

ISAIAH 11: THE MESSIANIC AGE

“The text describes a new ruler from Jesse’s Davidic line (11:1) who fears the Lord (11:2-3), practices justice (11:4-5), establishes peace (11:6-9), slays the wicked (11:4), restores the oppressed people of Judah and Israel (11:10-16), and causes the earth to be full of the knowledge of the Lord (11:9). This figure calls to mind another kingly figure who will rule justly (Ps 72:1-2,7), establish a time of peace and prosperity (72:3,7,16), deliver the oppressed (72:2,4,12-14), and cause the earth to be full of the glory of the Lord (72:19). This king in Ps 72 will rule the whole earth, from sea to sea, forever. He appears to be the same messianic figure mentioned in Ps 2, the one in the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7:11-16, and the one ruling justly on the throne of David in Isa 9:1-7. It seems totally inappropriate to identify this new king with Ahaz or Hezekiah” (Smith 2007: 268).

“These promises can motivate any believer in periods of depression or times of oppression under the forces of ungodliness. Present problems must be evaluated in light of God’s eternal promises. God will be victorious; the Messiah will reign over all the earth! Nothing will stop him from establishing his kingdom” (Smith 2007: 279).

“The glorious hope, therefore, is of a reconstituted world and people under a perfect king” (Motyer 1993: 121).

SOURCES CITED

- J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 1993.
John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, NICOT, 1986.
Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, New American Commentary, 2007.
Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, The Bible Speaks Today, 1996.

I. THE MESSIANIC AGE (vv. 1-9)

“The passage moves from his fitness to rule (1-3 a) to the character of his rule (3b-5) to the ideal state of affairs that will result from his rule (6-9)” (Webb 1996: 75).

A. The Messianic Character (vv. 1-3a)

Cf. Isa 4:2; 6:13; Zech 3:8; 6:12; Jer 23:5; 33:15

B. The Messianic Rule (vv. 3b-5)

Cf. Rev 19:15, 21

C. The Messianic Earth (vv. 6-9)

Cf. Isa 35:9; 65:25; Ezek 34:25; Hos 13:14; 1 Cor 15:55

II. THE MESSIAH WILL BRING BACK THE REMNANT (vv. 10-16)

A. The Return from the Four Corners (vv. 10-12)

Cf. Isa 5:26

B. The Removal of Enmity (vv. 13-14)

C. The Restoration of the People (vv. 15-16)

QUOTATIONS

“In 11:1-16 the messianic hope which began to be expressed in 7:14 and which was amplified in 8:23–9:5 (Eng. 9:1-6) comes to full flower. The Messiah is not merely promised or announced but is depicted as ruling. In place of the craven and petty house of David, or the arrogant and oppressive empire of Assyria, here is a king in whose hands the concerns of the weakest will be safe. He will usher in a reign of safety and security to which the weary exiles may come streaming in return” (Oswalt 1986: 277).

v1 “The prophet has just depicted Assyria’s swift and sudden destruction. The forest of her pride is nothing but a field of stumps. So, too, with God’s people (6:11-13). Both Jacob and Assyria have fallen under the judgment of God. But there is a difference. When Assyria was finally cut down in 609 B.C. by the combined forces of Babylon, Media, and Persia, nothing ever arose from the stumps again. Not so with Israel. From one of her stumps, as we are told in the call narrative (6:13c), the smallest shoot would venture forth. From that helpless shoot (53:1, 2) would come the restoration of that nation and with it the end of the war (9:5) and the establishment of that which the world has sought but never attained, namely, genuine security” (Oswalt 1986: 278).

v2 “Because the Messiah will be characterized by this fear of the Lord, he can be depended upon to perceive correctly (John 2:24, 25; Mark 2:8) and to act with integrity (Luke 4:1-13). The person who knows God in a full-orbed way and is supremely concerned to please him can be depended upon not to allow self-serving to cloud the issue, to cause him to trample other people. If there should come One in whom God’s Spirit could dwell completely and purely, that person could be the Savior of the world (61:1). The testimony of the NT (Luke 4:14, 18; John 1:14) and of the Christian Church is that Jesus of Nazareth is that person” (Oswalt 1986: 280).

v4 “Thus, if one’s kingship rested upon the favor and goodwill of the rich and the powerful, primary attention to the needs of the powerless would always remain an ideal. In order for that ideal to become a reality, the king’s authority would have to rest upon something other than political power. In that case, right decisions could be rendered without concern for political ramifications. These decisions could hardly be made unless the kingship was of a more than human sort. This seems to be exactly what Isaiah hoped for” (Oswalt 1986: 281).

“Apart from the revelation of the Messiah any return will be but a temporal matter whose ultimate significance is always in doubt” (Oswalt 1986: 287).

“In fact, the idea of peace as a result of the mutual agreement of nations is not a biblical one. The biblical (and Isaianic) idea is of a peace which results from mutual submission to an overwhelming Sovereign (e.g., 9:3-6 [Eng. 4-7]; 63:1-6; Rev. 19:11-16). Only when God has defeated his enemies and they have submitted to him is the vision of peace in 11:6-9 a possibility. The difficulty which the Hebrews had was in admitting that they, too, were the enemies of God who needed to submit to him. They, as we, wished to see themselves as the darlings of God, who could use God to accomplish their own political purposes. This is not the picture that Isaiah is projecting here; rather, he is saying once again that Israel’s sin cannot destroy the promises of God to Israel” (Oswalt 1986: 288).

“The first [9:6-7] focuses on his birth, the second [11:1-9] on the actualization of his reign over the earth. In New Testament terms, 9:6-7 was fulfilled in his incarnation, and 11:1-9 will be fulfilled in his second advent” (Webb 1996: 76).

“Although the audience may presently suffer under adverse conditions as a consequence of Ahaz’s sins and Assyria’s oppression (11:16), they should trust God because of what he will do in the future. He will not abandon his people, but will cause the remnant to return (10:20–27; 11:10–12), deliver them from oppression, re-establish them as his holy people in Zion (cf. 4:2–6), and inaugurate an era of peace between the nations (2:1–5). This future glorious kingdom and its just ruler (9:1–7; 11:1–9) are set in contrast to the Assyrian kingdom and its arrogant ruler in 10:5–14. A Davidic king who rules with justice and gathers people from the far reaches of the world will replace the proud Assyrian tyrant who destroys and scatters many nations. The wisdom, strength, and Spirit of the LORD will empower this new king (11:1–4); he will not arrogantly depend on his own wisdom and strength as did the haughty king of Assyria. God’s people will no longer be weak and under a foreign yoke (10:10–11, 24–27), but will be powerful and free of domination (11:10–16)” (Smith 2007: 267).

“Throughout these chapters hope comes from trusting and fearing God (as in 7:3–9, 8:12–13, 17; 9:13; 10:20–24), not from relying on some strong foreign power” (Smith 2007: 268).