

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE

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LESSON 5 • The Kingdom of God - Peace on EarthWEEKLY READINGS
READING FOR STUDY PAPERGenesis 15-17, Luke 15-18
Psalm 72, Isaiah 35

Peace on earth - when?

When Jesus was born, the angels sang for joy. The words of their song are written in Luke, chapter 2, verse 14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Yet from that day to this, there has never been any real and lasting peace on earth. And there never will be until Jesus comes back to Israel to set up the Kingdom of God.

The Old Testament tells us a lot about that kingdom, and gives us many pictures of the time of peace and prosperity that it will bring.

The extent of the Kingdom

Look again at Psalm 72. In this Psalm we are given a picture in words of the time when God's Kingdom is established on earth. But, for the moment, notice particularly verse 8.

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the end of the earth."

This tells us that the kingdom set up by Jesus in Israel is going to extend over the whole earth. We find the same thing in Psalm 2, verse 8, where God speaks to Jesus, saying,

"Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession."

(In your Bible you may notice that it says "heathen" instead of nations. When the Bible was first written in English about 400 years ago, the word "heathen" meant exactly what our word "nation" means today.)

Let us look up one more verse. Turn to the 14th chapter of Zechariah and read verse 9,

"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one."

The rule of Christ

Jesus Christ will rule from Jerusalem, His capital city, which He once called, "The city of the great king" (Matthew, chapter 5, verse 35).

His law will go out through all the earth, as we read in Isaiah, chapter 2. read verses 1-4, and note particularly:

"Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

An ideal kingdom

Suppose you were asked to say what conditions you would like to live under in an ideal world.

One of the first things you would ask for would be security; freedom from fear, and peace to enjoy the fruits of your labour. In fact, you would probably have a picture in your mind something like the one the prophet Micah gives us.

"And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

"But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it." (Micah, chapter 4, verses 3-4).

But before there can be peace, there must be a real effort on the part of men to walk in the ways of God. So long as men continue to go their own way, there will be trouble. So one of the first works of the Lord Jesus will be to teach all nations the ways of God.

But you may say, there are some who simply wouldn't listen! That is true, and those who do not obey will be punished, as we read in Isaiah, chapter 11, verse 4,

"With the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."

- for, remember, when Jesus comes back, He will be all-powerful.

Under the rule of Jesus, then, all people will learn to do that which is pleasing to God - as it tells us in Isaiah, chapter 26, verse 9,

"When Thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

Now turn over to Isaiah, chapter 32, verse 17, and you will read,

"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

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Prosperity for all

With such perfect conditions, there will be prosperity on every hand. Did you notice verse 16 of Psalm 72, which says, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains."
Mountain-tops are usually bare. If there is a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains, we can imagine how abundant it will be in the valleys. As we read in Psalm 67, verse 6,
"Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us."
Even the deserts will be green in those days. Read the beautiful verses in Isaiah, chapter 35, which tells us how,
"The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing."
(verses 1-2).

Healing of mind and body

With these blessings will come also the blessing of greater health and strength.
When Jesus lived on earth nearly 2,000 years ago, He brought health to many who were sick, by using the power that God had given Him. In the Kingdom of God, this power will again be seen. Read on in Isaiah chapter 35, to verse 5,
"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."
We can well imagine, too, that people will live longer that they do today. The prophet Zechariah tells us that this will be so. In chapter 8, verses 4-5, he says,
"There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for every age."
"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."
These verses speak of Jerusalem, but, as we have seen, the blessings of the Kingdom will extend over all the earth.

The sure word of God

Perhaps you are thinking, "All this sounds very nice, but it is surely too good to be true."
If the promises which we have read about depended on men, then we certainly could put no trust in them. Even the best of men may not be able to do what they promise, because of human weakness.
But these are the promises of God, and we may put all our trust in them.
Read Isaiah, chapter 55, verses 6-11, and notice particularly verse 11,
"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."
And so we may look forward with joy to that time when there shall be:
"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE"
(Luke chapter 2, verse 14).

Summary

1. When Jesus comes back, He will become King of the World.
2. His capital city will be Jerusalem.
3. All over the world there will be peace and prosperity, health and happiness.
4. In His world-wide Kingdom, everybody will learn to obey God's commandments