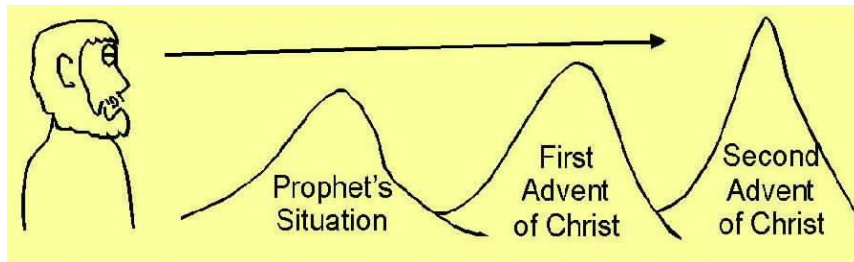


THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL EXILE and RETURN GOD THE SUSTAINER *Anticipating the Coming King*

This is our Christmas lesson but it is not the Christmas story that we normally think of at Christmas. Today, we will look beyond the first coming of our Savior to His Second Coming – the return of our long-expected Jesus as King! For many the Christmas season is often more a time of sadness than joy. Sadness at Christmas comes from a variety of reasons: worry about Christmas debt, loss of family members, unrealistic expectations, illness or other personal circumstances to name a few. When you feel sad during this time of year, remember the words of the prophet Isaiah: *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...Isaiah 9:2*

Today we return to the time before the Babylonian captivity when Judah was still its own kingdom and Isaiah was God's prophet in the land. From this man of God who lived at least 700 years before the birth of Jesus the Messiah we learn about the first and second comings of the Promised King.



Old Testament prophets saw the prophecies they were given from a distance. It helps us to understand how they visualized those prophecies, when we think of looking at a mountain range

from a distance. When we look across the horizon that group of mountains will appear as one. The closer we come to the actual mountain range, the more we are able to see the distance between peaks and valleys in that mountain range. The same is true of prophecy. Prophetic events are often seen like mountains with valleys in between. Such is the case with the prophecies concerning the First and Second Comings of the Messiah found in **Isaiah 11**.

As we view the mountain peaks of prophecy that Isaiah saw concerning the Messiah, we have a few advantages: (1) We have access to the writings of all the prophets and can compare them; (2) we have the New Testament's perspective regarding how to interpret the prophets and (3) we have 2,700 years of watching it all play out! Even though the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah would not be fulfilled in his own lifetime, it was still a message of great hope for God's people. Just as Jesus' promised return for His children is a message of hope for us today. **1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (ESV)** ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall

all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Isaiah said to anticipate an unlikely King from the line of David.



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

Jesse was the father of King David. David himself is not mentioned at this time. Why does Isaiah go back to his father, Jesse? Yes, the royal line began with David; however, his father, Jesse, was a common man who lived in a place called Bethlehem. By the time the Branch would spring forth on the stump, the line of King David would no longer be kingly – the bloodline would still be there but the descendants of the king would be common men and women. The coming Branch would not shoot from a prince raised in a palace, but from One raised in a carpenter shop. This is why Isaiah prophesies regarding the *shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit*. Isaiah saw that David's dynasty was ready to end, but out of his family the Messiah would come.

We read of David's descendent in ***Revelation 5:5 (ESV) ⁵ And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."*** Here Jesus the Messiah and Lamb of God is called the Root of David acknowledging how the descendent of David born at the first coming as a common Man will be the King of kings at His second coming.

Isaiah looked beyond his people's present and coming trials to the glorious kingdom that will be established when Messiah comes to reign on earth. Earthly kings disappoint. Anticipate a Spirit-filled King who will bring God's justice.

Read Isaiah 11:2-5 (ESV) 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.

Isaiah said of the coming Messiah: *And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him*. Isaiah prophesied a similar prophecy regarding the coming Messiah in ***Isaiah 61:1-2 (ESV) ¹ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me...*** During Jesus' earthly ministry, He read from the scroll of ***Isaiah***

61 proclaiming in **Luke 4:18-19 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.... You can read and compare those passages for yourself and see that when Jesus read the prophesy from **Isaiah 61:1-2**, He spoke only of the portion of the prophesy that referenced His first coming. Isaiah from his vantage point had visualized the first and second comings of Christ as one. It does not mean Isaiah was wrong. He just saw the events as a whole with no time in between. Our God is not a God of Time. He is the God of Eternity! **Psalm 90:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.**

Isaiah spoke of the sevenfold spirit which would rest upon the Messiah consisting of the Spirit (1) of the Lord; (2) of wisdom; (3) of understanding; (4) of counsel; (5) of might; (6) of knowledge; and (7) of the fear of the Lord. Isaiah focuses on the Messiah’s *fear of the LORD*. He goes so far as to say the Messiah’s *delight shall be in the fear of the LORD*. Through His fear of the LORD, Jesus gained other aspects of the Spirit as mentioned in **Proverbs 9:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.* If Jesus was to grow in wisdom and knowledge, He had to fear the LORD. We are not talking about momentary outbursts of fear like we experience. Jesus’ fear of the LORD sustained His life and caused Him not to sin. His godly fear caused Him to submit to the will of God. Recall His words in **Luke 22:42 (ESV)** ⁴² ... *“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”*

If we are to fear the LORD like Jesus did, it will be our joy to stand in awe of God! It was Jesus’ joy to tremble at the terrible prospect of displeasing His Father,



His fear makes Jesus utterly reliable in His judgments of men. Why is justice blindfolded?? Possibly it comes from this text. His judgments are not based on appearance or the opinions of others. He is impartial. He doesn’t need your smile in the courtroom. He looks to God. He judges with perfect justice. Paul saw a fulfillment of verse 4 at the **second coming** when he wrote in **2 Thessalonians 2:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.* Jesus saw the fulfillment of verses 1-5 at the **first coming**. Reminding us of the two mountain peaks of prophecy foreseen by Isaiah.

Anticipate the King who will bring redemption and establish a people.

Read Isaiah 11:6-10 (ESV) 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.

Ironside comments that there are “those who attempt to spiritualize all these expressions making the beasts to represent violent and savage men whose hearts will be changed by regeneration. But the prophet gives no hint of such an application of his words. He very definitely speaks of that which God will do for the animal kingdom in the day when the curse will be lifted.”

I took a few notes from a sermon by John Piper on this passage. He said in part, “This is radically new. The kingdom is global – it is an earthly kingdom (children and animals). We don’t know how it works but we see the outcome. The knowledge of God is suppressed today even by the animals. There are more things beyond us than we can count.”

This period of time when the animal kingdom and the kingdom of man is at peace under the rule of King Jesus is known as the Millennium. Concerning the millennium there are many differences of opinion because one again we are looking across those mountain tops of Isaiah’s prophecy. I personally believe in a literal, future reign of Christ on earth, during which Satan is bound a 1000 years and the saints reign with Christ. After that time period, Satan will be loosed for a season. I know for sure what happens to him eventually. **Revelation 20:10 (ESV)**¹⁰ *and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* I know that at some point in all of this a new heaven and new earth will be created. **Isaiah 65:17 (ESV)**¹⁷ *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.*

I don’t claim to understand it all. Maybe Christians in the 21st century standing looking back to the birth of the Messiah, the cross and the resurrection of Jesus understand a few details more clearly than Isaiah who was looking forward to the Messiah from his time 2700 years ago. But let’s never forget what Isaiah said when he had a personal look into the throne room of heaven. **Isaiah 6:5 (ESV)**⁵ *And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”*

I fail to comprehend it all somehow but I agree with Isaiah who had seen the King, the LORD of hosts: *his resting place shall be glorious.* No matter what happens on December 25 or January 1, I know I am trusting in Jesus – He has given me the Gift Above Every Gift – my faith has found a resting place and that place will be in and with Jesus for all eternity and it will be glorious! Hallelujah for Christ – God’s perfect Christmas gift to the world. Accept the Gift – live forever!