

Jesus is Worth Celebrating Series

Full of Knowledge and Fear (Isa. 11:2)

By
Andy Davis

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 Knowledge and Fear

I. Introduction

A. Illustration: Quotes on the Value of Science

1. “The beauty of science is that it liberates us from the shackles of ignorance and empowers us with knowledge.”—Neal deGrasse Tyson
2. “Science is the great engine of change. It is the bulwark against ignorance and superstition.”—Bill Nye
3. “Science knows no country, because knowledge belongs to humanity, and is the torch which illuminates the world.”—Louis Pasteur
4. “Science and technology revolutionize our lives, but memory, tradition, and myth frame our responses.”—Arthur Schlesinger
5. “Science is not only a disciple of reason but, also, one of romance and passion.”—Stephen Hawking

B. Almost every modern person respects and values the benefits of science. Most people already value knowledge related to science. In fact, there is a book with the title, *The Value of Science*, written back in 1905. Richard Feynman said of the value of science, “The first way in which science is of value is familiar to everyone. It is that scientific knowledge enables us to do all kinds of things and to make all kinds of things....such power has evident value.”¹ As another person continues, “These benefits are the improvements in outcomes that matter to people and the environment—lives saved, increased crop yields, a fishery collapse avoided—that result from making better decisions.”² In all of this, the Bible’s wisdom is confirmed: “¹⁶ How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.” (Pr. 16:16).³ We rightly see the practical benefits of a knowledge of the natural world. Knowledge can greatly improve our lives—we already know this.

C. The problem is, we don’t value the most important kind of knowledge: knowledge of God. As important as knowledge of science and the physical world is, it is not nearly as important as the knowledge of God—the nonphysical world. The knowledge of God can add even greater benefits to our lives. While knowledge of the physical world can grant greater physical health, knowledge of the nonphysical world can grant greater health to our soul—which we ought to value more highly than the body. While it is common for people to disagree that knowledge and God belong in the same sentence, that simply is not true. The same human faculties (abilities) that are at work in scientific knowledge are the very same capacities that are at work in the knowledge of God (reason being one of them mentioned above). If our abilities are reliable for knowledge of science, they are also reliable for knowledge about God as well.⁴

¹ classes.matthewjbrown.net/teaching-files/stv/feynman-valueofscience.pdf Accessed 12/12/23

² [Value of Science 105: Three Principles of the Value of Information \(rff.org\)](https://www.rff.org/value-of-science-105-three-principles-of-the-value-of-information)

³ Proverbs 3:15-18, 8:10-11

⁴ For more on this I strongly encourage people to read J.P. Moreland’s book *Scientism and Secularism*. A link for this book is available on our website under the Resources tab.

D. In Isaiah 11:2, disciples are encouraged to value knowledge: not just any knowledge, but the most important kind of knowledge. They are encouraged to respond to that knowledge in a healthy way. This is where the final two qualities of the Messiah point us.

II. The Quality of Knowledge

A. Isaiah is continuing his list of qualities that God’s special ruler will possess, embody, and rule with:

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. 11:2)

B. The fifth Holy Spirit empowered quality of God’s special ruler, the Messiah, that will enable Him to be the world’s best ruler is, “The spirit of knowledge” (v. 2). While the Spirit can produce knowledge in general by giving breath of mind, as in the case of Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:29), it is more likely that a more specific knowledge of God is in view here (v. 9). Another reason to think this is the case is due to the other quality knowledge is paired with, which is clearly connected directly to God. The relationship between the two terms may very well mean that it is the knowledge which leads to the fear.

C. Knowledge is a clear and certain mental apprehension often associated with moral dimensions.⁵ In other words, knowledge is the ability to think about things accurately, as they really are, in harmony with what is true. It also has a secondary element of having an awareness not just of what is true, but also of what is morally right. Knowledge applies to both truth and morality. Knowledge perceives moral issues as they really are, as well. While many think morality is subjective without any truth attached to it, this is not the case. Genuine knowledge is connected to right and wrong, just as it is with truth.

D. Once again, we see Isaiah connecting these qualities to later explanations of the Messiah. In this case Isaiah attaches knowledge to the most detailed description of the Messiah found in chapter 53. The Messiah, who is also the Savior, will use His knowledge to accomplish the greatest accomplishment on behalf of humanity:

¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors. (Isa. 53:11-12)

E. God’s special ruler will use His knowledge to “justify the many” and “bear their iniquities” (v. 11). The rescue of humanity from their moral corruption is accomplished by the knowledge of the Messiah! The rest of chapter 53 describes how this will occur in specific detail.

F. The Messiah will use His knowledge to make the invitation available for each person to have their moral record cleared before God, so they won’t be harmed by the judgment of God at the end of the age when everyone will be repaid for their deeds—justice being served. Through the

⁵ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Bible Word Study on Isa. 11:2 “knowledge”. As philosophers put it, knowledge is justified true belief—having accurate and informed reasons that produce a mental picture of the world as it really is.

knowledge and actions of the Messiah, forgiveness and restoration to God is possible. That which is required by God “for our well-being” (Isa. 53:5) is accomplished by God’s ruler as “He poured out Himself to death” (Isa. 53:12) and “bore the sin of many” (Isa. 53:12). It becomes obvious that this action was completed by Jesus during His execution by the Romans when the details are examined. This is the gospel—the core message of and about Jesus. It is the message of Christianity.

G. Here is how Jesus understood His own death:

²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Mk. 10:45)

H. “The Son of Man” is Jesus’ most common way of referring to Himself. He says He gives His life “a ransom for many”. A ransom is that which is given in exchange (as payment) for the release of someone held captive.⁶ To ransom is to pay for the freedom of a human life. Examples of ransoms still exist in the modern world, like a country buying its citizens back from kidnappers and people who buy others out of human trafficking. Jesus claims His death frees many people from captivity. On Jesus’ view, this captivity is a moral one (Jn. 8:33-36). Jesus’ death frees people from their own harmful desires and impulses, which is called sin. Individuals experience the freedom Jesus provides the more they stay connected to and live by the words of Jesus as they deepen their knowledge of the truth (Jn. 8:31-32).

I. Since Isaiah connected our passage with chapter 53, read through Isaiah 53 and write down every prediction about the Messiah that you can find. Then, compare this list to the life of Jesus.⁷ How many of the predictions did Jesus fulfill? Isaiah 53 contains some of the most specific and detailed predictions about the identity of the Messiah. This chapter alone can convince people that Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah is true. The New Testament authors quoted from Isaiah, including this chapter, quite often when talking about Jesus. They pointed out time after time how Isaiah spoke about Jesus and how Jesus’ life fulfilled these predictions. The book of Isaiah is referenced and connected with 412 times by New Testament writers!⁸

J. Despite Jesus performing miracles, many people did not believe in Jesus. One of the people who was closest to Jesus during His lifetime on earth, John the apostle, says this fact of the life of Jesus fulfills the first prediction in Isaiah 53:

³⁷ But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. ³⁸ *This was* to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?” (Jn. 12:37-38)

K. Many other predictions found in the rest of the chapter are also fulfilled in the life of Jesus. Be encouraged to discover which ones for yourself. This is not using the Bible to prove the Bible, which would be circular reasoning. Remember that Isaiah was its own historical document, written hundreds of years prior to each of the gospels being written. Each New Testament book

⁶ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Mark 10:45 “ransom”

⁷ *100 Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus: Messianic Prophecies Made before the Birth of Christ, Evidence that Demands a Verdict* chapter 9, and *The Prophets Still Speak: Messiah in Both Testaments* can help you do this more effectively. For those who want a deep dive, use *The Harvest Handbook of Bible Prophecy: A Comprehensive Survey from the World’s Foremost Experts*.

⁸ Logos 10 Bible Study Software New Testament Use of the Old Testament interactive tool

was independently written and transmitted from all the others. The Bible, while collected and printed as one book today, is an ancient library of 66 unique historical documents that corroborate one another. It goes against historical evidence to think and act like the Bible is only one book. Approaching the Bible this way is not circular; it is how historical studies are conducted.

- L. If you have been convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and that His claim to be God’s Ruler is true, be encouraged to commit your life to Jesus and allow Him to be the highest authority in your life as you learn what it means to live for Him—the King of your life. For those who may be ready to take this step, let Psalm 51:1-10 guide you in your prayer to God as you turn your life over to Him. Express your desire to commit your life to Him and accept all the benefits Jesus has to offer. Those who take this step are encouraged to tell someone else who is already following Jesus about what they’ve done so they can help you begin to follow Jesus.

III. The Quality of Fear

- A. The final quality mentioned by Isaiah is, “the fear of the Lord” (v. 2).⁹ In this, the Messiah will follow the positive example of David as a king (2 Sam. 23:3).¹⁰ The fear of God is a feeling and attitude of profound respect for someone—in this case, God.¹¹ The Bible frequently mentions this attitude, and it regularly appears next to knowledge—it is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7, 2:5).¹² To fear God is the other side of the coin of loving Him (Ps. 97:10, Jn. 14:15).¹³ The fear of God is to hate what is evil (Pr. 8:13), or more precisely, to love righteousness and hate wickedness (Ps. 45:7)—love what is good hate what is evil (Am. 5:15, Rm. 12:9). The Messiah “will delight in the fear of the LORD” (Isa. 11:3). He not only possesses this attitude, but will also have a particular posture toward it—He enjoys and takes pleasure in it! The opposite of a person who fears God is a person who loves evil and hates good (Mic. 3:2).
- B. Jesus’ attitude of respect for God the Father motivated Jesus to always do what is pleasing to the Father (Jn. 8:29). He intentionally did what the Father wanted and submitted His will to the Father’s will in all things (Jn. 6:38). These are the natural consequences of possessing an attitude of respect for God. The fear of God is to care about what God thinks, to have the desire to please Him, and to align our actions with what He wants. Do you notice the three C’s at work here (convictions, character, and conduct)?
- C. Jesus encouraged His disciples to develop and live with this attitude of the fear of God (Mt. 10:24-33, Lk. 12:4-9). As disciples serve Jesus by actively working to expand His kingdom on earth, they will face opposition from human opponents. Jesus tells His disciples not to fear other people who have the power and may even kill them for their faithfulness to Jesus. The far greater danger is to displease God, the One who has the power not only to kill as the human

⁹ Interestingly under the inspiration of the Spirit, Mary emphasized this very quality, at the announcement of Jesus’ birth (Lk. 1:50).

¹⁰ Which is God’s ideal type of ruler/King (2 Sam. 23:3).

¹¹ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Word Study Guide on Isaiah 11:2 “fear of the Lord”

¹² The fear of God is also regularly connected to obedience and the commandments of God. The fear of God theme is most commonly found in the wisdom literature (Eccl. 12:13,).

¹³ What about when the Bible says there is no fear in love and perfect love casts our fear (1 Jn. 4:18)? This fear is not an attitude of respect—it is a different type of fear—which is why God also continually tells His people to not fear Him. The fear being discussed here is a fear of punishment which has no place in the Christian life.

opponents do, but also to punish people in hell for their disobedience to Him. Since God has the greater power and displeasing Him has more serious consequences, disciples should fear God instead of persecution, and even martyrdom (being put to death for faithfulness to Jesus). In this, Jesus is giving His disciples a true and proper perspective. In these instructions, Jesus possesses the heart of the Father (Dt. 5:29, 10:12).

- D. An example of Jesus' attitude of respect for the Father, which also highlights some of the main elements of this attitude, is found in one of Jesus' prayers to the Father:
- ²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight." (Mt. 11:25-26)
- E. As Jesus begins this prayer, His respect for God is seen in His approach, "I praise You, Father" (v. 25). Jesus openly and verbally gives honor to God as a reflection of His heart. Jesus values God and is giving Him His proper due. Worship naturally flows from an attitude of respect for God.
- F. What is driving this approach to the Father? We find the answer in the very next words of this prayer, "Lord of heaven and earth" (v. 25). Jesus recognizes, understands, and acknowledges God's status, position, and role as the Ruler of His creation. Jesus doesn't just say God has authority over this world, but also of everything immaterial that has also been created—the heavens. Jesus knows that the Father has ultimate authority, and that is all matters. He is the One in charge.
- G. Jesus' attitude of respect is further reflected in His confession of God's work on earth and in the kingdom building efforts of Jesus' disciples: "You have hidden these things from *the wise* and intelligent and have revealed them to infants." (v. 25). God works in such a way that He reveals Himself in a way that is not dependent on human intelligence. Jesus admits that God is actively at work in the world, in people's lives in general, through Him, and in those Jesus personally trained to share His message. God the Father makes a meaningful difference in Jesus' life. Jesus recognizes God activity in His life which is connected to a respect for Him.
- H. Finally, a fear of God is seen in Jesus' statement and agreement that working in this way, "was well-pleasing in Your sight" (v. 26). Jesus wants God to be pleased and have His way. Not only that, but Jesus agrees with what the Father is doing. Jesus is glad the Father is well-pleased. Jesus is "rejoicing" in what brings the Father happiness (Lk. 10:21). Jesus is delighting in His respect for the Father.
- I. Jesus' example and emphasis of an attitude of respect for God being a central character trait of those who love God harmonizes with the longstanding message of God found in the Bible and communicated through God's spokespersons throughout history.
- J. In this, Jesus is fulfilling the law just as He said He would (Mt. 5:17). An important Scripture that summarizes and universalizes the requirement of this attitude in every person's life is:
- ¹³ The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is*: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person. (Eccl. 12:13)
- K. For our lives to please God, they need to be lived with an attitude of respect for God that influences everything we do. Does your life demonstrate and express a deep respect for God? Disciples who love God care about Him—what He thinks, what He wants, and His happiness.

These followers of Jesus live in such a way to make God happy—to please Him (2 Cor. 5:9), just as Jesus did.¹⁴ While we will certainly fail at times, our life goal is to follow Jesus’ example as best we can.

- L. The Bible says the fear of God leads to growth in holiness (2 Cor. 7:1), gives confidence (Pr. 14:26), improves the quality of our sleep (Pr. 19:23), it can bring about riches, honor, and life (Pr. 22:4), it motivates bold evangelism (2 Cor. 5:11), it helps individuals abstain from every form of evil (1 Thess. 5:22), it prevents sin (Ex. 20:20), and it changes how we treat others (Lev. 25:17, Dt. 25:18). Have you experienced these life benefits of an attitude of respect for God?

IV. Conclusion

- A. Here is Isaiah’s list of qualities that will be empowered by the Holy Spirit in the life of the Messiah: wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, and the fear of God (attitude of respect). These are the qualities that produce good leadership and the best kind of world that God will create for His people. These qualities enable God’s special ruler to bring about world peace.
- B. Throughout this series, we’ve been evaluating the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah. Jesus said the predictions made about the Christ happened to Him during His lifetime on earth, which were previously written in the Scriptures (Lk. 24:26-27). Using just one passage, Isaiah 11:1-2, we’ve seen an impressive list of predictions, some of them being very specific, that match the historical record of the life of Jesus. Is Jesus the Messiah? Jesus and His disciples thought and claimed that He is. What do you think? How will the magnitude of Jesus’ identity affect your life?

V. Questions for Further Thought

- A. In your opinion, out of all the qualities listed in Isaiah 11:1-2, which one is most obvious in the life of Jesus? Where do you see it?
- B. When you think of the “fear of God,” what comes to mind? Can you think of any Bible verses that teach about it?
- C. What do you learn about the knowledge of God in the following verses: Hos. 6:6, Pr. 2:5, Jer. 9:6, 1 Cor. 1:21, Gal. 4:8-9, Jer. 2:8?
- D. What internal indicators will demonstrate a person has a respect for God? What will their character be like?
- E. What action steps can be taken to grow in a knowledge of God?

¹⁴ The term “please” means to give pleasure and satisfaction. Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on 2 Cor. 5:9 “pleasing”