

The End of All Fear

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[0 : 0 0] Now in the passage that we read in Isaiah chapter 11, we have a vision given to the prophet here of a time when the earth will be transformed.

And it will be transformed not simply by nature, but rather by the power of one whom the Lord shall send. There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

It is quite clear both from Isaiah and Jeremiah and other places that this branch, this root of Jesse, is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. But clearly when he came the first time, we do not have animals, for example, who are predators, lying down peacefully with those who are its natural prey, and so on.

We do not have all of Israel coming back to the Holy Land, and all the Gentiles being turned and converted in the brief period of our Lord's initial earthly ministry.

So what we have here is a vision of the Lord, whether it be the thousand year reign that we read of in Revelation 20, or whether it be the new heavens and the new earth, a time when the presence and power of the Lord will transform creation.

[1 : 1 8] And he will transform both the land itself, the land, the sea, we read of changes taking place in the land and the sea. It will transform men and women, of whom we read towards the end of the chapter.

It will transform the beasts of the field and the beasts of creation. All things will be changed by the power of the Lord. Now notice these adjectives here, that the spirits resting upon him, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might.

If we were to turn back a page to chapter 9, when we would see about the prophecy of the child that would be born, the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

All the wisdom, all the counsel, all the knowledge and understanding that is described here is described there, likewise, as being fulfilled in the child that shall be promised, which of course we know to be the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is nobody this can be speaking about except Christ. Now that doesn't just mean fast, it means living understanding in the fear of the Lord.

[2 : 3 8] 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. Now you might read that verse and think initially, oh but wait a minute, that's not right, is it?

I mean surely the whole thing about somebody who judges is you go on the evidence. You go on what you see, you go on what you hear, you go on what is presented to you. You can't bring your own preconceptions and prejudgments to a case.

You have to go on the evidence. So surely you must go by what you see and by what you hear and by the evidence that is presented. But what it means is here that he will be of living, of quick understanding.

He won't simply judge by appearances. It's not what it seems to be, but rather his discernment will go much deeper. It won't simply be what is seen to be superficially on the surface.

Not just what appears to be the case, but he can see right through to the heart of the matter. Now that just doesn't mean a belt or whatever.

[4 : 02] The girdle is that which holds everything together. Everything. Faithfulness, the girdle of his reins. Whether it's the inward workings of the heart and the inner organs, or whether it's the outward body, the girdle of his loins.

These are the things that hold everything together. Righteousness is like a girdle on the outside. Faithfulness, the girdle on the inside. And then we have this transformation of nature.

Now, just as we mentioned a few minutes earlier, I would suggest you that this is not clearly describing present time. It's not describing the earth as it now is.

We know that. We can see that. It's not even describing the earth as when the Lord came in the first three and a half years of his first coming, as it were. But is it the second coming?

Is it the new heaven and the new earth? Is it the thousand-year reign? Whatever we take it to be, we have to recognize that one possibility at least is that we're looking at the question of the new heaven and the new earth.

[5 : 05] If that is the case, then clearly we're not talking heaven. Because it says the earth shall be full, verse 9, of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

If this is the new earth that is being talked about here, then that might account for why we have such a variety of animal life in it. We don't actually read, and I can't make definitive judgments, obviously, about the nature of heaven, but we don't actually read of any animal kingdom beings in heaven.

Whether in the old heaven or as far as we know in the new heaven. But if there is a new heaven and a new earth which we are told is made, there's no reason to suppose that there will not be those of animal creatures in the new earth.

It is a renewed earth. It is an earth which is made new and full. Diverse and rich as God originally intended to be. It's not so much turning the clock back to Eden before the fall, because in a sense you can never go back.

But rather recognizing there has been a fall and redeeming the heavens and the earth and the old separated state. The Lord is bringing in this new creation, this new heaven and new earth in which these beasts will be behaving in this way.

[6 : 26] What we see in this description, just as we mentioned earlier with the children, how you've got the dove and you've got the stake, which Jesus makes reference to. As we know in Matthew 10, verse 16, you know, These two creatures and these two characteristics almost never combine in the same situation.

And likewise, we don't have these animals normally combining together in the situation described here. The wolf normally would eat the lamb or the sheep. The leopard would eat the young goat, the kid.

The calf would be eaten by the young lion. And the fatling and so on. And the fatling would be eaten likewise. A little child would be in danger from all of these predators. The bear would feast on whatever it could get.

And a little child lying down in the midst of them and lying, if it's got a chance of eating an ox, is going to eat it as opposed to just eat straw. And a little child who's not weaned yet, playing on the hold of the snake in its den and putting its hand on the cockatrice's den.

Well, what's a cockatrice? Well, technically, the word cockatrice, as we have it in English, it's a mythical creature that's normally referred to by that, which is taken as being in legend.

[7 : 45] It was the creature that was hatched by a serpent from an egg laid by a cockerel. Now, cockerels don't lay eggs, so that's why it's a mythical creature. But, of course, we don't go by simply the translation.

We go by what the original Hebrew would say. And the original Hebrew that's been translated here as cockatrice almost certainly means a particular kind of snake more poisonous than an asp.

Could mean a particular kind of lizard. There is such a lizard that can be described as a cockatrice. But it's probably a particular kind of snake more poisonous than an asp.

Shall play on the hold of the asp, and the weaned chuck shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Very similar, of course, to the verse we have in Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 14. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. What do we have here?

[8 : 43] Filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Because these creatures, or these children that are described here, men and little children and creatures all together, this total absence of fear, this total absence of danger.

Why? Because they know the Lord. They know the presence of the Lord. The whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

If, for example, they think of, you know, Psalm 23, the sheep lying down by green pastures and feeding beside the still water. Why are the sheep content and at peace to do that?

Because they know the shepherd is near. They know that they are protected. They know they're safe. They know they're reasonably satisfied because the shepherd is near.

Why would a young bear, for example, not attack a cow? Big taste in it. Maybe because it is already satisfied and because it already feels safe because either its parent bear or whatever is close.

[9 : 51] Something, somebody that makes it feel safe, secure and at peace is known, recognised to be there. It's just like when you're a little child, you know, you don't know half the problems that your mum or dad may have with paying bills or mortgages or what is at work and anything like that.

And all the problems in your world when you're little, just being taken in your mum or dad's arms and given a cuddle or whatever, it's not they all go away but you feel safe. You feel safe because you know that they're there.

The little child could be playing in its room with its toys quite happily and as far as it knows, mum's in the kitchen or dad's outside or whatever. And so they feel safe even if they can't see them because they know they're there.

Mum and dad could perhaps theoretically disappear for a while and as long as the kid thought they were there, it could play away quite happily, you know, not be worried, not be panicking because it thinks, it feels, it knows that they are nearby.

Why? This is the sense I would suggest to you that these creatures, this new creation is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, the presence, the knowledge of the Lord, that he is there, he is there, it fills not only the sentient creatures like mankind but also these beasts of the field.

[11 : 09] It is, I would suggest to you, a new earth as opposed to a new heaven because, partly because there's this distinction that the Bible makes between soul and spirit.

As perhaps you may be aware, Ecclesiastes, for example, talks about the spirit of the beast and the spirit of man. And although they all, you know, in this world we all die, that which befollowed, chapter 3, verse 19 of Ecclesiastes, That which befollowed the sons of men befollowed beasts, even one thing befollowed them.

As the one died, so doth the other. Yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast, for all is vanity. All go unto one place, all are of the dust, all turn to dust again.

That's talking about the body. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? Now, clearly, by spirit, it must simply mean life force, as opposed to soul.

Mankind is a soul. Every human being has a soul. When we read in Genesis, you know, that man breathed into Adam, that God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and it's something that is God-given.

[12 : 17] Man became a living soul, something he receives from God, something that makes him like God, in a way that the beasts of the field do not have. They have a life force, they have a spirit, but when that departs and they die, they simply return to the dust.

Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward? When he dies, as we read at the end of Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, verse 7, Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.

If it is a person, a human being we're talking about, that the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth. It doesn't have a soul in that sense, because a soul is that, it's which something God gives, which makes us like him.

We read, as we mentioned a moment ago, in Genesis, how the Lord breathed into Adam's nostrils. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Man became a living soul.

You could say it's almost like he's inspired by God's spirit. You know, sometimes people think, well, if that's the spirit of God bringing him alive, then what brings the animals alive?

[13 : 25] It is different. It is different insofar as God has made man in his image. He's made the beasts for his glory, but this is a new earth. This is a new heaven and earth in which even the beasts are not at odds with each other, because he has recreated all things.

And when God's presence and spirit is known and grasped and is present there, creation becomes transformed by not just people's souls.

It's not just over-saved, so that's good. But I would suggest to you, and this has been experienced by places which have known times of revival or the presence of the Lord, that it's not just, for example, that people's lives are changed or their hearts are changed, but the very eco-structure becomes changed around them.

You know, communities that were devastated because, you know, in Greenland and Canada and places where the Inuit people maybe were, they weren't the elk or seals or whatever, and the seas had emptied of these things, the land had emptied of these things.

When the Lord visited these places and they turned to the Lord and people were converted and revival time came to these places, the elk would come back, the seals appeared again in the sea, the ecosystem, the whole land and sea became transformed by the presence of the Lord.

[14 : 52] And they were able to function again as communities. Their lives were changed, not only in the spiritual sense of what they believed and the relationship with the Lord, but their ordinary daily lives were transformed.

If we look in Hosea chapter 2, we see at verse 17, I will take away the names of Balaam out of her mouth and they shall no more be remembered by their name.

In other words, false gods, the things that men worship that are less than God. And in this world, maybe we don't send up this culture, maybe you don't set up little sort of graven images and gods and bow down to them and burn candles and say prayers and burn incense and so on.

But we do make gods of the things of this world. We do make false gods. And these are the things to which men give their time, to which they give their adoration, to which they give their effort, their energy, their money.

They pour their life force into these things which ultimately have no eternal value. But it says, I will take away, Hosea chapter 2, verse 17, I will take away the names of Balaam out of her mouth, they shall no more be remembered.

[15 : 59] And in that day, I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven and with the creeping things of the ground. And I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth.

In other words, they won't even be hunted anymore. And we'll make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me forever. Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercies.

I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness. And thou shalt know the Lord. Again, this same kind of terms that has been used in Isaiah. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, said the Lord, I will hear the heavens and they shall hear the earth.

And the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil and they shall hear Jezreel, that name which means Jehovah shall scatter. But he's talking about bringing back again that which was scattered.

And I will sow her unto me in the earth and I will have mercy upon her that have not obtained mercy. And I will say to them which were not my people, thou art my people and they shall say, thou art my gods.

[17 : 11] Isaiah is talking about a situation and a time where turning to the Lord transforms the earth itself. Not just the people upon it, but begins to transform the area where such people live.

It changes their lives, it changes their world. It changes the way the soil produces, it changes the beasts of the field and their relationship. Now that's what happens when in a small scale, small situation, you know, microcosm, people turn to the Lord with all their heart and soul and mind and strength.

What we're talking about in Isaiah 11 is where that has happened in a worldwide scale. In a huge, massive worldwide scale.

New heavens, new earth, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Everybody will know it. The very beasts of the field will know it. They will sense the nearness of their shepherd or their protector or the equivalent of the bear's parent or the lion, the chief lion who protects the young cubs or whatever.

They will feel safe. There will be a complete absence of fear. There will be no need to kill one another because they will be satisfied. There will be no killing, no death, no danger because the Lord is there.

[18 : 29] The presence of the Lord doesn't just fill the little place where revival is going one at a time or the individual heart that is transformed, but it is filling the whole earth and so it is changing the whole earth.

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 seas. Have a great, fulfilled with the glory, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Now of course at that time and in that situation the love of the Lord which will go hand in hand with the knowledge of the Lord will be perfect.

And of course we read in 1 John 4, 18 there is no fear in love but perfect love cast without fear because fear hath torment. He that fear hath is not made perfect in love.

And of course we might think yeah but I love the Lord but I still have things of you because our love is not made perfect. Our love is not yet perfected here. Our love will always be imperfect as long as we are in this imperfect world.

[19 : 35] As long as we are in this fallen world and as long as we are still on the journey and haven't yet reached the destination our love has yet ways of being improved upon. It is not yet perfected.

So of course there is always going to be little elements of fear mixed in with it. Perfect love cast without fear. What Isaiah is talking about is a situation that fills the whole life. There is the complete absence of fear.

It is the end of all fear. It is the end of all danger. It is the end of all death. Now this situation it is not that it is unnatural but rather it is going back to how nature was created at the first before sin entered in.

It is not unnatural it is supernatural. It is enabled to happen only by the power of the Lord changing lives changing men and women changing the way creation itself behaves.

Just as when Jesus talked as we mentioned earlier about the wisdom of the serpent and the gentleness of the dove. A serpent you know has qualities.

[20 : 40] It is subtle. It is cunning. We know that even from the very beginning of creation it is very difficult to catch how many times it slither out of the hands of those that might try and lay hold upon it.

You know as the Proverbs say you know three things are too wonderful but four I understand not. The way of an eagle in the air the way of a serpent upon a rock the way of a ship in the midst of the sea the way of a man with a mane.

The serpent is itself a wonder. It is that which God has created and he made it good at the outset but it has that cunning that wisdom which the Lord wants us at times to have elements of but the gentleness of the dove is that which is combined also with its purity.

It as we mentioned to the children doesn't settle in any uncool place. It approaches him who is gentle. What does that say also about no other preacher of righteousness? But when he let forth the dove out of the ark and he didn't find anywhere to settle it came back to him settled again in his hand he drew it back into the ark again it recognized him as gentle.

It didn't just find that there was no land but perhaps even when there were places it could have settled if the dove will not settle any place that it recognizes as unclean it means that the cleansing of the earth which the flood was meant to do had not yet completed its work and then it brought back the little olive leaf plucked off that symbol which to us now symbolizes peace the olive branch the olive leaf but then eventually it came back no more because the earth had been cleansed by the flood there was now a clean place for the dove to settle this transformation of creation for the new heaven and the new earth or maybe it's the thousand year reign as we say we don't know exactly this that Isaiah is seeing his vision of is if you like the completed picture the picture whereby God is not simply changing the animal kingdom he is also bringing his people together to one place because when we go on to verse verse 10 in that day there shall be the root of Jesse again talking about the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ will be an end sign for the people to it shall the Gentiles seek so it's not just talking about Israel being gathered talks about Ephraim and Judah but also the Gentiles are coming too and from all these different countries that are mentioned from Assyria and Egypt and Pathos and Cush and Elam and so on all these countries of the Middle East the Far East

[23 : 17] Greece and so on and the islands of the sea and by extension all the countries of the world that are being brought together to the Lord gathered together and dispersed with Judah from the four corners of the earth they won't vex each other anymore they won't attack or envy each other anymore the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea in other words drying up the Red Sea and let them come across and with his mighty wind shall shake his hand over the river that means the river Euphrates shall smite it in the seven streams make men go over dry shore in other words he will change creation so that nothing can stand in the way of bringing his people to him and there shall be a highway for the red man to his people an open wide road what do we understand from this we understand that for those being thus gathered at the mass the journey is part of the joy for those being thus gathered on the highway of the Lord the journey is part of the joy they are coming towards nearer and nearer to the consummation of all things in the Lord we obviously are not there yet and creation is not there yet and the animal kingdom is not there yet but as we know from the mentioned instances that are known about in the past and places that have had transformation because of their relationship with the Lord when the Lord comes down and visits places it doesn't just change people's lives and hearts it changes the very nature of the world around them it changes the ecosystems around them it changes the kingdom of nature around them it brings fullness it brings richness back again to the fields to the soil to the seeds the Lord changes creation when creation turns to him and Christmas creation in a sense was cursed and fell because of man's sin when man is reconciled to God creation joins with that blessing and the Lord begins to change it we do not yet see the fulfillment that we see here in Isaiah we do not yet see doves and snakes we do not yet see calves and bears and lions and young goats all sitting down together if we saw a little child and his hand down where a snake was noting to come out we'd be panicking and snatch it away but once the Lord has changed and transformed his creation there will be the complete end of all fear the complete end of all danger they shall not hurt nor destroy all my holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea we think of that just a poetic phrase think of the waters covering the sea the waters don't so much cover the sea the waters are the sea the knowledge of the Lord will be creation itself that won't be anything no grass no hills no rocks no nothing that doesn't live and breathe with the presence and the knowledge of the Lord of course it will be transformed just as you can't have the sea without waters as the waters cover the sea that's like saying the sea is the waters the knowledge of the Lord is what makes this new creation the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as Habakkuk puts it and we are not there yet but that same root and branch of Jesse the stem of Jesse and the branch that grows up out of his roots the spirit of the Lord that rests upon him he doesn't just judge by appearances but rather his discernment will go much deeper we read in Revelation of how the Lord has his eyes like blazing fire he can pierce through any kind of protection

or outward layer he sees right into your very soul he sees right into your heart and he knows your needs he knows the anxieties and the fears and the things that may be holding you back he knows the things that may be stopping you from committing or trusting to him he knows exactly who you are in every detail of your life he does not just judge after the appearance of his eyes after the sight of his eyes neither approve after the hearing of his ears but with righteousness shall he judge the poor he will give justice he will give righteousness and that is available to us today that is available for us here and now if we will turn to Christ if we will come to him as our only saviour and recognise that the world is not going to be changed by me the world is not going to be changed by what I do I am not going to be able to change creation and the animal kingdom and the nature of the seas and the lands if I could

I won't but I can what can we do which the Lord has given us some measure of responsibility for some measure if we can say there is of control over your own heart your own life what will you do with it what have you done with it it will be made whole it will be healed and made complete directly in proportion to the extent that you turn to the Lord with all your heart and soul and mind and strength and the extent to which yeah ok to the water a wee bit with the Lord but the rest is for me that will just emphasise how miserable and how unstable and how double hearted our position is we cannot be made joyful in that situation you cannot halt between two opinions and still expect to be blessed by them both we have to either just completely give ourselves over to the Lord or give ourselves completely to the Lord but as we go more and more on with the Lord we trust and believe this consummation this fulfilment will come because God cannot be defeated or overcome which means that the nearer we go day by day as Paul wrote to the Romans now is our salvation nearer than when we believed if you're a Christian it means that you are nearer now to seeing the Lord and being with him for all eternity than you were on that summer than you were even yesterday every day is another step onward and upward on that journey now is our salvation nearer than when we believe the highway is set before you the journey is part of the joy and the longer you go on with the Lord and the deeper you come to know him the greater is your strength the greater is your joy the thicker is the armor of God round about you the less power has the evil one over you and the more we go on with the Lord the more we'll begin to see perhaps not nature is transformed perhaps not all creation is transformed but you go on with the Lord and I promise you your world will begin to change your life will begin to change ordinary little things that seem totally unconnected to the relationship you are engaging on with the Lord will begin to come together and fall into place things that never seem connected in any way but of course they are all connected spirit, mind, matter, body, soul they're all connected as part of God's work you heal one place and the healing spreads you damage one place and the point it spreads close in with Christ come to this root stem, branch of Jesse that grows out of his roots and all creation will not be changed by your one decision but your world will begin to change your life will begin to change and the further you go on with the Lord and the deeper you go with Christ and the stronger your faith becomes day by day the more and more all these seemingly unconnected earthbound worldly things will fall into place and will become blessed and will become strengthened yes you'll get attacks of the evil one you'll get plenty of those that's what Jesus wants his apostles about that's why you have to be as wise as serpents as well as harmless as doves but this transformation of nature it's not that it will be completed by anything we do but for us and for our little part of the world we will have made a start and God will bring it to completion

God will bring it to fulfilment and consummation whether it be his second coming whether it be the thousand year reign whether it be the new heaven and the new earth that much you can safely leave with the Lord but so many of the prophecies of scripture have been seen to come to pass and fulfilled that the tiny percentage that have yet to be fulfilled such as this one we may confidently expect will likewise be seen to come to pass because God is not only no man's debt or he is not a liar we shall have to turn and repent if God has said he will do it if God has promised he will fulfil and if God freely offers the gift of salvation and the forgiveness of sin to sinners such as we are he is not messing about with us he is making a genuine offer which we have the power humanly speaking to accept and oh nobody can accept unless the spirit of the Lord moves them but humanly speaking we have the power to accept we won't know till afterwards that it was the Lord pushing us forward and enabling us to accept humanly speaking he sets before you an open door and he invites you in through it and that which he freely offers he is able to deliver he is able to fulfill the Lord is no man's debtor and the Lord is no man's liar he has begun and he will complete and the question for us today is not so much how do you believe this hopefully you believe it maybe you don't believe it but rather don't you want to be part of it or are you content to miss that because the world will not all change when you come to Christ or when you go on with Christ but your bit of it will begin to change it will begin to be transformed and little by little gradually step by step stage by stage the Lord's fruit and harvest will ripen for his ingathering and we will see in the fullness of time by whatever means he chooses to do it that which he has begun to do he will complete you and I need only concentrate on knowing that root of Jesse on knowing that Messiah the journey is part of the joy and leave the fulfillment the consummation of the Lord

Amen and then do need another fifth he evday services and we will see the money holistic is part of the of the acres and 2014 and crime in direction and June