

Isaiah – Chapter 11

Isaiah 11:1, 6, 10, 16 – Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from His roots will bear fruit. ... And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. ... Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious. ... And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant of His people who will be left, just as there was for Israel in the day that they came up out of the land of Egypt.

REVIEW

Last week we walked through Isaiah 9:8–10:34. In the middle of thick darkness, the prophet declared light in 9:1-7, then turned straight back to the north and let the refrain strike four times: “In spite of all this, His anger does not turn away and His hand is still stretched out.” We saw prideful rebuilding after every blow, refusal to return to the Lord, society devouring itself, unjust lawmakers with no escape, Assyria as the rod of God’s anger, and then the sudden word that a remnant would return and rely on the Holy One of Israel. The Assyrian army marched to Nob, shaking its fist at Zion, only to be felled like the cedars of Lebanon.

We remain inside the Book of Immanuel, Chapters 7–12. The same Holy One whose holiness demanded judgment now guarantees hope through the Child whose shoulders will carry the government. The three threads stay tight: the Messianic Hope, the Motif of the City, and the Holy One of Israel.

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

We are still in the window of 732–721 BC and its immediate aftermath. Assyria has already struck the northern tribes. Judah watches its brothers deported while Ahaz pays tribute and invites the very power that will become a heavier yoke. The prophet looks at this devastated scene and tells both kingdoms that the same God who allowed the contempt will one day reverse it. The ultimate solution applies directly to their present distress.

EXPOSITION

Verses 1–2 – The Branch and the Fullness of the Spirit

A shoot springs from the stem of Jesse and a branch from his roots bears fruit. The Hebrew *netser* (branch) pictures fresh green growth from what looks like a dead stump. Jesse was David’s father; the royal line appears cut down after generations of failed kings. Yet God causes life to spring again. This is the same Branch from Isaiah 4:2 and will see again in Jeremiah 23:5 (“a righteous Branch”), Zechariah 3:8, and Zechariah 6:12.

The Spirit of the LORD rests on Him. The verb “rest” means to settle down and remain in permanent abode. This is the Holy Spirit’s empowering presence upon the Messiah in His full humanity. Six distinct qualities/virtues follow, each showing how the Spirit equips the King. The Branch has a special relationship to the Spirit of the Lord. When Jesus Christ was

physically on earth the Holy Spirit's connection was unique and special. When Jesus returns the connection continues and will manifest in the reign of the Messiah.

- Spirit of wisdom (chakmah): the ability or skill to see the true nature of things and choose course of action. Jesus displayed this constantly in the Gospels when He answered traps with perfect insight.
- Spirit of understanding (binah): the power to discern the heart of a matter. Jesus repeatedly knew what was in men (John 2:25) and explained Scripture with clarity that astonished His hearers.
- Spirit of counsel (etsah): the skill to give right direction. In His earthly ministry Jesus counseled individuals and crowds with divine wisdom; in the coming kingdom He will guide the nations. Remember Jesus will need no counselor from anyone, why? The Holy Spirit will be his counselor, and Jesus will be the counselor for everyone on Earth.
- Spirit of strength (gebura): the power to carry out what wisdom and counsel decide. This is strength, might, or power. We see foretastes in Jesus' miracles and authoritative commands; the full display comes when He rules with a rod of iron.
- Spirit of knowledge (daath): intimate, relational knowledge of God and reality. Jesus said, "No one knows the Father except the Son" (Matthew 11:27). There can be no knowledge without God. In His humanity Jesus knows perfectly because the Spirit of the Lord communicates it to Him. In the Kingdom Jesus will have all knowledge and will bring perfect peace to the earth.
- Spirit of the fear (yirah) of the LORD: reverent awe and delighted obedience to the Father. This was the governing motive of Jesus' entire earthly life (Hebrews 5:7).

These are not interchangeable. Each has its own emphasis, yet together they show the Messiah as the perfectly Spirit-filled Man who rules exactly in the will of the Father.

Verses 3–5 – The King's Righteous Judgment

What is the basis for a perfect government? Total and consistent respect for God. The Messiah delights in the fear of the LORD. Because His deepest joy is revering God, He refuses to judge by outward appearances or popular opinion. He does not need human evidence. He judges the poor with righteousness and decides with fairness for the afflicted of the earth. With the rod of His mouth He strikes the earth; with the breath of His lips He slays the wicked. Righteousness and faithfulness are the belts around His waist.

In the first advent Jesus gave clear previews: Although He did not come to judge, His perception of the reality was perfect. He defended the weak, exposed hypocrisy without partiality, and exercised authority by His word. Yet the complete fulfillment, when every wicked force is slain and perfect justice covers the earth, awaits His return and kingdom reign.

When Jesus returns the world will be in disarray, but He will establish a perfect system for maximizing human potential. The world will be filled with extreme poverty and suffering.

- Judgments will be righteous, conforming to God’s Word.
- Judgments will be fair, in accordance with behavior.
- Judgments will be immediate (strike the earth) and punitive (rod).

The character of the Kingdom will be righteousness and faithfulness. He sets the standards and will never waiver. There will be perfect judicial relationship between the King and the Kingdom.

Verses 6–9 – The Peace of the Kingdom

Some try to spiritualize these verses, saying they picture the present church age or a merely moral change in people. That view collapses under the text itself. The grammar is straightforward future description. The animals named are literal predators and prey. A little boy leading them, a nursing child playing by a cobra’s hole, and a weaned child reaching into a viper’s den cannot be reduced to symbolic “peace in the church.” These are concrete pictures of a creation set free from the curse (Romans 8:20-21).

The Holy Spirit through Isaiah is describing the reversal of Genesis 3. When the righteous King rules, nature itself is healed. Predators and prey live together without harm. Even the most vulnerable children are perfectly safe among what were once deadly creatures. The cause is stated plainly: the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. This is not gradual moral improvement; it is the direct result of the King’s personal reign on the earth. Only a literal understanding fits the language, the context, and the contrast with the present fallen world.

Verses 10–16 – The Banner and the Regathering

In that day the nations resort to the root of Jesse, who stands as a signal for the peoples; His resting place is glorious. The Lord recovers the second time the remnant of His people who remain from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the islands of the sea. He lifts up a standard for the nations and assembles the banished of Israel and gathers the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

The Root of Jesse (the same Person as the Branch) becomes the banner to which nations stream. His resting place, the center of His kingdom, is glorious. This regathering is called the “second time,” the first being the exodus from Egypt. The geography listed covers the known world of Isaiah’s day and points beyond it.

Various views exist on this regathering. Some see it as fully fulfilled in the return from Babylon under Zerubbabel and Ezra. Others view the modern nation of Israel (1948 onward) as the laying of bricks for a future fulfillment. The text itself demands a greater fulfillment.

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The scale, the involvement of all nations, the peace described in verses 6–9, and the highway like the Exodus all point to a final, complete regathering when the King sits on David's throne. The current return of Jewish people to the land may well be preparatory, but the full prophecy still awaits the day the Root of Jesse rules.

The Lord will split the tongue of the Sea of Egypt and wave His hand over the River with a scorching wind, turning it into seven streams so men walk over dry-shod. There will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant, just as there was when Israel came up from Egypt. The same sovereign power that dried the Red Sea removes every obstacle.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Chapter 11 presents one unified vision. The righteous King from David's line is qualified by the full empowering of the Holy Spirit. Under His reign creation is healed and at peace. The nations find their center in Him, and the scattered remnant of Israel is regathered in safety and joy. Every statement flows from the character of the Branch. Because He rules in perfect righteousness, the curse is reversed, the remnant returns, and the knowledge of the LORD fills the earth.

The ultimate solution applies directly to the original hearers' circumstances of invasion, deportation, and despair. The same God who allowed the Assyrian rod will one day cut that rod down and raise up the righteous King.

TYING THE THREADS TOGETHER

Messianic Thread: This is the same Child of 9:6-7, the Immanuel of chapter 7, the Holy Seed in the stump of 6:13. The Branch springs up to rule in justice.

Motif of the City: While Assyria shakes its fist at Zion in chapter 10, chapter 11 shows God's holy mountain as the safe, glorious center of a renewed creation. The nations resort to the Root of Jesse whose resting place is glorious.

The Holy One of Israel: The same Holy One whose holiness demanded judgment now raises the King who perfectly fears the LORD and displays every divine attribute. His zeal accomplishes the kingdom just as it accomplishes the Child's eternal rule.

The hand stretched out in anger is terrifying. But that same hand raises the Branch, gathers the remnant, and brings the day when nothing hurts or destroys in all God's holy mountain. The light of 9:1-7 has the last word.

The Prophetic Mosaic: Unveiling Isaiah Chapters 1-11

The Foundation of the Mosaic

The Mosaic Approach:
Individual oracles placed non-linearly to reveal a unified theological picture.



The Covenant Lawsuit:
Heaven and earth are called as witnesses to judge Judah's rebellion and empty worship.

The Parable of the Vineyard:
God provided everything for success, yet the nation produced only "worthless grapes" of injustice.

The Revealed Tiles (Lessons 1-11)

Key "Wild Grapes" of Chapter 5



Material Greed:
The rich "add house to house" until no room remains for the poor.

Moral Inversion:
Calling "evil good and good evil," substituting darkness for light.

Corrupt Justice:
Judges who take bribes and deprive the innocent of their rights.

The Branch of Jesse:
A shoot from a dead stump, empowered by a seven-fold Spirit to rule in peace.

The Holy One of Israel:
Isaiah is cleansed by a burning coal to serve a King whose glory fills the earth.

The Sign of Immanuel:
A promise that "God is with us," identifying the Messiah as the land's true owner.



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