

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for December 16
Golden Text—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, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.—Isa. 9:6
The Lesson as a Whole
 Christ is exalted only as He is recognized as Lord and His word is obeyed. It therefore becomes all

who profess faith in Him to give the Scriptures entirely as to the great doctrine of the Kingdom of God and His Christ. This present age, (Gal. 1:4), is to continue in rebellion against the Lord, until it is closed in judgment. Then, when Jesus is revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, with His mighty angels, visiting condign judgment on all adversaries of the truth (2 Thess. 1:7-10); He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16).

Until that glorious day, it is only those who have been born again among the nations who will recognize Him as the true King, against whom the world, as such, is in rebellion. Christians are responsible so to behave themselves in the nation to which they belong by natural birth or naturalization, that men will see in them the characteristics now of Christ's Kingdom, and so many of them will be won to obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord. But the great majority will ever be opposed to His rule over their lives or over the nation as such, until, when His judgments are in the world, the inhabitants of the earth shall learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9).

Verse by Verse
 Isa. 9:2—"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." This is a prophetic foreview of the coming into the world of Jesus, the "light of the world," who was destined to bring salvation and blessing to untold millions of earth's inhabitants, though rejected by His own nation and also by the nations of the Gentiles as such.
 Verse 3—"Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy." The nation here is Israel and should not be understood as referring to any other people. It is questionable whether the negative not should be retained or removed. The consensus of opinion among spiritually-minded scholars is that it should be omitted, as the passage looks forward to the future blessing of the favored nation.
 Verse 6—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The twofold nature of our Lord is here set forth. As to His humanity He is the child born of Mary. As to His deity He is the Son given of the Father to be our Redeemer (1 John 4:9, 10). In God's due time, He is to take over the governorship of the nations. This refers, however, not to His first, but to His second advent. The names given Him all indicate the dignity of His person. He is "Wonderful," "The mighty God" manifested in flesh, the "Father of the Ages," which is the meaning of the next expression, and "The Prince of Peace," under whose beneficent and righteous rule all nations will be brought into the enjoyment of peace.
 Verse 7—"The throne of David." This is not the Father's throne on

which He now sits. It is the throne of authority over the world, which He will occupy when He comes again. The two thrones are distinguished for us very clearly in Revelation 3:21: Up to the present hour, the Lord Jesus, has never occupied the throne of David. He will fulfill this promise when He takes the Kingdom and then He will "establish it with judgment and with justice," to go on forever. No effort of man or of Satan can thwart this purpose; for "the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."
 Luke 1:26—"The angel Gabriel was sent from God." The time had come to begin the fulfillment of the divine program. Gabriel is one of the two holy angels mentioned by name in Holy Scripture. The only other is Michael. Gabriel had informed Daniel of events connected with Messiah's coming (Dan. 9:21-27). Now he was sent by God to inform Mary that she was to be the mother of this glorious One, who was to redeem Israel and bring salvation to the world.

Verse 27—"A virgin... of the house of David... Mary," Mary was the one spoken of by Israel more than 700 years before (Isa. 7:14) who, though a virgin, was to be the mother of a Son, Joseph, to whom she was espoused but not married, and she were both of the lineage of David.
 Verse 28—"Blessed art thou among women." No other woman has ever been, or ever will be, so signally honored as Mary. It was given to her to bring the Saviour into the world and to nourish Him in His infancy and care for Him in His childhood and youth. In this sense, we need not be afraid to speak of "the blessed virgin Mary," but the idea that she was always virgin and did not become a normal wife after the birth of her firstborn Son is a figment of the imagination (Matt. 1:24, 25).

Verse 29—"She was troubled at his saying." To this simple-hearted, modest and humble young woman, the angel's salutation was almost incomprehensible. She could not imagine why she was so addressed.
 Verse 30—"Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God." Gabriel proceeded to reassure her by giving her to know that God had dealt with her graciously, thus preparing her for the startling announcement that was to follow.
 Verse 31—"Thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." It was an amazing declaration to make to a virgin, but it told Mary she was the destined mother of the promised Messiah. The name given to the child before His conception means "Jehovah the Saviour." It indicated His mysterious divine-human personality.

Verse 32—"He... shall be called the Son of the Highest." He was to have no human father, but was to be in a unique sense, though a man born on earth, the "Son of God" (v. 35). The angel went on to declare that the "Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." As to His humanity, He was the son of David and the prophecies concerning the throne of David and its universality of sway were to be fulfilled in Him. This promise, as we have seen, awaits His second advent for its fulfillment.
 Verse 33—"He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." This will be literally true of Him when He takes the Kingdom and His earthly people own Him as Messiah in the coming day. Then the nations of the world will become subject to Him, for "of his kingdom there shall be no end." To attempt to spiritualize these promises and to attempt to make them apply to the present age is to wrest Scripture and to deny that "all things" which are written of Him will be fulfilled (Luke 24:44).

The Heart of the Lesson
 The prophets of old told of the Saviour who was coming into the world as the Son of a virgin. He is the One who is to sit upon the throne of David and who is to be Governor among the nations, ruling Israel and the world in righteousness. In His reign that era of universal peace, for which men have longed, will be brought about. During the present age, as rejected by both Israel and the nations of the Gentiles, He sits on the Father's throne, waiting for the appointed hour when He is to return and fulfill all the promises made of old. In His personal absence, those who trust and love Him are responsible to represent Him in the world and to seek to make Him known to men as Saviour and Lord. All who trust Him now will share in His glory when He returns.

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