



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvermail, Jr.  
Isaiah 11:1-2

December 25, 2011  
English Standard Version

---

## *“God’s Messiah”*

### **Isaiah 11:1-10**

*“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. <sup>2</sup> And 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 the fear of the Lord. <sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. <sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. <sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or 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> In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.”*

*Heavenly Father, thank You for making us Your people. We thank You for Your word. We thank You for its richness. We thank You for its truth. We thank You for how it points to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and we pray tonight that You would open our eyes to behold wonderful things in Your word and above all to behold the Wonderful Counselor Himself. Focus us on Your Word and on Your Son. We desperately need Him this morning. Help us to see Jesus today, in His holy and precious name, we pray, Amen.*

### **INTRODUCTION: *Beauty from Ashes***<sup>1</sup>

During World War II, Hitler's bombers rained destruction upon London from the skies. Over 15,000 people lost their lives and many parts of the city were reduced to rubble. Yet when spring came, an amazing thing happened. Beautiful wildflowers, many of them thought extinct, sprang up in the midst of the devastation. Botanists concluded that the seeds had laid dormant under buildings and other structures until the bomb blasts exposed them and gave them the opportunity to germinate.

Isaiah foresaw a day when Israel also would be devastated. The great King David's lineage would be decimated. His mighty family tree would be chopped down to a stump. Yet God would be faithful. Out of that “**stump**” would come the One who would be the Savior of the world. And so it happened. As the Apostle Paul declared, **Galatians 4:4-5**, “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,<sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*”

At a time when civilization lay devastated by the effects of sin, when the rubble of broken lives would be scattered over the countryside, a Branch from a tree long thought dead would appear with the promise of new life.

Isaiah 1-12 forms the first major division of the book. Isaiah 11-12 closes that division with a picture of the ideal king and the changes he will bring, with the Lord being praised in Zion. There is a rapid move from the **destruction** of Assyria in Isaiah 10 to the **establishment** of the kingdom of God in Isaiah 11. The two are connected theologically: it is God's initiative that affects both. In the vision by which he was called to prophetic ministry, Isaiah saw a seed springing from the stump, the remnant of Israel, **Isaiah 6:13**, “*And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump.*”

---

<sup>1</sup> **The Introduction** is adapted from the article, “*The Rod of Jesse*” in the Lessons on Living email devotional by Dr. Woodrow Kroll, Back To The Bible Ministries, 6/10/05, [www.backtothebible.org](http://www.backtothebible.org) and the devotional book The Love of God, Volume Two by Dr. D.A. Carson, May 13.

A Terebinth was a large, spreading tree which had religious connections as a place under which pagan gods were worshiped, which at times were taken up in Israel's religion, part of their common fall into idolatry. So God is basically saying that it's only good for firewood.

So now Assyria falls like a mighty forest before the ax of God, and a shoot springs from the stump of Jesse, that is, from the Davidic dynasty. Here the Branch explicitly refers to the Messiah. "Messiah" simply means "anointed one," so only the ultimate Messiah could fill the slot described here. Uniquely empowered by the Spirit of God, His rule is impeccably righteous, the antithesis of the corruption in the nation that has attracted God's judgment. So perfect and absolute will the Messiah's rule be that death and destruction will die.

So let's look closer at this, let's go back to verse 1 of Isaiah 11 and ...

#### v. 1: **THE PROMISE OF THE COMING KING**<sup>2</sup>

Of all the promises God made to the people of Israel, none was more important to them than the promise of a coming king, born of David's line, who would rule with justice and in peace.

This promise was first hinted at way back in the book of Genesis. In **Genesis 3:15**, the first glimpse of what history is moving towards is seen. God makes His first promise of a future salvation and victory over Satan by promising that an offspring of Eve will crush Satan's head. This future person is further defined with the giving of the covenant in Genesis 12 and 15, and then in a prophecy uttered by the patriarch Jacob shortly before he died, **Genesis 49:10**, "*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*" The coming king will come from the descendants of Abraham, the nation Israel, and specifically, the tribe Judah.

The promise was later confirmed by a strange character who appears in the book of Numbers, a man called Balaam, who was hired to pronounce a curse upon Israel. Instead, God's Spirit inspired Balaam to bless the people of Israel, and to offer this hauntingly beautiful prophecy, **Numbers 24:17**, "*I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise*

---

**2** The Exposition of the text has adapted material from the Book, *Preaching the Word-Isaiah: God Saves Sinners* by Dr. Ray Ortlund, Jr.; *The Communicator's Commentary, Volume 17: Isaiah 1-39*, by Dr. David McKenna, page 153ff. **And the Sermons**, "A Light for Those in Darkness," by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 12/9/07, [www.fpcjackson.org](http://www.fpcjackson.org). **And the Articles**, "The Jesse Tree," by Rev. David Bast, Words of HOPE Radio Program, 12/5/04, [www.woh.org](http://www.woh.org); "The Promise of Christmas to David" by Josh Thiessen, Emmaus Bible Church, Omaha, NE, 12/22/11, [www.cripplegate.com](http://www.cripplegate.com); "What Child Is This? Jesus the Messiah, Son of David, Son of Abraham," Interview with Dr. Dan Doriani, author of *Incarnation in the Gospels*, by Richard Doster, [www.byFaithonline.org](http://www.byFaithonline.org).

*out of Israel.”*

Then there is a quantum leap forward in our understanding of the coming Messiah in **2 Samuel**. Here God made those prophecies specific by relating them to one particular descendant of Jacob, from the tribe of Judah, namely, King David.

The context of this chapter is fascinating. In **2 Samuel 5**, David is anointed king over all of Israel. As David dwells on who God is, **2 Samuel 7** says that he is struck with a startling reality, **2 Samuel 7:2**, *“the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.”*

King David is shocked to think that God has been moving around in tent when he has such a nice house. Therefore David desires to build God a temple. But again David is wrong in what he thinks God would have him do. God never asked for a house of cedar. I’m sure He would have settled for obedience.

Then something really strange happens, the King of the universe says to this king of a small nation in the Middle East, that not only will David **not** build Him a house, but **God** will build **David** a house. This is truly astounding. The humility and grace of God is unmeasured. He took a shepherd boy and made him prince through which God will establish an eternal kingdom.

And to David God promised a never-failing line and perpetual rule, **2 Samuel 7:9, 11, 16**, *“And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ... And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ... And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”*

David’s name is to be great. Israel is to have a place to dwell in peace. And when David dies, God will raise up his offspring and build a house for his name and establish an eternal kingdom. This promise of an heir who would establish an eternal kingdom lives on through David’s descendants.

With the reign of Solomon, there is hope that **perhaps** he is this offspring, but history tells us that he was not to be. His kingdom fell, but God’s promise to David never did. But the zenith of Israel's glory under David and his son Solomon faded quickly. Within a generation their kingdom was split in two, with David's descendants inheriting Judah, the smaller, weaker part. One by one the vassal states among Israel's neighbors broke free, and the mighty empire that David had conquered and Solomon had ruled dwindled away. Bit by bit the Temple store houses that Solomon's treasure fleet had filled with gold were emptied, as one foreign power after another had to be bought off.

By the time of the prophet Isaiah, the northern kingdom of Israel had

disappeared, swallowed up by the Assyrian Empire. All that was left of Judah was the city of Jerusalem and a little bit of surrounding territory. Gone were the vast armies — it was at this time that an invading enemy general taunted King Hezekiah of Judah by offering him 2,000 horses if he could find the men to put on them — gone was the wealth, gone was the glory.

**And what of the promises of God? Were they gone too?**

No, they weren't. Just then God spoke again through His prophet Isaiah, and this is what He promised, **Isaiah 11:1**, "*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.*"

A shoot would come forth again from the stump of Jesse. **That's the promise.** It's a promise that when things looked their bleakest, the house of David (the son of Jesse), would once again be revived. God's guarantee was that a new ruler would rise who would succeed David.

Jesus is the Son of David because one day He will fulfill the hope of a king like David. He's going to rule on God's throne forever, as it states in **2 Samuel 7**. Over a thousand years pass before this promise is fulfilled.

There are moments where this promise hangs by a thread. Like the time in **2 Kings 11**, when the wicked Queen Athaliah, a Judean "**Jezebel**," wanted her son to be king, but he was killed. So in rage she **wipes out** the rest of the royal family ... but unbeknownst to her, her sister takes her grandson, the infant boy Joash, and hides him away, with his nurse, in an upstairs bedroom in her home ... **for six years** ... and then with the help of Jehoiada the priest, Joash is revealed and takes the throne at the age of seven.

And then we read, **2 Kings 11:17**, "*And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and people, **that they should be the Lord's people.***"

**God keeps the line of David alive until the proper time. And the proper time** is what we call **Christmas**. It is the time when Jesus Christ, **Son of David**, enters the world as the ultimate King over not just Israel but over all creation. This mystery of how a **descendent** of David can **establish** an eternal throne is solved in the **incarnation** of Jesus Christ. Through every generation, the line of David remained unbroken, preserved by God, and it is at this time of year that we rejoice that God is faithful and has kept His promises to Eve, to Abraham, to Judah, and to David. **Remember the faithfulness of God** to His promises.

When we think about this, it's worth remembering that real flesh-and-blood men wrote each of the Gospels — each one appointed by God, inspired by the Spirit, and each had a particular audience in mind. The four Gospels tell the same story from different angles. The writers tailor their messages because each one seeks to reach different readers. There's no question that Matthew quotes the Old

Testament more often than the other three Gospel writers. And that's why after we finish Genesis, we'll be in Matthew at this time next year. Matthew is trying to say to his Jewish readers, ***"This is the One you have hoped for. He fulfills the prophecies you have heard. The One you have longed for is here."***

So, ***"Son of David"*** appears prominently because the Israelites in general — and especially in that first century after the birth of Christ — were hoping for a deliverer, one who would liberate them from the oppression of Roman rule. Matthew is saying, ***"Jesus was the true deliverer you were looking for. No, He didn't overthrow Rome's armies; He did something far better than that, He fulfilled the hope for a righteous king."***

And He is righteous because the Spirit of the Lord rests upon Him. And so we're told about ...

#### **v. 2: THE SPIRIT OF THE COMING KING**

***"And 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 the fear of the Lord."***

The Spirit of the Lord is inseparable from the character of the Christ. Whenever God calls a person to the divine mission or a holy task, He endows His chosen with the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit. Moses was given His spirit in Numbers 11 and David in 1 Samuel 16. From this endowment come six qualities that characterize the servant of the Lord: wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, and fear of the Lord. Catholics add "delight in the fear of the Lord" to make the "seven gifts of the Holy Spirit" in their tradition.

Whether the number of gifts is six or seven, they stand as qualities that Isaiah found missing in the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem. Still fresh in their minds is the "woe" that Isaiah pronounced against them, **Isaiah 5:21**, ***"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!"*** They also remember Isaiah warning the children of Judah against consulting with mediums and wizards rather than seeking the counsel of their God, **Isaiah 8:19**, ***"And when they say to you, 'Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,' should not a people inquire of their God?"*** Christ, however, will be guilty of neither of these sins. With the Spirit of the Lord resting upon Him, He will be His own counsel.

The gifts of the Spirit that Isaiah identifies represent the endowment for leadership that Christ will bring to His Messianic role. In contrast with the leadership whom Isaiah has blasted time and time again for personal unrighteousness and social injustice, Christ will come with wisdom (seeing things rightly and fully), understanding (sensitivity to how things and people fit together

and work together), counsel (willingness to listen and advise), power (ability to influence by example), knowledge (knowing the facts), and fear of the Lord (being totally focused on carrying out the will of God).

Leadership theory has come full circle in recent days. When serious study of leadership began, effectiveness was identified with the charismatic personality of the leader. As the field developed, however, personal characteristics of leadership got lost in a maze of “situational” theories that emphasized **how** the leader functioned rather than **who** the leader was. But now, the deeper the studies go, the closer they come to the fact that **the character** of the leader makes the difference. American politics reflects that change. Watergate was a turning point. Before Watergate, the character of candidates for presidential leadership did not come into question. Today, however, character and trust are questions that take precedence over such critical issues as economics, health care, and education. Isaiah drew that same conclusion centuries ago. Leadership is not a haphazard role in any setting or situation. Special responsibility is **given to** a leader by God and special accountability is **required of** a leader to God. Without the Spirit of the Lord resting upon the person who is called to lead, there is the danger of leaders becoming “*wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight.*” Christ is the example for all to follow. He has the Spirit of the true King.

And finally, because He has the Spirit of the King, we see ...

### v. 3-10: **THE DELIGHT OF THE COMING KING**

**Isaiah 11:3-10**, “*And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den.<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or 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> In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.”*

This would be **no ordinary king**. For the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might. Unlike the

world's most powerful people — a class of individuals not particularly distinguished for either godliness or virtue — this King, this shoot from Jesse's stump, would **delight** to fear the Lord, and righteousness and faithfulness would be His garments. Unlike most politicians, who talk about helping the poor while leading millionaire lifestyles, the shoot of Jesse would bless the poor with justice. And the result would be **unimaginable** ... enemies reconciled, injuries healed, dangers removed, and the earth as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

The wonderful Hebrew word that most fully describes this promised state of peace is “*shalom*.” But where is this promised shalom? Where is the fulfillment of Isaiah's vision of God's promise? In case you haven't noticed, wolves do not yet dwell with lambs in our world; they eat them. So does that mean God's promise has failed? That His king isn't coming? No, it means we look for Him all the more. The truth is, despite all the political promises, despite all the government programs, despite all the sincere efforts of all the decent, well-intentioned people everywhere; the human race is never going to achieve peace by itself, through its own unaided efforts. It's beyond the capacity of human nature to make the world a place of universal blessing. Only **the rightful King** can establish righteousness and justice in the earth, and only when He personally returns.

But the good news is this ... **He will return!** We don't know when, but we do know who. His name is Jesus Christ. He came once to atone for sin and to reconcile people to God and to each other. He will come again to complete the salvation of the whole world. Christ's reign in the new creation will usher in the kingdom of God in all its fullness, and then shalom will come and it will fill the world.

### **CONCLUSION: *The Jesse Tree***

Perhaps some of you have visited Chartres Cathedral in France, one of the world's most beautiful buildings. It's justly celebrated for its magnificent medieval stained glass windows. One of the most striking is a window called “The Jesse Tree.” This window is set in the cathedral's western wall, and when the afternoon sun shines through it the ethereal blue of its glass dazzles the eye. But even more arresting is the story the window tells in picture form. “The Jesse Tree” is a rectangle that rises vertically. At the bottom, old Jesse lies asleep, but from his side a tree springs up, its branches seeming to push upward through each succeeding generation. The lower limbs boast of kings and conquerors, but at the top of the tree, ruling in glory, seated upon His throne, is the Lord Jesus. The Jesse Tree window tells in pictures the promises that **Isaiah 11** gives us in words, all of which will grow to fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile, we watch, and wait, and prepare for His coming, by witnessing to Him, and by working towards the ultimate shalom He will bring.

Think about Him ... because **He's the King!** And today ... He has come!

You need to pray. Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

*Oh Lord, our Lord. Thank You that You're the King. The King who comes to us today with wisdom and understanding. The King who comes to us with*

*Lord, here there is so much grace, given to us ... the undeserving. Lord thank You that no one is beyond Your grace. Thank You that we're not beyond Your grace. Thank You that the blood of Jesus covers our sins. For we pray, in the Name of Your Son, Jesus, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.*

This message has been lightly edited and formatted for the web page. No attempt has been made to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript conforming to an established style template. There may be slight differences with the audio version. Should there be any questions regarding grammar or theological content, the reader should presume any error to be with the original speaker and should contact him directly. For full copyright, reproduction and permissions information, please visit the PHPC Copyright statement at [www.PotomacHills.org](http://www.PotomacHills.org).