

The King of Righteousness and Peace

by A.B. Simpson

The sermon explores the character and ministry of Jesus Christ as the King of righteousness and peace, highlighting His supernatural character, righteousness, and judgment.

Scripture: Isaiah 11:2

Topics: "Righteousness", "Peace"

Description

A.B. Simpson preaches about Jesus as the King of Righteousness and Peace, drawing from Isaiah 11:2-6 to illustrate how Christ emerges from the decay of humanity as a new branch, embodying divine wisdom, understanding, and righteousness. He emphasizes that Jesus' qualities are not inherent but bestowed by the Holy Spirit, showcasing a model of dependence on God that believers should emulate. Simpson highlights the transformative power of Christ, who brings life from death and righteousness that judges both the meek and the wicked. He concludes with a vision of millennial peace, urging believers to embody this peace in their lives as a reflection of Christ's reign. The sermon calls for personal application of these truths in the lives of Christians today.

Transcript

"And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." (Is. 11: 2-6.)

This is the third picture of Christ in the book of Isaiah. The first is the prophecy of Immanuel in the seventh chapter, the next the Wonderful Counselor in the ninth chapter. Now comes the great antitype of Melchisedek, the King of righteousness and peace.

I. He is a Shoot from the stem of Jesse and a Branch from his roots. The idea is that the family of David was to pass into decay like an old rotting stem, and out of the ruin was to spring a shoot who should become the heir of David's house and throne. That the Jewish rabbis understood this as a prophecy of the Messiah is evidenced from the Chaldean paraphrase of the old Testament in which this is translated as a

son and heir and the name Messiah is used.

There is a fine contrast in the whole paragraph including the previous context in which the king of Assyria is described under the image of a great cedar forest which is to be cut down and utterly fall while the house of David, although seeming to pass into decay, is to be revived by this branch that is to spring from its ruin.

A great principle is here expressed, the principle which underlies the whole Christian system, namely, life out of death. The Lord Jesus Christ came as the outgrowth of a ruined race. He was born of our sinful humanity. He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Humanity had fallen into ruins when out of its decaying roots sprang this new and heavenly Branch which was to "blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit." Christ Himself was true to this principle all through His life and work. In accordance with it, He went down into death itself and out of the grave He arose in resurrection, life and power to be the Tree of Life for earth's dying millions.

In like manner, our life must come out of death. Every saved soul is a shoot from the decaying root of a lost past. Every sanctified soul is as one resurrected from the dead, and the glory of the new age is to come through the death of the old and the resurrection not only of men, but of nature too.

The Hebrew word "nazar" signifies a little scrubby shoot. The name is applied to the Lord Jesus in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah again. "A root out of dry ground." This is forever true not only of the Master, but of all His followers. "The Nazarene" was a name of contempt and humiliation. It signified the last degree of human merit and earthly promise, but from this root has sprung all the hope of earth and all the glory of heaven.

II. He is endowed with supernatural character.

The qualities of wisdom and righteousness here ascribed to this scion of the house of David are not merely remarkable in themselves, but still more remarkable in their source. They are not the inherent qualities of the Messiah, but they are communicated to Him directly and supernaturally by the Holy Ghost Himself. Here is the radical distinction between human ethics and divine righteousness. Man's morality is the result of natural virtue and ethical culture. God's righteousness comes down from heaven and is directly communicated by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Therefore Jesus Christ Himself set the example of this new divine righteousness by delaying and suspending all His official ministry until after He received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Although the Son of God, possessing the attributes of deity, He did not exercise them in His own person; but humbled Himself and took the place of dependence upon His Father like any other man, and at length received all the gifts and graces required for His public ministry by receiving the Holy Spirit as we are to receive Him, and living ever after a life of constant dependence by faith and prayer upon God for the supply of wisdom, strength and righteousness for His whole life and ministry. Such stupendous condescension surpasses all other acts of humiliation on the part of our Lord. He consented to be nothing and to receive everything as given Him from above. "I can of My own self do nothing," He testified. "The words I speak are not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." "I, by the Holy Ghost, cast out demons." "As the living Father has sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eats Me even he shall live by Me." The Master received all His gifts and graces just as we receive them: through the Holy Ghost.

The apostle John speaks of "the seven spirits which are before the throne," that is, the seven-fold ministry and equipment of the divine Spirit. This passage in Isaiah presents to us seven operations of the Holy

Ghost in connection with the character and ministry of Christ.

1. The Spirit of wisdom. Wisdom is that quality which enables us to use the right means for the end in view. It is the ability to accomplish results, to bring things to pass, to do the right thing. It is the quality which gives success and efficiency in practical life.

2. The Spirit of understanding. This has reference to knowledge in general. One may possess wisdom and yet have a very limited knowledge. On the other hand, one may possess stores of knowledge and yet have no practical sense or sound judgment. It is said of one of England's kings:

"He never said a foolish thing

And never did a wise one."

The Lord Jesus was eminently wise and yet had boundless knowledge. How marvelously He met the snares His subtle foes set for Him and always did the right thing and so answered their ensnaring questions that at last no man dared ask Him anything. At the same time, how marvelous His knowledge of the Word of God. Even at the age of twelve, His familiarity with the Scriptures amazed the Jewish scholars in the temple, and the testimony of all that listened to Him through His public ministry might be expressed in the one admiring reply of the men that tried to arrest Him, "Never a man spoke like this man."

3. The Spirit of counsel. This is the ability to impart wisdom to others and to guide safely and rightly the steps of those that look to Him for direction. What a "Wonderful Counselor" He is. "When He puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them and they know His voice." He leads His people "in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." They that follow Him shall not stumble, and "the wayfaring man though a fool shall not err therein."

4. The Spirit of might. The Holy Ghost endowed Christ with miraculous power over all the power of Satan, over the forces and laws of nature and over disease and men. The promise of the Comforter still involves the same power for the followers of Christ. Christianity is not a mere set of harmless opinions but the presence of a living potency that brings things to pass.

5. The Spirit of the knowledge of God. The Holy Spirit was the medium of fellowship between the Father and the Son, and in His light and presence we come to know God and hold intimate converse with Him. Divine things and the Divine Being become intensely real.

6. The Spirit of the fear of God. This means devotedness, godliness, piety, sensitive regard for God's authority and will, and that absolute obedience and faithfulness of which the Lord Jesus could say, "The Father has not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him."

7. The final quality in this sevenfold equipment of the Holy Ghost is expressed by an extremely significant figure, whose beauty and force are brought out by the marginal reading, "and shall make him of quick scent (or smell) in the fear of the Lord."

The sense of smell is the finest exercise of all our physical qualities. It approaches more nearly to the spiritual and ethereal than any other. The fragrance of the flower has been compared to the soul of nature breathing out in sweet perfume. The scent in animals is the instinct which detects things as no operation of the human intellect possibly can. The dog recognizes his master and his enemy. The wild bird knows where the warm breezes of the Southland blow, and the difference between the poisoned berry and the

wholesome fruit of the wilderness.

And so the Holy Ghost gives to us an instinctive life that is higher than the operation of our reasoning powers. We know God, and we know right and wrong. Yes, and we know His messages, His directions, His intimations to us by those finer touches, those more delicate instincts which do not appeal to our reasoning powers or our coarser senses, but which speak to our consciousness with the authority of intuitions, and which bring to us the certainty that we cannot explain to others and yet could not for a moment question.

How marvelously the Lord perceived the thoughts and characters of those around Him. How often He answered men without their having spoken. How He sensed conditions, characters and things by something within Himself which was as unerring as it was incomprehensible to men. The Holy Spirit will be to us such an instinct and will give to us intuitions of God, of truth, of right, of approaching evil and of the will of God for us which will make us of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and which will lead us likewise to judge, "not after the sight of our eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of our ears."

III. The Spirit of righteousness and holiness.

"Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." The mightiest thing about the Lord Jesus was not His miraculous power but His unimpeachable righteousness. It was this that saved us from the curse which our unrighteousness had brought upon the race. Had He for one moment failed to meet the tests of Satan the race would have been wrecked forever, and the plan of redemption been an irretrievable failure. Just once Moses, the great lawgiver, failed, and that one failure shut him out of the land of promise. With what subtle art the great enemy sought to overthrow the righteousness of Jesus! Could he have but ensnared Him for an instant and lured Him aside from the pathway of obedience upon which He had staked His life and our redemption, what despair must have filled the heavens, and what hopeless anguish must have been the endless portion of our race! But Jesus overcame because "righteousness was the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." Not for a moment did He even think of or desire aught but His Father's will, and so "by the obedience of One have many been made righteous." It was through the Holy Ghost that He stood victorious in this awful test, and that same Holy Ghost is the Sanctifier who still comes to lead us through the same conflict and to the same victory.

IV. The Spirit of judgment.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ, however, was not only personal, it also became a consuming fire to destroy the wicked. Once or twice only in His earthly life did that flame flash forth in the words that withered the barren fig tree, and the woes that scathed the hypocritical Pharisees, who knew the right but chose the wrong. He did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. Therefore, when He read from the book of Isaiah in His inaugural sermon at Nazareth the words of His great commission, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, for He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He closed the book at that point, and left unuttered the last sentence of the prophecy -- "the day of vengeance of our God." The time for that had not yet come, but none the less surely is coming. The fire that melts the gold and makes it pure, burns up the chaff to ashes. The holiness of Christ must either save or destroy. The announcement of the forerunner was, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." But there was another fire for those who refused the Holy Ghost: "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The Lord Jesus

Christ must inevitably judge all evil which refuses to be cleansed by His grace and brought into subjection to His Father's will.

Therefore, He is here revealed as the reprover and avenger of the wickedness of the wicked. "With righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth, and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."

This last clause has been quoted by the apostle Paul in a remarkable passage in his description of the coming of the Lord, and especially the judgment that is to fall upon the man of sin, the great antichrist of the last days. After speaking of the mystery of iniquity which already works and which is to culminate in that wicked one who is coming "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," he adds, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

This is a literal quotation from our text, and it brings into view the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in His sublime character as the leader of the last great conflict and the destroyer of antichrist and Satan.

Let us not, therefore, dream that the mercy of our Savior is a soft and weak emotion, without character or principle behind it. It is a love that can smite as well as save, and of all the fearful pictures of a lost eternity, there is none so terrible and none from which the men that have rejected Christ will so wish to hide themselves behind rocks and mountains as the wrath of the Lamb."

God save you, dear reader, from that wrath which is but the righteousness of wounded love, of rejected mercy: the wrath of the Lamb.

V. The vision of millennial peace and blessedness.

The picture that follows describes the golden age of faith and hope and prophecy. Human poetry has dreamed of it, but only inspiration has been able to portray it. It is to bring the redemption of the lower orders of creation and the restoration of this sin-cursed earth, as well as the harmony of man with man and man with God. Oh, how the warbling birds will acclaim it! Oh, how the abused beasts of burden, that have groaned under man's oppression, will almost speak their words of thankfulness! Oh, how heaven will smile as it looks down again upon this paradise restored! "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Is. 11: 6-9.)

"Come, then, oh, Christ, earth's Monarch and Redeemer,

Your glorious Eden bring;

Where peace at length, no more a timid stranger,

Shall fold her weary wing."

VI. The restoration of Israel.

Along with this comes the restoration of God's chosen people, the seed of Abraham. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." (Is. 11: 11-13.)

There can be no doubt about the literal application of this prophecy. This is not the first restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, for we are distinctly told that the Lord shall set His hand again a second time to recover the remnant of His people. This also includes the ten tribes represented by Ephraim, as well as the captives of Judah. All are to be united in an everlasting homecoming, such as the sons of Jacob have never seen since the days of Solomon. The envy of Ephraim is to depart, and the vision of Ezekiel 37 is to be fulfilled, and the children of Joseph and the children of Judah are to be one forever. The physical barriers are to be removed, "for the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea." The political obstacles are to be set aside, for "He shall shake His hand over the river and smite it in the seven streams." This is the river Euphrates, described by the apostle John in Revelation 16: 12, representing the Turkish power, which is to be "dried up that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared." These kings of the East are the returning children of Israel, who are to go back as the rulers of the Orient when the filthy rover of Mohammedan persecution and corruption shall have been put aside. Then will come the glad millennial song of Isaiah 12 when the universe shall be summoned to celebrate the great deliverance and the advent of the new creation and the millennial age.

In conclusion, what personal application can we make of this sublime vision to our individual lives?

1. As Christ came out of the ruined stump of Israel, so still our Christian life is born out of death, and at every stage we still must trace the principle of death and resurrection.
2. As the Lord Jesus Christ derived His holiness and righteousness from the Holy Ghost, so still the Christian character is not culture but a supernatural gift of the Spirit of God, and must be received by faith and maintained by union with the Lord Jesus through the spirit of holiness.
3. Like Him, we too may be baptized with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of the knowledge and the fear of the Lord, and above all, with that intuitive life which will make us of quick scent in the fear of the Lord, and give us the instinct of holiness and divine communion.
4. There is a sense in which the vision of Isaiah 11: 6, is still fulfilled in our hearts and homes. The lion and the bear, the asp and the adder are not always found in the jungle or menagerie. There are human hearts and lives so like these wild beasts of earth that one cannot altogether wonder that men have thought of the doctrine of evolution and have fancied that our progenitors were monkeys and brutes. But when Jesus comes into human lives, the lion will become a lamb, the poison of the asp will cease to be found behind our lips, the subtlety of the serpent will be taken from our hearts, and our strife and alienation will be healed, and we will walk in love even as "Christ also has loved us." We have no right to be looking for the millennium unless we have the millennium in our own hearts. We have no business to expect an eternity of peace if we are living in strife and envy now. Let us begin the millennial life here if we expect to enjoy it by and by.

5. The Restorer of Israel will also be our Restorer. How much there is waiting for the "times of the restitution of all things which God has promised by all His holy prophets since the world began." How much God gives us back here of that which sin and Satan have robbed us, and, oh, how much is waiting for that glad day when the lost shall be found and "the years that the locust has eaten" will be given back untarnished forever.

How can we have this blessed King of righteousness and peace, and announce and assist His glorious advent which shall make

"This blighted earth of ours

His own fair world again."

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