

Advent 2018
His Name Shall Be...
King

Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1-9

1. **Shoot**

- Isaiah 6:13a

2. **Spirit**

- Isaiah 11:2-3

3. **Sash**

- Isaiah 11:5, 3-4; James 2:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:8;
Psalm 8:4-5

4. **Serenity**

- 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 14:27

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- 1 Peter 3:18

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Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-9

Our Sunday series for this month has been called, "His Name Shall Be..." We've been looking at the biblical birth announcement for Jesus that was given about 750 years *before* he was born, by the prophet Isaiah:

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:6-7, niv)

During this Advent month we have been digging a little deeper into what those four names meant about Jesus, what he came to do, and what they means for us: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Today, we will conclude this series by exploring the unnamed but obvious reference to Jesus as the Government ruler, or King.

In fact, in just a couple of chapters later, Isaiah goes into a lot more detail about the coming Messiah being a government leader, or king. It is in chapter 11, the first nine verses:

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a

little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:1-9, niv)

I'm praying that through our time in this passage today, one of two things will happen for each of us: perhaps for you, you will for the first time identify Christ as your king. And if you already have done that, then I hope you will identify with Jesus as king even more closely than you already do.

Let's dig into that passage and see first...

1. ***Shoot***

In this passage, a "shoot" refers to a small sapling of a tree growing up out of a root, and it's talking about Jesus.

I think I've mentioned this story another time, but before we purchased our previous house in Idaho, some well-meaning amateur landscaper installed several juniper bushes. I think juniper bushes are like puppies; they are small and cute when you buy them, then they get big and hard to control and make a mess everywhere. I'm sure at the time, they planted them with the best of intentions of keeping them pruned. But by the time we bought the house, those junipers were each at least six feet in diameter, side by side, all along our house. I'm not fond of junipers, but more than that junipers are breeding grounds for wasps, and my wife Shelly is deathly allergic to wasps. So I began the laborious process of removing those junipers, one by one. Granted, it's not as hard as removing, say, an oak tree, but it's still no fun. Juniper roots can be several inches thick and go down a ways and out in all directions, and when they are all entangled with each other and with other plants, it's difficult to remove them.

After a great deal of effort and sweat and over the course of several days, I finally got them cut out and got the stumps removed. I smoothed over the area; we covered it with bark, and planted a few cleaner, more containable flowering shrubs. You'd never know those junipers were ever there. All was great.

Until little tiny shoots started to spring up. In fact, some were growing six feet away, out in my grass. I was constantly pulling those things up. I thought that I had gotten rid of them completely.

Isaiah is using *that* kind of word picture to make a point in our passage today – a root that appeared to be gone but then grew out of nowhere.

Isaiah was a prophet in Israel – actually, in Judah, the southern portion of Israel. If you remember the history, Israel insisted on having a king, even though God told them that he would be their king. But they insisted, and God let them have their way, and for the most part things went downhill. There was a brief period during King David's reign when things worked like God had intended them to when he first allowed them to have a king – King David submitted himself to God and he ruled under God's authority – most of the time. But

for the most part all the rest of the kings led people away from God. Eventually it got so bad that the nation of Israel itself had split in two – the northern Kingdom and the southern Kingdom. Judah was another name for the southern Kingdom. But by Isaiah’s time, the idea of a united Israel under a godly king had been lost for several centuries (this Scripture was about 300 years *after* King David). Both kingdoms had a long list of failed, ungodly kings, many of whom were not even descendants of David.

Centuries of sin, of national idol worship, of turning their back on God had left Israel divided and headed toward captivity. Within a hundred years or so of Isaiah’s time, the Babylonians would overrun Israel and the people were led off into exile. The promises God had made to David and to Israel about always having a descendent of David’s family tree ruling on the throne were a long-distant, mostly forgotten memory to the people. By the time that Isaiah’s prophecies of Israel’s exile would come true about 100 years later, the great, godly family tree of David the son of Jesse would be nothing more than a chopped-off stump. Earlier, Isaiah described the destruction of Israel this way:

“And though a tenth remain in it,
it will be burned again,
like a terebinth or an oak,
whose stump remains
when it is felled...” (Isaiah 6:13a, esv)

The stump is a metaphor for the remnant of the royal family of David. The kingly line will be all but eliminated in the invasions and deportations by the Babylonians.¹

You’d think the hope of Israel was nothing more than an old, dried up stump. The stump was all that was left of what used to be a great, giant tree; it had been dead for centuries and all of Israel’s hopes were cut down and burned up with it.

But even though Israel had forfeited their role as a nation and had long forgotten the promises because of their sin, God had not forgotten his love for them or his promises. So Isaiah looked further through the centuries to see a promise: unbelievably, there was still life in that old stump. Even at the end of that prophetic poem I just read, there is one small line that gives them hope:

“...it will be burned again,
like a terebinth or an oak,
whose stump remains
when it is felled.
The holy seed is its stump.” (Isaiah 6:13, esv)

Within that seemingly long dead stump is a shoot that will spring up. This is a prophecy about the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, the King! It is because of this prophecy that both Matthew and Luke take painstaking time to trace the lineage of Jesus two different ways to prove that he was, in fact, a descendent of King David, son of Jesse – he was growing out of that long dead stump.

¹ John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Is. 11:1.

When a person is not in a relationship with God through Christ (not a Christian), then that person is dead in their sin, their disobedience of God. If that is you, then when you look at your life from today backward, what do you see? Do you see some failures? Shortcomings? Crises? Do you see sin? Those are all the old dead stumps of the trees of your life. Each one represented a promising future, full of abundant life, shelter, and hope for tomorrow. But now they are just stumps; none of their promise has come to pass.

Think about a tire swing on a large branch of an oak tree. That was put there with hope in mind – hope that the child growing up under that tree would be able to swing and play and climb for a long time to come. But the rope is cut, the branch is gone, and the tree is nothing more than a stump. As you look back on your life, maybe you see heartache, or grief, or loss, or sin.

But look carefully; out of the stump there is a sign of growth – a green shoot is emerging. That shoot is Jesus Christ, God himself. He will take what was dead in your life and create a brand new tree from it. Jesus can do that if you will let him, because not only is he the promised King, as the king, he died on the cross and rose from the dead! He is really good at bringing dead things to life, including the dead stumps of your life.

I remember talking with someone who had just accepted Christ into his life, and he said this to me: “I thought I was living before, but now I’m really alive. I’m still me, but I’m no longer the empty me – I am now the me I was always meant to be – I am my *best* me, because of what God has done in my life.”

That is what Christ who was born into our world that first Christmas came to do, Christ the shoot that grew out of the stump of Jesse has come to give *you* life, if you will accept it. I’ll give you an opportunity to do so at the end of this message.

But there’s so much more in this passage that tells us about Christ our king, which next is...

2. *Spirit*

The passage shares some interesting things about Jesus our King, including that *four* times it uses the word “Spirit,” or better yet the *name* “Spirit.” I’ll just remind you what it said, and notice that it uses a capital “S”:

“The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—
and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.” (Isaiah 11:2-3, niv)

This seals the deal that the new King will be God’s Son; God the Father is speaking about God the Son and describing him in terms of God the Spirit.

You’ll notice in that passage that the word “Spirit” is capitalized. It is the Hebrew word, “ruach” which can be literally translated “wind,” or “spirit,” but in this case it is a title or a name, so it is talking about not just any spirit but the Spirit of God himself.

Not to overstate the point, but consider the characteristics of Christ as King. Let's look at the characteristics quickly:

- ***The Holy Spirit of Wisdom*** – this is the quality that enables Christ to use the right means for the proper end. In other words, Christ can see the best result or outcome or ending place for your life, and he then leads you into ways that will get you there, in order for you to achieve success and effectiveness in this life. Doesn't that sound like something we all want?

- ***The Holy Spirit of Understanding*** – This is not just knowledge, but *all* knowledge that allows Christ to discriminate and distinguish between what is good and what is greatest for your life. There is no limit to his understanding of you, of your circumstances, of all information, and of the future.

- ***The Holy Spirit of Counsel*** – This is the ability to take that wisdom and understanding and explain it to you in order for you to be able to understand it, apply it, and use it.

- ***The Holy Spirit of Might*** – This is the powerful, unmatched, supernatural ability to bring things to pass. *Christ makes things happen*. And it's not just physical strength, but the language indicates also mental and spiritual power. Jesus has demonstrated this authority over demons, diseases, the natural order and even death.

- ***The Holy Spirit of Knowledge*** – This is not information, this is a complete awareness of God himself. The use of the word is similar to what is used when a husband and wife "know" each other intimately; it is the deepest, most personal knowledge you can have of another person. Jesus has this knowledge of God and then he makes God known to us.

- ***The Holy Spirit of Fear of the Lord*** – We see this and we equate it with being afraid, but here it means something greater than that; it is an awe or reverence for the awesomeness of God and a true devotion to God and to his authority; a complete willingness to follow God's ways. Again, Jesus did this completely, and so he is the one who empowers us to do the same.

Finally...

- ***The Holy Spirit of Delight in the Fear of the Lord*** – This is an interesting phrase. Not just fear in the Lord, but delight in it. The original language involves drawing breath and a sense of smell. It means Jesus takes in deep breaths of God; his very breath *is* God.

Let me put it this way: have you been to the Krispy Kreme in town? I remember the first time I ever saw a Krispy Kreme. It was in Indiana. I walked in and saw that conveyor belt with those beautiful little ovals of sugary dough going underneath a shower of glaze. All I wanted to do was lay down on that belt with my mouth open! You see those donuts and then you smell that smell; you can nearly taste that warm fresh donut melting in your mouth. *That's* the kind of word picture that Isaiah is painting of how Jesus delights in knowing God; Jesus breathes in the Spirit of God and finds nothing more satisfying. When you accept Christ as your King, you come to know God in this very way. If you are a Christian and you are not experiencing this, then you need a fresh encounter with the King.

This is the King that Isaiah's prophecy promised would one day come from David's line, *from* Israel and *for* Israel. Imagine the anticipation as the Israelites waited another 700 years for this King to arrive!

The third thing that Isaiah paints for us about Christ is his...

3. ***Sash***

Isaiah gives some more descriptions about the kind of King Jesus is, by describing what he is wearing:

“Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.”
(Isaiah 11:5, esv)

What's interesting about this is that it's not just a description of his clothes; it a statement about *how* the clothing symbolizes his *personality* and his *character*. The belt is his righteousness and faithfulness; these characteristics are clearly evident in who he is and they “hold up” everything else he does – like a belt. This means that Jesus will *always* act in the way that is the very best, in keeping with God's character and nature, and that he can be counted on to always do what he says. His promises for you are true. The belt is a summary of the description that came before in the previous two verses (3 & 4):

“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.” (Isaiah 11:3-4, esv)

Let me give you an example: The president, based on what he sees in intelligence briefings and what he hears from his advisors, makes decisions regarding the security of our nation and allies. Doesn't that make sense? But in the passage here we are told that King Jesus will *not* make judgments based on what he sees and hears. So how in the world could Jesus make good judgments? Well, the problem with *our* judgment is it is dependent *only* on what we see and hear, and we never – I mean never – see and hear the *whole* story or the *whole* truth, even in the best of situations. Remember after 9-11 when General Colin Powell shared the convincing proof that Sadaam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction? He convincingly shared with Congress and the Senate and then with the UN what everyone saw in the pictures and heard on the ground. Everyone agreed. But then the truth ended up being less than what we thought; yes he did have weapons that he was stockpiling, but they were not to the degree that we thought from what we saw and heard.

In this passage we are told that King Jesus will *not* make judgments based on what he sees and hears. So how in the world does Jesus make good judgments then? Well remember, Jesus has the Spirit of wisdom and of knowledge. When Jesus makes judgments about situations and about people and about you and me, he does so by the information that is revealed by God himself, who knows *everything*. *Jesus judges by the Spirit of God*, not by hearsay or by appearances.

And we are told Jesus will make his judgments on behalf of the poor, the needy, the defenseless, and the meek. These are the people who never get their day in court; they are taken advantage of, they are oppressed, they have no one to speak for them. Most leaders see those who are poor and on the margins of society as a problem to solve. But King Jesus makes his judgments *for them*. King Jesus' heart is *with* the defenseless. He can be counted on to defend the weakest of us.

Righteousness and equity or fairness will characterize Messiah's rule – no favoritism, ever.

Then it says that Jesus will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. A “rod” or a staff in this case means a “scepter.” It is the symbol of his power. What does that mean? It means His words *are* his authority. Remember, it is by God's words that everything was created (Genesis says, “And God *spoke*, let there be light,” and so on.). Remember that Jesus himself is called the Word of God, according to John 1. It is not with military might that Christ has authority; it is not with money or power or votes that Christ has authority. His authority is in himself, so his words are his authority. What he says is what *is*. His word has such authority that the very demons of hell tremble in fear. The Bible says:

“You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.” (James 2:19, nlt)

Jesus has such authority, that he only need *speak* and all those who are evil and wicked and sinful will be blown away – literally. That passage says that with the breath of his lips he will destroy the wicked. Talk about being blown away! In the New Testament it says this about Jesus:

“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8, niv)

Jesus has such authority that all of the worst evil of all the caverns of hell itself can come up against him, and he will destroy them all with just a (poof!) breath from his lips. In fact, the very worst weapon of hell is death. Death's power against us is the finality of it and the fear we have of it, but Jesus overcame that: He has *all* authority. And it is this all-authoritative King who loves you completely! He loves you with everything he has. What King would willingly walk defenseless into the worst battle filled with the vilest enemies who are all armed to the teeth against him, and yet he has no weapons, no secret service, nothing – and he lets them kill him? Jesus did that for you, knowing that it was *you* that evil and death were coming for. So he gave *himself for you*.

The King of all creation and the entire universe and all universes and beyond universes, *that* King died for *you* on this tiny little dust ball of dirt called Earth. You aren't even a speck on a dust ball! But he transcended all the universes to die for you. For me. For all humanity on this lonely little planet.

Another poem from the Old Testament in the book of Psalms says this:

“What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.” (Psalm 8:4-5, niv)

What is mankind? What are you? You are the object of his love, and all of his divine kingliness is for *you*. That's what his sash around his waist means.

When you let this King rule over your life, what you will come to find is complete...

4. ***Serenity***

Isaiah writes for us this amazing, beautiful, poetic picture of what life is like under King Jesus' rule. He tells of a wolf lying down with a lamb, a leopard with a young goat, even a lion and a fat juicy calf all lying down together. The peace of Christ King is so *real* that the predator and prey relationship completely disappears. His reign will be so full of peace that even a little child will be able to lead the worst, most dangerous of animals as if they were his playthings. That is an amazing image of how the peace of Christ works in your life. Isaiah is saying that Christ's kingly rule is so powerful in its peace that the natural order is completely changed; that it's like an entirely new creation. And that is exactly what King Jesus will do in *you*:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17, esv)

When you allow the peace of Christ the King to be in your life, the natural order of your life changes so dramatically that you will think differently, see people differently, live life differently, and you will know true peace. That's why King Jesus himself said:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27, niv)

So the only thing left for you today is whether or not you have accepted Jesus as your...

5. ***Savior***

Jesus is a King who saves and rescues and redeems and restores. Will you let him save you? Will you allow him to be King in your life? Will you allow him to rule over your life? This Jesus can be your king.

It is an amazing thing, what Christ the King has done for you. He died on the cross for you. The Bible says:

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” (1 Peter 3:18, niv)

He did that for you. Now the question is will you accept him, let him save you, and become King in your life?

Some day, all that Isaiah described will be true throughout the entire world. This world will be no more, and the type of world that Isaiah described will be physically true. But until then, it can be spiritually true for *you*, in *your* life, if you will let the King be your savior.

Prayer.