

Notes

The Reign of the Messiah and the Song of Salvation (11:1–12:6)

- Isaiah 11–12 presents one of the clearest visions of the coming Messianic Kingdom in Scripture. The passage begins with the promise of a righteous King and concludes with a joyful song celebrating the LORD's salvation. Together, these 2 chapters reveal a righteous reign, the restoration of Israel, and a universal kingdom in which even the nations share in its blessings.

1. The Promised King: The Righteous Branch (11:1–5)

- Isaiah introduces the Messiah as a *"rod out of the stem of Jesse"* and a *"Branch"* growing from his roots. The Davidic dynasty, once glorious, would be cut down through judgment and decline. Yet it would not be destroyed. From this apparent ruin, new life would arise. The prophet uses 2 images to describe this hope:
 - The *"rod"* or shoot emphasizes new life emerging from what seems lifeless (53:2).
 - The Branch points to the Messiah who emerges from an apparently fallen Davidic line.

The *"Branch"* is a Messianic title (Jer 23:5; Zech 3:8), ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, whose Davidic lineage is clearly affirmed in Matthew 1:1.

- The Messiah is uniquely characterized by the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and endowed with wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of the LORD. This was affirmed at Christ's baptism (Matt 3:16) and throughout His ministry, for He possessed the Spirit without measure or limit (John 3:34). He alone perfectly embodies these divine qualities.
- Verses 3–4 then unfold the nature of His rule. He judges with perfect righteousness. He defends the poor & the meek, and *"with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked"* (v4), a theme echoed in Rev 19:15. The King is righteous in His Person and perfect in His rule. Righteousness defines all that He does. Faithfulness secures all that He promises.

2. The Restored Creation: Peace Under His Reign (11:6–9)

- VV6–9 presents a picture of creation restored & a return to Eden-like conditions. The prophet describes natural enemies living together in peace: wolves with lambs, leopards with goats, and lions with calves. Even the nature of animals will be transformed, as lions will eat straw like oxen (Gen 1:29-30). The curse in Gen 3 will be lifted in its effects & creation will be renewed (Rom 8:19–22). What sin disrupted, the Messiah restores.

- The imagery of children playing safely beside serpents (v8) underscores the depth of the renewal. Fear, danger, and destruction will no longer exist because Christ has removed the curse in its effects. Creation will once again reflect the harmony of Eden under the reign of the Messiah (65:25). Though such a scene seems unimaginable today, it is best understood as a literal description of the future Millennial Kingdom under the Messiah's reign.
- The reason for this universal peace is given in v9: *"the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."* As humanity lives in submission to God, creation reflects that restored order (cf. Hab 2:14; Jer 31:34). From Jerusalem, the centre of God's rule, the reign of the Messiah will extend over all the earth.
- This passage reminds us that the world is broken - but not beyond God's restoration. It gives us hope in a troubled world and calls us to trust the King who will one day make all things right. And because that future is certain, we can face the present with confidence.

3. From the Nations to Zion: The Regathering of God's People (11:10-16)

- Isaiah next turns to the Messiah's rule over the nations and His covenant people, Israel. In that day, the Messiah will stand as an *"ensign"* (banner) for the peoples. The Gentiles will seek Him willingly, highlighting the global scope of God's redemptive plan. Salvation was never intended to be limited to Israel, but to extend to all nations (Matt 28:19). The phrase *"his rest shall be glorious"* points to the blessed peace found in His reign - anticipating the believer's rest (Heb 4:9-10) and ultimately the fullness of God's presence in the eternal state (Rev 21:3).
- Isaiah also speaks of a future regathering of Israel. The LORD will recover His people *"the second time,"* indicating a restoration greater than the return from Babylon. This regathering includes both Israel and Judah and extends worldwide. Following the dispersion after AD 70, the Jewish people were scattered globally. While some view the modern return to the land (1948) as a preliminary stage, the complete fulfilment awaits the last days, when a believing remnant will turn to the Messiah (Rom 11:26).
- The prophet lists various regions - Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the "islands of the sea" - to emphasize the worldwide scope of this regathering. No place is beyond God's reach. This promise echoes Deuteronomy 30:3-5 and Jeremiah 23:3, demonstrating that God's covenant faithfulness transcends both geography and time.

- Restoration is not only external - it is internal. In that day, the long-standing division between Ephraim (Israel) and Judah will be healed. Israel will be united as one people under one King (Ezek 37:15-19). They will also experience victory over their former enemies - Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Isaiah further describes how obstacles to this regathering will be removed. Seas will be dried, rivers divided, and a highway prepared for the returning remnant. This highlights His covenant faithfulness: though Israel was scattered for centuries, God has not forgotten His promises (Ps 107:1-3). His Word never fails - even when its fulfilment seems delayed.

4. The Song of the Redeemed: Joy in God's Salvation (12:1-6)

- Isaiah 12 concludes with a song of praise in response to God's salvation. With this hymn, the "Book of Immanuel" (Isaiah 7-12) reaches its glorious climax: God with us naturally culminates in praise from us.
- First, salvation is presented as a personal reality. God's anger against sin is real and just, yet His wrath is turned away. This ultimately points to the work of Christ, who bore divine judgment on behalf of sinners. God does not ignore sin - He deals with it fully, and then He comforts the redeemed. True worship flows from the assurance that God Himself is our salvation. To say *"God is my salvation"* is to confess that salvation rests entirely in Him, not in human effort. He is not only the source of future hope; He is our present strength and joy. Such trust removes fear: *"I will trust, and not be afraid."*
- Second, salvation is to be enjoyed. Isaiah uses the image of drawing water from wells, symbolizing joy, refreshment, and continual renewal. God's salvation is abundant and sustaining (cf. John 4:14). Yet it must be personally appropriated - *"ye shall draw."*
- Third, salvation is to be proclaimed. The redeemed are called to *"declare his doings among the people"* (v4). Worship overflows into witness. Those who truly know God cannot remain silent about Him. VV5-6 concludes with two great reasons for praise:
 - Who God is — the Holy One of Israel.
 - Where God is — dwelling in the midst of His people.
- The greatest blessing of salvation is not merely deliverance from judgment, but restored fellowship with God (Rev 21:3). Salvation is not only something to understand - it is something to experience, enjoy, and proclaim.