

Silent Peace

Isaiah 11:1-10

Theme

When King Herod heard the Magi asking about the birth of a new “King of the Jews,” he was hardly at peace about it! “When King Herod heard this he was *disturbed*, and all Jerusalem with him” (Matt 2:3). So he called together some Bible scholars to find out what they knew. They cited an ancient prediction from Micah that said Israel’s Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. They appear to have done what others of us have been guilty of doing: *When they found the “answer” they were looking for, they stopped reading.* Is the key idea in Micah 5:2-6 really “Bethlehem”? What if they had read beyond verse 2 and focused on these ideas: unity of God’s people (v.3b), a shepherd for God’s flock (v.4a), security (v.4b), and *peace* (v.5)?

Dinner Table Questions

- Was the *Advent Season* part of your experience growing up?
- How did you celebrate Advent as a child?
- What are you doing to make Advent significant in your life at this point?

Open-Bible Questions

Today’s primary text for study is Isaiah 11:1-10. As background, please begin by reading the familiar “To us a child is born” text from Isaiah 9:1-7 aloud.

- In its *immediate* context, this text is about the gloomy spiritual condition of Jerusalem in the eighth century B.C. The “child” to be born may refer to Good King Hezekiah who would arise later from the Davidic line and attempt to restore faithfulness to Yahweh.
- In its *ultimate* fulfillment, Christians see this text pointing beyond the Jewish people of Isaiah’s ministry to Jesus who is God’s “great light” (v.2), the one who releases from the “yoke that burdens” his people (v.4), and who will eventually reign as “Prince of Peace” (v.6) in the New Heaven and New Earth where “peace” will reign forever (v.7).

Isaiah 11 tells the people of Isaiah’s generation that the promise God made to King David of a *peaceful kingdom* that would be ruled by one of his descendants had not been forgotten.

- Can you identify the “shoot [that] will come up from the stump of Jesse”? 1 Sam 16:10-13.
- Explain the imagery of a *green shoot* coming out of a *tree stump*. How does this fit Jesus?
- Now read the original promise made to David at 2 Sam 7:12-16.

Now for some parallels and lessons for us from these Old Testament texts . . .

- Ever feel threatened by a lack of peace similar to what the Jews felt in Isaiah’s day? See our time in history as “gloomy”? Feel more “troubled” than “peaceful” in your own heart?
- When and how will the promise of a world without war and poverty be fulfilled? Isa 65:17ff; cf. Rev 21:4.
- How are you claiming and living the peace of Christ in your life today? “Rehearsing,” as it were, for what lies ahead at Christ’s return?

A Monday Morning Suggestion

- Let this quote from C.S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity* frame your thinking for the week ahead: “*Enemy-occupied territory – that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed...and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.*”
- “Sabotage” any anxiety or friction you meet this week with the *peace* of Christ’s presence.