

## Lesson 18

### The Kingdom and the Old Testament

In the previous lesson we learned that God promised an everlasting *land* and *nation* to Abraham. We also learned that David was promised an everlasting *king* and *kingdom*. The Old Testament prophets give great detail about this promised kingdom. We will now learn more about the nature and characteristics of this kingdom.

#### Peace and Righteousness

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more*" (Read Isaiah 2:1-4). The kingdom will be a kingdom of *peace*. Nations will no longer learn how to make war.

". . . 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 *righteousness* shall be the girdle of his loins . . ." (Read Isaiah 11:3-5). Unlike judges currently on earth, the king will not be limited to judging according to what he hears and sees. He will judge with perfect righteousness. No clever lawyer will be able to fool him. It will be a kingdom of *righteousness*.

#### Curse Removed from Animal and Plant Creation

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb . . . and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together . . . And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp . . ." (Read Isaiah 11:6-9). In the original creation, man and animal were at peace and the animal kingdom was at peace with itself. Only later did animals start to eat one another and a fear arose between man and animal (See Genesis 1:29; 9:2-3). In the kingdom this curse will be removed. The wolf and lamb will live together and the wolf will not eat the lamb. The cow and the bear with their young will live together and the bear will not harm the cow. A small child will play near the den of a poisonous snake and not be hurt. *Animal creation will be tamed.*

". . . for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). Since Adam's sin, the earth has never been full of the knowledge of the Lord. Most people ignore and reject God's Word. Clearly this verse describes a kingdom that has not yet existed on earth. When the kingdom comes *the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord.*

". . . the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly . . ." (Read Isaiah 35). The curse on the plant creation will also be removed (Genesis 3:18). Farmers and gardeners will no longer struggle with drought, weeds, insects, etc. The harvest will be plentiful. *The plant creation will also be tamed.*

#### Physical Healing

"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 . . ." (Read Isaiah 35). The physical disabilities and ailments that men suffer with today will be healed. This curse also will be removed. [Notice that this healing is not promised until Christ, the King, returns. ". . . your God will come with vengeance . . . Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened" (verses 4-6).] *There will be physical healing in the kingdom.*

"There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Read Isaiah 65:19-25). *The human life span will be greatly lengthened.* Someone who dies at the age of one hundred will still be considered a child. The only reason for death even at one hundred years of age will be because of judgment upon sin.

### **A Physical, Eternal Kingdom on Earth**

Daniel chapter two contains a dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation. The dream concerns four kingdoms on earth. The first kingdom is Babylon, the second one is Media-Persia, the third is Greece, and the fourth is the kingdom of the antichrist. All four of these are, of course, physical kingdoms on earth (not spiritual kingdoms). Then we come to the final kingdom on earth. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed . . . and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44). We continue to emphasize that this will be *an everlasting, literal, physical kingdom on the earth* because many churches deny this truth. They teach that the kingdom is only spiritual. However, we have seen many verses in this lesson and in lesson 17 that prove the physical and eternal nature of this kingdom. There are literally hundreds of verses in the Old Testament about this promised kingdom. It is impossible to understand the Bible without understanding this kingdom that is so prominent in the Old Testament.

### **When did the Old Testament Begin?**

Most Christians would say that the answer to this question is obvious. They would say that the Old Testament began in Genesis 1:1, the first verse in the Bible. It is true that the Bible is commonly divided into the Old and New Testaments. In this division the Old Testament, of course, begins in Genesis 1:1. However, there is another way to answer this question. A testament is a covenant (compare Hebrews 8:7-8 with Hebrews 9:15). The "old testament" can also be called the *old covenant*. The old covenant or "first covenant" was given to Moses. *The old testament formally began in Exodus 24:7-8* when Moses sprinkled blood from an ox upon the people of Israel and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

### **Salvation through Israel**

In lesson 17 we learned that Israel was God's chosen nation. God gave up the Gentiles in Genesis 11. Was it possible for Gentiles to be saved during Old Testament times? If so, how?

God spoke to Abraham about this matter. "And in *thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Read Genesis 22:17-18). The Gentiles were to be blessed *through Abraham's descendants*, the nation of Israel. Isaiah also answers our question. In Isaiah 2:1-3 we are told that "all nations shall flow" unto *Jerusalem* during the kingdom. The word of the Lord will go out from *Jerusalem* to all nations. Thus, we can conclude that during Old Testament times the *Gentiles could only be saved through the nation of Israel*. Israel was to bring blessing to all the nations.

### An Earthly Hope

Many people are surprised to learn that God did not promise Old Testament saints that they would go to heaven! And that Abraham, Moses, and David had no hope of spending eternity in heaven! Nevertheless, this is true. God promised the Old Testament saints a kingdom on **earth**. Abraham, Moses, David, and all the Old Testament saints hoped to spend eternity in a kingdom on earth. Job gave the following testimony: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the **earth**: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26). Job believed that when he died and his body was destroyed, he would be resurrected and would see God *upon the earth*. Notice the location of the kingdom prophesied by Jeremiah: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the *earth*" (Jeremiah 23:5). Jeremiah, like all Old Testament saints, looked for a kingdom *in the earth*.

### Old Testament Summary

All of the people who lived during Old Testament times lived in what Ephesians 2:11 calls "**time past**." "Time past" was different from the present time in many ways. Beginning with Moses, they lived under the *Law*. We live under *grace*. God favored *Israel* above all nations in "time past." God does *not* favor any nation today (Romans 10:12). Those in "time past" were looking for a kingdom on *earth*. We are awaiting the time when we will go to *heaven* for all eternity. Gentiles in "time past" were saved through *Israel*. Gentiles today are not saved through Israel, but by grace through faith *in spite of Israel's rejection* of her Savior. The beginning of the old testament brought to an end the time from "*Adam to Moses*" and started the time from **Moses to Christ** (Law to Grace) spoken of in Romans 5:13-16. The rest of the Old Testament is the time period of *Moses to Christ*.

In Genesis and the first portion of the book of Exodus we read about the time referred to as "Adam to Moses." When the Law is given to Moses, the time of **Moses to Christ (Law to Grace)** begins. [See Romans 5:13-16]

"**The promise**" starts with Abraham and continues through the rest of the Old Testament. "**The Law**" begins with Moses and also continues through the remainder of the Old Testament. [See Galatians 3:17]

### Review Questions

#### True or False

1. God promised Abraham an eternal home in heaven.
2. The kingdom promised to David will be a kingdom of righteousness.
3. Due to man's wickedness the earth will never be full of the knowledge of the Lord.
4. The kingdom promised to David is a spiritual kingdom and many will continue to suffer from physical ailments such as blindness and deafness in the kingdom.

#### Multiple Choice

5. Daniel chapter two confirms that the kingdom:
  - a) will be in heaven
  - b) will be a literal, physical kingdom on earth
  - c) is in our hearts
  - d) cannot be understood by man
6. During Old Testament times Gentiles were saved:
  - a) by water baptism
  - b) by being sincere
  - c) in exactly the same way that Gentiles today are saved
  - d) through the nation of Israel
7. All those who lived during Old Testament times lived in:
  - a) time past
  - b) the ages to come
  - c) the dispensation of grace
  - d) the time of "Adam to Moses"

### **Fill in the Blanks**

8. "The promise" started with \_\_\_\_\_ and "the Law" with \_\_\_\_.
9. ". . . neither shall they learn \_\_\_ any more" (Isaiah 2:4).
10. "The \_\_\_ also shall dwell with the \_\_\_ (Isaiah 11:6).

### **For Further Study**

1. Read Isaiah 60:1-3. What will the Gentiles do when God's glory shines upon Israel?
2. Read Zechariah 8:23. What will the Gentiles do during the kingdom?
3. What possession does God the Father promise to the Son in Psalm 2:8?
4. What information about the kingdom is given in Jeremiah 31:12?
5. During the kingdom the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and what else? (Psalm 72:19)

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