The Kingdom of Peace
Isaiah 11:1-9
SS Lesson for 09/04/2016

Devotional Scripture: Ps 72

OUTLINE

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson
The lesson explains the nature of God’s Kingdom of Peace. The study’s aim is to understand how God will bring about peace in His future kingdom. The study’s application is to experience peace now in daily life in view of God’s sovereign control.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Isa 11:9
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

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary
The Assyrian Empire would fall (10:5-34), but another empire would arise. This section about God’s empire (11:1-12:6) includes a description of the Messiah, the kingdom itself, and the remnant who will inhabit the kingdom. Besides contrasting this kingdom with the Assyrian kingdom, Isaiah also contrasted it with the sinful actions of Israel in his day.

11:1. The Lord would cut down the forests and the mighty trees (10:33-34), that is, foreign soldiers and leaders, but God’s kingdom will arise by a Shoot coming up from the stump of Jesse, David’s father (cf. Rev. 22:16). Isaiah undoubtedly was thinking of God’s promise to David (2 Sam. 7:16) that a Descendant of David will rule over his kingdom (cf. Isa. 9:7) forever. This Branch, the Messiah (cf. Jer. 23:5), will bear fruit, that is, prosper and benefit others. (He is the Root; cf. Isa. 11:10.) This Hebrew word for branch (nēṣer) differs from the word used for branch in 4:2 (semaḥ). However, the concept is the same. (Yônēq) in 53:2 for “tender shoot” is still another word.) He will come directly from the line of David (cf. Matt. 1:1) and will fulfill God’s promises in the Davidic Covenant.

11:2-3a. In these verses the character and work of the “Branch” are described. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, that is, the Holy Spirit would empower Him (at Jesus’ baptism, Matt. 3:16-17) for His work which would be characterized by wisdom... understanding... counsel... power... knowledge, and the fear of the LORD. The attributes of the Holy Spirit would characterize the Messiah. Because of His wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge He is the Wonderful Counselor (Isa. 9:6). Isaiah referred to the Holy Spirit more than did any other Old Testament prophet (11:2 [four times]; 30:1; 32:15; 34:16; 40:13; 42:1; 44:3; 48:16; 59:21; 61:1; 63:10-11, 14). He is characterized by the fear of the LORD and has delight in it (11:3) just as His people should have. To fear God is to respond to Him in awe, trust, obedience, and worship. (Interestingly all three Persons of the Trinity are suggested in vv. 1-2.) The Messiah constantly seeks to do what God the Father wants Him to do. This contrasted with the religious leaders in Isaiah’s day who were unconcerned about following God’s Word.

11:3b-5. As world Ruler, the Messiah will judge the world (cf. 2:4). But He will not be like an ordinary judge who may be swayed by superficial knowledge. He will judge impartially and in righteousness. The needy and the poor will not be oppressed by Him as they often are by human leaders (10:1-2). The oppressed will be the beneficiaries of His justice, and the wicked will be slain. His reign will be characterized by righteousness (11:5; cf. 9:7; 16:5) and faithfulness as if they were integral parts of His clothing, as a belt and sash.

11:6-9. Isaiah described the righteous kingdom which the Messiah will set up. The curse will be lifted, peace and harmony will be present, and wild animals will again be tame and harmless to domesticated animals and humans. The wolf... leopard... lion, and bear are mentioned as examples of wild animals that will dwell safely with farm animals (the lamb... goat... calf... cow, and ox). A little child will be safe with lions, bears, cobras, and vipers (cf. 65:25). And on the temple mount (God’s holy mountain; cf. 27:13; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20) tranquility will prevail. Many Bible students interpret these verses nonlinearly, because they suppose such changes in the animal world are not possible. However, because the Messiah is “God (is) with us” (7:14) and He will be dwelling with His people, it need not be difficult to envision these changes in nature. Though the curse of sin will be removed to some extent it will not be totally removed until the end of the millennial kingdom when finally death will be abolished (Rev. 20:14). The reason such tranquility is possible is that all the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD (Isa. 11:9; cf. Jer. 31:34; Hab. 2:14). This means more than people knowing intellectually about the Lord. The idea is that people everywhere will live according to God’s principles and Word. Animals will be affected, as well. This will occur in the Millennium when the Messiah will be reigning (Isa. 9:6-7), Jerusalem will...
have prominence in the world (2:2), and Judah and Israel will be regathered to the land in belief and will be living according to the New Covenant. The Millennium can hardly be in existence now since these factors do not characterize the present age.

11:10. Israel will have a special place in the kingdom because of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:18-21; 17:7-8; 22:17-18), the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16), and the New Covenant (Jer. 31:33-34). But people in other nations will also benefit from the kingdom. The Messiah, the Root of Jesse (cf. comments on “stump of Jesse,” Isa. 11:1), will be a means of rallying for the nations (cf. v. 12; Zech. 14:9, 16). Jesus Himself made the same point that many people from outside Israel will have a part in God’s kingdom (Luke 13:29). God had promised Abraham that through his line all peoples on the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). The dispensational teaching that Israel has a special place in God’s program because of His promises to Abraham does not exclude the Gentiles from also having a special place.

11:11-12. In verses 11-16 Isaiah spoke of the Lord’s gathering the people of Israel and Judah from all over the world. He compared it to a second “Exodus,” like the release from Egypt about 700 years earlier. That first Exodus was one of Israel’s most significant events for in only three months after that God gave the Mosaic Covenant, thus marking the beginning of Israel as a nation. The remnant will be drawn by God from the north (Hamath), south (Egypt and Cush), east (Assyria...Elam...Babylonia) and west (islands of the sea)—from the four quarters of the earth. Both Israel and Judah will be regathered (v. 12; cf. Jer. 31:31-34). This was important as the Northern Kingdom would go off into captivity, and Judahites in Isaiah’s day might have thought it unlikely that both parts of the nation would ever be united.

11:13-14. In that day of regathering, Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) will not be jealous of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) and the South will have no hostilities toward the North. Reunited they (Israel and Judah) will occupy the land and defeat their enemies. Philistia refers to the southwestern edge of Israel along the Mediterranean Sea. People to the east may be those in northern Arabia (see comments on Job 1:3) and beyond (see comments on Isa. 11:11). Edom...Moab, and the Ammonites were south and east of Israel. In the kingdom period Israel will no longer be bothered by these or other enemies (cf. Obad. 19).

11:15-16. When Israel returns to her land at the beginning of the Millennium, God will prepare the way for her. The Gulf of Suez will be dried up to enable Israelites to return from Egypt and Cush (cf. v. 11), and the Euphrates River will be divided into shallow canals so that the people can return to Israel from the east. This drying of the waters will be reminiscent of the first Exodus when Israel crossed the Red Sea (lit., “Sea of Reeds”) on dry land (Ex. 14:21-22). The return from Assyria (Isa. 11:16), perhaps representative of all places from which the remnant would come, will be like Israel’s “exit” from Egypt. Isaiah did not know when this new Exodus would take place; he may have thought it would occur soon.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Isaiah 11 describes the perfect King and the perfect kingdom (Alexander and Alexander, eds., Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible, Eerdmans). It is one of the clearest messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, recorded some seven centuries before the birth of Christ. The description of Christ as the Judge who will “smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips ... slay the wicked” (Isa. 11:4) sets the prophecy in the context of Christ’s second coming. Indeed, the prophetic words about Christ’s kingdom in verses 6-10, if taken in any literal sense (as they should be), could apply only to the future and coming kingdom. Following the terrible judgments of the tribulation period, Christ, the King of kings, will return to earth to reign over His kingdom for a thousand years. Those believers on the earth when Christ returns will enter His kingdom to live there (cf. Matt. 25:34). The earth both they and the resurrected and glorified saints will encounter, however, will be very different from anything they have seen before. After the ravages inflicted on the earth by sinful humans for millennia and by God Himself in the judgments of the tribulation, the conditions of the earth during the millennial kingdom will be supernaturally returned to an Eden-like paradise. Isaiah 11:6-8 describes the physical changes that will take place in the animal world, as natural enemies will dwell together and humans will have nothing to fear from what were once very dangerous animals. The word “they” at the beginning of our text probably refers to human beings in general (Alexander, A Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, Zondervan). In Christ’s kingdom, violence will be absent from the Lord’s “holy mountain.” This is a reference to Jerusalem, which will be the seat of worship in the kingdom. However, the peace that characterizes Jerusalem also will define the entire world, for Christ’s reign will extend throughout the earth (cf. Isa. 9:7). The basis for this universal peace and this freedom from even animal violence is the “knowledge of the Lord,” which will fill the earth and cover it “as the waters cover the sea.” This implies more than mere intellectual knowledge of the Lord extending around the globe. Rather, it means that “people everywhere will live according to God’s principles and Word” (Watvoord and Zuck, eds., The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Cook). This glorious future awaits
all of God’s people. Our sovereign God has a plan for the ages that can never be thwarted by the efforts of sinful humans and all the misery they introduce to our world. The revelation the Bible gives us of the future reminds us that God is always in control and moving everything toward the completion of His good plan. What a comfort it is to know that, while we may not understand everything about the future, as the old gospel song says, we know who holds tomorrow, and we know who holds our hand!

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Before there were GPS (Global Positioning System) devices, I used the set of maps in the back of the telephone book to find a location in my city. First, I had to look up the street name in the index. Then I had to find the correct map by referring to the code that accompanied the index entry. I had to make sure I ended up looking at the right map, otherwise I could find myself “running out of room” as the street trailed off the edge of the (wrong) map before I found the desired location. Our world seeks many of the positive qualities described in today’s lesson text from the prophet Isaiah. Who in his or her right mind does not desire righteousness, justice, and peace? The problem is that the ethical maps that the world consults are too small—they are limited to this world’s sinful perspective, and they do not reflect God’s point of view. We will find righteousness, justice, and peace (along with many other blessings) only when we humble ourselves enough to consult Heaven’s GPS: God’s Promised Son. It is he who is at the heart of today’s study.

The book of Isaiah appears in our Bibles as the first of the group known as the Major Prophets—so-called because of their length (the Minor Prophets are shorter books). Isaiah is known for his numerous prophecies of Jesus, many of which are quoted in the New Testament. The issue of God’s sovereignty likely was a hot-button topic in Isaiah’s day, since that was one of the more chaotic times in the history of God’s people. Isaiah’s call to prophetic service came “in the year that King Uzziah died” (Isaiah 6:1). That was about 738 BC, not quite two hundred years after God’s people had split into the two kingdoms of Israel to the north and Judah to the south. Uzziah (or Azariah; see 2 Kings 15:1, 13) was one of Judah’s better kings, though he finished poorly as a result of pride (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). Isaiah 7 records the prophet’s confrontation with one of Judah’s worst kings, Ahaz (grandson of Uzziah). At the time, Judah was facing the rising threat of Assyria to the northeast. Ahaz rejected the counsel of Isaiah to trust in the Lord (Isaiah 7:1-12). The prophet warned the defiant king of the folly of this course of action (or inaction) and declared that Assyria would indeed wreak havoc on Judah (7:17-20; 10:5, 6). It is always a mistake, though, to underestimate God in the midst of a seemingly hopeless situation. Often that is when he does his best work! Isaiah 10:10, 11, 22, 23 predicted that God’s judgment on his people would not leave much. But it would leave something: a remnant sufficient for God to carry out his sovereign purpose (10:20, 21). God had informed Isaiah that his ministry would not appear to be that successful. The prophet was to proclaim God’s message “until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, … and the fields ruined and ravaged” (Isaiah 6:11). The population of Judah would go into exile (6:12). Although God compared the people with a tree stripped of its leaves, “the holy seed” would remain from which new growth would come (6:13).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Savior Who Brings Peace (Isaiah 11:1-2)

1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Through lineage (1)

Lineage prophesied in the Scriptures (John 7:42)

42 Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?”
Lineage sworn by God (Ps 132:11)
11 The Lord swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne

Lineage of a righteous King (Jer 23:5)
5 "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

Lineage from the clan of Judah (Mic 5:2)
2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

Lineage of a ruler from Judah (Gen 49:10)
10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.

Through qualifications (2)

Wisdom and understanding that makes the God's way known to us (Isa 42:16)
16 I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

Wisdom and understanding that allows us to know God better (Eph 1:17-18)
17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

God's counsel guides us in the way we should go (Ps 32:8)
8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

God's counsel is best because there is none better (Ps 73:24-25)
24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

God's counsel is sound (Prov 8:14)
14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power.

God's counsel is worth praise (Ps 16:7)
7 I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

The Judgment That Produces Peace (Isaiah 11:3-5)
3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
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 slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.
Judgement with equity (3-4)

_Equity because God created all and therefore requires justice (Job 31:13-15)_
13 "If I have denied justice to my menservants and maidservants when they had a grievance against me, 14 what will I do when God confronts me? What will I answer when called to account? 15 Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?"

_Equity because all are the work of God’s hands (Job 34:19)_
19 who shows no partiality to princes and does not favor the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands?

_Equity because there is no partiality with God (Rom 2:11)_
11 For God does not show favoritism.

_Equity because God has no distinction between Christians (Rom 10:12)_
12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

Judgement with righteousness (4-5)

_God’s judgment is based on truth (Rom 2:2)_
2 Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

_God judges in righteousness and justice (Ps 9:7-8)_
7 The Lord reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. 8 He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice.

_God is righteous in all His ways (Ps 145:17)_
17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.

_God will judge the world through Jesus (Acts 17:31)_
31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”

_God’s judgment is right (2 Thess 1:5)_
5 All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

The Animal Realm that Evidences Peace (Isaiah 11:6-9)

6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.
9 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.

Animal to animal harmony (6-7)

_Harmony through a covenant of peace (Ezek 34:25)_
25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety."
Harmony through God abolishing aggression (Hos 2:18)

18 In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety.

Harmony through honoring God (Isa 43:20)

20 The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen,

Animal to man harmony (8-9)

Harmony of man to animals through God’s discipline (Job 5:17-23)

17 "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. 18 For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal. 19 From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you. 20 In famine he will ransom you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. 21 You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes. 22 You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the beasts of the earth. 23 For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you.

Harmony of man to animals through being one of God’s redeemed (Isa 35:9)

9 No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there,

Harmony of man to animals through God granting peace (Lev 26:6)

6 "I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. I will remove savage beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country.

Harmony of man to animals through God controlling the animals (Dan 6:22)

22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verse 1

The prophet had just described Assyria cut down like a forest of trees (Isaiah 10:15-19; Isaiah 10:33-34). Likewise, Israel would have only a remnant left after God finished judging her (Isaiah 10:20-23; cf. Isaiah 6:11-13). Now he pictured a shoot (Heb. nezer) sprouting from one of the stumps left after Israel’s harvesting (cf. Isaiah 4:2; Isaiah 6:13; Isaiah 53:1-3; Job 14:7). A shoot would sprout from Jesse’s family tree stump. Some interpreters believe that Matthew had this shoot (nezer) in mind when he wrote that Jesus fulfilled prophecy by being called a Nazarene (Matthew 2:23). [Note: E.g, Delitzsch, 1:282.] The reference to humble Jesse, rather than to glorious David, stresses God’s grace in providing a deliverer from a lowly family. It also indicates that Messiah would be another David, not just a son of David, and that the house of David would lack royal dignity when Messiah appeared. Other prophets referred to the coming ideal Davidic king as "David," picturing him as the second coming of David, so to speak (cf. Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; Ezekiel 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5; Micah 5:2). The figure of a "branch" (Heb. neser, sapling), referring to Messiah, also appears in Jeremiah 23:5; Jeremiah 33:15, and in Zechariah 3:8; Zechariah 6:12.

Verses 1-9

The rule of the Shoot11:1-9
Messiah would meet certain qualifications (Isaiah 11:2-3 a) and would rule with absolute justice (Isaiah 11:3-5) - with the result that people would live in peace (Isaiah 11:6-9)

Verse 2

Clearly this shoot would be a person, and the qualities of God's Spirit would distinguish Him (cf. Isaiah 61:1; Exodus 31:3; Judges 14:6; 1 Samuel 10:10; 1 Samuel 16:13; Luke 4:18; John 1:31-34; John 3:34). Isaiah referred to the Holy Spirit more than any other Old Testament prophet (Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 30:1; Isaiah 32:15; Isaiah 34:16; Isaiah 40:13; Isaiah 42:1; Isaiah 44:3; Isaiah 48:16; Isaiah 59:21; Isaiah 61:1; Isaiah 63:10-11; Isaiah 63:14). Spiritual qualities had not distinguished many of the Davidic kings thus far (cf. 2 Samuel 23:2-3), but the future ruler would enjoy divine enablement and would manifest supreme godliness. This description presents Him as perfectly endowed by the Spirit with everything He needs to fulfill His kingly task (cf. Revelation 1:4; Revelation 4:5; Revelation 5:6). "Wisdom" and "understanding" are synonyms that, together, mean great wisdom. "Counsel" and "strength" suggest His ability to strategize wisely and then execute His strategy. "Knowledge" and "fear" refer to His acknowledgement of and loyalty to God. The source of these traits would be God's Spirit on Him.

Verse 3

The coming "David" would also delight in fearing the Lord, not fearing Him out of dread, much less, lacking respect for Yahweh. He would make decisions on the basis of reality rather than appearances, having the ability to see through issues. Such abilities demand more than a merely human ruler (cf. John 18:36-38). An earlier Messiah passage (Isaiah 9:6) showed Him to be divine, but this one presents Him as a dependent human being, "a combination that requires the Incarnation for its explanation." [Note: Grogan, p87.]

Verse 4

Justice for the poor was hard to find in the ancient world because the poor could not afford to bribe their Judges, and they possessed little political influence. But Israel's coming king would do what was right for the poor and be fair with the afflicted (cf. Revelation 1:5; Revelation 3:14). His words of judgment would result in the death of the wicked rather than giving them preferential treatment for what they could do for the judge (cf. Isaiah 55:10-11; Genesis 1:3; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 1:16; Revelation 19:15; Revelation 19:21). Clearly, this king will acknowledge God as His sovereign.

Verse 5

Righteousness and faithfulness (to God) would be His outstanding and determining characteristics. These were the marks of the Israelites' God (cf. Isaiah 5:16; Isaiah 65:16; Psalm 40:10; Psalm 119:75; Psalm 119:142; Zechariah 8:8). A belt in Isaiah's culture held together everything else that the person wore. So the figure here pictures everything about the king as thoroughly righteous and pleasing to God.

Verses 6-8

Security and safety would result from this king's rule. Whereas the conditions described may occur literally in the Millennium, Isaiah probably used them to represent those conditions figuratively. The presently rapacious - represented by the wolf, leopard, lion (twice), bear, cobra, and viper - will coexist peacefully with the defenseless - the lamb, the kid, the calf, the cow, the ox, the nursing child, and the weaned child. "The faling" (NASB) breaks the parallelism and may be better rendered "will graze" (NET). People least able to control wild things will be able to exercise effective leadership over them then, because God will change their natures.

In that day death itself will have lost its sting (cf. Hosea 13:14; 1 Corinthians 15:55). People will have no fear of what is now fatal. The serpent will have been subdued (Genesis 3:15). Note again the recurrence of the child motif in this section, to stress the victory of humility over self-assertiveness (cf. Matthew 18:2-5). In short, these conditions indicate a return to paradise on earth (cf. Genesis 1:28-30; Psalm 8; 1 Corinthians 15:25-28; Hebrews 2:5-9).
Amillennial interpreters do not believe there will be a future reign of Messiah on the earth for a millennium. They believe the conditions Isaiah described here are either figurative descriptions of the peace that Christ has brought to humanity through His saving work, or they describe conditions in heaven.

Verse 9

The enemies of humankind, those that are hurtful and destructive, will no longer hurt or destroy people in God’s holy mountain (kingdom, cf. Isaiah 2:2-3; Daniel 2:32; Daniel 2:45; et al.)—because everyone will know (relationally) the Lord (cf. Jeremiah 31:34). "Mountain" seems to refer metaphorically here to God’s kingdom, since it is the whole earth, not just a small region, that will be full of the knowledge of the LORD. "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD" means: "there will be universal submission to the LORD’s sovereignty" (NET cf. Isaiah 11:2). The animals contrasted in Isaiah 11:6-8 undoubtedly represent people. Peaceful conditions in the animal kingdom could not be all that Isaiah intended but global peace.

Verse 10

"In that day" points to the time when Messiah would rule (Isaiah 11:1-9). Then the Gentile nations would seek out the king who would represent His people, the Jews. The signal or standard in view seems to refer to a rallying point. The fulfillment could not be the return from Babylonian exile as the fulfillment, and the rallying of all sorts of people around Christ-as preached in the church age—does not fit the picture either. Many liberal interpreters prefer the first explanation, and amillennialists [Note: E.g, Young, 1:396.] prefer the second. It must refer to a future worldwide turning to Messiah in which the Jews will be prominent (cf. Romans 11). No resting place of Messiah was especially glorious during His first advent, but when He returns, Jerusalem will become "a glory" because He will rule there.

The title "root of Jesse" presents the Messiah as the source of the Davidic line (cf. Genesis 3:15; Genesis 17:6), not just the product of that line (Isaiah 11:1).

Verses 10-16

The return under the Shoot11:10-16

The rebellion of one Davidic king, Ahaz, would result in the defeat and dispersion of God’s people (Isaiah 8:6-8), but the righteousness of another Davidic king, Messiah, would result in their revival and return to God and the Promised Land.

Verse 11

Then there will be a second regathering of the Israelites to the Promised Land—from all over the world. The first regathering happened under Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and Ezra. The present return of many Jews to the State of Israel cannot fulfill this second regathering prediction because, as Isaiah explained, that will happen when Messiah rules on earth. Assyrian and Babylonian sovereigns might defeat and disperse the Jews, but the ultimate sovereign, Messiah, will restore and reassemble them (cf. Ezekiel 37).

Verse 12

The standard He lifts up for the nations is the flag of His kingdom; His will be an earthly kingdom. He will assemble under this banner a remnant of Jews from both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms who will be living all over the earth then. The northern tribes of Israel were not lost, as some cults claim. They have a future as Israel.

Verse 13-14

Internal strife among the tribes will cease. Instead of fighting among themselves, the Israelites will subdue their common enemies and gain the whole Promised Land. Evidently this conflict will precede the peace pictured in Isaiah 11:6-9.
Verse 15-16

God will defeat Israel’s ancient enemies, Egypt and Babylonia. His judgments on them will involve the drying up of major barriers: the Red Sea and the Euphrates River (cf. Exodus 14:21; Revelation 16:12). This judgment will allow the Jews to return to the Promised Land, unhindered, from those parts of the world. They will be able to leave the territory of Assyria, where God had said He would send them captive, as easily as their forefathers left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea in the Exodus. Dividing the Euphrates into seven seasonal streams (Heb. nahal) may connote a perfect and complete taming, or even Revelation -creation, by God. Thus, this section of the book, dealing with the hope of God’s deliverance (Isaiah 10:5 to Isaiah 11:16), culminates in the reign of Messiah on the earth. Israel will Revelation-gather in the Promised Land-from all over the world-trusting in God. The Gentiles, too, will acknowledge His sovereignty, which both they and His own people have forever resisted.

(Adapted from URL:http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/isaiah-11.html)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The story is told of two artists who were commissioned to paint a picture that conveyed the theme of peace. One painted a quiet rural scene featuring a beautiful country home in the center. Next to the home were fields with crops awaiting harvest. Contented cows loitered under trees. The sun was setting in the distance, with the skies tinted at just the right colors. The other artist drew an entirely different picture. In his, a storm was raging. Trees swayed on the mountainside and in the valley below. Flashes of lightning punctuated the dark and gloomy sky. At first glance, the second painting seemed to depict the very opposite of a peaceful setting. But on a rock projecting from a cliff protected by an overhang, a small bird sat calmly on her nest. She remained at peace in spite of the storm.

In a day to come, everything that is destructive, harmful, painful, and sorrowful will be eliminated without exception. That is God’s clear promise to us. Until then, we reside in a world that still suffers the brutal effects of sin. The circumstances of many Christians are especially stormy. Some are persecuted because of their faith; many are in anguish as they, family members, and/or close friends wrestle with intense pain, wondering how they can make it through another day. Under such conditions, the peace that God promises becomes a cherished anchor for the soul. Pointing to the unceasing strife in the world, cynics note the lack of peace that Jesus came to bring (see Luke 2:14). But until Jesus returns, peace is not found in the absence of life’s storms, but rather in the midst of life’s storms. Jesus was very clear: “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33b). Anyone could say that, of course, but only Jesus could say what follows: “But take heart! I have overcome the world” (16:33c). And only Jesus could say, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace” (16:33a). That peace is not of this world (John 14:27) just as Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world (18:36). Jesus’ peace sustains us when the world around us is coming to pieces. The way we model that peace can be a compelling witness to the stormy, broken world around us. There is a peaceful kingdom here and now. It is the church, whose Lord is the Prince of Peace.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. The Messiah came from a line that seemed defeated and dead, like the stump of a tree (Isa. 11:1)
2. God's Spirit was on the Messiah, and the Spirit empowered Him (vs. 2)
3. True justice will prevail under the Messiah because He is perfectly righteous (vss. 3-5)
4. Even the animal kingdom will be at peace under the Messiah's reign (vss. 6-7)
5. All of creation will coexist in harmony in God's future kingdom (vs. 8)
6. There will be no cause for violence or harm under the Messiah's rule (vs. 9)