

The glory of Christ is our peace and our proclamation.

Isaiah 11:1-16

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All other things we think are glorious will be left to ruin and only in Christ do we find what we crave, what we ache for, and as a people, we will run after nothing else.

I love dystopian fantasies. Hear me out. The books, stories, and films that paint a future reality where something just isn't right. It fascinates me that there really isn't a market for "utopian fantasies" because every time we form a story about the reformed, enlightened future, with its gadgets and dreamscapes, we can't help but see ruin.

We know human nature (whether we believe what God has to say about it), so every story of the appearance of utopia is tainted by an undercurrent of darkness. The controlling, exploiting, perversion we expect corrupts the dream, the expectation.

But for all our attempts to dream up different realities, or wallow in a dystopian existence there is a coming future not sourced in human cunning or enlightenment but by God.

Better than we could imagine. Sweeter than we have a taste for now. More amazing than any dream that stirs us. And we see a picture of this future in Isaiah 11. The promise fulfilled in the middle of warnings of judgment, cracking open heaven meeting earth. The grand renewal of the earth when the wrath of God has its say and the grace of Christ reigns for eternity.

The imagery of it comes in the midst of destruction.

Isaiah 10:33–34 "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. [34] He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon will fall by the Majestic One." (ESV)

The nation used by the hand of God to judge Israel will itself be cut down with an axe - to nothing left. It follows the rendering of Israel and Judah really to a wasteland... a bad place, a dystopia.

Despair, kingdoms destroyed, cities thrown down. Then in slides a prophetic picture of something amazing. And it is meant for us, as a beacon calling us home, a sure thing, the very glory of Christ that is and will be our peace and is our proclamation.

The picture is of a person, a peace, and a path. And these things shape us, so let's set out to be shaped by it because it is where real humanity thrives.

As we walk through this garden of grace that is Isaiah 11, we must keep in mind Prophetic perspective at play (mountain range, they all look like one but as you get closer there is depth).

Meant to stoke present God-centered righteousness, a life of trusting in him, and give the now and forthcoming relief of all suffering - especially eternal suffering.

1) Person

Nothing is left but a stump... an image of the demise of the forest, even the uselessness of the royal line by this point. But from the ruin, from the missed life and disregard of God would come a shoot. New growth is coming.

To those being carted off into exile, looking back and seeing only waste, this is a branch of new life... budding with fruit. The line is not broken and a son is on his way. Unexpected, poor... an unlikely person from an unlikely place.

Revealing the Messiah, the perfect king promised to God's people, to redeem Israel once and for all. To produce the perfect place for them, with them, forever.

Can't-miss it for a second when the prophet says The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. This is surely the Anointed One, this is the Christ.

A full portion of the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and the reverence, awe of God.

Not a momentary spark from the Spirit to do a task but the indwelling fullness of power. His delight is in the fear of the Lord - to do the Father's will and give him glory.

We step back from the mountain range and we can see another height that arrives in history... the way prepared for this Anointed One.

Matthew 3:11–12 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. [12] His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” (ESV)

Matthew 3:16–17 “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; [17] and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (ESV)

I can't imagine a more credible recommendation!

And beginning his ministry, Jesus goes to the synagogue in Nazareth and reads from the scroll of Isaiah...

Luke 4:18–21 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, [19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” ...

[20] And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. [21] And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (ESV)

What Isaiah is saying is sprouting, comes. To rescue people from sin and death.

One who will be the righteous judge of all of humanity. That will strike the earth with the truth he speaks - his creative voice unleashing judgment... caring for the poor and the meek of the earth. Those being carted off to exile and those that would be lost in oppression and bondage for generations to come.

The ultimate judge, the true and forever king. Who rules with strength, with mind-boggling longevity!

Not like our dystopian rulers... “Christ is clothed not with the trappings of human ego but with righteousness and faithfulness.”

It is the person of Jesus we believe in and place our trust and surrender to as Lord. And we can and will say more about him, but we have to see what he brings, where he leads.

2) Peace

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat...” those once predators will be at peace with those once prey and a little child shall lead them. Snakes won't bite, play untainted, unrestricted.

To those living as prey before a ferocious warring nation... this means unexplainable peace. No harmful thing, the hunt is over.

All of existence covered in the knowledge of the Lord.

Isaiah uses the imagery of his time to make one point: the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD. The One whom Israel rejected as unhelpful renews the world and there will be no doubting it.

Another mountain peak in this prophetic range - so we don't know the timing, but we know it is coming as sure as the branch has come!

We have a hard time contemplating what it will be like - but it will be glorious when it comes. Creation as was designed to be. Infants will be snake-handlers and the weird kind! And I am dancing with all the pigeons!

Imagine the hope it instilled in Judah and Israel's faithful. It is meant to do that same in us.

This is our destination... not produced by our ingenuity or advancement but by the king of the universe.

"The one anointed with the Spirit is the only one able to renew nature. He made this world. He loves it. He will transform it, so that "nature, red in tooth and claw" will be restful, secure, innocent. Every square inch of the world will be the "Holy mountain" of the Lord." RO

The Messiah will establish a perfect renewal of the earth in that his peace extends even to nature; all men will know God.

"When the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, the scars of our ugly utopias will disappear forever under the overflowing healing of Christ." RO

This will cement our awe of God then, and it should stoke it now.

This fuels our lives now, in what seems like desolation, wondering when the kingdom will break loose... it's coming and we can carry on because it is the home Jesus is bringing us to!

Like waiting months for girl scout cookies... We endure because we know the sweetness to come. To get over the mountain... to see paradise with Savior forever. We taste it now in the forgiveness of sin, in the filling of the Holy Spirit, healing, provision, hope.

We long for it and wait for it and we pursue it by pursuing the One bringing it.

"The triumph of Jesus will not be the rise of religion. His salvation is not confining that way, not even as private bliss. Nor will he set us in the clouds to play harps and sing massed choirs forever. The victory of Jesus will be the awakening and purifying and restoring and gladdening of all things human. His kingdom is the only final answer to poverty, hunger, injustice, illiteracy, and all the other sorrows we have created." RO

We will only realize, can only expect it through Jesus.

3) Pathway

Isaiah 11:10 “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.” (ESV)

He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the corners of the earth. He makes a way, a highway, by clearing out all opposition, everything that attempts to prevent his people from coming to him and he draws them in.

The branch, the King, the Messiah is calling back the remnant, he will not abandon his people. We can have differing opinions on the timing and what it means for Israel, but the Savior bringing peace will bring in those he has covenanted with. And if you believe in his life, death, and resurrection he has made a covenant with you!

“The fulfillment of this prophecy began in the restoration from exile and extends to the fullness of time, when Christ came to gather both Jews and Gentiles into his flock (**John 10:16**... ‘I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.’” (ESV)

Romans 15:8–12 “For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, [9] and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and sing to your name.”

[10] And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

[11] And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.”

[12] And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.” (ESV)

Jesus as a signal, a flag, a banner flying. On the cross for sin... **John 3:14–15** “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, [15] that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” (ESV)

That those far from God; living for self, under the weight of sin and the wrath of God against it. That the broken. Imperfect. The lost could be saved and kept by the blood of Christ. Being wooed into repentance by his mercy and grace.

Now Jesus is lifted as a signal by those that believe in him, worship him and give him glory. That the nations, that all people would seek him and surrender to him, to his grace for them. And we

can lift him high because we know when he has set his heart on anyone, nothing and no one can stand in his way.

Who he is and what he has done and will do. This is his glory and he invites us to participate in it.

The promise of the person, the Savior we know well, and the coming peace before us as a beacon calling us and others home. This is what settles the waves of our lives, this is what soothes our broken hearts and mend the torn places of life. And this is what we go on about, this is what we hold before ourselves and others as our truest hope.

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How will Isaiah 11 work itself into us?

Here is the grand vision of home, of the glory of Christ, how will we respond?

Believe it - That Jesus, the God-man lived an obedient life for you and was the substitute on the cross your sin deserves. That he defeated death in his resurrection and that he will surely return as promised to renew the world and reign forever.

Live Expectantly - Not in the despair the enemies of God produce but longing for the day of eternal freedom and peace. Seek his peace now and be clothed by the same righteousness and faithfulness of Christ.

Yeilding to the same Spirit that rested upon him for empowerment in all of life now.

Calvin - Spirit in us now: "Accordingly the Prophet shows that the gifts of the Spirit are laid upon him, first generally, and next, particularly; that we may go to him to obtain whatever we want. He will enlighten us with the light of wisdom and understanding, will impart to us counsel in difficulties, will make us strong and courageous in battles, will bestow on us the true fear of God, that is, godliness, and in a word, will communicate to us, all that is necessary for our life and salvation."

Don't settle for less than the fullness of Jesus. We are far too easily pleased... there is nothing better than this holiday by the sea!

Raise the Signal - Make Jesus known. Not merely with lip service but sacrifice, sharing Jesus.

As Reservoir Church. We don't believe we exist for our own comforts... but to be about equipping and sending, maturing and launching disciples.

One even had the vision of opening an outpost at the gates of hell... heck, let's open lots of outposts!

“The kingdom is established; the flag is flying. It will never fall, but it is opposed. Our part is to stay true.” And lift it high.

That will mean giving and serving not for programs that meet my preferences but send the signal high. Unleashing creatives, entrepreneurs, pastors, planters, missionaries, moms, a unified gospel-centered, Spirit-led people for the glory of Christ!

"This is the central meaning of our time. Christ reigns to reach the nations... We are in the days of great prophetic fulfillment. The signal of the shoot of Jesse — Jesus Christ, crucified and risen — is being lifted up among the nations and they are streaming to the Savior of the world. I pray that you will be among the those who with their last ounce of energy will lift up the signal for the nations (Isaiah 11:10)." Piper

The glory of Christ is our peace and our proclamation. Let's be about it!

We are headed home to peace beyond our dreams, through a grace that is beyond anything we could imagine. Commissioned to bring others with us.

No fear of a dystopian future. But focused on that which is promised in Christ.

“Even now, the fullness of his kingdom is only an inch away. All that stands between the present moment and the promised future is the command of God. He is not waiting for favorable conditions in human social evolution. All he has to do is give the order, and Christ will come and judge and save and rule, because he is himself our peace.” RO

Romans 15:13 “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” (ESV)