

## **THE GREATER THAN SOLOMON'S**

***- I KINGS 11:4-13; LUKE 8:20. - DECEMBER 20. -***

**Golden Text: – "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." – Luke 2:11.**

THE object of this lesson is to show the downfall of the kingdom of Solomon the wise, the rich, the great, and the necessity for the greater Kingdom than his, which divine wisdom and love have designed, and which Divine power is to inaugurate in due time. In Solomon's experiences we have a most remarkable lesson of a most remarkable man; illustrating the tendencies of wisdom and riches to lead the imperfect children of men away from God, the Source of wisdom and riches, and away from all the highest ideals.

The accounts of Solomon's prosperity are set forth in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and indicate that, under his wise administration, numerous public works were carried on, royal palaces built, great roads engineered, and water works and store-houses and armories constructed, etc. The nation of Israel, under Solomon's regime reached its highest position of power and influence in the world and dominated its largest amount of territory. But as Solomon prospered, he grew less pious. He became what the world would call broader-minded. The royal families of surrounding nations were pleased to have their daughters become Solomon's wives, and he generously accepted them from every quarter. The effect, however, was injurious to the King and to his entire people, because each of these prominent wives felt that she must represent the dignity of her own home land at the Jewish capital, and specially must represent its religious sentiment. Thus the heathen religionists all felt a great jealousy for the great temple of Jehovah and its elaborate

services; and these wives, as representatives of the religions of their fathers, urged upon King Solomon, insistently, that they must have the opportunity of serving their gods, and that proper breadth of mind on his part would lead him to accede to their demands and to erect altars to their heathen divinities.

The King, rolling in wealth, yielded to these importunities of his wives and established for them and their foreign ambassadors and visitors shrines, altars, holy places, dedicated to the various false gods of surrounding nations – not that the King believed in these or worshiped them himself, but, through a mistaken view of broad-mindedness and a mistaken form of generosity to his wives and their sentiments, he violated his highest sense of responsibility to his own Lord, Jehovah. Gradually that devotion which had been his at first, and which the Lord had blessed by two special manifestations, yielded, and the King became less and less a man after God's own heart; possessed of less and less of his father David's loyalty of heart and zeal for the Divine will and worship.

### **SOLOMON'S DISLOYALTY REBUKED**

Our lesson tells how the Lord rebuked Solomon for his course; doubtless through the Prophet Ahijah. (Vs. 29-37.) The Lord assured Solomon that, because of his unfaithfulness, the major part of the kingdom would be rent or torn with violence from his son and come under the rule of one of his servants – Jeroboam. This man had been a trusted officer in the raising of taxes and the levying of workmen for the King's business. The same Prophet anointed Jeroboam, in the name of the Lord, to be king over the ten tribes; but, instead of waiting for the Lord's time, as David had done, Jeroboam instituted a rebellion against the King, in which he was unsuccessful and obliged to flee from the King's forces into Egypt. Afterward, in God's due time, he became the King of the ten tribes. Incidentally we note here a

lesson for all of God's people; that we should wait upon the Lord for his times and seasons, in respect to all of life's affairs, great and small. It is for us to be faithful and alert and on the lookout for the Lord's providence; but not to anticipate them, not to make a **[R4298 : page 379]** move in advance in any event of the Lord's own time.

"His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste;  
But sweet will be the flower."

## **THE ANTITYPICAL KINGDOM**

It is only when we remember that the Kingdom of God under Solomon was a foreshadowing of the Kingdom of Christ that we get the proper view of the situation. It was God's typical kingdom and Solomon sat upon its throne as God's representative. So a greater than Solomon is eventually to sit upon the throne of earth and extend the Kingdom to the uttermost bounds and bring to the Kingdom riches, honor, wisdom and power greater than we can now properly appreciate and but feebly foreshadowed in Solomon's experiences. Solomon's blemishes are not to be considered as typical blemishes in the Kingdom of Christ, however. They teach another lesson, namely, that all power and wisdom in the present time are hindered by the unfavorable conditions surrounding, so that they become traps and snares, even to the wisest and best intentioned of men. Meantime the Lord's promise through Moses and the prophets was for a greater than Solomon, and wiser than he, and richer and more powerful than Solomon; able and willing to execute the Divine will amongst men, and to bring in a Kingdom of everlasting righteousness. That Kingdom has not yet appeared amongst men, and hence we still pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

When we remember that this Kingdom is hinted at in our Lord's declaration, that "The Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," and that it was later more particularly referred to in the promise made to Abraham, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," we readily see that, from the human standpoint, this hope is long deferred. Israel hoped to constitute that Kingdom and waited for Messiah, its head and Lord, to rule their nation, to use it, his elect people, to bless all the nations of earth. But when Messiah came into the world and to his people, that consecrated nation, he found them not worthy of the Kingdom blessings; nay, not even 144,000 worthy to constitute his Church, his Bride, members of his Body class, to be joint-heirs with him in his Kingdom. This was what God had foreseen and foretold, saying, "Though Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant shall be saved." (Rom. 9:27.) This does not signify that the mass of that nation is lost in an irretrievable sense, but rather that only the remnant was saved in harmony with their expectations, saved as respects their relationship to the Kingdom class. This worthy remnant probably constituted in all not above 20,000, who were gathered out during the period of our Lord's ministry and the ensuing thirty-seven years of the Jewish harvest time and begetting of the holy Spirit. **[R4298 : page 380]** These became the nucleus of Spiritual Israel, and since then, in harmony with prophetic declaration, the Lord has been using various agencies for gathering out a similar class from all nations, peoples, kingdoms and tongues. Soon, we believe, the total number of 144,000 will have been tested, proven, and accepted beyond the veil – "changed in the twinkling of an eye," from human conditions to heavenly conditions – to the divine nature.

The long-promised Kingdom waits for the development of this "little flock" of Kings and Priests, who shall reign with Christ in the earth, as members of the Messiah company, of which he is the Head and Lord, as well as the Redeemer. With the glorification of the last member of this elect class comes the due

time for the setting up of the Kingdom of God's dear Son in power and great glory. Then will be fulfilled the promise, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," because the elect Church is a part of the seed of Abraham; therefore the promise of which they are heirs with Christ cannot be fulfilled until their selection and glorification shall be completed. Toward that glorious consummation of human redemption all the promises and arrangements of the Divine Word and Plan are bent:

### **A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST**

This brings us to the second part of the appointed lesson, which stands more particularly related to the Christmas season. It matters not particularly that December 25 is not the anniversary of our Lord's birth, according to the Scriptural account; that really he was born about September 25, nine months later. One day, as well as another, will serve us to commemorate our Saviour's birth in the flesh, as a gift of God's love to a condemned and dying world. Indeed, in some respects December 25, which corresponds to the date of our Lord's annunciation or begetting by the holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, may be considered even more appropriate for celebration than the day of his death. Was it not there that the Father began the sending of his Son, began to give us the gift of the man Christ Jesus? Indeed, at his birth he was not yet the man, and he could not save us as the babe. His begetting and birth were important, but incidental to the man at thirty years offering the sacrifice and saying, "Lo, I come, as in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:7.) There the great Sacrifice for sin was offered to the Father and was accepted, and the acceptance was indicated by the bestowing of the holy Spirit, which begat our Lord again to a spiritual nature on the divine plane.

For the three and a half years of his ministry his sacrificed flesh, laid upon the altar, was being consumed, while the New

Creature was growing, being tested and approved, and finally, in his resurrection, he was justified in spirit or perfected as a New Creature. Our Golden Text is in full accord with this. The day of our Lord's birth the Saviour was born, the One who was to save his people, not only from their sins, but from the penalty of those sins, the death penalty – save them from the tomb. He did not really become the Saviour until he was thirty years of age. Indeed, in a larger sense of the word, he has not yet become the Saviour, the Deliverer.

What he did during his earthly ministry and sacrifice of himself was merely to lay the foundation for the world's salvation by his own sacrifice – dying, "the Just for the unjust." After finishing this part of his work he at Pentecost began a work of saving the "little flock," "the elect," those who accept his favor by faith. Yet even with these the salvation is not yet completed; as the Apostle declares, "We are saved by hope."

By faith and by hope we may accept the Lord's promises of a resurrection from the dead in due time. And these promises may operate in us so fully, so thoroughly, as to permit us even now to speak and think of ourselves from the Scriptural standpoint, as no longer dead with the world, but reckonedly risen with Christ, in newness of life, which brings us blessings of a spiritual kind today, but which costs us sacrifices and sufferings until death. The salvation we are looking for and which the Lord promises we shall ultimately have is, as the Apostle tells us, "At the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." – I Tim. 6:14.

## **SALVATION BY HOPE AND ACTUALLY**

Whoever fails to see the difference between the hope salvation of the present time and the actual salvation of the resurrection morning has not the key necessary to enter into and enjoy, in a deep sense, the Divine Word and Plan. However precious the hope of the present time, it would be of small value

alone, without the reality which it foreshadows. The salvation which Christ came to bring to mankind is not merely a hope such as we may enjoy, but a bona-fide reality such as he has promised us shall be realized in his Millennial Kingdom. The whole work of the Millennial Kingdom will be a resurrection work. Not merely will all mankind come forth from the grave, as Jesus has promised (John 5:28), but they will come forth for the purpose of being resurrected out of present sin and death conditions to the glorious perfection of perfect human beings – which Adam lost by disobedience – to the image of God, plus invaluable lessons gained during the reign of sin and death.

### **THE EMBRYO KINGDOM OF CHRIST**

Messiah's Kingdom is to be a world empire, in which every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God; when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth," and none shall need say to his neighbor, "Know thou the Lord; for they all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." That Kingdom we still pray for and have not yet received, but the "little flock," the "elect," who hear the call and obey it – these are spoken of as the Lord's Kingdom in embryo, for two reasons: **(1)** They voluntarily submit their hearts to him and seek to have his will done in them, in thought and word and deed, and increasingly as the days go by; and **(2)** because they are to be members of the royal family, which shall reign during the Millennium, under the Headship of Jesus, the great Prophet, Priest and King. These shall be his joint-heirs, whose office or service shall also combine Kingship and Priesthood.

### **GOD'S GIFTS NOW**

Let us, then, rejoice at this joyful season of the year and have our hearts filled with appreciation of the Divine love and generosity, which gave us the great gift of Messiah, and thus indirectly a knowledge of the Kingdom yet to come and of our

share in that Kingdom, which shall bless the world. As we have freely received, let us freely give, and thus copy our Lord and the heavenly Father. Some may have the opportunity of giving many gifts of many kinds. All will have the privilege of offering to their fellows, directly or indirectly, gifts of God's love, by making known to them the riches of his grace, as presented in the "Divine Plan of the Ages." [R4299 : page 381]

The message of God's love is the most precious thing we have ever received, and let us have this in mind when offering gifts to others that, whatever else we may or may not be able to give our dear friends and neighbors and loved ones, we may offer them this; and our manner and general deportment should show how we value it above rubies, and thus we may best commend the gift of God to others and help them to appreciate it. In such presentations kind words, kind looks, will proceed from the loving heart, which has itself been saved by the power of the Truth from the domination of the Adversary and sin and selfishness. Let us learn to scatter these gifts of grace and Truth and happifying influences to all about us, not merely once a year, but every day and every hour, and not merely upon our friends, but, God-like, upon our enemies also, for "He is kind to the unthankful, and causes his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good."

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