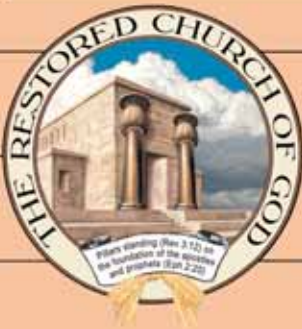


THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD

CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



The Major Prophets



LEVEL 6
LESSON 7

The Major Prophets

We are now ready to study the second half of the Old Testament. In this Lesson, we will study the books of three prophets, called the Major Prophets.

But before we go into those books, we need to ask: What is prophecy? Prophecy is revealing future events before they happen. For example, God's Word states that nations would descend from Abraham and that they would be mighty and have tremendous blessings. That was a prophecy. Thousands of years later, this became true of America, Britain and the other Israelite nations. While this prophecy has been fulfilled, most prophecies in the Bible have not been fulfilled yet.

How much prophecy is in the Bible? When taken as a whole, one-third of the Bible is directly related to prophecy. Yet, as much as 90 percent of those prophecies are still to occur in the future.

Prophecy is very popular today. Some of the most popular items downloaded from our websites are prophecy related. This topic gets people's attention because it reveals things that will soon come upon mankind.

However, the world is very confused about prophecy. There are hundreds—even thousands—of counterfeit ideas and teachings.

Some of the most popular books at your local bookstore are related to a skewed, bungled form of prophecy. Even some splinters that came from the Worldwide Church of God are now proclaiming wrong, confused understandings of prophecy.

God's Word explains what will soon come upon mankind. As a young person, this subject should be of interest to you. However, you must be careful not to delve into the world's explanations of these prophecies. The Bible warns of many false prophets bringing many false prophecies. This warning rings true today!

God's Church provides the only true source of understanding on the subject of future events. Isn't it exciting that you have access to the right understanding of what will happen to this world? While we cannot learn every detail of future events, we are able to peer into the future and see what is soon to come.

Three Prophets

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were sent by God to deliver a message to the nations of Israel and Judah. These messages were largely messages of coming punishment upon those nations.

Isaiah prophesied for 40 years, from about 740 to 700 B.C. This was during the reigns of Judah's kings, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. His message was concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

Jeremiah also prophesied to the nation of Judah. He prophesied during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, from approximately 626 to 582 B.C. This was during the period right before the nation of Judah was taken into captivity.

Jeremiah continued to warn and prophesy after the captivity. Later, he accompanied a royal entourage to Ireland, where he became well-known and highly honored.

Finally, the prophet Ezekiel was sent to the nation of Israel, and prophesied from 592 to 572 B.C. By this time, Israel had already been taken captive as well. Ezekiel was a prisoner in Babylon at the time.

A Lesson for Youth

Before proceeding, an important side note should be mentioned. Turn in your Bible to Jeremiah 1:5 and fill in the blanks (remember, we use the New King James Version in these lessons). Here, God is talking to Jeremiah:

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born _____; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.’ Then said I: ‘Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for _____’ But the LORD said to me: ‘Do not say, “I am _____,” For you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. _____ of their faces, for _____,’ says the LORD.”

Take note. Jeremiah was a young man, but God chose him for a very special and important purpose. You must realize that, with the help of God, you too can do much. There may be a time in your life when you realize that God wants you to help in a specific way. You will have to rely on Him to help you fulfill any task He asks of you.

Also, as a youth in God's Church, you are sanctified—set apart. Notice I Corinthians 7:14: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.” This means that, as you grow up in God's Church, you will be given unique and special opportunities. Be sure to take advantage of them!

A Message for Today

Let's continue studying these three large books of the Bible—Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

If these prophets were sent to the nations of Judah and Israel, some may ask: “How do we know that this is written for our time? How do we know that these books detail events that are soon to come?” An answer lies in *when* these prophesies were given.

Recall that it was mentioned that Ezekiel was already a prisoner when he prophesied to the nation of Israel. His book, Ezekiel, explains a coming captivity. However, the kingdom of Israel was already taken into captivity! It would not make any sense to warn the nation when it had already happened. Also, Ezekiel could not actually *take* the message to Israel, as he was imprisoned in Babylon.

Ezekiel's message was primarily for the modern-day house of Israel. Knowing the iden-

tity of the nations that descended from Israel is the key to understanding these prophecies.

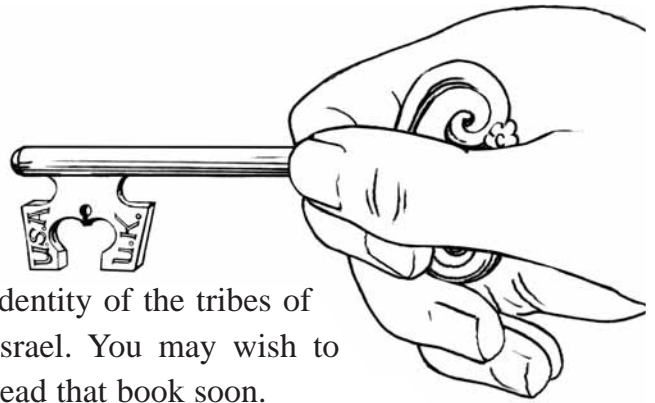
The Key to Understanding

You are most likely aware of the modern country called “Israel.” It is in the Middle East, and often arises in the news in regard to a territorial conflict with the Palestinians. The people that make up today’s country of Israel are Jewish. These people descended from the tribe of Judah. Descendants of the tribes of Benjamin and Levi are also found in the modern nation of Israel.

But where are the other tribes of ancient Israel? The world calls them the lost ten tribes of Israel. They are lost to the world; however, it has been revealed to God’s Church where those tribes are located, and their identity provides the answer as toward whom the message of the Major Prophets is directed.

The vital key to the identity of the ten tribes was revealed to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. By now, if you have grown up in the Church, you have probably heard quite a bit about this man. As Christ’s apostle, he was sent to lead the Church during a large portion of the last century. During that time, God revealed the identity of ancient Israel through Mr. Armstrong in the book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. After Mr. Armstrong died, a group of men changed the teachings of the Church; God’s people left, and the book was no longer available.

Since that time, God has raised up another leader to lead His Church. Mr. David C. Pack has rewritten all of Mr. Armstrong’s literature to make it available again to any God is calling. Mr. Pack’s book *AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN BIBLE PROPHECY* explains the same Bible truths of the



identity of the tribes of Israel. You may wish to read that book soon.

In summary, the book explains that the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and many other European nations constitute the “house of Israel” in Bible prophecies. Some brief history will help here. You will recall that the nation of Israel split in two. The southern nation became the house of Judah. These people became the Jews, and they are the only tribe of Israel that kept their identity.

The northern nation, consisting of ten tribes, was called Israel. However, they lost their identity, which is why the world considers them the “ten lost tribes.” They lost their identity because of Sabbath-breaking and idolatry. After being warned, the nation of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians. The above-mentioned book explains that these people eventually migrated to Western Europe and North America.

Two Great Sins

Let’s briefly review why Israel was taken into captivity, and why they lost their identity. Recall that God made an agreement (called a covenant) with Israel.

Notice Exodus 31: “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a *sign* between Me and you

throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. ‘You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. ‘Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. ‘It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed’” (vs. 13-14, 16-17).



Also notice Leviticus 26, a chapter that explains the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience. It outlines two major areas that must be paid special attention—Sabbath-keeping and idolatry: “You shall not _____ for _____; neither a _____ nor a sacred pillar shall you _____ for _____; nor shall you set up an _____ in your land, to _____ to it; for _____. You shall keep My _____ and _____ My _____: I am the LORD. If you _____ in My _____ and _____ My _____, and perform them...” (vs. 1-3).

Both the above passages underscore the importance of the keeping the Sabbath. It is a sign that points to the God of creation—the one true God! Those who keep the Sabbath are kept in the true knowledge of God and His truths. If people do not keep the Sabbath, they will not be able to worship the true God and eventually

will lose all truth, including their identity. That is what happened to the tribes of ancient Israel.

Turn to Ezekiel 20:12 and fill in the blanks: “Moreover I also _____ them _____, to be a _____ between them and Me, that they might _____ that _____ the LORD who sanctifies them. Yet the house of Israel _____ against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in _____; they despised My _____,

‘which, if a man does, he shall live by them’; and they greatly _____. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them. But I said to their children in the wilderness, ‘Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe _____, nor defile yourselves with _____. I am the LORD your God: Walk in _____, keep _____, and do them; ‘hallow _____, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.’ Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, ‘which, if a man does, he shall live by them’; but they _____. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness” (vs. 12-13, 18-21).

In the end, Israel lost their identity and the true God. He scattered them for their disobedience. However, the message to them in the Major Prophets still applies, and it will come to pass in the coming years.

Bad News—Then Great News

Many take note of some of the horrible things that are soon to come. They wonder why God would allow such events. The simplest answer is that these events are part of a greater plan of God—a plan that ends with tremendous and wonderful abundance.

Mankind must truly understand that its way only ends in war, starvation, unhappiness and many other bad effects. The horribly tragic events that will smash into this world are for the purpose of teaching mankind a lesson.

But, again, there is MUCH good just beyond the bad. The Major Prophets talk about some serious times ahead. But these books also discuss that beyond those horrific events is a time when Jesus Christ will reign for 1,000 years. Peace, prosperity, abundance and happiness will be the norm throughout the earth. Beyond those 1,000 years, the God family (consisting of God the Father, Jesus Christ and all human beings who qualify) will go on to do wonderful things in the entire universe for all eternity.

We can only touch on certain high points in these books. There is much in what amounts to 166 chapters. As you grow older, you will want to revisit these books and do a Bible Study on each.

Test Your Memory:

- 1) What did God instruct Jeremiah when he said he was too young? _____
- 2) The Sabbath is a _____.
- 3) Which book by Mr. Pack explains the identity of Israel? _____
- 4) First is _____ news, then there is much _____ news.

Christ's Sacrifice Prophesied

As mentioned, the prophecies in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are primarily for the time just ahead of us. However, there is one very large prophecy that has already been fulfilled—Jesus Christ's First Coming. We must cover this since it is so fundamental to the plan for mankind.

Notice Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a _____: Behold, the _____ shall _____ and _____, and shall call _____."

Immanuel means "God is with us." This is a prophecy of Christ's First Coming. Remember, Isaiah prophesied 700 years before Christ came. As we know, that prophecy came true!

But Isaiah had more to say of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of _____, and a _____ shall grow out of his roots. The _____ shall rest upon Him, the _____-_____ and _____, the Spirit of _____ and _____, the Spirit of _____ and of the _____ of the LORD" (11: 1-2). This is also a prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ. The stem of Jesse simply means that Christ would descend from the house of Jesse (or David, Jesse's son).

The coming of Jesus Christ was all-important to God's Plan for mankind. Before we explain why, let's see other aspects of Christ's life prophesied in the book of Isaiah. The following scriptures explain what Christ went through at the end of His life.

Isaiah 52:14: "Just as many were astonished at you, So His _____ was _____, And His form more than the sons of men."

Isaiah 53:3: “He is _____ and _____, a Man of _____ and acquainted with _____. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was _____, and _____.”

Isaiah 53:5: “But He was _____, He was _____; The _____ for our peace was upon Him, And by _____.”

Take note of the last scripture, and answer the following question: Why was Jesus Christ wounded? Answer: _____.

We will later see all that God plans to bring mankind in the Millennium. All the “good news” could not happen if Christ did not first come and die for mankind’s sin. Humanity needs a Savior.

Why? Because death is the ultimate penalty of all sin. Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.” Romans 3:23 explains that all have sinned. Every human being on earth has sinned. Sin cuts a person off from God. Jesus Christ came 2,000 years ago to pay the penalty for all mankind. Only then could human beings inherit eternal life. Without Jesus Christ’s sacrifice for us, we would earn the death penalty.

Take note of the description of Jesus Christ’s death in Isaiah. Imagine the immense pain and suffering He went through so mankind could receive so much! He was beaten up more than any other man! He was wounded, bruised, chastised and whipped for each and every one of us.

Also note that it is by His stripes (the physical beatings He received) that we are healed. Only in God’s Church today are there real, genuine healings. When we are sick, we are to come to the elders of the Church, and they will ask for

our healing through anointing. If an elder is not nearby, he will send you an anointed cloth. Of course, we must believe (have faith) that God can heal us. Also, as we have now learned, we would not be able to be healed if it weren’t for Christ’s sacrifice.

A Picture of Today

Now let’s look deep into the three books that we are studying. All three prophets describe the world today. In effect, they prophesied all the bad things in society that we see around us. The picture is bleak and quite ugly.

You must strive to be different than the world around you. Church services, these lessons, magazines and other literature, your parents and siblings are all things to help you grow into a godly person. You will face pressure from friends at school. You will see some of the things that the prophets described. You may even be tempted to leave the Church and move on to other things. However, the world, and what it has to offer, is simply not worth it.

Let’s study some passages:

Ezekiel 7:10-11; 23: “Behold, the day! Behold, it has come! Doom has gone out; The rod has blossomed, pride has budded. _____ into a rod of wickedness...For the _____, and the _____.”

This accurately describes the world today. Violence is everywhere. Almost every television show or movie contains hundreds of violent acts. Video games teach youth to be violent. Gangs are in every city, and are moving into suburbs and towns. Truly, the cities are “full of violence” and “filled with crimes.”

Ezekiel 9:9: “Then He said to me, ‘The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is

_____, and the land is _____, and the city _____; for they say, “The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!””

In society, there is every form of perversity. Clothing styles and music are growing more odd, weird and twisted. Teens also make it their goal to look promiscuous. Foul language is becoming the norm. Sin of every flavor, stripe and color is now accepted, and anyone who says sin is wrong is considered intolerant.

Ezekiel 2:3-4, 7: “I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a _____ that has _____; they and their fathers have _____ to this very day. For they are _____ and _____ children... You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether _____, for _____.”

Ezekiel 20:7-8: “Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’ But they _____ and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt...”

The nation of Israel was stubborn—they always wanted to do things their own way. The same is true today. All people, but especially the descendants of Israel, are rebellious. They ignore what God has to say; instead, they do what *they* think is right.

As young people, always be careful of the tendency to be stubborn and rebellious. You may find yourself not wanting to do what your parents tell you. But they know what is in your best interest, so be sure never to allow yourself to

become like those described in the passages above.

Idolatry—Then and Now

Remember that the tribes of Israel lost their identity because of two laws that they broke. These were keeping the Sabbath and not worshipping idols. If you keep these two laws, you stay in contact with the true God. If you break these commandments, you eventually pull away from God and all His teachings.

We have looked at the Sabbath, but let’s now discuss idolatry. Notice Ezekiel 14:4-5: “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Everyone of the house of Israel who _____ in _____, and puts before him what causes him to _____ into _____, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols.’”

The nation of Israel turned away from God and worshiped idols. In their case, these were false gods made of metal, stone and wood. They needed something physical to worship rather than the one true God, who is spiritual.

How does this have application to you today? Generally, we are not in a society having many physical idols. While there are some, and we must avoid them, there is a far bigger problem, and it applies to every one of God’s young people.

Idolatry can be defined as when something—anything—comes before God. Money is a modern-day example. People can focus on earning money more than anything else in their lives—including worshipping God. If this hap-

pens, they make money their idol. Young people can focus on their looks too much, and this can become an idol. The same is true with clothes, television shows, music, knowledge, etc. If anything in your life comes before God, it is an idol; you must either avoid it completely or learn its proper place in your life.

Sighing and Crying

What should your reaction be to all the sins that you see around you? Ezekiel 9:4 reveals the answer: “And the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who _____ and _____ over all the _____ that are done within it.”

We are to “sigh” and “cry” for the things we see around us. This means that it should hit us hard and affect us emotionally. Every time you see something horrible, you should remind yourself that God’s kingdom is coming soon—that there is good news ahead. It should cause you to truly want that day to come as soon as possible. It should also cause you to pray to God and ask Him that His kingdom come quickly.

A Warning Necessary

Because of the rebellion and lawlessness that God’s people (Israel) have committed, they will be punished. This is not because God no longer likes them. In fact, this will happen because He loves them, and understands that they must learn their lesson. Sometimes, human beings have to learn the hard way. This can mean pain or sadness, but in the end, the lesson is learned.

Before God corrects His children, He always warns them. He gives them a chance to turn

around and obey Him. God’s Church generally, and Mr. Pack specifically, is fulfilling God’s purpose to warn the nations of what lies ahead if they do not repent.

Notice Ezekiel 3:17-19: “Son of man, I have made you a _____ for the _____ of _____; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them _____: When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to _____, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.” (You will find a similar explanation of God’s warning and His Watchman in Ezekiel 33.)

God requires His Church and His leader to issue a warning. This is done today through various means—magazines, books, booklets, articles, broadcasts, etc.

Coming Punishment

Having seen the prophets describe the awful picture of today, and understanding that the people will be warned, we must now look at what lies ahead for this rebellious people. The picture is not good. But remember, there is only a little bad news before a great deal of good news.

Jeremiah 30:7 states, “Alas! For that day is great, _____; and it is the time of _____, but he shall be saved out of it.”

The correction that is coming for the nations of Israel will be very strong. There will be none other like it. But even the above scriptures

describe that Jacob (the house of Israel) will be saved from it in the end.

Ezekiel 5 describes what will happen to these nations. Turn to Ezekiel 5:12: “_____ of you shall ____ of the _____, and be _____ with _____ in your midst; and _____ shall fall by the _____ all around you; and I will _____ to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.” The final third described here will be taken into captivity by other nations.

As you can see, this time of coming punishment will not be pleasant for the house of Israel. However, you need not fear this time—you can be protected. The same chapter, verse 3, states, “You shall also take a _____ and bind them in the edge of your garment.” A tiny few, those in God’s Church, will be protected from this time of punishment. You will be protected as long as you continue to obey God and live His way of life. (Also read Isaiah 26:20.)

Notice Ezekiel 6:6: “In all your dwelling places the _____, and the high places shall be desolate, so that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, your idols may be broken and made to cease, your incense altars may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.”

What does it mean that cities will be laid waste? Ten years ago, it would be hard to understand. But today, we can recall what happened to New Orleans in the summer of 2005. A hurricane came and caused the city to flood. Months later, the city was still not restored to its original state. In effect, New Orleans was laid waste. Also, Hiroshima, a Japanese city, was utterly destroyed with a nuclear bomb in World War II. Something similar will happen to hundreds and

thousands of cities in the coming Great Tribulation.

The World Tomorrow

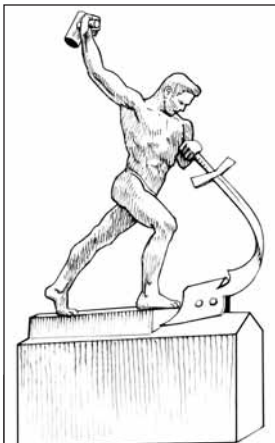
In just a few short years, after the terrible time described above, Christ will return, and God’s kingdom will be established. Under Christ, resurrected saints will rule with Him.

Let’s notice some scriptures:

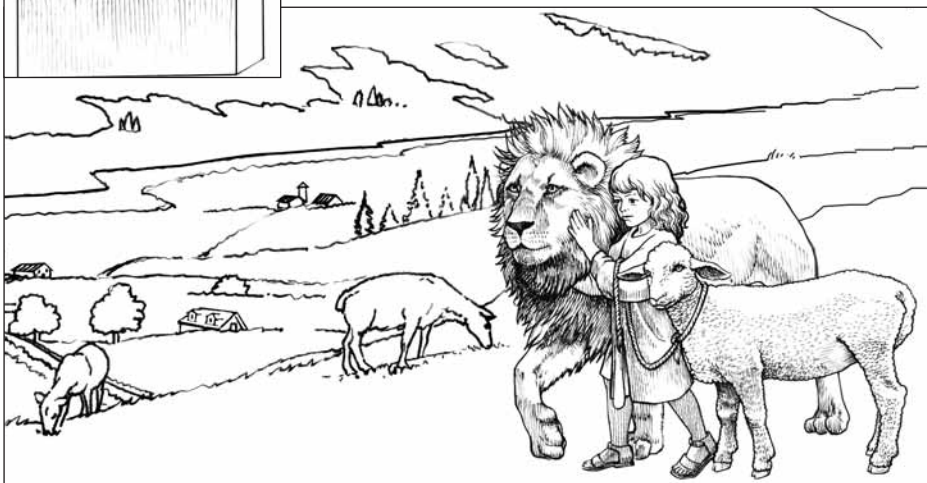
Ezekiel 36:25-31: “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be _____; I will _____ you from all your _____ and from all your idols. I will give you a _____ and put a _____ within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put _____ within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will _____ and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. Then _____ your _____ and your _____ that were _____; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.”

Isaiah 2:2-4: “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; ____ will _____ us _____,

and we shall ____ in ____.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall ____ their ____ into ____, and their ____ into ____; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”



Isaiah 11:4-9: “But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. _____ shall be the belt of His loins, and _____ the belt of His



waist. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the _____ shall be _____ of the _____ of the LORD as the waters _____ the _____.”

This is the good news! And it is in the near future!

Your parents, (if they are in God’s true Church), and maybe even you, if there is time left for you to be baptized, will be among those

saints ruling with Christ in that wonderful world to come. (Of course, if there is not time for you to be baptized, you will be a top human leader in the Millennium. Still, a superb opportunity!)

God’s government will bring about immense peace, abundance and joy. People will be filled with hope, assurance and inspiration. All nations will be given the opportunity to know the true God. It will truly be the Wonderful World Tomorrow!

Test Your Memory:

- 1) What will cause two-thirds of the people of Israel to perish? _____
- 2) Cities will become _____.
- 3) What are some of the things that will be in abundance in the World Tomorrow? _____
- 4) The Church, specifically its leader, has what responsibility? _____
- 5) How are you supposed to react to the world full of iniquity? _____
- 6) List three more things that could be idols in your life. _____

BIBLE MEMORY: Isaiah 11:4-9

TRUE OR FALSE?

- T** **F** The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people.
- T** **F** The Millennium is when Christ will reign on Mars.
- T** **F** The kingdom of heaven is in our hearts.
- T** **F** The generally English-speaking countries are the prophetic "House of Israel."
- T** **F** Keeping the Sabbath helps us to stay in contact with the true God.
- T** **F** God will punish those who keep His Sabbaths.
- T** **F** Jesus Christ died so we do not have to keep the Sabbath or the Ten Commandments.
- T** **F** God takes note of those who are upset when they hear of horrible things done in the world.
- T** **F** It is not the responsibility of God's Church and its leader to warn the world of what is coming.