

Jesus is Worth Celebrating Series

Full of Wisdom and Understanding (Isa. 11:1-2)

By
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At A Glance:

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These sermon study notes are designed to be a tool used after listening to the sermon. This resource is a guide to help deepen understanding regarding the Scriptures and ideas presented in the sermon. Those who use these study notes are encouraged to look up, read through, and think about Scripture references in this guide. There is more information in these notes than what is presented in the sermon. These study notes are designed to be used as an independent study tool to help the formation of Biblical convictions, character, and conduct.

Full of Wisdom and Understanding

I. Introduction

A. Christmas Song: Joy to the World¹

1. A lot of people have their own list of favorite Christmas songs. Perhaps even a top one or two that they can listen to repeatedly throughout the Christmas season. In our household, the Christmas decorating has commenced, and that usually includes playing Christmas music while decorating.
2. Joy to the World is one of my favorite Christmas songs. It communicates a powerful message of the magnitude of the different Jesus makes in the world and captures the essence of what should be celebrated at Christmas.
3. A critically important line is, "Let earth receive her King." It is from this fact that most of the rest of the song flows. Many and significant ramifications happen because Jesus, the King of this world, has appeared. There is a strong emphasis on the positive benefits He makes available. This line points to one of the main focal points of a proper celebration of the Christmas holiday: God's ruler has arrived on earth.

B. This central truth is going to be the focus of our Christmas series this year. We are going to be looking at a few of the reasons why Jesus is worth celebrating from Isaiah 11:1-2. The more we understand who Jesus is, the greater our capacity to celebrate Him becomes. As we are going to see throughout this series, the appearance of Jesus on earth was, quite literally, a historic, world-changing event.

C. Since Jesus was born in history, the world will never be the same again. Through Jesus, God promises, life will get much better and a utopian society will be created by Jesus in the future. The type of society people hope for and desperately try to create will finally become a reality when Jesus rules directly in our world. Prior to this ideal society, everything that is bad and that which corrupts is removed. Evil and immorality must be dealt with before God's ideal utopian society can be created. Even though, right now, we experience tremendous difficulty and hardships (just like the nation of Israel at Isaiahs' time), no matter how bleak things may appear, there is always reason for hope because of the promises of God.

II. Prediction of a Future Ruler: The Messiah

- A. While the historical context of this text is important, we will only briefly mention the most relevant factors related to understanding the meaning of this passage so that most of our attention can be focused on Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1-2. Our passage jumps into the middle of an ongoing situation, which can make it more challenging to understand what is happening in our selected Scripture.
- B. At the time of Isaiah, God's people (the southern Jewish nation of Judah) have been enduring the leadership of bad governmental leaders in their monarchy.² The last several kings (Uzziah,

¹ [\(3\) Joy To The World | Christmas Lyric Video | Reawaken Hymns - YouTube](#)

² The nation of Israel, following the rule of Solomon, split into two distinct nations: the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. God's people never experienced a united nation again knowing only what is called the divided kingdom. Israel

Jotham, Ahaz) have led the nation into a very dark and destructive place.³ God is so displeased with His people that He tells them they are going to be punished like a tree cut down to the stump by the nation of Assyria and its military to punish Judah for its rebellion and disobedience against God (Isa. 10:1-4).⁴ God's people are in a dark time in their history. Isaiah wrote his book at least 100 years before the life of Jesus.⁵

- C. However, out of this "stump" of the line of kings coming from the descendants of David (called the Davidic dynasty), there will come a new ideal King who will rule as God desires. This special King will bring about many benefits for God's people. Those who follow the leadership of this King will result in a faithful remnant of people who obey God. God will replace the bad leadership of Judah with a good leader: the Messiah.⁶ This is what gives the nation of Judah hope amid its punishment and exile:

¹ Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. (Isa. 11:1-2)

- D. The leadership of this future ruler stands in stark contrast from the past kings. This ruler will take God's people back to their glory days of King David and Solomon and will even exceed the prosperity they produced. Through this predicted ruler, God promises to bless His people in ways they have never experienced before. All these benefits are set in motion when, "a shoot from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots" (v. 1) is sent by God to His people.
- E. The idea of this future special ruler, called the Messiah, is a major theme throughout Isaiah; it reoccurs several times, and the details build over the course of the entire book. Isaiah's first major discussion of the Messiah occurs in chapter nine, verses one through seven, where the announcement a child will be born who will carry the government of God's people. Our passage adds to the previous discussion. After Isaiah 11, the Messiah is also described in 41:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-11, and 52:13-53:12.⁷ The most detailed description of this King, called the Messiah, is found in Isaiah chapter 53. The book of Isaiah gives us a lot of information and specific predictions about God's future King and Savior.
- F. Our passage gives us multiple ways to test Jesus to discover if He really is the person He claimed to be. Besides the lineage of David already mentioned, this predicted ruler and judge, "will bear fruit" (v. 1) and "The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him" (v. 2) which is followed by a specific description of what this will look like (we will examine these indicators below). The significant

was most prosperous and powerful during the united nation under the rule of David and Solomon. Throughout their history, God's people longed to return to the glory days of David.

³ Gordon H. Johnston, "[Messianic Trajectories in Isaiah](#)," in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2012), 133, Hosea 1:1

⁴ Assyria, as an evil nation itself, will be punished by God after He is done using it for His purposes (Isa. 10:5-19).

⁵ While it extremely likely Isaiah wrote much earlier than this, 100 years is the minimum required to be accepted, even for the most skeptical person, based on the dating of the still existent Great Isaiah Scroll found as part of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

⁶ Jeremiah 23:1-8

⁷ Gordon H. Johnston, "[Messianic Trajectories in Isaiah](#)," in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2012), 133.

point for us is that Isaiah is making a clear prediction to a significant person whom God is going to send to His people in the future.

- G. What even many Christians miss about Jesus is that a central aspect of Jesus' message is that Jesus claimed to be this Messiah (the title of Christ) and repeatedly said the Scriptures were written about Him.⁸ Jesus spent a lot of time and effort convincing His disciples of this fact. Jesus repeatedly pointed out to His disciples that God's Word spoke about Him and His life fulfilled many different elements found in the Jewish Bible. So convinced were the disciples of this truth that this reality was a prominent feature of their preaching in the early church.
- H. The whole chapter of Isaiah 11, along with the other descriptions of the Messiah throughout the book, give us the opportunity to put Jesus' claims to the test to investigate if the claims He made about Himself are true. Especially fascinating are the details of Isaiah chapter 53, which uses the same imagery of our passage using the wording, "He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground" (Isa. 53:2).
- I. The very educated Jewish leader, the apostle Paul, applies this very text to Jesus as he explains different ways Jesus fulfilled various promises of God found in the Old Testament:
- ⁸ For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers, ⁹ and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME." ¹⁰ Again he says, "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE." ¹¹ And again, "PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM." ¹² Again Isaiah says, "THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE." (Rm. 15:8-12)
- J. Paul is convinced Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, that He, "confirms the promises *given* to the fathers" (v. 8) including being, "the root of Jesse" (v. 12). This prominent apostle views Jesus as the person Isaiah was talking about and is communicating the identity of Jesus to the church in Rome. For Paul, Jesus being the Messiah is a big deal.
- K. Jesus is the uncorrupted governmental leader we yearn for who will bring about the utopia we know is possible. We all know the world can be a better place and we recognize the social injustices all around us that need to be corrected. People's lives can be improved with better laws and governmental policies. The rest of Isaiah chapter 11 describes what life will be like when God's Messiah, Jesus, is in direct control of human affairs. The advantages and blessings are many—just read verses 3-9. The prediction of this future Ruler is connected to the promise of a bright future.
- L. Do you accept Jesus as the Jewish Messiah predicted in the Bible? Be encouraged to investigate what the Bible says about the predicted ideal ruler of God's people. This investigation can begin by looking at the above listed passages from Isaiah that describe who the Messiah is. Once you have a clear understanding of who the Messiah is that God is going to send, compare what you know about this person to the life of Jesus.

⁸ Mt. 16:13-17, Mk. 8:27-30, Lk. 9:18-21, Mt. 16:20, Mk. 9:41, Lk. 24:26, 24:46, Mt. 5:17, Lk. 24:44, Jn. 5:39-40. Geerhardus Vos, [*The Self-Disclosure of Jesus: The Modern Debate about the Messianic Consciousness*](#), ed. Johannes G. Vos, Second Edition. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), 105.

III. Empowered by the Spirit of God

A. The Messiah predicted by Isaiah is described as, “The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him” (v. 2). Following the pattern of how God works, especially the good example of King David (1 Sam. 16:13), the King of God’s people will have a special empowering of the Spirit of God that will enable Him to do the work God has given Him to do. It is critical to note the description of the activity regarding the Spirit: the Holy Spirit will “rest” on God’s King. It appears this will be a unique experience of the Spirit. While God’s Spirit has, throughout the history of the people of God, fallen on individuals to enable them to carry out the various tasks they were given by God (including Moses, the faithful kings, and the prophets), it seems to have done so at specific times and in specific ways. The sense we get here is that there will be a permanent, all-encompassing influence of the Spirit of God on this special ruler.

B. We will naturally ask the question, did Jesus demonstrate a special empowering of the Holy Spirit? According to the best records of the life of Jesus, there is good evidence to suggest Jesus lived a life that evidenced a powerful influence of the Spirit of God. Here is how the baptism of Jesus is described:

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.” (Lk. 3:21-22)

C. Notice, it is said, Jesus received the Holy Spirit, “the Holy Spirit descended upon Him” (v. 22). The result of Jesus being given the Spirit is summarized a little later in Luke’s gospel:

¹⁴ And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. (Lk. 4:14)

D. So powerful was the impact of the Spirit on Jesus that news about Him spread throughout Israel. Following His baptism, Jesus carried out His ministry and life, “in the power of the Spirit”. According to Luke’s historical investigation, including conversations with eyewitnesses, Jesus appears to have the Spirit of God resting on Him (Lk. 1:1-4).

E. If that weren’t enough, we also have Jesus’ own word testifying to this fact. When at His home synagogue, Jesus used another portion of Isaiah to describe Himself, including having a special anointing of God’s Spirit:

¹⁷ And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, ¹⁹ TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.” ²⁰ And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Lk. 4:17-21)

F. Jesus says of Himself, in fulfillment of another prediction from Isaiah, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me” (v. 17). Jesus claims that His preaching to those in the Nazareth synagogue fulfills this

Scripture on that very day! Jesus viewed Himself as having a special empowering of the Spirit to do the ministry He was doing.

- G. Disciples have a need to follow Jesus' example by being strengthened by the Spirit of God:
 - ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (Eph. 3:16-17)
- H. The only way you and I will ever be like Jesus is if we are, "strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (v. 16). In a similar way to Jesus, we need the power of God through the Spirit to strengthen us internally so we can be like Jesus. While Jesus is who He is, we need help to become like Him so that, "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (v. 17). The way a person receives this strength to become like Jesus is by trusting in Jesus.
- I. Every true disciple will come to the realization that they need God's help to be the type of person that God wants them to be. It is impossible for us to please God on our own. We will never be strong enough to be good enough to earn God's acceptance. Only with God's help can we have what we need to become the person God wants us to be.

IV. Qualities of Wisdom and Understanding

- A. According to Isaiah, the Spirit will produce specific internal qualities in the Messiah. The first quality is described as, "the spirit of wisdom" (v. 2). The qualities empowered by the Holy Spirit are listed in three pairs.⁹ Each pair is related. "Wisdom" is closely connected to "understanding". Understanding precedes and leads to wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight.¹⁰ Wisdom is the capacity to make right judgments—to be discerning.¹¹ Wisdom uses understanding in daily life to help navigate the situations that are encountered. Wisdom is the practical application and use of knowledge. A wise person has the capability to functionally use what they know and understand beneficially. Wisdom can handle the problems of daily living.¹²
- B. Regrettably, time will only permit the examination of one example from the life of Jesus demonstrating His possession of a divinely empowered wisdom. While Jesus was frequently attacked and many attempted to trap Him, He was never caught or shown to be mistaken. Jesus clearly demonstrated a wisdom that no one else, not even the brightest scholars of His day, could conquer. On one occasion:

¹⁹ The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them. ²⁰ So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they *could* deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor. ²¹ They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that

⁹ It is also fascinating to discover every quality empowered by the Spirit is internal and most are intellectual. In an environment that dismisses the important of the mind and doctrine, this text can help provided a needed correction. At least part of the role of the Holy Spirit and an effect of His power in a person's life will affect the life of the mind.

¹⁰ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Bible Word Study Isaiah 11:2 "wisdom"

¹¹ J. Alec Motyer, [Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 117.

¹² Hans Wildberger, [A Continental Commentary: Isaiah 1-12](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 472.

You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. ²² Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" ²³ But He detected their trickery and said to them, ²⁴ "Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." ²⁵ And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." ²⁶ And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and being amazed at His answer, they became silent. (Lk. 20:19-26)

- C. Jesus applied what He knew to the trap set for Him by the religious leaders concerning paying taxes. Those trying to outsmart Jesus sent people in disguise to listen to His teaching so they could find a way to publicly discredit Him and find legal grounds to arrest Him. When they thought they had a good strategy, they deceptively approached Jesus to set Him up.
- D. Jesus brilliantly navigated the situation so, "they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the present of the people" (v. 26). In fact, His opponents were, "amazed at His answer" (v. 26). Jesus' wisdom was even recognized by those trying to harm Him! Ultimately, those trying to outsmart Jesus could not do it and, "became silent" (v. 26). There are many other examples of Jesus using wisdom that no one else could compete with.
- E. Jumping back to Isaiah, the second quality empowered by the Spirit is understanding (v. 2). Understanding is the collection of concepts and information that a person knows.¹³ Understanding involves the ability to see to the heart of an issue.¹⁴ It involves insight and the ability to see connections beyond the brute facts to make an assessment.¹⁵
- F. Again, we see Jesus demonstrating this quality. This quality was acknowledged even by those who rejected Jesus. On another occasion, when Jesus returned to the town where He grew up:
 - ² When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man *get* these things, and what is *this* wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands? ³ "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. (Mk. 6:2-3)
- G. When the people of Nazareth ask the question, "Where did this man *get* these things" (v. 2) notice it is distinct from "wisdom" (v. 2). They are asking where Jesus got His ideas, the content of His teaching, or His perspective. They are baffled as to how Jesus knows so much.¹⁶ The understanding Jesus has does not come from His upbringing or background, which left the people He had grown up with wondering as to its source. They were puzzled at the source of His knowledge.¹⁷
- H. Even a brief look at the life of Jesus has revealed that Jesus clearly demonstrated the qualities predicted in Isaiah. Jesus embodied both qualities of wisdom and understanding which was

¹³ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Bible Word Study Isaiah 11:2 "understanding"

¹⁴ . Alec Motyer, [Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 117.

¹⁵ Hans Wildberger, [A Continental Commentary: Isaiah 1-12](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 472.

¹⁶ Richard C. Blight, [An Exegetical Summary of Mark 1-8](#) (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2012), 280.

¹⁷ Richard C. Blight, [An Exegetical Summary of Mark 1-8](#) (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2012), 282.

recognized by those around Jesus, including those who were hostile toward Him. These qualities are found in texts that sit on a strong historical foundation.

- I. Jesus is wise and understanding. Those who know who Jesus is will tend to have deeper trust in Him and His teachings. Disciples who recognize these qualities of Jesus will also trust Jesus with the oversight of their lives. They won't be quick to question God when difficult circumstances happen in their lives since Jesus said those who have seen Him have seen God the Father—they are of the same nature. Disciples who acknowledge the wisdom and understanding of Jesus won't think they know better than God and will be more patient with the hurts and frustrations of life. They will not assume their plan for their life is better than what God is giving to them. Disciples possess a quicker acceptance of life events—especially the challenging ones. There will be a humble attitude toward God and how He is managing our life. Finally, individuals who truly accept the wisdom and understanding of Jesus will go through life with a greater sense of peace because they rest in the fact that God knows what He is doing with our lives. He can be trusted. Is this your attitude?

V. Conclusion

- A. Jesus is worthy to be celebrated. This happens in a special way at Christmas, but it is appropriate all year round. It is the magnitude of who Jesus is that helps us celebrate Jesus in a special way every year. Celebrating Jesus in this way doesn't grow old because there is always more to discover about how wonderful He is.
- B. Isaiah has provided us with two good reasons to celebrate Jesus. Jesus has more wisdom than anyone else and we can learn from Him. Jesus has understanding that He can, and will, eventually use to bring about the best possible human society.

VI. Questions for Further Thought

- A. When you think about Christmas and what is being celebrated, what ideas come to mind?
- B. What other examples of Jesus' wisdom and understanding can you recall from the gospels? How is Jesus' wisdom and understanding observed?
- C. What might prevent or hinder someone from trusting the understanding and wisdom of Jesus?
- D. How might you be able to tell if a person recognizes Jesus' wisdom and understanding?
- E. What practical difference would it make if someone accepts Jesus' intelligence?