

"UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN"

– *DECEMBER 24. – ISAIAH 9:2-7. –*

A PICTURE OF MESSIAH AND HIS MILLENNIAL KINGDOM – DARKNESS STILL MEASURABLY COVERS THE WORLD – THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD SHINING FROM CHRIST AND HIS FOLLOWERS – THE RISING OF THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO SCATTER THE DARKNESS – THE WORLD TO BE CLEANSED FROM ALL OPPOSITION TO THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT – MESSIAH TO BE THE AGENCY THROUGH WHICH EARTH'S CLEANSING AND LIGHTING WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." – Verse 6.

WE AGREE with Leeser's translation of the Old Testament that the first verse of the chapter from which today's Study is taken should properly be the last verse of the preceding chapter – that the second verse of our lesson begins a new topic. With it, therefore the Study for today properly begins.

Verse 2. After the Hebrew idiom this statement pertaining to the future reads as if it related to something in the past – just as in Verse 6 we read, "Unto us a Child is born," whereas Jesus was not born at that time nor until several centuries later. The promised great Light is not yet shining upon the people. Mankind still dwell in the land of the Shadow of Death. The shadows of the demoralized, sinful, dying condition of Adam's race affect all of life's interests for the whole world of mankind. As the Apostle explains subsequently, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." – Romans 8:22.

We are still in the time when "darkness covers the earth [civilized society], and gross darkness the people [the heathen]." True, there is a measure of light in the world. True, also, that light emanated from our dear Redeemer, His words and His works; and it still shines forth from all who are truly His, all whose hearts are illuminated by His promises and His Spirit. But this is not the light which is to scatter all of earth's darkness and to cause all mankind to appreciate the glory of God. It is merely "the light that is in you" – in believers. It is a light of faith, a light of hope, a light of love ignited in the hearts of the Little Flock, who shine as lighted candles in the world and who are admonished to shine brightly.

Our Lord's light shone into a little corner of the world called Palestine: and from His lamp many followers have **[R6024 : page 395]** lighted their lamps. To these the Master's instruction is, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven"; "Put not your light under a bushel, but upon a lampstand, that it may give light unto all in the House." But He adds, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds be reproved." – Matthew 5:15,16; John 3:20; 2 Cor. 4:4.

THE TRUE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

That the True Light is not now shining, that the Sun of Righteousness has not yet arisen with healing in His beams, is fully evidenced by the gross darkness of heathendom and by the lesser darkness of Christendom. In proportion as Jesus' true followers have kept their lights trimmed and burning, in that proportion a measure of light has spread throughout the world. But all this is merely the shining of light in the midst of darkness and at the present time and under present conditions a light wholly inadequate to dispel the night and to bring in the glorious Day for which the whole creation groans and waits. That glorious Day cannot come until the Lord shall first have found the members of His Body, who together with Himself

shall constitute the Sun of Righteousness. – Malachi 4:2; Matthew 13:43.

The glorious prospect is that very soon the Church of Christ will be completed, that soon the Sun of Righteousness will shine. Soon its rays will light the uttermost parts of the earth. Then ultimately every child of Adam, sharer in his curse, shall be a sharer in Messiah's great work of blessing by being brought under the influence of that great Light which will constitute the Millennial Age a Day of glory and of knowledge of the Lord – the Golden Age of prophecy.

The prophecy of Verse 2 of our Study goes beyond the living of that time and assures us that the Light will shine to those who are in the shadow of death – those who are in Hades, in darkness. Upon every member of Adam's race the light must shine; for Christ hath tasted death for all. As all of Adam's children were condemned before their birth, so Christ died for all, and the majority before their birth. As surely as they shared in the curse that came upon Father Adam, so surely will they receive a blessing from the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Romans 5:17,18.

MULTIPLICATION BY RESURRECTION

Verse 3. "Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy; they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." This, the Revised Version rendering, is evidently the correct one. This pictures the world of mankind during the Millennial Age, brought forth from the bondage of death, released from the Adamic curse, rejoicing as those who are dividing a spoil – sharing in something which is not theirs, something which has fallen to them. It will be just so. The blessings of the Millennium will be distributed as Divine bounty; the curse will be rolled away; the Sun of Righteousness will shine for all with healing in His beams, bringing Restitution to all; and none will forfeit the

blessings except those who wilfully refuse them and who do despite to God's favor.

The same is true now to those who receive Divine mercy. It is a gift; they can do nothing for it; they are merely assured that they are forgiven. The difference is that now only a very few have the eye to see, the ear to hear and the heart to appreciate God's mercy as it is told us in the Good Tidings which can be understood only by the hearing of faith. By and by, after the selection of the elect class, the Church, sight and knowledge will largely take the place of faith. The world will then realize the grace of God in Christ Jesus, forgiving their sins and providing them with life everlasting if they will accept it; and they will rejoice to divide the great spoil, the great gift of God. – Romans 6:23.

Verse 4 delineates the cause for this rejoicing. It will be because the great oppressor, Satan, will no longer have control. His yoke of sin, sorrow, pain and death, his rod and his staff of affliction and slavery, will be broken forever, as the Lord explains. (Revelation 20:1-3.) The victory over the Adversary is not to be a slow and gradual one, not to be accomplished by missions or any human power; but the Lord Himself will interpose His Power, "as in the day of Midian."

THE ANTITYPICAL GIDEON'S BAND

The day of Midian was the day when Gideon and his little band of Israelites met the hosts of Midian. (Judges 7:15-22.) Suddenly, at the breaking of the pitchers and the blowing of the rams' horns, the Lord overwhelmed the powerful enemies of His people and granted them a miraculous deliverance. Gideon evidently prefigured our Lord Jesus; and his little band prefigured the Little Flock of Christ – the saints, the Very Elect. It was after the testing, the sifting, of Gideon's little band that the Lord granted the great deliverance. Thus will it be at the end of this Age. As soon as the antitypical Gideon's Band, the Royal Priesthood under the captaincy of their Lord Jesus

Christ, shall have given their Message and shall have let their feeble lights shine out, the Lord will grant the great victory for truth and righteousness through a Time of Trouble which will eventuate in the binding of Satan and the release of all the oppressed.

We read of the grand consummation, the end of sin and trouble, in Verse 5, which Leeser translates thus: "For all the weapons of the fighters in the battle's tumult and the garments rolled in blood shall be burned, become fuel for the fire." The interpretation of this figurative statement is that all of the weapons of Satan, all the accessories of sin and death, everything that pertained to this great conflict between righteousness and unrighteousness which has prevailed in the world for centuries, shall be utterly destroyed. The picture shows us the world cleansed from every evidence of opposition to the Divine Government and the Law of Righteousness, and accords well with the statement in Revelation 5:13.

HOW WILL IT BE BROUGHT ABOUT?

Verse 6 gives us the explanation of the process by which the foregoing prophecy of blessing and release from the oppressor shall be accomplished. The Lord would draw the attention of all having the hearing ear to the fact that no such blessing and enlightenment could be possible until first Messiah should come. He would also show that Messiah would be born after the manner of mankind, but would nevertheless be the Son of the Living God.

How beautiful, how simple, is the entire statement from the standpoint of faith! Yet how possible it is for the wisdom of this world to stumble over even such simple statements as these, and to claim, as Higher Critics do, that this prophecy was wholly to the Israelites of Isaiah's day, and that the promised one was King Hezekiah! Blessed are our eyes if they see, and our ears if they hear, the true meaning of this prophecy and thus permit us to recognize in it the Messiah, the Sent of God, Immanuel – "God with us" – to be the great Deliverer and to accomplish for us all the wonderful things

which God hath promised by all the holy Prophets since the world began, confirming His Promise made to Abraham: "In thy Seed [R6024 : page 396] shall all the families of the earth be blessed." – Acts 3:19-21; Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8,16,29.

Continuing, the prophecy pictures the Child grown to manhood, and the government placed upon His shoulders – the responsibility falling upon Him as a royal mantle from the Heavenly Emperor, Jehovah. The prophecy steps over the earthly trials and sufferings of our Redeemer, the Head, and of the Church, His Body, throughout this Gospel Age. It ignores the names Beelzebub, Prince of devils, Man of Sorrows, etc.; and it points us to the complete and glorified Messiah at His Second Advent, as viewed from the standpoint of Jehovah and from the standpoint from which ultimately the whole world shall recognize Him, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to Him, to the glory of the Father.

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME"

A name stands for or represents the character, disposition, qualities or powers of an individual. Thus all these names, these titles, given to our Lord in Verse 6, represent His majesty, dignity, power and glory. Our Lord is already recognized by His true followers, who know Him as the most wonderful Counselor. No other counsel, no other teaching is like His. The world in general has yet to learn this fact respecting Him; but before the close of the Millennium it will be generally known. If after mankind shall have confessed Him as the wonderful, wise Counselor, Guide, Teacher, any of them shall then wilfully and deliberately ignore and reject His teachings, and shall sin wilfully and intentionally, such must die the Second Death.

Our Lord Jesus is recognized now by His true followers as the Mighty Lord, the Mighty God, but not as the Father. (1 Cor. 8:6.) He is the Father's Representative, Voice, Mouthpiece, the well-beloved Son whom the Father has clothed with glory, honor and immortality,

and given all power in Heaven and in earth necessary to the accomplishment of the great work entrusted to Him, His fitness for which He demonstrated by His love and His loyalty even unto the death of the Cross.

Our Lord Jesus will be the Everlasting Father of the human race in the sense that Adam, their father, failed to give them life, and that our Lord redeemed Adam and all his posterity, thus becoming the Author of everlasting life to all who will obey Him. This will include all of the human family that will attain to everlasting life, except the Church class of this Gospel Age, who are chosen from out the world and begotten of the Heavenly Father to a new, spiritual nature. (1 Peter 1:3.) These spirit-begotten ones are separate and distinct from the world, and are Scripturally designated the New Creation. They are spoken of as the brethren of Christ in one figure, and as His Bride and Joint-heirs in another, but never as His children. To the world, however, He will be the Everlasting Father, or Life-giver through whom they may have everlasting life – life to all eternity – if they will become obedient to Jehovah's arrangements.

Another of our Lord's titles shall be that of the Prince of Peace. While His Kingdom will be introduced by the great Time of Trouble such as never before was, the trouble will not be of His producing. It will be the legitimate result of the wrong course of sin and selfishness fostered by the great oppressor, Satan. The Prince of Peace will subdue all enemies, all sin, all unrighteousness, all insubordination to the Divine will. He will neither fail nor be discouraged. Nothing shall hinder the accomplishment of this great mission entrusted to Him by the Father. His love of peace shall not hinder Him from dashing the nations to pieces as a potter's vessel, in order that righteousness shall be established upon a firm and sure foundation. – Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:26,27.

"UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID"

Verse 7. The word David signifies beloved; and the kingdom entrusted to King David was God's Kingdom in a typical form, which was never to pass away. (1 Chronicles 29:23; 2 Samuel 7:16.) It was maintained by the Lord down to the time of Zedekiah, when we are told that the crown and the scepter of authority and power were removed to be overturned until He should come whose RIGHT it is. – Ezekiel 21:27.

Our Lord in the flesh, as a descendant of King David, was the legitimate Heir to that Kingdom of David which was to have no end. But instead of establishing His Kingdom at His First Advent, He declared, "My Kingdom is not of this world" – not of this Age, not of this Dispensation – and began the selection of the Little Flock who in the world to come – the Millennial Age – will be His joint-heirs and associates in the Millennial Kingdom. This work of selecting the Church – the kings, rulers, priests – has since been in progress; and we have the assurance of God's Word that it will reach a final and glorious consummation worthy of our God.

When Christ and the glorified Church shall reign over the earth, their Rule will be the continuation or exaltation of the Kingdom of God which was begun in King David and Natural Israel. This greater David, this greater Beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth, will establish righteousness in the earth with judgment – with punishments for wrong-doing and rewards for right-doing. "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

