

Series: Isaiah
Title: A Root Out of Dry Ground
Text: Isaiah 53: 2
Date: September 22, 2013
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Isaiah 53: 2: For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

There is a double metaphor in this verse. First, the metaphor compares Christ to a tender plant, a root—"he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Secondly, there is a metaphor comparing the tribe of Judah, the house of Jesse, the house of David, the nation of Israel—and all sinners as well—as "dry ground."

Proposition: I want to show you Christ is the Root and all sinners, including God's elect, are dry ground. We give nothing to Christ the Root but Christ the Root gives all to his people.

Divisions: 1) The Root before dry ground 2) The Root out of dry ground; 3) Substitution by the Root 4) The Root within dry ground sinners

I. CHRIST IS THE ROOT THAT IS BEFORE THE DRY GROUND

Illustration: The root comes first. You have a seed, then a root, then a tender plant, then a sapling, then it grows into an oak. Christ is First—the Root.

Christ, the Root, is the Seed of Abraham—meaning, according to the flesh, he came through Abraham, Isaac, Israel, of the tribe of Judah, of the house of Jesse, of the house of David, of Joseph and Mary. But Christ is the Root that bore them—he is God our Creator.

Christ Jesus was the Son of David, according to the flesh—meaning Christ came through the lineage of David's house. Mary and Joseph were both the descendants of King David.

So Christ was born of the lineage which the old testament scripture said he would be. But listen to this scripture:

Revelation 22:16: I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Christ indeed was the root that came from David, as the offspring of David in the flesh, but Christ, as God the Son, is the Root from which David came.

Christ is the self-sufficient God, the self-sustained Life and Surety—the Root—of all God's elect. We receive life and righteousness from him and he carries us. David was born from Christ the Root.

Matthew 22:41: While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. 43: He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? 45: If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? 46: And no man was able to answer him a word,...

Christ gave David life and righteousness, then Christ came into this world through David, he became the offspring of David.

Romans 11: 16:...if the root be holy, so are the branches.

Some say Paul is speaking here of Abraham as the Root, but Christ is the Root, the Vine, the Olive Tree, who bore Abraham. Christ said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches.” Christ is Holy and his people, as branches born from Christ the Root, are like him—holy.

Romans 11: 17: And if some of the branches be broken off,...

The natural children of Israel, rebellious, were branches that God broke off. They were “suckers” attached to the Vine which appeared as branches but were not true branches because they brought forth no fruit produced by the Vine. Christ said, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” (Jn 15: 2) They were in Israel but they were not all of Israel so Christ, God the Son, broke them off.

Romans 11: 17:...and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them,

You and I, who are Gentiles, given life and faith and made righteous by Christ are like wild olive branches grafted into Christ the Root and the Olive Tree.

Romans 11: 17:...and with them partakest of the Root and fatness of the Olive Tree;

All of God’s elect, called out from among Jew and Gentile, are made to partake together of Christ the Root, of the fatness of Christ the Olive Tree—just as true branches grow together with grafted branches in a natural tree.

Romans 11: 18: Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

We cannot boast against unbelieving Jews broken off because of unbelief—we were just like them—dry ground. Only grace made the difference. Boasting is excluded. We, as branches, do not bear Christ the Root, but Christ the Root bears us. Dry ground gives nothing to Christ but Christ our Root gives everything to us.

So you see, Christ is the Root—the Vine—the Olive Tree—God the Son—the Life—by whom his people are born.

Isaiah 53: 2: For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

II. AND CHRIST IS THE ROOT THAT CAME FROM DRY GROUND.

Christ came according to the flesh from the nation of Israel, of tribe of Judah, of the house of Jesse, of the house of David—which had become dry ground by the time he came—none of their former glory existed. Why?

Rebellion in Israel

Isaiah 1: 1: The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem...2: Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. 3: The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4: Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

The Holy One of Israel is Christ the Root—God the Son, the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. Those rebellious children were those natural branches—“suckers”—not God’s true elect, not truly, vitally, connected to Christ the Root. But that is also a description of every son of Adam—you and me in our flesh—God’s elect included. We are dry ground.

Isaiah 1: 5: Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6: From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. 7: Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

Divine Election

If God's elect are the same, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?"

Isaiah 1: 9: Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

God by his grace—who chooses whom he will and passes by whom he will—he alone makes one sinner to differ from another sinner. That nation is an example of sinful, fallen man—the Root formed that nation—just like he made Adam but they rebelled like Adam—and all we became as a garden that hath no water—a dry ground.

Destruction of Transgressors

Isaiah 1: 28: And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed. 29: For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. 30: For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

God has never been unjust toward us. He gave them great light—sending them his prophets, giving them his scriptures—just like he has for you and me. They took on a form of religion—they drew near in body—but their heart was far from God—like some of us were. But in our flesh, we desired mighty, impressive oaks—so when we beheld Christ—that root out of dry ground—there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Sinner, hear what God says. Christ the Root says of you sinner—you shall be ashamed of the mighty oaks you have desired. Do you despise coming here? Do you have no desire to walk in the light God has given you? Learn from Israel—they wouldn't walk in the light God gave them so God made it so they couldn't!

Judicial Reprobation by the Root Sent

Isaiah 6: 8: Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. 9: And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10: Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Who fulfilled this prophecy? Christ the Root fulfilled this prophecy and the prophecy in Isaiah 53. Listen to:

John 12: 37: But though he [Christ] had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39: Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40: He hath blinded their eye and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41: These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

They would not simply draw near to be taught of God so God turned them over to judicial reprobation so they could not. I am showing you that Christ is the Root from which the house of David. And that by the judgment of

God, the house of David, became a dry ground and so are we. This is why Christ came and why he's a "root out of a dry ground."

Isaiah 6: 11: Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, 12: And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. 13: But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

Christ the Root bore Jesse's house, David's house, that whole nation. Then because the natural branches refused to walk in the light God gave them, he cut down that tree and made it a dry ground. Yet, in it he reserved a tenth—an elect remnant. Christ the Root, the Substance, came from that elect remnant to save his people like a tender plant grows out of tree stump. He told Ahaz, here is the sign assuring you that the scepter shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come.

Isaiah 7: 14:...Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The Root from the Stump

The enemies that God used were like an ax in God's hand. The enemies boasted, God said

Isaiah 10: 15: Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it?...33: Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. 34: And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one. [By Christ the Root] 11: 1: And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;...10: And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. 11: And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12: And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

From Dry Joseph and Dry Mary

Furthermore, Christ came forth as the Root out of the dry ground of his parents—Joseph and Mary. Christ bore them and provided all for them, not them for Christ. Christ came exactly as the old testament scripture said he would through the house of David—which Mary and Joseph were. God determined before that Christ would be formed in Mary's womb. And Joseph would be the instrument to provide for Christ as he grew up. Therefore, the triune God, including Christ who is God the Son—protected and provided for Mary and Joseph in every step they took from their youth up.

Brethren, Christ protected us from our youth up till Christ was formed in us, too. Sinner, have you ever considered that may be why he has preserved you so far. Why haven't you died, yet?

It was God the Son, the Root, that came with the Holy Ghost when the body of Christ our Savior was formed for him in Mary's virgin womb. Christ was formed in the womb of a virgin in order to be the spotless, sinless High Priest and Lamb of God, Christ could not be "conceived in sin" in the womb as you and I.

Protection by the Root

It appeared that Joseph and Mary were protecting the infant Lord Jesus—but remember, dry ground gives nothing to the Root but the Root gives to the dry ground. In reality, it was the Root directing and protecting Joseph and Mary. We know that is true, because Christ said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” (Mt 5: 17) And every move Mary and Joseph made was Christ fulfilling that which the prophets wrote.

Matthew 2: 13: And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: 14: When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son...20: Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life. 21: And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22: But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Christ the Root bore and gave all blessings to Mary and Joseph, just as he has to us, brethren. Dry ground gives nothing to the Root. The Root bears us, we don’t bear the root.

Nothing to Bring to Nothing

Here is the point: Christ came as a Root out of a dry ground, out of a poverty-stricken family and nation, with none of its former glory, on purpose. God chose base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are. (1 Cor 1: 28)

Natural eyes, would have desired a King, so Christ was not born of nobility—yet Christ was King. Natural eyes, would have desired a rich Savior so Christ was poor—yet Christ created all AND is the proprietor of all things—even when it appeared he owned nothing.

He did not use political leaders or famous movie stars or popular athletes or rock-n-roll music or anything else that appeals to the base, carnal nature within dry ground sinners. Christ chose fishermen to speak for him. He used despised prostitutes and publicans who he made righteous to represent him. He chose the foolishness of preaching to spread his good news. He chose a cruel Roman cross where his body would hang before men, stripped and beaten and marred more than any other man. He must give the desire or else we would boast. Thou bearest not the Root, but the Root thee. The Root came to give life to his chosen who are dead, dry ground. The Root came to establish righteousness and freely give that righteousness to sinners unable to give him anything.

Isaiah 60:21: Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

III. SUBSTITUTION--THE ROOT TOOK THE PLACE OF GOD’S ELECT WHO WERE DRY GROUND—Isaiah 53 says Christ became the Substitute—taking the place of God’s elect.

The justice of God had to be upheld—his elect must pay eternal death. Christ is eternal God so he could satisfy eternally and as Man he could die. So the Spotless Lamb actually did what the spotless lamb ceremonially did in all the old testament shadows. Christ willingly bore the sin of his people.

Isaiah 53: 6:...“the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Now, listen to the Psalms describe the dryness he suffered in place of his people who are dry ground.

Psalm 102:4 My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.

Psalm 22:15: My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

Psalm 32:4: For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

Finishing the Curse

Psalm 104:29: Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

God hid his face from Christ in just judgment. And how the Savior was troubled! But when justice was satisfied—HE himself gave up his breath, HE laid down his life, and went to the dust of the grave. Why? To finish the curse. Because in the garden, Justice said, “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen 3: 19) But Christ did not stay there because he satisfied God and justified his people.

Isaiah 53: 11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12: Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. 54: 1: Sing, O barren, [oh dry ground] thou that didst not bear;...

Revelation 5:5: And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Sinner, can you rejoice that by Christ’s finished work you have now been made the righteousness of God in him? Have you ceased working for salvation? Are now motivated to good works by his love? If so, let me tell you why you!

IV. WHEN CHRIST THE ROOT IS FORMED IN A SINNER, CHRIST IN YOU IS AS “A ROOT IN A DRY GROUND.”

Our flesh provides no fertile ground—only dry ground. Our flesh contributes nothing to our salvation—we are only dry ground. (John 6: 63) We have to be made to confess that. So at first, it is much the same as what the Lord did to the nation of Israel. He brings us down to see we are but dust.

Isaiah 40: 6...All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: 7: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

Isaiah 5: 24:...their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust:...

Christ keeps us there beholding our dry ground of sin...“till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain”—as a tree with all its branches broken off. (Is 30: 16-17.) Therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious and merciful unto you—till you see your salvation is all of his grace and mercy. Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be exalted—till you see he alone is to be glorified for your salvation. For the LORD is a God of judgment...” (Is 30: 18)

This is how he imparts Godly fear, the brokenness of the broken heart, contriteness of the contrite heart. So when he has brought his child to repentance from our dry ground of sinful flesh, to you cry out to him in faith like the publican that smote upon his breast. Then Christ makes his child to know he is all YOUR Righteousness and all YOUR Sanctification—for “if the root be holy, so are the branches.” (Rom 11: 16) A still small voice whispers in the conscious of the inner man,

John 15: 3: Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4: Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5: I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Before, you saw no comeliness in him that made you desire him. Now you say,

Psalm 73:25: Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

So you willingly confess to the world your old man is buried and you are risen with Christ to newness of life in believer's baptism.

Then you have the peace only Christ gives! Can I tell you what true peace is? Peace in believing is the peace Christ gives when he gives us confidence of knowing: the Root has born me from my mother's womb, the Root made me the righteousness of God by what he accomplished, the Root gave me life and all things that pertain to godliness, and the Root is guiding me and working all things for my good in everything that is going on around me in this earth. Amazing grace! He is doing this for me, who in my flesh, is nothing but dry ground. So you never depart, nothing can separate the true branch from the Vine. You shall dwell with the King in his kingdom forever!

Amen!