

The Story of a Shoot

Prologue – The Stump

- Today, story, of shoot: baby plant, or sprout, branch, twig, sprig – little, tender, baby plant, shoot. Story shoot. Lonely: grows up, begins life surrounded by death. Usually shoots grow out of healthy plants, trees. Not this shoot; grew up in unlikely spot: grew up out of dead tree stump.
- Long before this story shoot begins: once huge tree (beautiful, dignified), with long rich history. God himself planted; every branch told its own story. Oldest: A&E in garden of Eden. Another: Noah & flood. Others: Abraham, Moses, Exodus, Mt. Sinai, King David, Solomon, temple. Tree represents Jewish kingdom, God's OT people; tall, proud for centuries; until Assyrians lopped off branches, left tree half dead; then Babylonians came with chainsaw, cut great tree to ground, to rot/decay. Grandeur of Jewish kingdom reduced to nothing more than stump; looked like that's where story would end.

Chapter One – The Shoot-King

- But this isn't story re that tree/stump: prologue to this story. Today, story of shoot. Ch 1: **vs. 1**. New life, new beginning. Deep in crevice on surface of stump, shoot begins to grow. Only few inches tall; not very strong; but growing! Stump wasn't dead after all; looked dead. But this little shoot drawing life from its ancient roots, growing up in its place.
- If this tree represents kingdom of Jews, then this shoot must be the King of Jews. Why stump called "**stump of Jesse.**" Jesse = father of Jew's greatest king, David. From Jesse's stump, another king would come; but would start small, seemingly insignificant, like tender little shoot. Ch 1.

Chapter Two – The Gifts

- Ch. 2. **Vs. 2-3a**. As shoot grows up into role as king, God's HS would come down on new king, get ready to rule. Just like sunshine, rain come down to make little shoots grow into healthy, strong plants; so also God's HS come down on this king, shower him with gifts: **wisdom, understanding** (wise ruler; would know just what to do for God's people); **counsel, might** (when his people feeling hurt, would know how to comfort, give advice; when people feeling weak, he strong for them); **knowledge, fear of Lord** (close relationship to God heavenly Father; so close, this king actually called Son of God); **delight** (would love God, God's people). These are sevenfold gifts of Spirit, showered down on this king like gentle rain on tender shoot. Many years later, John 3 would say: "**The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit**" (**vs. 34**). Limitless supply of Spirit-blessings are growing this shoot, getting king ready to rule. Ch. 2.

Chapter Three – The Reign

- Ch. 3. **Vs. 3b-4a**. Now shoot isn't so small anymore; has branches, leaves; become tall, strong. King begun to rule. Just judge; helps poor, needy. Says to them: **Mt 5:3-10 (Gospel)**. This king has special interest in helping spiritually poor, needy, mournful, meek. Builds them up; defends from enemies: **vs. 4b-5**. Or **Ps 98: "He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity"** (**vs. 9**). This king is judge; someday, all people will stand before this king; he will judge them. "**When the Son of Man comes in his glory, ... all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats**" (**Mt 25:31-32**). Will judge world; someday; not yet. Right now, shoot is grown; king ruling. Ch. 3.

Chapter Four – The Peace

- Ch 4. Shoot now full-size tree, coming up out of stump of Jesse. Surrounding tree is curious scene: animals (wild), children; together. Never would have expected to see this anywhere else. But under this tree, under rule of this king, things are different. **Vs. 6** (wolves/lambs don't get along; do here.

Ferocious carnivores side by side with gentle livestock. Let little children play with lions? That's what's happening under this tree.) Vs. 7 (Cows eat grass; bears meat; but having dinner together. Same thing.) Vs. 8 (Almost makes you grimace hearing those words, esp if parent; never let kids play with venomous snakes. But here it's okay, because things are different under this tree.) Peace reigns. This king = prince of peace.

- Says: **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (Jn 14:27). “[May] the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, ...guard your hearts and your minds” (Php 4:7).** Little children, wild animals, playing together; and vs. 9. And when earth filled with knowledge of Lord, with Gospel of forgiveness, grace through death, res of this special king, then peace. Ch. 4.

Chapter Five – The Tree

- Now finally made it to last ch, ch 5. We've seen first tree cut down, and baby shoot grow out of its stump. Seen little shoot receive gifts from Spirit, grow into tree, king. As king, he used those gifts to help his people, bring peace. Now, last chapter, read vs. 10a (very rootstock from which first tree was cut, shoot began to grow). So we've come full circle. Now shoot huge, beautiful, dignified tree, towering into sky, branches spread, fully leafed, with its roots embedded in stump of Jewish kingdom; but now vs. 10ab. This tree is for whole world; this king of Jews for everyone. While many people do not believe **John 3:16 (“God so loved...”)**, everyone who *does* believe in God's Son, this Savior-Messiah, shoot-king – they all gather together under that tall tree; in its shade find forgiveness, peace, grace.

Epilogue – The Rest

- There this story could end. But there's one more page in this book, the epilogue. Vs. 10c. Resting place - glorious. **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). “In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (Jn 14:2-3, NIV 1984). “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory” (Jn 17:24).**
- And there in heaven, with King Jesus (the shoot that grew up out of stump of Jesse), **“his resting place will be glorious,”** because there the story of the shoot has no end.

Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD — ³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den, the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.