

## 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.

### THE GRACIOUS CALL.

LESSON VI., FEBRUARY 7, ISAIAH 55:1-13.

**Golden Text.** – "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." – Isa. 55:6.

In our last lesson – Isa. 53:1-12 – the Prophet brought to view the "Lamb of God" whose sacrifice would take away the sin of the world, and thus prepare the way, legally, for the glorious restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. – Acts 3:19-21.

This lesson opens with the gracious invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." This at once calls to mind the very similar invitation of Rev. 22:17 – "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It will be observed that the call in both cases is only to those who desire the water of life: "every one that thirsteth" and "whosoever will" may have it; but it will not be forced upon any. Here, as frequently in the Scriptures, water is mentioned as a symbol of truth (See also John 4:10-14; Rev. 7:17); consequently the invitation to these is to accept or partake of the favor of everlasting life through obedience to the truth. – John 17:17.

Isaiah also compares this sanctifying and life-giving draught to exhilarating wine and nourishing milk, which the thirsty, who desire it and have nothing to give in exchange for it, may have without money and without price. The truth or water of life thus offered is the good news of redemption and consequent restitution to perfection and eternal life, through "the precious blood of Christ," "shed for many [for all] for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26:28.) Since we were all bankrupt and had no means wherewith to purchase so great a treasure, those who value it will gratefully appreciate its offer as a free gift, without money and without price.

But though these two invitations are virtually the same, the student will observe that that of Rev. 22:17 is due in the Millennial age, when the now espoused virgin Church will have become the Bride of Christ. Then the Spirit and the Bride (who has no existence as the Bride yet) will say, Come, etc. But that the invitation of Isaiah 55:1 is intended for those thirsting for truth during the Gospel age is manifest from verses 2 and 3, which show that those of this class have not only been desirous of the truth, but that they have been diligently, though hitherto vainly, searching for it. In hope of finding the truth, they have been spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not. In the Millennial age, none will thus vainly search for truth; for then "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," and none will teach his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least of them to the greatest of them (Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34); and the way of life will be so plain that a wayfaring man, though unlearned, shall not err therein. (Isa. 35:8.) But such is not the case now, when hundreds of conflicting creeds jar and jangle with both reason and Scripture, each one saying to the bewildered inquirer, "This is the way of truth: walk ye in it." Such bewildered, yet earnest, thirsting souls the Lord here counsels to leave the unsatisfying portion and to hearken diligently to his Word, saying, "Hearken diligently unto *me*, and eat ye that which is good, and

let your soul delight itself in fatness." The reference [R1364 : page 43] here is to the good plan of God, the clear unfolding of which, in these last days, is meat and drink in due season for the household of faith.

The invitation is synonymous with that of Rev. 18:4 to the same class, to come out of Babylon (confusion – the confusion of sectarianism); for while they remain in those systems of error, endeavoring to support and defend them, they are prejudiced and blinded against God's truth, wherever it conflicts with their creeds, so that they cannot progress in knowledge while they thus continue to spend their "money" – their influence and their labor – for that which is not bread and which satisfieth not.

But, thank God, there is a satisfying portion for those who earnestly crave it, and some are eating that goodly portion, and their souls are delighting themselves in fatness. Let the thirsty hear further the gracious invitation, "Incline your ear [turn your ear away from the clash of conflicting creeds, and incline it towards God's own precious word, in simple faith [R1364 : page 44] accepting all of its testimony, notwithstanding the testimony of men to the contrary], and come unto me: hear [*my* word] and your soul shall live."

To those who thus heed the invitation there is a special promise given, over and above the promise of life and the satisfaction now, of receiving this gift by faith. It is this: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." [He will make an agreement with such that they may share in those sure, holy promises which belong to his beloved Son – the kingdom, power and glory of the world to come.] The name David signifies *beloved*; and the Apostle shows (Acts 13:33,34) that it here refers to our Lord, the Beloved Son of God. And not only is the name David sometimes used in prophecy, as here, to refer to God's beloved Son, but David himself frequently figures

as a type of our Lord, as in Psalm 22:1,17,18. Moreover, "the sure mercies" or holy promises here referred to as belonging to our Lord, and in which we of this Gospel age are invited to share with him, were made to King David (2 Sam. 7:8-16) and will evidently have a partially literal fulfilment, although the substance is in Christ.

These sure mercies or holy things of David (Christ) are clearly set forth in Psalm 89:20-37, to be –

(1) That the Lord would anoint him to be a great king, and that he would establish his throne forever – as long as the sun and moon endure;

(2) That no enemy should have advantage over him, but that all should be made subservient to him;

(3) That God's covenant to bless all the families of the earth should stand fast with him, or be fulfilled by his reign;

(4) That his children (by redemption and regeneration) should have such reformatory discipline under his reign as would be necessary for their correction and establishment in righteousness;

(5) And that all the willing and obedient who shall profit by the discipline shall endure forever – that thus he might see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

Verse 5 shows how the work will progress among the people of the world after the Christ has been glorified – after all the members of the "body" have filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ and entered into his glory. – Col. 1:24.

The succeeding verses picture for us the blessed opportunities of the Millennial age and the fulness of provision

there for all to come into full harmony with God's Kingdom through the Christ.

Verse 6 shows that when God does thus reveal his grace it must not be trifled with. God has graciously appointed a day [a thousand years – the Millennium] in which he will judge the world in righteousness – granting to each the fullest knowledge and opportunity for a return to his favor and to its reward, everlasting life; but God has determined to "make an end of sin and to bring in everlasting righteousness," and those who do not "seek the Lord while he may be found" will be accounted unworthy of further judgment [trial] and will perish in the second death as lovers of unrighteousness. (Rev. 21:8.) Or, as elsewhere stated, when God shall raise up to glory and dominion this Great Prophet, Priest and King (the Lord and his body or bride), it will come to pass that the soul that will not hear [obey] that Prophet shall be cut off from [life] among his people. – Acts 3:22,23.

Verse 7. That will not be a time for pardoning wicked men, but for pardoning those who desire to *forsake* their wicked ways and thoughts. Nor are we to understand that the forsaking of the sin brings the pardon, aside from the sacrifice of Christ: this is merely stating the conditions upon which all during the Millennial age will share its favors. Preceding verses and chapters have shown how the "Beloved" first, by the will of God, died as the redemption price of Adam and his race, and in consequence inherited the "sure mercies" – the privilege of blessing the world by giving to each full knowledge and a righteous trial for life everlasting.

Verses 9-11 take note of the present blindness of mankind respecting the gracious character of God – that they will not believe so gracious a message even when it is called to their attention. God reasons with such and shows them why they do not believe that he will be so gracious as he here promises, saying, My

plans are not as you would plan, nor my ways of executing my plan such as you would surmise – mine are higher than yours. These my promises are as sure to bring blessings ultimately to all [whether they will hear or whether they will forbear; whether or not they will seek the Lord when he thus draws near], as my blessings now are extended to all – the sun shining upon the just and the unjust and the rain coming upon the evil and the good. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." I have declared that in the Seed of Abraham (Christ and the elect Church – Gal. 3:16,29) all the families of the earth shall be blessed, [R1364 : page 45] and the whole earth shall be filled with my glory. Although men may count me slack and suppose that this promise and also the promise to bring punishment upon the wicked will never be fulfilled, they are mistaken: they overlook the fact that a thousand years with men are as one day with me. The day so long promised shall come – the day of blessing and restitution to all who shall prove their love of righteousness – the day of vengeance upon all who shall prove their love of iniquity. – 2 Peter 3:8.

Verses 12,13 recount in symbolic terms the Millennial blessings of peace and joy for all who love righteousness. Instead of the thorn [the wicked man who wounds and injures his fellow creatures] shall be the fir tree [an evergreen tree, representative of a man possessing everlasting life], having inherent grace and fatness: "his leaf fadeth never." [R1364 : page 45]

## **THE NEW COVENANT.**

LESSON VII., FEBRUARY 14, JER. 31:27-37.

**Golden Text. – "I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more." – Verse 34.**

The opening verses of this lesson (verses 27,28) point to the return of God's favor to Israel according to the flesh, and have no reference to spiritual Israel, as is clearly evident. Verse 10 confirms the assurance, saying, "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and tell it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd his flock." Verse 27 mentions Israel and Judah both, which might at first appear to teach that God has a different blessing for them and that the distinction which had its start after the death of Solomon is to be perpetuated. But no: we see no distinction in the blessings enumerated. Subsequent verses ignore all distinctions, thus showing that the object in mentioning both is to prevent any from getting the idea that only the ten tribes would be blessed in the future, and not the two tribes for a time known distinctively as Judah. The distinction really ended with the restoration from Babylon (Hosea 1:11); and our Lord and the Apostles used the name Israel as a general name.

It is undeniable by either Jew or Gentile that ever since Messiah's rejection, five days before his crucifixion, when he said to them, "Your house is left desolate," Israel has been under divine displeasure, tempest-tossed all over the world. Surely God has watched over them, as foretold, "to pluck up and to break down and to throw down and to destroy and to afflict" them; and the faithful performance of the evil part of the promise is an assurance of the ultimate fulfilment of the promised blessings. Jer. 16:13-18 shows the same rejection and punishment of fleshly Israel, promises the same regathering and blessing, and indicates the time when it will commence. See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., Chap. VII.

But while verses 27 and 28, and verses 36 and 37, refer to fleshly Israel alone, we are glad that others as well as Israel shall have a share in the blessings of the New Covenant related in verses 24 to 34. The divine method of hiding truths until the due time for

revealing them is peculiar to the Bible. As with the doctrines of Election and Free Grace, some affirm the one and deny the other, and the majority stumble into partial error on one side or the other, while in reality *both* are taught and both are true, so it is with the majority in studying prophecies of which Israel is the theme. Some will contend that it is fleshly Israel, while others as vehemently claim everything for spiritual Israel – the Gospel Church. The fact is that *both* are represented in prophecy, and it [R1365 : page 45] is only necessary to rightly divide the word of truth to see them both and their respective portions.

Israel as a nation had certain inalienable promises yet to be inherited as a nation (Rom. 11:26-32), but it was also a typical people. As we have already shown, they as a people and their age and their ceremonies, sacrifices, etc., typified the Gospel Church of the present age. (MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., pages 201-248.) Moreover, they serve again in other respects as a type of *those people of all nations* who, during the Millennium, will accept the opportunities then offered, and come into covenant relations with God. In this latter sense they are before us in this prophecy of the blessings of the New Covenant. They represent not merely the faithful ones of the natural seed of Abraham, but *all* who, under those favorable conditions of the times of restitution, will believe God and seek to serve him, as did Abraham.

As proving that Israel typified God's general blessing for the world, notice their three divisions, and what each division represented. (1) *Priests*, called out from the tribe of Levi and specially consecrated. These, we know, typified Christ our Chief Priest and his faithful, consecrated "little flock," the Royal Priesthood. (2) *The Levites*, who represented the general household of faith who serve the tabernacle and carry along the work financially and otherwise, yet never *see* the holy things, "the deep things," in any clear and definite manner. (Num. 4:5-



15.) (3) *The people of Israel*, for whom the priesthood made sacrifices and offerings for sins, effecting their atonement and the establishment of the Covenant between them [R1365 : page 46] and God. These were typical, as well as the Priests and Levites. As the typical sacrifices were made *for the people of Israel* who desired harmony with God, they typified the better sacrifices of Christ made *for the sins of the whole world*, who might come unto God by him.

It is when Israel is thus seen to be the type of the repentant, reconciled world that we begin to get a conception of the length and breadth, the height and depth of God's great plan as it embraces "whosoever will" of all the families of the earth. It is when we get this comprehensive view that we understand the Apostle's frequent expression – to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. The worthy, faithful Israelites after the flesh, especially those tried prophets and patriarchs of past dispensations, will take first rank in the blessings of the repentant world under the Millennial reign of Christ. But every promise and blessing to them under the New Covenant, will be also in as full measure to the numberless class whom they typify. No wonder, then, the Apostle reasons on this question that the promises of God to Israel imply life from the dead and general blessing. His words are, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" – Rom. 11:15,30-33.

Realizing, then, that the blood of Christ sealed the New Covenant, not alone for Israel, but, as well, for all the world whom Israel typified, we see that whatever shall be declared true of Israel under that New Covenant will be true as well of all who, after the selection of the royal priesthood, shall become Israelites indeed, by the circumcision of the heart, when the full knowledge of the truth shall, in due time, reach the Jew first and afterward all men.

Verses 29,30. "In those days" – days future at the time of the prophecy, and days still future, which shall be indicated by the return of divine favor to Israel – "In *those* days, they shall say no more, 'The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge.' For every one [who then dies] shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." The "teeth on edge" represent the heredity of sickness and death by the human family, and the "sour grape" represents Adam's *original sin*, repeated and emphasized in his children. We as a race die for Adam's sin, the effects of which we inherit, as also saith the Apostle. (Rom. 5:12.) As a part of the New Covenant sealed by the blood of Christ, this present state of things which has continued for over six thousand years is to give place to a new order; and none shall any longer die, as now, for Adam's sin; but whoever dies will die for his own wilful sin – the second death. It will be the second death because the first death sentence covered *all*. By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and *death* as the result of sin; and *thus death passed upon all*.

The death of our Lord, "the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a *ransom* for all," was the *full payment* to justice of the penalty which came upon Adam, and through him by heredity upon all his race; so that he who paid our penalty thus *ratified* or made possible the New Covenant under which Israel first and then all the world shall be blessed, and whosoever will may be recovered to everlasting life. Adamic death or the first death, or, as people generally miscall it, *natural death*, will entirely cease as soon as the Great Priest, Prophet and King (head and body complete) shall take the control of earth's affairs and introduce to Israel, and to the world through Israel, the New Covenant. None, after that, shall die, unless, being proved unworthy of life, they come under condemnation to the second death, for personal, wilful disobedience against fullest knowledge and opportunity. – Acts 3:22,23.

Verses 31 and 32 clearly point out that Israel must not expect these favors as a part of their Law Covenant made with them at Mt. Sinai, when they were on their way from Egypt to Canaan, which covenant they failed entirely to keep, and from which, consequently, they must expect no blessing. They must learn that this favor comes as a result of another – a *new* covenant; and in learning that, they will learn about him whom they pierced, whose death ratified or made effective this New Covenant. Thus they shall look upon him whom they pierced, and, thank God, they shall mourn as they come to see the actual facts. – Zech. 12:10.

Verses 33 and 34 particularize some of the blessings and advantages of the Millennial age under the New Covenant, contrasting them with Israel's Law Covenant experiences. The Law Covenant written on tables of stone was easily forgotten by the typical people, and God was continually reminding them of their unfaithfulness, and chastising them by sending them into captivity among the nations, by sending blights, drouths, etc., and by sending his prophets to reprove their idolatries (Jer. 7:25); but the Israel who will enter into the New Covenant with God, in Christ, shall not be so. It shall be introduced by a greater prophet and mediator than Moses. The Christ shall be Jehovah's agent in carrying out all of its blessed provisions. Its law, Love, will [**R1365 : page 47**] be gradually written in the hearts of men during that Millennial age; and so completely will outward sin be kept under control, and so fully will temptations to forsake God be excluded, and so general will be the diffusion of the true knowledge of God (Heb. 2:14; Isa. 11:9), that it will no longer be necessary, as in the past and present, to be always preaching, "know the Lord;" for *they shall all know him* from the least of them to the greatest of them. And under this New Covenant, God (through Christ, the mediator of that New Covenant, who sealed it by the sacrifice of himself as our ransom price) will not only instruct all fully, and write his law in their hearts, but he will forgive their iniquities and remember no more their sins, *i.e.*, of

such as in that favored time of knowledge shall accept of the privileges offered and enter into the New Covenant conditions, obeying the law of love from the heart as it is written there by the finger of God – by the Great Prophet – the Christ.

It will require the entire Millennial age to re-write in the heart of man the law of God – the law of love. We say *re-write*, for the law was written in man's heart, in his very constitution, when God created him in his own likeness. The law on tables of stone was given to Israel after two thousand years of falling had almost effaced the original moral-likeness. "When they *knew God* they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but *became vain* in their imaginations and their foolish heart *was darkened*. Professing themselves to be wise, they *became fools*." – Rom. 1:21,22,28.

But God foreknew that the Law Covenant, made at Sinai, and the typical sacrifices for sin which were a part of it, could never take away sin nor make (Israel) the comers thereunto perfect; and he designed it only as a lesson to Israel and the world to point out the real remedy for sin and to foreshadow the better New Covenant and its superior arrangements for the relief of sinners at the hands of the Mediator like unto, but far superior to Moses.

God gave a figure of his original law written in the heart of man and the renewed law as it will be re-written under the New Covenant. When Moses first went into the Mount he received two tables of the law, perfect, from the hand of God – representing the perfect man in the likeness of God, as he came from God's hand. But those tables of the law were dashed in pieces when Moses reached the camp, representing how the fall into sin has almost destroyed the law of God from the hearts of men, effacing the likeness of the Creator. God's method of replacing the broken tablets of the law was an illustration of how he purposes to restore his likeness and re-write his law in the hearts of all who desire to

be in harmony with him under the New Covenant. He told Moses to hew out, polish and prepare two tables of stone, and promised to re-write the law thereon. So Christ, whom Moses typified, is to prepare mankind ("whosoever will") for the writing of the law of God. Christ does this, first of all by giving the ransom for all, secondly by bringing all who desire it back into harmony with God and into a full knowledge of the truth, which, as God's pen, will re-engrave the law of Love and godliness in all obedient hearts.

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