

Family Tree

Isaiah 11:1

Dr. Pierre Cannings

I. Pruning v.1

a. The Cut

- i. The prophecy reaches behind David to Jesse (just as Mic 5:1 [2] reaches behind Jerusalem to Bethlehem). עץ, “stump,” is descriptive of a broken, cut-off dynasty. It takes up the figure of the Master Forester from 10:33–34 with the trimming and thinning of the forest describing the troubled times of Ahaz’s reign. It realistically recognizes the severely reduced status of the throne, a reduction by the division of the kingdom (cf. 7:17) and more recently by the vassal status of Ahaz and the reduced area controlled by Judah. A “stump” indeed!
- ii. Although the audience may presently suffer under adverse conditions as a consequence of Ahaz’s sins and Assyria’s oppression (11:16), they should trust God because of what he will do in the future. He will not abandon his people, but will cause the remnant to return (10:20–27; 11:10–12), deliver them from oppression, re-establish them as his holy people in Zion (cf. 4:2–6), and inaugurate an era of peace between the nations (2:1–5). This future glorious kingdom and its just ruler (9:1–7; 11:1–9) are set in contrast to the Assyrian kingdom and its arrogant ruler in 10:5–14.
 1. Cut with the hope of the Future
 2. Cut with the consequence of sin but not the end
 3. God allowed the cut highlights the growth

b. Shoot-

i. Timing-

1. and the great mosaic of pictures that follows. הנה, “behold,” and the participle in 10:33 portray an act of God that is already apparent. Thus this passage begins to picture the possibilities that derive from that act. יצא, “come out,”

ii. Genealogy – God is in charge of Family

1. can refer to being born (Gen 35:11) or to his appearance as king (Zech 5:5). Gen 17:6 uses it for his genealogy (cf. Mic 5:1 [2]).
2. The shoot (חטר) or the branch (נצר) springs not from fresh new ground (a new dynasty) but from the old stump or roots. Jesse’s descendants will take on new life. Job 14:7 The term חטר, “shoot,” is used only here in this meaning, while נצר, “branch,” appears only here in royal Davidic literature.

- iii. Promise to Grow (Davidic Covenant)
 1. He knew that the monarchy could not survive the unbelief of Ahaz (7:9); he foresaw too the ensuing calamity (6:9–12). It would have been odd indeed if he had not felt the tension between this vision of termination and his other predictions of future Davidic glory (1:25–27). Will the Lord then revoke his promises or will he keep them? Passages like 9:1–7 and 11:1–16 arise out of this tension in Isaiah’s message and affirm the faithfulness of God to his purposes and promises
 2. Ps 2, the one in the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7:11–16, and the one ruling justly on the throne of David in Isa 9:1–7.

II. Roots Isaiah 11:1 Matthew 1:6 Romans 15:12

- a. Roots
 - i. Jesse, the father of David, is compared to a root from which there had grown a tree—the line of Jewish monarchs descended from David; this tree has been cut down; but the roots remain in the earth and a mere stump above ground, *i.e.* the throne of David has fallen, but the family of David survives; as from the stump of a tree that has been felled there may shoot forth new growth (Job 14:7–9, cp Is 6:13),
 - ii. 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).
 - iii. While the restoration of the house of David is far from being a prominent feature of the aspirations expressed in Isa 40–66, the anticipation of a new growth from the old stock of Jesse, ancestor of the Davidic dynasty (1 Sam 16:1), aligns with dynastic aspirations that come to expression in other texts from the post-destruction period (Jer 23:5–6; 33:14–22; Ezek 37:24–28; Amos 9:11–15; Mic 5:1–3[2–4]).
- b. Jesse
 - i. Father of David – Choice of Sons

III. Bear Fruit v.1

- a. New Growth
 - i. While the family of David survives, hope remains that some member of it may re-establish the monarchy, and thus, in the terms of the figure, become the new shoot and green growth from the old roots.
 - ii. 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 (*ṣemaḥ*). However, the concept is the same. (*Yōnēq* 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.

- iii. The text describes a new ruler from Jesse’s Davidic line (11:1) who fears the Lord (11:2–3), practices justice (11:4–5), establishes peace (11:6–9), slays the wicked (11:4), restores the oppressed people of Judah and Israel (11:10–16), and causes the earth to be full of the knowledge of the Lord (11:9). This figure calls to mind another kingly figure who will rule justly (Ps 72:1–2, 7), establish a time of peace and prosperity (72:3, 7, 16), deliver the oppressed (72:2, 4, 12–14), and cause the earth to be full of the glory of the Lord (72:19)

Commentary Studies

royal ideology in the Psalms and in some prophets. Parallels may be found in and Ps 72:2, 4, 13. Yet there are also distinctive elements unique to this composition. Wildberger (439) sees vv 1–5 as an “oracle” of a future king, whereas Ps 72 sings of a current monarch. Other differences also show that the genre of royal psalms has been subtly reshaped. The explicit position of the king is minimized (only in 11:1 and 11:10 directly). The passage, in tune with the larger context of 10:24–34 and 11:11–16, keeps its attention on the work of YHWH. Its centerpiece in 11:3b–4 picks up the work of YHWH from 10:33–34 in picturing his righteous judgment. He is the subject of these verbs, not the king. In addition, the surrounding sections shift the emphasis from the king to YHWH’s endowments that are necessary for peace, prosperity, and success: his Spirit (v 2), his “fear” (v 3b), his righteousness and justice (v 5), and his “knowledge” (v 9). The king does have a role, but as in 9:6 (7) the composition carefully subordinates it to the wider view of God’s work and makes it contingent on the spirit, fear, righteousness, and knowledge of YHWH that are the essential elements for the fulfillment of God’s purpose for his people and the world.

Poems describing “the peaceable kingdom” are virtually unique to Isaiah (see also chap. 35 and 65:17–25). They are used in contrast to the violent pictures of YHWH’s warfare in the Vision to convey the sense of YHWH’s goals toward which his strategy with the nations and with Israel are moving.

Comment

1 ויצא, “and ... will go out.” The verb form (perfect + *vav*) does not set the time as future (see J. Wash Watts, *Survey of Syntax*, 47–54; contra Wildberger) but relates the passage to the controlling sentence (10:33) and the great mosaic of pictures that follows. הנה, “behold,” and the participle in 10:33 portray an act of God that is already apparent. Thus this passage begins to picture the possibilities that derive from that act¹. יצא, “come out,” can refer to being born (Gen 35:11) or to his appearance as king (Zech 5:5). Gen 17:6 uses it for his genealogy (cf. Mic 5:1 [2]).

The prophecy reaches behind David to Jesse (just as Mic 5:1 [2] reaches behind Jerusalem to Bethlehem). גזע, “stump,” is descriptive of a broken, cut-off dynasty. It takes up the figure of the Master Forester from 10:33–34 with the trimming and thinning of the forest describing the troubled times of Ahaz’s reign. It realistically recognizes the severely reduced status of the throne, a reduction by the division of the kingdom (cf. 7:17) and more recently by the vassal status of Ahaz and the reduced area controlled by Judah. A “stump” indeed!

The shoot (חטר) or the branch (נצר) springs not from fresh new ground (a new dynasty) but from the old stump or roots. Jesse’s descendants will take on new life. Job 14:7 uses the same words to picture the revival of an apparently dead tree. The term חטר, “shoot,” is used only here in this meaning, while נצר, “branch,” appears only here in royal Davidic literature. In 14:19

¹act. active

it refers to the dead king of Babylon and in 60:21 to the returned people of Jerusalem. Dan 11:7 designates a royal heir by it. The “Branch of YHWH” in 4:2 uses a different word.

G. Widengren (*The King and the Tree of Life*, UU²Å [Uppsala: Lundequistska, 1951] 50) has drawn on ancient Near Eastern parallels to suggest a relation between kingship and the tree of life. The verse (with v 10) applies such imagery to the concern in act 1 for the survival of the Davidic dynasty (cf. 7:1–14; 9:5–6 [6–7]).³

The poem predicts the restoration of the Jewish monarchy in the person of a king sprung from the family of Jesse, the father of David, who will be equipped by Yahweh’s spirit for all the duties of a righteous ruler, vv. 1f. Thus equipped, he will in virtue of his wisdom discern what is right, and in virtue of his might achieve it, securing for the weak what is due to them, and smiting down the powerful who do wrong. All that he does will be done in righteousness and faithfulness, vv. 3–5. In his days the conditions of Paradise will return; the beasts will no longer be at enmity with one another and with men, but all will live together in peace and friendship, vv. 6–8.

The thought of the poet is concentrated on the future of the Jews, though he sees it in the light of conditions (vv. 6–8) which will presumably be universal and not limited to Palestine. The larger thought, too, of the world-wide government of the king breaks through in v. 4, if the words *of the earth* be original.

Of the conditions which immediately precede the reign of this king he says nothing directly, nor gives any indication how soon the future which he predicts may be expected. It is possible that an opening distich has been lost (see above, p. 212) which may have resembled 9:1 (2) in its tenor.

The editor, whether Isaiah himself (Di⁴. p. 104), or another (*e.g.* Mart⁵i), who is responsible for the present arrangement of Isaiah chs. 10:5–12, may indeed have intended that this reign was to begin when the world-power has been destroyed and the destruction of everything opposed to God within Israel and without (10:22f.) has been accomplished. But Di⁶., no less than Du⁷., argued that 11:1ff. is not the immediate continuation of 10:5–34; and in spite of Kit⁸.’s attempt to prove the contrary, this remains clear (see above on 10:5–34). It is not even probable that 10:33f., which is certainly not the original continuation of 10:27–32, contains the opening distich, or distichs, of 11:1ff.: 10:34, indeed, if we omit “with iron,” is a distich similar in

²UUÅ Uppsala Universitetsårskrift

³ John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, Revised Edition., vol. 24, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2005), 208–209.

⁴Di. *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 1890.

⁵Marti *Das Buch Jesaja*, 1900.

⁶Di. *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 1890.

⁷Du. *Das Buch Jesaja*, 1892 (ed. 2, 1902).

⁸Kit. (1) *Der Prophet Jesaja*, a new edition (1898) of Di.; (2) *Biblia Hebraica*, 1906.

rhythm and parallelistic structure to 11:1–8, but by itself it forms a less probable beginning than 11:1. On the other hand, 10:33 is less similar to 11:1–8 and is still no good opening; moreover, the elaborate metaphors of 10:33f. contrast with the general literalness of 11:1–8: the figure in 11:1 is simple, and 11:6–8 is, of course, intended literally, not metaphorically. Finally, the antithesis sought between 10:33f. and 11:1—the Assyrian cedar forest is smitten down, the tree of Jesse is rejuvenated—is anything but inevitable—(“unverkennbar,” Di⁹), and is certainly not suggested by the order of the words. Had the writer of 11:1 been the author also of the antithesis attributed to him by those who make 11:1 the immediate continuation of 10:34, it is probable that he would have written **וּמִנְזַע יִשִׁי חֹטֵר יִצָּא**.

It follows that 11:1–8 must be judged by itself and not in connection with 10:5–34.

If the most obvious is the correct interpretation of v. 1, the poem was written after 586 B.C. (see on v. 1). A downward limit of date is fixed by the quotation in 65:25. Like 9:1–6 the poem might well have been written towards the end of the Exile when men’s minds were turning towards Restoration, and when some may have been setting high hopes on Zerubbabel, of the stock of Jesse, who immediately after the Return certainly focussed such hopes upon himself (Hag., Zech.).

Apart from the historical presuppositions of v. 1, which point more decisively than those of 9:1–6 to an exilic or post-exilic date, the evidence is no more conclusive than in the case of 9:1–6. The language is certainly compatible with a post-exilic date, and the occurrence of the three words **נָצַר**, **חֹטֵר**, **גִּזַּע** in v. 1 is even better explained by it than by an earlier date. For the significance of the ideas, reference must be made to the commentary.

Among those who assign the poem to Isaiah, much difference of opinion prevails as to the period of his life to which it belongs. For the most part it is connected with 10:5–34, and simply on the ground of that supposed connection assigned to the same period: see, e.g., Dr¹⁰. *LO*¹¹ 210f., where the date 701 B.C. is suggested, and allusion is made (with references) to other theories placing the prophecy early in Sargon’s reign (W. R. Smith, *Prophets*², 296ff.), or at the end of Sargon’s reign. Earlier writers thought of the reign of Ahaz (Vitring¹²a). Finally, Du¹³. groups 11:1–8 with 2:2–4; 32:1–5 as one of Isaiah’s “swan-songs” written in extreme old age, in the reign of Manasseh, for the private use of his disciples and not for publication.

1, 2. The origin and endowments of the Future King.—**1.** The poem opens with a prediction of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy. This is expressed figuratively. Jesse, the father of David, is compared to a root from which there had grown a tree—the line of Jewish monarchs descended from David; this tree has been cut down; but the roots remain in the earth and a

⁹Di. *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 1890.

¹⁰Dr. (1) *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (ed. 3, Oxford, 1892).

(2) *An Introduction to the Literature of the OT* (abbreviated *LOT*), cited according to the pagination of ed. 8 (Edin. 1909), which is also that of editions 6 and 7.

¹¹*LOT An Introduction to the Literature of the OT*, cited according to the pagination of ed. 8 (Edin. 1909), which is also that of editions 6 and 7.

¹²Vitringa *Commentarius in librum prophetiarum Jesaiae ... editio nova*, Leovardiae, 1724.

¹³Du. *Das Buch Jesaia*, 1892 (ed. 2, 1902).

mere stump above ground, *i.e.* the throne of David has fallen, but the family of David survives; as from the stump of a tree that has been felled there may shoot forth new growth (Job 14:7–9, cp¹⁴. Is 6:13), so while the family of David survives, hope remains that some member of it may re-establish the monarchy, and thus, in the terms of the figure, become the new shoot and green growth from the old roots. What the opening distich of the poem asserts is that this hope will be actually realised. The revival, and not the fall of the tree, is the subject of prediction. The fall of the tree belongs to the past; the stump is an existing fact familiar to the poet and his audience. Thus this v. presupposes a period when no Davidic king was reigning. The necessary inference is that the poem was written some time after 586 B.C. This inference can only be avoided by adopting less natural and obvious interpretations: thus (1) Di¹⁵. considers that the implication of the figure is that each successive king from David downwards was a tree sprung from the root and stump of Jesse; by means of an improbable figure Isaiah would then be expressing the rather jejune idea that as there had already been a dozen kings or more descended from Jesse, one of whom was reigning at the present moment, so there would be another; (2) Du¹⁶. sees in the passage a prediction that the Messiah will not spring from David, but as being himself a new David will spring from another branch of the house of Jesse, in the terms of the figure from another of the roots (*plural*)—an unparalleled and most improbable idea; moreover, this interpretation does not explain the assumption that the tree of David has already fallen. On this Du¹⁷. says that the expression *צֶמֶד*, *stock*, indicates that before the Messianic age the Dynasty will suffer ill.—A *shoot*] *חֹטֶר*, Pr 14:3^{18†}. In Aramaic, early and late, and Assyrian the word meant *sceptre* (see phil. n.).—*The stump*] 40:24; Job 14:8^{19†}. The word *צֶמֶד* is derived from a root meaning *to cut*, (so *جَزَع* commonly); in view of this, of the parallel here, and of the parallel and the context in Job, the word probably meant primarily *the part* (above ground) *left after felling*. In 40:24 it seems rather to be used of the bole of a growing, newly planted tree; cp²⁰. the New Hebrew usage: see Lev^{21γ}, NH^{22B}, s.v.—*The stump of Jesse*] this phrase well reflects the fact that the Jewish monarchy is no more, though the family, from which it sprang, survives; “the stump of David” would have reflected this less clearly and might more appropriately have been used if the monarchy had merely lost power and glory as at the Disruption.—A *scion*] 14:19 (?) 60:21; Dn 11:7; Sir 40:15 (margin). The word *נֹצֵר* comes probably from the root which in Arabic (*نَضِر*) means *to be fresh and beautiful*, and, of the foliage of a tree, *to become green*; it was presumably applied to vigorous growth from a tree, whether as

¹⁴cp. Compare.

¹⁵Di. *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 1890.

¹⁶Du. *Das Buch Jesaja*, 1892 (ed. 2, 1902).

¹⁷Du. *Das Buch Jesaja*, 1892 (ed. 2, 1902).

^{18†} The sign, following a series of references, indicates that all examples of the phrase, word, or form in question, occurring in the OT, have been quoted.

^{19†} The sign, following a series of references, indicates that all examples of the phrase, word, or form in question, occurring in the OT, have been quoted.

²⁰cp. Compare.

²¹Levy *NHB = Neuhebräisches u. Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*.

²²*NHB Neuhebräisches u. Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*.

here and in 60:21 directly from the root, or from some other part; it is used in N²³H of *withies*; cp²⁴. חבל נצר, *a rope of withies*; סלי נצרים, *a basket made of withies* (Lev²⁵γ, NH²⁶B iii. 431b).—*Shall bear fruit*] if the text is right, the 2nd line of the distich goes beyond the first—not only will a new tree grow from the old root, but it will yield fruit; not only will the Davidic monarchy be restored, but the new king will prosper (cp²⁷. Ps 1:3). But יפרה may be an error for יפרח, *shall sprout forth* (cp²⁸. Job 14:9), and the two lines throughout synonymously parallel.—2. The king will be a man on whom the spirit of Yahweh *rests* (Nu 11:25f., cp²⁹. 2 K 2:15; Nu 11:17 n.), and therefore fit for exceptional achievements; as the spirit gives the exceptional craftsman (Ex 31:3; 35:31), or the warrior (Jg 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19), or the prophet (Nu 11:25f.; Is 61:1), or the interpreter of dreams (Gn 41:38), the power to do or be something beyond the ordinary (cp³⁰. 2 K 2:15), so it gives kingliness to the king (1 S 16:13f.). King and people often seemed to the prophets to forget this, and in consequence to trust in “flesh” rather than in “spirit” (31:3); but the Messianic age will be distinguished by the outpouring of the spirit (32:15; Jl 3:1f. (2:28f.)) on all men, and, in particular, the point with which alone the present passage is concerned, on the Messiah. The spirit of Yahweh settles upon the king as a *spirit of*, or, as we should say, imparting, *wisdom and discernment* (cp³¹. Ex 31:3), a capacity to discern what rightly belongs to the king’s office and to the right discharge of it, and to detect the right in difficult circumstances (v. 3, cp³². 1 K 3:9–12, 28). The *spirit* is also one *of counsel and might*, i.e. the king receives power not only to discern the right, but to execute it, to secure for the weak their due, and to punish and put to death the guilty, however powerful (v. 4). By the spirit of Yahweh the king becomes a wonderful, or exceptional, Counsellor and Mighty One (9:5). In spite of 36:5, it is very questionable whether the king is here represented as a great soldier. Finally, the spirit makes him careful for the will of God and a true worshipper of Yahweh, and consequently righteous, v. 5, cp³³. Jer 23:5f.: he is possessed of *knowledge and fear of Yahweh*: knowledge is here not knowledge of his craft, as in Ex 31:3, an idea sufficiently covered by v. 2b, but knowledge of God which shows itself in care for the poor and weak: cp³⁴. Jer 22:16. gives to *the spirit of Yahweh* the specialised sense of the spirit of prophecy—an interpretation which made the passage a convenient proof, though it is certainly not the ultimate source of the idea, of “the seven spirits which are before the throne of God” (Rev 1:4); for the idea, see Schöttgen *Horae Talmudicae*; for its origin, cp³⁵. Gunkel, *Schöpfung u.*

²³NH New Hebrew (the language of the mishnah, etc.).

²⁴cp. Compare.

²⁵Levy *NHB = Neuhebräisches u. Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*.

²⁶*NHB Neuhebräisches u. Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*.

²⁷cp. Compare.

²⁸cp. Compare.

²⁹cp. Compare.

³⁰cp. Compare.

³¹cp. Compare.

³²cp. Compare.

³³cp. Compare.

³⁴cp. Compare.

³⁵cp. Compare.

Chaos, pp. 294–302; *KA*³⁶*T*³ 624f.—The opening words of **3** are obviously the result of dittography, or of the intrusion into the text of variants (see phil. n.). As they stand they are meaningless: literally translated they read, *and his enjoyment of the scent of the fear of Yahweh*, or, assuming an awkward suppression of the copula, *and the scent that he enjoys is the fear of Yahweh*, which is paraphrased by R³⁷V into “and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord”; *i.e.* himself God-fearing, he will delight to find the fear of God in others.—The real sense of the phrase used in ³⁸ is clear in Ex 30:38, “Whosoever makes anything like it (this sweet incense), *to enjoy the scent of it*, shall be cut off from his people”; cp³⁹. Lv 26:31. Since the feasts and solemn assemblies of the Hebrews were thick with the fumes of sacrificial victims, it was quite appropriate to say, “I will not enjoy the scent of them (Am 5:21)”; but “the fear of Yahweh,” which is here made the object of the vb., was not a smell. Another meaning that has frequently been tortured out of the words is this, *He will scent out the fear of God*, recognise at once the God-fearing; but in this sense הריח takes the simple acc. (Job 39:25).⁴⁰

⁴¹**(4) The Reign of a Righteous King (11:1–16)**

THEOLOGY. This new hopeful section returns to the theme of God’s kingdom provisions and the messianic hope for the world, corresponding to the initial discussion of this theme in 9:1–7. Although the audience may presently suffer under adverse conditions as a consequence of Ahaz’s sins and Assyria’s oppression (11:16), they should trust God because of what he will do in the future. He will not abandon his people, but will cause the remnant to return (10:20–27; 11:10–12), deliver them from oppression, re-establish them as his holy people in Zion (cf. 4:2–6), and inaugurate an era of peace between the nations (2:1–5). This future glorious kingdom and its just ruler (9:1–7; 11:1–9) are set in contrast to the Assyrian kingdom and its arrogant ruler in 10:5–14. A Davidic king who rules with justice and gathers people from the far reaches of the world will replace the proud Assyrian tyrant who destroys and scatters many nations. The wisdom, strength, and Spirit of the LORD will empower this new king (11:1–4); he

☞ The Jewish Aramaic Version or Targum (p. xxvi).

³⁶*KAT Die Keilinschriften und das alte Testament*, by Eb. Schrader. References are given to the pages of the 2nd German edition which are marked in the margin of the translation.

A third edition of the German work (*KAT*³) has been edited (and indeed entirely rewritten) by H. Zimmern and H. Winckler (1903).

³⁷RV Revised Version.

☞ Jewish recension of the Hebrew (unvocalised) text, *i.e.* the consonants of the ordinary Hebrew MSS and printed Bibles.

³⁸☞ Jewish recension of the Hebrew (unvocalised) text, *i.e.* the consonants of the ordinary Hebrew MSS and printed Bibles.

³⁹cp. Compare.

⁴⁰George Buchanan Gray, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, I–XXXIX*](#), International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1912), 213–217.

will not arrogantly depend on his own wisdom and strength as did the haughty king of Assyria. God's people will no longer be weak and under a foreign yoke (10:10–11, 24–27), but will be powerful and free of domination (11:10–16).

Common theological themes play an important part in linking chaps. 10 and 11. For example, the remnant's return to the land in 11:10–14 is consistent with the remnant's return to God in 10:20–23. In both 10:26 and 11:15–16, the prophet recalls God's mighty deliverance of his people from Egypt at the Red Sea in order to arouse faith in the listeners. Throughout these chapters hope comes from trusting and fearing God (as in 7:3–9, 8:12–13, 17; 9:13; 10:20–24), not from relying on some strong foreign power. Though there is little historical information that would help date this message, these themes would be an appropriate message of hope (similar to 9:1–7) during the difficult time of Ahaz when everything seemed hopelessly lost. The future orientation of this chapter means that there are almost no hints concerning the actual date when this message was spoken.⁴⁰⁴²⁸

The text describes a new ruler from Jesse's Davidic line (11:1) who fears the Lord (11:2–3), practices justice (11:4–5), establishes peace (11:6–9), slays the wicked (11:4), restores the oppressed people of Judah and Israel (11:10–16), and causes the earth to be full of the knowledge of the Lord (11:9). This figure calls to mind another kingly figure who will rule justly (Ps 72:1–2, 7), establish a time of peace and prosperity (72:3, 7, 16), deliver the oppressed (72:2, 4, 12–14), and cause the earth to be full of the glory of the Lord (72:19).⁴⁰⁴³⁹ This king in Ps 72 will rule the whole earth, from sea to sea, forever. He appears to be the same messianic figure mentioned in Ps 2, the one in the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7:11–16, and the one ruling justly on the throne of David in Isa 9:1–7. It seems totally inappropriate to identify this new king with Ahaz or Hezekiah.⁴¹⁴⁴⁰

GENRE. These messages begin with an announcement of the coming of a royal savior in 11:1–5 (not a birth announcement as in 9:1–7), a vision of a peaceful kingdom in 11:6–9, and a salvation oracle concerning the restoration of Israel in 11:10–16. The common theme of hope and divine deliverance from the evils of corrupt national and international relationships

⁴²⁴⁰⁸ Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 469, hypothesizes that this message reflects Isaiah's disappointment in Hezekiah when he turned to Egypt for help. Thus Isaiah realized that Hezekiah was not that ideal Davidic king he was looking for, so in chap. 11 he envisions another hope for the nation. This, along with Sweeney's, *Isaiah 1–39*, 204, attempt to connect the "little boy will lead them" in 11:6 with Josiah, should be rejected as guesses that have little evidence to support them.

⁴³⁴⁰⁹ Although these pictures of this new king may seem somewhat fantastic, some of the "Assyrian apocalyptic prophecies" also foresee times of great peace, prosperity, justice, joy, and the end of oppression. See W. W. Hallo, "Akkadian Apocalypses," *IEJ* (1966): 231–242, or A. K. Grayson, "Akkadian Prophecies," *JCS* (1964): 7–30.

⁴⁴⁴¹⁰ Hayes and Irvine, *Isaiah*, 213, think the author is presenting his great expectation of Ahaz after the end of the Syro-Ephraimite War, while Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 174, believes "the context calls for a near fulfillment.... This was fulfilled: Hezekiah (and a century later, Josiah) was to occupy the throne." Oswalt, "God's Determination to Redeem His People," *RE* 88 (1991): 153–65, argues strongly for connecting this figure to the messianic figure in 9:1–7.

infiltrates the whole section. Although 11:10–11 fits the themes of the second half of the chapter, its narrative form is surprising in the middle of the poetic oracles all around it.

The idyllic description of a paradise-like condition in 11:6–9 presents numerous hermeneutical problems for interpreters. Hosea already has introduced the theme of God's covenant with the animals (Hos 2:18) and one of the covenant blessings looked forward to a time when there would be peace with the animals (Lev 26:6), but none of these are as explicit or as detailed as the peaceful relationship between the animals and mankind in 11:6–9. Some regard this as a later insertion based on similar motifs in 65:25, but J. van Ruiten has shown that it makes more sense to see 65:25 as dependent on the traditions in 11:6–9.⁴¹⁴⁵¹ It was not uncommon in the ancient Near East (and still today) to expect that the rise of a new political leader will produce an idyllic time of peace⁴¹⁴⁶² and a return to Eden-like conditions (51:3). One might interpret these animals metaphorically (Ezek 22:27 calls Judah's officials wolves and Ezek 34:6 calls the people sheep) though later prophets also seem to understand the ideal that God will restore the paradise of Eden once again at the end of time (cf. Ezek 34:25; 36:35). One should not be concerned with trying to explain the biology of how lions can survive by eating straw or how it is possible for there to be such dramatic changes in the animal behavior of vicious wild beasts. The prophet draws a picture of how God will transform the world. The picture communicates the beauty of his revolutionary transformational power, no matter how one interprets the scene (literally or metaphorically).

STRUCTURE. The hopeful promises of a Davidic shoot out of a stump in 11:1 is not directly connected to the fallen trees of Assyria in 1:29–31.⁴¹⁴⁷³ The section includes two main paragraphs.⁴⁸

⁴⁵⁴¹¹ J. T. van Ruiten, "The Intertextual Relationship between Isaiah 65. 25 and Isaiah 11. 6–9," in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls: Fs A. S. van der Woude*, ed. F. G. Martinez, et al., VTSupp 49 (1992): 31–42, examines the evidence and develops an argument to show that the shorter discussion in 65:25 was based on the whole context of 11:6–9. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 265, also holds 11:6–9 as the source of 65:25.

⁴⁶⁴¹² The Egyptian "prophecy" of Nefer-Rohu (*ANET*, 444–446) and similar Mesopotamian "prophecies" (*ANET*, 606–607) expect ideal days ahead when the new king begins his rule. There is some question about whether these were actually prophecies about the future; instead, they appear to be political propaganda to support the coronation of a new king.

⁴⁷⁴¹³ Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–12*, 251, 254, takes 10:33–34 as a description of God's destruction of Judah in 586 BC and 11:1 as God's development of eschatological hope (the shoot) out of the fallen trees of Judah in 10:33–34. Beuken, "Emergence of the Shoot of Jesse," 88–108, found syntactical continuity in the verbs within chaps. 10 and 11, so he interpreted 10:5–11:16 as one unit made up of two diptychs (one negative and one positive) in the same temporal era. However, this ignores the change of genre in 11:1–9 that points to a new literary unit. The eschatological focus of chap. 11 also separates it from the Assyrian crisis that dominates chap. 10.

⁴⁸ Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, The New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2007), 267–269.