

## Isaiah 11:1-16

<sup>1</sup> There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. <sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. <sup>3</sup> His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; <sup>4</sup> But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. <sup>6</sup> "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. <sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. <sup>10</sup> "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." <sup>11</sup> It shall come to pass in that day *That* the LORD shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. <sup>12</sup> He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. <sup>13</sup> Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim. <sup>14</sup> But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; Together they shall plunder the people of the East; They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; And the people of Ammon shall obey them. <sup>15</sup> The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, And strike it in the seven streams, And make *men* cross over dry-shod. <sup>16</sup> There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

The first thing I said to myself when I approached this passage this morning is... oh boy. I say that because this is another passage about the end times that may have several explanations. We will try to focus on that which is clear and mention that which is not.

Now, to set the stage for what God has to say this morning, we must back up to see what God has just said through the prophet Isaiah. He was talking about how the enemies of God would be destroyed.

### **Isaiah 10:33-34**

**<sup>33</sup> Behold, the Lord, The LORD of hosts, Will lop off the bough with terror; Those of high stature *will be* hewn down, And the haughty will be humbled. <sup>34</sup> He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One.**

God is taking the best that humans can do against Him in all their pride and arrogance and self assurance and human reckoning and he swings the ax and it is leveled. That is the stage. God has torn down the tower of Babel. He has destroyed all those who thought they, by defeating God's people had defeated the God of those people. No. God silences them.

There is a comfort in this truth. While it is good for us to become indignant when our God is mocked by his creations, and while it is good for us to stand brazenly against their attacks on His character. It is also important for us to know that they have zero effect on God. All of their words are just background noise in God's plans. They are simply revealing who they are. And one day God will take His turn and reveal to them **who HE is**. There will be no grand battle. There will be no extended quests against God. There will be devastation as the wrath of God removes all His enemies.

Have you ever seen a tree fight back against an ax? Does it take its branches and swing at the one who is chopping it down. Oh branches might fall, but the tree is powerless against the ax. That is how the world is against the wrath of God. Oh some may boast and taunt and ridicule. But all of that is just a pitiful display of powerlessness when the ax begins to swing. The Bill Mahers and the Steven Hawkings will be looking for a place to hide when they encounter the reality of God. Keep that in mind when they speak. It won't go on for much longer. So God has hewn down His enemies. Then what? Out of the devastation comes a wonderful development.

**<sup>1</sup> There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.**

Isaiah paints the picture of a stump that was left after the devastation. There it sits. There is no hope for it evident. And what happens? A new branch begins to grow.

Now look at the imagery. It is talking about a royal line. But look closely. Why does it start with **Jesse** who was **never even a king**. And it appears to end in a dead stump. What we see here is futility of human potential. There is no royal kingly line with all its glory and pomp. There is no dignified progression of

righteous leadership. No, it starts with **human potential** and ends up a hewn stump sticking out of the ground. There is nothing for it to commend itself with. That is the exact situation when Christ appeared. The Jewish race had been without its own king for about 600 years. What virtues that line may have **seemed to have had** had not been visible for hundreds of years. No one should make the mistake of thinking that the beauty was in the human bloodline. That bloodline truly was a stump. Ahaz was what it had produced. But then life appeared.

Now we are going to be looking at one of those prophecies that doesn't differentiate Christ's first and second coming. It doesn't tell us when and how these things will happen. It mostly focuses on the "who" it will happen to. We are not going to concern ourselves much with how this all fits into the last days charts. But we will glean out of it lots of application and fuel for our minds and lives.

Now the Branch is clearly talking about Christ. There was no human king of David's bloodline that ever matched the description that Isaiah gives. Only Christ **ever did** and **ever will** fit this description.

And the description of a rod or branch represents a weak, small tender product. It is an unlikely origin. It is not what one would expect **great power** to come from. Again, with the birth of Christ this was all very clear to see. He was that unlikely King of Kings, born in poverty conditions with shepherds and angels being the heralds.

**<sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.**

Oh what a king.

I am in the process at work of getting a new boss. It may take a while, but that is what is going to happen. Now getting a new boss is a little scary. I don't know if he will be wise and understanding. I don't know if he will be knowledgeable. And I sure don't know if he will fear the Lord. And even if all those things are true, he or she will have limits. So I need to learn the parameters in which I would trust this person.

This was also true of all the Israelite kings up to this point. They were simply humans with human limitations.

But Jesus is a king that can be absolutely trusted and submitted to. There is never any good reason to say no to anything He tells us to do. There is no reason to not fully trust everything He tells us. He is displaying the attributes and resources of God when He speaks and acts.

So why do we do it? Why do we think we can **know what is best for ourselves** in **contrast** to what King Jesus says.

I have been learning a hard lesson. The lesson is that I cannot define my needs based on the desperation that I may feel about having something. Just because I may feel I may go insane without something, that does not mean I need it. Just because I feel I must have it does not mean I do.

Now I would have passed the test question on this. I could easily pass the theology test on this. But I would not have, and often have not passed the **life** question on this. In fact, I have often failed. While I would have said that we must trust Christ and not our seemers, when my seemer responds powerfully it is difficult to stick with my theology. I am learning experientially that I cannot tell God what I need, unless His word says that I need it. I am not the expert on me and my life. He is. And he has given me what I am calling the “opportunity of desperation” to test what I really believe.

I am in a situation where I have the golden opportunity to trust God, and God alone, to provide what I need. And if he gives it I will know I need it. If He does not, I must learn to trust that I do not need it. And I am left with no other option than to cling more dearly to Him. I would never have asked for this opportunity. But now that it is mine I hope to make the best of it.

I am sure there are some of you that know exactly the struggle I am talking about, the struggle that comes when **your life demands that you trust Christ** for that which you feel you must have. We cannot allow our seemers, our intuition, our gut feelings to tell us **what we must** or **what we should** or **what we can't do**. That privilege is reserved for the Word of God and reasoning based on the word of God.

Well our text this morning should be a real help. Look who we are called to trust. **The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.**

We are loved with all the resources of God. We are the wisest of humans to fully and quickly throw ourselves upon Him and all His wonderful virtues. We get it all right when we run to Christ and cling to Christ. We do well to tell our “seemer” shut up. You don't know what you are talking about. It is not like it seems. It is exactly as Christ says. And I will trust Christ with no exceptions and no limits. And even as it comes off of our lips we know that we will fail. But we also know that Christ will not. He is our strength. He is where our help comes from. He is the great and mighty King. And He is the only person who has ever had the proper qualifications to rule the world.

I came across an excellent quote this week. It really resonated with me.

**When we start to trust Jesus more than we trust ourselves, we're beginning to understand what it means to trust Jesus at all.**

*Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word – Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.*

If you are in the battle of trusting Jesus while being besieged by a seer that tells you that you cannot, let's trust our King Jesus together. Let's have this week be one that glorifies Him by the lives of people who put their money where their mouth is and trust Him.

I just love what the next verse says.

**<sup>3</sup> His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;**

Do you see what this is saying? King Jesus does not do that which He is telling us not to do. He does what **He tells us** to do.

Jesus displayed absolute trust in God. That is the essence, I believe, of having his delight in the fear of the Lord.

Christ's delight is in the fear of the Lord. Christ's life was to serve His Father's wishes. There was nothing more important to Him. To know God and enjoy Him fully seems to be what Christ was doing. It delighted Christ to live in a reverential awe toward His Father. He is giving us the perfect example for us to follow.

**Deuteronomy 6:5**

**<sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**

**Matthew 6:33**

**<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

Jesus told **us** to do both of these things, and here we find **Him** doing the same thing.

And what will he, in his human form, not do?

Not judge by the sight of His eyes or decide by the hearing of His ears. Christ would not allow His human senses, His human attributes, to distract Him from truth that comes from His Father.

Isn't this wonderful? We see that even Christ was tempted to do what we are so often tempted to do. He was tempted to believe His own excuses. He was tempted to trust his senses, his seer. What we can see from this is that **even Christ** could not tread through our wildernesses **in the power of his own senses.**

He needed the word of God. Carla has been emphasizing in her class on Bible Study just how true that is. We find that even Christ, when doing direct battle with Satan with all of humanity's salvation online said as much. **Matthew 4:4**

**<sup>4</sup> But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "**

The obvious point is that if Christ who was God in the flesh could not trust his own senses, what makes us think that we are wise or even allowed to do such a thing? We can't. We can't trust just what we see and hear and experience. We have got to orient our lives according to **what God says**, even when it seems like the most difficult thing in the world to do.

I was talking to a woman at work this week. She said that her husband says if he cannot see or touch something, he is not going to believe it. Isn't that interesting? Christ Himself did not go by such a rule, and He created the place. All Christ had to know was, "Did my Father say it." That was enough.

**<sup>4</sup> But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.**

In ancient times, the belt held the wardrobe together. So this is saying that righteousness and faithfulness are holding everything together. Frankly, I don't look at righteousness like I should. Righteousness is a wonderful thing, an amazing thing. But when I hear the word "righteousness" the first thing that comes to my mind is "unattainable for me." And that is true. It is the perfection of rightness. I will never achieve that. That would be like running a 3 ¾ minute mile for me. It ain't ever gonna happen. I would die trying. Do you know what I mean? Righteousness has a negative connotation in my mind.

But how do I want to be dealt with? What kind of people do I want holding authority over me? What actions would I like to see coming out of my life and your life? Righteous ones. Faithful ones. People who do the right things. Well the thing that holds Christ's garments together in this imagery is the quality of His that He always does the right thing.

Now that would ultimately be a bad thing for us in our sin. Because the right thing would be for God to destroy us in His justice. But Christ did that amazing thing we sing about. Christ died in our place. Mike emphasized this point and I still can't get over it. I hope we are all in this together. Once Christ died for our sins, his sacrifice was so perfect, so adequate, that now it would be Unjust for God to punish us for our sins. Do we get that? It would be Unjust for God to grant to us what every sin we committed deserved.

You talk about something being too good to be true. Now that, if we didn't know that it is **true**, WOULD be too good to be true.

Righteousness is the quality of God that allows us to stake our Hope in Him without fear. God cannot violate what is right. He cannot go against who HE is. So we can know that if we are in Christ, He will, without a doubt, deliver us in the end. And we know more.

We hear about militant Muslims putting Christians to death and worse. We hear about all the evil and just pure wickedness. Don't our hearts cry out for righteousness? Do we not want and need an authority that will settle these wrongs. Don't we want Dad to step in here, like when we were kids and being mistreated by siblings.

Righteousness is really wonderful. And the fact that we cannot attain it should not rob us of the appreciation of its beauty.

A wonderful day awaits every true believer. It is a day when God will execute all of His righteousness on sin. Christians will fly under the radar because of Christ's work on our behalf. We have voted **for** righteousness. We have surrendered our rebellion. We have bowed our knees willingly. We have said that we want what Christ has for us. So our ultimate destiny will be, can we believe this, righteousness. Wonder of wonders.

But everyone who has rejected Christ, everyone who has, for whatever reason rejected His glorious invitation, will be fully exposed to the wrath of God. They have not invited the ultimate transformation. They have not bought into God's program. They ultimately **do not want to be righteous** the only way God offers to **make us** righteous, so they will be destroyed **by** His righteousness.

The meek of the earth, those who are constantly and continually orienting to the voice and direction of God will be the winners in this world. And those who make them suffer for their devotion will pay dearly.

Now, what will this kingdom look like where righteousness reigns supreme? The world and the world's media would have us believe it would be awful. Think of all the restrictions on human freedom, human self expression, human degradation? Yeah, it will be awful.

<sup>6</sup> **"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.**

Look at this. The predator is laying down with its favorite prey.

I have developed a saying. This planet is not a safe place to live. We all know that it is true. Things that threaten our lives are all around us every day. Little insects like mosquitos and ticks are carriers of death. Bacteria and viruses surround us unseen. Cellular changes turn life sustaining cells into life ending cells. Wild animals threaten us. And then we have the human threat. North Korea would kill us all if that raving lunatic who rules the country had the chance.

But what about the world where righteousness reigns, where these people called Christians are finally at home with their master? Peace. Finally and completely.

All the threat is gone. There is **no reason** for suffering and there is **no suffering**. Children, the most undiscerning, are not in danger. All those animals that posed such a threat are no longer a threat. I wonder what the wasps will do? In this environment the animals still live. But they are changed. I suspect they are changed into what they were before sin existed on our planet. Are you facing a lot in your life right now? Is it hard? Do you sometimes feel like quitting, like giving up? Do you wonder if it is worth it? Wonder no more. You will look and feel like a genius if you will just hold on. Don't back down. Don't believe the father of lies. Don't give in to your temptations. Every sacrifice you make, every obedience you cling to, every resistance of evil will be worth it a million times over. This is what we get. We need this firm in our minds. When we cross the finish line, this is what we finish into. Bliss. Peace. Contentment. Health. Joy. Christ. Righteousness. Quit looking around you at what you are losing. It is all a flash in the pan. It is here today and gone tomorrow. Fix your eyes on things above.

### **Colossians 3:1-10**

**<sup>1</sup> If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. <sup>5</sup> Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, <sup>7</sup> in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. <sup>8</sup> But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,** Paul gave us some very good guidance here. Paul knew that if we didn't **think about** the reward, we would not **value** the reward.

We need to get it into our heads that the glory **God will share with us** is far better than any worldly pleasure. We need to get it into our heads that God is not asking for us to give up valuable things to get worthless things. That is what the Devil tries to sell us. That is always the deal he is trying to make. But God is asking us to give up temporary pleasures for eternally amazing experiences. Hasn't the devil already gotten enough of our compliance? Don't we have enough experience with him to know that the trinkets he sells are never worth the price? How long will we give up our joy and assurance to have the trinkets he tempts us with?

Paul tells us to live a congruent life. If we were raised with Christ, then live in that realm. Live like people who are going to live forever. Live like people who have a reward coming that cannot compare to anything this world can offer.

That is the **therefore** he gives us that enables us to view everything else as junk. Let's look a little more at the prize we are being offered.

**<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.**

They shall not hurt nor destroy. Oh isn't this what our hearts crave for? Don't we know deep in our spirits that this is what we were designed for? Every one of us has to get this. We have all experienced that the promises in this life always **over promise** and **under deliver**. There is hurt waiting everywhere. And much of it we create for ourselves because of our own sinful hearts.

But in eternity- no hurt. No destruction. Oh bring it on. Death doesn't look so bad when this is waiting on the other side.

And finally the knowledge of God will be the reigning mindset. Today there are a thousand godless philosophies. But in that day there will be one congruent understanding that runs across all borders and people. We will all be walking in the understanding that **the grace of God** has been our rescue and **the goodness of God** has allowed us this wonderful unending happiness. Everyone will finally get it. Everyone will know God.

From verse 10 to the end of the chapter we see Israel as being politically superior. All their enemies shall be crushed under the root of Jesse. And the Gentiles will seek Him. The world will be coming together under Christ. He will be drawing some from everywhere to Himself. There will be peace between all the tribes. And the enemies will be removed.

Now we see here some warfare happening, so it is difficult to know exactly **when** all of this is happening and **where** it is happening and **how** it is happening. Maybe the good stuff is happening in heaven while some bad stuff continues on earth. But we are certain about one thing. We are certain about **to whom** it is happening. Very very good things are happening to God's people and very very bad things are happening to God's enemies.

I like verse 16.

**<sup>16</sup> There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.**

God always makes a way for His people to return to Him, for them to experience His blessing. Don't our lives exhibit that same truth? Even though we have chosen paths that would lead in the wrong direction, God finds a way to bring us back to Himself. He always makes that road one we can easily travel. In fact sometimes he makes every other path so bad that we can't help but choose the right one.

Well here we have it again. From the pen of Isaiah we are drawn into the rich grace of God. We are given every reason to throw ourselves completely and quickly onto Him in obedience and worship. And we are given wonderful things to enthrall our imaginations and inspire our worship. Praise be to Jesus!