

THE GOODNESS OF GOD TO HIS SAINTS

BIBLE TEXT: Isaiah 12:1-6; Habakkuk 3:17-19

LESSON 151 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Behold. God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid" (Isaiah 12:2).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Isaiah 12:1-6

¹ And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

² Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation.

³ Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

⁴ And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

⁵ Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this *is* known in all the earth.

⁶ Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

¹⁷ Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither *shall* fruit *be* in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and *there shall be* no herd in the stalls:

¹⁸ Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

¹⁹ The LORD God *is* my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' *feet*, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

God's Garden

God gave the people He created everything they needed to make them happy. It was His wish when He placed them in the Garden of Eden that they should rejoice in the beauties of their home, and praise Him as did the angels in Heaven. And they did — until sin came in. Sin took the joy from their hearts, robbed them of the beauties about them, and forced them out of their paradise into a cursed world to work for a living.

When God chose the Israelites for His peculiar people, He again showered them with blessings, hoping that they would praise Him for His goodness, and enjoy a fruitful life. He promised them everything that might be dreamed about or hoped for. But they sinned, too, and lost most of the reward God wanted to give them. They became a scattered people who have suffered heart-rending persecutions through the centuries.

God's Grief

It grieved the heart of God to have His people turn Him aside. They were not even as faithful to Him as animals are to their masters. Through the Prophet Isaiah, God said: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isaiah 1:3). There are many beautiful passages of Scripture in the writings of the prophets where God cries in grief that His beloved has gone away from Him, and each man has turned unto his own way.

When Jesus was on earth He wept over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). That was just a little while before He was crucified; and He added: "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:39). Never since that time have the Jews as a whole acknowledged Jesus, but the day is coming when many Jews will welcome Him as the Messiah and will go to Jerusalem to worship Him during the Millennium, the golden age prophesied throughout the Bible. In that day He will be their King and will rule with the Church in righteousness throughout the world.

It was of that time that Isaiah spoke: "And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me" (**Isaiah 12:1** ¹ And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me). After centuries of suffering the judgments of God, the Jews will repent and find comfort in the Lord. All their disobedience and hatred and their turning from God will be forgiven and forgotten as they humble themselves before their King.

The kingdom in the Heart

We do not have to wait for the Millennium, when Christ's earthly kingdom will be set up, to enjoy the blessings spoken of in

this chapter. The true Church is now drawing water with joy "out of the wells of salvation." As we yield our lives to Jesus and receive pardon for our sins, the joy of the Lord comes in which pales every other happiness we have ever known. His Kingdom has begun in our hearts.

Joy During Trials

The path of the Christian may not always be smooth, but that inward peace remains in spite of the troubles that bother him outwardly. He can sing songs from the heart, and smile cheerfully through the deepest trials.

Jesus told His followers that they would suffer persecutions, but He added: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:12). Some people think they are particularly pious if they wear a long face, but Jesus wants His people to be cheerful, even under trial. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but he of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

David's Anthems of Praise

We read of the turbulent life of David when King Saul many times tried to kill him. He had to leave his home and family, in order to save his life, and many of his friends forsook him. But through all those years of trial he could sing unto the Lord, and some of the Psalms he wrote while in deep stress are anthems of praise. He sang unto God: "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). If it was possible for David to sing unto the Lord throughout his trials, it is possible for any Christian. If we cannot carry a tune we can still sing and make a melody in our heart unto the Lord (**Ephesians 5:19** ¹⁹ [Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord](#)).

Strength in Song

Some people may let discouragement dim their songs, and then they become spiritually weak. Isaiah said: "The LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song." Strength and song go together. When courage fails, sing. God gives His people songs in the night to comfort their hearts. When Nehemiah received the call from God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, the Israelites were again a nation of slaves as they were when in Egypt. But Nehemiah encouraged them: "The joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). When they turned their hearts to God, the joy they felt gave them the courage and strength to go forward and build, in spite of the sneers of the heathen onlookers.

If we should become weak in faith and the Christian way seem burdensome, we should begin to praise the Lord. Remember the blessings He has given us in times past; read in the Bible the promises He has given for the faithful. Praises of gratitude will well up in our hearts, and new strength will flow into us. Our faith will increase, and we will feel as David did when He said, "For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall" (II Samuel 22:30).

God wants His people to be happy. Jesus said: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). Our joy comes from that inward peace that Jesus gives. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14 : 17) .

Joy in Sorrow

What if we have prayed and asked things of God which He has not given us? Are we to weep in disappointment? In the days when Habakkuk the Prophet spoke, there was much iniquity in the land. God's people had departed from Him, and judgment had come upon them. Rain had ceased to fall, and the result was famine. But Habakkuk was a true man of God, and he could say: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; ... yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17, 18).

The Christian's joy comes not from the things he has, the pleasures around him, nor his own desires fulfilled. His joy comes from pleasing God. He will say with the Psalmist David: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).

Perhaps the Lord is trying the Christian. He is being refined as gold, with great heat. For what purpose?

**"He sat by the furnace of sevenfold heat,
As He watched by the precious ore,
And closer He bent with a searching
gaze, As He heated it more and more.
He knew He had ore that would stand
the test And He wanted the finest gold
To mould for the crown for the King to
wear, Set with gems of a price untold."**

Are we willing to go through the testing time, perhaps be persecuted of men, so we can come forth as fine gold for God's use?

Expectancy

The real people of God are serving Him with gladness — not with sorrow, nor despair, nor anxiety over the future. Every day is thanksgiving day, because they are serving Him with an expectation of seeing Him at any moment come in the air, as the Bridegroom of their heart. Jesus said that when we see great fear and trouble coming upon the earth, "Then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:2.8).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Under what conditions did the first people live in the Garden of Eden?
- 2 How did God feel when Adam and Eve sinned?
- 3 What prophecy did Jesus make about the Jews when He wept over Jerusalem?
- 4 What is the Millennium?
- 5 Where is the Kingdom of God now?
- 6 What are we to do when we are persecuted?
- 7 What kind of songs did David write when he was in exile?
- 8 What was the condition of Israel when Habakkuk wrote his prophecies?
- 9 At what time did Habakkuk say he could rejoice?
- 10 Why could he rejoice?