

"From Dark Days . . . A Bright Hope"
Isaiah 11:12:6
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Welcome! I've been hearing that many are struggling with this study. You know what? It's ok to be uncomfortable with the study to this point – there's been a lot of Scripture speaking to the reality of God's judgment. The topic of judgment ***should*** make us uncomfortable. ***But*** we as followers of our Lord and Savior have Him to thank that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. He paid the price for ***our*** judgment. In the busyness of life, it is easy to forget all that God has done for us, so this portion of the study is a helpful, albeit sometimes difficult, prodding to render a more consistent attitude of gratitude for His saving works - for His mercy and grace. I don't know about you, but I need the prodding of the Lord – more often than I wish I did. I use the word prodding, but a more Biblical word to describe what some of us are feeling at this point is chastening.

I looked up the definition of Chasten, and it reads, "to correct by punishment or suffering; to cause to be humbler or restrained. Job 5:17 reminds us, "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore, do not despise the chastening of the Almighty." Happy?? Anybody here happy when the Lord is chastening you? For those of us who are struggling with this study, are any of us happy? A better translation of the word "happy" is "blessed." Again – why would we feel blessed by the chastening of the Lord? The writer of Hebrews knows, "For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." (Hebrews 12:6)

I'm not going to stand up here and tell you it's peaches and cream when the Lord is chastening us – it isn't. It hurts! But He wants us to know He's doing it out of love. He wants us to remember that He's with us **ALL THE TIME**. He also wants us to remember that there is GREAT VICTORY to those who ***walk with*** and ***wait on*** Him. Today's reading is going to give us a glimpse into the glorious hope we have in our beloved Creator, Savior, and Friend. Hang in there in everyone – like the title of today's study says, "From Dark Days...A Bright Hope."

Chapter 11 is one of the great Messianic prophecies of Scripture. In the KJV, verse 1 begins with the word - "And" – indicating the connection of Chapters 10 and 11. After going through the tribulation in Chapter 10, we move into the Kingdom age in Chapters 11 & 12. We learned in our homework that Jesse was the father of King David, and the shoot is a symbol of the coming Messiah from David's line. Why does Isaiah refer to the royal line beginning with Jesse and not David? By the time of Jesus, the line of David had sunk back to the level of peasant. There was no longer the "royal" factor of being a part of the line of David. This is what happens when we move away from the Lord and seek the things of this world. We exchange our God-given spiritual royalty – being priests in the Kingdom – for the temporal folly of the pursuit of worldly royalty.

Where do we end up when we do this? Verse 1 tells us we become stumps in the dirt. The word "Branch" is capitalized because the word is *netser* in Hebrew, the word from which we get "Nazarene." As we all should know, Nazareth was a small town in northern Israel where Joseph & Mary raised Jesus – in Matthew 2:23 it tells us they went to Nazareth as it was a fulfillment of prophecy that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.

In verse 2, we hear about the seven-fold spirit which will rest on the Lord Jesus Christ during the Millennium. The number 7 should ring a bell – it is the number of completion – meaning Jesus will have the complete fullness of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit as reigns on the Earth for 1,000 years. The first-fold of the Spirit mentioned is that of the LORD – when we see the LORD capitalized it is literally call God by His name – which we use Yahweh.

The second-fold of the Spirit noted is that of wisdom. 1 Corinthians 1:30 elaborates on this wisdom, "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption." The third-fold of the Spirit is understanding. This is speaking of spiritual discernment. Philippians 1:9-10 helps us better understand this Spirit of understanding, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,"

The fourth-fold of the Spirit is counsel – Jesus never had to ask for advice – He gave it. The fifth-fold of the Spirit is might – speaking of power. The Apostle Paul sheds some light on God's power in Philippians 3:10, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." The sixth-fold of the Spirit is knowledge. This knowledge is the glory of God. 2 Corinthians 4:6 expands on this, "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The seventh and final fold of the Spirit is the fear of the LORD. What begins with the fear of the LORD? Wisdom.

I mentioned Jesus had the fullness of the Holy Spirit. John 3:34 tells us that the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God – God gives the Spirit **without limit**. How "filled" with the Spirit are we? Do we have the ability to completely possess the Holy Spirit – to be totally filled? Jesus was sent by the Father, and He was given the Spirit without limit. Have we been "sent"? In Matthew 28, Jesus gave us the great commission to go and make disciples of all nations, so it appears pretty clear we have been sent.

Since we are sent, we must have the potential of being completely filled by the Holy Spirit like Jesus. Look at the below list:

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

Do these sound like something we would want? I would suggest a primary reason Jesus possessed the fullness of the Spirit was because He actually *went* when He was *sent*. I propose the reason most of us, if not all of us, do not possess the fullness of the Spirit because we haven't gone anywhere or nowhere near where the Lord wants us to be. We know we are sent, but Satan is hell-bent on keeping us from going.

Yet, we have to allow this resistance – we have a choice. If we stay focused on Jesus and truly follow Him and Him alone, Satan will ultimately get out of the way, and we can begin to experience the fullness of life by possessing more and more of the Spirit. This doesn't mean we have to preach the gospel to thousands of people – though we might – God has a plan for each one of us, and He's prepared to equip us with the fullness of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the plan. We just have to go!

In verses 1 & 2, we learned about the Person of the Kingdom. In verses 3-5 we learn of the Purpose of the Kingdom. I broke up these verses a bit, so we could see the things Jesus will be doing as He reigns during the Millennium. It is interesting that His first purpose is to delight in the fear of the Lord. I don't know about you, but I am totally convicted by this – do I delight in the fear of the Lord? Sometimes – but more often than I would like to admit, I do not. That probably explains all the gray hair for this 29-year-old man!!!

His next purpose will be to judge – what a concept – judging with righteousness!! Notably, the first group He will judge will be the needy – the poor of the earth. Personally, I think that judgment will bounce off of many of these people and will move straight to those who had the ability to help the needy and the poor – but didn't.

And that is apparently what is going to happen – He's going to strike the earth with the rod of His mouth. By just Jesus' words, He's going to wipe out the wicked. Do you remember when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane and the soldiers were coming with Judas to take Him? When He identified Himself, His voice knocked these guys on

their keesters. The Word of God is indeed powerful. Notably, righteousness is reiterated – something that is growing more and more void in this fallen world. His faithfulness to His Father and to us is affirmed. It is going to be incredible living in a world ruled by Jesus – I can't wait.

In verses 6-8 we see the tangible evidence of a Christ-ruled world. It truly will be a peace that passes our understanding – as we see the world today. Little Red Riding Hood's wolf and Mary's lamb are going to be hanging out together. The leopard will be lying down with the goat as opposed to snacking on him. Kids will have some amazing pets – Simba, Bambi, and Bossy! Cows will be picnicking with bears instead of being on the BBQ. Little kids will even be playing with lawyers! Uh, I mean snakes. Sound impossible? "I will tell you what I'll do. If you can make a lion, I will make him eat straw." With God nothing is impossible.

In verse 10, we learn of another reference to a name of God. The Lord is my Banner. We first learned of this name in Exodus 15. In Hebrew, the name is called Jehovah-Nissi. This occurred after the nation of Israel had defeated the Amalekites when Aaron and Hur helped keep Moses' arms raised – when they were raised, they gained the victory. Verse 10 tells us Jesus, whose hands were raised on the cross to give us our victory and salvation, will stand as Jehovah-Nissi – as a banner signaling, He is the victor, nations will rally to Him, and – I love this part – "His resting place will be glorious." Anyone here ready for some real rest?

"In that day" – that "day" begins with the tribulation and extends into the Kingdom. The Gentiles will have a part in the millennial Kingdom. Isaiah 11:11: "In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant 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." The first gathering of Israel was with the Zionist movement beginning in the 1800s and concluded in 1948 when Israel became a nation once again. Here we learn of a second gathering where He will assemble the Jews from the four corners of the earth.

"Ephraim" is another name for the 10 northern tribes. After Solomon's reign, there was a civil war and division of Israel. Ephraim was the second son of Joseph, and Jacob "claimed" Manasseh and Ephraim as his making them part of the tribes of Israel. Edom was another name for Esau – Jacob's brother, and these people were always against God's chosen ones. The Moabites and the Ammonites descended from Moab and Ben Ammi – the sons produced from Lot's – Abraham's nephew - incestual relationship with his daughter.

In these verses, we see another example of the breadth of the redemption that was purchased with the blood of the Lamb. Not just individual souls are redeemed but nations and property as well. Isaiah 11:15: "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." The wind was what was used to part the Red Sea in the Exodus, and we see the wind at work again as the Euphrates River is broken into seven small streams to make it crossable by foot. We again see the number 7 – the symbol of Completion. We see God's complete control over nature allowing His people to return safely.

Isaiah 11:16: "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." This highway speaks of God's desire to remove all obstacles in the way of His people's return to Him. Matthew spoke about John the Baptist's mission being similar in Matthew 3:3, "This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

Moving into chapter 12 we read in verse 1, "In that day you will say: 'I will praise you, Lord. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.'" From Chapter 7, there have been a series of prophecies beginning with the judgment of God upon His people. In Isaiah 11 we saw that the kingdom would be established on earth and that the Lord Jesus would reign personally. Chapter 12 is a high note – the Tribulation is past, and the storms of life are all over – now they're worshiping and singing praises to God. One of the messages we should be gleaning from Isaiah so far is that God is only angry for a season. Whether it is due to His anger or the loving induced chastisement I mentioned earlier, there is always God's mercy and grace – ALWAYS.

Isaiah 12:2 is an example of where I am baffled at the Jews rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. It doesn't get clearer than this than plainly stating that salvation only comes from God. *Jehovah-shuah* means "Jehovah is salvation." Jehovah was shortened to Joshua. Joshua is the Hebrew form of the Greek name, Jesus. So, this time, in the Kingdom age, the Jews will get it – they will acknowledge Jesus is their salvation. Salvation is a person.

Isaiah 12:3: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." John 4:13 tells us, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again," The world's water doesn't satisfy us – it just makes us thirstier. Not so with the well of the Lord. The wells speak of abundance. Our exhibition of the joy of the Lord and His salvation is our greatest witness to Him. The Psalmist confirms the promise of joy to those of us going through difficult times in Psalm 30:5, "For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." The final 3 verses of Chapter 12 exhort the nation of Israel – now under the confession of Jesus as their Messiah to praise God, proclaim His name; make Him known to all nations; and shout and sing for joy because they are at last with their Messiah.

I'm now going to go all the way back to verse 1 and start again!! Just kidding. To refresh your memories, it says, "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from

his roots a Branch will bear fruit." As I read this verse in the NIV and other versions of the Bible, I began to think about these and other references to plant life when describing God in the Scriptures. I wanted to share with you with something that I think is pretty cool –I call it the "Life Cycle of the Plant of God" I am going to reference many Scriptures through this, so I have made copies of this section – they're at the entrances. So, for those of you taking notes, you can just sit back and listen.

Just as it is with any plant, for a plant to grow, it must first start with a seed. We first learn of a seed from God in the third chapter of Genesis when God is pronouncing his judgment on Satan in serpent form where He promises Eve's Seed, "Genesis 3:15: And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." (NKJV) Notice the capital "S" – will bruise his head. Later in Genesis 22:18, God, rewarding Abraham for his faithfulness, promises that in his seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Genesis 22:18: "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (NKJV)

Jumping to the Gospels, we remember the Parable of the Sower of the seed. In Luke 8:11, the parable is explained – that the seed is the word of God. Finally, the seed is revealed in Galatians 3:16, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made." He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. (NKJV) Once the seed is planted, the next step in its growth is to take root.

In our reading today, we learned about the Root of Jesse, and we also learned that Jesse was King David's father. Later in Isaiah we will read in the great Messianic Chapter 53 about how the Messiah will grow up before the Father as a tender plant – as a root out of dry ground. Jesus Himself in Revelation 22 will name Himself as the Root and the Offspring of David. From the root of the plant develops a stem – other versions call it a Rod or a shoot.

In the first verse of chapter 11, we learned about the shoot, or in the NKJV – the Rod, will come forth from the stem of Jesse. Again, the stem of Jesse refers to Jesus. From the Rod/Stem the plant develops into a vine. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of a noble vine in chapter 2, verse 21 – a seed of the highest quality. Jesus will again reveal another name for Himself in the 15th chapter of John's Gospel – that He is the true vine. From the vine the plant becomes the Branch.

In Zechariah 3:8 – we hear about God bringing forth His Servant – the Branch. "Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign;^[1]_{SEP} For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH." (NKJV) Jeremiah, in the 23rd chapter of his book, tells us God will raise to David a Branch of righteousness – that He'll be a King that will reign and prosper – executing judgment and righteousness in the earth. In verse 4 of chapter 11, the concept of the Messiah judging in righteousness is confirmed. Back in Isaiah 4:2, we learned that the

Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious. By saying "in that day" – it is speaking of the Day of the Lord – the day the Messiah will be ruling and reigning.

So, we've seen the plant of God grow from the Seed into a Root into a Rod/Stem then into a Vine and ultimately into the Branch – each stage growing more developed and stronger. Who did see at each stage of the process? Jesus. We remember in the first chapter of Genesis – in the story of creation – that creation was designed to reproduce itself - Genesis 1:11: "Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself." So how does a plant reproduce itself?

Jesus presents us this important response in John 12:24, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." (NKJV) So, for the life cycle of a plant to occur, the seed must die before it becomes fruitful. God designed creation to live, and we've seen He's at every stage of our growth. But when sin entered the world, death came with it, and death was not part of His original plan. God is a faithful God, and He loves to give life – and He has the power to restore life. So, just as He was at every stage of growth in life, so is He at the necessary stage to bring new life.

With God, death brings life. John 5:21: "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will." (NKJV) And how does God give life to those who are dead as a result of sin?

John 3:5-6: "Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (NKJV)

John 6:63: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life." (NKJV)

Oh, the power of God – the love of God. We see in His creation His love – He doesn't want us to sit still – He wants us to grow, and He's going to be with us EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. Even when there's a death – He's there with us – He's there to hold us and then lift us up into new life. For those of us who already call on the name of the Lord as our Savior, we will have death-like experiences in life. There's no promise of a pain free life in a sin-filled world. But there is a promise from the Giver of life and the Redeemer of life – He loves you, and He is with you. As Jesus said, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." Let's pray.