

The Messiah's Righteous Reign Isaiah 11:1-10

As you scroll the news in the morning, you find a number of things.

- **You find a ton of political headlines, and after sifting through those, you then find a lot of *sad* news.** Here are a few recent headlines:
- “Two teenagers killed by mother’s girlfriend (CNN, 12/5)
- “More than 140,000 people died of measles this year” (CNN, 12/5)
- “Father hanging lights, falls off roof and dies” (CNN 12/5)
- “Global Hate Fanning Local Flames” (CNN 12/14)
- “Police Officer Among Six Dead after Jersey City Stand-off” (CNN 12/11)

Or you can go over to BBC, but **you don’t find a lot of good news there either.**

After sifting through the Brexit news, we read headlines like this last week:

- “NZ Eruption Death Toll Rises” (Story of Volcano in NZ that killed at least six people with 25 in critical condition)
- A story of sexual abuse and trafficking in India.
- “Why People Are Defending Myanmar’s Divisive Leader” (a story of Genocide Accusations)

**There is a lot of darkness in our world... morally, politically, socially, relationally...
There’s disease, destruction, death, distress...**

So then what some of us do is quickly go to the **sports section...**

- It often means more bad news (Anthony Rendon signs with the Angels. No! I wish it was Fake News)

Don’t you find yourself regularly trying to find good news?

Of course, many don’t find it, and so they run to false sources of comfort and joy:

- **Drugs, sexual perversion, social media, endless Netflix viewing, or other vices to numb the pain.**
- **Others just pretend they are not in distress and gloom.**

And these false sources of comfort and joy are pursued by all types of people, including those in affluent suburbia (where many of us live).

- **If we could see inside these expensive homes and cars, we would find a lot of discontentment, darkness and disconnection; anxiety, fear, manipulation, desperation**

So what do we do? (1) Give up? (2) Become defeated pessimists? (3) Adopt the “Eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die” view of life? (4) Spend more? (5) Party more? (6) Fake happiness?

No! These are not Christian responses to the sad news that is in our world.

**The answer to the sad news in life not more pessimism, more purchasing,
more partying or more pretending;
the answer is in more promises!**

The way we deal with the darkness by immersing our hearts and mind in the good news of the gospel.

We look back in *remembrance* and we look forward in *anticipation*. This is Advent.

Isaiah 11 is about promises made, and promises kept; promises about the Messiah.

- And it's **not** a message that gets packed up in January.
- It's the hope we live on.

Isaiah 11 is about the future reign of the Messiah.

Context (9:8-11:16): God reveals his plan for Israel: He will use Assyria as an instrument of judgment on faithless Israel, but he promises to punish Assyria for their arrogance, and to give his remnant a home in the Messianic kingdom.

In the midst of their sad news headlines of Judah's day — corruption, danger, evil and ignorance — glorious news is proclaimed, which looks way out in the future.

Consider with me: (1) His [the Messiah's] ancestry, (2) his anointing, (3) his attitude, (4), his administration, and (5) his accomplishments.

- Chapter 11 is connected to Chapter 9.
- **Chapter 11 fleshes out what this kingdom is going to be like** (recall 9:7).

#1: His Ancestry (11:1, 10a)

Some of you have done "Ancestry.com" or "23 and Me" where millions of people have tried to find their backstory....

- I recently watched a few guys in this church from MS do a family tree on a white board in order to see how closely they are related (knowing that everyone from MS is surely related!)
- Sometimes you find interesting people in your family tree ... **Convicted horse thieves who escaped hanging; war heroes...** obscure humble people, famous people, etc.

Here we see something of Jesus' ancestry....

- Notice first the context of this verse:
 - Chapter 10 ends with God's judgment on human pride.... **v 33-34**
 - God is coming to chop down the forest.
 - **All that is left is bare stumps as far as the eye can see; no birds, no life...**
 - **And we read of this little twig! A twig of hope!**

A. His Unique Nature (Fully human, v. 1, and fully divine, v. 10)

Humanity: He will come from the line of Jesse: he's the shoot/branch (**v. 1**).

- A shoot or branch means you have come out of someone else.
- This king will come out of Jesse who is the father of David.
- He will be a physical descendent of David.

Divinity: He will also be the “root of Jesse” (v. 10).

- Wait, what?
- How did Jesse come from Him and he came from Jesse?
- How can you be both shoot and root?
- “I, Jesus . . . am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” Rev 22
- How can you be a **descendent** of David and the **source** of David?

God (the root of everyone) was born into the world, who came as the descendent of David.

- He’s the God-man.
- Jesus is not like some other religious teacher helping you do some self-improvement.
- At the heart of Christianity is the unique identity of Jesus Christ.
- He was a religious teacher, you can say that; but He was more than that — If verses like this are true!
- Good News of Christmas: God has come in Jesus Christ and he has come to save us from our sins.
- It’s not us trying to be good enough for long enough; but about God coming down in Christ to do for us what we could never do for ourselves!

B. His Humble Beginnings (11:1)

The imagery also shows that Jesus will have humble beginnings.

- What’s more uninviting than a stump where a great tree once flourished?
- “Hey wanna come over, have a tea, and look at the stump in my back yard?”

It’s a “stump of Jesse” – why a stump and not a tree?

- This is a statement about Judah at the time.
- The tree refers to the Messianic promise made to David (2 Sam 7:12-13).
- But because of Judah’s situation, God’s promises to David were in question.
- That tree had been cut to a stump after God’s judgment.
- Isaiah tells us the Messiah would arise when the nation looks pathetic and powerless.
 - Bumper Sticker: “This is not an abandoned car!” It looks like one.
 - God’s kingdom may have looked abandoned kingdom, but it in such condition, this promise is made.
 - Have you read through Matthew’s genealogy recently, and gotten to the names after David and said, “Who are these guys?” (eg., Ahaz)
 - They are obscure.
 - Those were “stump times,” not “tree times.”
- **But God’s promise would come to pass. This is vintage Yahweh.**
- Out of total obscurity, a “shoot” and a “branch” would come: Jesus Christ:
 - Born in a manger, to poor parents, under Roman oppression.
- **Isaiah 53:2:** “He grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground.”

C. His Fruitfulness (11:1)

- But this humble one, sent from Heaven, would be effective: “He shall bear fruit.”
- This twig will succeed.

- The rest of the passage **shows just how fruitful he would be!**
- **From this Branch will come a whole new world!**

Transition: Verses 2-5 tell us about his **adequacy**; his resume: anointing, attitude, admin.

#2: His Anointing (11:2)

How will this humble one be fruitful?

He would be anointed for the task.

- The word “Christ” (Hb “Messiah”) means “Anointed One.”

Kings would have oil poured over them as a sign of God’s selection, power, and presence (see 1 Kings 16:3).

- It was a symbol of the Spirit enabling the king for the task.
- Throughout the OT, the Spirit would come upon one for a special task (Craftsman, Israel’s judges/prophets/kings). (Example: Sampson)

Here the Branch has the Spirit resting upon him.

- Some call this the “seven-fold description of the Spirit”
- He would have it all!
 1. The Spirit of the Lord,
 2. Wisdom
 3. Understanding,
 4. Counsel
 5. Strength,
 6. Knowledge and
 7. The fear of the Lord

Read in this way, Isaiah is representing perfection (cf., Rev 1:4).

- This King lacks nothing.

Others group them in three parts:

1. Wisdom and understanding – necessary for kingly leadership (Deut 1:13; 1 Kin 3:9)

Sometimes we think of the Spirit has that which is needed for miracles or perhaps we think of great emotional experiences, but notice the emphasis on wisdom/ understanding here.

Richard Lovelace reminds us: “In our quest for the fullness of the Spirit, we have sometimes forgotten that a Spirit-filled intelligence is one of the powerful weapons for pulling down satanic strongholds.”

He uses the wisdom to wield... counsel and strength

2. Counsel and Strength – the ability to carry out these plans (Isaiah 9:6), and
3. Knowledge and Fear the Lord – holy character of the King (Prov 2:5)
 - **Detective Shows: A theme, the guy solving the crime has his own issues**
 - **Not Jesus: the problem solver is perfect.**

We read of his dramatic anointing ceremony in Matthew 3:16-17.

Isaiah refers to the Spirit enabling the Messiah for the work later, as well: **42:1; 61:1-3.**

Ortlund: “Jesus does not need our mechanisms for power. He has another way to build the world of our dreams. He has the Spirit of wisdom and understanding for leadership, the Spirit of counsel and might for war, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord for holiness. Unlike every other human leader in the sorry length of our history, Jesus is literally qualified to rule the world. We have nothing to fear from him. We are foolish to resist him. We can never be too loyal to him.”

#3: His Attitude (11:3a)

When we talk about fearing the Lord – you may hear of something that is not enjoyable, but the Messiah’s attitude is different!

His delight is in the fear of the Lord.

- This is a way of speaking of his **perfect faithfulness**.
- He “delights” in doing God’s will.
- The Hebrew here carries the idea of **smelling** something, like a **delightful fragrance**.
- A lot of early translations kept this idea.
- **I delight in the smell of my wife’s hair, for example. (I try to return the favor with my beard balm!)... smell of good pizza ... coffee... bacon (sounds like applause)**

The Messiah will enjoy his relationship with the Father...

- Here we see something of the relationship within the Trinity.
- **There is perfect delight and love within the Triune God. Isa 42:1**

Becoming a Christian is **about being swept up into that love.**

- It is when your **desirability of God changes that everything in your life changes.**
- This is the result of the regenerating work of the Spirit.
- Psalm 27: “One thing: to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord...”
- Isaiah 26:8 – “Your name and your renown are the desires of our hearts.”

Jesus delighted in the Father, in communion with the Spirit, and we are invited into this holy relationship with God as well.

And as we **desire God above all, then our duty becomes our delight too.**

Philip: How do we get these teenagers to *want* to learn French? If I could get them to *want* to learn, the *how* would be easy.

Do you see your Christian life as “do’s and don’ts” or “desires and delights”?

Pray that he will give you the enjoyment of obedience; cultivate that enjoyment through the means of grace: worship, Word, community, prayer, etc.

#4: His Administration (11:3b-5)

Now we read of the **justice** of our Messiah.

Isaiah tells us that two things will mark the Messiah's administration:

1. He will **defend the weak.**
2. He will **defeat the wicked.**

3b: His ability to do this: He does not judge based on **appearances**.

- **Most of the dumb decisions that we've made in life is traced back to this problem, isn't it? We chose to do something, or not do something because of appearances:**
 - It looked good, she looked good, he looked good; everything seemed great but you lacked the wisdom to see through it to the truth.
 - Eating plastic fruit. Looks can be deceiving.
 - Example: Food, Hiring Someone...
- **We are often deceived by appearances.**
 - One may be beautiful on the outside, but a total mess inwardly: Potiphar's Wife
- **But Jesus will not make this mistake: He knows the hearts of all. ("God looks at the heart")**
- **Isaiah 2:4 speaks of his ability to decide disputes perfectly.**

4: Defending the Weak/Defeating the Wicked

4a: The Weak

- The book of Isaiah opens up with God rebuking the people for not caring for the vulnerable (Isaiah 1:1:16-17)
- A series of "woes" in chapter 5 that also hit on these issues again (eg., 5:23)
- The ideal King was to protect the weak (Proverbs 31:8-9)
- He will protect the weak.
- He will not overlook the unimportant of the world.
- He has a heart for the weak and champions their cause.
- **"He knows our needs, to our weakness he is no stranger... behold your King"**
- We as his kingdom people are to reflect his character and love to those in need.

4b: The Wicked

- **"Christ will never be without enemies, who will endeavor to overturn his kingdom: (Calvin).**
- **But he does not dally with them; he deals with him by his mighty decree.**
- **He will kill the wicked with the "rod of his mouth" – that is, with his truth.**
- **He needs no other weapon than his word! (Rev. 1:16b, 19:15; ; 2 Thess 2:8b)**

Ralph Davis: "Only this morning I was reading in a prayer guide I use. It tells of a Pakistani Christian who was beaten to death by police four months ago after having been stripped naked and hung up until his shoulders were dislocated. He was for eighteen years a driver for a Muslim politician. His employer's wife accused him of stealing jewelry. So what do you do? Oh, you torture him and beat him to death in the police station on the 'testimony' of one witness.

Or there are two Christian girls, twenty-one and twenty, sisters. They are kidnapped by Muslims about six months or so ago, forcibly converted to Islam, and forced to marry

their kidnappers. One of them has managed to escape. But no return to family, for they themselves are under scrutiny and in danger. So lives are wrecked and ruined and futures shattered and no one is brought to justice. It happens about 700 times a year to Christian girls and women in Pakistan. Their pillows (if they have them) are drenched in tears, the earth (or the floor of police stations) is wet with their blood—how they will welcome the One who will judge the helpless with righteousness and take up for the afflicted of the earth!”

“Oh come, oh come, Immanuel...”

This is the King we are waiting for. This is the world we long for.

5: His character from which these acts flow: **righteousness and faithfulness**.

- He is not **wrapped in arrogance and ego (ch. 10)**, but **righteousness and faithfulness**.
- Paul mentions these ideas: “the belt of truth” [or faithfulness].

Practical Application on verses 2-5: There’s not only hope and promise, there is also a pattern for how we are to live as followers of the Messiah.

1. **Be a person of integrity: justice, righteousness, truth (through the power of the Spirit).**
 - **Go the extra mile. Speak up for the voiceless. Defend the weak. Keep your word.**
 - **Apologize when you don’t do this — because we will fail;**
 - **And forgive people when they ask for your forgiveness.**
 - **For there is only one who is perfect, Jesus, and we put our failures under his blood.**
2. **Don’t let appearances and opinions intimidate you, or entice you to sin.**
 - **Teenagers, don’t live for the approval of your peers; but for the glory of God.**
 - **Adults, don’t let the appearances or importance of others cause you to cave in and compromise convictions. Live for the glory of God.**
3. **Get your facts right before we make judgments about other people.**
 - **Don’t judge by appearances or first impressions or here-say.**
 - **Be careful of making judgments about a person when you haven’t talked to them or when you lack information.**
4. **Delight in God; for nothing is as lovely and beautiful than our Triune God.**
 - **Religious people find God useful; disciples find him beautiful.**

#5: His Accomplishments (11:6-10)

Read - this is a radically new world. We are not here!

What will the Messiah accomplish?

1. He will usher in **universal peace**. A kingdom of total peace.
2. All the Nations will **rally to him in global praise**.

A. Universal Peace (6-9)

No human government and society has ever experienced perfect peace.
But this one will be marked by total shalom – **peace, harmony, glory.**

11:6

⁶The 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.

It is Paradise restored.

**The wolf that once destroyed the lamb. is dwelling with it.
The leopard and goat are lying down.**

Jesus will renew this earth – he made it and he loves it, and one day, all creatures of our God and King will live in peace and harmony together. (Isaiah 65:17ff).

Look at this picture of reconciliation and harmony.

- **Predators and prey live together!**
- **We will not fear criminals, or corrupt nations any longer.**

“A little child shall lead them” -- a mere *child* is safe among these animals, and there is no abuse of animals by humans.

- **Adopting Joshua – he was scared of the lion in the zoo.**
- **But he could say, “Oh come on over...”**

11:7

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Isaiah says natures are transformed.

- **It's not simply that these creatures are united in peace; it's a statement about their nature.**
- **God will remove the carnivorous nature of the wolf, leopard, lion, and bear.**
- **The reference to *their young* shows that the transformation is a permanent.**

11:8. Then imagine this one...

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

- **This once vicious creature, a cobra is no danger to a child.**
- **It is a picture of total tranquility.**
- **“Hey where's little Johnny; Oh he went out to play with the cobras”!**
- **Jesus has crushed the head of the serpent, and he will usher in this peace.**

11:9: This is a summary and expansion of verses 6-8.

- **There will be no more fear and killing of one another (9a).**

- **All the earth gathered to the Lord's holy mountain; that is, in his presence, in a new creation.** God's holy mountain will fill the whole earth.

9b: This peace is due to the earth being full of the knowledge of the Lord...

- The redeemed are full of the knowledge of the glory of God, and are at peace.
- **The earth is no longer suppressing the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1); but has perfect knowledge and consequently there is total shalom.**

"As the waters cover the sea" – it will be universal peace and glory.

- **Our sin has its fingerprints on everything – work, relationships, decisions.**
- **But one day, sin will be dealt with, as the curse will be reversed!**
- **Our enmity with each other will be removed forever, and our enmity with the created order will be removed.**
- **In its place will be the knowledge of the Lord. It will be the glory of the Lord.**

Jesus will transform the whole world!

- **It is like the best home improvement show you've ever seen!**
- **We love seeing things made more beautiful, don't we?**
- **We are made for beauty and harmony.**
- **That's what we have to look forward to, thanks to our King!**

All made possible, through his first coming, through the sacrificial death our King (reconciled all things through the cross, Colossians 1), his resurrection, ascension, and and through his second coming, the second Advent.

In some small sense, we're already participating in this new creation, because we have been made new creations.

- **But we must wait for the fulfillment of it.**
- **But it's coming... This is good news! You may not read it on your morning news feed, but it's true.**

Waiting and watching are reoccurring themes of Advent.

- **As a general rule, Americans don't like to wait for anything.**
- **We don't have long lunches like the French; we don't have Siestas like the Spanish, we don't wait for crosswalks like the Germans; we are not fatalistic like the Ukrainians...**
- **Of course, the can-do spirit is good for certain facets of the faith (and we are not fatalistic): we plant a lot of churches, send a lot of missionaries, raise a lot of money, and work to solve global problems...**
- **Merica! We make things happen! We like to be busy getting things accomplished.**
- **Some of us have little patience for slow progress.**

- **But for the second advent we are to wait and watch.**
- **Some of us think, if God isn't going to bring the fulfillment of the kingdom, we want to help him to do it!**

- But we must wait for the calf and the lion playing tighter; the child playing over the cobra hole; we must wait for the coming of the Prince of Peace.
- The Bridegroom has delayed; and we must wait for him.

But soon, he will kill the dragon and get his bride.

- Don't let the waiting make you think it won't happen!
- For some, the second coming is as crazy as science fiction; but the first advent promises us the certainty of the second. It will happen!
- You are not a crazy fundamentalist for believing this; but a faithful Christian.
- Through waiting w/ confident expectation that we find our strength renewed. Isa 40:31

B. Global Praise (11:10)

Here we see the global reach of Christ's kingdom.

The Messiah stands "as a signal for the peoples."

- That is, a banner or flag, that draws us.
- As we read on in the Bible, we know it is the cross of Jesus that draws the nations: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32).

11-16 speak of how the King would gather the remnant from all over the earth.

We know that this this humble King, this Shoot and Root of Jesse, will be worshiped by the nations, and his resting place will be glorious.

- People from all over the earth will stream to his banner, loving and worshiping him as their King. (cf., Isaiah 2)

How will the nations be included in this glorious worship of the King?

Through our faithful proclamation of the good news.

Paul quotes Rom. 15:12 when describing his passion to preach to the unreached peoples of the earth.

- Paul sees himself (as we should see ourselves,!) as living in this time in which the Gentiles will come to believe on the Messiah.

¹² And again Isaiah says,

i"The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope." [Isa 11:10]....

²⁰ ... and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, ²¹ but as it is written,

"Those who have never been told of him will see,
and those who have never heard will understand." [Isa 52:15]

All of these OT texts shows us that this has always been God's plan: to have a people for himself from every tribe, tongue, people and language: ¹⁰ 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.

We know these things *are* happening! God's promises are coming true!

My friends, the message of Christmas is a message for us to rejoice in – but it is also a message for us to proclaim.

What is our task in this? It is simply to commend Christ to people.

Let us adore him, and we will find ourselves naturally commending him.

He's worthy of adoration – Isaiah is filled with his perfections and his promises.

God ordained that divine glory come from the stump of Jesse.

- **That the Messiah would be anointed for the most important task of all times.**
- **This Messiah delighted to do God's will.**
- **His Kingdom is advancing though many don't recognize it.**
- **And one day his glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, as the redeemed live in total shalom.**

We should not anticipate some utopian society promised by a political leader in our time; but instead look forward to the day in which Jesus makes all things new, where we live peacefully and joyfully under his righteous rule!

Jesus does not over-promise and under-deliver.

- **This glorious promise of future peace, of no more death, and of unimaginable joy will come to pass.**
- **This future glory gives us present hope.**
- **The One born at Christmas offers us real hope, real light in this dark world.**
- **He will bring his people home.**

Come, Lord Jesus.