

Focus on Isaiah 11:1–10

WHAT is important to know?

—From “Exegetical Perspective” by Bruce C. Birch

The vision of harmony in verses 6–10 is often referred to as the vision of “the peaceable kingdom.” The image is of a return to Eden when God’s reign is finally consummated. When the anointed one described in earlier verses ushers it in, broken creation becomes the completely harmonious creation God intended. The earth will now be filled with the “knowledge of the LORD” (v. 9). This Hebrew term for knowledge is more than cognitive information; it is the full entering into and experiencing of what is known. So the earth will be infused with the reality of God, and it shall be as comprehensive as the waters of the sea (v. 9).

WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective” by Noel Leo Erskine

The church is not the kingdom of God, but its relationship to the kingdom signals its mission. The realm of God shines through the witness and mission of the church as the poor have good news preached to them and are judged with righteousness and equity. The Messiah awaits the church in a future of righteousness marked off by the gifts of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of God, beckoning the church to a new future not of its own making but one made possible by YHWH. The challenge is not to be stuck in the traditions of the past but to be open to the new realm in which the proud will be punished, the humble will be exalted, and the practice of justice will be the order of a new day.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective” by
Stacey Simpson Duke

This is how hope gets its start—it emerges as a tiny tendril in an unexpected place. Where are the stumps in our own lives; where do we feel cut off? Can we imagine or believe that even now God might be nurturing the growth of something new and good from our old, dead dreams? Consider what areas of our lives most need the promise of new life, and how we might become open to such newness. Isaiah’s promise is not just a future one; even now there are tiny signs of hope and life in places that look dead and discarded.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “Homiletical Perspective” by
Paul Simpson Duke

What of the “little child” who leads them? Shall Christians think of Jesus again? We should not make this move too quickly. Like the calf, lamb, kid, and ox, the child stands for the vulnerable, and is joined by others even younger and more vulnerable, happily playing in a safe world at last. Why is it the child who leads the whole bleating, mooing, yipping, snuffling, roaring, giggling company? The new creation wants a human presence—new, bright, undefended, and free—to love and care for it all.

“Lo, How a Rose”

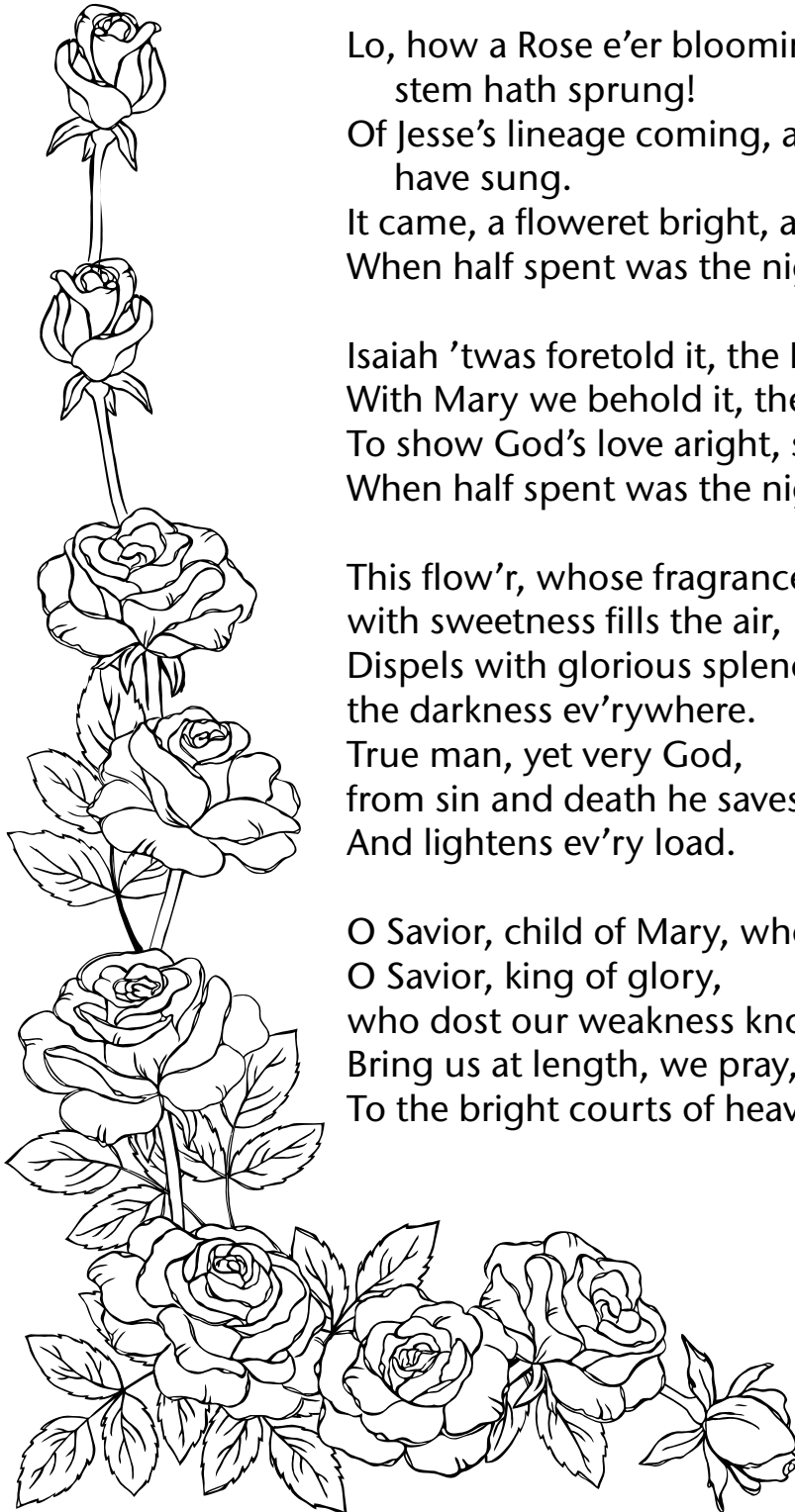
“Lo, how a Rose E’er blooming”

Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming from tender
stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming, as men of old
have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah ’twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God’s love aright, she bore to men a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

This flow’r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
the darkness ev’rywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us,
And lightens ev’ry load.

O Savior, child of Mary, who felt our human woe;
O Savior, king of glory,
who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length, we pray,
To the bright courts of heaven and into endless day.



Music: ES IST EIN ROS’
German carol, 15th century
Translated: Theodore Baker
sts. 1-2; Harriet Knuth Spaeth, st.
3; John C. Mattes, st. 4.