

“There Shall Come Forth a Shoot”

“A New Thing” Series, August 1 & 2, 2026 (Communion) | Isaiah 11:1-10

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We would all love a little more Camelot.

Camelot represents the almost perfect kingdom.

It’s led by the mythical King Arthur, who became king when he drew the magical sword, Excalibur, from a rock. Arthur then united Britain and brought a group of noble knights together at his Round Table. Camelot was his castle where his knights came together to go on heroic quests and pursue chivalrous romances. The name Camelot has come to symbolize a golden age of peace and justice where all is right.¹

I’ve been building castles since I was a kid.

Lego blocks were my favorite toys. I used to build all kinds of things—spaceships, robots, and castles. The things I built were always part of stories, and the stories were gateways to imaginary, ideal places like Camelot. There may be battles, but the good guys always win, peace and justice reign, and all is well.

But Camelot always falls.

King Arthur marries Guinevere, the love of his life, who is also in love with Sir Lancelot, one of Arthur’s knights. Their affair leads to war and gives evil Mordred the opportunity to seize power. In the coming war, most of the knights die, Arthur is mortally wounded, and Britain descends into chaos again. Camelot comes to an end.

All our almost perfect kingdoms fall because we live in a world that’s already broken.

Camelot represents the moment when all seems well. When history produces a charismatic leader with bold vision who unites the country, we call those moments Camelot. My mother calls the time when my brothers and I were all in elementary school Camelot. All was well. But these moments slip through our fingers. All is no longer well because we live in a world coated with the consequences of sin. It’s inevitable here and now that Camelot will fall, but that fact doesn’t keep us from dreaming of a time and place where peace and justice reign and all is well.

We will always reach for kingdoms like that.

We tell stories like the legend of King Arthur because we dream of those days. We work together in the world and at home trying to carve out a time and place where all is well. The longing for an ideal kingdom is buried deep in our hearts. Isaiah tells us why. God has put it there! Even though we live in a fallen world, God has promised us a perfect kingdom led by the Perfect King—someday. We are still waiting for that day, and it has not yet come, but it is already starting to dawn, and that fact makes our dreaming and our working make sense.

¹ https://www.pbs.org/mythsandheroes/myths_four_arthur.html

In the past, Isaiah shared a vision of the Perfect King.

David's line was reduced to a stump.

David was the good king of Judah and Israel, a man after God's own heart. God promised David that a member of his family would reign over His people forever. Judah was ruled by the descendants of David. Some of them were good—a few great. Most were bad—some terrible. Isaiah lived more than a hundred years before Judah was conquered and the last descendant of David would rule in Jerusalem. But Isaiah could see it. If the House of David had been like a flourishing tree, it had become a stump. The line of David had failed. How disheartening!

God promised a king who would be both a root and a shoot.

In Isaiah 11, the prophet is speaking about Messiah, the coming king who will save and deliver His people. **Isaiah 11:1** begins describing Him,

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

Jesse was David's father, so the stump of Jesse symbolizes the House of David being reduced to a stump. But we're going back further. Where did Jesse come from? God Himself is the root or source of Jesse, David, and the House of David. Since the line has gone wrong, we are going back to the source, God Himself. And a new shoot will come from the source. A new and better shoot—Messiah, Jesus.

Messiah would be the Perfect King.

Isaiah 11:2 tells us that He will be filled with God's Holy Spirit who will empower Him,

And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him ...

He will live faithfully. **Isaiah 11:3** begins,

And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD ...

That is, He will do what God wants. **Isaiah 11:4** adds that Messiah will protect the poor and vulnerable,
... but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth ...

Verse 4 adds that Messiah will get the job done, and verse 5 says that He will be clothed in righteousness and faithfulness to God. This is the Perfect King! This is Jesus.

Isaiah gives us a standard for evaluating any king or leader—from history or right now.

In giving us the picture of the Perfect King, Isaiah gives us a checklist. Are they filled with God's Spirit? Do they defend the poor, weak, and vulnerable? Do they do what God says? Are they personally righteous? That's the picture of the Perfect King, and it can be a grid that can help us anytime we are evaluating leaders or candidates. And we want to think actively about the people we choose to lead us! They're not perfect. But God is not done with history yet.

Someday, our Perfect King will bring us His Perfect Kingdom.

Someday, our Perfect King will bring perfect peace to Creation.

What Isaiah says in verses 6-8 may be so familiar to you that you miss its impact. Wolves don't hang out with lambs unless they're eating them! Isaiah is saying that when Messiah comes, predators will no longer stalk prey. Lions are not going to eat meat. Children can play with snakes. Violence will be

gone, not just from human life but also from Creation itself! Someday, Messiah will change Creation itself fundamentally.

Someday, He will draw the world to Himself.

When Messiah rules, the whole world will have direct knowledge of God. **Isaiah 11:9** says,

... the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

That means that someday knowing and obeying God will be normal, not unusual. **Isaiah 11:10** adds that the nations will seek out Messiah's wisdom,

... of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Creation will change, people's hearts will change, and the world will tilt toward God, instead of away from Him. Someday.

The Kingdom of God is better than Camelot because it's the real thing.

Isaiah is pointing toward the future, to the time after Jesus comes again. Call it the Millennium leading into New Creation or New Creation itself. When Jesus comes again, He will usher in a new age of His direct rule. I don't know about you, but I can't wait for that day! Because as a follower of Jesus Christ, I will be resurrected to join Jesus there!

The story of Camelot gets told again and again.

It was made into a Broadway musical that became a movie. In the musical, a boy, Tom of Warwick, finds Arthur shortly before the final battle. He tells Arthur that he wants to become a knight. Arthur tells him about a day that will come when people will be ready to dream and work together again. Then he commissions him as a knight, tells him to go home and survive, to remember Camelot, and to tell everyone he can about Camelot. It's just one more way that the story of Camelot lives to be told.

If the story of Camelot should be told, then the Kingdom of God is Good News we can't live without.

Isaiah's vision tells us that the Kingdom of God is certain to come. It dawned in Jesus Christ, and it will come in all its fullness when Jesus returns. Until then, the vision of the coming Kingdom of God is Good News that needs to be repeated. We repeat it because it carries us through miserable days when we are otherwise tempted to give up hope. We repeat it because it tells us that God is on the move and that Resurrection, New Creation, and Eternity are certain. And we repeat it because it calls anyone who hasn't come to faith in Jesus Christ to find that faith here and now before Someday comes.

Now, we have been made members of His royal family.

In Jesus, we are adopted into God's family.

Without Jesus, we are in open rebellion against God. We may not feel it, but we have fundamentally said "no" to God and walked away from Him. We have made ourselves enemies of heaven. When we come to faith in Jesus, our identity changes. We are adopted as sons and daughters of God. **Romans 8:15-16** makes this dramatic claim,

... you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God ...

C.S. Lewis imagines us as Kings and Queens, and he hits the mark.

The Chronicles of Narnia begins with *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. It tells of the adventures of the Pevensie children in the magical land of Narnia. They fight the White Witch and, with the help of the magical lion Aslan, liberate the land. At the end, Aslan crowns the four of them as kings and queens over Narnia as the crowd cheers. Lewis was painting a picture of us. We are children of God, members of His royal family, heirs along with our Perfect King. That's where Paul was driving because in **Romans 8:17** he went on,

... and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ ...

What are we? Kings and Queens? Princes and Princesses? We are members of God's royal family.

The Kingdom of Our Father is the "Now and Not-Yet Kingdom."

Jesus the Messiah came into the world the first time. He is God-with-us who came to show us God's love and His ways; He died to pay the price for our sin; He rose from the dead, victorious over sin, death, and evil. In Him, we can be forgiven, set free from our bondage to sin, reconciled to God, placed in God's family, filled with His Holy Spirit, and given new power and purpose for living. That's the Kingdom of God breaking in even now. But a day is coming when Jesus will return. He will rule. He will change the world fundamentally. We will rise and live and reign with Him forever. That's the fullness of the Kingdom of God, and that day is yet to come. So, the Kingdom of God is truly "Now and Not Yet."

Now, we are outposts of the future breaking in.

Everything that is going to happen fully when Jesus returns is slowly cooking inside of us now. Peace is growing inside of us. So are justice, righteousness, and holiness. We increasingly want to be faithful to God and obedient to Him. The ways of the coming Kingdom of God are becoming our ways now. Eternal life isn't just something that happens at a point in the future. Eternal life starts in us when we come to faith in Jesus Christ and just grows in us until we see Jesus face-to-face. We are like the first wave of an invasion by heaven.

What if we made here and now a little more like our Perfect Someday?

Isaiah has given us a roadmap.

We will never bring the Kingdom of God to Earth here and now; that is entirely a work of God, and it will only happen Someday. But there are things we can do. They're in what Isaiah said about our Perfect King. How can we do here and now what our Perfect King will do in the Perfect Someday perfectly? We can pursue the Spirit of God and obey Him. We can defend the vulnerable and work for God's will to be done. We can be righteous and faithful. We can bring peace where there has been division. We can draw people to God.

There are bold ways in which we can make the here and now more like the Kingdom.

What if you started a Bible study at your place of work and saw 25 colleagues joining you? You could share faith with your neighbors or with the next generation? We have a vision of seeing 100 people

baptized each year. What if we blew that number out of the water? You could fight to protect human life from conception to natural death because that covers some of the most vulnerable populations in our world. There are big ways in which we can make the here and now more like the Kingdom of God.

Simple acts of hospitality can also give people a glimpse of the Kingdom.

I told you a few months ago the story of how Rosaria Butterfield came to saving faith in Jesus. She went from being a hostile, radical atheist, living an alternative lifestyle, to being a faithful, orthodox Christian. I probably didn't make clear how it happened. Two people invited her for dinner and conversation. Over and over again.² Just inviting people into your home to share a meal is a simple but radical sign that the Kingdom of God is breaking in now. To begin with, the Kingdom of God is like a great banquet! Extending hospitality also says that you will say "yes" to God. Opening your home brings people together in peace. Around the table is a great place to talk and share what God is doing in your life. It's a great place to see lives changed. Simple acts can make here and now much more like the coming Kingdom.

Home is where we start.

What does your home look like? Whatever shape your home takes, may the people there see the Kingdom of God in you. May your life be bathed in the presence of God, submitted to the will of God. May you be a person of peace, and may the Gospel of Jesus Christ be like a magnet inside you, drawing people toward God. May the people in your home sense the Kingdom of God coming through you to them. May our homes here and now look a little more like our Perfect Someday.

² <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2018/04/rosaria-butterfield-gospel-comes-house-key>