

Both a Branch and the Root of Jesse

Isa. 11:1-5 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 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. His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.

To grasp the intent of what Isaiah is saying here in chapter 11 one must first look at the last two verses of chapter 10 where we read of a great forest being reduce to nothing, *"Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, will lop off the bough with terror; those of high stature will be hewn down, and the haughty will be humbled. He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One."* Isaiah here is speaking of the soon coming destruction of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The former glorious **earthly kingdom** of David will be no more for this **earthly kingdom** had been a conditional covenant of promise based upon obedience. Yet, time and time again these descendants of Abraham had rebelled against God in dreadful rebellion. Again and again they had become idolaters and had turned away from serving the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to serving gods of wood and stone. And how often they showed disrespect by despising and even killing the prophets that God had sent to warn them. One cannot help but to think of the words of our Lord when He cried out, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"* (Matt 23:37-38)

Without question, God had been more than long suffering with them. In particular thinking of that horrible act of their hatred toward God when after God had sent Zachariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who warned them, *"Thus God says: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, He also has forsaken you.'" So they conspired against him, and at the **command of the king** they stoned him with stones **in the court of the house of the Lord.** (2 Chron. 24:20-21) Did not our Lord Jesus Christ recount the history of the ungodly that were guilty of *"shedding the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered **between the temple and the altar.**"* (Matt 23:35)*

Therefore Isaiah in picturesque language speaks of the soon coming end of David's **earthly throne** by the scene of a great forest cut down with just the stumps of trees left by the hand of Almighty God. And note carefully Nebuchadnezzar may have been one of the instruments God used, but the destruction and end of David's earthly throne came about by the hand of God Himself, for we read, *"The Lord of hosts will lop off the bough with terror; those of high stature will be hewn down, and the haughty will be humbled."* (Isa 10:33) Yet Isaiah gives comfort to the elect remnant for while speaking of the final destruction of the earthly throne of David he continues to give them the promise of a coming King and a kingdom that will cover the earth and be eternal in the heavens. Let us then consider this passage under these three headings, 1. The continuing King 2. The character of this continuing lineage of Jesse. 3. And the righteous rule of this coming Priest and King.

A. The Continuing King

1. First picture a forest cut down and seemingly without life, just rotting, decaying stumps
2. Then while walking through this former forest with only stumps left you see one stump with a stem growing out of it
 - a. What a glorious picture of the coming Christ
 - b. For indeed He will be insignificant in the eyes of the world
 - c. Born in Bethlehem, one of the smallest towns of Judah
 - d. Laid in a manger
 - e. Returning from Egypt He grew up in the lowly city of Nazareth
 - f. The great lineage of David had become a family of lowly humble, hard working peasants

Mark 6:3 Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

- g. The world indeed overlooks this insignificant stem, but to us, His chosen ones we marvel that the Lord of heaven and earth became poor for our sakes

2 Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

- h. Indeed our Redeemer is born of the lineage, the stump of Jesses
 - (1) A King from David's lineage
 - (2) At the same time a King yet separate from David's kingdom

- i. And we know this passage speaks of Jesus for we have the witness of the Apostle Paul

Rom 15:12 Isaiah says: "There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope."

- 3. But immediately we observe an apparent dilemma in this passage for we read that He is both from the stem of Jesse and at the same time the root of Jesse?
 - a. How can He be from Jesse and at the same time the cause or the root of Jesse's existence?
 - b. Yet we know that He is proclaimed to be so by the elders around the throne of heaven

*And one of the elders said to me, do not weep: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, **the Root of David**, has prevailed to open the book, and to loosen the seven seals thereof. (Rev 5:5)*

- c. Jesus Himself in the Book of Revelation uses that same descriptive speech regarding Himself

*I, Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you of these things in the churches. **I am the root and the offspring of David** and the bright and morning star. (Rev 22:16)*

- d. The answer is simply this, He is both truly Man and truly God
- e. As man He was born of the virgin therefore He came forth from Jesse
- f. At the same time being truly God He was before Jesse
- g. As God He is the very root of Jesse, the Creator of heaven and earth
- h. The very one that brought Jesse into existence

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

- i. He was the very one that removed Saul from the throne and placed David upon that very throne.
- j. This is explained for us by John the Baptist who was born in time before Jesus and yet fully aware that Christ was before Him.

*"This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, **for He was before me.**'" John 1:15*

- k. That one who was born in Bethlehem is from everlasting.

Mic 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

Thus we may well conclude - Jesus is both the stem and the root

The offspring of Jesse and at the same time the very source of Jesse existence

Isa. 11:1-5 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

We have seen that Jesus is indeed this stem and this root of Jesse

It has been proclaimed to be so by the Apostle Paul
By the elders around the throne of heaven
And finally by our Lord Himself

And we have seen how in great detail our Lord is carefully presented to us in the Old Testament

And in such a way, that no other than Jesus could, without question, be the Christ

For none other than Jesus the Christ, could be both the stem and the root of Jesse

None other than one who is both truly God and truly Man could be Jesus Christ our Lord

And finally we can only marvel at such love that would provide such love

That "Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider His equality with God something to be held on to, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Phil 2:5-9

And why would our great God and Savior Jesus Christ do this for us?

The only answer is, that He loved us and "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people. (Titus 2:13-14)

Rejoice dear flock of Christ, for there could be no greater love, no greater salvation.