



Study #5 - Isaiah 11-12

The shoot from the stump of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1-9)

1. Who is the shoot from the stump of Jesse?
See also Isaiah 4:2-6, 6:13 & 11:10-11.
2. What is the fruit that this one will bear (11:1)? Compare this with the song of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:4, 7.
3. What do we learn in 11:2-5 about:
 - his relationship with YHWH?
 - his actions towards those over whom he will rule?
4. This "ideal" king, descended from the line of David, lives a life of obedience to YHWH and rules over God's people in a way unlike any of Israel's past kings. What do you find remarkable about what Isaiah says about him?
5. Given the context of this chapter and the verses immediately prior to it describing the decimation of the Assyrian might (10:33-34), could this king be Hezekiah? (10:28-32 describes the frightening speed with which the Assyrian menace has come upon the

city of Jerusalem; however the LORD God will bring that great army to nought 10:33-34.)

Now read Isaiah 9:6-7 in the light of 11:1-7.

6. What do they have in common? How are they different?

See also Isaiah 42:3-4, 61:1-2

These last 2 references from the latter part of the book of Isaiah refer to a figure who emerges from the shadows. He appears, seemingly from nowhere, and from then on begins to dominate the rest of the book. Called "the servant of the LORD", the portrait of this person is like a collage made up of a series of songs or poems which culminate in the well-known passage of Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Gradually a picture of what he is like and what the LORD will achieve through him comes into clearer focus.

Isaiah 11 does not explicitly indicate that the shoot from the stump of Jesse and the servant of the LORD are the same person. However the former, who may well have been known to Isaiah (Hezekiah?) may well foreshadow the latter (the servant of the LORD is portrayed by Isaiah as acting in the future well, past the time of the prophet's death).

7. What, according to 11:5-9, will result from the shoot from the stump of Jesse's reign?

What do you find remarkable here?

The root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:10-16)

8. Is the shoot from the root of Jesse and the root of Jesse the same individual? The "In that day" repeated in verses 10 & 11 would seem to indicate that it is at the same time as 11:1.

9. If that's the case Isaiah 11:10-16, seems to indicate that the LORD God will use this same individual to bring about the future restoration of God's people and their return from exile. Who exactly constitutes the people of God here? How are they described? What does their restoration look like? And how is their return described? (compare 11:15-16 with Isaiah 40:1-5)

The song that will be sung on that day (Isaiah 12)

Isaiah 12 mirrors the song of Moses of Exodus 15:1-8, where Moses leads God's people in celebrating the incredible victory that the LORD has accomplished in delivering and

saving them from Pharaoh's army. In both songs we hear the refrain,

The LORD is my strength and my song and he has become my salvation. (Exodus 15:2, Isaiah 12:2)

10. What do you think Isaiah is telling us in quoting Moses? Given the significance of the exodus for the people of Israel in Moses' day, what do we learn from Isaiah 12 about the relative importance of the moment that Isaiah is responding to?

The defeat of the Assyrian army in Isaiah's own day would seem to be the event that the prophet is responding to in the first instance by the song in Isaiah 12. However Isaiah 11 speaks of a subsequent moment of fulfilment - the return of the exiles described in 11:11-12. Similarly, in Isaiah 11:16 this moment of great victory brought about the LORD himself is likened to the exodus event.

Fulfilment in the New Testament

11. The apostle Paul in Romans 15:8-13 draws together a number of strands from the Old Testament. How does Paul see Isaiah 11-12 being fulfilled in his own day?

Prayer

Praise God together for the wonderful news of Jesus that we will be celebrating this Christmas, news that is announced beforehand through the prophet Isaiah. Thank God also for all that we've learned from our time in Isaiah 1-12.