

The Kingdom of God 5 – Its King, Rule, Subjects, and Scope

(Isaiah 11)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Isaiah had spoken of great gloom facing Israel and Judah because of their rebellion and sin.
 - A. Israel would fall to the Assyrians and Judah would be invaded by Assyria and Jerusalem besieged, only to later be taken into captivity by Babylon.
 - B. God would also bring complete destruction upon Assyria for their arrogance (see 10:12-13).
 - C. Yet, in amidst these gloomy scenarios God presents a wonderful ray of hope.
 - i. A remnant would be preserved and return. And, through this remnant God's spiritual kingdom would be established.
 - ii. For, a son would be born of a virgin (7:14) and on his shoulders God's kingdom would rest (9:1-7).
 - iii. In Isaiah 11 this kingdom would come through the tree of David, left for a time as a seemingly dead stump, but restored to vitality through the Messiah.
2. It is this ray of hope provided in Isaiah 11 that we will focus on today. For here the hope for Israel is presented in connection with the Messianic King's ancestry and endowments, then in His rule, next in the change coming to the subjects of the kingdom, and finally how this hope is offered to both houses of Israel as well as the Gentiles.

BODY:

I. The ancestry and endowments of God's king (11:1-2):

- A. This hope would consist of a rod, or shoot, coming from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from its root bearing fruit, bringing life (11:1).
 1. Note that David's tree had become as a dead stump, being cut down for the sin of its kings, possibly even disgraced to the point that Isaiah called it by Jesse's, not David's, name.
 2. This tree of David, though brought low, would be revived through a *shoot* growing out of a stump, and a *branch* bearing fruit from the roots, which is Christ.
 - a. Though it appeared dead, there was still life in its roots (i.e., you likely have seen this after cutting down a tree—how it continues to produce shoots that will grow into a tree).
 - b. It is difficult to know if this was just a coupling of two similar ways of saying the same thing, or whether this could refer to something like Jesus being David's son and David's lord at the same time as mentioned by Jesus (Mt. 22:45; Mk. 12:37).
 - c. Jesus, the Messiah, who was of the tribe of Judah and lineage of David, would revive this fallen tree, bringing life beyond expectation!
- B. The *seven endowments* of Jesus, the Messianic King (11:2).
 1. The listing of seven could refer to the completeness of these endowments—that he was completely, or fully, endowed by God to be king.
 2. These would come through the *Spirit of Jehovah resting on him*, that we know was fulfilled at Jesus' baptism (Matt. 3:16-17 – “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”).
 - a. So, necessary parts of God's plan to establish His kingdom were fulfilled in Jesus' life.
 3. As a result of God's Spirit resting upon Him, Jesus would be given three couplets of endowments, or perfections, of the Spirit to qualify Him to rule.
 - a. The Spirit of *wisdom* and *understanding*:
 - i. Wisdom allows right judgment in all matters, being able to see underlying causes, etc.
 - ii. Understanding allows him to see the heart of the matter and make proper judgements based on His wisdom.
 - b. The Spirit of *counsel* (9:6 – “Wonderful Counselor”) and *might*, meaning He has proper direction to determine a plan or solution and the power to carry out that plan or solution.

- c. The Spirit of *knowledge* and *fear of the Lord* which includes knowing *about* God and *knowing Him in an intimate relationship*, which will always be coupled with fear shown in moral concern, obedience, loyalty, and worship.
- 4. Point: He has what it takes to rule—the right lineage and the right tools/endowments—to rule, exceeding all others, seeing they were tainted by human frailties and imperfections.

II. The rule of God's king—its excellence (11:3-5):

- A. God's king will *delight* first and foremost in *the fear of the Lord* (11:3).
 - 1. This delight means that he cares about what God says and his joy will be in doing exactly what God wants (11:3a).
 - 2. As a divine king, his judgment is not be swayed by deception of sight or word (11:3b).
 - a. You cannot fool Christ. He sees beyond the obvious to the truth of the matter.
 - b. We may put on masks to fool others or even ourselves, but not the Lord!
- B. His judgments (11:4-5).
 - 1. They are applied with righteousness and equity (fairness/ impartiality) to the poor and the meek—the afflicted of the earth (11:4)
 - a. One of the true signs of the character of a king or judge is how he judges in matters relating to those who *do not matter*, those who are *unimportant*.
 - b. And, the poor and meek are his special concern.
 - c. He knows justice and righteousness and will not allow these to be perverted by bribe or influence. Every judgement is right and fair!
 - 2. This judgement would come upon the earth through the words of His mouth (11:4b)!
 - a. Those who reject His words will be slain by the wrath of his lips!
 - b. That is Christ's power! What he *says* is just and it is right and the means of life or death!
 - c. It's no surprise the Christian's weapon is the sword of the Spirit, God's word (Eph. 6:17).
 - 3. The very belt he wears around his waist is righteousness and faithfulness (11:5).
 - a. *Righteousness* is whatever matches the Lord's will, while *faithfulness* is that unshakeable commitment to do what the Lord wills!
 - b. These characteristics are like clothes he wears.
 - i. Wearing them like a belt indicates these characteristics hold it all together for the Messiah. All that He is and does as King comes from righteousness and faithfulness!
 - ii. These are the foundational characteristics of God's rule (Psa. 89:14 – "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face.").
 - 4. Being the characteristics of Christ's rule, they should be those of Christians as well!
 - a. We should not be influenced by status, wealth, etc., in view or treatment of others.
 - b. We must see all as equals no matter who they are, never giving way to partiality or prejudice. We just judge with righteous judgment (John 7:24)!

III. The subjects of the kingdom (11:6-9):

- A. The changes God brings to those in the Messianic kingdom are extraordinary!
 - 1. An unnatural, supernatural, peace reigns (11:6-8)
 - a. The prey (lamb, goat, calf) willingly dwelling with predators (wolf, leopard, lion – 11:6).
 - b. Carnivores (bear, lion) eating grass alongside a cow and ox instead of eating them (11:7)!
 - c. A nursing child safely playing near a cobra's hole or a child having no fear of putting his hand in a viper's den (11:8)!
 - 2. This is not literal of animals, any more than is a rod coming out of Christ's mouth (11:4), but speaks of the amazing change God would bring to the lives of His subjects in Christ!
 - a. Those who were enemies, both predator and prey, live together in harmony in Christ, having their nature changed, as is a lion's that now eats straw!
 - i. Some have compared this to Jew and Gentile relationships in the church.
 - ii. Yet, this is likely a general view of the carnal (animal) side of man being brought into subjection to the Spirit of God and His will so that peace abounds!

- b. This peace is found in being part of a kingdom that Isaiah 9:6-7 says is ruled by the “Prince of Peace” of whom it is said that “the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.”
 - i. Through Christ peace is preached to all (Eph. 2:14, 17-18 – “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ...¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”).
 - i) If it were not for Christ, would we all be together today? I doubt it.
 - ii) We all come from such varying backgrounds, personalities, places, etc., that without the Lord, we would never have found each other!
 - iii) Think of the Christians throughout the world being so very different people in most every way except one...that they are all sinners in need of the salvation found in Christ!
 - ii. Praise be to God for his amazing power of peace found in Christ!
- B. This peace is only found in *God’s holy Mountain*, his kingdom, His church (11:9).
 - 1. Many would claim that this prophecy has not been fulfilled because nations continue to fight, and people continue to strive against one another and hurt one another.
 - a. This peace is based on the *knowledge of the Lord filling the earth*, taking control of people hearts, their thoughts and actions (11:9b).
 - b. This peace is for those who as Isaiah 2:3 says, choose to *come* to God’s holy mountain and *learn* of His ways and *walk* in His paths.
 - c. There is no promise of peace and harmony for those who reject Christ and His will! Yet, in God’s kingdom, there is unnatural peace amidst the world’s strife, wars, and pain!
 - 2. So, when we are saved in Christ we are made to be wonderfully different people.
 - a. We are made to have a different view of the world and others (Isa. 2:4 – “He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”).
 - i. We are people that pursue peace, love, compassion, harmony, tolerance!
 - ii. There is a bond that exists in Christ that overcomes all barriers!
 - b. We are made with a different view of life (2 Cor. 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”). We are not who we used to be! We are renewed in Christ—the old is gone!
 - c. We are made to have a different view of sin (Rom. 6:11-14 – “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”).
 - 3. I wonder if we dwell enough on the changes God has brought to us in Christ to make a difference?
 - a. Have we allowed God to put His stamp on our hearts and lives as He has clearly intended?
 - b. Remember, this is radical change! Do people know we are Christians by the radical change and the unifying love for one another Christ has brought to our lives (John 13:35 – “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”).

IV. The worldwide scope of the kingdom (11:10-16):

- A. In that day the root of Jesse, or Christ the King, will stand as a banner, or rallying point, to the peoples and nations/Gentiles, calling both Jew and Gentile to Him (11:10).
 - 1. “In that day” refers to the time of the *context* when the shoot/branch from the stump/root bears fruit and changes the nature of the kingdom’s subjects (i.e., lion and lamb together).

2. Paul quotes this verse in Romans 15:12 and applies to the present time *in the church*, where Jew and Gentile are beneficiaries of Christ's blessings and glorify God for salvation.
3. Those who seek a future kingdom in Isaiah's word cannot deal honestly with Paul's application, and must *deny* it and *ultimately* that salvation has come to the Gentiles!
4. Christ's kingdom is here, being a *spiritual* one, and He rules His people among the nations!
- B. *In that day*, the time of the context, God would *once again* take it in hand to recover the remnant of those from Judah *and* Israel, and the nations (11:11-16).
 1. The first time God brought back a remnant was from Babylon.
 2. This time, however, the remnant/outcasts would come from *all parts of the earth*, unifying Judah and Israel (11:12-13).
 - a. We know this began at Pentecost with the call of the gospel going out to Jews present there from all over the world (Acts 2:5).
 - b. This remnant of grace has existed from that day (Rom. 11:5 – "Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.").
 - c. And again, the fighting, bad feelings, jealousy, etc., is eliminated in Christ and peace reigns among God's people, His spiritual Israel, in His spiritual kingdom!
 3. The power of this King to bring peace is so great that even the long-time enemies of Israel will be defeated by the gospel and Prince of peace and join the kingdom (11:14).
 4. All barriers to the remnant's return from captivity will be removed, with rivers dried up and a highway built for swift travel, just as it was when Israel victoriously left Egypt (11:15-16).
 - a. We, like Israel, all find ourselves in the bondage of sin and need deliverance!
 - b. Through the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, the Church, all barriers to our deliverance, to our salvation, are removed and all can come freely and receive it!
 - c. That is the kingdom of Christ, the hope of Israel and the world!

CONCLUSION:

1. What we have seen in God's establishment of His kingdom is some phenomenally amazing events—that God has through Christ brought salvation and peace to a lost, dying, and divided world.
 - A. Christ has established His kingdom and rules it with divine endowments, assuring its existence in righteousness and justice, as well as its enduring success!
 - B. He has changed our nature, allowing all who were once enemies to be in harmony with Him and with others of different languages, cultures, backgrounds, and dispositions!
 - C. We must not take that for granted or be trite about it! Earth-shattering events have occurred, and we as the saved are a part of that!
2. How will you respond?
 - A. Has Isaiah's words encouraged you to take a second look at your salvation, to think again about what God has done for you and reevaluate its place and influence in your life?
 - B. Are you *different* because of Christ and the gospel of the kingdom?
 - C. Will you let such magnificent change, such wonderful hope, pass you by in refusing to obey the gospel and come into Christ today by F-R-C-B?