



THURSDAY 12.02.10

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Jeremiah's message was a difficult one for Israel to receive. To Jeremiah fell the task of announcing the destruction of the entire kingdom, and, yet, carefully nestled within his demanding words is the consistent message of hope. "The days are coming," according to Jeremiah. God will not forget Israel. In the New Testament, Peter will say it this way, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise. He is patient."

- Patience just might be the characteristic of God we find the most difficult to understand. It seems that almost all of us struggle with it. Why is patience so challenging? Patience does call us to surrender to that which is beyond our control. Is this a part of your struggle with patience?
- Where does God's patience come from? How might maturing in your love for God enable you to increase patience in your life?

---



---



---



---



FRIDAY 12.03.10

Micah 5:2-4

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah have used several metaphors to speak of the future hope found beyond the coming despair. "Dark will turn to light." "The captives will be set free." "A shoot will come from the stump of Jesse." "The highway of the Lord will cut through the wilderness." Micah uses another metaphor. "Israel will give birth to a son."

- In the birthing process, life begins before we can even recognize it. We eventually see the signs of that growing life, but it is one day in particular that we record in our memories, the day when the birthing is complete. Perhaps it is helpful to think of God's activity in our hearts and lives in a similar way.
- As we continue to move towards Christmas, consider these questions. What is God birthing in your life right now? What is God anxiously awaiting to see born in you?

---



---



---



---



# GROW • PRAY • STUDY

A RESOURCE FOR DISCIPLES SEEKING TO LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS & SERVE THE WORLD ...

**Series:** *The Prince of Peace*  
**Message:** *It Starts with a Funny Little Word*  
**Scripture:** *Isaiah 9:1-7, Genesis 1-2*

*Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon:*

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



## Introduction

Today we begin a four-week journey that will culminate with the celebration of Christmas. Within the church, this season known as Advent is a time where we remember the anticipation of the Messiah's coming that was experienced throughout many generations in the history of Israel. We will seek to remind ourselves of their deep hunger for deliverance and the hope that was found in the promises foretold by the prophets. We prepare for the celebration of Christmas by remembering that we, too, are hungry for salvation and in need of the Christ child to bring that gift into our lives.

The prophet Isaiah, writing almost 700 years before the birth of Jesus, described the coming Messiah as a "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." During our readings this week, we will look in further detail at the promises made to Israel about the child that was to be born who would bring deliverance to all people. As we begin this journey together, may this prayer light our path.

***Holy God, we wait in hopeful expectation for the coming of our King. We hold firmly to the promise you have made to each of us to come and set us free from the chains which bind our hearts and lives. Lord, in this season which is often dominated by the busyness and chaos of our lives, bring us the true and lasting peace that only you can bring. AMEN.***



## TUESDAY 11.30.10

## Isaiah 11:1-9

When Saul, the first king of Israel, fell out of the Lord's favor, Samuel, the prophet, was sent to the house of Jesse to anoint the next king. The Lord's favor fell upon Jesse's youngest son, David. The reference to the stump of Jesse vividly portrays how Israel would first be "cut down" before a new "shoot" would begin to grow. Jesus' birth in David's hometown of Bethlehem was part of the fulfillment of the promise that the Messiah would come from David's lineage.

- Verses 6-9 illustrate the type of peace that the "shoot of Jesse" will bring. With this imagery, Isaiah communicates that all of creation will one day live in peace together. Do you believe that the entire creation is in need of God's peace? In what way?
- How might your decisions and actions today contribute to bringing peace to all of creation?

---



---



---



---



## MONDAY 11.29.10

## Isaiah 9:1-7

Isaiah lived during a period of rapid decline. The expansion of the Assyrian empire and the subsequent strengthening of the Babylonians left the Israelites in a perilous position which would eventually lead to their demise. As God's chosen prophet, Isaiah was sent to not only condemn Israel for wandering from God, he also spoke of a future day when God would once again redeem the people.

- Isaiah looks to the birth of a "son" as a turning point in the future of Israel. Looking back at verses 1-5, how does Isaiah describe the circumstances that Israel will be able to leave behind when this child is born?
- Isaiah uses four phrases in verse 6 to describe the Messiah. What do they communicate about him? Today, consider what other words you would use to describe Jesus. What has led you to understanding him in this way?

---



---



---



---



## WEDNESDAY 12.01.10

## Isaiah 40:1-5

In all four of the gospels, the ministry of Jesus is preceded by the work of John the Baptist. Matthew's Gospel says of John, "This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah," and then Matthew quotes verse 3 of our text today. People from throughout Judea came out to see John the Baptist, to confess their sins and to mark their renewed commitment by being baptized by John. In this way, John was preparing "the highway for our God."

- The ministry of John the Baptist and these words from Isaiah remind us that confession opens the doorway for God to work in our lives. Have you experienced this? How has repentance brought comfort into your life?
- As we continue to prepare for "the glory of the Lord to be revealed," is there anything you need to repent of today?

---



---



---



---