

The Reign of a Righteous Branch

Isaiah 11:1-10

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There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

² 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.

³ 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,

⁴ 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.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

⁶ 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.

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

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

⁹ 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.

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.

Introduction

Last week, we began the advent season by looking at Isaiah 2:1-5. In that passage, we saw how Isaiah was anticipating the day when the mountain of the Lord would be lifted up above all other mountains and all of the nations would come to the mountain in order to meet the Lord. Then, we found that the Christ himself fulfilled the expectations of Isaiah 2 by supplanting the mountain and the temple of God by become the meeting place of God's people. No longer did one have to come to Mount Zion to encounter God. God was to be found, to be encountered in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the enfleshed revelation of God.

So this morning, we find Isaiah employing another image. Last week it was a mountain, this week it is a branch. Specifically, "a shoot from the stump of Jesse," most well-known as the father of King David.

According to Isaiah, an offshoot, an offspring of David will come and “bear fruit.” So let’s look at what Isaiah has in mind by turning our attention back to the passage...

Exposition

I. The Source and Spirit of the Righteous Branch (Vss. 1-5)

As Isaiah references the “stump of Jesse,” he is pointing to the lineage or the house of Jesse. If you remember, Jesse is the father of King David, the king who united the tribes of Israel under a divine monarchy. He was a “man after God’s own heart,” yet he was also a man with problems. He committed adultery, had a man murdered to cover up his adultery, acted passively regarding the violation of his own daughter, Tamar, by his son, Amnon, only to be pursued by one of his other sons, Absalom, who died trying to kill his father. David’s life is not a happy life, at least not toward the end of his life. His most famous son, Solomon, expands the kingdom, but has a love for foreign women, which resulted in false foreign gods entering into the Israelite community. Soon after Solomon dies, his son Rehoboam makes foolish and proud governing decisions, which lead to the monarchy splitting into two kingdoms, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

While Israel would pretty much be evil from this point forward and dissolve into Assyrian captivity in 722 B.C., Judah would vacillate between good and bad kings before ultimately meeting their fate in Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. The prophetic ministry of Isaiah is set in this time frame after the split of the Davidic Monarchy. He is primarily addressing the people of Judah during the reigns of the Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, all of who were descendants of Jesse.

According to Isaiah, God is going back to the “stump of Jesse,” which means he intends to start over. The king that would come would not be like the other kings who had come from the house of Jesse. God would certainly fulfill His promise to appoint a kingdom from the house of David for eternity over His people, but this king would be different, which is what we see in verses 2-5.

This King would be empowered by the “Spirit of the Lord,” who would produce the spiritual fruits of wisdom, understanding, counseling, might, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord, which refers to reverent obedience and submission to the law of God. He will delight in the glory of God and rule with justice, mercy, and righteousness.

So how would this “righteous branch’s reign be different from the previous kings from the “stump of Jesse?”

II. The Reign and Rest of the Righteous Branch (Vss. 6-10)

In verses 6-10, we find the answer. His reign will be transformative and His rest will be glorious. He will not simply enforce peace, He will transform the very nature of those under His reign. Because the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth under the reign of this king, all will be set right and back in order.

Conclusion

We live in a broken, disorder world. If you do not believe this, simply take a little time this week to watch the news. This world is not how God intended it to be. When he created the world, He declared that “it is good,” yet sin and rebellion disrupted the world. Animals that once existed at peace with one another, turned against one another. Humans that once existed in harmony and unity began to deceive and harm one another. And the world knows that it is broken.

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people living for today

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people living life in peace

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope some day you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people sharing all the world, you

In God's mercy, however, He did not leave the world in this state of brokenness to figure it all out on our own, nor was God's solution to the brokenness the dissolution of heaven, hell, countries, religions, or possessions. The remedy for the brokenness in this world is not human cooperation, but rather, divine transformation! Isaiah 11 teaches us that it is the “righteous branch of Jesse” that will bring this transformation.

Who is the righteous branch? He is none other than Jesus Christ himself!

Romans 15:12 / Acts 13:23 – The Branch of Jesse
Matthew 3:16 – The Spirit of the Lord upon Him
John 7:24 – Heart Judgment

What will His reign be like? A reign of Reconciliation, Peace, and Rest!

Already in Jesus' ministry on earth and in our own lives, we have begun to experience the power of His reign. We have been forgiven, we have been granted peace with God, and we have entered into the spiritual rest of His gospel that we may no longer toil to please God. Yet, we are also looking forward to that Day when Christ returns and completely consummated His Kingdom and reigns forever in the new heavens and the new earth.

Read from Revelation 21-22