The Third Week of Advent - A Reflection on Isaiah 11

As we think of Advent a great text is in Isaiah 11, we're told “וְיָצָָ֥א ח ֹ֖טֶר מִג  ֵּ֣זַע יִשָָׁ֑י וְנ ֹ֖צֶר מִשָרָשָ֥יו יִפְרֶֶֽה׃” that is “a shoot will come forth from Jesse” or “a branch from his roots will bring forth”, or “will spring forth”. I've thought about the Hebrew word נֵ֧צֶר (nê·ṣer). It means a branch when we look at the New Testament. When we look at Matthew 2 Matthew alludes to this idea of the נֵ֧צֶר (nê·ṣer) when Jesus goes to Ναζαρὲ (Nazareth). We're told that it might be fulfilled through the prophet saying he shall be called a Nazarite. He shall be called a נֵ֧צֶר (nê·ṣer). Here I think we have a clear application of this נֵ֧צֶר (nê·ṣer) idea to Jesus going to Nazareth. It's been sort of like saying the branch went to branch town and as we think about Jesus is truly the branch that comes forth from David.

We see this idea of the branch throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Jeremiah 23 and Zechariah 6 are references as its applied to Jesus. Also, the idea of Jesus being the final David is found in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, in the book of Ezekiel we have a reference in Ezekiel 34 where it speaks of David as the Shepherd that is to come. Ezekiel says I will establish over them one Shepherd and he will shepherd them, and it will be my servant David יִנַּ֖עְבְדָ֑י אֲבַדְּמֶ֑ש לָ֖הוּ (‘aḇ·dî ġā·wîḏ). He will shepherd them and is made again in Ezekiel 34:22 יִנַּ֖עְבְדָ֑י אֲבַדְּמֶ֑ש לָ֖הוּ (‘aḇ·dî ġā·wîḏ) my servant David will be in their midst.

I'm taken by that idea of David as the Shepherd because Jesus is the final David. As we look at the Gospel of Matthew, we have fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to מְשַׁמֵּֽא (Messian) or to Christ.

Fourteen reminds us of David because in Hebrew יִנַּ֖עְבְדָ֑י (gā·wîḏ) equals 14: ו = four, י = six, י = four. By using a gematria (assigning a numerical value to a Hebrew name) we put those letters together we end up with fourteen. That refers to David like double perfection where seven is being perfection. Double that and we have fourteen.

The final David is here, and Matthew is driving that theme home not only in Matthew 1 but also in Matthew 2 where the branch who comes from David is the final יִנַּ֖עְבְדָ֑י (gā·wîḏ). The final יִנַּ֖עְבְדָ֑י (gā·wîḏ) moved to branch town and so the whole inner connection of David and the final Messiah refers to Jesus. He is the final David and is the Shepherd that wants to shepherd us if we put our faith in Him as Lord and Savior.

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The First Week of Advent - A Reflection on the Covenants
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