
Observations from Isaiah

LESSON XI : THE OFFSHOOT FROM THE STUMP OF JESSE (11:1-12:6)

General outline (from Young's *Isaiah*):

- A. Introduction to the Entire Prophecy (1:1-31)
- B. Early Messages of Isaiah (2:1-5:30)
- C. Judah's True Hope: The Messianic King (6:1-12:6)
 - 1. Isaiah's Vision of the Holy God (6:1-13)
 - 2. The Crisis and the Promise (7:1-25)
 - 3. The Assyrian Invader (8:1-9:7)
 - 4. The Threat of Assyria (9:8-10:34)
 - 5. Judah's Hope in the Messiah (11:1-12:6)
 - a. The shoot of Jesse (11:1-5)
 - b. The coming peace (11:6-10)
 - c. The future of Israel (11:11-16)
 - d. A victorious song of praise (12:1-6)

OVERVIEW — Chapter 11 begins by describing the character of the Messiah to come, divinely filled with the Spirit. A world-wide peace and righteousness will follow His second advent which will include the Gentiles as well as the Jews (whom the Lord will return to their homeland). Chapter 12 concludes this portion with a song of praise and thanksgiving.

5. Judah's Hope in the Messiah (11:1-12:6)

a. The shoot of Jesse (11:1-5)

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD — and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the

And a rod hath come out from the stock of Jesse, And a branch from his roots is fruitful. Rested on him hath the Spirit of Jehovah, The spirit of wisdom and of understanding, The spirit of counsel and might, The spirit of knowledge and fear of Jehovah. To refresh him in the fear of Jehovah, And by the sight of his eyes he judgeth not, Nor by the hearing of his ears decideth. And he hath judged in righteousness the poor, And

the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. (NIV)

poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (KJV)

decided in uprightness for the humble of earth, And hath smitten earth with the rod of his mouth, And with the breath of his lips he putteth the wicked to death. And righteousness hath been the girdle of his loins, And faithfulness — the girdle of his reins. (YLT)

THE OFFSHOOT OF JESSE — “In the previous chapter, the prophet had represented the Assyrian monarch and his army under the image of a dense and flourishing forest, with all its glory and grandeur. In opposition to this, he describes the illustrious personage who is the subject of this chapter, under the image of a slender twig or shoot, sprouting up from the root of a decayed and fallen tree. *Between the Assyrian, therefore, and the person who is the subject of this chapter, there is a most striking and beautiful contrast. The one was at first magnificent — like a vast spreading forest — yet should soon fall and decay; the other was the little sprout of a decayed tree, which should yet rise, expand and flourish.*” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*] “*Jesse: the expectation is not simply of a coming king but of a coming David for, though successive kings were assessed by comparison with ‘their father David’ (e.g. 2 Kings 18:3), only David is ‘the son of Jesse’ (e.g. 1 Kings 12:16). When Jesse produces a shoot it must be David (cp Jer 30:9; Ezek 34:23,24; Hos 3:5). The golden king of the past foreshadows the true gold to come.*” [Motyer, *Isaiah*]

THE “ROD” AND “BRANCH” — “*A rod:* This word occurs in but one other place; Prov 14:3: ‘In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride.’ Here it means, evidently, **a branch, a twig, a shoot**, such as starts up from the roots of a decayed tree, and is synonymous with the word rendered ‘branch’ in Isa 4:2.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*] *And a branch:* **A twig, branch, or shoot; a slip or young sucker of a tree that is selected for transplanting and that requires to be watched with special care.** The word occurs but four times: Isa 14:19; 60:21; Dan 11:7 and here. This is closely connected with the “branch” in Isaiah 4 although different Hebrew words are used. Here the word is synonymous with that which is rendered rod in the previous part of the verse — a shoot, or twig, from the root of a decayed tree.

THE “STUMP” — “*Out of the stem:* This word occurs but three times in the Old Testament ... It means **the stock or stump of a tree that has been cut down — a stock, however, which may not be quite dead, but where it may send up a branch or shoot from its roots.** It is beautifully applied to an ancient family that is fallen into decay, yet where there may be a descendant that shall rise and flourish; as a tree may fall and decay, but still there may be vitality in the root, and it shall send up a tender germ or sprout. *Of Jesse: The father of David.* It means, that he who is here spoken of should be of the family of Jesse, or David. *Though Jesse had died, and though the ancient family of David would fall into decay, yet there would arise from that family an illustrious descendant. The beauty of this description is apparent, if we bear in recollection that, when the Messiah was born, the ancient and much honored family of David had fallen into decay; that the mother of Jesus, though pertaining to that family, was poor, obscure, and unknown; and that, to all appearance, the glory of the family had departed. Yet from that, as from a long-decayed root in the ground, he should spring who would restore the family to more*

*than its ancient glory, and shed additional luster on the honored name of Jesse.” [Barnes, Notes on OT] “Isaiah takes seriously his prediction of 6:13 — the time will come when all signs of life in the Davidic monarchy will have disappeared, like a tree cut to the stump, but there remains a secret vitality. He knew the monarchy could not survive the unbelief of Ahaz (7:9); he foresaw too the ensuing calamity (6:9-12). It would have been odd indeed if he had not felt the tension between this vision of termination and his other predictions of future Davidic glory (1:25-27). Will the Lord then revoke His promises or will He keep them? Passages like 9:1-7 and 11:1-16 arise out of this tension in Isaiah’s message and affirm the faithfulness of God to His purposes and promises.” [Motyer, Isaiah] “The reference to Jesse (who was of course never king) rather than to David (who was) may point to the total absence of royal dignity in the house of David when the Messiah would come. There was still life in the house though, for God’s purpose (cf. 2 Sam 7:16) had not been set aside (cf. Ezek 21:27). The Branch is now fully messianic. **God’s people need more than the promise of fertile land or of continued national life through the remnant. They need the very incarnation of God’s life in the Messiah.**” [Grogan, Isaiah]*

UNDOUBTEDLY MESSIANIC — *“Out of his roots: As a shoot starts up from the roots of a decayed tree.... The Chaldee, ‘And a king shall proceed from the sons of Jesse, and the Messiah from his sons’ sons shall arise;’ showing conclusively that the ancient Jews referred this to the Messiah. That this verse, and the subsequent parts of the chapter, refer to the Messiah, may be argued from the following considerations: (1) The fact that it is expressly applied to him in the New Testament. Thus Paul, in Rom 15:12, quotes the tenth verse of this chapter as expressly applicable to the times of the Messiah. (2) The Chaldee Paraphrase shows, that this was the sense which the ancient Jews put upon the passage. That paraphrase is of authority, only to show that this was the sense which appeared to be the true one by the ancient interpreters. (3) The description in the chapter is not applicable to any other personage than the Messiah.... (4) The peace, prosperity, harmony and order, referred to in the subsequent portions of the chapter, are not descriptive of any portion of the reign of Hezekiah. (5) The terms and descriptions here accord with other portions of the Scriptures, as applicable to the Messiah. Thus Jeremiah (Jer 23:5; 33:15) describes the Messiah under the similitude of a ‘branch, a germ or shoot’ — using, indeed, a different Hebrew word, but retaining the same idea and image; compare Zech 3:8. It accords also with the description by Isaiah of the same personage in Isa 4:2. (6) I may add, that nearly all commentators have referred this to the Messiah; and, perhaps, it would not be possible to find greater unanimity in regard to the interpretation of any passage of Scripture than on this.” [Barnes, Notes on OT]*

— THE MESSIAH DESCRIBED —

FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT — *“ ‘The Spirit of Jehovah’ is the Divine Spirit, as the communicative vehicle of the whole creative fulness of divine powers. Then follow the six spirits, comprehended by the [Spirit of] Yehovah in three pairs, of which the first relates to the intellectual life, the second to the practical life, and the third to the direct relation to God.... **There are seven spirits, which are enumerated in order from the highest downwards; since the spirit of the fear of Jehovah is the basis of the whole (Prov 1:7; Job 28:28; Ps 111:10), and the Spirit of Jehovah is the heart of all. It corresponds to the shaft of the seven-lighted candlestick, and the three pair of arms that proceeded from it. In these seven forms the Holy Spirit descended upon the second David for a permanent possession.... The seven torches before the throne of God (Rev 4:5, cf., Isa 1:4) burn and give light in His soul. The seven spirits are His seven eyes (Rev 5:6).**” [K&D, Commentary] “There can be no doubt that reference is here had to the Holy Spirit, the third person*

of the sacred Trinity, as descending upon him in the fullness of his influences, and producing in him perfect wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. The Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him — a Spirit producing wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, etc. All these are what the Scriptures traced to the agency of the Holy Spirit; see 1 Cor 12:8-11. ***The meaning here is, that the Messiah should be endowed with these eminent prophetic gifts and qualifications for his ministry by the agency of the Holy Spirit. It was by that Spirit that the prophets had been inspired (see 2 Pet 1:21; 2 Tim 3:16); and as the Messiah was to be a prophet (Deut 18:15,18), there was a fitness that he should be endowed in the same manner.*** If it be asked how one, who was divine in his own nature, could be thus endowed by the aid of the Spirit, the answer is, that he was also to be a man descended from the honored line of David, and that as a man he might be furnished for his work by the agency of the Holy Spirit. His human nature was kept pure; his mind was made eminently wise; his heart always retained the fear and love of God, and there is no absurdity in supposing that these extraordinary endowments were to be traced to God. That he was thus under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is abundantly taught in the New Testament. Thus, in Matt 3:16, the Holy Spirit is represented as descending on him at his baptism, In John 3:34, it is said, ‘For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;’ compare Col 1:19.” [Barnes, Notes on OT]

HIS RULING QUALITIES: WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING — Keil and Delitzsch makes the difference between these two words as being that ***wisdom is the power of discerning the nature of things through the appearance, and understanding the power of discerning the differences of things in their appearance;*** the former is the Greek sophia (wisdom) and the latter is discernment. “*The spirit of wisdom:* The spirit producing wisdom, or making him wise. ***Wisdom consists in the choice of the best means to secure the best ends.*** This attribute is often given to the Messiah in the New Testament, and was always evinced by him; compare 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:17; Col 2:3: ‘In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ *And understanding:* The difference between the words here rendered wisdom and understanding is, that ***the former denotes wisdom properly; and the latter, that judgment resulting from wisdom, by which we distinguish things, or decide on their character.***” [Barnes, Notes on OT]

HIS PRACTICAL QUALITIES: COUNSEL AND POWER — “ ‘Counsel’ is the gift of forming right conclusions, and ‘might’ the ability to carry them out with energy.” [K&D, Commentary] “*The spirit of counsel:* That by which he shall be qualified to give counsel or advice; the qualification of a public instructor and guide; see Isa 9:6. *And might:* Strength, vigor, energy; that strength of heart and purpose which will enable a man to meet difficulties, to encounter dangers, to be bold, open, and fearless in the discharge of his duties. It is not necessary to remark, that this characteristic was found in an eminent degree in the Lord Jesus Christ.” [Barnes, Notes on OT]

HIS SPIRITUAL QUALITIES: SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND FEAR OF THE LORD — “ ‘*The knowledge of Jehovah*’ is knowledge founded upon the fellowship of love; and ‘*the fear of Jehovah,*’ fear absorbed in reverence.” [K&D, Commentary] “*Of knowledge:* That is, the knowledge of the attributes and plans of Yahweh; compare Matt 11:27: ‘Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son.’ John 1:18: ‘No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;’ 1 John 5:20. *And of the fear of the LORD:* The fear of Yahweh is often used to denote piety in general, as consisting in a reverence for the divine commands, and a dread of offending him; that is, a desire to please him, which is piety; compare Job 28:28; Psalm 19:9; 111:10; Prov 1:7; 3:13; 15:33; 19:23.” [Barnes, Notes on OT]

The last phrase is a Hebraism (a “colloquial saying” to the Hebrews) and may be variously understood which explains the differences in our translations: “*and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.*” (NIV) — “*And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD*” (KJV) — “*To refresh him in the fear of Jehovah*” (YLT). Keil and Delitzsch translates it literally to be “*And fear of Jehovah is fragrance to Him.*” Barnes gives the following renderings: the Septuagint, “*And the spirit of the fear of God shall fill him*”; the Chaldee, “*And the Lord shall draw him near to him in his fear*”; the Syriac, “*And he shall be resplendent (like the sun, or the stars) in the fear of the Lord.*” “Considerable controversy surrounds the first phrase of v3. If the text is correct, ***the sense is that the Messiah will ‘smell’ with delight the attitude of reverent concern for God’s ways just as God delights in the smell of incense.***” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] “We must not render it: His smelling is the smelling of the fear of God, i.e., the penetration of it with a keen judicial insight.... ***The fear of God is that which He smells with satisfaction....*** Just as the outward man has five senses for the material world, the inner man has also a sensorium for the spiritual world, which discerns different things in different ways. ***Thus the second David scents the fear of God, and only the fear of God, as a pleasant fragrance; for the fear of God is a sacrifice of adoration continually ascending to God. His favour or displeasure does not depend upon brilliant or repulsive external qualities; He does not judge according to outward appearances, but according to the relation of the heart to His God.***” [K&D, *Commentary*]

HE WILL JUDGE RIGHTEOUSLY AND IMPARTIALLY — E. Young has correctly observed that *absolute justice demands absolute knowledge*. “*The king knows the divine principles of right and can apply them in correct judgements. But, on the other hand, he is also equally sensitive to the deservings of people; justice is here ‘uprightness, straightness, fairness.’ Consequently, both the poor and the wicked are dealt with even-handedly. Neither improper favour to the needy nor disfavour to the wicked subverts the exact balance of justice.*” [Motyer, *Isaiah*] “The act of pronouncing judgment in the court is often treated in the OT as the acid test of a wise and incorruptible use of authority (cf., e.g., 5:21-23; Ps 72:1-4). Verse 3b does not mean that right judgment ignores evidence available to the senses but rather that it requires inner qualities of character (cf. John 2:25; 7:24). The word ‘judgment’ has an ominous ring to us; but when used of the poor, it is almost a synonym for salvation (Ps 72:2; 82:2-4). Where there is corruption in the law courts, it is the poor who long for a righteous judge.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

HE WILL DECLARE TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS TO A FALLEN WORLD — “*This testifies to his great power (cf. v.2), because, unlike many a monarch, he is well able to execute the judgments he pronounces. In him word and consequent action are virtually one.*” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] “The reiterated word ‘earth’ also signifies ‘land.’ The rule of the messianic King is to be over Israel but also over the whole world (9:7, cf. 11:10), so it is not easy to tell whether here and in v. 9 the narrower or the wider sense is intended. Either would be appropriate. Whichever is meant, we can be sure that the principles he rules the world by will not differ from those operative in the more limited sphere.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] “By the ‘earth’ here, or the land, is meant evidently ‘the wicked,’ as the following member of the parallelism shows.... The characteristic here is that of an upright judge or prince, who would punish the wicked. To ‘smite’ the earth, or the wicked, is expressive of punishment; and this characteristic is elsewhere attributed to the Messiah; see Ps 2:9-12; Rev 2:27.... *With the rod of his mouth*: The word rendered here ‘rod,’ denotes properly a stick, or staff; a rod for chastisement or correction (Prov 10:13; 13:24; Job 9:34; 21:9); the staff, or scepter of a ruler — as an emblem of office; a measuring rod; a spear, etc.; Note, Isa 10:5. ***It is not elsewhere applied to the mouth, though it is often used in other connections. It means that which goes out of the mouth — a word command threatening decision; and it is implied that it***

would go forth to pronounce sentence of condemnation, and to punish. His word would be so just, impartial, and authoritative, that the effect would be to overwhelm the wicked. In a sense similar to this, Christ is said to have been seen by John, when ‘out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword’ (Rev 1:16); that is, his commands and decisions were so authoritative, and so certain in their execution, as to be like a sharp sword; cp Heb 4:12; Isa 49:2: ‘And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.’ The discriminating preaching, the pungent discourses, the authoritative commands of the Lord Jesus, when on earth, showed, and his judicial decisions in the day of judgment will show, the manner of the fulfillment of the prediction.” [Barnes, Notes on OT]

RIGHTEOUS AND FAITHFUL — “The sense of this verse is plain. He will always exhibit himself as a just and faithful king. ‘The girdle of the loins’ refers to the cincture, or band, with which the ancients girded themselves. A part of their dress consisted of an outward, loose, flowing robe. This robe it was necessary to gird up, or to confine close to the body in active labor, or in running; and the meaning of the figure used here is, probably, that the virtues of righteousness and justice would adhere to him as closely and inseparably as the garment does to the body to which it was bound.... *The idea is, that he shall be distinguished for justice and truth, and that a zeal for these shall make him strong and active in executing the purposes of his reign.* [Barnes, Notes on OT]

b. The coming peace (11:6-10)

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. (NIV)

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. 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. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. (KJV)

And a wolf hath sojourned with a lamb, And a leopard with a kid doth lie down, And calf, and young lion, and fatling [are] together, And a little youth is leader over them. And cow and bear do feed, Together lie down their young ones, And a lion as an ox eateth straw. And played hath a suckling by the hole of an asp, And on the den of a cockatrice Hath the weaned one put his hand. Evil they do not, nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For full hath been the earth with the knowledge of Jehovah, As the waters are covering the sea. And there hath been, in that day, A root of Jesse that is standing for an ensign of peoples, Unto him do nations seek, And his rest hath been — honour! (YLT)

THE COMING AGE OF PEACE AND SECURITY — “Old hostilities and fears are reconciled and allayed. Predators and prey live together: a mere child is safe among them, and also human

dominion (Gen 1:28) no longer takes the form of our often inhumane exploitation of animals, but wears instead this gentle and unthreatening face. Natures are transformed. The point made here is not simply ‘togetherness’ — the message of verse 6 — but identity of nature. They all eat the same food: carnivores have become herbivores. ***The reference to their young shows that the transformation is a permanent heredity.*** The sequence in verse 6 moved from the beasts to the child; similarly verse 7 moves to 8, but now the relationship of humankind to reptiles is in focus: not the restoration of true ‘dominion’ as in verse 6, but the lifting of the curse of Genesis 3:15. ***Infant is the child at the breast, utterly helpless in itself; young child is the toddler, capable of running thoughtlessly into danger. But now there is neither a danger that strikes nor a danger that lurks. the ‘enmity’ has gone.*** [Motyer, *Isaiah*]

HOW ARE WE TO INTERPRET THIS? — Some **spiritualize** this by stating the animals are representative of human. E.g. Calvin, while not denying a future alteration in the animal kingdom, believes this to speak of the “character and habits of those who have submitted to Christ,” the sense being that the relationship between God and man is restored to the beginning: “Though Isaiah says that the wild and the tame beasts will live in harmony, that the blessing of God may be clearly and fully manifested, yet he chiefly means what I have said, that the people of Christ will have no disposition to do injury, no fierceness or cruelty. They were formerly like lions or leopards, but will now be like sheep or lambs; for they will have laid aside every cruel and brutish disposition. By these modes of expression he means nothing else than that those who formerly were like savage beasts will be mild and gentle; for he compares violent and ravenous men to wolves and bears which live on prey and plunder, and declares that they will be tame and gentle, so that they will be satisfied with ordinary food, and will abstain from doing any injury or harm.” [Calvin, *Isaiah*] Another manner is to take this **figuratively**: “In this approach one concludes that an extended figure of speech is being used to make a single, overarching point, namely, that in the Messiah’s reign the fears associated with insecurity, danger, and evil be removed, not only for the individual but for the world as well (Rom 8:19-21). Precisely how God may choose to do this in his infinite creativity is his to decide. But that he will do so we may confidently believe.” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] I choose to accept this **literally**, being fulfilled at the second coming of Christ and during His millennial reign. “Biblical eschatology may involve more than the simple restoration of conditions as they were in the unfallen world, but it certainly includes this (cf. Gen 1:26-28; Ps 8; 1 Cor 15:25-28; Heb 2:5-9). It is not now Adam who is to be king of the world but the Second Man, the messianic King. ***In his reign nature will be at peace with itself and with human kings. There seems no reason to doubt that this is to be understood literally.... We know something of the effects of the Fall on human kings and on plant life (Gen 3:17-18); and we cannot doubt that animal life bound with the human race and the plants in the unity of a world-wide eco-system — must have been affected also.***” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] I confess I don’t have all the answers to the difficulties found in pre-millennialism but I want to remind the reader that *every eschatological scheme has its difficulties*. Nor do I hold those who spiritualize this (and other passages of like manner) as “lesser Christians” or “apostates who destroy the Word of God”; many strong, faithful men differ in these matters. ***But for myself, I am looking for the soon return of the Messiah to rule over His chosen people of Israel, now gathered in their homeland (for the first time in almost 2500 years) and rapidly approaching Armageddon.***

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN? — I believe the conditions herein described occur during the millennial reign of Christ and will as well be an eternal condition in the new heavens and earth. Having said that, it is also important to keep in mind the comments of Barnes (while he takes a figurative approach to this passage, I agree with his point): “The eye of the prophet is fixed upon

the reign of the Messiah, not with reference to time, but with reference to the actual facts of that reign. He saw the scene pass before his mind in vision and it is not the nature of such descriptions to mark the ‘time,’ but the order, the passing aspect of the scene. ‘Under the reign of the Messiah,’ he saw that this would occur. Looking down distant times, as on a beautiful landscape, he perceived, under the mild reign of the Prince of peace, a state of things which would be well represented by the wolf dwelling with the lamb, the leopard crouching down with the kid, and a little child safe in their midst.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*] *“As a result of the taming of nature, normally ‘red in tooth and claw,’ Mount Zion, the holy mountain of God (v.9), will know a comprehensive peace and security that reminds us of other comprehensive promises in 4:5-6. The breadth of the Messiah’s reign (cf. 9:7) means however that the peace and security of Jerusalem will be a microcosm of a much wider blessing. Whatever the meaning of eres (‘earth’) in v.4, it almost certainly refers to the whole world in this passage (cf. Rom 8:19-22) because of the references to the sea here and to the nations in v.10. The conjunction ‘for’ (v.9) is theologically important, because it states the cause of this peace. The restoration of human beings to God that is implied in ‘the knowledge of God’ reverses the alienation introduced by the Fall, so making possible the restoration of their environment to its unfallen condition.”* [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

THE OFFSHOOT OF JESSE IS ALSO THE ROOT — “But how can one and the same person be both the shoot coming from Jesse (v1) and the Root from which Jesse comes? This is an enigma unexplained until Luke 1:32.” [Motyer, *Isaiah*] “There shall be a sprout, shoot, or scion of the ancient and decayed family of Jesse.... The word “root” here is evidently used in the sense of a root that is alive when the tree is dead; a root that sends up a shoot or sprout; and is thus applied to him who should proceed from the ancient and decayed family of Jesse; see Isa 53:2. Thus in Rev 5:5, the Messiah is called ‘the root of David,’ and in Rev 22:16, ‘the root and the offspring of David.’ ” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

c. The future of Israel (11:11-16)

<i>In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. Ephraim’s jealousy will vanish, and Judah’s enemies will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim. They will</i>	<i>And 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, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. 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</i>	<i>And it hath come to pass, in that day, The Lord addeth a second time his power, To get the remnant of His people that is left, From Asshur, and from Egypt, And from Pathros, and from Cush, And from Elam, and from Shinar, And from Hamath, and from isles of the sea, And He hath lifted up an ensign to nations, And gathereth the driven away of Israel, And the scattered of Judah He assembleth, From the four wings of the earth. And turned aside hath the envy of Ephraim, And the adversaries of Judah are cut off, Ephraim doth not envy Judah, And Judah doth not</i>
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swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west; together they will plunder the people to the east. They will lay hands on Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them. The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River. He will break it up into seven streams so that men can cross over in sandals. There will be a highway for the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria, as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt. (NIV)

Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt. (KJV)

distress Ephraim. And they have flown on the shoulder of the Philistines westward, Together they spoil the sons of the east, Edom and Moab sending forth their hand, And sons of Ammon obeying them. And Jehovah hath devoted to destruction The tongue of the sea of Egypt, And hath waved His hand over the river, In the terror of his wind, And hath smitten it at the seven streams, And hath caused [men] to tread [it] with shoes. And there hath been a highway, For the remnant of His people that is left, from Asshur, As there was for Israel in the day of his coming up out of the land of Egypt! (YLT)

THE “SECOND” GATHERING OF ISRAEL — “The eschatological phrase ‘in that day’ ... relates this messianic teaching to the end times. Like most of the OT writers, Isaiah had a lively sense of the special importance of the Exodus from Egypt, when God had stretched out his hand to deliver his people. Isaiah looked forward to a time that will see an event comparable with it in redemptive significance (v.11). This will contrast with the Exodus, for those who return will be the remnant of a larger people, while it was the greatly enlarged family of Jacob that left Egypt under Moses. The events will also differ because this time the people will not move together as a body from one point of departure but will come together from many lands and various points of the compass. Instead of going forth under a great leader, they will come together seeking a greater leader still. The places referred to with one exception — are located at or near the two great river-systems that have acted as mothers of civilization in the Near East: the Tigris-Euphrates and the Nile. The addition, however, of the phrase ‘the islands of the sea’ is surprising. The word ‘island’ in the plural occurs frequently in Isa 40-66 and appears to designate the Mediterranean maritime areas. The only reference to a dispersion of Jews in this area is in Joel 3:6; and, of course, it is by no means agreed that Joel prophesied before Isaiah. We do find a considerable western dispersion in NT times, however, as also today, and this is anticipated here by the Holy Spirit.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] *“The redemption which the prophet here foretells is a second, to be followed by no third; consequently the banishment out of which Israel is redeemed is the ultimate form of that which is threatened in Isa 6:12 (cf., Deut 30:1ff.). It is the second redemption, the counterpart of the Egyptian. He will then stretch out His hand again and as He once delivered Israel out of Egypt, so will He now redeem it — purchase it back out of all the countries named.”* [K&D, *Commentary*]

THE MIRACLE OF ISRAEL — A pastor was asked one time why he believed the bible and the pastor gave the answer, “*the Jews.*” *What other explanation other than the Lord can explain the miracle of Israel? “In all the predictions respecting the calamities that should ever come upon*

them, the idea is always held out that the nation would not be wholly extinguished; but that, however great the national judgments, a remnant would still survive. This was particularly true in regard to the fearful judgments which Moses denounced on the nation if they should be disobedient, and which have been so strikingly fulfilled; Deut 28. As the result of those judgments, Moses does not say that Yahweh would annihilate the nation, or extinguish their name, but that the would be ‘left few in number,’ (Deut 28:62); that Yahweh would scatter them among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other, (Deut 28:64); and that among these nations they should find no ease, neither should the sole of their foot have rest, Isa 11:65. ***In like manner it was predicted that they should be scattered everywhere.*** ‘I will scatter them also among the pagan, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, in all places whither I will drive them;’ Jer 9:16; 24:9,10. ‘I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds;’ Ezek 5:10. ‘I will also scatter them among the nations, among the pagan, and disperse them in the countries;’ Ezek 12:15, ‘I will sift the house of Israel among the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. They shall be wanderers among the nations;’ Amos 9:9. ‘I will make a full end of the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished;’ Jer 46:28. ***From all these, and from numerous other passages in the Old Testament, it is evident that it was designed that the Jewish nation should never be wholly destroyed; that though they were scattered among the nations, they should still be a distinct people; that while other nations would wholly cease to exist, yet that a remnant of the Jewish people, with the national peculiarities and customs, would still survive. How entirely this has been fulfilled, the remarkable history of the Jewish people everywhere testifies. Their present condition on the earth, as a people scattered in all nations, yet surviving; without a king and a temple, yet preserving their national prejudices and peculiarities, is a most striking fulfillment of the prophecy.*** [Barnes, Notes on OT]

JUDAH AND EPHRAIM UNITED ONCE AGAIN — “*The envy also:* The word envy here is used in the sense of hatred, or the hatred which arose from the ambition of Ephraim, and from the prosperity of Judah. Ephraim here, is the name for the kingdom of Israel, or the ten tribes.... The language here is evidently figurative, and means, that in the time here referred to UNDER THE MESSIAH, the causes of animosity, before existing, would cease; that contentions between those who are, by nature, brethren, and who ought to evince the spirit of brethren, would come to an end; and that those animosities and strike would be succeeded by a state of amity and peace. ***When the scattered Jews shall be regathered to God under the Messiah, all the contentions among them shall cease, and they shall be united under one king and prince. All the causes of contention which had so long existed, and which had produced such disastrous results, would come to an end.*** The strifes and contentions of these two kingdoms, once belonging to the same nation, and descended from the same ancestors — the painful and protracted “family broil” — was the object that most prominently attracted the attention, then, of the prophets of God. The most happy idea of future blessedness which was presented to the mind of the prophet, was that period when all this should cease, and when, under the Messiah, all should be harmony and love. [Barnes, Notes on OT]

ISRAEL ON THE OFFENSIVE — “Ephraim and Judah would make common cause against the Philistines (v.14), taking advantage of their location in the hill country to move down the slopes of the Shephelah, west of the Judean mountains, against the Philistines on the coastal plain. The three neighboring nations to the east and southeast would come under subjection again to Judah. Ps 2 may well represent the futility of the rebellion of these small nations — as representative of world

rebellion — against Judah. This rebellion will now be over. The nations mentioned in v.14 were small and insignificant when compared with the great militarist regimes of Egypt and Mesopotamia. God's hand of power will be stretched forth in fulfillment of his purposes for his people in both areas. He had dried up the water of the Red Sea before. He would act again to dry it up and for the same liberating purpose (v.15). He had used a great wind (Ex 14:21) at the Exodus; he would do so again to bring the people back from Mesopotamia, for the wind would produce there a delta not unlike that at the mouth of the Nile. The highway promised (v.16) may contain an allusion to Ex 14:26-29, the dry road through the Red Sea; or it may mean that God will bring them back safely across the desert that stretched between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean sea board (cf. 35:8)." [Grogan, *Isaiah*] "There was no such diaspora of Israel at the time when the prophet uttered this prediction, nor indeed even after the dissolution of the northern kingdom; so that the specification is not historical, but prophetic." [K&D, *Commentary*]

d. A victorious song of praise (12:1-6)

In that day you will say: "I will praise you, O LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you." (NIV)

And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. (KJV)

And thou hast said in that day: 'I thank thee, O Jehovah, Though Thou hast been angry with me, Turn back doth Thine anger, And Thou dost comfort me. Lo, God [is] my salvation, I trust, and fear not, For my strength and song [is] Jah Jehovah, And He is to me for salvation. And ye have drawn waters with joy Out of the fountains of salvation, And ye have said in that day, Give ye praise to Jehovah, call in His name. Make known among the peoples His acts. Make mention that set on high is His name. Praise ye Jehovah, for excellence He hath done, Known is this in all the earth. Cry aloud, and sing, O inhabitant of Zion, For great in thy midst [is] the Holy One of Israel!' (YLT)

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE — *"The central focus of these verses, as well as the entire song, is upon God. This is what Isaiah has been appealing for (8:12-23; so also 31:1,2; 33:17-22; 40:12-31; etc.). Whenever Israel focuses primarily upon her needs she is in difficulty, for supply of those needs becomes the ultimate goal and all else, including the Sovereign of the universe, becomes but a means to that end. This attitude is a pure prescription for spiritual disaster. Thus praise and thanks are essential to robust spiritual life, not because God needs them like some neurotic tyrant, but because we need to give them. It is only in this way that we*

can refocus our attention upon how much we have received from a loving Father and in that appreciation stop attempting to use Him as our servant (idolatry). Thus, ... ‘Any revival of religion which may yet come to the world will be marked by a new outburst of thanksgiving.’ ”

[Oswalt, *Isaiah*] “The prophet had foretold the deliverance of the nation from the threatened invasion of Sennacherib (Isa 10); he had then looked forward to the times of the Messiah, and described the certainty, the character, and the consequences of this reign (Isa 11.) The eleventh chapter closes with a reference to the deliverance of the nation from the oppression of the Egyptians. That deliverance was celebrated with a beautiful ode, which was sung by Miriam and ‘all the women,’ who ‘went out after her with timbrels and with dances’ (Ex 15:1-21). In imitation of that deliverance, Isaiah says, in this chapter, that the deliverance of which he speaks shall be celebrated also with a song of praise; and this chapter; therefore, is properly an expression of the feelings of the redeemed people of God, in view of his great mercy in interposing to save them. *It should be read in view of the great and glorious deliverance which God has performed for us in the redemption of his Son; and with feelings of lofty gratitude that he has brought us from worse than Egyptian bondage — the bondage of sin.* [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE LORD OUR SALVATION — The strict interpretation of these verses is probably physical deliverance rather than spiritual. “It would be attractive to interpret the salvation declared in v.2 in spiritual terms, so that it would become a virtual synonym of the forgiveness seen in v.1. This would bring it into line with the normal use of the word ‘salvation’ in the NT instead of with the physical connotation it usually possesses in the Old. The physical and spiritual could be combined here, but there can be little doubt that the prophet had chiefly in mind the deliverance of the people from all their enemies that was to be a consequence of God’s forgiving grace.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] Keeping that in mind, it would not be incorrect to make a spiritual application. *“God is the author, or source, of my salvation. It has not been brought about by any human hands, but is to be traced directly to him. The value of a gift is always enhanced by the dignity and excellency of the giver, and it confers an inestimable value on the blessings of salvation, that they are conferred by a being no less than the infinite God. It is not by human or angelic power; but it is to be traced directly and entirely to Yahweh.”* [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

FAITH BRINGS PEACE — *I will trust, and not be afraid:* Since God is its author; since he is able to defend me, and to perfect that which he has begun, I will confide in him, and not be afraid of the power or machinations of any enemy. In his hands I am safe. God is the foundation of our confidence; and trusting in him, his people shall never be moved.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*] “When it is said that he is ‘my strength and my song’ (v.2), the reader is made aware that this God is now everything to his people. The personalizing form of the phrases implies exhaustiveness. Not only do the people rely on him for strength, but they have abandoned all other trust. The prophet had been warned in the inaugural vision of his ministry that the people would be spiritually unresponsive (6:9-10). He had faced the fear and unbelief of Ahaz, their king (ch. 7). Even Hezekiah’s faith, real as it was (37:14-20), proved to be imperfect; for he, like Ahaz, had succumbed to the temptation to curry favor with potential military allies (ch. 39). In the future day Isaiah visualized, however, trust in God the Savior would be so complete as to banish all fear.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

GREAT IS THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL — “God has shown himself great and worthy of praise, by the wonderful deliverance which he has worked for his people. Thus closes this beautiful hymn. It is worthy of the theme — worth to be sung by all. O, may all the redeemed join in this song of deliverance; and may the time soon come, when the beautiful vision of the poet shall be

realized, in the triumphant song of redemption echoing around the world: ‘One song employs all nations; and all cry, “Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!” The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops From distant mountains catch the flying joy; Till, nation after nation taught the strain, Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.’ ” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

“In a word, the ruler will be the servant, not because he is too weak to dominate, but because he is strong enough not to need to crush.”

John N. Oswalt, “The Book of Isaiah”

“Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

— Isaiah 12:5,6 NIV