



SPECIAL SESSION

A Future King

SESSION SUMMARY

In this session, we will look at one of the prophecies from Isaiah, written 680 years before the time of Christ. Isaiah wrote to the Jewish people in Judah to inform them of a future King—an unlikely king from the line of David who would be filled with the Spirit, and who would bring God’s justice and redemption to the world. In seeing Isaiah’s vision of the coming King, we understand our need for God’s salvation and the reason we are part of God’s people who exist for His mission.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 11:1-10

THE POINT

The Old Testament foretells the birth of King Jesus.

INTRO/STARTER 5-10 MINUTES

Option 1

All over the world, people greeted the news with celebration. A baby was to be born—a baby who would grow up to be a king! Rich and poor, old and young—people from all over the country sent gifts and offerings. Month after month, the people’s sense of anticipation increased until the moment the baby arrived—the future king was born!

This is not the story of an ancient king, but the birth of Prince George of Cambridge, son of William and Catherine, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. The year was 2013, and the sense of anticipation was so strong that it was labeled “royal baby fever.”

Even in the United States, where there is no monarch, people were drawn to the picture of a royal family welcoming a new family member into the world—a baby who in the future might take the throne of England. The moment reminded people of fairy tales, knights, princesses, daring rescues, and beautiful romances. The news that a king was on the way stirred up hope, joy, and possibilities for the future.

That mixture of hope and longing, anticipation and joy, is at the heart of the church’s celebration of Christmas. When we celebrate the birth of Christ, we put ourselves back in the place of the first-century Jews who were waiting for their Messiah. And we long for the Messiah’s return, when the King comes to make everything right.

- **What are some common practices during the Christmas season that build up anticipation for Christmas morning? Why is a sense of anticipation important for the Christian faith?**

Option 2

To *anticipate* means *to wait with expectation*. Students anticipate the coming of summer and the end of the school year. We anticipate the first snow, or maybe dream of a “white Christmas.” We anticipate graduations, weddings, one-day’s and maybe’s. We wait with expectation to attend a favorite concert or meet our favorite artist. We send announcements, cards, invitations, and save-the-dates. In the same way, Isaiah’s prophecy of the coming king would cause His people to wait with expectation, to anticipate His return. A *prophecy* was a message from God, given through a prophet about a future event. Prophecies often declared judgment but some, like Isaiah 11, foretold of good things to come. In this case, the prophecy wasn’t about a good *thing*, rather it was about the coming Messiah—the ultimate and long awaited King.

- **What are some events you anticipate attending or people you anticipate seeing? How does that compare to your anticipation of Jesus’ return?**

HIS STORY

15-20 MINUTES

THE POINT

The Old Testament foretells the birth of King Jesus.

CHARACTERS

- **Isaiah** - prophet of God who is most known for his prophecies of the coming Messiah

PLOT

For this Christmas session we take a step back and look at one of the prophecies from Isaiah, written 680 years before the time of Christ. In writing to the Jewish people, Isaiah told them of a future King—an unlikely king who would come from the line of David, be filled with the Spirit, and bring God’s justice and redemption to the world.

TIMELINE

A FUTURE KING
Isaiah tells of a future king coming from the line of David.

DANIEL IS DELIVERED
God protects Daniel in the lions' den.

THE JOURNEY HOME
God keeps His promise to bring His people home.

JESUS WILL COME FROM THE LINE OF DAVID

Isaiah lived 700 years before the time of Christ. As we look at Isaiah's prophecy regarding the coming King, we will reach back into Israel's history and review some of the stories we have encountered in our journey through the Bible's storyline. With Isaiah, we will also stretch forward in time as we see how his words point toward the coming Messiah. Let's start where Isaiah did, with an unlikely king coming from the line of David.

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. (Isa. 11:1)

At the time this prophecy was written, Israel knew what had been promised to David, but many of the people had given up hope. Israel did not resemble the mighty kingdom David established. Ruined by a string of bad monarchs who made terrible spiritual and political decisions, Israel had been divided and conquered.

God's message to Isaiah was one of hope. Israel was like a tree that had been cut down (note the reference to a stump), but God would bring about a shoot from the line of David and his father Jesse. But why David?

Back to David

Remember that the nation of Israel had seen its glory days. The people had been ruled by God and guided by judges, but they ultimately demanded to be like all the surrounding nations. They were captivated by the concept of a visible monarch they could celebrate and serve. God granted their request and anointed King Saul as ruler of Israel. Saul was handsome and strong. However, Saul was not without his fatal flaws. He lacked integrity and disobeyed God. Therefore, God told Saul that his royal line would not continue in Israel.

Next came the moment when Samuel, a prophet of God, was told to journey to the house of Jesse where God would choose a new king. Samuel surveyed each of Jesse's children until he came to a shepherd boy named David. God told Samuel to anoint David to be king over all Israel.

David did not know peace during his reign. He expanded the borders of Israel through conquest and established the nation as an economic and military power. In gratitude to God for His provision, David wanted to build a temple for the Lord. God said no. Instead, God promised to build a house for David—an eternal kingdom through one of David's descendants.

This is the backstory to the prophecy in Isaiah 11:1. God promised to bring about new life (a shoot) from something dead (a stump), in order to remain faithful to His promise to Jesse and his son, King David. No matter how hopeless the situation seemed, God promised to be faithful.

Forward to Jesus

God's greatest gift to David would be given hundreds of years after Isaiah prophesied. God would send His own Son to be born into the line of David. This King would be a true shepherd who would guide, protect, and care for the people who followed Him. He would be the ultimate King by choosing to place the needs of His people above His own, and through sacrificing Himself for the sins of the world.

David was an unlikely king. His path to the throne inspires us because of how improbable his rise was. In this, the coming King Jesus resembled the unlikely rise of King David. Jesus is the shoot of Jesse who came in the most unlikely of circumstances. No one anticipated that He would be born into a small family and carry the name of a descendant of David. This unlikely King was born to a poor carpenter and virgin mother. This king was not born in a palace, but in a stable, surrounded by animals. Only God could have crafted this marvelous plan for His glory. David was an unlikely king, but Jesus tore down all expectations by being our unlikely *Savior* King.

- **When have you faced a difficult situation and given up hope that God would come through for you? What happened?** (*p. 28, PSG*)

JESUS WOULD BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AND BRING GOD'S JUSTICE

Justice is an important theme throughout the Bible, which is why Isaiah's prophecy next shows how the coming King will bring justice to the world.

And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. (Isa. 11:2-5)

Back to Solomon

As the passage continues, we see that God promised this Messiah would be full of wisdom and understanding and knowledge. He would judge the world wisely. This description reminds us of King Solomon, the son of David who was known for his wisdom.

When he took the throne after his father David, Solomon was given the opportunity to ask God for anything. Instead of asking for wealth or for victory over his enemies, Solomon humbly prayed for wisdom, knowing that he would need it to rule the people well. God granted his request.

Forward to Jesus

As admirable as Solomon's sense of justice and wisdom was, nothing compares with the king in Isaiah's prophecy. This descendant would have Spirit-filled wisdom beyond comprehension. Isaiah said that the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon this King. The spirit of wisdom and understanding belong to Him. The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord would belong to Him. These are the qualities Solomon also wrote about in Proverbs.

JESUS WILL REDEEM AND BRING PEACE

In the next section of his prophecy, Isaiah shows us what life will be like once God redeems the world and establishes His people.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. (Isa. 11:6-10)

If you have ever watched Animal Planet, odds are you have witnessed a predatory animal seeking after its prey. In the wild, animals are often at war and survival is the top prize. They battle each other for food and shelter in order to care for their young and sustain themselves. The relationship of predator and prey is pervasive throughout our observance of the natural world.

However, here in this passage, the most unlikely of animal pairs find themselves bonding together. Wolves, lambs, leopards, goats, lions, and children all live together in harmony. Rather than competing with one another for resources and food, these animals share their lives and resources. The vision of a nursing child playing near the hole of a cobra without fear should seem odd to anyone. Who would allow such a thing to happen? Only someone who understood that the cobra would not harm the child under any circumstances. In other words, the prey in each of the situations listed in the passage would not live in fear. They would not feel a sense of danger. The world would experience true peace.

Nature can be brutal, but humans can act in savage ways also—one of the unfortunate consequences of our world of sin. Thankfully, according to Isaiah's prophecy, humans will live in peace. Isaiah 11:9 says people will not hurt or destroy one another on God's Holy Mountain.

Isaiah 11 described a peaceful kingdom, which prophesied about Christ's future reign. The Bible makes clear that Jesus will return to establish a visible kingdom. In this kingdom, verse 10 reminds us that all nations will seek Him and His resting place will be glorious.

TIMELINE

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

Despite immense opposition the temple is rebuilt.

ESTHER RISKS IT ALL

God's providential work in the life of Esther.

HAMAN'S DOWNFALL

Haman's plot to destroy the Jews backfires.

Other passages describe the final state of humanity. Revelation 22 depicts the future kingdom where the tree of life resides. Christ will be seated on His throne in this kingdom, and everything will function as it was meant to when it was created. The world will be free from the effects of sin. This is a beautiful and glorious place God has in store for those of us who follow Christ.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Christ as King (p. 28, PSG)

God has always been King over His kingdom from eternity past, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a king who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming king finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.

CHRIST CONNECTION

From the beginning God intended to establish His kingdom, and His kingdom is fully realized through the gospel. We have been redeemed as the people of God through Christ's sacrifice and resurrection. Now we are called to go and spread the news of our unlikely King and His kingdom.

Christmas is a time when we look at the coming of Christ. First, we look at Jesus' coming in the past, when the Son of God became man and offered Himself for our redemption. Secondly, we look forward to the future coming of Jesus, when He will return to our world as the King who brings God's redemptive justice.

In the meantime, we ought to tell the world the news of a Savior who, through the Spirit, enters the hearts and lives of those who repent and believe in the gospel. As we wait for Jesus' return, let's take the gospel to the people around us, that Christ might enter their lives and bring salvation.

YOUR STORY 10-15 MINUTES

GROUP QUESTIONS

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- **Do you think of yourself as “Spirit-filled”? In what ways does it help you as a Christian to know that the Spirit who was upon Jesus is also the Spirit who empowers you to obey in faith?** *Answers will vary.*
- **Why is it important that this King brings the justice of God? Do you feel that most churches mirror God's commitment and love for justice? Why or why not?** *Answers will vary.*
- **In what ways can our church be a stronger “foretaste” of the future restoration Jesus will bring?** *Answers will vary.*
- **What aspects of Christ's future reign are you most looking forward to? Why does this view of peace that is described in Isaiah 11 seem out of reach for us?** *Answers will vary.*

HIS STORY

God's Story of Redemption, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

YOUR STORY

Where your story meets His.

YOUR MISSION 10-15 MINUTES



HEAD

Jesus' birth stands in stark contrast to the way the world typically celebrates the entrance of someone being born into a royal family. Kings now and then would normally be born under the care of the highest paid physicians, surrounded by the elites of society. Not Jesus. The King of the Universe was born into the world in a manger, surrounded by animals and shepherds. This contrast emphasizes the type of character Jesus possesses and the humility He was willing to demonstrate for the sake of His people.

- **How do the circumstances of Jesus' birth help us understand how His rule is different from other kings?** *Answers will vary.*
- **What aspects of Jesus' character distinguish Him from what we might expect from a king?** *Answers will vary.*



HEART

When Christ died for us on the cross, it was the completion of the justice of God. He interceded on our behalf and experienced the full wrath of God on the cross. It was there that the justice of God was completely satisfied. Our sin needed to be punished, and it was. Because Jesus fully paid our penalty on the cross, those who put their trust in Christ are justified and freed from sin.

- **How should the truth of what God has done for us through Christ motivate us to greater love for Him?** *Answers will vary.*
- **How can we fight apathy in our own lives toward God with the truth of what Christ has done for us?** *Answers will vary.*



HANDS

It is easy to get so wrapped up in the Christmas season—with all of the get-togethers with friends and family, and buying the perfect gifts—that we lose sight of the simple task of telling others about Christ. The truth is that Jesus not only came to save that which was lost, but to also redeem a people who desire to do good for His glory and for the good of others (Titus 2:14). Salvation isn't a passive experience that gives us the benefit of sitting on the sidelines while we watch the world go by. No, salvation in Christ is the very means by which we are empowered to actively live out our faith in plain sight to those around us.

- **What are some things that have distracted you from the true meaning of this Christmas season?** *Answers will vary.*
- **What are some ways can you redirect your attention to Christ and serving others this year?** *Answers will vary.*

▶ ADDITIONAL INFO

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following additional resources:

- **Leader Training Videos**
- **One Conversations**
- **Midweek Studies (to access your Midweek Study, go to lifeway.com/TGPWIN17Dan)**
- **Circular Timeline Poster**
- **App (for both leader and student)**



Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at
GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

And for ***free online training*** on how to lead a group visit
MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject