

December 4th
Second Sunday of Advent

"God's Utopian Kingdom"

We are - right now - citizens of Christ's Kingdom. In all we do, we should uphold the standards of that Kingdom.

Key Verse: 1 Peter 1:13 (NIV)

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 11:1-10 (NIV)

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD-- and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.

Lesson Thought

In this passage, Jesus is referred to as the "Branch." Jesus descended from the line of King David, and Jesse was David's father. Thus, Jesus is a King - *the* King over all. This passage describes the wonderful Kingdom He will establish and rule over when He comes again (His Second Advent). Jesus' Kingdom will be the first in all of history to be governed with perfect justice and righteousness. He will

pronounce His judgments according to actual truth, not according to what people say or how things look. No evildoer will "get away" with any crimes, and the poor and oppressed will be freed from their suffering. All people will live together in perfect safety and peace. Isaiah describes how even wild beasts will live together in peace and how even the youngest child will be safe among the most dangerous animals. Can you imagine the world looking like this?

Application: what does this lesson say to us today?

1) What parts of my personal life fail to reflect the justice, righteousness, and peace of Christ's rule over me? What parts of our family life fall short of God's Kingdom standards?

2) How can I bring Christ's future kingdom into the places and people of my life right now? Who should I pray for and tell about my King and Savior? What can we do today to put all parts of our home and family life under the rule of Christ?

Family Activities: putting the lesson into action

1) With younger children: have the children make a beautiful crown, and then have each family member pretend to be King or Queen for ten minutes. Discuss as a family how a good and righteous king or queen would rule. Keep the crown out for the week, to remind everyone that Jesus is the righteous King.

2) Discuss how difficult it is for human beings to judge and rule fairly, even when they intend to do so. Have each member of the family share about a time when one of them, or someone they know, was punished unfairly by mistake.

c) Discuss some injustice that has been reported in the news recently. Imagine what it will be like when Christ rules the world with perfect justice.

Suggestions for further study

1 Peter 2:9-10

Revelation 21:1-11

John 15:1-8

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