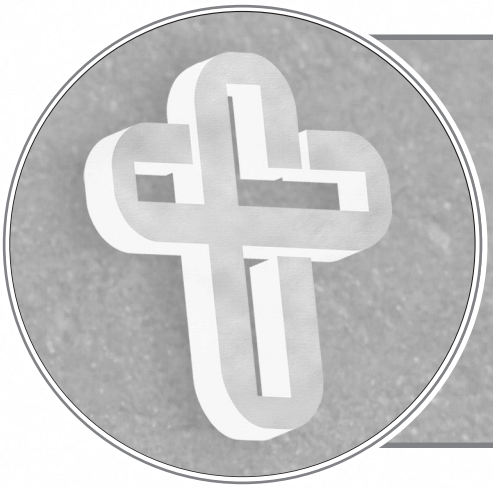


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
MAY 25 2024

hope for the world?

Scripture Story: Isaiah 11; 12; 44.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 26; 31.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

It is a cruel act of fate that some of the best and brightest are called to live in the darkest of times. Yet, it is darkness that makes one appreciate light. As dark times go, the period in which Isaiah prophesied was one of the darkest in the history of Judah.

Isaiah's ministry was preceded by the sad events of the demise of Uzziah, a faithful follower of God for most of his 52-year reign, whom God afflicted with leprosy because he presumed to minister in the holy sanctuary, an honor reserved for priests. Uzziah was followed by his son Jotham who did what was right in the sight of God. But in spite of these two largely positive reigns, Judah continued to decline—as did Israel in the North. Neither Uzziah nor Jotham destroyed the evil shrines worshipped by the people in the high places, for instance.

As you teach the lesson, keep in mind that Isaiah's message is twofold. His first concern is that the people be reconciled to God, that they put away all known idolatry and sin. Second, Isaiah wants the people to catch the vision that so energized his life in Isaiah 6. He wanted to give the people hope during the difficult days of Assyrian threat by painting for them the picture of the coming Messiah, a picture so compelling that they would yearn for His appearing and live out their belief in Him from day to day.

The students must know that Isaiah's call to repentance and obedience, and promise of redemption through Jesus Christ is the same for us today. God's message of salvation can transform our lives and make us a spectacle of godliness such as the world has never seen. Through Isaiah God desired to remind His people of their special status as light-bearers to the world. We too are called to shine for Jesus so that others might be saved.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that as spiritual descendants of Abraham, they are called to give the world an example of godliness. *(Know)*
- Experience the joy that flows from accepting their place in God's divine plan. *(Feel)*
- Look for opportunities to share the blessings with which God has entrusted them. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Remnant and Its Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 13

"The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. . . . (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

As a follow-up to the *What Do You Think?* activity, consider asking the students to come up with two people who inspire them.

Once the students have had a few moments to think, ask them to share the names of the people they chose and why. Then ask a few of the teens to share one specific thing that they have received or learned from one of the people they admire. It must be something that they plan to incorporate into their lives.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

"Franklin Roosevelt's closest adviser during much of his presidency was a man named Harry Hopkins. During World War II, when his influence with Roosevelt was at its peak, Hopkins held no official Cabinet position. Moreover, Hopkins' closeness to Roosevelt caused many to regard him as a shadowy, sinister figure. As a result he was a major political liability to the president. A political foe once asked Roosevelt, 'Why do you keep Hopkins so close to you? You surely realize that people distrust him and resent his influence.' Roosevelt replied, 'Someday you may well be sitting here where I am now as president of the United States. And when you are, you'll be looking at that door over there and knowing that practically everybody who walks through it wants something out of you. You'll learn what a lonely job this is, and you'll discover the need for somebody like Harry Hopkins, who asks for nothing except to serve you.' Winston Churchill rated Hopkins as one of the half-dozen most powerful men in the world in the early 1940s. And the sole source of Hopkins' power was his willingness to serve"—*Discipleship Journal*, Issue 39 (1987), p. 5.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

People who simply have our best interest at heart are difficult to find. We have just such a person in Jesus. God knew that the world would need an example of godliness, someone truly dedicated to bringing about humanity's best good. Isaiah goes to great pains to describe Jesus in Isaiah 11: "He will delight in the fear of the LORD.

"He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth" (verses 3, 4, NIV). In a very real sense, these traits should have been on display in the lives of God's people in Judah and Israel—to please God and to give the world a picture of who He is. They were not, but there was reason to hope—Jesus.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- *Underline* the parts of the two Scripture passages that catch your attention.
- Is there anything in Isaiah's description of Jesus that strikes you as odd? Why does he specifically choose to highlight certain elements of Jesus' character? What message was God communicating through the prophet's description?
- Isaiah is first and foremost a prophet of redemption. *Circle* portions of the second passage (Isaiah 44:1-5) that show God's redemptive power.
- God promises to "pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground." Then He says, "They will spring up like grass in a meadow" (Isaiah 44:3, 4, NIV). Who is the "they" spoken of here by God?
- Who was the audience for these messages from Isaiah? What relevance might these messages have for us today?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story:

Exodus 19:5; John 15:1-17; Genesis 22:13-19.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. **God's Eye on the Heathen.** Though Israel did not understand how much God cared for the heathen, a careful survey of God's promise to Abraham would have brought it to their attention. Genesis 12:2, 3 states: "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (NIV).

   Instead of focusing on the fact that they were blessed in order to be a blessing, Israel basked in their divine favor instead of sharing it.

2. **Turbulent Times.** It can be argued that Isaiah prophesied during some of the most tumultuous times in Judah's history. God was angry at His people's apostasy: "Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your worthless assemblies" (Isaiah 1:13, NIV). More than that, however, Judah was under mortal threat from Sennacharib and the powerful Assyrians, who in 722 B.C. had conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. This conquest scared King Hezekiah so much that he stripped the Temple of all its treasures and sent them to the Assyrian king in hope of appeasing him (2 Kings 18:13-16). It did not work. When all hope failed, Hezekiah sought out Isaiah for a word from the Lord (2 Kings 19:1-7). It was against

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Creatively Creative

In any learning environment, whether it be kindergarten or adult, there will be a wide variety of learning styles represented. This is also true of your Sabbath School class. In this lesson Isaiah paints a word picture of Jesus (Isaiah 11). He does so again in Isaiah 53 and in other places.

How Isaiah views Jesus is certainly not how your students might picture Him. Ask the students to create their own picture of Jesus. They may do so by selecting a characteristic of Jesus that they admire, or doing something on His entire life. They may create their picture by drawing, writing, role-playing, singing—whatever best expresses how they think of Jesus. Provide paper, pens, markers, and other items they might need. Ask a few volunteers to share their creativity with the class.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

this backdrop that Isaiah called Jerusalem to repentance and encouraged Hezekiah to resist Assyria by exercising faith and trust in God.

3. **Anointed Aristocrat.** Unlike most biblical prophets, Isaiah was not born into poverty. He did no menial labor. He was the son of Amoz, a nobleman, who many scholars believe had distant royal lineage. Isaiah, of all the Bible's prophets, had unparalleled access to the halls of power. He prophesied under Kings Uzziah and Jotham, advised King Ahaz (though Ahaz failed to heed his counsel), and warned Hezekiah of foreign entanglements with Egypt against Assyria. For this reason he is considered the most political prophet in all of Scripture. Isaiah's ministry shows us that God is willing to use those with influence and status, as well as those with none. All God requires is a willing heart.
4. **Prophet of Redemption.** Isaiah's prophecies helped to guide Judah during turbulent times, but this was by no means the focus of his prophetic ministry. Fueled by his vision of God in Isaiah 6, and the transformation that he experienced by being forgiven and redeemed, Isaiah's prophetic message is the most spiritually complete of all Old Testament prophets. He spoke of God's judgment of sin, but pointed to a day when the Messiah would come—a fair king, an honest king, a compassionate king, a sacrificing king, a loving king (Isaiah 11)—who would not only deliver them from their physical enemies but from sin itself. This promise of redemption is echoed throughout Isaiah's book.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Read the following to your students: "The inhabitants of Judah were all undeserving, yet God would not give them up. By them His name was to be exalted among the heathen. Many who were wholly unacquainted with His attributes were yet to behold the glory of the divine character. It was for the purpose of making plain His merciful designs that He kept sending His servants the prophets with the message: 'Turn ye again now everyone from his evil way.' Jeremiah 25:5" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 319).

Ask the students to make a list of friends they want to see know God. Say a special prayer asking God to share His love through each student.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

God in His love and mercy never abandons His children to suffer hopelessly. Long after Israel's apostasy and idol worship had worn out God's patience, He still kept on extending offers of forgiveness and redemption.

God loved His people dearly, and He remembered His covenant with Abraham. If He was to bless the nations of the earth through Abraham's seed, He would have to redeem Israel, and this God did through the blood of His Son Jesus, to whom Isaiah pointed. Through Jesus, God offered redemption to not only His people but peoples everywhere.

What Israel had failed to do—set an example of godliness for the world—God did through Jesus; all who believe in Him take their place as Abraham's heirs and find their purpose in God's divine plan to bless fallen humanity. This high calling should be the joy of every Christian heart.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 26; 31.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Isaiah 11; 12; 44.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 26; 31.

hope for the world?



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

keytext

"They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. Some will say, 'I belong to the LORD'; others will call themselves by the name of Jacob; still others will write on their hand, 'The LORD's,' and will take the name Israel."

(Isaiah 44:4, 5, NIV)

flashlight

"Had Israel been true to her trust, all the nations of earth would have shared in her blessings. But the hearts of those to whom had been entrusted a knowledge of saving truth, were untouched by the needs of those around them. As God's purpose was lost sight of, the heathen came to be looked upon as beyond the pale of His mercy. The light of truth was withheld, and darkness prevailed. The nations were overspread with a veil of ignorance; the love of God was little known; error and superstition flourished" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 371).

what do you think?

Rate which of the following items people are most likely or least likely to pass on to others. (Note: 1 would be the item people would have no problem giving away; 7 would be the item least shared with others.)

___ Clothing
___ Car
___ Beliefs
___ Money
___ Jesus
___ Books
___ Cell Phone
___ Tablet
___ Laptop

INTO THE STORY

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

"He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. . . .

"He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth."

"But now listen, Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. This is what the LORD says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. Some will say, 'I belong to the LORD'; others will call themselves by the name of Jacob; still others will write on their hand, 'The LORD's,' and will take the name Israel."

(Isaiah 11:1-12; 44:1-5, NIV)

did you know?

Did you know that the prophet Isaiah lived through the reigns of three different kings of Judah? Scholars believe that his ministry started sometime around 740 B.C. and ended in 681 B.C. His ministry began under the evil King Ahaz, ran through the spiritual reawakening brought about by Hezekiah, and ended under the evil Manasseh. While Isaiah was one of the most "political" of prophets, he never failed to speak God's truth to the weak or the mighty.

OUT OF THE STORY

Read and reflect on the Scripture story for this week.

What would you say is the main point of the first passage, Isaiah 11:1-9, 12, and the second passage found in Isaiah 44:1-5?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Circle a verse in each section that comes closest to the main point of each.

Isaiah 11:1-9 describes a very special person. Who do you think is the person being spoken of? To whom is Isaiah writing?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is significant about the part of the Scripture story that paints a picture of animals dwelling together? What message is God trying to convey to us through these images?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end" **(Luke 1:31-33, NIV).**

"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" **(Ephesians 3:6, NIV).**

"After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: 'Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe' " **(Acts 15:7, NIV).**

"All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him" **(Psalm 22:27, NIV).**

further insight

"The members of God's church are to be zealous of good works, separating from worldly ambition and walking in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good. With hearts filled with sympathy and compassion, they are to minister to those in need of help, bringing to sinners a knowledge of the Saviour's love."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109

Sabbath

Read Isaiah 11:12.

God promised Israel that a special Deliverer would come from the line of King David's father, Jesse. Among the many things He would do is "raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel" (NIV). What message was God hoping to send to surrounding nations by rescuing exiled Israelites from groups that had taken them captive? How might those nations view God after such an act?

If God thought enough of the Israelites then as well as those of us today who are spiritual descendants of Abraham that He would send Jesus to save us, shouldn't we tell others the good news?

Sunday

Read Isaiah 11:1-9, 12; 44:1-5.

Read the *Into the Story* section to get at the heart of this week's lesson. Now complete the *Out of the Story* questions. The two passages in Isaiah that form the basis of this week's lesson are both hopeful in tone. God is making some very big and bold promises. The theme of hope runs through the writings of Isaiah. What do you think was happening in Judah at the time that made these messages so essential? How might Isaiah's messages apply to your life today?

How might the Spirit of wisdom and understanding express itself in your life?

The Spirit of counsel and power?

The Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord?

Monday

Read Luke 1:31-33.

In many Western societies, a woman adopts the last name of her husband-to-be once they are married. Marie James may become Marie Smith, or Marie James-Smith. This taking on of the fiancé's last name used to be considered quite a high honor bestowed by a wife on her husband.

Read this week's *Key Text*. What did God say future descendants of Jacob would do? What do you think this promise meant to the current crop of Israelites who were scattered and downtrodden?

Tuesday

Read Ephesians 3:6.

After reading this week's *Flashlight*, write a short paragraph to finish the following statement:

Ancient Israel could have been a great spiritual example to the then-known world by

Wednesday

Refer to this week's *Punch Lines*. Did any of the highlighted verses catch your attention? After reading Isaiah 11:1-5 (*Into the Story*, passage 1), how does Luke 1:31-33 fulfill Isaiah's prophecy? Notice also that Jesus was not simply coming to bless Christian believers; He came to bless everyone who would dare believe in Him.

Thursday

Read Acts 15:7.

Watch your local evening news tonight. More than likely you'll see a story of someone touched by violence, perhaps someone experiencing a weather-related incident, or maybe just a call for folks to help out a local soup kitchen. After you've seen the telecast, ask yourself: What small thing can I do to make my community better? What next step do I need to take to make this happen? Ask a friend to join you in carrying out your good deed.

Friday

Read Psalm 22:27.

Why are you here? Why do you think God made you and placed you where you are at this special time in history? How might sharing the gospel with others help you find yourself and your purpose?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 26; 31.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.