

Chapter 11 begins with a strong contrast. Over against the mighty forest of Lebanon there is a little tree, of which only a stem and some roots are left. David's empire had been small in comparison with the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, and the greater part of it had disappeared long before Isaiah's day. After the death of Solomon the Israelite nation itself had been split in two. The larger part, the northern kingdom, which did not continue any loyalty to David's line, was conquered by the Assyrians in the time of Isaiah, so that only the southern kingdom remained. This southern kingdom was now menaced by the great Assyrian empire, and would eventually be destroyed by its successor, the Babylonian empire. We have noticed that chapter 10 ends with the destruction of the great Assyrian empire. Chapter 11 begins with a little shoot beginning to come up from the smaller empire of David, which had almost disappeared: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." This is a picture of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mightiest ruler of all will come, not from the Assyrian empire, but from the little that remains of David's kingdom.

In Isaiah 11 the emphasis is not on the first coming of Christ. The chapter looks much further into the future. It begins with a description of our Lord's character. Verse 2 declares that the spirit of the LORD will rest upon Him, and describes the qualities that He will display, not only in His first coming, but also at His second coming. Verses 3 and 4 state that the Spirit of the Lord will "make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." While parts of this verse point to elements of His character that were apparent in certain events of His first coming, the verses particularly stress those kingly qualities that will find clearer expression at His second coming. In His first coming He came as the meek and humble One. In His second coming He will