

The Humble King Jesus

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[0 : 00] Let's turn now to Isaiah chapter 11. Isaiah chapter 11.

I'm going to read the first nine verses. If you remember, we're going through some of the Old Testament passages that prophesy of the coming of the Lord Jesus.

And we turn now to Isaiah chapter 11. We'll read the first nine verses. And focus particularly in verse 1 to 5. There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

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, and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what he sees for what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.

[1 : 17] He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

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.

The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

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.

May God add his blessing to that reading from his holy word. As we turn this, I say, especially to the first five verses of this great prophecy of the coming of the righteous reign of the Lord Jesus, the righteous reign of the branch, as we read there in verse one, as we particularly see the evidence of the Lord Jesus and all his humility coming from heaven to earth.

[2 : 38] The shoot from the stump of Jesse the branch, as we'll look at in more detail what this prophecy is actually saying, in prophecy of the Lord Jesus. And then as we read from verses two to five, where we see so much the emphasis on the spirit-filled, spirit-empowered Messiah, again linking what Isaiah is saying here in prophecy with the Lord Jesus Christ in his spirit-filled, spirit-directed ministry, as we consider more fully the humble King Jesus.

And it really doesn't need me to say, but I will say it. We're living in dark and dangerous times. We might see an almost perfect storm of these dark and dangerous times.

We're living, we're continuing to live through this pandemic and a lack of integrity and political leadership. A continuous secular onslaught against the church and against the Bible.

We're living in an atmosphere of cancelation in our universities. There's such a massive indifference around the, not just in our own land, but even around the world.

A massive indifference to the gospel. As we see in society in general, church is emptying. And the Lord's people even being tempted to feel that we're just on the edge, that we're marginalized, ostracized, and victimized simply because we're standing for the truth.

[4 : 13] This time of trouble, these times of crisis, in fact, not unlike the times of crisis that, well, that faced the nation of Israel some 700 years before the birth of Jesus.

Because when Isaiah is writing this prophecy, writing at a time, or really in the wake, of the mighty Assyrian Empire, the empire that had conquered Israel, the empire that had deported the inhabitants of Israel, sending these inhabitants into a pagan land.

And the Lord's people had brought upon themselves this national tragedy. They'd been disobedient to God. They'd turned away from Him in their worshiping false gods.

And they'd sought to rely on other pagan nations for their political and economic strength rather than trusting the one true God.

And God punished Israel, the northern nation of Israel. And He sent that mighty Assyrian army, and He sent the army to annihilate the kingdom and take away its people.

[5 : 23] And with Israel in exile, Israel, the northern territory, its southern neighbour, Judah, Judah was, at the same time, Judah was turning its back on the Lord.

Judah was being disobedient. Judah was being unfaithful. And Judah was in danger of being conquered and sent into exile. I mean, we're talking about two separate parts of a kingdom that was once united.

There had been a united kingdom under King David and King Solomon. After Solomon, the nation divided into Israel to the north, Judah to the south. And in that division, there's political strife, there's religious strife.

Israel is now in exile. Judah's in turmoil, and Judah's threatened with exile. It's a time of crisis. But it's not a time of hopelessness.

Because God raised up his prophet. God raised up Isaiah. And Isaiah, yes, he'd preach against Judah. He's warning Judah that it faces ruin because of its unfaithfulness to its covenant Lord.

[6 : 34] But Isaiah's also going to preach words of hope to the people of Israel in exile. He's telling them, your exile isn't permanent. God hasn't abandoned you.

There's a remnant who'll return. He'll return to Israel. So Isaiah's preaching a message of hope.

Hope for the Lord's people. Just as those who begin having the privilege of preaching God's word, preaching that word of hope for the Lord's people.

Because there is hope. True hope for all who are God's. It's that hope that Isaiah proclaimed triumphantly. And that hope that was confirmed and fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The one who was prophesied to come to save, to save his people. The one who was prophesied to reign, to reign not just in Israel, but in all, all the nations.

And so Isaiah's telling the people, don't remain in gloom. Don't remain in a permanent ejection.

Even though, yes, they've been unfaithful to God by their own disobedience, God's purposes will prevail.

[7 : 49] And in God's perfect time, Israel would be restored. And the royal king, the Messiah, will come and bring salvation and bring in his eternal peace.

And that was the hope that was promised to, well, to a dejected Israel in exile and a hope that was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. And it's that hope that we rejoice at this time of year, of course, and I pray at all times of year.

That hope as we were thinking this morning, that hope that erases the temptation to be afraid, to fear and to panic and to be tempted into a mindset of hopelessness.

Because the hope that the Lord gives to his people is a hope of new life. It's that hope of eternal life.

Because it's the hope that we find in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior.

It's our Savior who makes all things new. And that hope that we read here as we'll look at in more detail, that hope that was promised through Isaiah's prophecy, fulfilled in Jesus.

[9 : 00] And you who know that hope in Jesus, know this is the prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, as you know that, you know that by faith, then you have that confidence in Christ, that confidence in him that dispels fears, that dispels all anxieties, all anxieties, that confidence in the Lord Jesus that takes away even a temptation to feel hopeless, that confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ that enables you to rise above these troubled times, even these times that God and his providence is giving us, that confidence in Christ that enables you to find your true rest in the one who's come to give you life in all its abundance.

So, what then gives you that confidence, that confident hope? I mean, who is the saviour that Isaiah's prophesying of? Who's this promised saviour that we're permitted to see here in Isaiah's vision?

Well, let's be encouraged as we read the Lord Jesus Christ as we see, first of all, the humble royal Messiah as we read there in verse 1.

As we've been reminded so often, we'll continue to be reminded of the Lord Jesus came. He came from heaven to earth. He came in human form. He came fully divine and also fully man.

Fully man in all that man possesses in body and soul. The uncreated Son of God came in human form, came for our sakes.

[10 : 41] He came to the above man. He came to take our place. He came to pay the penalty that must be paid to appease a God of wrath against sin.

Remember, Jesus came from heaven to earth. He came willingly. He came humbly. Remember what Paul writes in Philippians 2 about Jesus? He made himself nothing. And the more that you dwell on that truth of the humble royal king, Jesus, he made himself nothing. The more that we marvel, the more that we worship the one who came in that great humility of coming from heaven to earth.

And even his coming from heaven to earth showing Jesus' great humility. Even being born in the most humble of circumstances there, born in that stable home.

The eternal Son of God leaving the glory of heaven, leaving that eternal bliss of the glory of heaven and coming to earth as our shorter catechism tells us, being found in a low condition.

[11 : 51] As the catechism tells us, born of a woman, born to be king and yet born in the most unlikely of places from where a king would be born. Born in a little obscure town in an out-of-the-way place.

And even as that young newborn child placed in an animal's feeding trough, becoming what he was not in order that you might become, that we might become children of God when he took our place in his perfect obedience to his father, even in dying for sinners such as ourselves.

And when you think of that great humble act of Jesus, even in his coming in human flesh and his incarnation, then that's what takes us to these words of Isaiah 11, there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

And you might think, wasn't that a very strange way of speaking of the Lord Jesus, the humble royal Messiah? A shoot from the stump of Jesse, a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

But this is referring to the Lord Jesus, this shoot, this branch from a tree stump called Jesse. But this is actually clear imagery.

[13 : 21] This is deliberately written down in the form it's written down because it's telling of, yes, the immediate context of the time. as we mentioned earlier, the strife, the turmoil in Israel and Judah.

Time that seemed so barren, so hopeless. Time when it seemed that the Lord's people were just in a completely desolate time when there seemed to be no sign of life at all.

Like that dead tree, like a dead tree that could bear no further fruit. fruit. But yet, Isaiah tells of life. There is a stump, a stump from what appears to be a dead tree.

And that little stump brings forth a little green shoot. And from that little green shoot a branch is formed. And from that branch fruit comes what seemed to be dead, what seemed to be lifeless, in fact, brings life.

In other words, there's hope. There is life. And there is hope. And that life's rooted in this stump, this tree called Jesse. And why is it called Jesse?

[14 : 32] Well, of course, Jesse was the father of David, King David. Where was Jesse from? Jesse was from Bethlehem. Jesse was from that town that's been described elsewhere in the Old Testament as the least of the clans, the least of the clans of Judah.

So David, the son of Jesse, David has his roots in Bethlehem. But of course, David rose from Bethlehem to become the great king, the great king of Israel.

And from that family, the family of Jesse, you can look forward to the Lord Jesus. We might say from a position of relative obscurity in Bethlehem, even from humble beginnings.

the humble royal king comes from David's line, from David's family. Another David, if you like, another king, but an eternal David, an eternal king comes.

And what Isaiah saw in vision, you know, you see in faith. That branch from the stump of Jesse is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

[15 : 44] It's none other than the son of David, the Messiah, the king. Yes, born in humble circumstances, born in that relatively obscure town of Bethlehem.

But at the same time, he's the glorious Lord, he's the glorious saviour. He is Christ the Lord. And the words that Isaiah gave at that time, it wasn't just hope for stricken Israel.

It wasn't just for words of encouragement to Judah. this is the hope of mankind for today. Because the humble King Jesus is your hope, my hope.

Because when all around seems so desolate, when everything seems so dead and trespasses and sins, there is a shoot. And from that shoot, the branch has appeared.

And that branch is the Lord Jesus Christ. He's come to bring hope of salvation. He's come to save you from your sins. So we don't need to despair. Don't need to remain in any kind of hopeless condition.

[16:53] Because the promise Christ has come. He was and is born to be king. He's born to give you a hope and a future. And that hope, of course, is realised and is coming from salvation to his own.

by his life, by his death, by his resurrection. You who know him, you who are in Christ, in Christ, in you, you have that sure hope of salvation, that sure hope of life, eternal life.

That hope that you have now, that life that you have now, that life that will be given to you in all its fullness in the glory of heaven. And you see that even in the prophecy where we read of the branch that will bear fruit.

What fruit is that? Yes, it's the fruit of righteousness, the fruit of salvation. It's the fruit of sinners saved. It's the fruit that the Lord Jesus looks upon with satisfaction, knowing that he came to bring forth that fruit, that fruit of his labour, that fruit of his work.

And he did it by his sacrifice. You are the fruit of his work. And you know, especially at this time of the year when we're looking at this prophecy of the Lord Jesus.

[18:14] And yes, our thoughts very much are on the coming of the Lord Jesus to earth. I pray that, you know, at the same time, this word will prompt you to examine your heart and ask yourself, am I being nourished in the branch?

Am I connected to that branch? Feeding in the Lord Jesus? Am I in him? Are you in that branch?

He is the vine. Are you one of the branches in that vine?

Is he your true hope, your sure hope, even in these troubled times? These are dark and troubled times. Is the Lord Jesus your hope, even in these present circumstances?

Is the Lord Jesus your confidence? Because if he's not your confidence, then you're placing your hope and confidence in something entirely different.

Just last week, a music phenomenon died, and some of you who are of a certain age and vintage will know the name John Miles. John Miles was one of the musicians who had a one-hit wonder called music, and the anthem in that song went like this, in this world of troubles, my music pulls me through.

[19:30] Don't get me wrong, I mean the right context. Music gives a soothing, a calm, a comfort at particular times. The human voice, of course, is the greatest of instruments.

I've heard that this evening. But whether it's the human voice, whether it's the human voice in song, or any other instrument, that's not the ultimate answer to these times of trouble, to this world of troubles.

Jesus is the only answer to the question that keeps being posed regarding these times of trouble. He's the only one whose most beautiful of human voices spoke words of peace, and joy, and love, that give you that sure hope of salvation.

I pray that you will see and hear Jesus speak to you of that hope and that love and that joy. Jesus, the humble servant of the Lord. Jesus, the hope of mankind.

I pray that he's your hope, as he's my hope, that he's your king, as he's my king, that he reigns in your heart, as he reigns in my heart.

[20:44] And I pray that you'll know that he is truly the king of glory, that he's the humble royal messiah. That's not all that Isaiah tells of the coming king.

It's the spirit-empowered messiah that we read of in verses 2 and 5. Because it doesn't just have royal pedigree, this king to come.

He's blessed. And he's blessed with the power of the Holy Spirit. That's what we read there of Isaiah proclaiming the royal king's going to be blessed with the power of the Spirit. And you read there of these giftings, these blessings of the Spirit.

The Spirit giving blessings of wisdom and understanding of counsel and power and knowledge and fear of the Lord and delighting in the fear of the Lord.

In other words, the Spirit has equipped the Messiah to come, the Christ to come. He's equipped him to rule, to rule well. He's going to accomplish all that his Father's given him to do.

[21 : 51] He's going to do it in a perfect reign of righteousness. He's going to have wisdom to make every decision correct. He's going to have understanding to perceive what's true.

He's going to be able to perceive and look into even the hearts of others and to know your true intentions. And Scripture, of course, tells us, God's Word tells us, tells us of these Spirit-gifted qualities when Jesus came to earth.

Even as a child, Jesus grew up in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man, as Luke tells us in chapter two. Or again, when you think of Jesus and his understanding and his knowledge of ourselves, you read in John two, John tells us he knew all people, he knew what was in a man. and that wisdom that is that wisdom that Jesus gives and shows, that is at all times correct, even governing your life in every detail, the wisdom of the Lord Jesus, that wisdom that's perfect, that wisdom that's holy, that wisdom that's God honouring.

And of course, we know from the New Testament that Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit when Jesus was about to embark in his public ministry. As we read in, for example, in Matthew 3, 16 to 17, when Jesus was baptised, we're told, he immediately went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and coming to rest in him.

[23 : 34] And behold, a voice from heaven said, this is my beloved Son, with whom I'm well pleased. Jesus, the beloved Son of God. Jesus, the humble King.

Jesus, the perfectly suited, perfectly righteous Saviour. Jesus, who delighted in his work of saving sinners. In fact, later in Isaiah's prophecy, we tell of Jesus being satisfied in the accomplishment of his work.

In fact, you can read later, even in the chapter we read of the words that tell us of the spirit empowerment of Jesus. He wouldn't judge, tells Isaiah.

He wouldn't focus on outward appearance, but he knows the heart of man. He knows the heart that's changed by the power of God. Remember what, and then also when we're taught Isaiah speaks of the poor and the meek?

Well, of course, Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, when he spoke blessed of the poor in spirit, blessed of the meek. Jesus, speaking words of absolute wisdom, because he's the one who's altogether lovely.

[24 : 49] He's the one who's altogether righteous, altogether faithful, and he'll put your trust in, and to put your confidence in, in this world of troubles.

So what are we to learn from this prophecy of Isaiah, this prophecy regarding the Lord Jesus? What is it giving to you this evening?

I pray that it gives you encouragement, and gives you that sure hope even in these days of trouble, because Isaiah prophesied here of a humble king. He prophesied of one to come whose rule would be absolutely suitable for the deepest needs of mankind.

And as your eyes of faith gaze on the Lord Jesus, even through this prophecy, gaze on him, look to him, look with eyes of faith, look and see the majesty of the Lord Jesus.

Yes, you'll see the Christ child born in Bethlehem, but remember he's the king of kings. He's brought in his kingdom of peace. So look to him and know that he's brought in his rule and reign and allow him to rule and reign in your heart.

[26 : 06] And in his rule and in his reign in your heart, you say this with reverence, you become like Christ, the humble servant. Because the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism, the same Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to his church.

Remember after Jesus ascended to heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent upon his church. And it's the same Holy Spirit who endows the Lord's people, gives you that power, power to believe, that power to serve, that power to overcome the world, that power to live in this world of troubles.

The Holy Spirit's been gifted to the Lord like Jesus to become like your king. And if you're like Jesus, you're going to have a concern for the poor and the meek.

You're going to be those who seek to have that Christ-like service, serving God in righteousness and faithfulness. You know, Christmas speaks of the king who came, who came to give his life, who came to give his life for those in whom God's favour rests, just as we were reminded this morning.

Remember he came for his own, for the sake of his own people. He came so that you might be changed, changed to be right with God, changed to follow the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, to be changed to live in a way that humbly serves your Lord and Saviour.

[27 : 39] So give praise, give thanks to the one who came as the humble king, the humble King Jesus. And I ask you for serving the Lord in humble faithfulness, rejoicing in the spirit of wisdom and understanding and counsel and might and knowledge and fear of the Lord.

And you delighting in serving the Lord in fear. These are troubled times, but remember in these troubled times, there's no safer place to be found than in the Lord Jesus Christ, in him by faith, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, serving God, God who's blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Christ. But what if you're not resting in the Lord Jesus? Well, you've got a restless heart if you're not resting in him. St. Augustine's words are absolutely true then.

Your hearts are restless until they find their rest in Christ. And your heart's going to be restless until it finds its true rest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So yes, go to Bethlehem in your heart. Go to the Christ child born there in that manger, and laid in that manger. See the one who came as king.

[29 : 07] Look to the one who came to bring in his reign of life, who came to bring peace and reconciliation between God and man. And in seeing the one who was born in Bethlehem, look beyond Bethlehem, look to the cross 33 years later, Jesus, the one born in Bethlehem, was crucified.

Leave behind your doubts, leave behind your fears and your anxious hearts, and turn to the one who even now called you to himself, because he's promised you the greatest gifts of all.

This is a time of gift giving. Well, you think of the greatest gift that Jesus gives to those who are his, the gift of salvation, the gift of fullness, the gift of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, the love of the Lord.

Greater gifts can there be at any time of the gift that the Savior promises and gives. Why don't you take that gift that's offered to you freely, offered by the humble royal Messiah, the Spirit empowered Messiah, who offers you what is truly best and truly honouring to God.

Amen. Let us pray. Our Lord, our God, our Saviour, as we call again these words of encouragement, may we truly be encouraged and be encouraged with that hope, that hope of salvation, salvation, is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[30 : 46] Forgive us, Lord, for the many times when we have simply taken for granted the blessing and privilege of salvation and taken for granted even the coming of the Lord Jesus to earth.

May we continually be those who give praise to you for your great love in sending our Saviour. your and on