

International Bible Lessons Commentary
Isaiah 11:1-9

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, September 4, 2016

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, September 4, 2016**, is from **Isaiah 11:1-9**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. If you are a Bible student or teacher, you can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the **International Bible Lesson Forum**.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Isaiah 11:1-9

(Isaiah 11:1) A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The Branch is Jesus the Messiah, who is a descendent of King David. King David's father was Jesse. The kingly line of King David was cut down as a ruling line over Israel and Judah because of the sins of the Davidic kings who followed David. Poetically, the kingly line of David had become a stump that produced nothing of value. Perhaps totally dead or dormant, the stump brought forth a shoot that became a branch that bore fruit. As God proved with the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, God can give life to the dead, even a dead tree stump. God inspired Isaiah to foretell that (though actually or apparently dead) the roots of the stump would live and bring forth a Branch, the Messiah. By the time of Jesus, the line of David had become obscure and powerless, but the Messiah's genealogy was carefully kept. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was of the line of David, but an obscure carpenter from Nazareth instead of ruling royalty (see Matthew 1:16, 20 and Luke 2:4; 3:23). After Jesus was born, it was as though a shoot of new life had sprouted from the stump of a tree that had been cut down, for He was widely recognized as the Messiah by the Jewish people and some in the aristocracy. And as the Branch, Jesus the Messiah bore much fruit. He also bestowed the Holy Spirit on His followers after He rose from the dead. They bore much fruit (see John 20:22, Acts 2:38, and Galatians 5:22-23).

(Isaiah 11:2) 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.

When Jesus' followers evaluated Him and wrote the Gospels, and when we read the Bible today, we see that the Spirit of God as revealed in the Old Testament (and later in the New Testament) rested (remained or abided) on Jesus. He expressed both the attitude (or spirit) of God and the power of God. He also showed the attitude (or spirit) human beings ought to maintain as they live before God and others. Jesus always demonstrated that He was in a right relationship with God. He showed the wisdom and power of God, and proved that He knew every human heart. He revered and obeyed God, His Father in heaven, explicitly at all times. [Please Note: some translations capitalize the word "spirit" the first time Isaiah used it in this verse. Other translations capitalize the word "spirit" each time the word is used in this verse. When capitalized, the word indicates the third Person, "Spirit" or "Holy Spirit." If not capitalized, the word "spirit" may mean "attitude and power and presence of God." The name "Lord" should be all capital letters (LORD) signifying YHWH, which is the holy name of God.]

(Isaiah 11:3) 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;

Other words to expand the meaning of the word “fear” might be “reverence” or “respect,” which leads to obedience. When we truly love God supremely, we experience great joy when we honor God with our lives and loyalty. On the one hand, we know that Jesus the Messiah will always judge according to what He sees and hears firsthand, and not from what He learns secondhand from the testimony of others. On the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, Jesus will always look upon and understand the human heart when He judges. This means Jesus will judge us on the basis of our intentions when we do something, or on the ultimate intention that motivates our way of life. What someone else sees or hears us do may give the appearance or impression that we are guilty of doing a misdeed, but Jesus will look into our hearts and know whether or not we are guilty, whether or not we did or did not intend to sin by what we said or did. Because Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus sees and hears all, and He will justly and mercifully judge all. Jesus does not need eye witnesses in order to judge with righteousness and give justice and bestow mercy. Jesus does not need to see or hear any of our actions to know the state or condition of our hearts, our reasons for living, and whether we are committed to loving and serving God supremely or ourselves selfishly.

(Isaiah 11:4) 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.

Consistently, the prophets defended the poor and also called to account those who took unfair advantage of the poor and the meek of the earth. Jesus the Messiah will judge them with righteousness and equity (give a just judgment). Jesus will not judge in favor of the privileged simply because they have influence. Jesus will not judge in favor of the poor simply because they are poor. Because God is love, Jesus will judge with justice and mercy. Because Jesus is God, He will also have the power to enforce His judgments, and He will enforce His judgments against the wicked at the right time.

(Isaiah 11:5) Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

Belts are used to hold up clothing or to carry a weapon. A belt around the loins means a person has prepared themselves and their clothing to take action or do work rather than be in repose or on a restful stroll. Isaiah foretold that Jesus the Messiah was going to (and He did and will do so again on the earth) live and reign with righteousness and faithfulness toward God His Father and others—not only with simple words but also with actions that would lead to the death of the wicked and the salvation of those who believed in Him. He can easily destroy the wicked with His mouth, but as the good news

of Jesus is preached around the world, Jesus can change the hearts of the wicked and save them from eternal death and hell. People can see the clothing of other people, and people can see that everything Jesus did on earth as the promised Messiah He did with righteousness toward others and faithfulness toward God. He will do the same when He comes again.

(Isaiah 11:6) 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.

Eventually, all nature will be changed to what God intended prior to God changing nature after the rebellion of the first man and woman. Natural enemies will learn to live together in peace as God originally intended. Whereas the unrepentant wicked will face destruction if their willful rebellion against God and destructive behavior toward their neighbors continues, predatory animals (that do not have the ability to choose) will be changed by God and become safe enough for even a child to lead. As the good news of Jesus is preached, wicked people with the nature and moral character similar to a lion, leopard, or wolf in their destructive tendencies, especially toward those who are helpless (such as a lamb, goat, or calf) will change and live peacefully with those they once sought to devour. A child will live in safety and have influence over others for the good of all. Everyone will love and live in cooperation under the lordship of Jesus the Messiah, which happens

today in many places through the Church, but will happen everywhere forever after Jesus returns and His kingdom is established on earth as it is in heaven.

(Isaiah 11:7) The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

At one time, all the animals and humans ate only vegetables. The animals were submissive friends to humans, and humans did not eat their animal friends. Since Jesus the Messiah's redeeming work has been done on the cross, we now look forward to the time when all animals and humans will once again become friends on the new earth. Hence, the lion and the ox will both eat straw and sleep without fear together. What seems naturally impossible to us is not impossible with God.

(Isaiah 11:8) The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

Snakes can be dangerous, especially to an unsuspecting child. Jesus will change the nature of poisonous snakes someday so they will neither bite a person nor be poisonous. The snake will not need to defend itself from harm, and parents will not need to worry about the safety of their children. As the Son of God, Jesus will watch over and care for everyone, even the domestic and wild animals of the earth and everyone will live in harmony, peace, and

safety. We eagerly wait for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to fulfill this prophecy of Isaiah.

(Isaiah 11:9) 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.

The holy mountain is Mount Zion where even today there is strife among people of different religions. When Jesus the Messiah returns all strife will cease and people will not make war anymore. Everyone will come to know the nature and character of the true God because they will see the Lord and bow down before Him. They will hear from His mouth and see His actions, and everyone on earth will be blessed when they come to know the true God. Wars among religious factions will cease. Just as the waters cover the sea and fill every cave under the water, so the truth about God will be known by everyone on earth and they will turn from error and falsehood to the truth.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What do these verses tell you about the type of person we should expect the Messiah to be? What kind of person was Jesus?

2. What does the word “peace” mean? What is necessary for there to be peace between God and a person? What will be necessary for there to be a lasting universal peace someday? How might Jesus do this?
3. What characteristics or traits of the Messiah mean the most to you? Why are all of these characteristics important for the Messiah to have? Do you think Jesus demonstrated these characteristics or traits? Why or Why not?
4. What kind of assurance does it give you to know that Jesus will only judge you by the condition or state of your heart, and not by what He learns from appearances, eye witnesses, or gossips? When you are being unjustly condemned by someone, who does not know or care why you did something, how might knowing this about Jesus’ way of judging give you encouragement?
5. Why are righteousness and faithfulness both important in relationships?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly
International Bible Lesson.

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