

ISAIAH: **THE GLORY OF GOD IN A WORLD OF CHAOS**

Part 4: “Our Future Hope”

Isaiah 10:33-11:10

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September 6, 2020 (Ordinary Time)

Scripture Reading

“Behold, the Lord GOD of hosts will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the great in height will be hewn down, and the lofty will be brought low. He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon will fall by the Majestic One. There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. 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 the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious” (Isaiah 10:33–11:10, ESV).

Heavenly Father, you alone are the everlasting God who has the authority and power to bring life out of death. As we look into your words, may your Holy Spirit shine light into our darkness, so that we might place our hope in Jesus Christ, who is your Son and our King. It is in his mighty name we pray, AMEN.

Introduction

Isaiah lives in a world that is falling apart.

Particularly, Isaiah chapters 7 through 12 are situated within an event remembered in the history of the Ancient Near East as the Syro-Ephraimite War (736-732 B.C.) [\[show](#)

the Assyrian Empire]. The brutal Assyrian Empire is invading the people of the Promise Land. By the end of this conflict, the nation of Syria has fallen. The Northern Kingdom of Israel – a nation composed of 10 of the twelve tribes of God’s chosen people – has fallen.

In chapter 10 of his book, Isaiah, the prophet compares this situation to a mighty and ancient forest being laid bare (Isa 10:33-34). Trees that have stood for hundreds of years have now been cut down, never to rise again.

It is during this time that the people of the southern kingdom of Judah are asking the question: will we soon be chopped down by Assyria too? The answer that God gives through Isaiah is not exactly what they want to hear.

Judah will not fall by the hand of Assyria. But one day, Judah will fall. One day even Assyria will fall. However, the stump of the fallen tree of Judah will produce a sprout, which will turn into a kingdom that knows no end.

Instead of just focusing on the events of the 8th century B.C., Isaiah is given a vision of God’s plan for human history.

Many kingdoms will rise. Many kingdoms will fall. And, God wants his people to know, if our hope is contingent upon any kingdom of this world, our hope is doomed to fail. But if our hope is rooted in the kingdom of God, our hope is invincible.

Thus, this section of Isaiah is showing us a vision of hope that we too desperately need to see and believe; the hope that history has a plan and a purpose; the hope that the end of the story for God’s people is one of joy and triumph; the hope that one day the powers of evil will come to an end. In Scripture, this hope is referred to as New Creation – it is the time when Jesus returns as king and makes all things new.

It is so easy to place our hope in things that will disappoint and fail us, whether they be jobs or achievements or relationships or comforts or experiences or circumstances. Right now, in this election year, politicians are trying their best to convince us to place our hope in them. But *Isaiah 11 is showing us that we cannot place our ultimate hope in any kingdom of man. Our ultimate hope must be in the kingdom of God, and the New Creation that will come as a result of the kingdom of God.*

Exposition

Our text shows us the hope of New Creation in three ways: 1.) *The Hope of the Power of God*, 2.) *The Hope of the Peace of God*, and 3.) *The Hope of the Presence of God*.

1. The Hope of the Power of God.

Isaiah’s vision of New Creation is a vision of radical change and renewal. It is a change that comes about because there has been a change in regime. It is something that can

only be accomplished by the miraculous power of God as exerted through God's chosen King.

Look for a moment at verses one and ten of chapter eleven. They are the two verses that frame our Scripture reading today with a prophetic glimpse of this promised King:

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit...In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:1, 10, ESV).

The Old Testament book of 1 Samuel shows us that Jesse is the father of David. David will become the greatest ancient king of God's people and the originator of the Davidic dynasty, which rule the southern kingdom of Judah. "The stump of Jesse" refers to the royal line of King David that will end when the kingdom of Judah is destroyed. Like a dead tree chopped down to the ground, the kingdom of Judah will fall. But the promise is that from the place of death, new life will come. A shoot shall come forth from this dead stump. It will grow into a mighty tree and bear fruit. And this mighty tree will stand as a signal to call to the peoples of every tribe and nation unto salvation.

We learn from the New Testament that Jesus is this descendant of David (Rev. 22:16). He is the shoot that came from the stump of Jesse. He is the power of new life that has come out of death and decay. He is the powerful king destined to bring about the peace of New Creation. And today, the "tree" of his cross stands as a universally recognized symbol and signal that summons all to salvation. It stands as *the true and better tree of life* because the curse of the sin and evil has been broken, and the blessing of a greater Eden has dawned.

The text of Isaiah 11 continues in verse 2 to illustrate why Jesus alone is worthy not just to be a king, but the king above *all* kings: *"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 the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins" Isaiah (11:2-5).*

These words are written in a time when the nation of Judah was used to very weak and selfish rulers who were powerless to bring about any real change. But the king that is coming is a good king and a powerful king. He will bring about what no man could ever hope to accomplish. The High King, above all other kings, is coming. The Creator is reclaiming his creation! As Pastor Ray Ortlund has commented on this passage: *"Unlike every other human leader in the sorry length of our history, Jesus is literally qualified*

to rule the world. We have nothing to fear from him. We are foolish to resist him. We can never be too loyal to him."¹

This is really good news, but it has really humbling ramifications on our pride. While we must, as God's people, seek to live righteously and justly, we cannot heal ourselves or our brokenness in our own strength. At the end of the day, our hope cannot rest in chasing the significance, the salary or the success that we think will make our world okay. To hope in the power of God is to let go of any hope that we have in ourselves to be our own saviors by our own self-effort. But O how glorious it is to give up this fool's errand! How freeing it is to let go of the worry, let go of the control, let go of the bitterness that shackles us when we think that we are our ultimate hope.

The vision of the gospel is a vision of hope that is gloriously outside and beyond us; a hope in a true and better Savior King, who is mighty and has the power to save.

This is the hope of the power of God.

2. The Hope of the Peace of God.

The vision of New Creation is a vision of the end of violence, war, and sickness. It is a vision of the death of death. But we are so accustomed to the brokenness of creation that such a renewed world seems unimaginable. Here Scripture intentionally sounds impossible and absurd. Yet these are the words of Scripture: *"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain..."* (Isaiah 11:6-9a).

Now in prophetic writing, these images children and animals are not meant to convey literal realities. Rather, they are working on a metaphorical level that the people of Judah would have easily understood. Specifically, these images of predatory animals living in harmony with weaker animals and children are likely representative of peace between nations of the world, and overall peace and harmony within creation itself. The big idea is that New Creation is a time when God will renew his good creation, forever remove the stain of sin and evil, and he will right all wrongs. Toward the end of Isaiah's book, the prophet even proclaims, *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress"* (65:17-19).

¹ Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. and R. Kent Hughes, *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 114.

Now, this is profound because even in the midst of profound suffering and profound pain, we can have a hope of true peace and true justice. The hope of the gospel is that one day the world will be put to rights, and creation will become what it should be.

And you cannot have this hope without the Kingdom of God. This is a hope that secular materialism knows nothing of. If our world is nothing more than matter in motion, at the end of the day, the universe is coldly indifferent to pain and suffering. Evil is an arbitrary and subjective term.

But if this reality is not just matter in motion, if there is a Creator who stands independent from his creation and has initiated a rescue of it, then we have a real hope. We have hope that though our suffering is real, there is a good ending to this story. There will be a day when all wrongs are made right, and, in the words of J.R.R. Tolkien, “*all sad things become untrue.*”

This is hope of the peace of God.

3. The Hope of the Presence of God.

The biblical vision of New Creation is profoundly spiritual *and* material. It is not a picture of the church going up into a disembodied heaven. But rather, as Revelation 21 tells us, it is a picture of heaven coming down and God making his dwelling with man. The hope of New Creation is that God will be present with us!

And why is this possible? It is possible because, “*...the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea*” (Isaiah 11:9b). There will not be a square inch of this world where God is not fully known as the Sovereign Savior.

For the Christian, this means that our greatest final hope is that we will one day fully know the One we have worshipped all these years. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, “*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known*” (1 Corinthians 13:12, ESV).

My wife Kate and I had a long-distance relationship when we were dating. She was living in Ohio, and I was in the great state of Texas. When we knew that we were in love and that we were going to get married, it was a time of happiness, but also a time of tension. It was a joy to know that soon we were going to be together and live with one another and be married, but during that season, we were still separated by over a thousand miles. All we had were emails and letters and phone conversations, and a few moments we could spend with one another while visiting each other. And don't get me wrong. I treasured our letters. I've still saved all the letters Kate wrote to me during that time. And the highlight of my day was when I could hear her voice over the phone. I cherished the moments we shared in one another's presence when we got to visit each other, but I wanted the day to come when I would never have to leave her again. I wanted to live with her, and I would have sacrificed *anything* for that desire to come true. So, when our wedding day came, it was a joy because I knew that I was now going to get to spend the rest of my life with the bride God had given me.

In the same way, we don't have the fullness of Jesus with us yet. But we have his words that we can treasure. We have his Spirit that will speak to us. And we even have those special moments when we feel his presence among us. But there is more. One day, for those who are redeemed, we will see him face to face. One day, we will never be separated from him again! And the Bible says no fear or pain or suffering—no matter how severe—is even worthy of being compared to the glorious joy that will be revealed in our lives on that day (Rom 8:18).

And the only reason we can hope in that day is because there was One who was willing to sacrifice anything to be united with us. If his love is so powerful that it would go through death and back again, can you imagine the joy that you would experience in His presence? Can you imagine the peace and validation and fulfillment you would feel? Let me just tell you: you can't adequately imagine it. Your wildest imaginations fall short of the capacity to envision the joy of the total presence of Almighty God. But the good news is, if you are saved in Christ Jesus, one day you won't have to imagine. It will be your reality. It is a hope that will not put us to shame (Rom 5:5). The deepest desire you have is to be fully known and fully loved. If you are a Christian, this desire will be realized when you finally see Jesus face to face.

This is the hope of the presence of God.

Conclusion

Like the people of Judah, we too have a very real temptation to place our hope in the kingdoms of men. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis, we have set our hopes too low, not too high. The Lord finds our desires too weak, not too strong. We are like children satisfied making mud-pies in slums when we've been invited to a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased.

In such an intense election season, like the one we are in right now, we need to be convinced of the truth of new creation more than anything else. Kingdoms will rise, and kingdoms will fall. Political parties and presidencies will rise and fall.

Knowing this, we must not messianic expectations on political outcomes.

Despite all the apocalyptic language that is being thrown around by politicians and pundits right now, you need to know this. If your party wins, it will not bring New Creation. If your party loses, it will not disrupt New Creation from coming.

Politics can be a good thing, but it can never be an ultimate thing – they can never be our ultimate hope. At best, politics are a flawed coping mechanism for navigating the brokenness of a fallen world. Politics can never save our souls. Therefore, politics must not be our highest love or our highest allegiance.

All kingdoms of men will fail and fall. But the kingdom of God is coming. It will not fail. And this is our sure foundation for a future hope because the one who promised us is faithful and true (Rev 21:5).

So, Redeemer Christian Church, in an age when the kingdoms of man are vying for our allegiance, our hope, and our love, may we be a people who place our hope in the power of God, the peace of God, and the presence of God. May we be a people who have eyes to see the future hope of New Creation!

Discussion Starters for Gospel Community

- 1. Read Isaiah 10:33-11:10. Summarize the big ideas of this passage as best you can in your own words.*
- 2. Isaiah chapters 7 through 12 were written in the context of the Syro-Ephraimite War (736-732 B.C.). This was a time of great chaos and unrest. In this trying time, Isaiah gives a vision of great hope. But this hope is not located in a temporary political or military outcome for the kingdom of Judah. Rather, Isaiah's hope is a vision of New Creation. How might the hope of New Creation apply to our current circumstances?*
- 3. Compare Isaiah 11:1 and Isaiah 11:10. What do these verses have in common? How does Jesus fulfill this Old Testament prophecy?*

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