

The Promised King

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[0 : 0 0] as we make our way through them this morning. Let me start off with a quick recap of Isaiah so far. We've looked at chapter 1, we've looked at chapter 6, we're now here in chapter 11, so we're making fairly quick progress through. But we want to keep the big picture in mind, as we've said. And so far, in a lot of ways, what we've seen has been a fairly bleak picture, hasn't it? Isaiah has been speaking to those who are supposed to be God's people, but who have turned their backs on God and who are rebelling against him. And last week in chapter 6, we saw that incredible picture of the God who is holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, a perfect and pure and mighty God. And in some ways, that served all the more to show just how shocking it is.

That his people are refusing to listen, refusing to trust, refusing to live for him as they should be. So it's been this kind of bleak picture, and yet we've also seen how there have been these pinpricks of light in the darkness as well. I think if you were to sit down and simply read through from Isaiah chapter 1 through to chapter 10, you would be left feeling the weight of these passages.

As we've said before, this is kind of serious stuff that Isaiah is talking about that we are dealing with in this book. But also, there'll be enough notes and kind of glimpses of hope, of positive promises, that you would know that actually the kind of bleakness is not going to be the end. If you imagine perhaps those kind of points of hope as little kind of chinks of light shining through an old wooden door, really in chapter 11, that door is kicked open, and we get to see the source of that light, that the reason for that hope, and the fulfillment of those promises. And that is all found in God's anointed king. That's who is needed to solve that situation in Isaiah's day. And we're going to see as well, I hope, that's also who we need when we consider that the darkness, the hopelessness, the struggle that we see around us in our day, where things can often seem pretty bleak as well. And also, if we're able to be honest, if we're able to be personal in our own lives, where we recognize that just as we've been seeing in Isaiah, we too don't always respond to the holy God in the way that we should and the way that he deserves.

So we're going to look through these two chapters at the promised king, the promised kingdom, and then a rescued people and a rejoicing people. So let's have a look at those things. First, really the main thing here, as we mentioned, is the promised king. He's really kind of headlining over these two chapters. We finished chapter six last week after God had promised judgment again on rebellious people, that there would only be this stump left. But again, remember that brief glimpse of hope, but with the holy seed as this stump, we were told. Again, that glimmer of hope. And here we see that image of the stump is picked up again here at the start of chapter 11, and that hope is expanded for us. Verse one, it says, there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. The Jesse there that it's spoken of, the stump of Jesse, that is

Jesse who was father of King David. King David was the greatest king in the people's history. God had promised to David a dynasty of kings who would always sit on the throne and would always trust in God.

[3 : 56] And yet that's all looking a little bit shaky at the moment, because these kings are not following God as they should. But Isaiah here promises another like David, the offspring of Jesse to come, and that he is the reason for the hope that people are able to have, the promised king. Let's just try and get to grips with a little bit more with biblical prophecy like we have in Isaiah. So it's important to remember there is an immediate context that Isaiah is writing into, an immediate situation that he's dealing with.

As we said, people, and also from chapter 7 onwards, a king, King Ahaz, who are failing to trust in God. And so God, through Isaiah in these intervening chapters, has said he's going to bring judgment on his people through a nation called Assyria. God says this aggressive nation is going to sweep through Judah, reaching even up to the neck, it says. And that's what's been happening in the last few chapters. So what hope do the people have? Well, they need this true Davidic king who will trust in God first and foremost. And in him, God promises that he will save his people from the coming judgment. And we'll see in a couple of weeks how that is exactly how things worked out with a king called Hezekiah who comes to the throne. Hezekiah trusts in the Lord, and God saves the people from the Assyrians, even though they had got right up to their neck, were kind of banging on the door, as it were. God keeps this promise. And it's important that we see that, I think. Like the rest of the prophets in the Old Testament, Isaiah was not just a guy who kind of wandered around saying vague, kind of spiritual-sounding things and speaking out into a vacuum. The word of the Lord really hits home to his first hearers in their specific situations. And it's really good for us to remember that the hope that the Bible offers, that it promises, is not a vague thing, but it's real in history. It makes a difference in real life, whatever it is that you might be facing. These promises are there for real life, as real as a vicious army armed to the teeth at the city gates, as we'll see in Isaiah. The people needed a godly king. They got that in Hezekiah, and God kept his promise of rescue. So there's some kind of biblical history for us. And yet it's also clear, as we listen to those chapters, as Jill read them to us, that what Isaiah is speaking about here is far more than just what happened when Hezekiah came to the throne a few years later. Old Testament prophecy is often compared to when you look at a kind of a range of mountains. It looks like from a distance, they're all just in a row. They're all kind of next to each other. But once you get closer to that first peak, you see actually, and often sort of disappointingly, if you're on a kind of hill walk, it's actually a great distance, a huge gap between that first peak and the second peak. You get to the second peak, and there's another kind of down and up, another gap before you get to the third peak, even though from a distance, they'd seemed like they were on a level. That's kind of how biblical prophecy often works as well. The nearest peak here, we could say, to Isaiah is Hezekiah. But when we get there, we see there's actually so much more to come that is not fulfilled in this first peak. As this prophecy points us on to Jesus and His first coming hundreds of years later, and actually even where we stand in history today, even being able to look back at the coming of Jesus, having seen that first coming, we recognize that there is still another peak to come with the second coming of Jesus, when He will return to rule over all things, when everyone will recognize His rule. That's kind of how biblical prophecy works, with these different timescales in view. Isaiah is speaking to each of these three times.

And so this line runs through Hezekiah, but it's ultimately finding its fulfillment in Jesus. Now, for Christians, it is in Jesus that our hope is found. He is the promised king that will bring rescue, that will bring deliverance, that will restore His people. And that hope, that rescue He offers, is every bit as concrete as that which Isaiah's first hearers needed.

And so we're getting in this passage a picture of Jesus as the promised king, and that He is the king that we need. So what does this promised king look like? Well, we see straight away from verse 2 that that he is God's man, isn't he? That the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, that he will be anointed. Straight away, we're not looking for some kind of superhero here. We're not looking for some kind of alpha male or anything like this. It is only through God's anointing, through God working through this person, that the king was able to offer the hope promised. And Jesus, of course, is the one who was anointed at his baptism, and who his whole life, his teaching, his speech, his example, is characterized by that perfect wisdom, understanding, knowledge spoken of in these verses, living to God's priorities in every area. And also that demonstrating itself in justice, in righteousness, in not showing favoritism between rich and poor, as these verses speak about. We'll see that again in the life of Jesus, that he spent time with people that others had no time for. That he wasn't swayed by worldly opinions or assessments of people, but dealt fairly with them. We see that character of Jesus, the anointed king, as we look back to his life in the gospels as recorded to us in the Bible. But we can also look forward to seeing that character in Jesus again, when he returns. That he will return as the promised king to judge the earth. And he will do that fairly. He will do that with perfect justice. He will do that in perfect righteousness. Who in that will remove all wickedness? As it says, verse 4, he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips, he shall kill the wicked. This passage, first off, gives us a picture of the attractiveness of Jesus.

This promised king, a king who is fair, and yet we're left in no doubt a king with real authority. A king who has God himself, rules according to God's priorities. And that's coming under that king, where true safety and joy and security is found. I think to really get to grips with then why this promised king, having Jesus as Lord, is such good news, we want to move on to the next section in these verses, which is the promised kingdom. This is verse 6 down to 10. And I think it's perhaps here that we see most clearly that what Isaiah is speaking about is not fulfilled by Hezekiah, however good a king he was. It isn't even fulfilled when Jesus came 2,000 years ago. But in some ways, the peak really in focus here is the return of Jesus when his reign, his rule will be perfectly and fully established. I do have a look down at those verses 6 to 10. And we see these pictures, which are here for us. They look almost a bit strange as we read them, but they're here as pictures of incredible peace, a supernatural peace, we might say. The wolf and the lamb together, the leopard and the goat, the calf and the lion, all led by a little child. Later on, this picture of, you know, the young children playing with snakes. It's a picture of a world where danger and death has been removed.

[12 : 36] It's a picture of a world where perfect harmony, that harmony that was created in the beginning, that was disrupted by our sin, but is restored again in the future. And that is what's achieved by the reign of the promised king ruling in perfect justice. Again, that's something that we've not yet seen in history, but it is promised when Jesus returns. Because as verse 9 says, at that point, through his rule as king, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. This incredible picture of a promised kingdom, a kingdom which will cover the whole earth as the promised king, Jesus, reigns perfectly and justly over all things. And we're looking ahead to that. And it's incredible that this morning, as we look ahead to that, we can sit here and we can personalize that for ourselves.

And we can say that one day, all of the things that are causing you worry, that are causing you harm, that are causing you pain, one day, all of those things will be done away with under Jesus's perfect reign. And it's important as we remember this big picture of God in Isaiah, that he is a big God who cares about individuals like us. That's really true. And we want to hold on to that truth for each and every one of us. But I think it's also important here to remember the big picture as well.

The context here is a universal kingdom. In verse 10, this king, the root of Jesse, draws all the peoples in. And so we're not talking here about a kind of a local leader who's going to make a little slice of heaven over here, but everything else will just continue as before. And what's being pictured here is this universal peace under the reign of a universal king. And it's important to remember that because we live in a time when we're so aware that that is not currently the case. That conflict is not just an internal thing that we struggle with, it's everywhere. That we live in a world full of war, that we are bombarded with that news. And that news affects us. A summary of some recent studies said this, the research found a collective global downturn in people's sense of well-being, irrespective of age, gender, or political views. During and following the outbreak of war in Ukraine, social media coverage of war was also found to be associated with a deterioration in people's well-being.

We're perhaps in our day and age aware of the global picture more than ever before, and so often it's not a pretty picture. And so we also need to keep in mind the global promise of the Bible more than ever before as well. Again, Isaiah presents this big picture of God. So although we are helpless in the face of international conflict, of geopolitical strife that we don't know the details of, we're reminded here that God isn't. And Jesus, his promised King, will deal with that in his promised kingdom to come. That is good news that we want to be sharing with our children. That is good news we want to hold on for ourselves. That is good news that we want to hold out to the world around us. The world that we want has been promised to us in the Bible. And yet it's not going to come about by human might or policy decisions or anything like this. Ultimately, it's going to come through the perfect, just, and righteous rule of Jesus when he returns. That is an amazing hope that the church can offer to a hurting and to an anxious world. That is the big God that Isaiah is speaking about, the big God that we need to be able to trust in him in the world we live in. That gives us this incredible hope for the future.

And it is worth asking as well, before we move on, what difference does that make today? And just before we move on, I suppose a really brief reminder that actually the church today is supposed to be kind of an outpost or a preview of that future hope. That as we live under the rule of Jesus as King now, that we would be a picture of that harmony that's to come. Now a group of people, different types of people with different backgrounds, different personalities, different struggles, a church of people like that, just kind of getting on, showing grace to one another, caring for one another, that might feel pretty insignificant compared to the wars of the world. That might seem a pretty small thing. And yet actually Jesus says that that is an incredible thing. Jesus says that's how people will know that we're his disciples, that we have him as king, that we love one another. And so this promised kingdom gives us a universal hope for the future, but also a call to us now in much more mundane ways to be living that out in the present as well. As in the church, we recognize Jesus the king has come and we seek to follow him, live under his rule for his glory and also for the good and for the care and for the encouragement of one another.

[18:20] And so the promised king, the promised kingdom, let's move on into verses 11, really to the end of that chapter where we see here a rescued people. Verse 11, in that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.

Again, one of the big concepts that runs through Isaiah that we'll hopefully get used to seeing is this idea of a remnant that we see mentioned in these verses and plenty of others.

He will recover the remnant that remains of his people. The idea here is that the people have turned their backs on God. The promised result of that has been judgment, has been exile, has been the people being taken out of the land. And yet incredibly, God is going to show his grace in that he has not forgotten his people. That he will not reject them completely, but there will be this remnant who he brings home to him.

These verses tell us that the king will come and he'll bring home those who've been dispersed. The point being that there is hope in the face of judgment, even for those who've been rebelling against God.

That actually they could be brought in to have a place in this promised kingdom because of the work of the promised king. And how is the king going to do that? Worth noticing here that this is kind of battle language being used in these verses.

[20 : 00] Verse 11, he will extend his hand. That kind of means his hand is a show of power and strength. Verse 14, the king's people will plunder the people of the east.

Verse 15, and the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt. And throughout these verses, but perhaps most clearly in verse 16, there is this language of the exodus being used here.

Where back in the book of Exodus, God for the first time kind of rescued and gathered up his people. How did he do that? He did that by winning a decisive victory over Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

And so we read in verse 16, and there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnants that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up out of the land of Egypt.

Just as God led the people through the Red Sea on dry land out of Egypt. So he will again make this highway, bringing his people out from those who enslave and overpower them.

[21 : 04] Once again, God will make a way so that his people might dwell with him in his presence. He'll do that as the king wins the victory over their oppressors.

And again, these three horizons, I suppose. There was an exile. God kept his promise and brought a remnant back into the promised land. And looking forward, there will be this perfect restoration where all those who put their trust in Jesus will be gathered together to see him face to face, to be in his presence, to give glory to God.

But there's also the fulfillment of this part of the prophecy that we've already seen in Jesus. Jesus, the king, has come. That he's won victory over our greatest enemy.

And so we can be brought back to him. Jesus on the cross died and yet rose again, winning victory over sin and death, showing the power of his mighty hand, opening the way for all those who would turn to him, who would trust in him, to move from judgment to perfect peace in God's presence.

A peace that if we trust in Jesus, we can enjoy now as his rescued people. And that we look forward to experiencing all the more fully in the full expression and experience of the promised kingdom to come.

[22 : 38] That we've seen this picture of in these verses already. The promised king wins the victory, rescues his people, brings them home.

The promised king is Jesus who ultimately won that victory at the cross, that we might be brought home to God. And that just leaves us finally then to see the response of his people.

It's really how are we to respond to the fact that the king has come and that the king will come again. And we see this in chapter 12 of your Bibles there.

We see a picture of a rejoicing people. Do just have a look down through those verses. It's such a brilliant chapter of joy in light of all that God has done.

Joy because the king has come. And that joy really came through so fully, I think, as Jill was reading it for us. A joy in response to all that God has done through his promised king.

[23 : 43] And we see that joy really express itself in three ways just to run through. Firstly, in thanks and praise. You will say on that day, I will give thanks to you, O Lord.

For though you are angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. Verse 4, Give thanks to the Lord. Call upon his name. Verse 5, Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously.

We see how these backsliding, rebellious people facing a judgment that they fully deserved have become filled with thankful praise.

Because the Lord, through his king, has carried out a rescue that they never deserved. When we look to Jesus and the cross, we want to be people of grateful praise to God.

Because if we put our trust in Jesus, we too have received this rescue that we could never deserve. We want to be people of gratitude and praise.

[24 : 43] I'm sure that all of us would agree with that. Well, we become those people not by trying to kind of muster it up within ourselves, but by constantly remembering that rescue we have received in the gospel.

So there's the first response, that response of thanks. We also see a second response here, which is trust, and an ongoing trust. Verse 2, 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. Because of the king and this rescue, we know we can continue moving forward trusting in God.

Again, a huge theme of Isaiah is that question, who are you going to trust? Where are you going to put your hope? Is it in God or is it in the things of the world?

And of course, the answer this book gives is a resounding call to trust in God, but not out of kind of vague, wishful thinking, but because he has shown his salvation in the past and so we can trust him with that into the future.

[25 : 58] The people here, as we said, are reminded of Exodus and their rescuing God, the God who has shown that he can be trusted. We look back to the cross and we see Jesus, the king, but the one who suffered for us to make a way to bring us back.

Again, he is a rescuing God who has shown he can be trusted. Whatever situation we face today, tomorrow, in the rest of our lives, we too are invited to say these words of Isaiah, behold, God is my salvation.

I will trust and I will not be afraid. As a rejoicing and praising people, we can trust in God because he has proven his trustworthiness.

And then the final aspect that's huge in chapter 12 is that in response to what God has done, his people become a proclaiming people. Verse 4, make known his deeds among the people, proclaim that his name is exalted.

Verse 5, 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.

[27 : 20] The incredible truth of what God achieves through his anointed king, the rescue he brings, the kingdom he promises, is simply too good for his people to keep to themselves.

And that should again be our position as God's people. We want to be committed to sharing the good news of Jesus as king and yet the motivation for that can't simply be a kind of pressure from the front, us saying, come on, you need to do this.

It can't just be a sense of guilt within us. It has to be this delight in what God has done for us through Jesus. And this desire that all people would know that for themselves, the greatness of God and all that he has done.

That they too would be able to come in and join in with that joyful praise. The people of Isaiah's time, we've seen already, were supposed to be this light to the nations, bringing people in to see something of God.

We've seen how they were failing so badly at that task. But it's God's rescue of his people that enables them here to fulfill their purpose.

[28 : 34] That once again, God dwells with his people and they invite others to come and meet with him. Our prayer as a church is that we will be so blown away by the wonders of the promised king, Jesus himself, the promised kingdom that he has established, the rescue that enables us to have a place in that kingdom with him.

That we might thankfully praise him, we might fully trust him and that we might proclaim his work in all the earth starting on our very doorsteps. That more and more people might come to find the certain hope and the only hope that comes through knowing Jesus as king.

So let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.