



SERMON RECAP

DECEMBER 7, 2025

Second Sunday of Advent: Peace

Isaiah 9:1-11

King Ahaz was stuck between a rock and a hard place. More literally, the small nation of Judah was stuck between the global imperial powers known as Assyria and Egypt. The long-time enemy of the people, Egypt was slipping in power. Assyria was asserting itself, and the only way to get to Egypt was through the smaller nations of Syria, Israel, and Judah.

When we read the first part of Isaiah, King Ahaz believes he has two options: align with the smaller kingdoms of Syria and Israel - who have long been enemies to Judah - and hope that their combined strength could hold off the surging Assyrians, or seek refuge from the Assyrians in hope that they are merciful to Judah.

Isaiah warns King Ahaz: do not seek the military might of Assyria, that will only lead to becoming a vassal, losing your identity, and bowing to Assyrian gods. Do not seek alliance with other nations, this will lead to destruction by the power of Assyria. On a practical level, this seems like the only logical options, but for Isaiah, there is a third option. It is not logical, it is to trust in God. Trust that the LORD will deliver. Trust that both ways of war will ultimately lead to destruction. Instead, wait for a wise counselor, a Prince of Peace.

As Christians, we read Isaiah and know that his advice was not only particular to that time. The life and ministry of Jesus was about presenting a third way. In Jesus' day, most thought that there were two options: Acquiesce to Roman authority or join in violent revolt. Personified in his own disciples, one who was a zealot and one who was a tax-collector, Jesus showed that the Way of God was to trust in neither Roman power nor Violent uprising.

Rome built crosses. Zealots build conspiracies. Jesus built a Table. His Way defied all logic, but it was the way of wonderful counsel and a path toward True Peace. The prophecy of Isaiah was to trust in God's way over the military might and logical answers of this world. It was true for Isaiah, the way of true peace was neither the Empire of Assyria nor the violence of their would-be allies. And it was prophetic for Jesus as well. His life, ministry, death, and resurrection showed that the way of peace was choosing neither empire nor violence.

As we celebrate the coming of Christ we would do well to remember. We are still called to resist empire and violence. As we wait for Jesus - we are not waiting passively, withdrawing from all the conflict. We are entering into a third way. It is way that builds tables - not empires or conspiracies. We are a people, like Isaiah, and Jesus, of the third way. The way of wonderful counsel and true peace.



bibleproject.com/videos/collections/advent
has informative videos on the themes of
Advent: hope, peace, joy, and love.



This map shows the Empire of Assyria as a looming threat to Judah. The kingdoms of Syria and Israel formed an alliance to defend the empire, and threatened war with Judah if they did not join. Isaiah warned King Ahaz to not join the confederation nor seek help from Assyria, for either would spell doom. Instead of heeding Isaiah's warning, Ahaz allied himself with Assyria, which led to Israel's defeat but also made Judah a vassal state of Assyria. Eventually Assyria couldn't save Judah either, and the Babylonian Empire completely destroyed Judah, sacked Jerusalem, razed the Temple, and sent the people into exile. Understanding this history helps sort out the warnings of all the Biblical pophets, especially Isaaah.