

## Isaiah 11:1-10

Advent 2; December 7 & 8, 2025

They were dominant companies that at one time you would have never guessed that they would fail. Let's take a look at a couple of them:

- **Sears.** Once America's largest retailer—the Amazon of its era—Sears struggled to adapt to the rise of big-box stores and later to online shopping. The company ultimately filed for bankruptcy in 2018.
- **Kodak.** A giant in photography for decades, Kodak largely ignored the digital camera revolution, despite inventing the first digital camera themselves. They filed for bankruptcy in 2012.
- **Blockbuster Video.** Blockbuster dominated the video-rental world with thousands of stores, but failed to adjust to the shift toward streaming. They even passed on an opportunity to buy Netflix. Blockbuster filed for bankruptcy in 2010.
- **Nokia.** Once the world's top cell-phone maker, Nokia fell behind as smartphones and modern operating systems took over, and was soon overtaken by Apple and Android.
- **BlackBerry.** A leader in business smartphones, BlackBerry failed to keep pace with the move to touchscreens and app-driven platforms.
- **MySpace.** The early king of social media, MySpace collapsed when Facebook offered a faster, more organized platform. Today, it barely exists in any meaningful form.

At one time, each of these companies seemed unstoppable. Everything was going their way, and it looked as if nothing could bring them down. But they faltered because they stopped innovating. They became complacent—and eventually collapsed. In a similar way, something like this happened with the people of Israel. God had richly blessed them, and under King David—Israel's greatest king—they reached a high point. In 2 Samuel 7, God sent the prophet Nathan to David with this promise:

<sup>8</sup> **“Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup> I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed.... <sup>12</sup> When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.... <sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”** (2 Samuel 7)

Talk about writing a blank check. Talk about establishing a dynasty. **“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever.”** For about 400 years, King David's dynasty endured. (To put that into perspective, that would be like a family dynasty from the time of the pilgrims at Plymouth Rock till today.) But over those 400 years, the dynasty of David began to fail.

- Civil war would divide the nation. The Assyrians would destroy the northern tribes and wipe them out.
- Judah was reduced to a very state.
- It's kings mostly turned away from God. They became evil.
- The royal family was corrupted both spiritually and politically.

Eventually, God had had enough. The final king in David's line was Zedekiah—an evil king who wanted nothing to do with God. He placed his hopes in an alliance with Egypt that never materialized and defiantly opposed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Babylon responded by destroying Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar summoned Zedekiah and his sons, executed the sons before their father's eyes, and then ordered Zedekiah's eyes to be put out so that their deaths would be the last thing he ever saw. Instead of killing him, Nebuchadnezzar sent Zedekiah to prison for the rest of his life. None of this should have come as a surprise. Nearly a century earlier, God had already spoken through the prophet Isaiah about the judgment that was coming on Israel. God instructed Isaiah to: **“Go and tell this people: ‘“Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes..... Then I said, “For how**

long, Lord?” And he answered: **“Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.”** (Isaiah 6). The Oak tree would be reduced to a stump. Judgement came down on Israel. Nothing would be left but a stump.

But what about the believers who still remained in Israel? Some of them would have remembered God’s promise: **“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”** Yet nothing they saw matched that promise. Their nation had been reduced to a stump, and they may have wondered if God had failed them. We can relate to that feeling. Have you ever felt as though God had abandoned you? Have you ever questioned what God was doing in your life?

But God had not forgotten his promises. He would remain faithful to what He had spoken to David and to Israel. The line of David wasn’t dead—it was only dormant for a time. And now, God was about to raise up a different kind of King, still from David’s line, but unlike any who came before. **“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 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—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.”**

Fast forward 750 years, and the angel Gabriel would connect the dots to Mary. **“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”** (Luke 11:31-33) This shoot would be Jesus. He would come with wisdom, understanding, righteousness and faithfulness. This king would come and change the world. He will come to establish his kingdom forever.

**“Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. 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. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra’s den, the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest. 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. 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.”**

That is what the coming Judge will bring to this world. He will bring back peace and hope. God would keep his promise to David. He would keep his promise to this world. Trust his promises and give thanks that he has also come to us. May God grant it. Amen.