

2nd Sunday in Advent

December 4, 2022

“Abounding hope through faith in the Root of Jesse for all!”

(Romans 15:12-13)

By Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 2nd Sunday in Advent is from our epistle reading, Romans 15:12-13.

“12 And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Here ends our text.

I. The proud tree of David is cutdown to a stump of judgment (Isaiah 11:1)

God uses everyday plant imagery to give us deep spiritual understanding of the highest importance! In both our Old Testament reading and Epistle we behold a root, a sprig, a branch that grows out of a stump, a lifeless trunk of a tree. So, we heard in Isaiah 11:1 from which Paul quotes in his epistle these words.

**“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” (Isaiah 11:1)**

The words Rod and Branch are capitalized. This helps us know that this Rod, this Branch that springs out of the human stump, the human descendancy of Jesse, is divine. Here’s the big picture and then we’ll look more closely at the details.

The Rod that comes forth from the stump of Jesse is the promised Savior, Jesus. Isaiah foretells of Jesus coming from the Davidic line that has been cut down in judgement for their unbelief. Yes, the tree that has been cut down to a stump are the Jews who followed false gods and were punished by God with foreign nations overthrowing them.

But, God in His mercy for that is who God is, the God of mercy, hope and love, brought forth a new Branch where there was no life. And in this Branch there is hope – abounding hope - not just for the Jews but also for us Gentiles.

That's the big picture for you to capture in your mind's eye. A green sprout coming out of a lifeless stump. Now that we have the big picture, let's look more closely at the details of our glorious salvation. For Paul says in our epistle reading:

“4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

So, let's learn from Scripture and increase in our hope in Jesus!

Isaiah received his call as we know in chapter 6 after he received the glorious vision of the holy God. “I'm undone, a man of unclean lips.” But God forgave his sins by touching his lips with a hot coal and purged away his sin. “Who shall I send?” Isaiah quickly answered, “Here I am. Send me”.

And he was sent with the message of judgement to the people of Israel who followed false gods.

““Go, and tell this people:

**‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’**

**10 “Make the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed.”**

11 Then I said, “Lord, how long?”

This was God's answer to Isaiah.

“Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant,

**The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,
12 The Lord has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.
13 But yet a tenth will be in it,
And will return and be for consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump remains when it is cut down.
So the holy seed shall be its stump.” (Isaiah 6:11-13)**

The northern kingdom would be conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC. And then Judah, the southern kingdom, would fall in 586 BC to the Babylonians, after Isaiah had been martyred. Yes, there were some bad kings like Ahaz and then Hezekiah's son Manasseh. Isaiah would be martyred under his rule. How long? 500 more years would pass until the shoot from the Davidic line would be born in Bethlehem!

I had a wood shop teacher in High School whose name was Mr. Stamp. He was an excellent teacher and was affectionately known as Mr. Stump. Why? Well, because in a moment of distraction he had sliced off half his thumb on the table saw. He used that half of thumb to remind us always about safety and to always be aware of the danger of a lapse in concentration. He liked it that we called him Mr. Stump because it kept us ever mindful of what could happen if we weren't careful.

The Israelites weren't careful to watch out for the dangers of false gods from foreign nations. They got severed from God. Only a lifeless stump remained. But God never left them without hope. He promised a Savior – the holy seed Jesus.

II. The Sprig of hope of salvation will come (Isaiah 11:1, Romans 15:12)

**“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” (Isaiah 11:1)**

This Branch, Jesus, would descend from David's father, Jesse. He would be true man but also true God.

**“that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:6)**

According to Jesus' human nature, the Father was His God. According to His divine nature – His Father from eternity.

And this Branch would be anointed in His baptism according to His human nature with the fullness of the Holy Spirit as Isaiah says in our Old Testament reading.

**“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” V.2**

And...

**“But with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins,
And faithfulness the belt of His waist.”**

With His Word of the Gospel He would slay the devil and give to the world the gift of His righteousness through faith. In Revelation 5, John hears this good news.

“4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. 5 But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” (Revelation 5:4-5)

III. The Root of Jesse is the Banner of hope for all people (Isaiah 11:10)

“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, And His resting place shall be glorious.” (Isaiah 11:10)

“17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.” (Romans 11:17-18)

God’s banner of love calls out salvation to Jews and Gentiles alike.

For God promises to reach out again to the Jews and bring in a remnant into His Holy Christian Church. So, in the verses that continue right after our Old Testament reading, we hear God speak about His recovery of lost Jews.

**“It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left,
From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush,
From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.**

12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.” (Isaiah 11:11-12)

The New Testament church is the glorious creation by the Root of Jesse, Jesus Christ. He became the humble Servant who fulfilled the Law perfectly and suffered the judgement of God in our place for our sins!

“Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, 9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy” (Romans 15:8-9)

Listen again to Isaiah 11 which describes the restoration of the spiritual peace, beauty and holiness of the New Testament church whose sins are forgiven by the Root of Jesse.

**“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole,
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.
9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
As the waters cover the sea.”**

Into this Holy Christian Church you have been brought through faith, by the washing of your sins in your baptism. It is the same baptism that John the Baptist baptized all who confessed their sins.

“4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)

From God’s perspective, it is perfect – washed in the blood of the Lamb. From our perspective, we still see our sinful nature that causes disunity in the church and our need for daily repentance. We see how easily we want to please ourselves and not be like-minded toward one another. (Romans 15:1) Don’t go back to being an unbelieving stump. Repent daily and God will continually give you life through faith in Jesus the Branch who bore the sins of the world!

“3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.” (Romans 15:3)

Yes! We also, who are rescued Gentiles, glorify God who is our Lord!

“5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:5-6)

Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)