

The Coming Messiah and His Kingdom on Earth

Isaiah 11

Isaiah 11 – *“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots. ² 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. ³ His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears. ⁴ But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.”*

Background Notes

In Isaiah 9-10 we learned about the predicted fall of two kingdoms. Isaiah’s prophecy about the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel at the hands of the Assyrians was described in the second half of chapter 9. Isaiah 10 contained the prophecy of the end of the pagan Assyrian Empire, after God allowed the Assyrians to be His “axe, saw, club and rod” of judgment or discipline for His own people, Israel.

In chapter 11, in contrast to the godless Assyrian Empire and in contrast to the rebellious northern kingdom of Israel, another future kingdom was prophesied. This kingdom is the future kingdom of the Messiah here on this earth. It will be a peaceful kingdom, where idolatry and immortality will not exist, and where the One True God will be acknowledged and worshipped. It will be a kingdom where the Messiah will reign supreme, and where God’s people will dwell in safety and security!

In the first five verses of chapter 11, before the description of the Messiah’s wonderful earthly kingdom, there is a description of the Messiah Himself. This is not a description of good King Hezekiah or Josiah. It is a description of the coming Messiah.

Verse 1 predicted that the Messiah would be in the line of David, the son of Jesse. Isaiah 6:13 predicted that, even though the Babylonian Empire would conquer the kingdom of Judah and terminate the reign of Davidic line of kings, the “*stump of Judah*” would remain throughout the Babylonian captivity. A remnant of Israel would return to the land, and out of that chopped-off stump would come a shoot in the line of David – the Messiah!

The Messiah would be anointed and filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit: *“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" (v2). In His kingdom, judicial decisions would not be based on hearsay, or on partial evidence, as in the courts today, because the Messiah will know everything! Not only that, He will have the power to put down the wicked, and to exalt the poor and the oppressed. His kingdom will be a kingdom of righteousness (v3-5).

Doctrinal Points

1. In that day, the wolf will dwell with the lamb.

Isaiah 11:6-9 - *"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.*

⁹ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

After reading a passage like this, the first logical questions about this kingdom of righteousness and peace, where the wolf will dwell with the lamb, are – "Where and when will this kingdom be?"

Is this a description of Heaven in the eternal future? No, I don't think so, because there will be no "poor and oppressed" people in Heaven (v4). And I don't believe there will be snakes in Heaven – not even non-poisonous snakes (v8)! So I don't think this is a description of Heaven. This kingdom of righteousness and peace is definitely an earthly kingdom, as verses 4 and 9 make clear.

Is this earthly kingdom of righteousness and peace in existence at the present time? Is the Church this kingdom (as is sometimes taught)? If it is, then everything in these verses can't be literal, so it must be "spiritualized" - such as "wolf-type people" getting along with "lamb-type people" in the Church. Believe it or not, a number of evangelical Christians accept this view of Isaiah 11. Essentially, this is the way Reformed Theology interprets this passage. They have to take this view because they do not believe there will be a millennial kingdom of Christ on earth in the future. They are *amillennial* in their eschatology – in other words, there is no future millennial Kingdom. Therefore they must spiritualize or allegorize Isaiah 11.

We believe that spiritualizing or allegorizing this passage to the present day Church is not the proper way to interpret Isaiah 11. We believe the prophecies of this passage should be taken literally. They should not be considered as an allegory, nor should they be "spiritualized." These prophecies will be fulfilled literally on the earth in the future, when the Lord literally returns to this earth after the Tribulation period. He will set up His literal kingdom that will exist for a millennium – a thousand years.

In this earthly millennial kingdom, the wolf will literally lie down with the lamb. Lions will not be carnivorous. Children will not have to fear poisonous snakes. Righteousness will reign on earth, and it will be a wonderful time of peace!

Romans 8 looks forward to this great time of peace and harmony on this earth that will eventually merge with eternity. Romans 8:18-21: *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”*

In that day, the wolf will dwell with the lamb.

2. In that day, the remnant will return to the land.

Isaiah 11:10-16 - *“And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.”* ¹¹ *It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea.* ¹² *He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.* ¹³ *Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim.* ¹⁴ *But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they shall plunder the people of the East. They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab, and the people of Ammon shall obey them.* ¹⁵ *The Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dry-shod.* ¹⁶ *There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.”*

Generally speaking when the prophets, especially Isaiah, used the phrase “*in that day*,” they were looking forward well beyond their own day, to the End Times. We believe that in the case here in Isaiah 11.

Romans 11 says that there will be a spiritual awakening of the Jewish people in the future, and many will turn to the Lord Jesus as their Messiah before He returns to this earth. There are glimpses of this spiritual awakening even now, in Israel and among Jews around the world.

Isaiah 11 predicted that a remnant of godly Jews will return to the **Lord**, and they will return to the **Land** of Israel as well. There are two points in verses 11-12 that indicate that this predicted return to the land was **not** fulfilled when the Jews’ returned from the Babylonian captivity (as is sometimes taught), but that the Isaiah 11 return is still in the future. In fact, this predicted return is already going on before our very eyes. What are these two points?

a. The phrase “a second time” is used (v11). The “*first* time” the Lord brought His people back was when the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity.

b. In the past, the Jews have never returned to the Land from the places mentioned in these verses (11-12).

Never before have the Jewish people returned to the Land from “the islands of the sea” and from “the four corners of the earth.” But at the present time, Jews are returning to Israel from all over the world. This return is only the beginning of what will come in the future when Israel returns to the Lord.

In that day, there will be one united kingdom of Israel. No longer will there be two kingdoms, with Ephraim in the north and Judah in the south (v13). And *in that day*, Israel will defeat all her surrounding enemies (v14). *In that day* the Lord will prepare the way for His people to return to the land (v15-16).

In that day, the remnant will return to the land.

Practical Application

Get ready to re-map the Middle East!

Prophetic Scriptures tell us that when the Lord returns to earth and sets up His kingdom, the present maps of the Middle East will have to be scrapped. As Israel becomes a blessing to the surrounding nations, Israel’s land area will be enlarged, and their boundaries will be re-drawn. National boundaries will change.

Physical geography will change as well. There will be topographical and geologic disruptions. Zechariah 14 says that the Mount of Olives will be divided, with a very large valley created between the two halves of the mountain. Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 47 predict that water will flow out of the Temple area in Jerusalem and will make its way down to the Dead Sea. As a result, the water of the Dead Sea will become fresh, and it will contain many fish!

Isaiah 11 says that “the tongue of the Sea of Egypt” (either the Gulf of Suez or the Gulf of Aqaba) will be destroyed or dried up, perhaps by an earthquake. In addition, the Euphrates River will be diverted into seven streams so as to make it easier for the Jews to return to the land from both northern and southern areas.

If we are consistent in our hermeneutics (principles of interpretation), these changes will **literally** take place. So - get ready to re-map the Middle East!