

## Jesus and His Church

Isaiah 11:1-16

I mentioned several weeks ago that I plan to study several of the highlights of Isaiah's prophecy on Sunday afternoons. We're going chapter by chapter in the Bible study on Wednesday night, and I encourage you all to come to that, but for a few more weeks we're going to focus on several of the key texts in this great book of prophecy. Isaiah 11 is one of those highlights, as it clearly portrays for us Jesus—who he is and what he came to do.

Remember just a few points of introduction, beginning with the fact that this book was written 7 to 800 years before Jesus was born. The prophet is giving the southern nation of Judah a warning, a warning that God will send them into exile if they don't turn away from their sin. Of course, they didn't, and he did. They fell to the king of Babylon in 586 BC. But even in that context of judgment, God promises that a remnant would return. And that return from exile is a picture of the greater work of God's salvation. Never is that clearer than in our text this afternoon, for this is not merely a prophecy of historical events that would take place. It is a prophecy of Jesus and his church. And right in the midst of that, it is a prophecy of glory. So the prophet looks forward, into the future, and in seeing the coming of Christ, in seeing the worldwide success of the church, he actually glimpses into heaven itself, as the end goal of all history.

So let's begin with a picture of Christ.

### I. A PROPHECY OF JESUS.

The point is very clearly made. The prophecy is a prediction about the coming of a king in the line of Jesse. Every Jewish listener of this prophecy would know exactly who is being referred to, Jesse, the father of their great king David.

v.1

So, point one, under the heading of a prophecy of Jesus. He would be,

#### A. The descendant of Jesse.

Let's get a little history.

1 Sam. 16:1 "Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." 2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." But the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' 3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

1 Sam. 16:11 "And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here." 12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah."

This lineage is made even clear in,

Mat. 1:1 "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: 2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz by

Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king.”

Jesse is mentioned again in verse 10 of our text, a root, then a banner. The theme presented is that of the gospel going to all that nations.

### **B. The Branch extending to all the nations.**

That’s what a branch does, it branches out. It reaches away from itself, encompassing everything all around it. Just imagine a tree trunk, tall and narrow. Now imagine the branches all around. That’s Jesus. That’s the gospel.

v.1

The whole point of this illustration, this prophecy, is that the gospel extends to all the nations. Look at,

v.10

The branch becomes a banner, but its the same idea. It’s a banner drawing people in, just those those poor folks who are hired to stand on the street corner waving a banner around to draw in the traffic.

And verse 10 is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 15, emphasizing as we will see in a few minutes that this gospel of Jesus goes to all the nations of the world.

Rom. 15:7 “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, 9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.” 10 And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!” 11 And again: “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you

peoples!” 12 And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.” 13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

The branch is Jesus. And he is,

### **C. The recipient of the Holy Spirit.**

v.2

We read something very similar in,

Is. 42:1 “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2 He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.”

And we see an historical fulfillment at Jesus’ baptism,

Mat. 3:16 “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

So each person of the Trinity is being presented, as distinct persons. The Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. And it is the Holy Spirit being referred to, whom we often say “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” Isaiah is prophesying all of that.

And then, there is the prophecy of,

**D. Perfect righteousness.**

And only Jesus has that.

v.3-4a

That verse gives us a glimpse all the way into the book of Revelation.

Rev. 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.”

A king, who rules with perfect righteousness. That’s Jesus. And notice just how thoroughly he rules.

v.4b-5

That’s the Christ, the Messiah. That’s Jesus. He is the rod coming forth from the stem of Jesse. He is the witness of the gospel to all the nations of the whole world. And so we see in this chapter,

**II. A PROPHECY OF THE CHURCH.**

Go back to,

v.10

As I have already emphasized,

**A. The gospel goes to all the nations of the world.**

This is a really crucial point emphasized greatly in the new testament. It’s not a side issue, but really is the main point.

Consider,

Eph. 2:11 “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

So the church is the fulfillment of God’s promise to the nations. And that is our calling as a church, to go to all the nations.

Mat. 28:18 “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Do you see how this all fits together? The prophecy of Jesus is a prophecy of Jesus' church, it is a prophecy of the proclamation of the gospel to all the nations of the world. And,

**B. The church shall be established with peace and prosperity.**

That's the meaning of,  
v.13-16

Jealousies and rivalries will be ended. Conflicts will end. Enemies will be destroyed. In the context of the people of Judah returning from the exile in Babylonia, read again,  
v.16

The reference goes back to the exodus from Egypt, on dry ground as the waters of the Red Sea were divided. The point is that God delivers his people, his true people, from every nation of the world. God saves his true people, through the power of the gospel. God redeems his people through the work of King Jesus, the branch, the banner, the rod of Jesse. And there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

So in 750 BC or so, Isaiah is prophesying that the church of Jesus Christ will be established in every nation of the world. As it is today. But you have to step back a minute and realize, that work is very much incomplete. It is very much unfinished. In fact, it might seem like we're going backwards. It might seem that the peace and prosperity of the church is declining. It might seem that the success of the gospel is in the past.

And yet in this prophecy, not only is that pessimistic perspective not found, we actually find the opposite. We see the most optimistic prophecy we could possibly have. So much so

that I believe the reference is to the age to come, not this current age. It is as if the prophet is looking forward, and like so many of the sites I saw last week in Arizona, he sees the mountain peaks, and he sees them all as one. As future. And I believe he is seeing mountain peaks that have their fulfillment not only in the church of this age, but also, in an even greater sense, in the age to come after Jesus returns a second time. It is called prophetic foreshortening.

So we see a prophecy of the church. But we also see,

**III. A PROPHECY OF GLORY.**

Look at,  
v.6-9

Now, if I could throw around some big words, if you were a postmillennialist, you would believe that this is a prophecy of this age, a golden age of gospel prosperity before Jesus comes back a second time. It would be a glorious millennium triumph of the church in which the whole world would be Christianized, summarized by that phrase at the end of,

v.9 "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea."

In other words, everywhere. That's the great optimism of postmillennialists. And in one sense, I hope they are right. I really mean that. I hope they are right. But I don't think they are, because, in my view, the great difficulty of applying verse 9 to the success of the church in this age is that verses 6 through 8 seem to describe something that could never take place in this age, namely,

**A. An end to the curse of death.**

I believe that is the meaning of verses 6-9, the end of death.

The death of death. And we know from what Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 15, that the last enemy to be destroyed is death. In other words, until Jesus comes, there will be death. Until the final resurrection, there will be death. We will remain mortal and corruptible.

1 Cor. 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. 27 For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

That is a description of future glory, the glory of the age to come. For the last enemy is not yet destroyed. We continue to live in a fallen world, where death abounds. Jesus “must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”

So verses 6-8 must refer to the glory of the age to come. And what a glory it will be. No more death! Not among men, not even among the animals.

v.6-8

All the natural predators of this age will no longer kill. And death will be no more. The fiercest of the lions will eat grass, the wolf and the lamb will live together as friends. And not even a cobra or a viper will be able to harm the most innocent of little children. There will be no more death. And that, beloved, is nothing less than the glory of heaven.

And in that day, when the wicked are fully and finally judged, there will be in the new heavens and the new earth,

### **B. An end to unbelief.**

And I do believe that is the meaning of,  
v.9

Waters cover the sea completely and entirely. And so shall it be in the new heaven and new earth.

So Isaiah has looked beyond this age in this great prophecy. He sees this age, he sees the prosperity of the church. And he sees much more. He sees heaven.

John would later see the same vision.

Rev. 21:1 “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

That passage continues with a glorious invitation, and it is an invitation I give to you this afternoon. It is the invitation of the gospel if you are not yet Christian. And if you are, it is the invitation of hope. It is an invitation to glory, a glory which we shall have, by faith in Jesus.

Rev. 21:6 “And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”

So as Isaiah himself would say in,

Is. 55:1 “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David. 4 Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people. 5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations who do not know you shall run to you, Because of the Lord your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you.” 6 Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.