

THE WEARY WORLD Rejoices

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Isaiah 2.1-5 | November 29, 2020
Prepared by Rev. Bryan Wenger
bryan@gspc.org | 562/493.2553 x116

I. Introduction to this Study

These next four Sundays of Advent, we will take some time to explore several prophecies from the Book of Isaiah. As we enter the season of Advent, we find ourselves rehearsing familiar events/memories related to the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. Advent is a time of waiting and anticipating. As we wait, we remember events of the past - the promises given by prophets hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus and the events surrounding his birth. And, as we wait, we anticipate his Second Advent, and the fulfillment of God's purposes of reconciling all things through Jesus Christ. Like standing at the foot of a mountain range we can see the hills and peaks in the foreground (the promises and past events), but we cannot see the majestic mountain peaks that lay beyond our range of sight (the future of Christ's reign). How are we to live and worship and rejoice in this - "seeing but not seeing it all" - period of time?

II. Connecting with One Another

a. Standing outside the Old City of Jerusalem (in which used to be "no man's land") is one of the most poignant memorials in Israel to the Six Day War in 1967. It is a futuristic sculpture made of wrecked military equipment with words from **Isaiah chapter 2.4** on it: "...They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."

When you read the quote above and think of the current state of affairs in our world, how do you respond?

b. Ponder a time when you have been most conscious of the "the splendor of God's majesty." What sort of feelings did that involve?

III. Study the Text

a. **(Verse 2)** "The mountain of the Lord" refers to the site upon which the temple in Jerusalem was built. What picture does Isaiah envision? Why are so many coming to the temple? What will God do for them?

b. The mountain of the Lord becomes the center for worldwide revelation of God and the divine rule (Jesus called this the Kingdom of God). Look at **verse 3**. To whom and to what are people from all nations responding? In what ways do we see this happening in the world today?



- c. As you continue through **verse 3**, how can this vision be understood as a present (that is, in Isaiah's day) reality? How can it also be seen as a "yet to completely happen" reality??
- d. The vision shifts in **verse 4b**. Swords and spears are **implements** of war. Taking up sword against another nation is the **practice** of war. Training for war is the **mentality** for war. These all disappear. How will this be accomplished according to **verses 2-4a**?
- e. **Verse 5** admonishes the people of Jacob (Israel) to *walk in the light of the Lord*. Light symbolizes God's presence and truth. What does it mean for Israel and for us to "walk" in this light? How does our walking in the light enable the things in verse 3 to happen?

IV. Pray

- a. As we are preparing for the Advent and Christmas season, I wanted to share with you a reflection from author, Bob Benson.

"When life caves in, you do not need reasons, you need comfort. You do not need some answers, you need someone. And Jesus does not come to us with an explanation; He comes to us with His presence."

Let us pray together for the real presence of Christ to be tangible to each person as they (virtually) connect at Good Shepherd and/or with you/your family, in your neighborhood and around our communities. And as you interact with family, friends, and even people you have just met, may the presence of Jesus comfort and heal and provide eternal hope to you and all your friends and guests....

- b. Continue to pray for the witness of the Church during this difficult and divisive election season and the on-going COVID pandemic.
- c. Praise God for the gift of His Son Jesus, who is our Savior, Lord, and Messiah. Thank God for being our only source of hope in these days that are filled with so much uncertainty.
- d. Pray for the Good Shepherd community during these unprecedented times in our nation and world. May we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, continue to seek in new and creative ways, to *invite all people to grow into a Christ-centered life in God's family*.

V. Digging Deeper

- a. Read other verses in Isaiah that reference *the mountain of the Lord* (**verse 3**): **11.9; 24.23; 27.13; 56.6-7**. What can you learn?
- b. What is meant by "the last days" (**verse 2**)? See **Acts 2.17 and Hebrews 1.2**. Why does Isaiah call Judah to come to the temple at this time?
- c. Thoughts on this observation...:

The peoples come voluntarily, transcending nationalism, to acknowledge the God of all nations... to be taught and to grasp the truth issuing redirection of life... to grasp the truth of the word of the Lord, veritable divine revelation. For Isaiah, the abolition of armaments



follows a divine reordering of the world... by the recognition of the one true God... (and) a return to Eden: people right with God again; the curse removed; the end of the serpent's dominion; an ideal environment.

Alec J. Motyer, Commenting on Isaiah 2:1-5

- d. Which of your swords and spears (i.e., mean streak? angry outbursts? Cutting tongue?) has God transformed into tools for peace?
- e. Read **Philippians 1.3-7 and 4.4-7...** Do not discount there have been days (especially since March) where you have felt, "weary" - physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Share how your hope and trust in the Lord leads you to rejoicing...
- f. Read **John 1.1-14**, reflecting on how scripture teaches us and brings us to Jesus, who is the Light of the Lord.... can you also find in which **Gospel** Jesus declares, "I am the Light of the world..."?

