

"THERE SHALL COME FORTH A ROD; A BRANCH SHALL GROW"

By Rev. C. L. Schuster
Golden Text—"Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1:21.
Lesson Text—Isaiah 11: 1-10. Luke 2: 8-14.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

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.

And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

The subject that comes in the regu-

lar order of lessons for this date is, "At the Empty Tomb and with the Risen Lord." But we shall lay it aside to study a lesson appropriate to the Christmas time.

The prophet spoke very clearly of the coming of the Messiah, and the character and work of the Messiah who was to save the people from their sins.

The portion of prophecy we study refers to the coming of the Messiah and the blessedness of his kingdom on the earth. The prophet gives us a word picture of the peace and good will to men the coming of the Messiah was to bring to men.

How nicely this finds its fulfillment in the song of the angels on the plains of Judea at the time of the birth of the Savior in the village of Bethlehem according to the scriptures.

The lesson brings to us the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, and the announcement of his birth given by the angels of heaven.

The Promised Messiah

"There shall come forth a rod—a Branch shall grow."

This eleventh chapter of Isaiah is one of the most remarkable prophecies in all the Old Testament. It is certainly Messianic in its predictions, and is full of holy enthusiasm for the future, and refers to the coming of the Messiah and his influence on the world, for in him only can these prophecies find their fulfillment. And how completely so many of the incidents in the life of the Saviour do fulfill the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah his birth, the place, his being of the line of David, his betrayal, his death and so many other things. Born into the most humble surroundings and conditions to an obscure family of the line of David, and reared in such a humble home that few if any saw in him the promised Messiah, "Who was to save his people from their sins."

The Samaritan woman at the well had a sense of his ability when she said, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things."

And the lesson says of him— "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." He would understand the deep wants and needs of men and would know how to supply these wants. It also implies a real understanding of the will of God and a purpose to carry out the will of God, and while he is to be king of kings and lord of lords, yet through all his teaching there shows a real purpose of obedience to his Father.

He was not to judge after the fashion of men, but with righteousness to judge the poor, who in those days so

rarely received justice at the hand of those in authority. Righteousness was to be his girdle, and as the girdle held the garment of the Oriental in place, so in the character of Christ, his unwavering righteousness makes his every attribute and power effective.

The Messiah's Reign
"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb."

Can we think of a more vivid illustration of the transformation that shall come as the result of the Mes-

siah's reign? In the word picture here used these beasts of prey are changed as to their very natures and are gentle and harmless. Changes just as radical as this are to be brought about in the lives of men by the gospel, even such a change as if one died and were born again. Old things pass away and all things become new. The things of the world will lose their attraction and the mind will be centered on things of God.

When the Messiah comes to reign then those forces now harmful will

be transformed and will work blessing instead of injury.

"And the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."

The Fulfillment
"The angel of the Lord came upon them." To men who were busy with their work. To shepherds who were as dear to God as any.

The angel came, not where men were engaged in the pleasures of the world, but where men could hear the voice of the angel.

"I bring you good tidings of great

joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

He came not to the palace or to the temple, but to earth's lowliest place, which may have abounded to his every need, yet the place of his birth had a sad significance. "He came unto his own but his own received him not."

"Came not to save the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance."

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