



Lesson 1 September 2nd, 2016

The Peaceful Kingdom

Study Scripture – Isaiah 11:1-9

Key Verse:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Isaiah 11:6

INTRODUCTION

This Study Scripture will examine the impermanence of the Kingdoms ruled by man, even by those appointed by God and ruling in a theocracy. Men, despite what they think about themselves, and what they pretend to be, are not really as great or “good” as they like to think.

The lesson is that the only permanent, righteous, and peaceful Kingdom will be the one established and ruled over personally by the Messiah, the Son of God.

David the famous warrior King and the sweet Psalmist of Israel had united the bickering and competitive tribes and had established a kingdom that was strong militarily, wealthy, and confident in its successes. But sadly, as one Bible Study commentary text described:

“Tensions had always existed between the tribes since of the judges, especially between Judah in the south and Ephraim, the most influential tribe in the north. Many of Israel’s leaders, such as Joshua and Samuel, had come from the tribe of Ephraim. But David was from the Southern tribe of Judah. These factors, along with the moving of the capital and the center of worship to the southern city of Jerusalem, strained the relationship more. Solomon’s taxation to fund the building of the temple and palace in the southern city of Jerusalem alienated the northern tribes furthered”.

David had passed the torch to his son Solomon, whose wisdom, wealth, and fabulously impressive court was known worldwide and his personal reputation was such that he was regarded as the wisest man on earth.

But all this fell apart after his death for his youthful and foolish son Rehoboam could not bring his proud self to make the political compromises necessary to keep the fractious twelve tribes together. When the people of the northern Tribes went to Rehoboam to petition him to reduce the heavy taxes and labor assessments imposed to fund the numerous and spectacular building projects done by his father, he refused to listen to the advice of the older counselors, insulted the petitioning people, and threatened to increase the burdensome taxation.

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The united kingdom then split with Ten Tribes forming the Northern Tribes forming what was then called the kingdom of Israel with its capital in Samaria. It immediately established the pagan worship of foreign gods to cement their relationship with each other and to keep the people away from going to Jerusalem to worship, for that city with the presence of the revered Temple was now the capital city of the Southern Kingdom called Judah. The reigning king of the Northern kingdom did everything that was forbidden to ignore or at best combine the worship of the True God with the false worship of idolatry.

As was to be expected the spiritual life of the Ten Tribes which had formed the nation of Israel with its capital in Samaria degenerated rapidly. Despite its military strength and often prosperous circumstances

The relationships between the divided kingdom was at times good when they had to cooperate to fight against their hostile neighbors. But for most of two hundred years these two sons of Jacob fought each like cats and dogs. The Northern Kingdom eventually collapsed under the judgment of God in 722 B.C. and its capital Samaria destroyed. Every king of Samaria was wicked. They were the worst kind of idolaters. Their doom was inevitable.

The Kingdom of Judah had a better political and spiritual record but their record was not very good. They collapsed and were destroyed in 586 B.C.

The prophet Isaiah was one of the most ‘political’ of the prophets. The reason for this is quite clear. Isaiah had the unshakeable belief that the Lord God was sovereign, was in charge of the affairs of every nation of the world, and indeed reigned. His entire ministry was spent reminding Israel of this critical fact.

In every single chapter of his book, he reminded Israel and Judah that God was in control, and that the Lord God was the only true God. It was God that determined the course of history.

He reminded his people that the enemy nation of Assyria was only a tool in the hands of God to discipline Israel. He emphasized that that nation would itself suddenly collapse because it had exalted and overreached itself, doing more evil to the captive nations than they ought to have done.

Living in a very turbulent period of Judah’s history, Isaiah took a very active part in explaining the events that were happening around Judah. He counseled a passive political and military response to the expanding Assyrian empire. Though he generally supported King Hezekiah, he strenuously objected to his attempts to create alliances with Egypt and with emissaries from the Babylonian king Merodach-baladan.

For Isaiah the prophet, the attempts at alliances by Hezekiah showed a lack of faith in the Lord God. He proclaimed that this same lack of faith showed itself in the corruption that was seriously eroding the strength of the kingdom of Judah.

Isaiah condemned the ruling classes as corrupt, oppressive, and unconcerned about the suffering of the poor, the widows, and the fatherless. They were condemned as being only



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interested in stealing the covenant given land owned by the peasants, accumulating wealth and power, and fighting each other for influence and position at the Royal court.

In the world of Isaiah the prophet therefore saw that the ruling classes were corrupt, arrogant, unjust, unrighteous, greedy, and without compassion for the poor and helpless. Despite this they still worshipped and sacrificed to God, though they behaved without any decency toward the less fortunate. The rulers of Judah were described as rulers of Sodom, as unclean, as doers of iniquity. He condemned them for provoking the God of Israel to anger and *“turning away back”*.

He indignantly asked them:

*“Why should you be stricken again?...
Your cities are burned with fire. Strangers devour your land in your presence;
And it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.
So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard,
As a hut in a garden of cucumbers, As a besieged city” (1:7-8).*

Isaiah saw that the military and political policies being pursued reflected the rulers’ trust in everything else but God as their defender.

The prophet described this behavior in chapter 8:6-7 and the inevitable consequences:

“... Again the Lord spoke to me thus, ‘Because that people have spurned the gently flowing waters of Siloam assuredly, My Lord will bring up against them the mighty, massive waters of the Euphrates, the king of Assyria and all his multitudes”.

The then corrupt king Ahaz, despite Isaiah’s warnings had no intention to trust in the promises of God to protect His people but like most believers today prefer when the grave issues of life come up, to lean on our own understanding and capabilities, instead of leaning on the word of God and the promises of God. We therefore fail because the arm of the flesh, or trust in the world has no substance to it.

This corrupt Jerusalem regime was therefore marked for certain enslavement. Assyria would be the instrument of God's judgment.

After describing the attitude of this King of NO FAITH in chapter 7, the prophet in chapter 8 began a private ministry to his disciples as God told him to bind up the testimony and seal the Law. Isaiah says:

“I will wait upon the Lord who hideth his face from the House of Jacob and I will look for him”.

God gave the prophet three signs to guide him through this period when the Assyrians would certainly bring severe peril to Judah. The signs were found in the name given to his children for they reflected the prophetic message



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Isaiah was given three sons and the first was named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which meant **“speed, spoil, hurry, pray”** to tell the prophet a time of desolation was coming, coming right up to the door and almost take the nation.

The second sign was the son named Shear-Yashub which meant **“a remnant will return”**. This was a sign of hope. When everything seemed lost God would bless the nation and save a remnant. Here we are told this in chapter 10.

In chapter 11 the prophet is given the third sign which is given the name of the prophet as the name Isaiah means **“the salvation of the Lord”**. This is the salvation that will come after the judgment and make it possible for the nation to return

This now is the declaration of the Kingdom and the King.

In today's lesson, Isaiah looks beyond the catastrophe and almost total doom. We will look at Isaiah's prediction of a future for God's people, proclaiming a hope that the destruction would not be total. He focuses us now on a kingdom totally different from the two divided kingdom tribes and those of the pagan Gentile nations.

He prophesied that there would be a remnant. There would also be a Royal Savior that would bring a salvation that would create a totally different society. In chapter 7:14 Isaiah tells us the King is to come, to be born.

In chapter 9 we are told a son is given, a child is born and *“his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace”*.

In chapter 11 we see the King reigning.

The salvation would bring about wholeness in the entire creation, including of course the animal kingdom. There would be compassion and justice in the entire society. There would be no accumulation of wealth at the expense of the vulnerable. There would be *‘peace’*.

THE PEACEFUL KINGDOM

What then is this peaceful kingdom and *“peace on earth”* that our lesson talks about? Let us define *‘peace’* so we can understand what it really is and why it is so elusive.

Everyone seems to want *‘peace’*, and constantly talks about it. But yet there is no *‘peace’*. Peace seems to be one of the most basic and fundamental desires of the human heart.

The problem is that there are many definitions of peace, and different people have their own personal and peculiar definition.

The terrorists and dictators look at peace as *‘complete control’* which comes from eliminating those that stand in their way. Those that accept some eastern religion consider peace as being at one with the universe, and having no awareness of self. But that is really only a desire for serenity.



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A person that is trying to sleep when a loud party is going on next door might say that they want peace, when what they really want is quietness. When a person is hounded by bill collectors, they might say they want peace, but what they really want is some money or prosperity.

Clearly then, when people have problems because they do not have what they think they should have, or do not feel the way they think they should feel, they say they need peace. Generally, then peace for many people is getting that situation in life that they think ought to exist.

The Webster dictionary however defines peace as:

1. a state of tranquility
2. freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions
3. harmony in personnel relations, and
4. a state or period of mutual accord between governments.

Note the emphasis on the ceasing of war or hostilities, and peace of mind. But note also that these are only temporary situations that can be interrupted by changes in the circumstances or in the relations between people.

The Hebrew or biblical concept of “peace” is however very, very different. In Hebrew the root word was “shalom”.

“Shalom” means wholeness, completeness, soundness, safety, health, and prosperity.

“Shalom” is really only experienced because of one's standing with the God of Israel.

‘Peace’ and God are therefore completely intertwined. The first recorded existence of peace for men was clearly stated to be in the Garden of Eden. There, Adam and Eve were at peace with God, with the creation, and with each other.

There was no problem, disease, disharmony, or discomfort of any kind. They were in an intimate relationship with their Creator, surrounded by beauty everywhere.

However, they lost their “shalom” because of disobedience.

God promised in Deuteronomy 28 that “shalom” would come if there was obedience to his Word. See also Numbers 6:26. With obedience, the people of God would experience continued wholeness in their families, the community, the environment, and in the relationship with the surrounding nations. In other words, they would live in a land *‘flowing with milk and honey’*.

But if they disobeyed, there would be no ‘peace’ or no “shalom”. See Leviticus 26:6, Psalm 4:8; 85:8; Isaiah 26:3,4.



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The basic lesson to be learned therefore is that there can be no real, permanent “peace” that does not come from God. Real ‘peace’ is based on a righteousness and truth, and it involves obedience to God.

The Jews therefore believed the Scriptures when it taught that only the coming of the Messiah would bring peace to the world. The Messiah was God's solution for “*peace*”. When the Jews therefore used the phrase “when the Messiah comes”, it essentially meant the same as “when peace comes”. Messiah would come to change things and restore perfection.

“*Peace*” therefore meant the permanent end of warfare between man and God, Satan and God, man and man, man and nature, as well as the war raging inside man. It is only the Messiah that would bring this kind of “*peace*”, a peace that was not based simply on outward circumstances, but was based on a restored relationship with the God of Israel.

Isaiah wrote that this kind of “*peace*”, the only real, permanent “*peace*”, had a very high price tag. It was the punishment of Messiah, the Lamb, the Servant of Jehovah that brought “*peace*”. The Jews did not like to consider that. We behave as if that was not the case, for we too crucify Christ afresh every day by our misdeeds.

Remember that in any kind of warfare, it is only when one force achieves victory over the opposing force that there can be “*peace*”. This is what Christ did. He was the victor.

Note however, as we study this lesson, that the peace is conditional, that is, one must accept the One who paid the price.

THE TEXT

Isaiah described the current circumstances, and then outlined the future of Israel and the world. God had determined events, and had decreed the role that Messiah would play.

God, the Lord of Hosts, had intended to cut off the king of Assyria (the bough), and his army). Both Judah and Assyria would come under the judgment of God. But Assyria, the destroyer, would never bud, that is, rise again, and would remain lifeless.

Verse 1. In contrast, Judah, though under the severe judgment of God would be different from the other nations. A peculiar thing would happen in Judah.

The Kingdom of God would come from a single little sprout, arising from the stump of a tree which had been cut down close to the roots. This stump was all that was left of a mighty tree. Only, a small ‘twig’ had life in it. This was the smallest of shoots.

The ancestry of Messiah Jesus had thus been reduced to insignificance, and Jesus would appear from an obscure background. The lineage was so reduced that the ‘shoot’ was not even described as coming from the illustrious and powerful David, but was described as coming from



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Jesse, his father, a comparatively unknown figure, who labored in rural and humble circumstances before the Royal glory had honored the family.

The Messiah would thus come from small beginnings, when the descendants of David had reached a state of deep humiliation. Nothing was left of the family but the ‘root’. It appears that the work of God is only done from a state of humiliation.

“When Israel is in humiliation and degradation that it is at that time that we can expect the Messiah to arise and that is precisely what has happened, you see when our Lord came, the tabernacle of David was fallen. Israel was in very poor straits. Israel was under the thumb and under the heel of the Romans, but it was at that time that Jesus Christ came. He came when it almost seemed that as if Israel’s hope was gone. The nation in unbelief, only a tiny remnant was faithful to him. There was an Anna, and there was a Simeon and there was a Joseph, and there was a Mary.

But very few had kept the faith in the Jehovah who had led Israel out of the land of Egypt. But there was a baby born in the manger in Bethlehem of the stem of Jesse. He belongs to the divine line. He possesses the right, legally through Joseph to the throne of David. And through his mother Mary, he possesses the nature that qualifies him to sit on that throne. In fact, it almost seems to me as if Isaiah recognizes that the condition of Israel will be such humiliation that he does not even say the stem of David. He says the stem of Jesse as if to stress the humiliation”.

The green ‘shoot’ would however shine and grow, and Isaiah would describe it as a Branch. A Branch is something that grows and bears fruit, that is, it prospers and benefits others.

Verse 2. Now the character and work of “the Branch” is described. This is to be a Spirit filled ministry. The Messiah would be a Prophet, and would speak by the Spirit, as the prophets before him had spoken through the Spirit. He possessed the Spirit in its fullest measure because of His relationship with God was intrinsic to His being. The Spirit came on Him at His baptism to equip Him, to inaugurate His ministry and to fully enable Him to meet any coming temptation. The Father therefore could then declare *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”*.

The Messiah would not do God's will by just human means. The ‘Breath of God’ would empower Him, and He would be under the control of the Spirit of the Lord, and therefore would be ‘most alive’ spiritually and most fruitful.

Note that Isaiah the prophet refers to the Holy Spirit more than any other Old Testament prophet, and it is instructive how he describes the result of the full endowment of the Spirit. If we really want to learn about how the Holy Spirit works, and how His work shows up in the life of believers, Isaiah shows us. Clearly, if people claim to have the Spirit, and do not show any, or some of these characteristics, there is a problem with their claim.

Seven ‘gifts’ of the Holy Spirit are described. Seven is commonly held to be a sacred number, and implies the operation of the Holy Ghost in His Fullness or perfection.



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Note that the prophets had received only a portion of the Spirit, and are never said to have received His Fullness. That ‘Fullness’ is only said to be found in the Son of God.

Let us therefore look at the characteristics of the Spirit mentioned.

The Spirit “rests” on the Messiah, that is, permanently, and does not merely ‘come’ on Him.

The work of the Servant is then characterized by attributes that are given in pairs, namely,
“wisdom and understanding”
“counsel and might”
“knowledge, and fear of the Lord”.

‘Wisdom’ speaks of the Messiah's intuitive insight into the nature of things, including human affairs. He did not need to be taught about things or about men, for He knew the hearts of men. Man could do nothing to surprise Him.

‘ Understanding’ deals with acting in light of the possession of wisdom, and hence the awareness of the differences between things. He therefore knew the Jewish way of thinking, as well as the Roman, Greek, or Gentile way of thinking. Jesus did not need to ask people questions to know or to understand their problems or where they were coming from.

When the Messiah saw the disciple Andrew, He knew everything about him, and He knew exactly what to say to him. Jesus also knew Peter, and knew, even though one could never have guessed it, that the impulsive, unstable Peter would be a ‘rock’.

The Messiah knew that all He had to do when He met Philip was to look at him and say *“Follow me”*. (John 1: 43) He knew what He was talking about when He said to Nathaniel *“Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile”*. (John 1: 47) This shows the Spirit of wisdom and understanding.

Next was paired **“the Spirit of counsel and might”**. With ‘counsel’ we refer to the ability to render authoritative plans and decisions based on essential righteousness and truth. This of course involves the ability to always give true and right advice.

This goes along with the ‘might’, that is, the ability to carry out this ‘good’ and ‘right’ decision. This involves omnipotence as well as omniscience.

The Messiah therefore reveals truth about spiritual life, and the deep things of the Kingdom of God, as well as the plans of God. He speaks authoritatively, so that people immediately recognize that no man ever spake like this man did.



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The third pair is “**the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord**”. From this we learn about the extent of the Messiah relationship to His Father. The Messiah was fully aware of the mind of God, and therefore would reveal the mind of the Father. He lived as a result in complete calm. The completeness of knowledge, His perfect learning, His practical life teaches us He was Immanuel, God with us.

When one fears God, it shows in complete trust, obedience, worship, and awe. As a result of this, the Messiah constantly sought to do the will of God. He was completely at the disposal of God. This certainly was not how the religious rulers behaved in Isaiah's time, or even how those we have in our time behave.

Verse 3. It thus could truthfully be said that the Messiah was literally “quick-scented in the fear of Jehovah”. He had a special wisdom to discern what the genuine, divine fear of God involved. This is in contrast to the attitude of us sinners, who do not really know what the ‘fear of the Lord’ really is. They therefore are very casual in their dealings with God, not reflecting the ‘terror of the Lord’.

It is important that at this stage we pay some attention to what one writer calls “**The Twelve Things That The Lord Jesus Never Did**”.

1. He never sought advice. On the contrary, we need to do that often.
2. He never changed His mind. He never had to have second thoughts.
3. He was never in a hurry. He never made haste.
4. He never showed personal fear. He knew that God was always with Him, and He did not fear.
5. He never made a mistake, He never did anything wrong.
6. He never showed surprise.
7. He never was defeated in a controversy.
8. He never performed a selfish miracle.
9. He never distrusted God.
10. He never denied a good request.
11. He never confessed a sin.
12. He never apologized for anything.

This reflected the full indwelling of the Spirit, and the fear of the Lord.

Isaiah therefore could speak of the Messiah as judging the world in an extraordinary way. He would not be like ordinary judges who are influenced by different things, and who make judgments based on superficial knowledge, external appearances or good sounding hearsay evidence.

Verse 4. The Messiah will be an impartial judge and ruler, for the ruler both rules and judges. He will do everything in righteousness, for He is pure and righteous, and the Spirit is pure and righteous.



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He will not ‘reprove’, that is, ‘argue’ or ‘decide’ except in righteousness and integrity. The needy and the poor will have nothing to fear from Him, for He will not oppress them. Indeed, the poor and needy will benefit from His justice. The only ones who need to fear will be the wicked, for He will slay them.

This implies that the ‘poor’ and the ‘meek’, or the humble pious people of Matthew 5, will be in a bad situation. The earth will be very wicked at the time when the Messiah comes to judge and to reign. He therefore brings in judgments on the wicked.

The sentences of condemnation will come against the wicked from Messiah’s own mouth. He will govern forcefully, and will have to strike the earth, because Messiah will be opposed by lawless and wicked rebels. He will have to deal with them before He ushers in His glorious millennial reign.

The decisions on judgments will come from the very ‘Word of God’, for He is the Word. He will speak the Word, and rain blows of judgments on Satan, the Beast, and the apostates.

Verse 5. The girdle firmly secures the rest of a person’s garments. Righteousness is here described as the quality which characterizes and holds together all parts of His being. His Faithfulness guarantees the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. This Messiah comes as the King and High Priest.

Now Isaiah continued his discussion of the messianic promises with predictions of a fundamental change in nature, and in the animal relationships, human relationships, and the relationships between man and animals.

When Messiah rules there is universal restoration of peace between man and animals. The consequences of the Fall are now substantially removed. There is spiritual peace in the human heart. Righteousness now reigns, as the Prince of Peace is reigning. Sin is removed, and hence hostility is also removed, and there is universal peace.

The beauty and harmony lost in the Garden of Eden is restored under the Messiah. There is an all embracing peace, and all of nature is now in harmony with the will of God.

Verses 6-7. Isaiah begins to describe the righteous kingdom that Messiah will set up. Wild animals will again be tame and harmless. Domesticated animals and humans will have nothing to fear from them. Note that each animal mentioned is coupled with its natural prey, emphasizing that the word ‘prey’ will vanish from the vocabulary. “Shalom” will come, for the whole earth will be full of the knowledge of Jehovah.

One writer remarks:

“What a beautiful picture! Here is the time when the dreams of men will be fulfilled, when all the longings that reflect themselves in peace demonstrations and cries for disarmament



will find their fulfillment. There is a deep hunger in mankind for this kind of a world, although we do not know how to achieve it. But there is coming One who does know how. Then, even the animals will lose their ferocity and lie down one with another. How would you mothers feel if you found your child playing with a Cobra? But there is coming a time when it shall happen, when the animals shall lose their ferocity against one another, when the Lion shall eat straw like the ox.”

Another writer adds:

“Wondrous indeed is this Messiah! His kingdom is to be contrasted with all earthly kingdoms. His is the kingdom as that kingdom should be. It will be the very opposite of what now is found in human kingdoms. All enmity will disappear, not only from among men, but even among beasts, and even between men and beasts all will be in a harmony.... Permanent and perpetual is this peace... So great is the Messiah’s power that even this fundamental enmity will be wiped out.”

The perfect ruler, the Prince of Peace, the Messiah, the Servant of Jehovah, “the shoot” from the root of Jesse, will bring this peace.

Lasting peace will only come when Jesus returns to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will come, and He will transform the spirits of those that are His, bring about a radical change in our society, and in our environment.

By all means, let us encourage those who work for peace, and work for peace in the world, but let us not fool ourselves that there can be permanent, lasting peace, with men’s heart remaining full of iniquity.

Let us never forget that our citizenship is in Heaven. We must work continually to bring the Gospel of Heaven to men, knowing that God will save those that are His. We therefore work, and pray continually for His soon coming, and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

Verses 8-9. Note that there is no peace in the animal kingdom today, for animals feed on animals, insects feed on each other, and all feed upon each other. But God’s plan is that one day all that will cease and the peace of paradise will be restored.

This is connected to the salvation of men, points out one scholar.

The creation longs for that day of deliverance and it will come. We too will receive deliverance from the suffering we undergo, for that suffering will be experienced by all believers until the day of redemption. We are told in the New Testament that the whole creation groans as a woman in childbirth as she travails in pains until the time of deliverance.

We live in history and God’s plan of redemption is in history



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Verses 10-11. It has been pointed out that the program of the King is simple. The Gentiles will be brought to the Kingdom. Israel will be recovered from all over the world and will be placed in the Land. Every eye shall see Him and everyone will know Him, and know what reality is, and what He is about.

But one writer points out something we should never forget:

“When man sinned, vicariously he placed the creation under a curse, in history. So, in history, the creation is going to be redeemed. Its time of redemption is not when we believe on Jesus Christ, its time of redemption is when the children of God received the resurrection bodies and then God will bring the quick provision, his program for the creation, in history. And because of sin in history and redemption in history that affects man and affects God’s creation, and not until then shall we enter into eternity. You see God’s philosophy of redemption is very, very to the point. So my friends, I say this is a very reasonable and wonderful program”.

CONCLUSION

Let us realize that God must win. He is sovereign. We must be living in the fear of the Lord, and delighting in this fear of the Lord. The Messiah is our only hope, for He is Immanuel, God with us. When God is with us, we have perfect peace.

We must keep looking forward to this beautiful time when the dreams of men, and the deep hunger and longing of each heart will be met. This will be a most beautiful time when the dreams of men will be fulfilled.

This is a literal time when the curse will be removed and creation will be released from its bondage.

Jerusalem will be restored, and Jesus will rule there. There will be Shalom, real peace.

We must learn to walk daily in fellowship with the Holy One of Israel, and give thanks to Him, and praise Him for his deeds, and bringing in the peaceful Kingdom.

