

How to Recognize Jesus the Messiah

International Bible Lesson

Isaiah 11:1-9

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“And he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth” (Isaiah 11:3-4a).

So people would recognize the Messiah, Isaiah prophesied His qualities of character and predicted some of what He would do. Jesus demonstrated all of the characteristics Isaiah predicted by manifesting “the Spirit of the LORD, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2). Jesus did not fear the LORD’s punishment, because Jesus obeyed His Father perfectly; rather, Jesus delighted in the fear of the LORD and rejoiced in His Father’s awesome might, creativity, holiness, justice, and everlasting love. In Jesus’ personal relationships, He showed the type of Messiah He would be after He returned to rule over the Earth. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus will not judge simply on the basis of what He observes or do whatever He wants to benefit himself, as many earthly rulers do. Jesus could see into the hearts of others, and He will judge according to what He knows about the totality of every situation. He will know immediately if anyone is bearing false witness. Jesus will judge according to the objective unchanging law of God revealed in the Bible, the law of love, the law requiring love for God and others. Jesus demonstrated God’s law by His life, and Jesus will judge the needy with righteousness instead of discrimination. For the first time, all the poor on Earth will receive the justice denied them by others.

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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?