

The Great Reset (Isa 11:1-16)

Have you heard of the Great Reset? The UN is talking about it. The Politicians. The environmentalists. The media. Because of all the upheaval caused by COVID-19, they say now is the time for us to reset our planet. Our countries. Our companies. Our churches. And even ourselves. But reset won't work. Because it's like restarting a computer that has a bug. No amount of switching on and off will help it. The world doesn't have a temporary glitch but a permanent problem. And humans could fix it we would of by now right? But we can't. The problem is beyond us. But there is hope for our world:

Right here in Isaiah 11. There is one Man and one movement that brings cosmic hope. There is a King and a Kingdom which can save this world. Let's look now at what this kingdom is like under three headings:

1. The Kingdom is ***Unexpected***
2. The Kingdom is ***Undoing the Curse***
3. The Kingdom is ***Unstoppable***

1. The Kingdom is Unexpected (vv. 1-5)

Notice how Isaiah starts in verse 1? **And there will come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.** A stump - a strange place for cosmic hope to be found, don't you think? If we go back to the end of chapter 10, notice there's nothing really left? The Lord is gonna send Assyria to lop down Judah. The LORD of armies is gonna use the Assyrian army as his axe. Judah was trusting in the Assyrian army for help.

Back in chapter 7 - the king of Aram and the king of Israel were banding together to take down Judah. Known in the history books as the Syro-Ephramite War. And King Ahaz - king of Judah - went to seek help from the Assyrians. Ahaz and the people put their hope in Assyria for deliverance. But the axe they're trusting in is gonna come swinging back and lop them down. The LORD wants to show them that's what happens when you trust in humanity.

So Judah is going to be chopped down. It's gonna be reduced to a stump. And it's when all hope has vanished from a human level, that God steps in. That's classic Yahweh. That's been Isaiah's experience from the start. That's what happened to Isaiah in chapter 6. It came after his fire and brimstone preaching in chapters 1-5. The Israelite society was corrupt beyond repair. And then the one King, Uzziah, who was the hope of the people - died. But it was when the earthly king was gone that Isaiah saw the heavenly King. And it's the same here in chapter 11. It's when the land is desolate - Judah is lopped down - that a shoot appears. A shoot from the stump of Jesse. Who would have thought? Jesse was a nobody. He wasn't royalty. He wasn't an influencer. He wasn't famous. He was a man from the backwater town of Bethlehem. But the LORD chose his family.

And from his descendants would come the Christ. A shoot would come out of his roots. **Stumps don't look like much do they? You're not really sure what's gonna come out of it - if anything. I had this passionfruit tree in my back yard that was reduced to a stump.** Stumps can look pathetic. But they also contain life. They burst through concrete.

And it was 700 years later. After the Israelites had been exiled. After hundreds of years of God being silent. That a shoot pushed through...and shot up in the little town of Bethlehem. Jesus - the root and offspring of David. Born in a manger. His parents were nobodies like Jesse. It all looked on the surface, well pretty unimpressive didn't it? But out of the shoot came the greatest man who ever lived. Out of one man came salvation for the world. Who would have thought? But that's how God works. That's what his kingdom is like. Unexpected.

Jesus in Matthew's gospel told us didn't he. It's like the mustard seed - starts out tiny but outgrows all the others in the end. Or it's like the leaven - you can't see it but it's taking over. ON the surface it doesn't look like much but it's powerful. Maybe that's what you need to hear this morning? You might be looking around and thinking - what on earth is God doing? Or what's God doing on earth? I can't see much. I can't see much change in my own life? I can't see much change in those around me? Things seems to be going backwards don't they. But know this - the kingdom is pushing through. It's growing.

So don't look at the surface - look at the substance. It's a spiritual kingdom. Notice in verse 2? This One who will have the Spirit on the LORD resting on him. Remember when Jesus was baptised in the river Jordan. And John the Baptist says, "I saw the Spirit descend like a dove, and it remained on him." And later we're told that Jesus "received the Spirit without measure." Or he got the Spirit immeasurably. Why does that matter? Because the Holy Spirit is God and the agent of God. In creation - The Spirit animates all life - remember in Genesis 1 it was the Spirit hovering over the face of the deep. The Holy Spirit gives all skills and gifts of intellect.

Remember when they were building the temple in Exodus - it was the Spirit that gave people the different skills they needed to do the jobs. It is the Spirit that gives people all strength and power. Remember when Samson ripped that lion with his bare hands? He did it we're told because the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. How was Solomon so wise? Because of the Holy Spirit. Anytime anyone did anything great in the Bible it's because of the Holy Spirit.

But there's only one who's received the Spirit without measure: Jesus. The dove descend and rested on One - Jesus. God his Father anointed him with the oil of gladness above anyone else. Paul says, **in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily**. So, Everything we need for life and salvation is in him. He ascended in order to give us his Spirit. All the power, wisdom, understanding, strength, love. Everything you need is found in Christ. And he freely gives it to us by His Spirit.

In this One man Jesus is the treasure house of heaven and earth. He is fully equipped for the task of King of the Universe. He is fully equipped to be the Judge of all the earth. Notice in verse 3 - he doesn't judge at surface level but he has perfect wisdom. And he makes the right decision every time. And notice when he speaks things happen? He only had to speak and the storm was calmed. The sick - healed. The dead - raised. So when he comes again to judge the living and the dead, he'll just speak and the wicked people will be slayed! Remember when Jesus was arrested, Judas and those with him came. **And Jesus said to them - "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth". And Jesus said, "I am". And it says when he said "I Am." They drew back and fell to the ground.**

How unexpected... The shoot from the root of Jesse is the judge of all the earth. He just speaks and the all the evil fades away like a bad dream. He's going to make everything right again. This stump kingdom is bringing in cosmic harmony.

2. The Kingdom Undoes the Curse (vv. 6-9)

Somehow the stump that comes up out of the ruins of Jesse - will bring in a whole new creation. That's what we see from verse 6 onwards. The Kingdom of Christ ***undoes the curse***. Check it out: The wolf hangs out with the lamb. The leopard with a goat. And a toddler is leading them on a leash. **It's like something out the Jungle Book isn't it? Maybe that's where Rudyard Kipling got his inspiration from.**

The imagery is taking us back to the beginning. Back to Eden. Back to Adam and Eve. In the beginning God created cosmic harmony. They lived in the blessed state. But then sin entered. And we entered into the cursed state. The moment sin entered the world was the moment our world went from ***cosmic harmony to cosmic hostility***. Our environment turned from a safe place into a dangerous place. The world is in a frustrated state because of human sin. This is the ultimate explanation for the climate catastrophe - sin. A broken relationship with our Creator. You could say our world, our environment is angry at us. Because we've sinned against the Creator. **George Whitfield - the famous English preacher. Preached a sermon on the Fall. And he went so far to say that wild animals treat us the way the do because they're angry at us. Why? Because we've offended their Creator. Why does the dog bark at you? Why does the lion want to eat you? Because you've sinned against their Maker.**

Here Isaiah tells us that the Kingdom of Jesus is undoing the curse. Jesus did it first of all by taking the curse of sin on the cross. *Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree - that the blessing of Abraham might come to the gentiles.* On the cross - Jesus undid the curse and crushed Satan - the old serpent. Notice in verse 8 - that's why the little boy can play over the snake hole - because in this kingdom there is no serpent. Jesus crushed Satan. There's no evil in this kingdom. Notice in verse 9 - *there's nothing that can hurt.* What Isaiah is showing us here is the new heavens and new earth. The restoration of all things that awaits all God's children. The time when the effects of the curse will be just a bad dream.

But that doesn't mean we don't experience the effects now. We do. As soon as someone becomes a Christian they are a new creation. The new creation starts with a person being born again.

When I became a Christian I was living down in Byron Bay. I was converted in Brisbane cause I was working up there. I vividly remember the night it happened and instantly everything changed. The way I viewed the around me changed. I was so selfish. Striving against God and others. But then through the cross of Jesus I had peace with God and everything changed. I remember walking down to the beach the next day. The tea tree lake - opposite the road house cafe if you know it. And everything looked different. And It was like the lights came on. It was like seeing in colour for the first time. I felt a sense of cosmic harmony. You know that's what people are looking for up there aren't they. Cosmic harmony. Yoga and mediation. Mindfulness. It's the search for peace. The search for calmness. The search for the sense you belong in the world. And that the world welcomes you. But you can only get in Jesus.

Jesus brings cosmic harmony to this hostile world. Those who were enemies become friends. Jesus changes carnivores into herbivores. He changes cannibals into Christians. He changes wild beasts into tame animals. Banner of Truth Magazine published an article called, 'An Early Communion in New Zealand.' Two Maori chiefs approached the Lord's table. In the 19th Century. One of them - Tamati Wiermu Puna was trembling. After the service someone asked him why? He explained that the other chief, Panapa had of another tribe, had in previous years killed and eaten Tamati's father. He said only that the Gospel which had given him a new nature could make him eat the same bread and drink the cup with someone who murdered his own father! Jesus is our peace (Eph. 2:14).

This is what's happening now as the gospel goes out. This unexpected kingdom is undoing the curse. It's bringing about cosmic harmony. It's changing wild animals into new men. And last of all - this kingdom is unstoppable.

3. The Kingdom is Unstoppable (vv. 10-16)

Notice in verse 10 - this root of Jesse. This one who came from nowhere. Becomes a banner for the people. He acts like a magnet to draw his people. It's like if you placed a big banner of Newcastle that read - "**FREE BEER FOR ALL**" You would have people flocking from everywhere wouldn't you. That's a shallow desire. But do you know the deepest desire of people, of all Australians is Jesus - the desire of the nations. What Australians are really wanting, although they don't know it, is Jesus.

How is this going to happen? It doesn't seem likely. People seem completely uninterested in Jesus don't they? Beer gets much more attraction than Jesus doesn't it?

But the success of this mass gathering doesn't depend on us. But on God. Notice in verse 11 - the LORD himself is going to do it. When Isaiah speaks of the second time - he means the first time was the Exodus from Egypt. So what is the second time? The future return of the exiles from Babylon? No. That's not big enough. Notice Isaiah ransacks all the known nations of the world to say how big this gathering is going to be. Notice in verse 12? It's from the four corners of the earth. It's a universal gathering isn't it. I don't know about you , but when I see the word remnant - it makes me think of...just a few. The frozen chosen. W.G.T. Shedd - the theologian, said when thinking about the number of those saved we need to avoid two errors. *First that all people are saved. Second that only a few are saved.* God's elect are of a number that can't be numbered. The Lord promised to Abraham 'your descendants will be more numerous than the stars of heaven.' There are trillions of stars aren't there. So I believe that the number of lost in the end will be far less than those saved. Charles Hodge said "*Ultimately the vast majority of the whole mass of humanity, including all generations will be actually redeemed by Christ.*"

The Kingdom is unstoppable because it is God's work. The LORD knows where his elect are and he will gather them. That's what is happening now. That's why the world is still spinning. Through the preaching of the gospel the Lord is gathering his elect from the four winds. It started when Jesus came - in John 12 when the gentiles start coming to him... Jesus said, "**when I will be lifted up I will draw all men unto me.**" The preaching of the cross is the banner. Lift him up. Lift him up in his word lift him up that's all. That's all we need to do for gospel success. Lift up the banner of Christ. Lift up Jesus. And the nations come flocking to him.

And he removes every barrier so they can come. Notice in verse 16 he creates a highway. Easy access so his people can coast home to heaven. Just like they did when they came through the Red Sea. So take heart Christian - the kingdom of Christ is unstoppable.

Donald Grey Barnhouse told of a few oak trees he once planted by his house. All of them but one grew more than twenty feet high. That one was damaged and died. But the root system was still good and a shoot came up. Barnhouse was going to tear it out and put in a new tree. But a horticulturist told him that that shoot would catch up with the other trees. Barnhouse didn't really believe it but he left it anyway. After two years it was six feet high. After four years more than twelve feet high.

So don't lose heart if it doesn't look like much is happening now. Don't be put off by the stump. The Kingdom might look whacked down to nothing at times. But the shoot of Jesse will thrive. *And one day the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD - as the waters cover the sea.*

Let's pray.

Father in heaven hallowed be your name - bring in your kingdom. Come Lord Jesus. Amen.