

# Come, Lord Jesus, ...2) As Judge

Isaiah 11:1-10 • 2022-12-04 • Advent Series: "Come, Lord Jesus"



Those courtroom tv shows can be fun to watch. They show real court cases in which a judge gives out a verdict. These types of shows are popular if the judge is an interesting character. The judge might be witty, snarky, or humorous. At other times the judge is stern and has no time for the people who don't seem to have any respect for the process of law. When a defendant is clearly guilty or doesn't seem to care that they have broken the law, the judge puts them in their place.

But at times, you see another side. The judge deals with someone who is downtrodden and just needs a break. Then the judge shows a gentler side. I saw a clip recently where this was the case. A woman was appealing the charge of running a red light. That's a pretty serious violation. But in this particular case the judge was willing to listen to her story. There was no denying that she broke the law; she was caught on camera. But when the judge learned about the circumstances, he became more amiable. He learned that she was a medical student who was working a late-night job in order to pay the bills. He also learned that her traffic violation occurred practically at the middle of night when there were absolutely no other cars on the road. He further found out that she was getting all A's in medical school. He was impressed with all that she was accomplishing and understood that this single traffic charge wasn't needed right now. So, in light of her outstanding role as a model citizen, he congratulated her on her good grades and working long hard hours to make ends meet. And he pardoned her from the traffic violation. I'm sure that most viewers of the show found it to be a happy outcome. The woman appeared to be holding back tears as she said thanks.

Is that the type of happy outcome we should expect when appearing before a judge? The judge of all is coming. And he isn't going to ignore any violations of the law. How should we feel about the coming of this judge? Today we look at Isaiah 11 and we see why we can pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, as Judge."

Isaiah prophesied at a time when people were crying out for justice and mercy. The proud nation of Assyria had brought destruction to the northern kingdom of Israel. In their pride the Assyrians grew arrogant and trampled over the people they conquered. They were staged in Isaiah's time to deal the death blow to the people of Israel. They were about to cut off the line of King David and put an end to the kings of Jerusalem once and for all.

But Isaiah prophesied the end of the Assyrians. At the end of Isaiah 10 we read how the Lord would chop off the branches of Assyria. And like an ax cutting down a mighty cedar, the Lord would bring down the proud nation of Assyria. *"Look! The Lord, the LORD of Armies, will chop off his branches with terrifying power. The tall trees will be cut down, and the lofty will be laid low."*

Meanwhile, what would happen to the house of David? David had once come from humble origins, from the house of Jesse. And now the once mighty line of David was humbled and laid low. It was like a stump was all that remained of the once great kingdom. After the destruction of a major logging project or a forest fire it looks like there is no life left. That's how the kingly line of David ended up after God had finished with his cutting down proud nations. He cut down Israel, he cut down Judah, and he cut down Assyria. All proud nations will be humbled.

Just as God leveled the Assyrians, he has leveled every proud nation. With Assyria, ancient Egypt would also fall from its once great height of power. The Greek Empire had expanded but it didn't hold up against Rome. Rome rose to significant heights. But where is it today? You can tour the ancient ruins of that old civilization. God cuts down the mighty. He still does. Right now, there is controversy over the way Qatar treats its migrant workers. Other places oppress the lowly and the poor. Where is the justice? God will bring it to every nation, including your enemies and your own.

But keep in mind that God is not just in the business of cutting down proud nations. All proud people will be cut down too. Consider the companies which exploit the helpless and poor. Children and helpless poor are working in mines and factories around the world. Where is the justice? What about the entitled celebrity actor who thinks that the world should revolve around them? That actor is only memorizing lines on a camera. Meanwhile the coal miner is working with his hands to make sure that celebrities can turn on the lights at night. The coal worker is only getting a meager paycheck and works a dirty dangerous job that actually helps people. Where is justice? Come, Lord Jesus, as judge!

But maybe rather than looking at all the lack of justice we ought to look at our own pending court date. Have you always acted in the interest of others? Have you always made it a priority to serve yourself or serve the poor and downtrodden? We might be able to fool a judge into thinking that we are a good citizen of this world with our good grades and our meager handouts. But can we judge the Ruler of all into thinking we are truly good citizens of his kingdom? We've done more than violate a red light. We've travelled the roads of his kingdom with a disregard for his laws of righteousness, justice, faithfulness, and truth. We ought to be leveled and cut down by his terrifying power like all other proud nations and proud people before us! Dare we yearn for the coming of our Judge? Perhaps not!

Except God foretold a judge like no other. Isaiah prophesied, *"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit."* Like a sprout from a dead stump, the line of David would survive! That judge would come from the lowly line of Jesse. From that lowly root, a king and judge would sit on his throne. But that shoot coming from the root of Jesse would bring us just what we yearn for and need, not what we deserve. He would be a perfect and holy judge. He would be a merciful judge. We were caught on camera with every infraction. But he won't be forgiving on the basis of what we have done. He will be on the basis of who he is and what he has done for us!

Listen to the description of the one prophesied to come from Jesse's line: *"The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. He will be delighted with the fear of the LORD."* When Mary and Joseph were told about the coming child, they were told he would sit on David's throne. And when Jesus was born, he didn't look like he had come from a mighty line of Kings. But he was the one prophesied, born of the line of David, the son of Mary.

Jesus fulfills this prophecy. He said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners."* (Luke 4) Good news for the poor! Freedom for prisoners! What kind of a judge has that kind of message? One filled with the Spirit and chosen by the Father, the Son of David, the Son of God! Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. Throughout his life he displayed the traits described here. He had wisdom and understanding. He had counsel and might. He had knowledge and fear of the Lord. And he didn't just have respect for the Lord, he delighted in keeping his Father's will. He was the one man who would be able to stand in the courtroom as the perfect citizen.

Only he wasn't just a citizen. Isaiah describes his work as judge. *"He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, nor will he render decisions based on what he hears with his ears, but with righteousness he will judge the poor, and he will render fair decisions in favor of the oppressed on the earth."* Who wants a blind and deaf judge? Isaiah's main point here is not that the judge is blind or deaf. Instead, the judge is beyond the need for eyes and ears to bring about a just verdict. He is the holy one. He knows our thoughts. He sees all things. He is the perfect judge. No one can escape his hearing or seeing. When Jesus walked this earth, he knew the thoughts of the hearts of those around him. And when he returns, he will judge based on truth. All the unseen evidence seen by our omniscient God will come to light. And he will share his verdict based on that. It will be a just, holy, and righteous verdict.

His verdict? *"Blessed are the poor in spirit...blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."* He came to bring us perfect justice! Do you grieve over the exploitation of the poor and lowly? Do you long to see the oppressed of this world lifted up? Jesus promised to lift up all who trust in him.

And no evil can stop this judge! Satan rules in tyranny over every poor sinner. But Jesus will not let evil prevail. *"He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath from his lips he will put the wicked to death."* By his powerful word Jesus will put an end to all evil and bring justice to all the earth! Evil will fail. Jesus, our judge will win.

And unlike all other judges he will be dressed in perfect righteousness and truth! Isaiah poetically describes the garments of Jesus as judge. He is wearing the belt of truth and righteousness. He came to live in perfect holiness and righteousness in our place. For all the times we failed to keep God's holy law, he did not. And for all the times we failed to help others around us Jesus never failed. He delighted in obeying the Father's will even to the point of exchanging his belt of righteousness for the punishment and scourging we all deserved for our sins.

The judge of all won't give us a free pass because we tried to be good citizens. But he will look at the circumstances. He will consider the perfect life lived in your place by the root of Jesse. He will see how Jesus delighted in keeping the law. And the same Jesus who delights in justice will let the sinner go free -not because he lets justice slide, but because he is a merciful judge. He sets the sinner free and exchanges places with them.

Now the judge declares peace for his kingdom. It is beautifully pictured in Isaiah's prophecy. It is a peace that we could never imagine in this world. Isaiah depicts the fiercest of predators and the gentlest or weakest of domesticated creatures living together in peace. Can you picture a little child leading a flock of bears, goats, and lions? Can you picture a helpless little infant playing in the den of cobras and putting his hand into the viper's nest? Picture all that happening without any harm or damage. The lion will eat straw like the cow so that no creature or any part of creation brings any harm to anyone. In Jesus' kingdom no man or beast or anything in all creation will cause any harm ever again! It will be a perfect peace. We will rise to life just as Jesus rose to life -never to die or face pain again.

His kingdom will stretch over all the earth. As much as the water's cover the sea, all of creation will be filled with knowledge of the Lord. That is why this portion of Isaiah's prophecy concludes with peoples and nations streaming to his kingdom. That is already beginning today as people stream to Jesus, the banner of Jesse. They stream and gather from all over to hear about his justice and peace. They long for his coming. They cry out with the Church, *"O Come, O come or Root of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny, from depths of hell your people save, and bring them victory o'er the grave."* And we cry out, *"Come, Lord Jesus, root of Jesse, as Judge."*