

# Christ Is The Flag For All Nations

Read Isaiah chapter 11

Every country should take great pride in their national flag. It is the official banner of a state or nation, often decorated with emblems or images that symbolize that nation.

The National Flag of Canada, also known as the Maple Leaf is a red flag with a white square in its center, featuring a stylized 11 pointed red maple leaf. Its adoption in 1965 marked the first time a national flag had been officially adopted in Canada to replace the Union Jack of the United Kingdom.

Symbolical standards were used by the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, and Jews. Biblical references to standards, ensigns, and banners are numerous. Early flags usually had a religious significance.

In Isaiah 11:12 we read, “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.”

The word *ensign* (in-sin) is a national flag displayed on ships and aircraft, often with the special insignia of a branch or unit of the armed forces. A standard or banner, as of a military unit. The ensign is placed on the front of a ship. It is there to remind sailors why they are serving, protecting, and defending their country.

Why does Isaiah choose the image of a flag and what does it represent? I believe the flag is a fitting symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovahnissi, which is translated “God our Banner.” It is as we look to Christ that we discover not a flag for one nation or state but for all nations. Therefore, the title of my message today is, “Christ Is The Flag For All Nations.”

## 1. The Origin Of The Flag

Where did it come from?

We read in verse 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.”

Here Isaiah describes a root of Jesse which shall stand as a flag for the people. The “root of Jesse” refers to the Davidic line from where the Messiah descended.

A root typically lies below the surface of the soil, and is not visible to the naked eye. It is underground and not plainly seen.

Similarly, the first coming of Christ was shrouded in mystery. The scribes and teachers of the Law searched and studied the prophecies regarding the coming of the Messiah in the O.T. But they could not pinpoint when Christ would come to the earth.

In Matthew 2:4-6 King Herod demanded where the birth of Christ should take place, “And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people

together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” (Micah 5:2)

Christ wasn't born in a palace on a bed of plush, silk sheets. There was no room for Mary, Joseph, and Christ in the inn. Therefore, they found shelter in a place with animals. It was a dirty, dark, and smelly spot. Hardly the ideal place for a baby to be born. But this was no ordinary baby. This was the God Man, The King of Glory. Born with the beasts of the field. What a humble birth!

Later when King Herod sought to kill the baby Jesus, Joseph was warned by an angel to take Mary, and the new born, and flee to Egypt where they lived in secrecy and obscurity for many days.

Then when Christ was 12 years old he went to Jerusalem with Mary and Joseph and we find him talking theology with the scribes and doctors of the Law.

After his time in Jerusalem, Christ again disappears from public. For the next eighteen years there is no record of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not until Christ reached the age of around 30 that he reemerged in public and began his earthly ministry of preaching and healing.

What can we learn about the humble beginnings of Christ?

He renounced His heavenly privileges and emptied himself so that His people might experience and enjoy the blessings of the forgiveness of sins and peace with God.

1. John Macarthur writes, "He dove into the water and went all the way down through the black cold water to the slime and ooze of this world. That's why in John 17:5 Jesus prayed, "Glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Christ gave up the glory of a face-to-face relationship with God for the muck of this earth. He gave up the adoring presence of angels for the spittle of men. He gave up the shining brilliance of heavens glories and emptied Himself.

Every now and then on earth the glory of Christ peaked through, such as on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36). There were glimpses of Christ's glory in His miracles, attitude, words, at the cross, at His resurrection, and at His ascension. But Christ emptied Himself of the continuous outward manifestation and personal enjoyment of heavenly glory.”

2. He gave up His personal riches. 2 Corinthians 8:9, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

Christ was poor in this world; He owned very little.

The root of Jesse, humble and obscure in the beginning would become a glorious banner for all men and nations to behold.

We read in 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

We read in John 12:32 “And I, if I be lifted up from

the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

Zechariah 12:10 "they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced."

The Flag is displayed for all nations to see Christ. We've considered the humble origins of the Lord. Let us now look at the desecration of the Flag.

## **2. The Desecration Of The Flag**

What could be more appalling and repulsive to a nation than to see their flag burned and defaced?

I can remember watching an historical documentary on the Vietnam War. It was at this time that flags and protest became nationally visible during the Vietnam era of the 1960s and 1970s. As Americans gradually became aware of the huge contradictions between government claims and military reality protest against the war reached high levels of social antagonism. One means protestors used to demonstrate their anger against the war was by burning the American flag.

To desecrate the flag is equivalent to spitting on the nation. The flag represents and symbolizes the very

heart of all that is good and great in a nation and to burn the flag would be an act of highest contempt.

How would you respond to the burning of the Canadian flag? Outrage. There would be a cry for justice in the streets. Where is the honor and respect for the flag?

Now consider Christ as the Flag For All Nations. Christ embodies perfect righteousness in his life; perfect obedience to His Father; perfect love for His people; How was Christ received and treated by men?

Isaiah tells us in chapter 53:3, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

The hatred for Christ today is deep. It is seen outwardly in the removal of the 10 commandments and prayer from public schools; in an open desecration of the Christian Sabbath by the world and most churches; it is seen inwardly in the heart of man, manifested in a height of sin and wickedness the likes of which the world has never seen before. The world hates Christ. His own people, the Jews,

rejected him, and said. “Let not this man rule over us.”

Christ exposed the Jews contempt for him in a parable in Mark 12, ...“A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

4And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

5And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.'

8And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.”

Are you burning Christ in your heart? Are you spitting on His gospel? Will you hug your sins right down to hell? The message from Isaiah is look to the

Flag for all nations. See there Christ dying on the cross, making atonement for sin. Cry to the Lord and ask Him to save you! Christ came into the world to rescue the perishing.

The desecration of Christ continues to this day.

### **3. The Victory Of The Flag**

A preacher of old observed, “Indeed, our Savior is the Ensign lifted up through the whole written Word, and displayed from Sunday to Sunday in the preached Gospel. He is lifted up on high by Moses and the Prophets and by the inspired Apostles of the New Testament, and after them, all the ministers of Christ in all His churches through the whole earth and to the end of time are standard-bearers, to bear His name and truth, His law and covenant, His promises and [judgments], to all people. We preach Christ crucified, buried, risen, ascended, and reigning at the Father's right hand and coming again in the clouds of Heaven.

He was lifted up as an ensign on the cross, and from the grave in His resurrection, and yet more in His exaltation to the right hand of power.

Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God and the righteousness of God for us.

We read in 2 Corinthians 2:14 “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.”

A Sampson may faint for thirst, and one of the "three mighty men with David" smote the Philistines till his hand was weary and cleaved to his sword, benumbed with holding it so long and fast, but they that war under Christ "shall renew their strength.”

It is He who "brings forth judgment unto victory." He came and overcame, and in His strength we conquer ourselves, the world, and [the] devil.

The God of grace," says the Apostle, shall "bruise Satan" under your feet shortly. The enemy may sometimes roar in the midst of the congregation and set up his ensign in assurance of victory; he may prevail over a Peter in an assault, but not in the war; no, Jesus has prayed for him [Peter], that "his faith fail not," and he returns to his colors.

Keep to your Ensign and you fright away the enemy; "resist the devil" and he shall flee before you. Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.

The ensign inspires courage. The flying colors put life into the soldier and lead him on intrepidly. It speaks to the hosts and says, as our Lord does to us, "Look on me and do likewise! Come on without fear!

Have I not commanded thee! Be strong and of good courage: Be not afraid or dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee" (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9; Judges 7:17).

Christ can inspire fortitude and strength to endure hardness, to resist unto blood, to be steadfast and immoveable and not draw the hand back that stretches out the spear. Jesus can make Joshuas and strengthen [them] with all might in the inner man; yes, out of weakness He makes [men] strong. Luke 10:19: "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.

Romans 8:37-38: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us: for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things

present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord."

Let Christ be great and good and glorious in our eyes: the "chiefest of ten thousand and altogether lovely."

Christ is victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The Flag For All Nations Is Christ. We've considered the humble origins of Christ, the rejection and desecration of Christ, and the glorious victory in Christ. Are you looking to Christ this day to save you from your sins? Look to Him and you will discover the truth in the Song of Solomon 2:4, "...his banner over me was love."

Let us pray.