

The Birth of Jesus, the Root of Jesse – *Isaiah 11:1-10*

Introduction – The miracle of the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on earth in time and space, comes in judgments and blessings upon people and nations. Those judgments and blessings occurred in part during His life on earth, they continue through God's providence throughout this age of the Gospel, and they will find their full consummation at the Final Day (1 Cor 15:51ff). Old Testament prophecies often telescope these comings and the manifestations of the judgments and blessings. Wrongly interpreting the prophecies can cause one to think that "the prophet was wrong" for it did not occur as described, or "the prophecy is only about heaven or after the resurrection" because it has not occurred here in the fullness described. But Jesus declared Himself to have "*all authority in heaven and on earth*" two millennia ago after "finishing" His work on the cross. We are to take these prophecies to have been fulfilled in principle which is not to say we are to simply pretend they are true. Hearing this by faith means Christmas is never over and there are more presents to open.

Context and Overview – Isaiah 6-12 is the context for this passage, and chapters 7 and 11 are direct contrasts. In Chapter 7, King Ahaz, facing the crisis of fresh invasions from the north, refused the prophet's call to trust in Yahweh. Ahaz was a wicked king (2 Chron 28), a traitor to Israel and Yahweh Himself, and Isaiah prophesies his downfall (Is 7:17). All that will be left of the Davidic dynasty will be a cut down stump (Is 6:13). There are more judgments declared, but we move on to Chapter 11.

A New Shoot; A New King – Throughout the scriptures, God promised a King who would sit on the throne of David and rule forever, and this chapter tells us about His incredible coming forth and rule. He is not just a coming King, but a coming David, for he is from the stem of Jesse (v1). This is Jesus, born in obscurity in the little town of Bethlehem, the city of David (Luke 2:4). A sevenfold Spirit will rest upon Him, the fullness of the majesty of the anointed King (Rev 1:4); while one king after another in David's line failed, this King would rule in perfect fullness. He shall rule impartially over all, delighting in the fear of the LORD and judging with righteousness and equity (vv3-4). Belts gird up one's clothes for action, and this King's preparation is righteousness (whatever the LORD thinks is right) and faithfulness (an unshakeable commitment to what the LORD directs) (v5).

A New Creation – The rule of this King produces a dramatic new order. In this Edenic vision, there is reconciliation and peace between what had previously been considered irreconcilable enemies; even a child could lead them (v6). This child also pictures the return to man's rightful dominion over the earth. Old hostilities and fears are forgotten as predators and prey share a meal and rest together (v7). The serpent shall no longer be a sign of conflict, for the conflict will have been defeated (v8). How will this New Order come about? Through a deep, transforming, intimate and covenantal knowledge of the LORD that will cover the earth (v9); the rule of this King will transform everything because everyone will know Him.

A Glorious Resting Place (v10) – In order for God to be this King, He had to come in the flesh to be of the line of David. But this God is also and always has been the God of all the nations, and so this King drew the Gentiles to Himself from the very beginning (Matt 2:1-2). But this was only the beginning, and so Paul would quote from these verses to define his ministry to the Gentiles (Rom 15:12). But just as we see and celebrate Immanuel in the manger, so we should hear this verse. "*His resting place shall be glorious*" (v10). Where is this resting place? As priest, we understand this to be at the right hand of God where He sat down after He offered the complete and perfect sacrifice (Heb 10:12). As King, He sits and rules, yes, but we also understand that He rests with and among His people (Psalm 132:13-18). We are that dwelling place and we are a banner to the world by which He draws all men to Himself (John 12:32).

Christmas to the World – What this means is that, having celebrated the Incarnation and remembering that God is with us, dwelling with us, we now are Christmas to the world the rest of the year. But what are we proclaiming? What are we believing? Isaiah 11 is not manifest in time and space before us yet – although much has. Verses 11-16 describe how this banner goes forth to all the nations (v12) and how a greater Exodus to the world is provided (v15). This is who we are and what we are doing as the church to the world (2 Cor 5:16-21).

The Twelve Days of Christmas – were celebrated in times past, where each day there was a new gift, *another* gift. This pictures the continual gifting of the Christmas event, the birth of Christ. His coming to this earth brings forth new gifts each day. The prophecy has been fulfilled in principle, but you are the manifestation of that prophecy if you are in Christ today, and will be used by Christ to bring forth His rule and reign over all of your life and all of the earth. We do not need to fear regarding the future of this world. At the end, His love and mercy will have been extended and brought forth in fullness and a final consummation will reveal all that was done in and through Christ ministering through His church. There will be dark days where we may wonder if this is true – and we are called upon to remember Bethlehem, and Calvary, and the resurrection, and our last Christmas celebration – and then by faith, open up another gift from God.