

CHRIST IN ISAIAH: **THE BRANCH**

Wednesday, December 6

Reading: Isaiah 11:1-16

Isaiah 11:1 *A Shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.*

During election years the TV and newspapers turn their attention to the various candidates. Politics can be a dirty business. Each party tries to find dirt on the other and smear their name. Every aspect of their character and career is put under a microscope. All in the name of getting the best person for the job. Whether this is successful or not is another story!

While there were no elections in Isaiah's day, the principles of responsibility and leadership were still vital to the success of the nation. Centuries earlier, King David had set an example of a godly king who loved and followed the Lord with all his heart. Because of this God promised him an eternal kingdom with one of his descendants always sitting on the throne of Israel (2 Samuel 7).

In King Ahaz, Judah had a man who miserably failed at his job. While he sometimes pretended to be faithful to God, he worshipped idols and followed the despicable practices of the heathen nations around him (cf. 2 Chronicles 28:1-4). Throughout his book, Isaiah warned of God's judgment – that God would cut down the house of David because his descendants had not obeyed the Lord as David had done.

But there was also hope! Though David's family tree had been chopped down, "a shoot [would] come up from the stump of Jesse" (David's father). It was a picture that though the kingdom of David had fallen, God would keep His promise. Isaiah had already used the title "the Branch" to refer to Messiah (cf. 4:2). Now he goes into greater detail.

The Branch would be a different kind of ruler. He would rule with wisdom and righteousness empowered by the Holy Spirit (11:1-3). Unlike Ahaz, Messiah would not be swayed by people's opinions and superficial knowledge. He would judge with justice and righteousness (11:4-5). While Ahaz brought war, Messiah would bring unprecedented peace where the "earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (11:6-9). He will gather His people from the far corners of the earth and His kingdom will be "glorious" (11:10-16).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "The Spirit of the Lord Will Rest On Him." Notice the attributes of the Messiah listed in these verses: wisdom, righteousness, justice, faithfulness, the fear of the Lord. The Bible calls us to be imitators of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21). Do these virtues characterize your life? Are you following in Christ's steps? We can only do this through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us.
2. "The Root of Jesse Will Stand as a Banner." There is only one perfect Candidate - the Lord Jesus Christ. Only He can rule with perfect justice and righteousness! Only He can bring perfect peace! While believers need to be involved in the political process, we must always remember that no government or politician will solve the problems of the world. Only when hearts are turned to Christ will people be changed. When Christ returns, He "will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him, and His resting place will be glorious" (11:10).