

IV. Hymn to Salvation.

Isaiah 12 is a hymn of praise to the Savior. It magnifies the truth that the Messiah’s redemption is freely offered to all the world (*vss. 4, 5*). May we also praise the Savior for His goodness, grace, and redeeming power. May He be our science and song.

Witnessing

“For He Himself is our peace . . . and has broken down the middle wall of separation” (*Eph. 2:14, NKJV*).

When citizens of East and West Berlin toppled the Berlin Wall with shovels, axes, and bare hands, it was a day of rejoicing for freedom lovers. But even harder than dismantling the wall was building a united peace for a once-divided nation.

Peace is an elusive dream for the human race. How blessed we are to know that the Prince of Peace is the Source of peace on whom we all can count.

Each of us struggles to find a peaceful heart. Perhaps we are facing difficulties at work, home, or school. Perhaps there is division in our church, on the school or church board, or even at our potluck dinners.

Is real peace possible?

Yes. Through Christ, it most certainly is possible.

During the next week, look for ways to bring a bit of peace into one person’s life. Perhaps you live next door to a single parent struggling to be all things at all times to his or her children. Offer to baby-sit one evening a month so that this person can have time alone. Or maybe you know of a coworker who has a serious health problem. Cook that person’s favorite meal or clean house for him or her. When you witness in such ways, you will discover that as you invite the Prince of Peace into the lives of others, you will have invited Him into yours, too!

THURSDAY April 29

“You Comforted Me” (*Isa. 12:1-6*).

Isaiah 12 is a short psalm (song) of praise to God for His merciful and powerful comfort. The psalm, put in the mouth of a member of the restored remnant, compares the promised deliverance to that of the Hebrews in the Exodus from Egypt (*see Isa. 11:16*); it is like the song of Moses and the Israelites when they were saved from Pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea (*see Exodus 15*).

Compare this song in Isaiah 12 to Revelation 15:2-4, the song of Moses and of the Lamb. What are they both praising God for?

Isaiah 12:2 comes close to identifying the coming Deliverer as Jesus. It says that “God is my salvation” and “he has become my salvation” (*NRSV*). The name Jesus means “The Lord is Salvation” (*compare Matt. 1:21*).

What is the significance of the idea, contained in the name of Jesus, that the Lord is salvation?

Not only does the Lord bestow salvation (*Isa. 12:2*); He Himself is salvation. The Presence of the Holy One of Israel in our midst (*vs. 6*) is everything to us. God is with us! Not only did Jesus do miracles; He “became flesh and lived among us” (*John 1:14, NRSV, emphasis supplied*). Not only did He bear our sins on the cross; He became sin for us (*2 Cor. 5:21*). Not only does He make peace; He is our peace (*Eph. 2:14*).

No wonder “the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples” (*Isa. 11:10, NRSV*). When He is lifted up on the cross, He draws all people to Himself (*John 12:32, 33*)! A remnant shall return to the “mighty God” (*Isa. 10:21, NRSV*), who is the Child born for us, the “Prince of Peace” (*Isa. 9:6*)!

Dwell more on this idea that Jesus is our salvation. Read Romans 3:24. It says that redemption is in Jesus; redemption is something that happened in Him, and it is through God’s grace and mercy that we can have an eternal share in that redemption, as well. In other words, that redemption that was in Him can become ours by faith, and not by works, because no works we do are good enough to redeem us. Only the works that Christ did, which He credits to us by faith, can bring redemption. How does this truth give you hope and assurance of salvation, especially when you feel overwhelmed by your own sense of unworthiness?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: “While Satan can solicit, he cannot compel to sin. . . .

“The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold. Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to tempt and destroy us.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 125. As our lesson this week states, we are to use free will wisely. We must use it to cultivate and graft our relationship with the “shoot” and “root” of David.

Thought Questions:

❶ *Lost.* The very word conjures up feelings of helplessness and fear. While the *Titanic* sank into the Atlantic, people clung to any floating surface, hoping to be rescued. How can we cling to the Root of David, Jesus Christ, to be rescued from sin? What is it about Jesus’ name that assures us that He is capable of saving us? (Read *Matt. 1:21*.)

❷ Read John 3:18, 19. How does this assure us that salvation is available to everyone? Accepting Christ brings us out of darkness into light. Discuss why this act of acceptance seems so difficult for so many.

Application Questions:

❶ Why can we not obtain salvation through our good intentions and works?

❷ On the cross, Christ was flanked by two sinners, one of whom sought salvation from Him. Jesus told him that he would, indeed, be in Paradise with Him. This individual had lived a life of crime horrible enough to merit capital punishment. So, what made this thief believe that Christ would forgive him? What did he do to gain salvation?

FRIDAY April 30

Further Study: “The heart of the human father yearns over his son. He looks into the face of his little child, and trembles at the thought of life’s peril. He longs to shield his dear one from Satan’s power, to hold him back from temptation and conflict. To meet a bitterer conflict and a more fearful risk, God gave His only-begotten Son, that the path of life might be made sure for our little ones. ‘Herein is love.’ Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth!” —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 49.

“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, *Signs of the Times*, March 5, 1896.

Discussion Question:

As we saw in Isaiah 11, the Lord presented in one picture both comings of Christ. This can help explain, at least somewhat, why some of the Jews didn’t accept Christ at His first coming, because they expected Him to do the things that will happen only at the Second Coming. What does this tell us about how important it is that we have a proper understanding of the nature of Christ’s advent? How can false views, for instance, of His second coming set people up for Satan’s great end-time deception? See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, chap. 39.

Summary: In the days of Isaiah, whose name means “Salvation of the Lord,” God promised salvation for the remnant of His people from the oppression that was coming upon them as a result of national apostasy. This prophecy of hope finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, whose name means “The Lord is Salvation.”