

Advent Week 2 2018

I am Sure that by this second Sunday in Advent you've already memorized every radio station on the dial that plays nothing but Xmas music 24 / 7, 7 days a week.

- I happen to have my alarm clock set to one of those stations. SO last Thursday at 5:30 in the morning I was awakened to "*Giddy-up, Giddy-up, Giddy-up, let's go*"
- I do enjoy Christmas music but there is one song that makes me to change the station every time it's played" and that is "Happy Christmas" by John Lennon.
- I have a hard time celebrating the birth of our Savior to lyrics written by an individual who spent his career promoting hedonism and maligning God.

Nevertheless, If you Listen Carefully to the Lyrics of "Happy Xmas" you will notice in the background there is a continual refrain, sung by the Harlem Children's choir, "**War is over, War is over, War is over.**" In reality, John was making a political statement about the Vietnam War that had nothing to do with Christmas.

- While John was a very vocal advocate for peace, there is only one person who will bring an end to war at his appearing.

Famous military leader Gen. Douglass MacArthur understood this, He said:

"Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations—all, in turn, failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. Truly the only path to peace, true peace, perfect peace, is the path that takes us to Jesus Christ."

IN 2003 The New York Times ran an article in which they stated, Over the past 3,400 years, humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, or just 8 percent of recorded history. At least 108 million people were killed in wars in the twentieth century alone."

- Activists and Musicians may dream of a day when "War is finally over" BUT The Prophet Isaiah, in a vision from God saw that day when the Prince of Peace would come and war would be banished forever.

Isaiah 2:1 **The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.**

2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it,

3 and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

This morning, as we continue our Advent devotions, we return to the Book of Isaiah. In chapter 11 the prophet describes the coming King who will rule in righteousness and bring about the restoration of all things. Of course, that King is the Lord Jesus.

- In his first Advent Jesus inaugurated His Kingdom making peace with God through his blood shed on the cross.
- In his second Advent, he will consummate His Kingdom and establish perfect and lasting peace throughout all of creation.

Let's turn to the 11th chapter of Isaiah, where we will study the first 10 verses under these headings.

- The Root of the King
- The Rule of the King
- The Reign of the King

1 The Root of the King

Isaiah 11: 1 **There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.**

- Let's stop and think about Isaiah's initial statement. What is a stump? Well, a stump is all that remains after a tree has been cut down.
- I have a few stumps in my back yard. When our children were young, we purchased a Christmas tree the kind of tree that comes with the roots intact so that you can plant it in the yard. And so we did.
- The tree grew and grew and after about 20 years, reaching the height of 30 feet the tree began to lean dangerously into the yard where now, my grand-children were playing. So in an act of final judgment I brought out the chain saw and I took down that crooked tree. Now all that remains is a stump.
- In Ch.11 Isaiah sees a stump, and from that stump, a tender shoot is growing.

Background: In Chapters 6-10 the Judgment of God on the nations is described by the prophet Isaiah in the language of a Lumberjack (9:10) **"Sycamores that were cut down."** He described the judgment as, **"Lopping off the boughs"** of a tree, **"Cutting down the thicket of the forest with an axe."**

- And So, leading up to chapter 11 the results of God's judgment are viewed as a forest of stumps where there used to be trees.
- Now in Chapter 11 when the axes stop swinging and the buzz saw of God's judgment is finally over, we're left looking at a stump. Isaiah calls it **"The Stump of Jesse."**

So we have to ask, "Who is Jesse?" (*Many of you know, for the sake of those who don't know*)

In 1 Samuel 16:1 When the Lord removed the kingly anointing from Saul, He sent the Prophet Samuel to the house of Jesse, in Bethlehem to anoint a new King who would rule over the people of Israel and that King was King David.

- David served in the office of King, as a man after God's own heart for forty years. Along the way God established a covenant with David. (2 Samuel)

2 Samuel 7: 12 **When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.**

- So it is that Christ the Messiah, the true King of Israel would be a direct descendant of King David. His throne would be established forever and his kingdom would never end.

With all that in mind, it seems a bit strange that the Messiah would be spoken of as the offspring of Jesse rather than the son of David. After all, the covenant line of Kings actually ran through David.

- Perhaps the Lord wanted to separate Christ from the failed fleshly monarchy of David's descendants and show that Christ would actually be a New David a New King who would rule over a greater Kingdom, one that was not restricted to physical Israel.

Here in Isaiah Ch. 11 the prophet helps to identify the King by revealing his family roots. He is a tender shoot that would arise from the stump of Jesse.

In the New Testament, Matthew and Luke record the genealogy of Jesus Christ showing that He has every right to sit on the throne because he is a descendant of Jesse, through the kingly line of David.

- Looking forward to the coming of this Messianic King, Isaiah describes both His personal characteristics and the nature of his rule.
- HE would rule with a different spirit than that which characterized many of David's Descendants. This long awaited Messiah would be filled with the Holy Spirit. With that thought we move on to the "Rule of the King"

2. The Rule of the King

Isaiah 11: 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.**

- (Background) Reading through the O.T. we find that all the Kings of Israel were anointed by a prophet to serve God's People. Carrying out the will of God the Prophet would pour oil on the new king in a symbolic recognition of the Holy Spirit's empowerment for the office.

In every case, regarding mere men, that anointing was limited in both time and authority. In the case of Saul, God actually removed His anointing while he was still in office and placed it on David. (This caused Saul to act in great fits of Jealousy)

- As you read through the O.T. you will find a number of different anointings.

In Exodus 31, The Spirit anointed craftsmen to create artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in the cutting of stones and in the carving wood, He empowered men to work in every craft building instruments of worship for the true and living God.

In Numbers 11, the Spirit empowered the Elders of Israel and they prophesied for a brief period of time.

- But when it came to Christ, the Messiah, Isaiah declares that the Spirit of God will descend on and remain with Him.

The Apostle John tells us that God gave Jesus the Spirit without measure.

John 3:34 **For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.**

- Isaiah describes the characteristics of Christ and His rule in verses 2-5.

Isaiah 11: 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 of the fear of the LORD;**

- Evidence of the Fullness of the Spirit on Christ is described for us in three pairings of Attributes, Characteristics that reveal the intellectual and practical life of Christ as well as his unique relationship with God the Father.

Intellectually: Jesus displayed the spirit of wisdom and understanding.

- When he walked on the earth, John tells us that **Jesus knew what was in man** and he was able to act wisely in the accomplishing of God's plan of Salvation.

Practically: He walked in the spirit of counsel and might.

- This word, "**Counsel**" can speak of wise strategies and might is the power through which those strategies are accomplished. The Lord Jesus came to earth with a divine strategy to deliver men from sin and death and he displayed overwhelming power when he bore the punishment for sin on the cross at Calvary.

Jesus displayed an intimate knowledge and Fear of God throughout his life.

- He only did those things which pleased His Father and he only said those things he heard his father saying. He knew God, He loved God and always did the will of God.

In the fullness of the Spirit, Jesus displayed these divine attributes with perfection proving that HE was the shoot, which came from the stump of Jesse, the Long awaited Messiah.

- My friends THIS is a King to whom we can yield unlimited and unrestrained devotion without fear. His character is unchanging and His wisdom and power are unlimited and his rule is characterized by righteousness and justice.

Isaiah 11:3b 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.

- This shoot from the stump of Jesse is both King and Judge. Jesus said in John 5:22 The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

Christ is the judge of all men, His rulings are not limited to evidence that is merely seen or heard. He possesses a perfect and complete knowledge of all man and every circumstance, so his judgments are perfectly just and true.

Unlike sinful human judges, this King shows NO partiality. He is not influenced by the wealth and power of men; instead, He displays compassion for the lowly, the weak and the poor.

- IN this passage, we find echoes of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus declares his blessing on the lowly.
- He says that the meek will inherit the earth and kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are poor in spirit.
- It is with the doubled edged Sword of His mouth, He judges the wicked and brings redemption to those who humbly repent and believe.
- Righteousness and Faithfulness are at the very core of his being.

The Gospel writers bear witness to the Root and the Rule of this King and through the pages of their writing; they confirm that Jesus is the shoot that came from the stump of Jesse. In his first advent he came to inaugurate his kingdom.

Mark 1: 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

- You see my friends, whenever the King is present, the Kingdom is at Hand. When Jesus walked on the earth, He demonstrated his authority over the physical world, speaking to the storm, walking on the water.
- He showed his authority over infirmity by healing the sick. He proved his power over the grave by raising the dead.. And he cast out demons.

IN His First Advent Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom and in His Second Advent He will Consummate that Kingdom.

- SO my friends, at this present time we who believe, live our lives somewhere between the inauguration and the consummation of the Kingdom.

- We live in the Already / Not Yet manifestation of the Kingdom.

Right Now, **We who have heard the word of truth, and believed in him, we are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**

- In a similar way that an engagement ring is the pledge of a future union, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of the eternal inheritance that awaits Believers.
- God who chose us, also called us and He who Justified us has also promised to glorify us in His presence.

The decisive battle against sin and Satan, sickness and death has been fought and Won by the “Root of Jesse” through his death and resurrection.

And yet for us the war is not over. Sin must be fought, Satan must be resisted, even today we continue to pray for the sick and groan over the death of our loved ones.

- BUT we know there is a day coming when sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Here in Ch. 11 the Prophet Isaiah describes the consummation of the kingdom as the complete removal of the curse of sin and the glorious restoration of all things.

Isaiah 11: 6 **The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, (Dwell – show hospitality) 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.**

- With poetic beauty, Isaiah moves through this list of predators and their prey from the lesser to the greater to show the comprehensive nature of God’s peace and the complete restoration of creation to its pre-fall condition.
- The whole realm of creation is dwelling at Peace with God and with one another. Remember from last week:

Isaiah 25:8, **“HE (The Lord Jesus) will swallow up death forever.”** And the correlating verse from Revelation:

Revelation 21: 4 **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”**

- When the former things are finally passed away, the curse will be lifted, death will be destroyed and the whole of creation will be at peace.
- The images that Isaiah provides are reminiscent of the pristine conditions of the Garden, revealing the final restoration of all things in the Kingdom.

And when Isaiah says, **“a little child shall lead them”** I believe he is describing the restoration of God’s original created order where man has dominion over the fish of the

sea, the birds of the air, over the livestock and over all the earth; over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. (Genesis 1:26)

- As if that were not sufficient evidence for the removal of the curse, Isaiah seems to say that the Enmity between man and the serpent is gone!
- Not that I will ever play with a snake BUT someone will....

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.**

- Even the most vulnerable of human beings, a nursing child will be unharmed by man's deadliest enemy.
- Isaiah closes this section by showing the vast extent and the underlying reason for the peace that will literally fill the earth at the Coming of the Lord.

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.**

- God's Holy Mountain is Zion, Here in Vs. 9 Zion has filled the earth.
- What Isaiah is describing is the fulfillment of God's command to Adam from Genesis 1:28. (**fill the earth and subdue it**)
- The First Adam Failed, the Second Adam, Jesus Christ will accomplish it.
- All men, everywhere will live in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God beholding the Face of their redeemer.
- And that knowledge will bear the sweet fruit of love and joy and peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control to an extent that we have NOT YET experienced.

The writer of Hebrews says in Ch. 2, Vs. 8B **Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.**

- Predators still hunt their prey and children don't play with poisonous serpents. (At least not at My House!)
- We still experience wars and hear those rumors of wars. BUT as the writer of Hebrews goes on to say:

Hebrews 2: 9 **But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.**

- God has graciously opened our eyes, through the new birth to see the King, the shoot from the stump of Jesse, who humbled himself by putting on human flesh for the purpose of offering himself as the only effective sacrifice for sin.

Having described the root, the rule and the reign of Christ our King, Isaiah proceeds to state the result of that reign. (I suppose that is a 4th "R" rest)

Isaiah 11:10 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.

- On that final day the root of Jesse, our Lord Jesus, will plant his feet on the earth once again and like a banner under which a victorious army rallies, all of the peoples, from every nation will gather to Him.

Isa 49:22 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.

AND his resting place WILL BE GLORY! LIT: His rest, Glory!

- This MORNING THE Lord is calling:

Matthew 11: 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

- Stop running from God and fall in the arms of the Savior. Repent and Believe on Christ and He will give you rest.