

CHAPTER 11

It is a very good transition in prophecy (whether it be so in rhetoric or no), and a very common one, to pass from the prediction of the temporal deliverances of the church to that of the great salvation, which in the fulness of time should be wrought out by Jesus Christ, of which the other were types and figures, to which all the prophets bore witness; and so the ancient Jews understood them. For what else was it that raised so great an expectation of the Messiah at the time he came. Upon occasion of the prophecy of the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib, here comes in a prophecy concerning Messiah the Prince.

- I.** His rise out of the house of David (v. 1).
- II.** His qualifications for his great undertaking (v. 2, 3).
- III.** The justice and equity of his government (v. 3-5).
- IV.** The peaceableness of his kingdom (v. 6-9).
- V.** The accession of the Gentiles to it (v. 10), and with them the remnant of the Jews, that should be united with them in the Messiah's kingdom (v. 11-16) and of all this God would now shortly give them a type, and some dark representation, in the excellent government of Hezekiah, the great peace which the nation should enjoy under him, after the ruin of Sennacherib's design, and the return of many of the ten tribes out of their dispersion to their brethren of the land of Judah, when they enjoyed that great tranquility.

ISAIAH 11:1-9

PROPHECY OF THE MESSIAH

The prophet had before, in this sermon, spoken of a child that should be born, a son that should be given, on whose shoulders the government should be, intending this for the comfort of the people of God in times of trouble, as dying Jacob, many ages before, had intended the prospect of Shiloh for the comfort of his seed in their affliction in Egypt. He had said

(~~2307~~ Isaiah 10:27) that *the yoke should be destroyed because of the anointing*; now here he tells us on whom that anointing should rest. He foretels,

I. That the Messiah should, in due time, arise out of the house of David, as that *branch* of the Lord which he had said (~~2302~~ Isaiah 4:2) should be excellent and glorious; the word is *Netzer*, which some think is referred to in ~~4023~~ Matthew 2:23, where it is said to be spoken by the prophets of the Messiah that he *should be called a Nazarene*. Observe here,

1. Whence this branch should arise — from *Jesse*. He should be the son of David, with whom the covenant of royalty was made, and to whom it was promised with an oath that *of the fruit of his loins God would raise of Christ*, ~~4120~~ Acts 2:30. David is often called *the son of Jesse*, and Christ is called so, because he was to be not only the Son of David, but David himself, ~~3885~~ Hosea 3:5.

2. The meanness of his appearance.

(1.) He is called a *rod*, and a *branch*; both the words here used signify a weak, small, tender product, a *twig* and a *sprig* (so some render them), such as is easily broken off. The enemies of God's church were just before compared to strong and stately boughs (~~2303~~ Isaiah 10:33), which will not, without great labour, be hewn down, but Christ to a tender branch (~~2502~~ Isaiah 53:2); yet he shall be victorious over them.

(2.) He is said to come out of Jesse rather than David, because Jesse lived and died in meanness and obscurity; his family was of small account (~~0885~~ 1 Samuel 18:18), and it was in a way of contempt and reproach that David was sometimes called the *son of Jesse*, ~~0227~~ 1 Samuel 22:7.

(3.) He comes forth out of the *stem*, or *stump*, of Jesse. When the royal family, that had been as a cedar, was cut down, and only the stump of it left, almost levelled with the ground and lost in the grass of the field (~~2085~~ Daniel 4:15), yet it shall sprout again (~~3847~~ Job 14:7); nay, it *shall grow out of his roots*, which are quite buried in the earth, and, like the roots of flowers in the winter, have no stem appearing above ground. The house of David was reduced and brought very low at the time of Christ's birth, witness the obscurity and poverty of Joseph and Mary. The Messiah was thus to begin his estate of humiliation, for submitting to which he should be highly exalted, and would thus give early notice that his kingdom was

not of this world. The Chaldee paraphrase reads this, *There shall come forth a King from the sons of Jesse, and the Messiah (or Christ) shall be anointed out of his sons' sons.*

II. That he should be every way qualified for that great work to which he was designed, that this tender branch should be so watered with the dews of heaven as to become a strong rod for a sceptre to rule, v. 2.

1. In general, *the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.* The Holy Spirit, in all his gifts and graces, shall not only come, but rest and abide upon him; he shall have the Spirit not by measure, but without measure, the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, ^{<4019>}Colossians 1:19; 2:9. He began his preaching with this (^{<4018>}Luke 4:18), *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*

2. In particular, the spirit of government, by which he should be every way fitted for that judgment which the Father has committed to him and *given him authority to execute* (^{<4020>}John 5:22, 27), and not only so, but should be made the fountain and treasury of all grace to believers, that from his fulness they might all receive the Spirit of grace, as all the members of the body derive animal spirits from the head.

(1.) He shall have *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and knowledge;* he shall thoroughly understand the business he is to be employed in. *No man knows the Father but the Son,* ^{<4017>}Matthew 11:27. What he is to make known to the children of men concerning God, and his mind and will, he shall be himself acquainted with and apprised of, ^{<4018>}John 1:18. He shall know how to administer the affairs of his spiritual kingdom in all the branches of it, so as effectually to answer the two great intentions of it, the glory of God and the welfare of the children of men. The terms of the covenant shall be settled by him, and ordinances instituted, in wisdom: treasures of wisdom shall be hid in him; he shall be our counsellor, and shall be made of God to us wisdom.

(2.) *The spirit of courage, or might, or fortitude.* The undertaking was very great, abundance of difficulty must be broken through, and therefore it was necessary that he should be so endowed that he *might not fail or be discouraged,* ^{<4021>}Isaiah 42:4. He was famed for courage in his teaching the way of God in truth, and not caring for any man, ^{<4026>}Matthew 22:16.

(3.) The spirit of religion, or *the fear of the Lord;* not only he shall himself have a reverent affection for his Father, as his servant (^{<4021>}Isaiah 42:1), and

he was heard in *that he feared* (^{<387>}Hebrews 5:7), but he shall have a zeal for religion, and shall design the advancement of it in his whole undertaking. Our faith in Christ was never designed to supersede and jostle out, but to increase and support, our fear of the Lord.

III. That he should be accurate, and critical, and very exact in the administration of his government and the exercise of the power committed to him (v. 3): The Spirit wherewith he shall be clothed *shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord* — of an acute smell or scent (so the word is), for the apprehensions of the mind are often expressed by the sensations of the body. Note,

1. Those are most truly and valuably intelligent that are so in the fear of the Lord, in the business of religion, for that is both the foundation and top-stone of wisdom.
2. By this it will appear that we have the Spirit of God, if we have spiritual senses exercised, and are of *quick understanding in the fear of the lord*. Those have divine illumination that know their duty and know how to go about it.
3. *Therefore* Jesus Christ had the spirit without measure, that he might perfectly understand his undertaking; and he did so, as appears not only in the admirable answers he gave to all that questioned with him, which proved him to be of *quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*, but in the management of his whole undertaking. He has settled the great affair of religion so unexpectedly well (so as effectually to secure both God's honour and man's happiness) that, it must be owned, he thoroughly understood it.

IV. That he should be just and righteous in all the acts of his government, and there should appear in it as much equity as wisdom. He shall judge as he expresses it himself, and as he himself would be judged of, ^{<412>}John 7:24.

1. Not according to outward appearance (v. 3): *he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes*, with respect of persons (^{<389>}Job 34:19) and according to outward shows and appearances, *not reprove after the hearing of his ears*, by common fame and report, and the representations of others, as men commonly do; nor does he judge of men by the fair words they speak, *calling him, Lord, Lord*, or their plausible actions before the eye of the

world, which they do to be seen of men; but he will judge by the hidden man of the heart, and the inward principles men are governed by, of which he is an infallible witness. Christ will judge the secrets of men (^{<406>}Romans 2:16), will determine concerning them, not according to their own pretensions and appearances (that were to *judge after the sight of the eyes*), not according to the opinion others have of them (that were to judge after the hearing of the ears), but we are sure that *his judgment is according to truth*.

2. He will judge righteous judgment (v. 5): *Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins*. He shall be righteous in the administration of his government, and his righteousness shall be his girdle; it shall constantly compass him and cleave to him, shall be his ornament and honour; he shall gird himself for every action, shall gird on his sword for war in righteousness; his righteousness shall be his strength, and shall make him expeditious in his undertakings, as a man with his loins girt. In conformity to Christ, his followers must have the girdle of truth (^{<404>}Ephesians 6:14) and it will be the stability of the times. Particularly,

(1.) He shall in righteousness plead for the people that are poor and oppressed; he will be their protector (v. 4): *With righteousness shall he judge the poor*; he shall judge in favour and defence of those that have right on their side, though they are poor in the world, and because they are poor in spirit. It is the duty of princes to defend and deliver the poor (^{<403>}Psalm 82:3, 4), and the honour of Christ that he is the poor man's King, ^{<402>}Psalm 72:2, 4. He shall *debate with evenness for the meek of the earth*, or of the land; those that bear the injuries done them with meekness and patience are in a special manner entitled to the divine care and protection. *I, as a deaf man, heard not, for thou wilt hear*, ^{<401>}Psalm 38:13, 14. Some read it, *He shall reprove or correct the meek of the earth with equity*. If his own people, the meek of the land, do amiss, he will *visit their transgression with the rod*.

(2.) He shall in righteousness plead against his enemies that are proud and oppressors (v. 4): *But he shall smite the earth*, the man of the earth, that doth oppress (see ^{<400>}Psalm 10:18), the men of the world, that *mind earthly things* only (^{<399>}Psalm 17:14); these he shall smite *with the rod of his mouth*, the word of his mouth, speaking terror and ruin to them; his threatenings shall take hold of them, and be executed upon them. *With the breath of his lips*, by the operation of his Spirit, according to his word, and

working with and by it, *he shall slay the wicked*. He will do it easily, with a word's speaking, as he laid those flat who came to seize him, by saying *I am he*, ^{<3816>}John 18:6. Killing terrors shall arrest their consciences, killing judgments shall ruin them, their power, and all their interests; and in the other world everlasting tribulation will be recompensed to those that trouble his poor people. The apostle applies this to the destruction of the man of sin, whom he calls *that wicked one* (^{<3108>}2 Thessalonians 2:8) *whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth*. And the Chaldee here reads it, *He shall slay that wicked Romulus*, or Rome, as Mr. Hugh Broughton understands it.

V. That there should be great peace and tranquillity under his government; this is an explication of what was said in ^{<2906>}Isaiah 9:6, that he should be the Prince of peace. Peace signifies two things: —

1. Unity or concord, which is intimated in these figurative promises, that even *the wolf shall dwell peaceably with the lamb*; men of the most fierce and furious dispositions, who used to bite and devour all about them, shall have their temper so strangely altered by the efficacy of the gospel and grace of Christ that they shall live in love even with the weakest and such as formerly they would have made an easy prey of. So far shall the sheep be from hurting one another, as sometimes they have done (^{<2640>}Ezekiel 34:20, 21), that even the wolves shall agree with them. Christ, who is our peace, came to slay all enmities and to settle lasting friendships among his followers, particularly between Jews and Gentiles: when multitudes of both, being converted to the faith of Christ, united in one sheep-fold, then the wolf and the lamb dwelt together; the wolf did not so much as threaten the lamb, nor was the lamb afraid of the wolf. *The leopard shall not only not tear the kid, but shall lie down with her: even their young ones shall lie down together*, and shall be trained up in a blessed amity, in order to the perpetuating of it. *The lion shall cease to be ravenous and shall eat straw like the ox*, as some think all the beasts of prey did before the fall. *The asp and the cockatrice shall cease to be venomous*, so that parents shall let their children *play with them and put their hands among them*. A generation of vipers shall become a seed of saints, and the old complaint of *homo homini lupus* — *man is a wolf to man*, shall be at an end. Those that inhabit the holy mountain shall live as amicably as the creatures did that were with Noah in the ark, and it shall be a means of their preservation, for *they shall not hurt nor destroy one another as they have done*. Now,

(1.) This is fulfilled in the wonderful effect of the gospel upon the minds of those that sincerely embrace it; it changes the nature, and makes those that trampled on the meek of the earth, not only meek like them, but affectionate towards them. When Paul, who had persecuted the saints, joined himself to them, then the *wolf dwelt with the lamb*.

(2.) Some are willing to hope it shall yet have a further accomplishment in the latter days, when *swords shall be beaten into ploughshares*.

2. Safety or security. Christ, the great Shepherd, shall take such care of the flock that those who would hurt them shall not; they shall not only not destroy one another, but no enemy from without shall be permitted to give them any molestation. The property of troubles, and of death itself, shall be so altered that they shall not do any real hurt to, much less shall they be the destruction of, any that *have their conversation in the holy mountain*, ^{<ARB>}1 Peter 3:13. *Who, or what, can harm us, if we be followers of him that is good?* God's people shall be delivered, not only from evil, but from the fear of it. Even *the sucking child* shall without any terror *play upon the hole of the asp*; blessed Paul does so when he says, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* and, *O death! where is thy sting?*

Lastly, Observe what shall be the effect, and what the cause, of this wonderful softening and sweetening of men's tempers by the grace of God.

1. The effect of it shall be tractableness, and a willingness to receive instruction: *A little child shall lead those* who formerly scorned to be controlled by the strongest man. Calvin understands it of their willing submission to the ministers of Christ, who are to instruct with meekness and not to use any coercive power, but to be as *little children*, ^{<ARB>}Matthew 18:3. See ^{<ARB>}2 Corinthians 8:5.

2. The cause of it shall be the knowledge of God. The more there is of that the more there is of a disposition to peace. They shall thus live in love, *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord*, which shall extinguish men's heats and animosities. The better acquainted we are with the God of love the more shall we be changed into the same image and the better affected shall we be to all those that bear his image. The earth shall be as full of this knowledge as the channels of the sea are of water — so broad and extensive shall this knowledge be and so far shall it spread — so deep and substantial shall this knowledge be, and so long shall it last. There is much more of the knowledge of God to be got by the gospel of Christ than

could be got by the law of Moses; and, whereas *then* in *Judah* only was God known, now *all shall know him*, ^{<381D>}Hebrews 8:11. But that is knowledge falsely so called which sows discord among men; the right knowledge of God settles peace.

<381D>ISAIAH 11:10-16

ADVANCEMENT OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

We have here a further prophecy of the enlargement and advancement of the kingdom of the Messiah, under the type and figure of the flourishing condition of the kingdom of Judah in the latter end of Hezekiah's reign, after the defeat of Sennacherib.

I. This prediction was in part accomplished when the great things God did for Hezekiah and his people proved as an ensign, inviting the neighbouring nations to them *to enquire of the wonders done in the land*, on which errand the king of Babylon's ambassadors came. To them the Gentiles sought; and Jerusalem, the rest or habitation of the Jews, was then glorious, v. 10. Then many of the Israelites who belonged to the kingdom of the ten tribes, who upon the destruction of that kingdom by the king of Assyria were forced to flee for shelter into all the countries about and to some that lay very remote, even to the islands of the sea, were encouraged to return to their own country and put themselves under the protection and government of the king of Judah, the rather because it was an Assyrian army by which their country had been ruined and that was not routed. This is said to be a recovery of them *the second time* (v. 11), such an instance of the power and goodness of God, and such a reviving to them, as their first deliverance out of Egypt was. Then the *outcasts of Israel* should be gathered in, and brought home, and those of Judah too, who, upon the approach of the Assyrian army, shifted for their own safety. Then the old feud between Ephraim and Judah shall be forgotten, and they shall join against the Philistines and their other common enemies, v. 13, 14. Note, Those who have been sharers with each other in afflictions and mercies, dangers and deliverances, ought in consideration thereof to unite for their joint and mutual safety and protection; and it is likely to be well with the church when Ephraim and Judah are one against the Philistines. Then, whatever difficulties there may be in the way of the return of the

dispersed, the Lord shall find out some way or other to remove them, as when he brought Israel out of Egypt he dried up the Red Sea and Jordan (v. 15) and led them to Canaan through the invincible embarrassments of a vast howling wilderness, v. 16. The like will he do this second time, or that which shall be equivalent. When God's time has come for the deliverance of his people mountains of opposition shall become plain before him. Let us not despair therefore when the interests of the church seem to be brought very low; God can soon turn gloomy days into glorious ones.

II. It had a further reference to the days of the Messiah and the accession of the Gentiles to his kingdom; for to these the apostle applies v. 10, of which the following verses are a continuation. ^{<65D>}Romans 15:12, *There shall be a root of Jesse; and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust.* That is a key to this prophecy, which speaks of Christ as the root of Jesse, or *a branch out of his roots* (v. 1), *a root out of a dry ground*, ^{<25D>}Isaiah 53:2. He is the *root of David* (^{<68B>}Revelation 5:5), the *root and offspring of David* (^{<62B>}Revelation 22:16).

1. *He shall stand*, or be set up, *for an ensign of the people.* When he was crucified he was *lifted up from the earth*, that, as an ensign of beacon, he might *draw* the eyes and the hearts of *all men unto him*, ^{<62B>}John 12:32. He is set up as an ensign in the preaching of the everlasting gospel, in which the ministers, as standard-bearers, display the banner of his love, to allure us to him (^{<21D>}Song of Solomon 1:4), the banner of his truth, under which we may enlist ourselves, to engage in a holy war against sin and Satan. Christ is the ensign to which *the children of God that were scattered abroad are gathered together* (^{<61B>}John 11:51), and in him they meet as the centre of their unity.

2. *To him shall the Gentiles seek.* We read of Greeks that did so (^{<62B>}John 12:21, *We would see Jesus*), and upon that occasion Christ spoke of his being lifted up, to draw all men to him. The apostle, from the Septuagint (or perhaps the Septuagint from the apostle, in the editions after Christ) reads it (^{<65D>}Romans 15:12), *In him shall the Gentiles trust; they shall seek to him with a dependence on him.*

3. *His rest shall be glorious.* Some understand this of the death of Christ (the triumphs of the cross made even that glorious), others of his ascension, when he sat down to rest at the right hand of God. Or rather it is

meant of the gospel church, that Mount Zion of which Christ has said, *This is my rest*, and in which he resides. This, though despised by the world, having upon it the beauty of holiness, is truly glorious, a *glorious high throne*, ^{<2472>}Jeremiah 17:12.

4. Both Jews and Gentiles shall be gathered to him, v. 11. A remnant of both, a little remnant in comparison, which shall be recovered, as it were, with great difficulty and hazard. As formerly God delivered his people, and gathered them out of all the countries whither they were scattered (^{<1946>}Psalm 106:47; ^{<2465>}Jeremiah 16:15, 16), so he will a second time, in another way, by the powerful working of the Spirit of grace with the word. He *shall set his hand* to do it; he shall exert his power, the *arm of the Lord shall be revealed* to do it.

(1.) There shall be a remnant of the Jews gathered in: *The outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah* (v. 12), many of whom, at the time of the bringing of them in to Christ, were *Jews of the dispersion, the twelve tribes that were scattered abroad* (^{<300>}James 1:1; ^{<401>}1 Peter 1:1), shall flock to Christ; and probably more of those scattered Jews were brought into the church, in proportion, than of those which remained in their own land.

(2.) Many of *the nations*, the Gentiles, shall be brought in by the lifting up of the ensign. Jacob foretold concerning Shiloh that *to him should the gathering of the people be*. Those that were strangers and foreigners shall be made nigh. The Jews were jealous of Christ's going to the dispersed among the Gentiles and of his *teaching the Gentiles*, ^{<415>}John 7:35.

5. There shall be a happy accommodation between Judah and Ephraim, and both shall be safe from their adversaries and have dominion over them, v. 13, 14. The coalescence between Judah and Israel at that time was a type and figure of the uniting of Jews and Gentiles, who had been so long at variance in the gospel church. *The house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel* (^{<2488>}Jeremiah 3:18) and become *one nation* (^{<2572>}Ezekiel 37:22); so the Jews and Gentiles are made of *twain one new man* (^{<405>}Ephesians 2:15), and, being at peace one with another, those that are adversaries to them both shall be cut off; for *they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines*, as an eagle strikes at her prey, shall spoil those on the west side of them, and then they shall extend their conquests eastward over the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites. The gospel of

Christ shall be successful in all parts, and some of all nations shall become obedient to the faith.

6. Every thing that might hinder the progress and success of the gospel shall be taken out of the way. As when God brought Israel out of Egypt he dried up the Red Sea and Jordan before them (²⁶¹¹Isaiah 63:11, 12), and as afterwards when he brought up the Jews out of Babylon he *prepared them their way* (²⁶¹⁰Isaiah 62:10), so when Jews and Gentiles are to be brought together into the gospel church all obstructions shall be removed (v. 15, 16), difficulties that seemed insuperable shall be strangely got over, *the blind shall be led by a way that they knew not*. See ²⁶¹⁵Isaiah 42:15, 16; 43:19, 20. Converts shall be brought in chariots and in litters, ²⁶¹⁰Isaiah 66:20. Some think it is the further accession of multitudes to the church that is pointed at in that obscure prophecy of the drying up of the river Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared (⁶⁹⁴²Revelation 16:12), which seems to refer to this prophecy. Note, When God's time has come for the bringing of nations, or particular persons, home to himself, divine grace will be victorious over all opposition. At the presence of the Lord the sea shall flee and Jordan be driven back; and those who set their faces heavenward will find there are not such difficulties in the way as they thought there were, for there is a highway thither, ²³¹⁸Isaiah 35:8.