

The Root of Jesse will Reclaim the Remnants a Second Time!

Isaiah 11:1-16 (**vv. 10-16**)

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I. Historical Background & Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

Isaiah rose as a prophet and messenger of God in the southern kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem, carrying forth prophetic visions of God's warnings and the impending judgment upon Israel. His prophetic messages called for Israel to repent and foretold the consequences for the people who persisted in sin.

Among these prophecies, the promise of the "Root of Jesse" stands out as a banner of hope for Israel and all nations. In Isaiah 11, this prophetic vision points to God's redemptive plan through the Messiah, who was to emerge from the seemingly lifeless stump of Jesse, the father of King David.

Isaiah's prophecies were delivered during a turbulent time for Israel and Judah. From the beginning of the book, the prophet Isaiah had warned of God's anger against Israel and Judah. At the time this prophecy was given, the people of Judah were facing the threat of Assyria. God intended to use Assyria as an instrument of His judgment against Israel and Judah (Isaiah 7:18-20), and afterward, He would judge Assyria itself (Isaiah 10:5-19, 25). However, out of judgment comes hope. Even though Israel would suffer destruction at the hands of Assyria, Isaiah assured the people that God would protect and spare a remnant (Isaiah 10:20-22), a faithful group who showed loyalty and faithfulness to God and His covenant. This remnant would consist of those who depended on God's power and supremacy over other nations and human strength and would serve as the foundation for a restored people.

B. Biblical Context

Despite the Israelites' unfaithfulness and disobedience, God's love, grace, and mercy ensured the survival of a faithful remnant. Isaiah's prophecy foresaw that the Messiah would fulfill God's covenant with David, son of Jesse. Recall that in 1 Samuel 16, God directed Samuel to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse, as King of Israel. David is described as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14) for his devotion, obedience, and faithfulness to God and His will. God's promise to David (2 Samuel 7:16), reiterated in Isaiah 11:1, would be fulfilled through his lineage, specifically from the tribe of Judah and the house of Jesse. This lineage paves the way for the Messiah – whom we now as Jesus Christ (Isaiah 11:2, Matthew 3:13-17 vv. 16, Luke 2:47) - who embodies the fullness of the Spirit of the Lord, encompassing wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and reverence for the Lord (Isaiah 11:2-3a). The Messiah, known as the "Root of Jesse," will rule and usher in a new world marked by justice, equity, and righteousness – one that is transformed and revitalized (Isaiah 11:3b-5). In that time, enemies will dwell in harmony (Isaiah 11:6-7), things will peacefully coexist (Isaiah 11:6-8) and the knowledge and reverence of God will permeate every corner of the earth (Isaiah 11:9).

II. The Root of Jesse will Reclaim the Remnants a Second Time! [Isaiah 11:1-16 (vv. 10-16)].

"The Root of Jesse" symbolizes the Messiah - we know is Jesus Christ - who will come from the lineage of Jesse, the father of King David. "Reclaim" means the restoration or gathering of what was lost and scattered, while the "remnants" signify a faithful group. Through this, we discern a divine promise and prophecy that God will intervene once again to gather and revive a loyal remnant of His people through the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Isaiah 11:10-16 reveal the divine nature and remarkable process that will come into fruition and fulfillment as the Messiah reclaims the remnants of His People.

1. **v. 10. The Root of Jesse and Hope for All**

"In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious." – NIV

This powerful scripture foretells the coming of a powerful Messiah, a descendant from King David, who will unite people from all nations under his righteous and glorious rule, bringing peace and prosperity to the world. He will serve as a banner and symbol for all people, not just one specific group or nation, but for all groups and all nations. The Messiah will be visible and recognized as a leader for all people; people from all nations will recognize and accept His influence, authority and power. A time of peace across the world – as nations from all over the world come together and be united under the leadership of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The kingdom in which Jesus Christ will reign will be one of peace, prosperity, and honor.

2. **vv. 11-12. The Gathering and Banner of the Nations.**

"¹¹ In that day, the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnants 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 Mediterranean Sea. ¹² 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." (NIV)

The remnant refers to the groups of faithful people who were scattered across various regions. The prophecy speaks of "that day," a future time when true restoration and a miraculous event will unfold. During this time, the Lord will gather and reclaim the remnants of Israel "a second time," signifying a complete and final restoration. God will again intervene to gather His scattered people from the nations where they have been exiled, bringing them back from those lands in a way like the Exodus from Egypt. Symbolized by a banner, The Messiah's reign will draw people from all nations, unifying His people once again from all corners of the world.

3. v. 13. The Reconciliation of Ephraim and Judah.

“Ephraim’s jealousy will vanish, and Judah’s enemies will be destroyed; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor Judah hostile towards Ephraim.”
(NIV)

This prophecy envisions peace and unity between Ephraim and Judah. The tribes have been in conflict since King Solomon's death, which resulted in the division of the united kingdom into the northern kingdom (Israel or Ephraim) and the southern kingdom (Judah). Isaiah 9:21 shows the conflict between them: Ephraim and Manasseh fought each other and together they fought against Judah. This longstanding conflict between the two kingdoms will finally come to an end, uniting God's people.

4. v. 14. Subduing of Enemies.

“They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west; together they will plunder the people to the east. They will subdue Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them.” (NIV)

The prophecy continues with Ephraim and Judah, now unified, work together to obtain victory over nations that historically opposed Israel. Such nations, like the Philistines and the nations east of Israel, had long-standing wars and conflicts with Israel. The once oppressed Israelites will have full victory. Nations like Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites will be subdued and subjected to Israel. This further adds to the restoration of Israel that was to come – no longer to be oppressed or divided.

5. vv. 15-16. Crossing the Egyptian Sea and The Highway of the Remnant.

“¹⁵ 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 anyone can cross over in sandals. ¹⁶ There will be a highway for the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria as there was for Israel when they come up from Egypt.” (NIV)

The miraculous drying up of the sea and dividing of the river recall the events of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea as they left Egypt and journeyed towards the promised land. Just as this allowed the Israelites to pass through safely, the prophecy foretells that God will once again perform a miraculous drying up of the sea and dividing of the river for the remnants of His people. In biblical context, seven means “completeness” and “abundance”, and here God is ensuring that there is ample time and opportunity for His people to pass safely. This “highway” will provide a clear and safe route for those coming from Assyria back to their homeland.

III. Conclusion

This prophecy holds relevance for us today as we witness God's ongoing redemptive plan for humanity unfolding. It reminds us of God's faithfulness and sovereignty throughout history. Just as God intervened in the past to protect and restore His people, He continues to do that for us every day. It reminds us to stay true to God's teachings and commands, because that is what keeps us under His protection and blessings.

Jesus will return a second time. Are we actively seeking to be part of the faithful remnant living in alignment with God's will? Are we advancing God's kingdom of peace, justice, and righteousness?

In light of these reflections, there are several things we can do:

- Deepen our relationship with God through prayer, study His word, and fellowship.
- Live a life that shows faithfulness, loyalty, and reverence to God.
- Stay hopeful and expectant in God to fulfill His Promises, trust and relying on His timing and power in all things.