

A Better King, the Son of David

Text: Isaiah 11

Introduction: One of my favorite hymns to sing during the Christmas season is “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” Long before it was ever a congregational hymn, its words were sung as prayers in the days leading up to Christmas. Each verse cries out to God using titles for the coming Messiah drawn straight from the prophets.

The song expresses a deep sense of longing and lament. You can feel the anticipation of God’s promised Messiah throughout the entire song. In fact, the opening verse places us at the heart of Israel’s captivity. God’s people were longing for someone who would come and deliver them from exile. Someone who would come and finally make things right.

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

There’s another verse of the song that you won’t find in our hymnal.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny
From depths of hell Thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave

That phrase “Rod of Jesse” comes from the KJV of Isaiah 11. We have seen in our study of 2 Samuel that God promised a descendant of David whose kingdom would be established forever. Isaiah 11 pictures the royal line of David as a tree that has been cut down. Nothing left but a stump. No throne. No crown. No visible hope. But God promises that from that stump, life will spring up again.

When we sing “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” we confess our confidence that God has kept and will keep His promise to David. That the better King Isaiah foretold really did come and will come. Isaiah 11 invites us to look closely at this King and see why His reign is unlike any other.

Go ahead and turn in your Bible to Isaiah 11. It’s on page ____ in the black pew Bible in front of you. If you don’t own a Bible, we encourage you to take the pew Bible with you when you leave.

(Read Isaiah 11...Pray)

We have been making our way through 2 Samuel. We’ve been following the life and reign of King David. We learned in 2 Samuel 7 that God promised David, “I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

However, all of that seemed to be in jeopardy as David committed grievous sin against Bathsheba and her husband Uriah. We were left wondering what God would do. Would he cut off David and his descendants as He had done with Saul?

We’ve learned that David wasn’t as much unlike Saul and all the other kings of all the other nations as we had hoped. It was a mistake to put our hope in David. He can’t save us. In fact, because of his sin, he needed someone to save him.

But this morning we come to Isaiah 11, and we see that **God promises a better King, a Spirit-filled Son of David who will reign with absolute justice and bring perfect peace to the world.**

So, let’s look at Isaiah 11 and all it has to say to us about this King God promises.

I. God promises a better King (Isaiah 11:1).

A. In seeking to understand Isaiah 11, it’s helpful to look back and see that the end of Isaiah 10 pictures the Davidic monarchy in ruins.

- 1. This of course is a problem for us because God was supposed to establish David’s throne forever.**

2. We've noted already in our study of 2 Samuel that David's sin in 2 Samuel 11 introduced a question into our minds regarding the promises of God to David. A question that had not previously existed when David was busy administering justice and equity to all his people. David sinned grievously, and we wondered what would become of God's promise to David.
3. But as we saw last week. God forgave David. He put away David's sin, and David did not immediately die. God did not cut off David and his offspring as He had done with Saul. This was because of God's faithfulness to His covenant. God always keeps His promises. He always does exactly what He says He is going to do.
4. Eventually, David did die, as all people do, and David's son Solomon ascended to the throne. Solomon ushered in a partial fulfillment of God's promise to David. He did build a house or temple for God just as God promised.
5. But things in Israel went downhill from there. Solomon was far from a perfect king. And his sons were much worse. In fact, the kingdom was split in two under Solomon's two sons Jeroboam and Rehoboam.
6. And Israel's monarchy was a mess from there. There were some good kings who did some good things. But by and large, there were a lot of bad kings who did a lot of things that were evil in the sight of the Lord.
7. And when God's people did evil and rebelled against Him, God used their enemies as instruments of His judgment. That's the picture at the end of Isaiah 10. God promises judgment on His people at the hands of the Assyrians. And the result is not pretty.
8. The prophet writes, "Behold, the Lord God of hosts will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the great in height will be hewn down, and the lofty will be brought low. He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon will fall by the Majestic One" (Is. 10:33-34).
9. It's not pretty. God's judgment on His people would be devastating.

B. But despite God's judgment at the hands of Assyrians at the end of chapter 10, there is hope as we come to chapter 11.

1. God will do as He said He will do. Because God always does exactly what He says He is going to do. He always keeps His promises.
2. Isaiah writes... (Read vs. 1)
3. The imagery here is vivid. We're supposed to imagine a former forest where there is nothing left but stumps where trees had previously stood. But those trees have been cut down. And there's nothing left but the stumps.
4. There's a piece of property in Buckingham County, Virginia that my family used to hunt every fall. We called it the Big Woods because of the size of the trees on the property. My grandfather was a game warden in Buckingham for a long time, and he knew the landowner. That's how our family got the privilege of hunting the property. It didn't belong to us, but we loved that piece of property as if it were our own. But things never stay the same forever, do they? The landowner eventually died, and his nephew inherited the property. Of course, those hardwoods didn't mean much to the nephew. When he looked at the property, all he could see were dollar signs. So, as soon as he was able, he had all of these beautiful trees that had been there for many years cut down and sold for timber. I remember my first time looking out over what had been the Big Woods, and there was nothing left but the stumps. A forest of big hardwood trees is a beautiful thing. But there's nothing beautiful about a field of stumps where those beautiful hardwoods once stood.
5. That's what I think of when I think of the situation at the beginning of Isaiah 11. It's not a very hope-filled picture. But then. There's a small green shoot emerging from one of the stumps. And with that shoot comes hope.

6. We know from our study of 1 and 2 Samuel that Jesse was the father of King David. So, when Isaiah says that a shoot will come from the stump of Jesse, he is talking about a descendant of David. He is referring to the promise that God made to David to establish his throne forever through his offspring.
7. God has not forgotten His promise! God has not forsaken His promise. The situation is bleak. But there is hope! Hope of a better King! Hope of one who will come and make things right. Hope of a King who will deliver His people.

Isaiah goes on to tell us what this King is like. We already know that He is a better King. Now we see that God's King is a better King because...

II. God's King is empowered by His Spirit (Isaiah 11:2-3a).

(Read vs. 2-3a)

A. I think here about the Spirit of the Lord rushing upon David in 1 Samuel 16 after he was anointed as Israel's next king.

1. The text says that the "Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam. 16:13).
2. And we have seen David empowered by the Spirit of the Lord both prior to him becoming king and during his reign as king.
3. I think also of the Spirit of the Lord departing from Saul in the same chapter.
4. The Holy Spirit did not typically indwell Old Testament saints in the same way that He indwells believers under the New Covenant. But we do see the Spirit coming upon and empowering people in various places throughout the Old Testament.

B. But there seems to be something different about what we see here in Isaiah 11 with the Spirit of the Lord resting upon this shoot from the stump of Jesse.

1. Isaiah gives a sevenfold description of the Spirit here: 1) He is the Spirit of the Lord, 2) He is the Spirit of wisdom, 3) The Spirit of understanding, 4) The Spirit of counsel, 5) The Spirit of might, 6) The Spirit of knowledge, 7) And the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.
2. Now, I don't think I'll be spoiling too much if I go ahead and tell you that this better King that Isaiah is prophesying about is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. And we know that there are prophecies in the book of Isaiah concerning the birth of Jesus.
 - a. Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
 - b. Isaiah 9:6 says, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
4. But this prophecy here in Isaiah 11 doesn't address the birth of Jesus. There's nothing about a baby being born. Nothing about a virgin bearing a child.
5. In fact, Jesus only fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 11 during His first coming in a very limited manner.
 - a. When we think about the Spirit of the Lord coming upon Jesus, I think of His baptism.
 - b. Matthew writes in his Gospel, "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased'" (Matt. 3:16-17).
 - c. And John the apostle writes, "And John [the Baptist] bore witness: 'I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to

baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (Jn. 1:33-34).

- d. Jesus' baptism was at the outset of His ministry, and we know that from there, Jesus was empowered throughout His ministry by the Spirit of the Lord. Empowered to perform miracles. Empowered to preach and teach with authority. And ultimately empowered to die to pay for our sin and raise from the grave three days later.
- e. And everything Jesus did during His earthly ministry was in submission to God the Father, even to the point of death. Isaiah says, "His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord" (vs. 3a). I think of His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Matt. 14:36).

We've seen that God's better King is empowered by His Spirit. Next, Isaiah tells us that...

III. God's King will execute absolute justice (Isaiah 11:3b-5).

A. I'm reminded here of what the Lord said to Samuel back in 1 Samuel 16 when David was anointed as king.

- 1. "The Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).
- 2. I think also of the fact that David as king was committed to administering justice and equity to all his people (2 Sam. 8:15).
- 3. But then when it came to Bathsheba and Uriah, he committed great injustice and tried to cover it up.
- 4. He was committed to justice, but he did not execute absolute justice. His efforts to administer justice were far from perfect.
- 5. But Isaiah tells us of one who would come and execute absolute justice. (Read vs. 3b-5)

B. Again, Isaiah is talking about the Lord Jesus. And we can certainly see a partial fulfillment of this prophecy during the life and ministry of Jesus on earth.

- 1. Think about His interaction with the woman at the well in John 4. Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband." The woman answered, "I have no husband." To which Jesus responded, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." Jesus used His ability to look beyond what His eyes could see to get to the heart of the matter. To confront this woman in her sin, but then to offer her living water and invite her into relationship with God through Him.
- 2. I think also of Jesus' interactions with lepers and others who were sick and infirmed. Or His interactions with tax collectors and sinners. Or even the poor widow in Mark 12 who was being taken advantage of by the religious leaders.
- 3. And I contrast that with the way that Jesus interacted with the religious leaders and those who perpetuated a system of injustice among God's people.
- 4. Jesus judged in righteousness. He decided with equity for the meek. He struck the earth with the rod of His mouth as He spoke truth to power and confronted the evil of the scribes and Pharisees.

C. But we should also note that Jesus executed absolute justice at the cross as He died to pay for our sin.

- 1. The cross is a reminder to us that God does not overlook sin. No injustice goes unpunished.
- 2. Jesus executed perfect justice by bearing it Himself. He died in our place as our substitute. He took our sin on Himself. He experienced the wrath of God toward our sin. The punishment we deserve.
- 3. In one sense, the cross was the greatest injustice the world has ever seen. The religious leaders executed the perfect Son of God. But at the same time, the death of

Jesus to pay for our sin was the greatest act of justice the world has ever seen. God did not overlook our sin. He punished His Son for our sin as Jesus willingly took it upon Himself and died in our place.

- D. But of course, we know the cross was not the end of injustice in this world. We still live in a world filled with evil and injustice, don't we?**
1. Things are not as they should be. Things are not as God created them to be.
 2. Goshen, I want you to know that there is coming a day when God will right all wrongs. There is coming a day when the Lord Jesus will descend in power to execute absolute justice on the earth.
 3. I think of Revelation 19, "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:11-16).
 4. King Jesus, the better King of Isaiah 11, will return and execute perfect justice in heaven and on earth.

Isaiah also tells us that...

IV. God's King will restore perfect peace (Isaiah 11:6-9).

- A. I think here about the very limited sense in which David brought peace to Israel.**

1. 2 Samuel 7:1 says that "the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies."
2. In making His covenant with David, God also promised, "I will give you rest from all your enemies" (2 Sam. 7:11).
3. But we're going to see as we continue our study of 2 Samuel in the new year that David's sin brought all kinds of unrest and infighting to David's family and the nation.
4. So, Isaiah prophesies about a better King who comes and restores perfect peace. (Read vs. 6-9)

- B. We can see a partial fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning perfect peace during the life and ministry of Jesus on earth.**

1. Remember that Prince of Peace is one of the names given to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6.
2. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus proclaimed, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9).
3. Just a bit later in the sermon, Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:43-44).
4. Jesus certainly brought peace between men, but the primary reason for His coming was to give us peace with God. Our sin makes us enemies of God. But Jesus came to bring us back into right relationship with God. To restore perfect peace between us and God.

- C. We look around us today, and we see a lack of peace. Things are not as they should be. Things are not as God intended them to be. But there is coming a day of perfect peace that will be inaugurated at the return of Jesus.**

1. Revelation 6:4 tells of a rider on a red horse who is permitted to take peace from the earth.

2. But all of that is reversed in Revelation 19 when Jesus returns in righteousness. From there, Satan is defeated. He is thrown into the lake of fire forever.
3. And then in Revelation 21, we read this, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:1-4).
4. Goshen, God’s King Jesus will restore perfect peace.
5. The last time there was perfect peace was in Eden before Adam and Eve sinned. The good news of the gospel is that there is coming a day of perfect peace. Where the wolf shall dwell with the lamb. The leopard shall lie down with the young goat. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

We’ve seen that God promises a better King. We’ve seen that God’s King is empowered by His Spirit. God’s King will execute absolute justice. God’s King will restore perfect peace. And finally...

V. God’s King will gather all the nations (Isaiah 11:10-16).

Look at verse 10. (Read vs. 10)

A. We know that the Lord Jesus came, not just as Israel’s Messiah, but as the Savior of the whole world.

1. “For God so loved THE WORLD, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16).

2. Jesus told His disciples to “make disciples of ALL NATIONS” (Matt. 28:19).
3. He said, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
4. On the Day of Pentecost, there were present “devout men from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). There were “Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians” (Acts. 2:9-11). And each of them heard in their own language. Because the message of the gospel is for all peoples from all nations.
5. The message of the gospel is the same for every person who has ever lived. (Share the gospel)

B. And all of human history is moving toward a day when people from every tribe, tongue, and nation will gather around the throne of our great God in worship to Him.

1. I’ve had the privilege of worshiping with Christians in Mexico and Central America. I’ve gathered with believers in Africa. And most recently in Southeast Asia. And I can tell you from firsthand experience that our God is establishing a people for Himself from every corner of the earth just as He has said He will do.
2. That’s why we pray for the advance of the gospel in North Africa and Southeast Asia and right here in Spotsylvania, Virginia. That’s why we give of our resources through things like the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to send missionaries to take the message of Jesus to the ends of the earth.
3. The Apostle John writes in Revelation 7, “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice,

“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen’” (Rev. 7:9-12).

- 4. That’s what the prophet Isaiah is talking about when he writes of people for the Lord from Assyria and Egypt and Pathros and Cush and Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and from the coastlands of the sea (vs. 11).**
- 5. That’s what the prophet is talking about when he says that King Jesus “will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (vs. 12).**
- 6. The prophet says, “There will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt” (vs. 16).**
- 7. Oh, isn’t it good news, Goshen, that God’s King will gather all the nations?**
- 8. David’s reign as king was limited to the borders of Israel. But David’s offspring. The shoot from the stump of Jesse. God’s better King. The Lord Jesus Christ. Will rule and reign over all the earth.**

Conclusion: The question for you this morning is: How will you respond to this King of whom Isaiah writes?

God promises a better King, a Spirit-filled Son of David who will reign with absolute justice and bring perfect peace to the whole world.

This King has come. He came in the form of a baby. Born of a virgin.

The angel told Mary, “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

God took on flesh. He dwelt among us. He lived a sinless life. And then He went to the cross to die to pay for our sin. But He didn’t stay dead. He was raised from the grave three days later. He ascended into heaven where He sits even now at the right hand of God the Father. And one day He will return to establish His kingdom forever.

Every knee WILL bow. Every tongue WILL confess. That Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

If you are in Christ, what a day of rejoicing that will be! Unimaginable. Incomparable. Inexpressible.

But if you are not in Christ, that day will be a day of judgment. A day of wailing and gnashing of teeth.

See, if you want to benefit from the absolute justice that King Jesus will execute. The perfect peace that He will restore. If you want to gather with all the nations. You must turn from your sin, place your complete trust in Jesus, and willingly bow your knee to King Jesus now.

He will receive you. He will restore you to right relationship with God. And He will mark you as His with the promise of eternal life forever.