

# Jesus, the Root and Rod of Jesse

## Isaiah 11

### Introduction:

- In our study of Isaiah thus far, we have seen that Jesus is called the Branch of the LORD (**Isaiah 4:2**); Immanuel (“God with us”), who would be born of a virgin (**Isaiah 7:14**); the “Rock of offence” (**Isaiah 8:14-15**); the “Great Light” (**Isaiah 9:2**); “Wonderful”; “Counsellor”; “The mighty God”; “The Everlasting Father”; and “The Prince of Peace” (**Isaiah 9:6**). In this lesson, we will learn about two more names for Jesus: “The Rod of Jesse” and “The Root of Jesse.”
- It is important to remember that throughout the book of Isaiah, the prophetic picture often switches back and forth from Jesus’ first Coming to earth to His Second Coming, and then back to Old Testament times (particularly, to events that would unfold in the 700 years between Isaiah and Christ). So it is in **Isaiah 9-11**. In **Isaiah 9:6-7**, which we studied in the last lesson, we were given a description of Jesus’ reign over the whole earth during the future Kingdom age. But then, the prophetic “clock” moves backward, and then forward again.
  - A. In **Isaiah 9:8-10:4**, we are given a description of the moral state of Israel in Isaiah’s own day, and of the judgments that God would send upon Israel in the near future, at the hand of their enemy, Syria.
  - B. In **Isaiah 10:5-19**, Isaiah prophecies of the judgment that God would bring upon Syria in the near future, at the hand of the Assyrian Empire.
  - C. In **Isaiah 10:20-34**, the LORD gave the Isaiah a vision of the future Tribulation period. We are told that the LORD will preserve the remnant of Israel during that time (**vv. 20-27**), and will destroy the Gentile armies of the Antichrist in the Battle of Armageddon (**vv. 28-34**).
- But then, in **Isaiah 11**, there is a sudden transition from the bleak days of the Tribulation to the glorious days of the 1,000-year Kingdom, which will follow immediately after the Tribulation. (This switch from the Tribulation / Battle of Armageddon in **Isaiah 10** to the Kingdom in **Isaiah 11** is very similar to the transition from **Revelation 20** to **21**.) Throughout this chapter, we are given a description of the Messiah Himself, and of the way in which He will rule all the nations of the earth.

### Isaiah 11:1-16

#### I. Jesus’ identity: He is the Rod and the Root of Jesse (11:1, 10)

A. Jesus’ human nature: He is the *Rod* of Jesse (**verse 1**).

- **Isaiah 11** begins with a striking prophecy of Jesus Christ. Isaiah prophecies that a “rod” (literally, a twig, or sapling tree) would spring up out of the “stem” of Jesse.

“Out of the stem of Jesse” is just another way of saying “from the family of King David,” since Jesse was the father of King David.

### **Ruth 4:17-22**

- The Hebrew word behind "**stem**" (*geza*) refers to the stump of a tree that has been cut down. Thus, Isaiah is giving us a picture of a stump of a fallen tree, with a brand-new sapling tree taking root right in the middle of the rotting stump. The Messiah is that brand new sapling tree.
- If the Messiah be a young, sapling tree, then what was the “tree” that was cut down? The “tree” that had fallen was the great, royal line of David--the monarchy that had thrived from about 1050 B.C. to 597 B.C. In the year 597 B.C., the last legitimate king in the line of David, Jehoiachin (also called Jechoniah), was removed from the throne of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. This was when the royal line of David was officially “cut down” like a tree.

### **2 Kings 24:6-16**

- The *royal monarchy* of David was “cut down” in 597 B.C.; but God promised to raise up the Messiah from the family of David in His own good time. Jesus is like a “sapling tree” springing up anew from the rotting stump of what once was the great royal line of David.

#### **B. Jesus’ Divine nature: He is the *Root* of Jesse (**verse 10**).**

- In **verse 1**, Jesus was called “the *rod* (sapling tree, or branch) of Jesse.” Obviously, this means that the Messiah would be a descendant, or offspring, of Jesse. Jesse is like a “root” of a tree, and Jesus is like a brand new tree springing up from one of Jesse’s “seeds” (descendants). The name “Rod of Jesse” reveals that Jesus would receive His human life through Jesse. Jesse was Jesus’ human ancestor.
- Yet, in this verse, we see just the opposite truth. Instead of Jesse being the root, and Jesus being the tree springing up from him, the idea is now reversed. Jesus is the Root, and Jesse is the “tree” springing up from *Him!*
- The meaning of this is clear: Jesus, as a Man, is the *descendant* of Jesse; but as God, He is the Creator of Jesse! This truth is pointed out in the New Testament.

### **Revelation 22:16**

- In the above verse, Jesus Himself uses the “root” and “rod” terminology from **Isaiah 11** to describe Himself. The only difference is that He calls Himself the “root and offspring of David” instead of “the root and offspring of Jesse.” Of course, this conveys the exact same idea. Jesus is the “Root” of both Jesse *and* David, since He, as God, gave them life. Yet, as a Man, Jesus is the “offspring,” or descendant, of both Jesse and David.

Jesus Himself emphasised this truth that He is both David's Creator, and David's descendant.

**Matthew 22:41-44** (In this passage, Jesus is quoting from **Psalm 110:1**.)

- Jesus showed the Pharisees what they had never seen, even though they had read **Psalm 110:1** all their lives. In this verse, David (the author of **Psalm 110**) calls the coming Messiah "my Lord" (in other words, his God); and yet, the Old Testament Scriptures also prophesied that the Messiah would be the "Son," or descendant, of David. Jesus is human....yet divine.

## II. Jesus' power: He is full of the Spirit (11:2)

- In **verse 2**, we are told that the "spirit of the LORD" would rest upon the Messiah. The Spirit of the LORD, of course, visibly descended upon Jesus at His baptism in order to show the people that He was, indeed, the Messiah.

**John 1:32-34**

- It is important to realise that the Holy Spirit was not "upon" Jesus in the same sense that He was "upon" the prophets of the Old Testament (such as David, in **1 Samuel 16:13**). John the Baptist made it clear that God "*giveth not the Spirit by measure*" unto Jesus (**John 3:34**). In other words, the Spirit didn't give Jesus only some of God's power, as He did to the prophets; rather, Jesus possesses *all* the divine power and qualities of the Holy Spirit, all the time. This is so because Jesus is God. Jesus is equal to the Holy Spirit in essence, power, being, and authority.
- Please notice that there are *seven* "spirits" mentioned in **verse 2**. These are not literally seven different "spirits," but rather seven qualities that characterise the Holy Spirit. They are:
  1. The spirit of the LORD
  2. The Spirit of wisdom
  3. The Spirit of understanding
  4. The Spirit of counsel
  5. The Spirit of might
  6. The Spirit of knowledge
  7. The Spirit of the fear of the LORD
- This mention of the *seven* divine qualities of the Holy Spirit reminds us of the Menorah (the seven-branched lamp stand that stood in the Temple), since the Menorah is a picture of the Holy Spirit.

**Revelation 1:4**

**Revelation 4:5**

- Every one of these divine essences or qualities of the Holy Spirit are all possessed by Jesus “without measure” (without limit), because Jesus is God Almighty.
- These things can be said of no one other than Jesus Christ. None of us will ever possess Christ's full wisdom, understanding, etc., because we are not God: nor will we ever become "gods." As Isaiah said, "there is no searching of his understanding" (**Isaiah 40:28**). However, we who know Christ have been made "partakers of the divine nature." This means that we can be like Him in holiness; but it also means that we can have godly wisdom, as He has.

### **2 Peter 1:4**

### **Hebrews 12:10**

- Because Christ lives inside Christians, He can impart to them the measure of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, etc. that they need in order to serve Him effectively.

## **III. Jesus’ kingly conduct: He will rule with complete justice (11:3-5)**

### **A. What Jesus will not do (v. 3)**

- In **verse 3**, we are told that the Messiah will not judge mankind according to “the sight of his eyes,” nor according to the “hearing of his ears.” In other words, He will not judge by outward appearances and sensory perception, as man does. As God, Jesus has complete understanding of men’s hearts, and will be able to render absolute, perfect justice during His 1,000-year Kingdom on earth.

### **1 Samuel 16:6-7**

### **Jeremiah 17:10**

**John 7:21-24** (Notice that Jesus expects His followers to imitate His divine quality of judging not by outward appearances, but according to righteousness. Of course, we cannot possibly know all things, as He does; but through His Word, we *can* have a godly discernment that enables us to see through deceptive outward appearances, and to make godly decisions accordingly.)

### **B. What Jesus will do (vv. 4-5)**

- In **verses 4 and 5**, we are told that the Messiah’s conduct *will* be like:
  1. He will judge the poor with “righteousness.”
    - Protection of the poor and needy from injustice and oppression is very dear to God’s heart. Throughout Scripture, God condemns rich and powerful men

for oppressing the poor, and warns them of coming judgment. (For example, **Ezekiel 18:4-13; Ezekiel 22:6- 7, 12-16; and Matthew 23:14, 27, 33.**)

- Christ’s rule will be characterised by complete justice and protection of the poor and needy. (Note that even during the 1,000-year Kingdom, there *will* still be a measure of poverty. As long as sin still exists, our world will not be absolutely perfect. **John 12:8**)
2. He will carry out instant execution upon rebels, and upon those who would even attempt to oppress the poor and innocent. He will slay the offenders simply by speaking the word (**verse 4**). (The phrase “rod of his mouth” is a reference to **Psalm 2:9**.)
  3. His personal “armour” will consist of a “belt” of righteousness, and a “girdle” (sash around the waist) of “faithfulness” (**verse 5**). This reminds us of one of Jesus’ many names: He is called “Faithful and True.”

#### **Revelation 19:11**

### **IV. Jesus’ kingdom: He will rule all the earth (11:6-16)**

A. Nature will be restored to Paradise-like conditions during the Kingdom.

- As **verses 6-8** clearly state, the Lord will remove the violence within the animal kingdom during the Millennium. Animals will not attack or eat each other, nor man. This truth is emphasised at the end of Isaiah, as well.

#### **Isaiah 65:25**

- Contrary to evolutionary thinking, which assumes that violence, bloodshed, and meat-eating have always been part of nature (“the survival of the fittest”), the Bible teaches that there was a time when all animals and man ate plants and fruits. It was only after Adam’s sin in the garden the death entered into world (including in the animal kingdom). It wasn’t until after the Flood that God gave man permission to eat animals, because of the radical change in the environment of the post-Flood world. It is reasonable to assume that violence entered the animal kingdom at that point, as well, since God promised man that He would now cause animals to fear man—something that they did not do before the Flood.

#### **Genesis 1:26-30**

#### **Genesis 3:17-21**

#### **Genesis 9:1-5**

- Though the Millennial Kingdom will not be absolutely perfect on account of the continued presence of sin ( in the mortal survivors of the Tribulation, and in their

children), it will be far more ideal than our present world. Compared to the present age, the Millennium will truly be like Paradise.

**B. Christ's kingdom will be global in its extent (vv. 9-16)**

1. The global worship of the Messiah (v. 10)

- In **verse 10**, Isaiah says that in that day (“the day of the LORD”—**Zechariah 14**), the Messiah will stand like an “ensign” of the people. This word “ensign” refers to some kind of banner, or flag, which is lifted up in a prominent, visible place. According to this verse, the Messiah Himself will be like a “banner” to which all the people of earth will rally, like soldiers rallying around their country’s flag.

**Isaiah 5:26**

- Paul quoted **Isaiah 11:10** in the New Testament in order to show God’s ancient intention to save the Gentiles, and to include them in His plan.

**Romans 15:12**

- This verse has *application* in this present church age, as Gentiles are being saved; but it will come to complete fulfilment during the Millennial Kingdom, when all Gentile nations will go to Jerusalem to worship Jesus Christ.

2. The global return of the scattered Jewish believers to their land (v. 11).

- The ancient lands mentions in **verse 11** (Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, and Hamath) comprise the modern nations of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The first “re-gathering” of Jews from these nations began in 535 B.C., when King Cyrus of Persia decreed that the Jewish captives were free return to their land (**Ezra 1:1-11**). The “second” re-gathering began, in part, in the early 1900’s A.D., when Jews began to travel back to Israel; and it continues to this present hour, as Jewish people continue to come back to Israel from every nation on earth. The Lord prophesied that in the last days the Jews would return to the land, even through they would still be in a state of unbelief and spiritual deadness (without the “breath” of the Spirit of God in them) (**Ezekiel 37:1-14**).
- However, the second return of the Jews to the land will not truly be fulfilled until the time of Christ’s Second Coming to earth. When Christ descends to earth, He will send out His angels to gather the Jewish believers from all over the world to Jerusalem. This re-gathering will be swift, supernatural, and absolute. *Not one Jew* will be left in other parts of the world. (Even unbelieving Jews will be gathered for judgement.)

**Matthew 24:27-31 / 25:31-32**

## C. The condition of the land of Israel during the Kingdom

### 1. The social condition: unity (v. 13)

- In 931 B.C., Israel split into two nations:
  - a. Israel, or Samaria (the ten tribes of the north)
  - b. Judah (the tribes of Benjamin and Judah in the south).

This split of the nation was ordained of God, as a punishment upon King Solomon for allowing idol worship in the land. The split was actually carried out shortly after Solomon's son, Rehoboam, came to the throne.

**1 Kings 11:9-13, 29-36**

**1 Kings 12:1, 12-19**

- However, this split did not happen overnight. Hundreds of years before Solomon, the tribe of Ephraim, in the north, desired to have the position of prominence in Israel (for example, in **Judges 8 and 12**); and after David became King, Ephraim began to turn its jealousy against the tribe of Judah, since David was from that tribe. It was a very ancient jealousy, which lasted for as long as Israel and Judah were still nations.
- Isaiah prophesies, however, that when Christ sets up His Kingdom, the old animosity between "Ephraim" (northern Israel) and Judah will no longer exist. (This is seen in **verse 13**: "*The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.*") Israel will be a united nation.

### 2. The political condition: greatly expanded borders (v. 14)

- The ancient strip of land in which Israel's enemies, the Philistines, lived, is the modern-day Gaza strip, along the Mediterranean Sea; and it is occupied today by a group of displaced Jordanians who call themselves "the Palestinians," and who claim to have the right to the land of Israel. "Palestine" is simply the Latinized form of "Philistine"—the very name that Isaiah calls them by in **verse 14**! Amazingly, after 2,700 years, the name for the people living in that strip of land along the Mediterranean is still the same, even though the modern-day "Palestinians" are ethnically a totally different people from the ancient Philistines!
- At this present hour, the Palestinians are demanding that they be given statehood; and the whole world is pressuring Israel to give it to them. It appears as though the Antichrist, whoever he is, will probably broker a peace treaty in which statehood will be granted to the "Palestinians", in exchange for Israel's right to rebuild the Temple.

### **Daniel 9:27**

### **Matthew 24:15**

### **2 Thessalonians 2:1-4**

- **Verse 14** states that after the Messiah establishes His Kingdom, Israel will swoop down on the land of the Philistines (modern Gaza), and claim it. God promised this land to Israel in ancient times; but they never did manage to take it from the Philistines.

### **Joshua 15:1, 12**

- According to **verse 12**, God intended for the children of Judah to have *all* the land in the southern part of Canaan, all the way to the “great sea” (the Mediterranean Sea, on the west coast of Israel). This is exactly where the land of the Philistines was—in the area that is today called the “Gaza Strip.” This strip of land where the Philistines lived took up about 40% of the land that *should have* belonged to the tribe of Judah. The children of Israel *never* took the land of the Philistines, as God had intended for them to do. They never were able to take it because they failed the test that God gave them. As a nation, they never *wholly* followed the Lord: therefore, God did not allow them to take all the land.

### **Judges 3:1-4**

- After Christ returns, Israel’s heart will finally be turned to the Lord *completely*. The land of the ancient Philistines will finally be in their possession, as God promised in ancient times! However, their expanded borders will also comprise Edom, Moab, and Ammon. These ancient nations would correspond to the modern nations of Egypt (in the Sinai peninsula, particularly); Jordan; and southwestern Syria (in the modern Golan Heights area). Again, this will be the fulfilment of God’s ancient promise that Israel would one day possess all the land to the Euphrates River.

### **Deuteronomy 1:7 / 11:24**

#### 3. The geographical condition: great changes!

- Scripture mentions a number of tremendous geographical and topographical changes that will take place during the 1,000-year Kingdom. **Verses 15 and 16** mention two of them:
  - c. The “tongue of the Egyptian sea” (the part of the Red Sea where Israel crossed on dry land) will be “destroyed.” (This portion of the Red Sea is called the Gulf of Aqaba in modern times.) Apparently, God will cause this stretch of the Red Sea to rise above sea level, so that it will no longer exist.



- d. The Lord will cause the great, wide Euphrates River, which has always been a huge hindrance to travel, to break into seven small streams; and God will cause men to travel on dry land over what was once the great Euphrates. (Perhaps these seven streams will be diverted in their direction.)
  
- e. These two great geographical changes will be for the purpose of creating a super “highway” that will go from Egypt to modern day Iraq (ancient Assyria) (**verse 16**). The highway will travel through what was once the Euphrates; will swing past the south of Israel, through what was once the Red Sea; and go into Egypt. This change will make travel from the continents of Africa and Asia much easier, as people come from all parts of the earth to worship King Jesus in Jerusalem! This highway will be called the “highway of holiness.”

**Zechariah 14:16**

**Isaiah 35:7-10**

**Conclusion:** In **Isaiah 11**, we are given a beautiful picture of Israel and the world during the Millennial Kingdom. It will be as near to Paradise as a sin-cursed world can be. However, the greatest part of the Millennial Kingdom will not be the ideal environment, or the peaceful political conditions; it will be the King Himself! Jesus, the Rod and Root of Jesse, will be an “ensign” to the whole earth, beckoning all to come and worship Him.