

## INTERNATIONAL S.S. LESSONS.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS DESIGNED TO ASSIST THOSE OF OUR READERS WHO ATTEND BIBLE CLASSES, WHERE THESE LESSONS ARE USED; THAT THEY MAY BE ENABLED TO LEAD OTHERS INTO THE FULNESS OF THE GOSPEL.

LESSON I., JANUARY 3, [ISA. 11:1-10](#).

### THE KING AND THE KINGDOM.

**Golden Text:** – "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." – [Psa. 72:8](#).

The inspiring themes of this lesson are the glorious Millennial Kingdom and the rightful King whom God hath appointed to reign in righteousness over all the earth. This is that kingdom to which our Lord referred when to his disciples he said, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" ([Luke 22:29,30](#)); that kingdom for which he taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven;" that kingdom which he commissioned his disciples to preach, saying, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" ([Luke 9:1,2,60](#)); and that to which some of the poor of this world, rich in faith, have been chosen heirs. ([James 2:5](#).) It is that kingdom of which the Prophet Isaiah frequently discourses in glowing language, and which, indeed, has been the theme of all the holy prophets since the world began ([Acts 3:19-21](#)), as well as of the Lord and the apostles.

But observe that every reference to it looks to its future establishment, and makes clearly manifest the fact that it is not yet set up in the earth; for the will of God is not yet done on earth as

it is done in heaven, and the heirs of the kingdom are not yet reigning with Christ. The only way in which the kingdom of God yet exists is in its embryo condition, in its incipient stage of humiliation, in which it often **[R1351 : page 14]** "suffers violence," and "the violent take it by force." (Matt. 11:12.) But in due time these prospective heirs of the kingdom who now faithfully endure hardness as good soldiers, will be counted worthy to be exalted and to reign with Christ when his kingdom shall be established in power and great glory. (Matt. 24:30.) Hear the promise of our glorified Lord: "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne." (Rev. 3:21.) And again, "They shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years" – "on the earth." – Rev. 20:6; 5:10.

It seems strange indeed, in view of the clear testimony of the Scriptures on the subject of the establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth, and of its glorious character and work, that Christians generally, both Catholic and Protestant, entertain the idea that that kingdom has already come, and that it has been established in the earth for many centuries. This error is not one which originated with Protestants, but rather, one which they have never outgrown. The claim was first made by the Papacy when she became popular with the world and was exalted to power, and the "Great **[R1352 : page 14]** Reformation" movement, while it touched many other doctrines, left this one unmolested; and the thoughtless indifference of Christians since those days has never discovered to them the absurdity of praying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," while at the same time they claim that his kingdom did come long ago, though they freely admit that his will is not, and never has been, done on earth as it is done in heaven.

But let us observe what the Prophet here has to say of the glorious character and the extent of this dominion and of the power and glory of its appointed King, and then see if there is, or

ever yet has been, such a king or such a kingdom in the earth. Hear him! (Isa. 11:1.) "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the reverence of Jehovah; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither give sentence after the hearing of his ears. [He will not need to call up the testimony of human witnesses in any case, since his own knowledge and understanding of each man's case will be perfect.] But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and give sentence with equity for the meek of the earth....And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." – Verses 1-5.

This glorious Branch out of the stock of Jesse we recognize as our blessed Lord Jesus, who, after his resurrection, said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18), and who at the time appointed will take unto him his great power and reign. (Rev. 11:17.) This is "the Messenger of the [new] covenant whom ye delight in. Behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 3:1; Jer. 31:31-34.) Oh, let our hearts truly rejoice in the blessed and multiplied assurances that he who so loved us as to give his life for our ransom is coming again to reign. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;...for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth." – Psa. 96:11-13.

Now in observing the character of his reign, notice First, that it will be a terror to evil doers, and that because iniquity so abounds in the world, the first work of his reign will be the smiting of the earth with the rod of his mouth and the slaying of the wicked with the breath of his lips (verse 4); for somehow *the truth*, "the rod of his mouth and the breath of his lips," is either directly or

indirectly to bring about the smiting of the earth – the great "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." – Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21; Jas. 5:1-6; Mal. 3:2-5; 4:1.

Secondly, observe that while his reign is to be a terror to evil doers, exposing and uprooting every system and every principle of evil, both in society at large and in every individual, it will on the other hand be the consolation and joy of all the meek who love righteousness; for such shall no longer be oppressed, but shall be exalted and blessed. – Verse 4. **[R1352 : page 15]**

Thirdly, notice that the blessings of Christ's Millennial reign will extend, not only to the establishment of righteousness in the earth and peace and harmony among men, but to the lower creatures as well, so that they will be docile and obedient to mankind, as they were originally. – Verses 6-9; Psa. 8:6-8.

And fourthly, do not overlook the blessed assurances of verses 9,10 – "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" – full, broad, ample and deep. Ah, no conflicting creeds then; for all will be made plain and all the vain traditions of men will have perished. And in that day the Root of Jesse shall stand for an ensign of the people; to him shall the nations come to inquire, and his resting-place shall be glorious. (Verse 10.) Here, he who in verse one is called the Branch out of the root of Jesse – the Son of Jesse – is now called the Root (or father) of Jesse. And this seeming contradiction is not an accidental misstatement but a veritable truth; for though Christ was the Son of Jesse according to the flesh, he is now to be "the Everlasting Father" or life-giver to the whole human race; so that Jesse, in the "Times of Restitution of all things," will be the son of Christ. – Isa. 9:6.

When Christ is thus exalted in the earth and men begin to realize his power and goodness, he will indeed be for an "ensign of the people," and there will indeed be a great turning to him.

Men will say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths....And all nations shall flow into it." (Isa. 2:3,2.) And truly "his resting-place shall be glorious" – so different from the miserable resting-places now afforded by human creeds, so aptly described by the Prophet (Isa. 28:20), saying, "For the bed is shorter than that a man [a developed Christian] can stretch himself [or grow more] on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." [He knows so little of the divine plan that he is constantly subject to doubts and fears.] But the blessed resting-place which the new King will discover to all men, in making "the knowledge of the Lord fill the earth as the waters cover the sea," will indeed be a glorious resting-place. God's plan and each man's place in that plan will be clearly manifest and blessedly satisfying.

In the blessed assurance of our Golden Text, that "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," and all the accompanying assurances of that precious psalm, let our hearts rejoice, remembering also that when he shall appear in his kingdom, then shall we also (if faithful unto death) appear with him in glory. – Col. 3:4.

Let us not fall into that miserable delusion, which should be so apparent to every student of the Scriptures, that the kingdoms of this world, misnamed Christendom (Christ's kingdom) are in any sense the kingdom of Christ, or that they are in any sense accomplishing the work which the Scriptures under consideration point out as the work of that kingdom. Let the true saints of God, the embryo kingdom, the "*heirs*" of the kingdom soon to come in power and great glory, be content to be unrecognized of men and to suffer reproach and violence if need be, knowing that when it does come, it will far surpass the vain glory of these earthly kingdoms which must pass away. Such was Paul's faith; for when about to die, and looking forward to the time appointed for the

setting up of the kingdom of God, he said, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me *at that day*, and *not to me only, but to all them also who love his appearing.*" (2 Tim. 4:8.) While, then, we wait for his appearing, let us confidently and joyfully hope for the glory to be revealed in us and through us. [R1352 : page 15]

## A SONG OF TRIUMPH.

LESSON II., JANUARY 10, ISA. 26:1-15.

Golden Text. – "Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

In this lesson we have two great cities brought to view; and the burden of the song is that the one has been "laid low, even to the dust" – *i.e.*, utterly destroyed – while the other is established in peace and security. Jehovah is shown to be the destroyer of one, and the founder and strength of the other. (Verses 5,1.) In the symbolic language of the Scriptures a city always represents a government or kingdom. The city here represented as securely established, and as a place of safety for all who love righteousness and truth (verse 2), symbolizes the Millennial Kingdom of God; while the city which is destroyed is the opposing kingdom of the prince of this world. In Revelation 21:2 the former is called "the holy city, the New Jerusalem," whose excellent glory is described as like that of "a bride adorned for her husband;" while the latter, in Chapters 14:8 and 18:21, is called Babylon, whose unrighteous character is described, and its sudden and violent overthrow predicted and likened to a great [R1352 : page 16] millstone cast into the sea to be found no more at all.

The time when this song will be sung is also definitely pointed out. "*In that day* shall this song be sung." What day? Evidently the day when the singers begin to recognize the fact that

the New Jerusalem or Kingdom of God is established in the earth, and that the great city, Babylon, has been completely overthrown – the dawn of the Millennial day. Those two events will occur simultaneously, and will be recognized together, as indicated in this song of triumph.

This calls to mind the theme of our last lesson (Isa. 11:1-10), and, glancing along the intervening chapters, we see that the Prophet applies this same name, Babylon, to the great city whose destruction he predicts, and that he has much to say of its ignoble character, as well as of its doom. See chapters 13:1,19; 14:4,22; 21:9; 47:1.

The destruction of Babylon and the establishment of the New Jerusalem or Kingdom of God are ascribed to Jehovah in verses 1,4 and 5; and this is in harmony with Psa. 2:6. "I [Jehovah] have set my King [Christ] upon my holy hill of Zion." And the great day of wrath which will accomplish the destruction of Babylon is called "the day of Jehovah." "Lo, the day of Jehovah doth come, fierce with wrath and heat of anger." – Isa. 13:9.

We next notice (verse 1) that this song is sung "in the land of Judah," thus indicating what is elsewhere clearly shown, that Israel will be the first to recognize the Kingdom established. **[R1353 : page 16]** And they will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." – Isa. 25:9.

Having thus distinguished the cities and located the time and the singers, let us now observe the burden of this song. Concerning the great city, Babylon, they sing (verses 5,6), "The lofty city [the city formerly exalted and powerful in the earth], he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust; for he bringeth down them that dwell on high. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor and the steps

of the needy" – referring to the great social troubles which will culminate in the utter destruction of all the present civil and ecclesiastical power of "Christendom:" a culmination even now greatly feared by long-headed statesmen and ecclesiastics everywhere.

But concerning the then established city, the New Jerusalem or Kingdom of God, they sing (verse 1), "We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." It will be a strong city of refuge within whose protecting walls all may enter who desire the great salvation which it assures.

Verse 2. "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth [observeth or regardeth] the truth may enter in." From Rev. 21:12 we learn that the gates or entrances of the city, which are twelve in number, are inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is in harmony with what we have learned of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God (see MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I., Chapter XIV.), that the ancient worthies from the various tribes of Israel, selected during the Jewish age, will be the visible representatives of the heavenly Kingdom in the earth, through whose instrumentality the nations may enter into the blessings of the Kingdom.

Verses 3,4 tell of the peace and general advantages of trusting in God. Verse 7 tells how plain he has made the path of the just – "The way of the just is plain: thou makest exactly plain the path of the just." – *Leeser*.

In verses 8,9 they tell how, through the long night of their chastisement, when the judgments of the Lord were upon them, they still remembered the Lord and desired his favor and blessing; and they justify God in sending his chastisements upon them for their correction, because they were necessary.



Verses 10,11 note the fact that the remainder of the world have not yet recognized and submitted themselves to the new Kingdom, but that they shall yet see and be ashamed of their past course, and that God will surely destroy any who persistently remain enemies.

Verse 12 expresses their confidence in God, who has cared for them in the past and ordained peace for them now, since they have come to trust in him.

Verses 13,14 refer to the contrast of their condition under the Kingdom of God with that under other rulers or lords of the past – the evil governments and systems under which they have suffered privation and bitter persecution. Henceforth they desire to make mention only of the Lord as their King and to forget the bitterness and woe of the past while cast off from his favor and subject to other rulers; for they remember that those evil governments and systems have perished, never again to be reorganized to oppress and misrule the world.

Verse 15 again refers to the blessedness of Israel regathered under divine protection and favor – Israel, which for their sins had been scattered to the ends of the earth.

-----