

Isaiah 11:1-10

A ruler brings justice and peace

11:1A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

11:2The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

11:3His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear,

11:4but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

11:5Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

11:6The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them.

11:7The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

11:8The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

11:9They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

11:10On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Psalms 72:1-7, 18-19

The righteous shall flourish

72:1 Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son.

72:2 May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice.

72:3 May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

72:4 May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

72:5 May he live while the sun endures and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

72:6 May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

72:7 In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

72:18 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

72:19 Blessed be his glorious name forever; may his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen.

Romans 15:4-13

Living in harmony

15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

15:5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus,

15:6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15:7Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

15:8For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors

15:9and in order that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles, and sing praises to your name";

15:10and again he says, "Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people";

15:11and again, "Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him";

15:12and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope."

15:13May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:1-12

Prepare the way of the Lord

3:1In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,

3:2"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

3:3This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"

3:4Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

3:5Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him,

3:6and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

3:7But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

3:8Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance,

3:9and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

3:10Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

3:11"I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

3:12His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."