

The Peaceful Kingdom
(Isa 9.1—7)

- 11** A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴ 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 kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Return of the Remnant of Israel and Judah

¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious. ¹

Did you hear the News last night? The reporter said a Christian group is predicting that Jesus will return in May, 2011. That's going to change our plans for attending the General Assembly in July!

Happy Peace Sunday! Have you thought of how the world would be if there was no war? Have you ever imagined what it would be like to live in the Garden of Eden? Everyone would live according to God's ways. People would not fear each other, nor would people fear animals and animals would not fear people. This is the vision that Isaiah had about the second coming of Christ. Isaiah prophesied at a time when the nation of Israel was in great turmoil. But the prophet explained that God had not totally abandoned them and would allow a "remnant" to return. When Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Ephraim), the nation was never restored but became what we know as Samaria. After the Babylonian Captivity (606–586 B.C.), the people of

¹ *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, S. Is 11:1-10

Judah were given another chance to establish themselves in the land; and through them, the Lord promised to bring the Messiah into the world.

Isaiah imagined the nations of the world as trees, and he told the people that in contrast to the proud trees that God cuts down, (10:33–34) the proud countries that warred against them and conquered them, God would allow a tender shoot from a seemingly dead stump. Isaiah looks beyond his people's trials to the glorious kingdom that will be established when Messiah comes to reign (11:1–9). David's dynasty was ready to end, but out of his family the Messiah would come (Rom. 1:3; Rev. 5:5). A godly remnant of Jews kept the nation alive so that the Messiah could be born.

To Isaiah the world-power, Assyria, resembled the cedar-forest of Lebanon; the house of David, on the other hand, because of its sin, was like the stump of a felled tree, like a root without stem, branches, or crown. Although things appeared hopeless for Israel, at a future time the Assyria power would be thrown down, and remain bowed before God, but the house of David would be renewed. When Assyria reached the summit of its glory, then it would suddenly fall; but Israel, reduced to captivity, will be exalted. Out of the stump of Jesse, out of the remnant of the chosen royal family which has sunk down to the insignificance of the house from which it sprang, there will come forth a twig, which promises to supply the place of the trunk and crown; and down below, in the roots covered with earth, and only rising a little above it, there shows itself a fresh green shoot. The shoot will bring forth fruit. In the humble beginning there lies a power which will carry it up to a great height by a steady and certain process (Ezek. 17:22, 23). The twig which is shooting up on the ground will become a tree, and this tree will have a crown laden with fruit. Consequently the state of humiliation will be followed by one of exaltation and perfection. This shoot is the Messiah.

God will acknowledge Messiah, and consecrate and equip Him for His great work with the seven spirits:

1. “The Spirit of Jehovah” or God is the Divine Spirit. This is the Spirit God used to create the heavens and the earth. It is the fullness of divine powers. The other six are from the Spirit of God and relate to the intellectual life, to the practical life, and to the direct relation to God.
2. The spirit of wisdom is the power of discerning the nature of things through the appearance.
3. The spirit of understanding is the power of discerning the differences of things in their appearance.
4. The spirit of “Counsel” is the gift of forming right conclusions.
5. The spirit of “might” is the ability to carry them out with energy
6. “The knowledge of God” is knowledge founded upon the fellowship of love; and
7. “The fear of God,” is fear absorbed in reverence.

These seven spirits remind us of the seven-lighted candlestick, and the three pair of arms that proceeded from it. In these seven forms the Holy Spirit will descend upon the second David for a permanent possession. The seven torches before the throne of God (Rev. 4:5, cf., 1:4) burn and give light in His soul. The seven spirits are His seven eyes (Rev. 5:6).

The fear of God is like a burnt offering which God smells with satisfaction. Just as humans have five senses for the material world, the inner person has a sensory system for the spiritual world, which discerns different things in different ways. So the Messiah will sense the fear of God as a pleasant fragrance. When Christ comes again He will be the great Judge, but He will not judge according to outward appearances, but according to the relation of the heart to God.

When Christ comes again He will do justice to the weak and helpless, by adopting an incorruptibly righteous course towards their oppressors, and decide with straightforwardness for the humble and meek of the land. These are the persons

burdened down by misfortune, not like the proud and arrogant that Jesus talked so much about in Luke. The poor and humble, or meek, will be the objects of His royal care; just as it was really to them that the first beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount applied. But “the earth” and “the wicked” will experience the full force of His penal righteousness. The very word of His mouth is a rod which shatters in pieces (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 1:16); and the breath of His lips is sufficient to destroy (2 Thess. 2:8). As the girdle upon the hips, and in front upon the loins, fastens the clothes together, righteousness and faithfulness will be the qualities within which He will operate. He will always follow God’s divine will. Therefore Christ’s return will commence a new age, in which Christ and His righteousness acquire a world-wide following of those who will humble themselves and live according to His instructions.

The fruit of righteousness that Christ will bring at His second coming is peace, because He is the Prince of Peace. Even in the animal world, there will be peace. It is hard for us to image such a world, but this is the prophecy of Isaiah, which we expect God to do on this side of the boundary between time and eternity. When I was a child there was a riddle about a person coming to a river crossing with a fox, a chicken, and a sack of grain. He found a box that was only big enough to carry one at a time. The child was asked to figure out how the person would manage know that if the fox and the chicken were left together the fox would eat the chicken, but if the chicken was left with the grain, the chicken would eat the grain. When Christ returns to rule that will not be an issue. There are now fierce conflicts and bloodthirstiness of the most savage kind among people and animals. But when Christ returns and fully possesses His royal inheritance, the peace of paradise will be renewed, and all that is true in the popular legends of the golden age be realized and confirmed. The wolf and lamb, those two hereditary foes, will be perfectly reconciled then. The leopard will let the teasing kid lie down beside it. The lion, between the calf and stalled ox, neither seizes upon its weaker neighbor, nor longs for the fatter one. Cow and bear graze together, while their young

ones lie down together in the pasture. The lion no longer thirsts for blood, but contents itself, like the ox, with chopped straw. The nursing baby will play by the adder's hole, and the child just weaned stretches out its hand boldly and fearlessly to a snake. The look of a snake, was supposed to have a paralyzing and bewitching influence; but now the snake will lose this power, and the snake will become so tame and harmless, it will let children handle its sparkling eyes as if they were jewels.

The peace that prevails in the animal world, and between humans and beast, is attributed to the universal knowledge of God. Remember in Genesis 3 when God punished Adam and the animal kingdom. When Christ returns there will be a reversal of that punishment and there will be universal peace. All sin will be forgiven and all hostility will come to an end. Israel will become the center of paradise, there people will come to learn of God and walk in His path. When humans really follow God's way, the whole earth will be saved. It will be the start of a future state of perfect and universal harmony (Isa. 6:3, "all the earth"). The knowledge of God will allow us to experience the fellowship of God's love. The knowledge of God will be plentiful, like the waters which cover the sea.²

When Isaiah looked at his people, he saw a *sinful* nation that would one day walk the "highway of holiness" and enter into a righteous kingdom. He saw a *suffering* people who would one day enjoy a beautiful and peaceful kingdom. He saw a *scattered* people who would be regathered and reunited under the kingship of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10); for only when His kingdom comes can there be peace on earth.³

Jesus came the first time and offered people a way of salvation and peace. Although the whole world had not yet submitted to his rule, we as individuals can submit to Him

²Keil, Carl Friedrich ; Delitzsch, Franz: *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Peabody, MA : Hendrickson, 2002, S. 7:182-186

³Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Be Comforted*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1992 (An Old Testament Study), S. Is 9:1

and live in obedience, holiness, righteousness and peace. And we have the blessed hope that He will come again. The World really can be different and it will be when He returns.

Thanks be unto God for salvation and the Holy Spirit to help us walk in righteousness and peace!