



The Prince of Peace

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: Jesus is the Prince of Peace who brought salvation to the world.

MAIN PASSAGE: Isaiah 9:1-7

“Far over the misty mountains cold / To dungeons deep and caverns old / We must away ere break of day / To claim our long-forgotten gold... / The pines were roaring on the height / The winds were moaning in the night. / The fire was red, it flaming spread; / The trees like torches blazed with light... / The mountain smoked beneath the moon / The dwarves, they heard the tramp of doom. / They fled their hall to dying fall / Beneath his feet, beneath the moon.”¹

This song from *The Hobbit* described the dwarves’ eager desire to return to their home under the mountain, which had been taken over by Smaug, a fire-breathing dragon who destroyed their home and forced them to flee. But they longed to return; no other land would do. The dwarves would not be complete until they returned home.



Where is your hometown? How long has it been since you lived there? What do you miss about it?

Group Time

Point 1: The Prince of Peace brings light and joy to the world (Isa. 9:1-3).

¹ Nevertheless, the gloom of the distressed land will not be like that of the former times when he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the future he will bring honor to the way of the sea, to the land east of the Jordan, and to Galilee of the nations.

² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness. ³ You have enlarged the nation and increased its joy. The people have rejoiced before you as they rejoice at harvest time and as they rejoice when dividing spoils.

Throughout the Old Testament, “darkness” is frequently used to describe prison (Ps. 107:10) or death (Job 17:13). Both descriptions were fitting for God’s people in Isaiah’s day. They had suffered from affliction and observed injustice under the violence of foreign enemies and their own leaders. However, Isaiah pointed the people toward the horizon. There, penetrating the darkness ever-so-faintly was a “light.” And with this light would come the hope of a new day, one marked by the birth of royalty, of divinity, of the Prince of Peace—God’s saving presence in the form of a baby. When light comes, joy follows.



How has your relationship with Jesus brought you light and joy, even in the midst of dark and difficult circumstances in life?

Point 2: The Prince of Peace brings freedom and peace to the world (Isa. 9:4-5).

⁴ For you have shattered their oppressive yoke and the rod on their shoulders, the staff of their oppressor, just as you did on the day of Midian. ⁵ For every trampling boot of battle and the bloodied garments of war will be burned as fuel for the fire.

To help the people see how their oppressive yoke would be shattered, Isaiah referenced a victory in Israel's past over Midian (Judg. 6–7) that provided the blueprint for how God would provide victory in the future. The people of Israel had sinned, and God sent the Midianites to discipline them. When the people cried out for rescue, He raised up Gideon and an impossibly small force for the job because their size didn't matter. By His power alone, God set the sword of the Midianites against one another and they were routed. The victory came by God's hand, not the hand of the Israelites. This was what Isaiah wanted the people of his day to see: God is the divine warrior who will win His people's freedom from their oppressors by His mighty power.



How should Christ's victory over sin and death frame how we understand sin's impact on us as believers?

The coming victory and freedom Isaiah anticipated would be a mighty and grace-filled act of God. However, there was more in store for them. The royal Child would bring a lasting peace. After the victory He would secure, the implements of wars would be burned, implying they would no longer be needed because everlasting peace had come through the Prince of Peace—Jesus Christ.



Voices from Church History

"Peace should be a hallmark of the godly person ... Peace should be part of our character also because God has promised us His peace, because He has commanded us to let peace rule in our lives and relationships, and because peace is a fruit of the Spirit and therefore an evidence of His working in our lives."²

—Jerry Bridges (1929–2016)

Point 3: The Prince of Peace brings justice and righteousness to the world (Isa. 9:6-7).

⁶ For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

“The government will be on his shoulders” does not imply a burden or a yoke but that He will carry the weight of governing His people with true kingly authority and with justice. Finally God’s people would have a ruler who would not tolerate exploitation and oppression from within or without. This is King Jesus.



How can we pursue justice in our world today to show others the justice of God in Christ?

Christ as King: God promised a King who would _____ His people and _____ all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its _____ when Jesus returns.

With four couplets Isaiah described the Son of God’s perfect reign in justice and righteousness. During His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated His unsurpassed righteousness in His full obedience to the Father. In the wondrous gospel transaction, Jesus has taken our sin and given us His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).



Which of the four couplets describing Jesus is most meaningful to you right now? Why?

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Isaiah 9:1-3

The relationship between happiness and joy is interesting. For some, these two words are synonyms. For others, they describe very different experiences: happiness is a situational feeling while joy is an ongoing decision. They may overlap and often do, yet one can maintain joy (as Christians are commanded) while not feeling happy. While the second perspective is valid, we must be careful not to divorce these two ideas, if indeed they are not the same. As Christians, our joy should fuel happiness. The sullen yet joyful Christian should not be what the world thinks of when they think of us.

The reason rests in the source of our joy: Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:4). We are commanded to be joyful at all times because the source of our joy is consistent—our salvation through Christ, the gospel. No matter what might be happening in our lives, no matter how difficult and painful they might be, Christ is always there and He is always the same. Our salvation is secure; we are a forgiven people who have received Jesus' righteousness. This is why we rejoice, even at times through tears.

However, as we turn our minds and hearts to Christ, even in times of trial, happiness should be a natural response of our hearts. Our inner joy should quite often present itself on the outside in smiles and happiness. This is a natural response to being a forgiven people, a people who have received such lavish kindness from God, a people who have eternity with God to look forward to. This is the natural response to the gospel.



Voices from Church History

"If we really think that home is elsewhere and that this life is a 'wandering to find home,' why should we not look forward to the arrival?"³

—C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)



When you think of the gospel, what is your usual emotional response? Why?

Day 2: Read Isaiah 9:4-5

We were once captive to sin and death, but now in Christ, we have been set free. This old yoke was not just taken off of us and cast aside; it was smashed by Christ, never able to be placed on us again. This is the good news of the gospel.

But as amazing as that is, our freedom does not end there. Our freedom is not just understood in terms of *from* but also *for*. We read in Galatians 5:13 that our freedom is not to be used as an opportunity to sin—an abuse of grace—but rather for service of others. As believers, we have the ability to refrain from sin and to obey God. One way we obey God is by submitting to His authority and loving and serving others. This is the freedom we have, freedom that is found in voluntarily yielding to our Father and placing the needs of others above our own.



Which aspect of your freedom tends to be more challenging for you: abstaining from sin or obeying God? Why?

Day 3: Read John 16:33

As Jesus wrapped up His upper room discourse on the night He was betrayed, He explained that what He had told the disciples was intended to give them peace. But then in the very next sentence, with no transition or explanation, Jesus told them they would have suffering in the world. If we only see peace as a tranquil stream, this makes no sense. But if we understand peace as more than that—as the peace Christ gives us within us, with others, and with God—then reconciling these two ideas is no problem. *Peace from the Lord and suffering for the Lord are not mutually exclusive.* For as we suffer on His behalf, we can know we are following His example and that our pain, as real as it is, is being used for His glory and purposes.

This is what fuels our inner peace. But then, as Jesus wrapped up this idea, He explained another way that peace and suffering work together: As we suffer in the world, we can know that one day all such suffering will end. Jesus has won, and one day when He returns, He will make all things new. That is our future hope because we have been given peace with God our Father through the suffering of Jesus Christ.



What can you do now to prepare your mind and heart to remember the Lord's peace the next time you experience suffering?

Day 4: Read Isaiah 9:6-7

We have to be careful to remember this truth: *Judgment removed is not justice satisfied.* We might believe it is at times if we focus on one aspect of the gospel—how we are no longer under God’s judgment. Of course, this is certainly true, gloriously so. And yet, we have to take a step back and look at the gospel more broadly to see God’s justice displayed. God did not just remove judgment from us and cast it aside; He placed it squarely on His Son. God’s full judgment was poured out on Christ. He bore the penalty for our sin. This is why God is just.

When we remember this, we can better understand God’s complete and unwavering justice. He always acts justly because being just is in His nature; it is one of His attributes. In fact, God *is* justice. Therefore, all He does is just, and this justice is a hallmark of His kingdom. We see it in the gospel—how we become part of His kingdom—and we see it in how He administers His kingdom. All He has done, all He does now as He advances His kingdom, and all He will do when His kingdom comes in fullness is marked by justice.



How does God being just give you confidence and hope in life today?

Day 5: Read Matthew 5:38-42

As believers, we know God is just. Our trust in the gospel and our hope in the gospel hinge to a large degree on His justice. And yet, we often find it difficult to live under God’s justice in day-to-day life. People wrong us. People hurt us. People reject us. In our flesh, we want to lash out, to get even, to administer our own justice. Often we feel vindicated in this desire, especially when we are wronged on behalf of Christ.

But Christ has called on us to put aside our desire for vengeance, not to pursue justice on our own but to trust in Him to bring about justice in His time and in His way. We may not see it today or even tomorrow, but we can know that justice is coming and we can rest in that. This is why Jesus told His followers to bear wrongs with patience and love—because we don’t have to worry about righting any wrongs against us. That is God’s role, not ours.



In what ways have you tried to pursue justice on your own instead of trusting in God’s justice?

The Gospel Project®

Adult Daily Discipleship Guide CSB
Volume 7, Number 2 Winter 2018-19

Eric Geiger

Senior Vice President, LifeWay Resources

Ed Stetzer

Founding Editor

Trevin Wax

General Editor

Brian Dembowczyk

Managing Editor

Daniel Davis

Content Editor

Josh Hayes

Content and Production Editor

Ken Braddy

Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

Michael Kelley

Director, Groups Ministry

Send questions/comments to:

Content Editor by email to daniel.davis@lifeway.com or mail to Content Editor, *The Gospel Project: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide*, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0175; or make comments on the Web at lifeway.com.

Printed in the United States of America

The Gospel Project®: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide CSB (ISSN 2162-7207; Item 005461524) is published quarterly by LifeWay Christian Resources, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234, Thom S. Rainer, President. © 2018 LifeWay Christian Resources.

For ordering or inquiries, visit lifeway.com, or write LifeWay Resources Customer Service, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113. For bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address, email orderentry@lifeway.com, fax 615.251.5933, or write to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission.



Brian Dembowczyk

Managing Editor—*The Gospel Project*
AUTHOR OF *Gospel-Centered Kids Ministry*
AND *Cornerstones: 200 Questions and Answers to Learn Truth*

The Books of Genesis and Exodus are meant to be read together, providing an important clue for our approach to the rest of Scripture. The story begins in Genesis and unfolds with breathtaking speed, but then the pace slows as the rest of the book tells us the story of four generations of the one family through which God promised to bring blessing to the world.

As Genesis winds down, we encounter Joseph, one of Abraham's great grandsons, and see that God's promises are not always easy for His people. But through Joseph's difficulties, we encounter the vital concept of redemption. His life was one of setbacks, frustration, and disappointment. But all the while, we see that God was at work *through* Joseph's adversity, not *despite* it. God brought about redemption for Joseph and his family; God is always bringing glory to Himself and good to His people through their hardships, even by overriding their sins.

Then as we move from Genesis to Exodus, we pass over nearly four hundred years to a time when God's people are enslaved. The stage is set for an even greater display of God's desire and ability to redeem His people. When they cry out to God for deliverance from their slavery in Egypt, He provides a rescuer in Moses to free His people and to provide for them.

God's deliverance of Joseph and the nation of Israel were the early stages of a beautiful crescendo of God's plan to redeem His people that culminated in Christ Jesus. In Him we have experienced redemption from the slavery of sin and death. As we study these sessions, let us pray that the Holy Spirit stirs our hearts anew so that we are captivated by the love, grace, and mercy of God made known to us in our redemption through Christ so we can share Him with others.



Matt Chandler (unit 4, sessions 4-6; unit 5, session 1) is a Lead Pastor at The Village Church, president of Acts 29, and author of several books, including *Take Heart: Christian Courage in the Age of Unbelief*. Matt and his wife, Lauren, have three children: Audrey, Reid and Norah.



Jennifer Grisham (unit 6, sessions 1-2) serves as managing editor and administrator at Doxology & Theology. She's a graduate of Baylor University and is currently pursuing a masters degree at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.



Andrew Hall (unit 6, session 3) is the Lead Pastor of Community Bible Church, located in Ilderton, Ontario, Canada. He is a graduate from Southern Seminary. He and his wife, Melanie, have four children: Noelle, Ava, Calvin, and Brita.



Pat Hood (unit 5, sessions 2-3) is the Senior Pastor at LifePoint Church in Tennessee. He and his wife, Amy, have five children. Pat is the author of *The Sending Church*, which challenges every church to send and every Christian to live sent.



Sung Jin Park (Christmas session) and his wife, Alice, have three kids. He is Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and earned a PhD from Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion.



David Roark (unit 4, sessions 4-6; unit 5, session 1) is the Communications and Resources Director at The Village Church and writes on faith and culture in notable publications. He and his wife, Taylor, have two daughters: Leigh and Lainey.



Robert Smith Jr. (unit 4, sessions 1-3), PhD, is the Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School. He is the author of *Doctrine That Dances* and *The Oasis of God*. He is married to Wanda Taylor-Smith (PhD), and they have four adult children with one in heaven.

UNIT 4

SESSION 1

1. Søren Kierkegaard, in *The Diary of Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. Peter Rohde (New York: Citadel Press, 1988), 111.
2. Horatio G. Spafford, "It Is Well with My Soul," in *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: LifeWay Worship, 2008), 447.
3. R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works*, in *Preaching the Word* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 94.

SESSION 2

1. "There Is a Balm in Gilead," Hymnary.org, accessed April 30, 2018, https://hymnary.org/text/sometimes_i_feel_discouraged_spiritual.
2. "Never Alone," Hymnary.org, accessed May 16, 2018, https://hymnary.org/text/ive_seen_the_lightning_flashing.

SESSION 3

1. St. John Chrysostom, Homily XXXII, in *The Homilies on the Gospel According to St. John* (Altenmünster, Germany: Jazzybee Verlag, 2012) [eBook].
2. Clement of Alexandria, in *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria*, trans. William Wilson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1867), 91.

CHRISTMAS SESSION

1. J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (New York: The Random House, 1996), 14–15.
2. Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008), 157–58.
3. C. S. Lewis, quoted in *The Question of God: C. S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life*, by Armand M. Nicholi Jr. (New York: Free Press, 2003), 239.

SESSION 4

1. P. G. George and Paul Swarup, "Exodus," in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 82.
2. Abel Ndjerareou, "Exodus," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 87.

SESSION 5

1. Priscilla Shirer, *One in a Million* (Nashville: B&H, 2010) [eBook].
2. *Letter to Diognetus*, quoted in *Introducing Major Theologians*, by Michael Reeves (SPCK, 2015) [eBook].

SESSION 6

1. History.com Staff, "Dunkirk," History.com, accessed June 4, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/dunkirk>.
2. Andrew Murray, *Working for God!* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), 158–59.
3. Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville: B&H, 2014) [eBook].

UNIT 5

SESSION 1

1. Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, in *Preaching the Word* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), 414.
2. Daniel Wilson, "Obituary: The Rev. Basil Woodd," in *The Christian Observer*, vol. 31 (London: J. Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly, 1831), 312.

SESSION 2

1. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, Prologue 7, quoted in *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard, with Ronnie J. Rombs, vol. III in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001) [WORDsearch].
2. Derek J. Prime and Alistair Begg, *On Being a Pastor* (Chicago: Moody, 2004) [eBook].

SESSION 3

1. Martin Luther, in *Luther's Works*, vol. 26 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 131.
2. J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1973, reprint 2018), 46.

UNIT 6

SESSION 1

1. Dorian G. Coover-Cox, "Exodus," in *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville: B&H, 2017), 142, n. 32:2–6.
2. Blaise Pascal, in *Blaise Pascal: Thoughts, Letters, and Minor Works*, ed. Charles W. Eliot, trans. W. F. Trotter, M. L. Booth, and O. W. Wight (New York: Cosimo, 1910), 330.
3. Kelly Minter, *No Other Gods* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2017), 53.

SESSION 2

1. Beth Moore, *A Woman's Heart: God's Dwelling Place* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2007), 79.
2. "Exodus," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International, Ltd, 2016), 137.

SESSION 3

1. Charles H. Gabriel, "I Stand Amazed in the Presence," in *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: LifeWay Worship, 2008), 237.
2. Randy Alcorn, *The Grace and Truth Paradox* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2003), 84–85.