

Two Advents of the Branch

Isaiah 11:1 – 9

Proposition: As we let the Spirit reign in our heart, He will be our all-sufficient resource to live high quality lives.

Application:

1. Ask for the gift of the Spirit, and then let Him rule and reign in your heart.
 2. Let the Lord speak His Word into your life. His Word has consequent action.
-

If you want to be a good giver of gifts, then you'll want to choose gifts based on the recipient's interests. We should not think of gift giving as a chore; we should think of it as a chance to show how much the recipient means to us. No matter who you're shopping for, you should find a gift that meets two criteria:

The WOW! Factor: No matter how old we may be, we still get a thrill tearing off wrapping paper and seeing in our hands just what we wanted.

The Value Factor: The value of a gift isn't measured by the amount of money you spend, but in the amount of thought you put into choosing the gift. If the gift isn't something the recipient needs, there is little value to the gift.

With the *WOW factor* and the *value factor* you will be a hero on Christmas day. In today's passage we will learn about a gift that has a WOW factor and a value factor. What is this gift? A Branch. Where is the WOW in that? Where is the value in a branch? Let's explore how this Branch has a huge WOW factor and priceless value factor.

I. The Branch as Redeemer (11:1 – 4a)

From Humble Beginnings (11:1): The roots of certain fallen trees can sprout again and develop new branches. This is because when a tree is cut down, the stump remains alive for a time. These stumps send up branches, the branches carry on with photosynthesis. The products of photosynthesis feed the stump so that it stays alive. Any of the branches that the stump sends up can grow into a full-sized tree.

The Stump: In this passage the *stump* refers to all that is left of a tree that has been cut down. The tree was the once mighty Davidic kingdom from whom the great kings of Judah emerged. In 586 BC the Babylonians attacked Judah, exiled the Jewish people and cut down the Davidic tree leaving only a hopeless looking stump. This marked the end of the kings of Judah. Yet the Lord will not let the line of David be totally destroyed. A stump remained. From that stump new life will emerge in the form of a fruitful branch – a *netzer* – a *Nazarene* – who will bear fruit as Redeemer and Ruler (Matt 2:23; Rom 15:12). Although the Davidic dynasty was decimated a

Branch emerged in the Person of Christ Jesus. A tree stump is a picture of the humble beginnings. Jesus was born into a poor family. He was raised in an obscure village.

The branch: The figure of a branch highlights His humanity (Rom 1:3). Because the Branch came from David's tree, He has the right to rule and reign as King. For all intents and purposes a tree stump is dead. But in the hands of God a stump can come back to life and bring forth fruit. What good things in your life have been cut down? Your health? Family relationships? Dwindling resources? Broken dreams? The things that may have once be vibrant in your life are now just a stump. Does it have to stay that way? No! Just as a new tree can emerge from a stump; just as the Lord raised up the Messiah from an obscure family, the Lord can bring new life into your broken dreams. To bring new life into your life requires a special resource. What is it? The Person of Christ Jesus dwelling in you by His Spirit.

Full of the Holy Spirit (11:2, 3): Notice the seven-fold nature of the Holy Spirit. In Scripture, seven suggests perfection, completeness, fullness. The work of the Spirit is diverse. The Spirit equipped Jesus to fulfill His role as Redeemer and Ruler. The same Spirit that rested on the Lord Jesus can dwell in you to empower and equip you to live godly lives. The Spirit of the Lord empowers us with **intellectual gifts** (*wisdom and understanding*), **administrative gifts** (*counsel and strength*) and **spiritual gifts** (*knowledge of God and fear of the Lord*). We are fully equipped to live amazing lives, exceptional lives, supernatural lives, as we allow the Holy Spirit in His fullness to rule and reign in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is all we need to live high-quality lives. As the Spirit came upon David to anoint him king of God's people; as the Spirit came up Jesus to fulfill His ministry of Redeemer and Ruler, the same Spirit can dwell in you and me, so that we can live goldy lives in an ungodly world.

Wisdom and understanding: These are intellectual gifts. *Wisdom* is the skill to bring about useful outcomes. *Understanding* is the ability to decide between diverse options. We cannot put a price tag on wisdom and understanding (Prov 8:1, 11). God gives wisdom upon the asking in faith (James 1:5).

Counsel and strength are gifts of leadership. We could also call this *strategy and strength*. The Holy Spirit shows us the right thing to do (*strategy*) then gives us power to carry it out (*strength*). We cannot achieve God's will by human means (Zech 4:6, 7). When I was in College I majored in Biomedical Science. For one course I had to write a paper on multiple sclerosis. Having done the research, I realized medical scientists know a lot about multiple sclerosis. Hundreds of thousands of pages have been written about the cause, symptoms, treatments and progress of the disease. Yet with all that knowledge doctors are not able to cure it. They can know its causes; they can treat its symptoms, but they cannot cure the disease. This is an example of knowledge without strength. Understanding without ability. Information without power. The Holy Spirit gives strategy and strength.

Knowledge and fear of the Lord: Knowledge means to know the Lord in personal relationship. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot know the Lord in this way. The fear of the Lord is reverence for who God is and for what He has done. One who fears the Lord delights in doing what pleases Him. The Branch fulfills the will of God by delighting in the fear of the Lord. Do you delight in the Lord as you delight in a sweet-smelling fragrance? A sweet fragrance draws us. In the same way, we are drawn to the Lord because we delight in Him.

We cannot live a high-quality life, an exceptional life, a life worth living unless we allow the Lord to rule and reign in our lives by His Spirit. It's the Christmas season. In large part Christmas is about gift giving; gifts that have a WOW factor and a value factor. May I suggest a gift? A gift that will elicit a WOW! A gift that no amount of money can buy. It is God's will to give us the best gift ever; the gift of wisdom and understanding; the gift of counsel and strength; the gift of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; the gift of the Holy Spirit in all His fullness. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ Jesus.

The prophet Isaiah now leaps in time, across the centuries, to the second advent of the Branch. He brings together the two comings of the Messiah as though they are one. We see two mountain peaks without seeing the valley in between. At His first advent, the Branch arrived in humble setting. He was endowed with all sufficiency through the Spirit of the Lord. Now we see the Branch coming a second time, not as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but as the Lion of Judah who reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

II. The Branch as Ruler (11:4b – 5)

He smites the Earth (11:4, 5): He will terrify the world with calamities, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, tsunamis, extreme heat. Why does the Branch smite the earth? To bring sinners to their senses that they might repent of their sin and turn to the Lord in faith before it's too late (Isa 26:9b, 10).

He slays the wicked: Once He is done *smiting* the earth, He then moves on to *slay* the unrepentant. When the Lord speaks, His word is followed up with consequent action (Rev 19:13 – 15).

The Branch came first to Redeem. He will come again to Rule. The Branch emerged from a stump as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Branch will come a second time as the Lion of Judah to judge sin and sinners. When He returns, He will sit on the throne of David and reign over the nations as a righteous King. Utopia is what the humanist dream about; it's what the new agers aspire to; it is what the brave new world longs for; but no one can bring it about. Only when the Messiah sets up His global reign will we be brought back to Eden.

The Effects on Nature (11:6 – 8): The Messiah will remove the curse on nature. No longer will there be predator-prey relationships. Carnivores will become herbivores. So radical will be the transformation of nature that even children will lead animals (Rom 8:20 – 22). Nature will be set free from its bondage and all nations will know the Lord.

The Effects on Nations (11:9): There will be no need for human rights councils; no need for the United Nations; no nuclear weapon treaties; no terrorism; no need for peace accords; no Planned Parenthood. Why? Because the knowledge of the Lord will engulf the nations as water covers every crevice and canyon of the sea. Nations will be under the influence of wisdom and understanding; they will possess counsel and strength; they will live by the knowledge and fear of the Lord. When we pray “*Thy kingdom come*”, we are praying for the second advent of the Branch to rule and reign over nature and nations as King of kings and Lord of lords.

If your life feels like a stump, your strength has declined, your dreams lie dormant, your hopes vanished, your life seems insignificant, the Lord is able to bring a fruitful tree out of a lifeless stump. Let the Lord speak His Word into your life. His Word has consequent action. He speaks and it is as good as done. He brings into existence that which does not yet exist.

God gives His Spirit without measure. He gives the Spirit not in part but in whole. He gives the Spirit through faith in Christ Jesus. If you do not know the Lord in personal relationship, you can know Him today! Admit you are a sinner in need of a Saviour. Believe that Jesus died for your sin and rose again on the third day. Call on Him and be saved and you will receive the gift of His Spirit so that you might be filled with wisdom and understanding; strategy and strength; knowledge and fear of the Lord.