

Lesson 6

Isaiah 11 & 12

Hope to Live By

Note: Isaiah 11 begins with a messianic poem, much of which is read every year during the Advent liturgy (2nd Sunday) and is alluded to or cited in the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, as well as in three different letters of Paul.

1. Who is the most famous king and descendant, before Jesus, to “spring from the root of Jesse”? (Matt 1:5-6)
2. Isaiah speaks of gifts of the Holy Spirit which will be given to the Messiah, and Catholic tradition says these same gifts are given to every baptized person. (Is 11:1-3)
 - a. Name the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Is 11:1-3; CCC 1831)
 - b. Which of the gifts do you most want the Spirit to work in your life?
3. How does Jesus fulfill the line of the poem (Is 11:4) that asserts that the Messiah will give justice to the poor and needy? (See Matt 5:2-11; Luke 6:20-26)
4. In Isaiah’s messianic poem, what is your favorite image of animals living in peace with each other, and why? (Is 11:6-9)
5. From how many places will the Lord “reclaim the surviving remnant of his people”? (Is 11:11-12)
6. How does Isaiah describe the reunion of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms? (Is 11:13)
7. *Reflection:* In messianic times all animals will live in peace with one another; the kingdoms of Judah and Israel will peacefully reunite, only to enable the newly unified Jewish kingdom to destroy and plunder their neighboring nations. (Is 11:6-14) Apparently this imagery does not seem contradictory to Isaiah. Does it seem contradictory to you, and why?

Chapter 12 gives us two hymns; the first in Isaiah 12:1-3, the second in Isaiah 12:4-6. Each hymn begins with the line, “*In that day you will say,*” and it is followed by a line expressing praise of God.

8. What is the most significant difference between the two poems? (*Hint:* Notice the constant use of words like “I,” “me,” and “my” in the first poem. Then compare it to the second poem.)
9. *Reflection:* In Isaiah 12:3 he says, “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”
 - a. What do you think “wells of salvation” meant to Isaiah?
 - b. How do we today draw water from the “wells of salvation”?
 - c. Is there more than one well of salvation?
 - d. In Isaiah’s day, how important was each village’s well from which villagers drew water?
10. Do you think Isaiah’s first poem is a recollection of his spiritual transformation described in Isaiah 6:1-8 and his response to it?