



This week we finished our brief advent foray in Isaiah by spending some time in chapter 11.

We began by quoting an advert from the New York Times in 1994 that said “The meaning of Christmas is that love will triumph and we will be able to put together a world of unity and peace.” Whilst that may be a nice idea it doesn’t square so much with our experience of the world.

Isaiah 11 looks ahead to a time when the world has been transformed, a world of unity and peace, and yet it comes not through our effort and ability, but rather the actions of God. We noted two threads at work:

v1-5: the perfect ruler

A picture of God’s king as painted as one whose Spirit endows him with wisdom and understanding, counsel and might as well as an underpinning of the fear of the Lord. Here is a leader (unlike the rulers of our time) whom we can respect and trust, whose not in it for himself or whom we don’t have to have any cynical eye rolls over. How refreshing!

v6-9: the place of peace

The created order is re-united - the story of creation as it was meant to be. Enemies have been reunited, it’s a place of safety and harmony. Lambs eating with wolves rather than being eaten by wolves, goats resting with leopards rather than running from leopards.

v8 gives us a taster as to when that might happen with snakes and toddlers existing together. This is more than a hint as to a time when the enmity between Eve’s offspring and the serpent being over (see Gen 3v15). This will be when Jesus has defeated Satan once and for all and all of creation is restored and redeemed. We ended by noting that Isaiah as a book in itself has a developing storyline regarding God’s Spirit-filled, anointed king coming to earth. In these early chapters (as we’ve seen) it’s a focus on an extraordinary child being born who will be God with us, in the middle of the book there are prophecies relating to a servant of the Lord who suffer and die for his people, whilst near the end of the prophecy it’s a conquering king who will bring a final place of peace and reconciliation.

Here are a few questions to start your group off

- What aspects of Jesus’ rule (from v1-5) are you most excited by?
- Why does it matter that he foundationally fears the Lord?
- What aspects of the description of the new creation are you most excited by?