

Gospel-Centered Advent Reading Week 2: The Peace Candle

In the beginning we had peace with God and each other. When we chose our way instead of God's way we traded our peace for conflict and war. Humankind ruled with an iron fist and so God wiped all people but Noah and his family off the face of the earth with a flood. As the waters dried Noah sent a dove from the ark to search for dry land. It returned with a freshly plucked olive leaf. The dove is now a symbol of peace.

The flood didn't solve our problem. We still wage war and hurt each other but God promised to never send a flood like that one again. He put a rainbow in the sky as a reminder of this promise of peace. In the Hebrew Scriptures the word for "rainbow" normally refers to a warrior's bow.¹ If God were to fire his bow, the arrow would not strike us, but go straight up into God's very own heart. To make lasting peace, God will have to wage war not upon humankind but upon himself.

Generations later God chose a man he named Abraham to start a new people. God promised that through his descendants he would bless all people on earth.

Genesis 12:2-3 (NIV)

2 "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.
3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

Over a thousand years later a prophet named Isaiah prophesied that a human child was coming who would be both the Mighty God and the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6-7a (NIV)

6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end...

Now as we light the candle of peace we remember how the Mighty God has given us the Prince of Peace through the birth of a small child into the family of Abraham. We remember at Christ's baptism how the Holy Spirit landed on him like a dove. We

¹ See NET Bible footnote on Genesis 9:13. <https://netbible.org/bible/Genesis+9>

remember the spear thrust into his side at the cross, God's arrow finally hitting its mark. We remember how the Christmas child grew up and took God's curse upon himself so God might give anyone who believes in Jesus Christ eternal and everlasting peace.

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Pastor Jonathan Romig wrote this gospel-centered advent reading to tell the big-story of the Bible. Please feel free to use it in your church to share the gospel. Find more advent readings at CornerstoneWestford.com.