

Acts 1:2 Jerry Arnold, Feb 11, 06

Father in Heaven, We ask that You will be here with us. We pray now for You to fill this sanctuary with angels and create a heavenly environment. We pray for You to move in and throughout our thoughts in our hearts through your Holy Spirit. We pray for miracles to take place in your presence. We ask for healings, Lord. In fact, there are people on our minds right now that we are praying that they would be physically healed. We ask, Lord, that you would bring healing to these people who are struggling emotionally. Lord, we pray for these individuals who need a miracle in their relationships. And Lord, we know people who spiritually are struggling and they need healing. We present them to You at this time. Please, work miracles. And now, as we open Your word, work another miracle in our own hearts. We ask in Jesus name, Amen.

A number of years ago, Jeff Foxworthy gained fame by his famous line, "You might be a redneck if..." Karen and I were pastoring in a distant conference. It was a difficult time for us. So to humor ourselves, and to have courage and hope and to move along, I came up a number of, "You might be a pastor if..." One of them was, "If you have two hundred bosses and none of them knows your job, you might be a pastor." "If everyone is invited to the New Year's Eve party but you, you might be a pastor." This is the one I want you to think of as we enter into the study of God's word today. "If the only one who believes is you is your wife and she's not sure, you might be a pastor." There's something powerful to the human experience when we know someone believes in us. I'd like to study that with you today.

Please turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter 1. We are continuing our series in the Book of Acts. In the Book of Acts we began a new series last week, and we discovered that in the first five verses there are a number of sermons we're going to look at. Last week we looked at the phrase, "The kingdom of God." We see it at the beginning of the book of Acts, it's at the end of the book of Acts, and we discovered that the kingdom of God is where God reigns.

I told you last week that this week we would start looking at Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It's just unbelievable what I've learned in this study about Jesus, the Holy Spirit and God. It ties right in with last week in a way I never anticipated. And that is that in the kingdom of God, when you ask God to reign in your heart it begs the question, "Do you really want God to reign in your life?" Do you really want him to?

Unfortunately, because of pastors and teachers and deacons and deaconesses and other church people, well meaning, whoever they are, many people have grown up in church and as a result of the very church they've grown up in, they have a distorted concept of God. And some people have chosen not to serve God. "If that's the way God is, I'm out of here." Others haven't even been in church but they've heard things about God and so they've rejected Him.

What we need before we can really answer the question, "Do we want God to reign in our hearts?" is we need a picture of God. Who is God? I didn't realize that studying about

Jesus and the Holy Spirit gives us a picture of God. We find our first passage in Acts 1:2. It says, "...until the day in which He (that's Jesus) was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen." Jesus through the Holy Spirit (it means Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit) had given commandments to the apostles.

And this is just so intriguing. Jesus is God. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus has all power within Himself. Why is it that He has to speak to the disciples and minister while He's on earth through the power of the Holy Spirit? But that's what happens. That's what I'm learning. And it's intriguing because Jesus is our example in all things. And so as we learn about Jesus and the Holy Spirit, not only we learn about Jesus, the Holy Spirit and God, we're going to learn about ourselves and our experience with the Lord. So today we're going to look at two passages from the Old Testament that talk about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. And we are going to seek to answer the question "Do you want God to reign in your life?"

Let's go to Isaiah chapter 11. We're going to read four verses. Isaiah 11 beginning with verse 1 it says, "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of council and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. 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. 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."

This is a prophecy given by Isaiah about 700 years before Jesus. Isaiah lived from 740 BC to 680 BC. He would live about 60 years. Sometime, during that time period, he wrote the book of Isaiah. King David, as you know, reigned about 1,000 years before Jesus. So, three hundred years after David you have Isaiah. Isaiah lived 700 years before Jesus, just to give you an idea of the flow of time.

Here in Isaiah 11:1 it says, "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse." Jesse as you know is the father of David. So this prophecy is associated with David though it is not mentioning David. It is speaking of David's father, Jesse. Interesting phrase here. It says, "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse."

Now in the New International Version, in the New American Standard Bible and in the Amplified Version of the Bible, it does not use the word rod. It says, "There shall come forth a shoot." That means to put forth new growth, to germinate and to sprout. Some new growth is going to come up out of the stem of Jesse. Stem in the Amplified Version is "stalk," in the New International Version is "stump." So you have the picture of a tree that has been cut off, a tree that basically is dead, but out of that tree a shoot will rise up miraculously, powerfully, wonderfully, and all under the hand of God. This shoot will come forth and it will be new, it will sprout, and as you shall see in a moment, it will bear fruit.

In the word branch where it says, “The Branch shall grow,” in the New International Version and New American Standard Bible and the Amplified Version it says, “will bear fruit.” So there’s something in this prophecy, it’s a prophecy about Jesus, and it’s talking about His beginnings as a human being. He will come out of apparent death. He will come forth, and He will bear fruit. Please hold your hand here and let’s look at the miraculous nature of Jesus birth.

Look at Luke chapter 1. Keep your hand here in Isaiah because we are coming back. Luke 1:30 says, “Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David. (There’s the tie-in with Jesse.) And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.’ Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, the holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.’” Here’s the miraculous nature of Jesus birth. Jesus would be born of the Holy Spirit. Mary would be a virgin who would know no human being. Placed within her womb miraculously would be Jesus.

Turn to Matthew chapter 1. We see Matthew’s account. Again, Jesus birth is all about the Holy Spirit. In Matt 1:18 it says, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (Now notice the next verse.) And she shall bring forth a Son and you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. In verse 23 it says, ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us.’”

So you see the miraculous nature of Jesus birth, that out of David’s lineage, or out of his seed, Jesus would be born. He apparently would come out of a time when there was death all around. There were no kings in Israel anymore when Jesus comes around. That stump had been dead for hundreds of years. Out of that death there would be fruit.

Now this teaches us a number of things. The first thing, as I mentioned, is the miraculous birth in the Holy Spirit. But let me give you a picture of the gospel just from this picture that is given to us. Did life come to us out of death? Yes. How? Jesus died for us. Where did he die? He died on a dead tree. And out of that, the miracle of salvation comes to us. So we see here that this prophecy in Isaiah 11 is all about Jesus and all about our salvation.

Let's go back to Isaiah 11:2. It says, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him." The Holy Spirit of God is going to rest upon Jesus. It means to remain or linger; to settle down upon Him. The Holy Spirit would rest upon Jesus. It goes on to say what Jesus experience will be as a result of the Holy Spirit resting upon Him. He would have the Spirit of wisdom and understanding. He would have the Spirit of council and might. He would have the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Now I'm going to break those down for you as to what they mean.

Wisdom is always in the scriptures associated with character and conduct. You go to the book of Proverbs, and you'll see wisdom and foolishness are contrasted between righteousness and unrighteousness, good behavior and bad behavior, morality and immortality. So wisdom is associated with character and conduct. It is the quality of making good judgments in the moral context. It is always associated with righteousness. Jesus would have this Spirit.

It also says that Jesus would have the Spirit of understanding. This is intellectual enlightenment, factual discerning. Jesus knew and could understand things that were going on—Sciences, Mathematics, Literature, all that stuff. He had a keen, sharp, brilliant mind.

He had the Spirit of council which is to give advice and guidance. Jesus could come along side somebody and say "Hey, let Me show you the way, here it is, here is how you walk in it."

Jesus would have the Spirit of might, that is strength, that is power. Jesus would be powerful in the Holy Spirit. J

Jesus would have a Spirit of knowledge and awareness, the capacity for learning and discovery. Nothing ever got past Him. And Jesus would live in the presence of God in the fear of the Lord which is reverence, and respect and obedience. That's a picture of Jesus.

Now, it says here in verse 3, "His delight is in the fear of the Lord." Jesus was the happiest and considered it the greatest pleasure on earth when He was giving reverence to God. Now that's fascinating because this is a description of Jesus filled with the Holy Spirit. Did you realize that is a description of a human being filled with the Holy Spirit, as well? This is what Jesus was and this is where Jesus wants us to go. This is what He wants us to be like. He came to reflect the character of God to us. And He, through the Holy Spirit, wants us to be able to reflect the character of God to others.

Here in Isaiah 11:3 we have another expression. It says, "He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears." This simply means Jesus would not judge people by appearances. We do. We do it so naturally. We do it so quickly. If you're seeing me for the first time you make judgments. And if I'm seeing you for the first time, I make judgments. We do that. It just happens. We don't even think about it. But Jesus would not judge anybody by appearances. We, who've lived long enough,

recognize that many times when we judge people by appearances, we are pitifully wrong. We come up short in our understanding. Jesus will not judge individuals that way. He, in fact, can read the thoughts of man. He goes to the very heart of who they are. He doesn't judge us by our appearance. He judges us by what we really, really are.

Then it says, "He will not judge by the hearing of the ears, nor decide by the hearing of his ears." This is a poetic way of saying, hearsay. This unfortunately is a problem we all have. You hear a story about someone or about a situation, and we make a judgment. We don't know if the information we've gotten is true. It is hearsay, but we make a judgment. God is not like that. Here is a picture of God. And it is saying, God does not deal with humanity by appearances. Nor does He deal with humanity upon hearsay evidence. He gets to the heart of the matter. He gets to the truth. That's a Godlike characteristic, a fascinating picture of our Lord.

Look at verse 4. Isaiah 11:4 says, "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." All this is done by Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is basically saying, He will be sympathetic to the downtrodden; He will be sympathetic to the meek. And He, ultimately, as we shall see in another passage, is going to establish justice in the world for eternity.

Now let me read to you what we've just read. Here's a description of our Lord under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus would be a descendant of David
His birth would be supernatural through the Holy Spirit
His death would bring life
He would be wise
He would be understanding
He would give Godly council
He would be powerful
He would be fully aware
He would delight in serving God
He would not judge by appearances or hearsay
He would be sympathetic to the humble, the downtrodden and the poor
He would stop wickedness
He would be Immanuel, God with us
So if we see Jesus, we see God

Are you beginning to understand as we study about Jesus and the Holy Spirit that we're getting a picture of God to see whether or not we want God to reign on the throne of our lives?

Let's go to another passage. You'll find it in Isaiah chapter 42 beginning with verse 1. "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights." Now who is speaking in the passage? God the Father. Who is the one in whom His soul

delights? It's Jesus. You know, at the baptism of Jesus, God the Father speaks from heaven. "This is My Son in whom I am well, well pleased." This is a picture of God. This is when it is prophesied 700 years before that that would actually happen. So here, in Isaiah 42:1 this is actually applied directly to Jesus in Matthew chapter 12, but we're not going to turn there. I'll let you do that later this afternoon.

It says regarding Jesus, "I have put my Spirit upon Him, and He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles." That means justice to the nations. Justice and right. He will reveal truth to the nations and all the people are going to learn about God. Now how many of you are into justice? How many of you like things to be fair? Would you say that that's the way it is on this planet right now? No, this hasn't happened yet. It's in process. Justice is such a wonderful thing, just for things to be fair. It is so refreshing.

Now, I am not a world traveler. So what I'm saying may be wrong, but I have a supposition and that is that I believe in this country we have as good a chance as getting justice as anywhere in the world. That's my impression and I may be wrong. But how many of you really would like to go to court even in this country? Do you think there's justice in our courts in this country? No. We've established a system that is adversarial, where you have one lawyer arguing against another lawyer and whoever has the best argument really wins. There seems to be little seeking out what the truth is or what would be fair and just. They seem to have an ethic all their own that I don't understand.

I can relate to the two little children that were talking about what their father's did. The one says, "What does your dad do?" and he told him. The other one says, "What does your dad do?" He said, "My dad's a lawyer." He said, "Honest?" He said "No, just a regular one." When you go to court today, the only people that win are the lawyers. And the human heart is crying for justice. And here is a prophecy about Jesus saying He's going to bring justice to the nations. It's going to happen. It's going to come.

In Isaiah 42:2 it says, "He will not cry out, nor raise his voice, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets." This is a picture of Jesus, that He would not draw attention to Himself for attention's sake. Quietly, unobtrusively He would without pomp or show minister to people. He would care about the one as much as He would a thousand. This is a picture of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 3 it says, "A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth." (Look at verse 4.) "He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth..." Jesus is going to set things right and He's not going to stop until He does. That's what the Bible says.

Let's look at this bruised reed and smoking flax. We have a picture of God through Christ. I did a little studying about a bruised reed, what a reed is. A reed is any number of grasses that can be found all around the world that are hollow. A reed is a grass that is hollow. A bruised reed would be a grass that has been hit in some way. It's weakened the cellular wall on the outside and it is probably causing it to bend over. It's about to

collapse. It is saying here that Jesus, though He's going to bring justice to the world, will be so gentle that He will not break a bruised reed.

It is a picture metaphorically of a human life, of a human being who senses an emptiness inside, a hollowness, a want for something they do not have, and life has come along and hit them and bruised them, and they are leaning over and they are burdened and they are about to be broken, and Jesus comes along and will not break that person. He will prop them up. He will shore them up. He will strengthen them. He will give them life. He will give them hope. He will give them completeness. He will give this wholeness. This is a picture of Jesus. And that is a picture of God.

It says, "He would not quench smoking flax." Flax is what they used for their wicks back then. And these wicks would be in bowls of oil, and they would just float around and you would light them, and they would burn. Smoking flax is a wick that has lost the flame. Do you know what you'd do with smoking flax or what those people did back then? Picked it out of that oil and cast it aside, threw it away. It was no good any more. The picture of this is of a human being who is on their last, last gasp of hope. They are depressed. They are discouraged. They are so beaten down. They are so hurt. They are so whatever it is, that life is almost gone from them. And Jesus comes along, and Jesus rekindles the fire.

There's a beautiful picture of Jesus given in Mark chapter 2. I'd like for you to turn there please. In Mark 2:13 it says, "Then Jesus went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. As he passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, 'Follow Me.' So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened as He was dining and Levi's house that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners they said to His disciples, 'How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard it He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'"

If you have no need of Jesus, is what he's saying, then He's not there for you, there's nothing He can do. But if you are sick, if you are a sinner, if you have need, that is Jesus and He is there for you. That's what He came for. That's what it's all about. You see, you might have reached a point where you don't believe in yourself, but God believes in you. This is a picture of God.

Let me share with you what Isaiah is saying. Isaiah is saying Jesus would be upheld by God and would be well pleasing to God. Jesus would teach all people about God, even sinners, tax collectors and sick people. Jesus would not use pomp or show to draw attention to Himself. Jesus would tenderly minister to people who were broken and bruised and empty inside and about to lose all hope, and Jesus would not stop until justice is established throughout the earth. He will not fail nor be discouraged until He has

established justice to the earth. That is the picture of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thursday night at the last supper, Philip says to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father." Jesus says, "Philip if you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." This is a picture of God. Logic would tell us that, "Yes, we want God to reign in our hearts." After all, we don't want to go to the lake of fire. That's just pure logic. I don't know anyone that's anxious and packing a picnic to go to the lake of fire. I don't know anybody like that. But I do know a lot of people who do not know God, and consequently they have no joy of life and their religious experience. And this is a picture of Jesus through the Holy Spirit which is a picture of God.

When I was in the Coast Guard on the icebreaker US Coast cutter Mackinaw, I got in trouble. I had to have a captain's mast. Captain's mast is where you are tried by the captain. He's the judge and the jury. And the captain of the ship saw something in me I didn't even see. I was a hollow bruised reed. I was smoking flax. I was about to be gone. I had no hope in the world. I didn't know God. I didn't care about knowing God, at least I didn't think I did. I was in full blown rebellion against God, against authority, against everybody and everything. I was miserable, absolutely miserable. When I stood there before this captain, I don't know why but somehow, somehow, he saw something in me that I didn't see. He worked out a situation to take me out of where I was working, which I despised and hated, and I was placed in a new place. Ultimately, within a few weeks of doing that, I accepted Jesus as my Savior.

Orders came from Washington to send me to Japan for one year. The executive officer of the ship is the second in command. This guy hated me. He really knew what I was like. When I'm sitting in his office he's filling out papers and signing them for me to get my orders and go to Japan. The whole time he's cursing me out saying, "I wouldn't do this. I'm against this. You should stay here. You should be punished for who you are, what you're like and what you do and what you don't do." Those are kind things I'm saying. He was cursing me out. He said, "I wouldn't do this at all except that Captain White has ordered me to." Then he said, "And he wants to interview you after this."

So when I got all my orders together, I went to the quarters where the captain dwelt. I knocked on his door and he invited me in. He welcomed me into his presence. He asked me how I was doing. I said, "Fine, thank you." I didn't know what to expect or what to do. He said, "I've heard you've had some big changes in your life." I had no idea he really knew who I was any more or even cared. He said, "Yes, in fact I've heard you've become religious." I had accepted Jesus as my Savior. It had changed me and apparently he had heard about the change. He said, "I'm really happy for you."

I have no idea if I'll ever see that man again on earth, but I fully expect to see him in heaven. He believed in me. And because he believed in me, he made sure the orders came through and I got to go to Japan. I got to be in an isolated duty situation where I

was isolated from all the friends and sin and all that type of stuff I'd been involved in. I read the Bible there. I started a church when I was there, and I accepted the call into the ministry from God because somebody believed in me. It's something to have somebody believe in you. But it's even more important to have someone with authority to believe in you. When the captain said, "He is leaving here," there was nothing anybody else could do to stop it.

You see, Brothers and Sisters, the question is, "Do you want God to be God in your life?" Here is your picture of God. He believes in you. He has a plan for you. It involves eternity. You may be sick, you may be sinful, you may be in a bad lifestyle. I don't care what it is. He believes in you. He sees potential in you that you have no idea about. And nobody has authority over him. So I come back to the original question. "Do you want God to be God in your life?" If you do, I'm going to ask you to stand.

Father in Heaven, here we are, bruised, hollow, about to go out, but you believe in us, Lord. And so today, through the power of your Holy Spirit, we're accepting Jesus as our Savior, and we pray that You would say we are Your children in whom You are well pleased, we ask in Jesus name, Amen.