

**International Sunday School Lesson  
Study Notes  
September 4, 2016**

**Lesson Text: Isaiah 11:1-9  
Lesson Title: The Kingdom of Peace**

**Introduction**

Ever since Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, man has dreamed of a perfect and peaceful world in which to live. That dream has never become a reality. Every attempt by man to build or create such a place has ended in failure. But someday there will be a real and perfect place, far better than any place man has ever imagined. It will be the Kingdom of our King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the most beautiful and encouraging passages in all the word of God is Isaiah 11:1-9. The promises contained in this chapter has been the hope of God's people for centuries. The passage is loaded with powerful metaphors used to tell us about a coming Messiah and a coming time when peace will reign and strife and division shall be no more.

The coming kingdom of peace is to be brought about by the coming of Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. When Messiah comes, He "shall not judge" by what his eyes see, or make decisions by "the hearing of his ears;" but with "righteousness he shall judge the poor," and deal with "the meek and the poor" in fairness.

**The King: Qualifications (Isaiah 11:1-3a)**

The context of Isaiah 11 actually begins in Isaiah 7 with King Ahaz's plan to deliver Judah from the King of Israel and the King of Syria to the north. His plan is to go to the powerful empire of Assyria and get her to help Judah defeat Israel and Syria. God sent the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz and commanded him not to make an alliance with Assyria. Although King Ahaz did not ask for a sign confirming God's promise, God, in His mercy, gave him the sign of the virgin birth of Christ.

The entire section from Isaiah 7 to Isaiah 11 has to do with King Ahaz leading Judah down a path to disaster, and yet God in His sovereignty is working His plan to send the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Savior, and King.

Verse 1

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:"

The prophet Isaiah presents the messianic hope throughout his prophecy (Isaiah 2:1-4; 4:1-6; 7:14; 9:1-6). In our lesson text, the prophecy comes to full revelation. Messiah will “come forth” from “a rod out of the stem of Jesse.” “Jesse” was the father of King David. This “rod out of the stem of Jesse” is of course a reference to David and the royal line from which Messiah comes.

The house of David had diminished into the condition of a “stem” or stump. The kings were faithless and the nations followed their spiritual leadership. The nation was in rebellion. Isaiah saw the royal lineage deteriorating and compared it to a tree cut down and rotting away. It appeared the end had come and the royal lineage was finished. But God is faithful and God would send Messiah from the fallen house of David.

Although Messiah would enter this world as a twig, he would grow into “a Branch out of his roots.” This “twig” had an insignificant and humble beginning but grew into “a Branch.” This “Branch” grew out of the stump of the faithless house of David. This “Branch” was everything the kings of Israel failed to be. He was the fulfillment of everything a king was supposed to be. That is the hope of God’s people.

Salvation would not come from the house of David because of his success and accomplishments. Salvation would come from the house of David because God is faithful to His promises even when men are unfaithful.

## Verse 2

“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;”

This “rod” and “Branch” described in verse 1 is now personalized as an individual rule, the Messiah Himself! Isaiah prophesies the Messiah’s ability to be everything He needs to be. First, “the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him” describes Messiah’s *spiritual life*. The nation of Israel was aware of the significance of the Holy Spirit for personal and national survival. The tabernacle and the priesthood were dependent upon the presence of the Holy Spirit. The coming Messiah will not be spiritually barren like King Ahaz and the Jewish leaders before him.

The greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon Messiah which identified Him as the true “Branch” (Luke 4:1, 14, 18). Commenting on the Spirit of the LORD resting upon Messiah, Alexander Maclaren observed: “There has never been but one man capable of receiving and retaining the whole fullness of the Spirit of God” (Colossians 2:9).

Second, “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” describes Messiah’s *intellectual life*. Messiah will have an unusual mind, a mind able to perceive things correctly. He will make correct decisions from the right motivation and for the right reason. Isaiah’s statement here concerning Messiah’s *spiritual* and *intellectual* life bears a striking similarity to his prophesy describing the divine child in Isaiah 9:6.

### Verse 3a

“And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD...”

The phrase “And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD” means Messiah delights or is extremely sensitive to the fear of God. “Quick understanding” literally means “to smell.” The coming King will delight in the “fear of the LORD” in the same manner one delights in the fresh aroma of flowers.

This king will rule with integrity. He will be different from King Ahaz and all the other kings who ruled in Israel. He will truly “fear the LORD.” There will be no crooked politics or talking out of both sides of the mouth with Messiah.

The reason men cannot rule properly today is because they have no “fear of the LORD.” Messiah will know God and He will stand in awe of God. He is going to delight in fearing God. Unlike King Ahaz, His character will be perfect, above reproach.

### **The King: Operation (Isaiah 11:3b-5)**

#### Verse 3b-4

“...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 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.”

The words of verses 3b-4 teach us the government of the coming king will not be conducted by political correctness or personal biases. Messiah will “not judge after the sight of his eyes” or the “hearing of his ears.” His judgment will be based upon more than external appearances and information. Trusting Assyria for help may have looked good to King Ahaz, but it was not what it appeared to be.

The coming King will not judge by sight or sound. He will judge “with righteousness, equity, and fairness. He will judge rightly the “meek of the earth” and the “poor.” In other words, the coming King will have more love and

concern for people than King Ahaz or any other king or government. Like many of our national and local leaders today, Ahaz never gave a second thought to the danger he was putting the people in nationally, economically, militarily, spiritually, and personally by trusting in Assyria to protect them rather than the Lord.

“And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” Messiah’s rule will be with great authority and through the power of His Word. John the Revelator wrote, *“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”* (Revelation 19:15).

When the coming King speaks His Word will bring the “wicked” into obedience to Jesus Christ. This is not a casual conversion of men to Christ. It is the aggressive intervention of God in the lives of men and women who have intentionally and purposefully rejected God’s truth. The King’s spoken Word will judge sinful man.

#### Verse 5

“And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”

Like a “girdle” or belt attached to one’s body, the “righteousness” and “faithfulness” of Messiah is inseparable from everything He will do. Messiah will be ready for whatever He faces when He comes to establish His kingdom upon the earth. His “righteousness” and “faithfulness,” like a belt, will hold together the spiritual greatness of His kingdom.

#### **The King: Restoration (Isaiah 11:6-9)**

#### Verse 6-8

“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.”

Isaiah prophesies what the world will be like when King Jesus reigns. Based on Isaiah’s prophesy, the world is going to be under God’s hand of blessing. What a glorious day that will be!

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and young lion and the fatling together...” means dangerous animals will no longer eat domesticated animals! In our sin cursed world, “wolves” and “lambs” do not “dwell” or “lie down” together. But in Christ’s kingdom wolves will dwell with sheep, and they will not eat them. Leopards will lie down with goats and calves; lions with young cows; little children will lead these animals in the pastures. Cows and bears will live in harmony. Nursing children will play with cobras and weaned children will put their hand on the viper’s den and they will not be hurt. This is a picture of the blessed reign of the Messiah in a restored heavens and earth where the fullness of God’s favor has come to rest on His people.

The picture Isaiah paints for us is of a restored universe. When the King comes to reign the curse of Eden will be removed. The blessings of the Garden of Eden will be restored.

### Verse 9

“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.”

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” is a reference to the normally dangerous and wild animals described in the previous verse. In the coming kingdom “they shall not hurt nor destroy” anyone in Zion or Jerusalem.

At that time “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” There is coming a day when everyone shall know about Jehovah God and know God personally. Today, our sinful world teaches false doctrine and promotes man-made gods that do not exist. In the glorious future day when Christ reigns as King, there will be no lawsuits by the American Civil Liberties Union to prohibit teaching creation or a Christian boy or girl speaking of Jesus Christ in a commencement speech.

The “earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” This means “knowledge of Jehovah” will pervade every crevice and cavern. Not only will a remnant of people in Israel and Judah be introduced to the divine Messiah, but the day is coming when Messiah shall rule the entire world.

### **Conclusion**

The prophecies we have just studied are yet future for the Jews and the Gentiles. Isaiah prophecies about these events in greater detail in the later chapters of his prophesy. But that is future our future as believers. We have a glorious future ahead. There is coming a kingdom of justice, peace, and safety on the earth all covered with the knowledge of God.

Christ will be the center of the coming Kingdom. He is the Lord of Lords and the Prince of Peace. All who have trusted Him for salvation will see Him, know Him, and worship Him forever. That should be what we long for and pray for. In fact, Jesus told us to pray, "*Thy kingdom come...*" (Matthew 6:10).

What should we be doing while we pray and wait for our Lord's return? Jesus said we should live as kingdom children now before a lost world. We are to show Christ to them, love them as He loves them, and deal justly with them as He would deal with them (Colossians 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:12).

Christ is coming again. That is certain. The way to prepare for His coming is to be saved by His grace. If you have been saved, live now in light of the truth of the coming kingdom.

Amen.