

The Anointed Branch

Isaiah 11:1-16

Halifax: 5 July 2009

Introduction:

Last week in Isaiah 10,

- we saw how God would raise up Assyria to be a mighty empire in
 - and how he would send her against His covenant people to chasten them...
- And how that after this work was complete,
 - He would then turn to judge Assyria for her arrogance and pride.
- At the end of the chapter,
 - Isaiah compares the Assyrian Empire to a great tree that has been cut down...
 - They will be reduced to a mere stump.

But from former prophecies,

- Isaiah has shown that a very similar demise was to befall the covenant people...
 - They too would be reduced to a mere stump.
- The comparison of the demise of Assyria to the demise of his own people must have struck him with great forcefulness...
 - For immediately after speaking of Assyria as a stump (as the end of chapter 10),
 - He begins to speak of the house of Jesse as a stump (at the beginning of chapter 11).
 - Now you must understand that Jesse was David's father, so in speaking of the stump of Jesse,
 - Isaiah is speaking about the house of David after it had fallen under God's judgement and disgrace because of covenant unfaithfulness.
 - He refers to David's house as the house of Jesse to show the condition to which it will be reduced by God's chastening hand.
 - Jesse was David's father, but he himself was no king.
 - Isaiah, looking into the future,
 - is seeing the house David cut down and reduced to what it was before David was anointed and God's covenant was established with him...
 - He is seeing that a time is coming when there will be no Davidic king—only a stump.

- But unlike the mighty Assyrian empire that was never to rise again,
 - Isaiah is given words of great encouragement about the stump of Jesse!
 - And these are words of encouragement for us too because they tell us about our Lord Jesus Christ,
 - and how God, in faithfulness to His promise to David and to all of His people,
 - brings forth the Messiah out of David's fallen house!

I. I want you to see first of all how Isaiah shows us here that our Lord Jesus Christ is just the right person to be our Saviour.

A. First, that He is just right because of His lowly origins.

1. In verse 1 Isaiah describes Him as a rod or a branch growing out of the stump of a felled tree...
 - He did not come into the world as a prince, but to a failed dynasty that had had no king for almost 600 years.
 - He comes as a carpenter's son from the lowly town of Nazareth.
 - He comes to a people who have been brought very low by God's judgment and disgrace.
2. And my brothers and sisters, this lowly origin is just what He had to have to be our Saviour...
 - a. He came to His covenant people not because they were righteous, but because they desperately needed to be saved from their sin...
 - His very name was to be called Jesus because He would save His people from their sin.
 - It was His task to come to them in their need.
 - b. He came, you see, to bear their iniquities...
 - It was necessary for Him to enter into their lowliness that He might raise them out of it.
 - His coming from the felled stump of Jesse was only the beginning of His humiliation and shame...
 - Before His word was done, He would have to bear the shame of all their iniquities on the cross.
 - He would have to bear the full weight of the curse of which their lowly condition in the world was but the beginning.

TRANS> So you see that He was just the right person to be our Saviour because He came in lowliness as a root out of the stump of Jesse.

B. Second, see that He is just the right person to be our Saviour because He is filled with the blessed Holy Spirit.

1. Verse 2 presents Him as God's anointed one—the Messiah!

a. Now you know that the titles and names that are used in the Bible often have meanings...

- And I would remind you that the title “Messiah (*xyvm maw-shee'- akh*)” in the Hebrew Old Testament,

- and the title “Christ (*Cristov khris-tos*)” in the Greek New Testament,

- both mean the same thing: “The Anointed One.”

- That is what our Lord Jesus is—He is the Christ of God—the anointed one of God.

b. And you will remember that in the Old Testament, the LORD anointed men when He called them to serve as His officers.

- Some were anointed as prophets, some as priests, and some as kings.

- And this anointing was done by pouring oil on their head.

- This was done to represent the giving of God's Spirit to them to enable them to fulfill the office to which He had called them.

c. And here in Isaiah 11:2, we do not read of this little branch of Jesse being anointed with oil...

- but we read of His anointing with the greater thing that was symbolised by the oil!

- We read that He shall be anointed with the Holy Spirit!

1) This is the very thing that John the Baptist saw when Jesus was Baptised by Him...

- We read about this earlier in John 1...

- John says:

- John 1:32-34: And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

- John recognised that this one was the anointed one whom God had promised...

- The One whom God had set apart as mediator...
 - The one who would give the Holy Spirit to His people to make them live...
 - And the one who was the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.
 - He did not take the office of Prophet, priest, and King to Himself, but waited until He was called to it at His Baptism...
 - It was not until then that His public ministry began.
- 2) In John 3:34, we are told Jesus was given the Spirit without measure.
- Because of this, He spoke the words of God...
 - In Acts we are told that the miracles He worked, He worked by the Spirit.
 - Although He was the Son of God,
 - He came as the humble root of Jesse in mere human flesh...
 - and as such, He was anointed with the Spirit in order that He might be furnished for His office.
2. And Isaiah tells us that Holy Spirit fully furnished Him for the work that He was given to do...
- You see how he lists what kind of Spirit the Spirit was for Him in verse 2:
 - a. First, that He was the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding
 - Over and over we see the wisdom of Jesus in the scripture.
 - We are told that his hearers were amazed at His teaching.
 - Even His enemies said of Him,
 - “no man every spoke as this man speaks!”
 - He perfectly understood the way of sinful man...
 - so that His words cut right through them and left them speechless...
 - The woman at the well called Him “the one who told me all that I ever did.”
 - His words brought many to deep searchings as they cut through all who heard them
 - Oh how glad we should be to have a Saviour like this!
 - We need a Saviour whose is able to speak to us with wisdom and understanding.

TRANS> But the Spirit He was given was not only the Spirit of wisdom and understanding...

- b. Second, Isaiah says that He was the Spirit of Counsel and Might
- In Luke 24:19, the disciples on the road to Emmaus describe Jesus as
 - “a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.”
 - Indeed, He carried out His work with a mighty power such as had not been seen...
 - He Himself said,
 - Luke 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."
 - He raised the dead and calmed the sea and worked such miracles as had never been seen before...
 - but His greatest work of all was His going to the cross to bear our sins.
 - He was empowered by the Spirit of might to do this great work.
 - To endure the cross, to die, and then to rise again!
 - No work so mighty will ever be done as this!
 - And by that same Spirit of counsel and might,
 - He baptises His church and pours life into her so that she serves God...
 - And by that same Spirit of counsel and might,
 - He will return again to judge the world at the last day with the breath of His mouth.

TRANS> How we need a Saviour who is furnished with such a Spirit!

- c. And thirdly, Isaiah says that the Spirit given to Him was the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.
- Jesus came into this fallen world that was cut off from the knowledge of God,
 - but He Himself was not cut off.
 - He knew God by the Spirit...
 - In Matthew 11:27, He declared it to be so. He says:
 - Matthew 11:27: ““All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.”

- Therefore, He is able to show us the Father and teach us His ways...
- And together with this knowledge of God is the fear of God...
 - For to know Him is to fear Him.
 - A person fears God when He recognises who God really is—what He is really like—and then lives accordingly!
 - What He knows of God keeps in the joyful service of God, not wanting to go against Him in any way.

TRANS> And having spoken of how our Saviour was furnished with the Spirit of the LORD,

- Isaiah turns thirdly to speak of how Jesus was unique in His character—because of His personal piety...

C. That He is just the right person to be our Saviour because He delights in the fear of the LORD.

1. The word *delight* is an interesting one...

- It speaks of an ability to smell something that brings pleasure.
- The overall idea is that Jesus' character was such that He was always finding out (sniffing out) what was pleasing to the Lord...
 - always meditating on the glory of the LORD and finding pleasure in this.
 - He said that His very meat and drink was to do the will of God...
 - He said that He always did what pleases the Father...
 - He said that He did not seek His own glory, but the glory of the Father.
- His goal was to glorify God and to lead others in glorifying Him...
 - You see, the God-fearer is one who has come to realise that nothing else really matters...
 - He has been captivated by the beauty of God and the glory of God and the holiness of God and the goodness of God...
 - All He wants to do is know God and promote His glory.
- Jesus saw nothing better than this and made it His continual occupation.
 - As a man made in the image of God,
 - He sought to represent His love, His holiness, His purity, His justice, His goodness, His truth, His anger—everything—
 - He was truly a man after God's own heart.

2. And in His ministry, it was His appointed place to lead others to fear God—to know God and to live for His glory...
 - Above all things, He wanted His people to glorify God, to please God, to delight in God.
 - a. And so in judging us—leading us and governing us—
 - Verse 3 says that He does not rely on His own sight or on what He has heard...
 - It's not about Him—it's about the Father...and what the Father wants!
 - He does not come up with His own standard of right and wrong and then try to impute that to God...
 - He does not decide for Himself what is good and evil,
 - but He finds out what was pleasing to the Lord and instructs us in that way.
 - You see, brothers and sisters, you can rely on Him to direct you as one who does not put His own slant on everything.
 - b. And my friends, as it is Jesus' way to find out what pleases God and to do it,
 - As this is His continually way of life...
 - He even went to the cross—all to promote the glory of Father and to please the Father...
 - all to redeem a people who would know Him and would know His glory...
 - If Jesus had not feared God, He never would have done this.
 - He did what He did to promote God.

TRANS> And this brings us into the next thing I want you to consider...

- Having seen how perfectly suited He is to be our Saviour as a branch of lowly origins who is filled with the Spirit and who delights in the fear of the Lord,
 - I now want you to see...

II. The work He does as our Saviour...

A. First, see how He exercises righteous judgment among us.

- In verse 4 it says:
 - v. 4: But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

1. This, of course, is rooted in what we just saw about Him—that He delights in the fear of the Lord.
 - And that because He does, He does not rely on His own judgement...
 - He is not like the kings of this earth who give favour to those who able to benefit them...
 - He is not influenced by such things—He is no respecter of persons.

2. Understand that this is not simply speaking of the courtroom...
 - a. I have told you before that when the Scriptures speak of one judging,
 - it refers to their ruling and governing...

 - b. And the main idea here is that when He is our governor,
 - He leads us in righteousness and truth...He upholds God's standard.
 - He upholds justice among those He governs so that we begin to live beautiful lives according to God's will!
 - He exposes the wrong and chastens the wrong and leads in the path of righteousness.

 - He makes the community of His people beautiful,
 - teaching them how to do God's will...
 - how to love and how to worship God with reverence.
 - His government is not spoiled by selfish interests or respect of persons.

3. And not only that, but verse 4 goes on to say that He destroys the wicked...
 - It says,
 - v. 4b: He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

 - a. This is one of the most important aspects of our Saviour's work—
 - and one that mostly lies in the future to us...
 - From the beginning we were told that He would crush the serpent's head...
 - and the day is coming when our Saviour will return, and when He does, He will summon the world before Him to be judged...
 - And He will envelop the wicked in His wrath as a consuming fire and remove them from His people.

 - b. Note well the power with which this root of Jesse will accomplish this!
 - He will slay them with the breath of his mouth!

- He will need no sword—
 - All He has to do is speak the word and His enemies will be consigned to their place.
 - There is no army—no dominion or power—that will be able to resist Him in that day!

- What a powerful Saviour! What a just Saviour!
 - He will not destroy a one who does not fully deserve to be destroyed—
 - neither will He spare a one who does deserve to be destroyed...
 - Only the redeemed who have fled to Him for mercy in this world will be spared.
 - All others will be exposed and destroyed.
 - They will be removed so that there may be a new heavens and a new earth wherein righteousness dwells.
 - This casting out of Satan and of all who are in league with Him is essential to the restoration of paradise.

- And let me warn you—
 - If you have not repented of your sin and turned to Jesus Christ for forgiveness,
 - you are one of the ones who is in league with Satan...
 - If you are wise, you will turn to Christ before it is too late!

TRANS> How glad we ought to be to have a Saviour who exercises righteous judgement.

B. Secondly, see that He is a Saviour who procures righteousness for us and brings us into favour with God.

- This is brought out in verse 5 where it says:
 - Isa 11:5: Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

- 1. This probably refers to belt wrestling—
 - a. In recent years, archaeologists have found many references to this among the nations that were related to Israel in Isaiah's time.

 - b. In a belt wrestling match,
 - the wrestlers would try to remove their opponent's belt.

TRANS> Whether or not this is indeed what Isaiah had in mind here,

- it provides an illustration of His relationship to righteousness and faithfulness...

2. As you know, the great battle in this world is not a battle for lands or for political freedom or anything of the kind...
 - a. It is a battle for righteousness...
 - To put it in belt-wrestling terms,
 - Adam was given a belt of righteousness and faithfulness at creation...
 - It was for Adam to continue in God's ways of right and in faithfulness to His covenant in order that he might obtain eternal life for himself and his posterity.
 - But he was to be tested...
 - Satan was to come and to try to wrest away this righteousness and this faithfulness...
 - And that is exactly what He did!
 - Adam was left a sinful man with a sinful posterity...
 - An unfaithful man who had broken God's covenant and so brought death upon himself and all his descendents.
 - b. But when God promised to Adam and Eve that He would raise up a seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head,
 - He was promising One that would come to restore righteousness!
 - But to do this,
 - the Saviour would have to obtain righteousness on much more difficult terms and be faithful to a covenant that was much more demanding.
 - You see, unlike Adam,
 - He was not called simply to maintain righteousness and continue in covenant faithfulness...
 - He also was called to undo what Adam had done!
 - He would have to go to the cross to bear the full penalty of the sins of his people... all the shame and all the curse...
 - Faithfulness for Him meant submission to the wretched cross.
 - And how Satan came against Him to wrest away His belt of righteousness and take away His belt of faithfulness!
 - He tempted Him in the wilderness as soon as He was anointed and had been weakened with fasting...
 - And again, he tempted Him at Gethsemane.

- All Satan's craft and all his power was unleashed to get the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - found in the weakness of our flesh—
 - to give up His belt of righteousness and faithfulness...
 - But try as he might,
 - Satan failed!
 - Our Saviour was brought to such anguish that He began to sweat blood from his pores...
 - But nothing could turn Him back from the love of the Father and from the love His church that He came to reconcile.
 - And so it was that He went to the cross and to the grave and then came forth with His belt of righteousness and faithfulness!
 - not only for Himself, but for all of His people!
- c. My friends, you know what you are...
- You have no righteousness or faithfulness of your own, for you are all sinners!
 - And I tell you that unless you come to Jesus Christ to rest by faith in the righteousness that He obtained,
 - you will perish in your sin and be brought to judgment as a covenant breaker.
 - Your righteousness and your faithfulness was won by Jesus Christ, the crucified one.
 - You are a complete fool if you neglect so great a salvation...
 - If all this should be done and you should ignore it!
 - What kind of stubbornness is that!
 - What kind of wickedness is that!
 - Our Saviour has won the victory!
 - Come to Him receive the righteousness He has obtained for His people and live forever in His glorious inheritance!

TRANS> Yes my brothers and sisters,

- now that Christ has procured righteousness and faithfulness for His people,
 - He will most certainly restore paradise for them!
 - This is the third work of the branch of Jesse that Isaiah describes

- C. He shall restore paradise for His people who are delivered from judgement by Him.
1. The beauty of paradise is described for us in verses 6-9.
 - a. Verse 6 tells us that the wolf will dwell with the lamb...
 - and that the leopard will lie down with the young goat!
 - Can you picture them cuddled up together for a nap?
 - We are told that the calf and the young lion will and fatling will be together
 - led by a little child—a little child who can hardly be trusted with domesticated animals!
 - b. Verse 7 speaks about a complete change in their nature...
 - So that bears will graze with cows and lions will eat straw with an ox...
 - c. And in verse 8 we have a nursing child playing by a cobra's hole—
 - and a weaned child putting his hand into a viper's den and experiencing no harm!
 2. This is a description of what it was like in Eden!
 - This is paradise restored!
 - Verse 9 summarises the situation as an end to the curse:
 - 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.
 - God's holy mountain refers to the place where His redeemed people dwell...
 - And here He says that no one will hurt or destroy each other in all His Holy Mountain!
 - We hurt and destroy each other now in our sin, and it is an awful thing.
 - I myself had to confess my own hurtful actions to others just yesterday...
 - What a terrible thing it is that in our pride and selfishness,
 - we bring harm to each other!
 - All the nasty words and all the neglected duties!
 - But the good news is that in Jesus Christ it will not always be so!
 - The day is coming when we will not hurt or destroy in all of God's holy mountain because we will be know the LORD...

- Jesus Christ will bring us before the face of God and we will see Him as He is and we will be like Him...
 - We will love as He loves and we will serve as He serves, and we will worship God with a perfect love and a perfect reverence.
 - We will no longer think of harming and destroying...
 - We will be too enraptured in serving our glorious King and Saviour!
3. Too often, instead of focusing on the glory of that is spoken of in this passage—
- the glory of paradise restored—
 - we get all caught up trying to figure out if this is talking about something that is yet to happen in this world...
 - or if it is talking about heaven and if there will be animals there—
 - or what?
 - But all you need to know is that paradise is going to be restored by Jesus Christ—
 - and we and all of creation will stop hurting each other because we will all be caught up in our glorious God!
 - This is what Jesus came to restore!
 - It begins in this life as we come to know our God through Christ and He delivers us...
 - And it is brought to completion in heaven...
 - That is what you need to know and that is what you need to rejoice in and that is what you need to look forward to with glad hope.

TRANS> And now having shown us the fitness of our Saviour to save us...

- and having shown us the work that He will do to save us...
 - Isaiah tells us how the branch of Jesse will gather His elect into His kingdom...
 - It would be a terrible shame if there should be such a Saviour as the branch of Jesse,
 - and if He should accomplish such great work as Isaiah has described—
 - but there should be no people to receive Him and His work!
 - But this shall not be the case.

III. See thirdly how Jesus gathers His people into His glorious kingdom...

A. First, Isaiah shows that Jesus Himself shall become a banner to the nations...

- In verse 10, he says:
 - Isaiah 11:10: "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him..."
- 1. This is a banner that is a standard or a rallying point...
 - a. It is the Root of Jesse Himself that is this banner...
 - And He was lifted up as a rallying point for the nations "in that day"
 - In the day that He came forth as the root of Jesse and was crucified.
 - b. After Jesus was raised from the dead, He commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel—
 - to tell the world that He has come and that He has secured righteousness for His people and that He shall restore paradise...
 - and that whoever repents and believes in Him will be saved.
 - This preaching is sometimes called the preaching of the cross...
 - The nations are told that Christ was lifted up on the cross to take away the sin of the world,
 - And this crucified now risen saviour becomes a rallying point for the nations...
 - They come at the preaching of the good news to receive forgiveness of sin and to be reconciled to God!
 - They come to Christ who was lifted up!
 - c. In John's gospel, we are told:
 - John 3:14: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,"
 - And then in John 12 when certain Greeks come declaring "we would see Jesus,"
 - Jesus declares to them He must first die and then He will be the One who will draw the nations to Himself...
 - John 12:32: "'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.'"
- 2. You see how Isaiah declares here in verse 10 that the Gentiles will seek Him.
 - Paul quotes this very verse in Romans 15:12 to show that Christ would draw the Gentiles to Himself.

- They will come to Him who alone is able to save them
 - and they will turn from their idols and their deceptions and their dreams to be saved by Him.
 - The **seeking** that is spoken of here is not a groping of one who cannot find what He is looking for...
 - It is rather a coming with joyous zealous commitment to obtain what has been given!
 - This is the only way to seek Him!
 - It will do you know good to endlessly search!
 - He is to be found as the one who was crucified and who is now saving all those who turn to Him.
 - Do not just gaze upon this banner that is lifted up...
 - See that you come and believe—
 - Come and receive life!

3. Isaiah tells us that His resting place shall be glorious!

- His resting place is the church—not a building, but the assembly.
 - The church is His holy mountain where He delights to dwell!
 - In Psalm 132, the Lord says:
 - Psalm 132:12-14: If your sons will keep My covenant And My testimony which I shall teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore." For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: "This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it."
 - You see here that His resting place is in the midst of His people...
 - And it is a glorious resting place because He is there forever!
 - And He is known by His people in whom He dwells...
 - And, as we just saw in verse 9, paradise is restored because God is known.
 - This is the place to which both Jews and Gentiles rally!

TRANS> But sometimes it seems like there are a lot of barriers that keep people from coming to Christ.

- We can become discouraged in our evangelism.
- But take heart...
 - in verses 11-16,

- B. We are told that God Himself will gather His people...
1. In verse 11, it says that He will set His hand the second time to gather them...
 - a. The first time was when He brought them out of Egypt...
 - The second time is the restoration from Babylon was very similar to their deliverance from Egypt in that God did it...
 - The only difference was that when they came from Babylon,
 - They were brought from a number of different places to which they had been scattered.
 - b. Now I know that Isaiah was just speaking about them coming to Christ—to the root of Jesse... so why is there this talk of Babylon?
 - It is because Isaiah is using the deliverance from Babylon to speak of the greater deliverance in Christ that will pertain to all nations...
 - It is used to illustrate and describe the power of God in gathering His people to Himself.
 - c. See how verse 12 shows again the setting up of a banner for the nations...
 - And then declares that God will assemble or gather His dispersed ones from the four corners or four wings of the earth...
 - He will find them wherever they are and will bring them to the banner!
 2. And for your encouragement I want you to see how God works to gather in His people!
 - a. One of the great barriers in Israel was envy...
 - 1) Envy keeps people from coming to Christ because they do not want to be shown up by Him!
 - It is stupid, but it is true!
 - People want to think that they can be accepted by God on account of their own merit...
 - and they are offended at the idea that they must look to Christ crucified to be accepted.
 - We are told that the Jews delivered Christ to be crucified because of envy.
 - Envy was the ruin of Cain and the ruin of Ishmael and the ruin of Esau...
 - They could not bear to humble themselves and receive salvation in the way their brother received it...

- so they all perished instead!
 - The best thing to do when you see someone who is blessed of the Lord is not to envy them, but to join them!
- 2) The envy Isaiah speaks about was the envy of Ephraim...
- In the days of King Rehoboam, Solomon's son, the kingdom was divided so that Ephraim separated from Judah...
 - And this envy of Ephraim kept many of them from the true worship of God at Jerusalem...
- 3) But you see that in verse 13, God promises to deal with the envy in His elect people so that they will come to Christ...
- Isa 11:13: Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.
 - He can deal with the envy in you if envy is keeping you from Christ...
 - if you are too proud to come to Him...
 - And He can deal with envy in the ones you witness too, so do not give up!
 - God is not limited by such things!
 - How such hostilities melt when we are gathered into Jesus Christ!
- b. Then we see in verse 14 that having saved Ephraim and Judah,
- They are able to bring Philistia, the people of the East, Edom, Moab, and Ammon into submission...
 - And as this is talking about the gospel, what submission is in view but that submission to Jesus Christ!
 - Yes, in coming back from Babylon and rebuilding the temple, these nations were brought under political control...
 - But Isaiah is using them to speak of higher things—
 - of submission to Jesus Christ when He comes as the root of Jesse and is lifted up as a banner...
 - It is a picture of stubborn, resistant enemies being broken down by the gospel to serve Christ.
- c. Verse 15 illustrates the breaking down of barriers with the two great rivers that had separated God's people from Him...

- Whenever the OT speaks of “the River” it is a reference to the mighty Euphrates...
 - And of course the Sea of Egypt is the Red Sea by which Israel was blocked in.
 - Isaiah shows us that God breaks down the barriers that keep His elect people from coming to Him...
 - No barrier is too hard for Him to break through...
 - He can take away the stony heart and replace it with a heart of flesh.
 - He can give sight to blind eyes and open deaf ears...
 - He can raise the dead and give them new life...
 - And this is exactly what He does do when He saves us!
 - Hear what Isaiah says here and be encouraged:
 - Verse 15: The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, And strike it in the seven streams, And make men cross over dry-shod.
- d. Not only does He destroy the barrier, but He also constructs a highway for His people to come to Him...
- Isaiah says:
 - Isa 11:16: There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.
 - My friends it is impossible for you or for anyone else to get to God...
 - Your sin has separated you from Him—
 - You are dead in your trespasses and sins and you are guilty and condemned in the sight of God...
 - But Jesus Christ is the highway that cuts through everything that separates you...
 - He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...
 - And he is the One who gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask him to change their wicked hearts.
 - The way is opened and the Lord bids you come!
 - The way is opened and the Lord bids you to summon others to come...

- The rod of Jesse is here and He is lifted up for the nations.
 - Come to Him and be saved...
 - Come and you will find Him to be all you could ever want...
 - Come and you will be able to rejoice in His work as the one who judges the world in righteousness,
 - who has procured righteousness for us,
 - and who will restore paradise for us!