The World Jesus Brings: Justice, Peace, Redemption, and Joy (Isaiah 11–12)

Isaiah: Trusting the God Who Judges, Saves, and Renews

Zionsville Fellowship | November 1, 2026 | Drew Hunter

It's another election season—not as big as a presidential election, but still consequential.

> In every campaign, we hear what's wrong and how it can be made better. When we vote, we make a statement about what kind of society we want. Some people are filled with hope for change. Some are filled with fear. Some are cynical about the whole process.
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> But what if we really could have one person make the ideal world become a reality? And what if he wasn't corrupt, but thoroughly trustworthy. He would bring perfect justice, vindication to victims, and enduring peace. And not just our nation, but the whole world, would be set right. In fact, he can tame lions and cobras into friendly pets.

Now these may seem beyond ideal—to the point of unrealistic.

> But that's what Isaiah promises—and it's where the Bible says all of history is heading.
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> These promises came to the people of Israel about 2700 years ago. They had kings without character, a society without justice, and a world without peace. They were themselves far from God, and without true joy.
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> And into this situation, God promised to send a true leader to set all things right. Isaiah is filled with promises of the Messiah, and we now know they are fulfilled in Jesus. But this is about much more than simply that Jesus would come. This is a comprehensive set of promises. This shows that Jesus will change society forever. He will transform the creation itself. And he will save not just Israelites, but people from all nations. And his work makes his people sing with joy and spread this news to others.
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> Here's the message this morning: **The Messiah Jesus came to make the ideal world a reality—a world of justice, peace, redemption, and joy.** And this shows how we should respond with singing and spreading his salvation.

[Read Isaiah 11–12]

> This shows us the Messiah Jesus would come to make the ideal world a reality—a world of justice, peace, redemption, and joy. If you're familiar with who Jesus is, this isn't a new message. It's familiar, but with a difference. This is the Jesus we know, but cast in the poetic beauty of ancient prophecy.
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> There are four main movements through these chapters, so this will be our four points. We see the King we need, the world we want, the people God saves, and the song we sing.

1. The King We Need (11:1–5)

First, the king we need.

> The first five verses of chapter 11 introduce us to a coming messiah, or king.

The first verse shows us who he is: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit."

> A tree was chopped down to just a stump. And that stump is called "the stump of Jesse." Who is Jesse? That was the name of King David's father. This refers to the line of Jesse and David and Solomon—and it's saying that while that line grew like a tree, it's now chopped down to a stump.
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> Why does that matter? Because it was through that royal line that the promised messiah and savior would come. It is through that line that the promise from the very beginning of the Bible would be fulfilled. When sin entered the world and Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden, they left with a promise. God said he would crush the head of the serpent, which is Satan, by a child from Eve's line. And the Old Testament constantly draws attention to how that line is narrowed—from Eve then through Noah, then Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah… then through Jesse and David.
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> But God's people and their Davidic kings are corrupt. And God is using their enemies to cut them down to a stump.
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> But now Isaiah says—a shoot will rise up out of that stump; a branch will grow out of the root. The promised serpent-crushing warrior king will still come through David's line.
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> Verse 2 says "the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him." God's Spirit rested on Israel's kings like Saul and David to empower them to rule. This was symbolically pictured by anointing the king's head with oil. It was a picture of the Spirit's anointing on him. This is why the coming king was called the Messiah—which means "anointed one."
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> When Jesus came, this happened to him at his baptism. The Spirit came down upon him to anoint him as the king.

Now, what will this coming Messiah be like?

> Verses 2–5 give us two main marks of his character and the way he rules—and they are wisdom and righteousness.
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> Notice the words verse 2 uses to describe his character: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. And then verses 3–5 describe how he judges with righteousness and justice.

This description is similar to wisdom literature like Proverbs. When we studied Proverbs last year, we saw that it was about raising up men as leaders—even as political rulers. According to Proverbs, the ideal ruler is marked by these two things: wisdom and righteousness.

1. What is wisdom?

   It's seeing reality as God designed it, and then adjusting your values and actions to align with it. It's living well in God's world according to God's design. And the wise leader is marked by the words of verse 2—he fears the Lord, which means he has a trusting reverence in God. And he has wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

   The opposite is foolishness. A leader can be very smart and charismatic and yet be foolish. We have many of them today—they are brilliant leaders, but they are leading our schools, and communities, and states, and nation in a way that is not in line with reality as God designed it.

2. And second, what is righteousness?

   To be righteous is to be in a right relationship with God and others—and to live in line with God's standards of what is good and right. And the righteous leader carries out justice—treating people fairly and in accordance with God's standards of what is good and right.

   Verse 3 says the Messiah will judge and decide disputes. He takes the role of the supreme court. And notice how he is different than every other society's leaders: "He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear." He is not swayed by appearances, nor by manipulative, biased, smooth speech. He sees through everything right to the core issues and decides with perfect justice.

   So often in our world, leaders are swayed by bribery. Or they are swayed by the power of a narrative. I talked with someone in the legal system recently, and he said it can be disillusioning. Jurors are not interested in the law—in what is truly right and just. Instead, they are swayed by their feelings—by whether or not something feels fair to them or not.

   But one day Jesus will bring ultimate justice, and it will be perfect.

   And this is especially good news for the vulnerable and mistreated. Verse 4 says, "with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth." The poor and meek are not singled out because they are always innocent. They are singled out because they are often mistreated.

   And this Messiah, Jesus, will also be against the wicked. Verse 4 says, "he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked." This is a poetic image. It's not that Jesus will literally have a sword coming out of his mouth. The meaning of the image is that his words are decisive. He speaks, and what he says is done.

These are the qualities of Jesus.

Do you notice that these are not just private and religious characteristics. The Messiah—who is Jesus—cares about public justice. He cares about social issues. He cares about how a judge and jury rules. He cares about how leaders treat others—how husbands treat wives, how parents treat children, how employers treat employees. He cares about victims of oppression. He cares about children in the womb. And one day he will set all things right.

And this vision was given to Israel in the midst of a deeply corrupt and oppressive society. This is still our hope today. Jesus has come, but we are waiting for him to come again to set all things right.

Four implications before we move on…

1. First, we set our ultimate political and societal hope in Jesus.

   This transformation will only come through Jesus. No political leader or campaign can bring this vision of human flourishing in. There are no utopian visions that will ever be accomplished without Jesus. So, we have restrained expectations—and we hope in Jesus no matter what happens politically.

2. Second, we seek to cultivate wisdom and justice in our own lives.

   Jesus is described here with characteristics that are ideal for every person. We are to grow in wisdom and righteousness. If you want a vision for parenting your children, it is this: be a wise and righteous parent, and cultivate wisdom and righteousness in your children—all according to God's design for reality.

3. Third, these are the qualities that we should look for and expect in church leaders.

   Character is nonnegotiable for spiritual leaders. The New Testament standards for elders and deacons and leaders is mainly a list of character traits. The world should look at the church and see leaders marked by the wisdom and justice of Jesus.

4. Fourth, these are the qualities to look for in community, government, and political leaders.

   We don't get to have Jesus on the ballot—and once he comes to set all things right, it won't happen by vote. So what do we do in the meantime? We recognize that Jesus's wisdom and righteousness sets the example and expectations for all leadership.

   It's an election season, so what criteria should we use when we vote? (And I hope you will vote.) It's not complicated: *We vote for the person, policies, and platform that is most wise and righteous.* We look for which option promotes the most wisdom and righteousness in the society—the option that most reflects the vision of Jesus's kingdom in these verses.

Politics is not to be bracketed off away from our Christian faith. Politics is one of the ways we love our neighbors as ourselves. It's a way work together for the good of our neighbors. It's a way of enacting wisdom and justice in our community.

Which means we have to be like Jesus in verse 3—not be swayed by appearances and smooth speech. We can't just listen to the campaign ads. We can't be swayed by the way a candidate looks or how they come across. We can't be swayed by whether or not we like their personality, or if they say things that make us feel good.

If alliteration helps you, here are four P's to remember: We consider the *platform*, the *policies*, their priorities, and their *personal* character. And we ask the question—which option will accomplish the most wisdom and righteousness in society?

In all of this, we prioritize the most urgent issues of justice and righteousness in our time, especially for the vulnerable.

And we cast our votes doing our best to reflect the wise and just rule of Jesus—and we do so remembering the first implication I gave—we put our ultimate political hope in Jesus. Because he is the king we need.

2. The World We Want (11:6–9)

Second, the world we want.

Adam and Eve were initially in harmony with all the animals. There was nothing to fear or harm them. Verses 6–9 draw on the imagery of this Edenic paradise. It says this is the world that we all want, and the world that Jesus will bring.

It's a picture of peace in the natural world. It refers to the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard laying with the young goat. Predators relaxing with the pray.

And verse 8 says that little children will play by a cobra hole and not get hurt. This is poetic hyperbole. It's here to shock us. It takes one of the most frightening images and turns it into something playful. This is a mom saying, "Look Ron, how cute: little Billy is playing by the cobras again."

The point is verse 9—nothing will hurt or destroy anymore. A carefree joy and playful ease will be spread across the entire world. This is the new earth that Jesus will bring.

Sometimes people ask if there will be animals in heaven. Well, if by heaven you mean the place our spirit goes right when we die—I'm not sure. That's the intermediate state. Our body goes in the ground; our spirit goes to be with Jesus. That's not our final eternal state. The final state happens after Jesus returns and brings in a new heavens and a new earth.

Then our bodies will be raised, and our spirit will be rejoined with our bodies to live on this new earth forever. This is what Isaiah is talking about—the new creation. And apparently there will be animals there. And, why not? The new earth is the best of this life, minus the worst of this life, plus Jesus. It's not that Lions in themselves are a problem—it's their attitude right now that we don't like.

This is the world we all want.

Nothing to harm us. No more death. No more terrorists. No more oppression. No more fear. This is the world Jesus brings.

3. The People God Saves (11:10–16)

Third, the people God saves.

Who gets to be a part of this new world? Isaiah describes two kinds of people—and they are drawn to Jesus. Jesus is the center here, and there are two kinds of people that he gathers together into one new people.

First, then nations—people from every nation.

This is verse 10: It says, "In that day the root of Jesse," so this refers to the coming Messiah, Jesus. He "shall stand as a signal for the peoples, of him shall the nations inquire (or seek)." The Hebrew word for "signal" there is the word used to describe a military banner—it would be raised up, and the soldiers would see it and rally to it.

So, this Messiah will be lifted up, and people from all nations will gather to him.

In the gospel of John Jesus said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die" (John 12:32–33). He pictured himself being lifted up on the cross—and that would be like a banner being raised. And it would be this—his death—that would draw people from all nations to him.

If you're a Christian, this is what happened to you. You looked to Jesus in his death, and you came to him in faith. You knew that he died for you, for your sins, all of them, to forgive you fully and finally. And so you left your old life with its priorities, and you rallied to Jesus.

And Jesus has been doing this for 2,000 years, and drawing people from all nations. There is a steady stream of people from around the world coming to Christ. You are part of it.

And if you are not yet trusting Christ, you can. You look to him like a banner, and you come to him in faith, receiving his forgiveness and grace.

That's the first category of people drawn to Jesus—the second is a remnant of Jewish people.

In verse 11 Isaiah says God will "recover the remnant that remains of his people." And then he lists all sorts of areas around the land of Israel—he mentions Assyria as the greatest nation, and then he does a circle around the land of Israel, from the south to the east to the north to the west—naming place after place after place.

Why? Because of what we saw the past few weeks. Israel was being judged. God was going to bring in Assyria to conquer them and scatter them outside of the land. And this happened in history. They were all scattered to various other nations around them.

But look at verse 12—he'll do for them what he does for the nations: "He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." So he's not just gathering nations to Jesus as a banner, but the exiled Jewish people that were scattered among the nations.

Now, if you'll track with me for a couple minutes…

I want to point out an idea Isaiah is emphasizing—and then show how this idea unlocks the whole Bible and human history.

The idea or theme is what we can call a New Exodus. You remember the first exodus? It was the central event in Jewish history. It was the gospel of the Old Testament. Israel was in slavery in Egypt, and God rescued them, brought them through the Red Sea, and out through the wilderness and into the land of Canaan.

Now, notice in verse 11, it says "the Lord will extend his hand *yet a second time* to recover the remnant that remains of his people." A second time? What was the first time? It was the exodus. He will rescue his people *again*, but in a greater exodus.

And verse 15—listen to the imagery drawn from the first exodus to describe a greater one to come: "And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt, and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching breath, and strike it into seven channels, and he will lead people across in sandals. And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt."

So, just like he opened up the Red Sea to bring his people out—now he'll split open the Euphrates river, bring his people across, and lead them in the wilderness in sandals to the land. It's not literal—this is poetic imagery. It's saying that God is going to accomplish another, greater exodus. It will be a return from exile.

Now, how does this idea unlock the whole Bible and human history?

Well, the story of Israel is the story of humanity in-miniature, isn't it?

Think about Genesis 1–11, the story of humanity before the story of Israel starts.

Humanity's Story:

- People: Adam and Eve
- Place: Eden
- Problem: Sin
- Result: Exile from God's presence in the land, ultimately to Babel and scattered among nations.
- Promise: Descendent of Eve and the implied restoration of all things

And what is the story of Israel?
Israel's Story:

- People: Israel (a new Adam)
- Place: Canaan (a new Eden)
- Problem: Sin (like Adam)
- Result: Exile from the land, ultimately to Babylon and scattered among nations
- Promise: Descendent of David and the promised restoration of all things

Now, what does Israel need? And what does humanity need? Ultimate the same thing. We need God to do for us all what he did for Israel at the exodus, but in a deeper way.

We need to be rescued from our sin, the consequence of death, and the power of Satan. We need to be forgiven and restored to God. And we long not to be back just to a small plot of land like Canaan—but to Eden again, but if Eden filled the whole world. A new creation.

This is what Isaiah is promising in chapter 11. He is saying that Jesus—the one promised to come through the line of Eve, as is travels right through the line of Israel… will come.

And he will be raised up like a banner—and he will bring people back out of exile. But not just Israel, but the nations. He will create a new people—from a remnant of Israel, and from all nations. We will be drawn to him, coming out of our deeper exile. Forgiven of sins, rescued from death, redeemed in a greater exodus.

Do you realize this is why Jesus came, and that he's already fulfilling this?

- When he came, he focused his ministry first on regathering that lost remnant of Israelites. A small portion of the Jewish people trusted him, and were gathered to him.
- And then after his death and resurrection, he was raised like a banner to draw the nations to himself and join this remnant of Israelites.

> And this is why, wherever the gospel went in the New Testament—it went to the Jew first, and then the Gentile. Why both? Because of texts like Isaiah 11. Jesus is creating a new people—not a geopolitical nation of ethnic Israel anymore—a new people of a remnant of Israelites and people from all nations.
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> And we are now in the wilderness, traveling toward the greater land of Canaan, a new creation, Eden and Canaan 2.0.

This is the people God saves—people from Israel and the nations who come to Jesus.

4. The Song We Sing (12:1–6)

This leads to the final section, which is our response in chapter 12. This is the song we sing.

> So far we've seen the king we need, who brings the world we want, and is himself the center of it all, gathering Jews and Gentiles to himself into one new people.
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> Now, how do we respond to that if we are part of it? What is the only fitting way to live if this is true, and you have come to Christ? There are two responses: you sing with joy, and you spread this joy.

First, you sing with joy.

> You can see how chapter 12 begins: "You will say in that day." *Who* will say in *what* day? This is all those who are redeemed, and it is in the time that they are redeemed. And this day has come. If you are in Christ by faith, you are part of his people. We are now living in this "day" of salvation. It was future for Isaiah; it is present for us now.
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> And so, what do we say? We thank God for his saving grace. Verses 1 and 2: "I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." In verse 5, it says to sing praises to God.
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> This is a life of thankfulness, and a thankfulness to is expressed in singing. Christians are singing people. Why? Because we're grateful people.
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> And this is all an overflow of the joy Jesus gives us. Verse 3 is one of my favorite statements in Scripture: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." Jesus and his salvation is a full and refreshing and satisfying well. To be a Christian is to drop your bucked down that well, pull it back up, and drink deeply. And to do this over and over and over again. That's what we're doing on Sundays here—we're filling up again, drinking from God's grace. And that's why we encourage one another to engage with God through the Bible and prayer every day—that is an act of dropping your bucket into the well, and drinking deeply.

It is reminding us of God's grace through Jesus, and being renewed by this grace for sinners like us. And then we sing—in our hearts, and with our mouths.

And this leads to a second response—which is spreading this salvation.

This is evangelism and global missions. It's the natural overflow of having joy in Jesus.

This is verses 4–6. Notice what we will say in the day of salvation, which is now. What will we say? Notice, these are commands. We will speak commands to one another? What will we encourage each other to do? ""Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. "Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

Do you see what we will say to one another? We will say, "Go make God known. Go proclaim his name. Go tell people about Jesus."

This is about having such a joy in Jesus and his salvation that you can't help but tell other people.

We are all evangelists for what we love. We all tell other people about our favorite things. I just read—after dismissing it for decades—I finally read through Harry Potter. I loved it. And it is surprisingly a deeply Christian book. If you've spent time with me the past few weeks, chances are you've heard me talk about it. And if you haven't read it, I've encouraged you to do it. Why? Because I enjoyed it so much that I want to share that joy.

This is what we do with the things we love and enjoy. You promote your favorite college team. You tell people your newest health hack that made you feel better. You tell people about your favorite band and their new album. You are an evangelist for what you love.

So the question is: are you an evangelist for *Jesus*? If you haven't prayed for people to know Jesus by name. If you haven't looked for opportunities to talk to people about Jesus. If this is not on your mind, it may be because his love is not really alive in your heart.

But a church that is filled with joy in Jesus will be an evangelistic, invitational church. We will invite others to know the Jesus we've come to know. And we will gladly send and support and encourage missionaries to share Jesus with other peoples.

This is the comprehensive vision of a better world that Jesus brings.

This is the king we need—the perfect leader, who rules with wisdom and justice.

This is the world we want—a new creation, with peace even in the animal world.

This is the people he saves—not just bringing Israelites back to himself, but people from all nations. He brings us back from our exile from his presence—saving us from sin and death.

And this is the song we sing—we overflow with joy to thank him, and we spread his salvation to our neighbors and the nations.