

The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE
MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

THE GREAT IMAGE—DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF THE KINGDOM

"This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof..." (Daniel 2:36). Thus spake the prophet Daniel to King Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled in power and strength over the Babylonian empire -- the greatest, earthly empire of all time. The king was troubled by a dream he couldn't remember. Through the inspiration of God, Daniel revealed the secret of the dream and its meaning.

The king had dreamed of a great image of a man standing before him. The head was of gold, the arms and breasts of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet were a mixture of iron and clay. Daniel explained that the image represented a succession of four universal kingdoms.

The golden head represented Nebuchadnezzar and the mighty Babylonian empire. This empire was the first and greatest of all universal kingdoms which rose out of the ancient Assyrian empire founded by Nimrod. Nebuchadnezzar ruled over this wealthy empire from 606 to 561 B.C. Daniel foretold the fall of the Babylo-

nian empire and the rise of the second great kingdom. In 538 B.C., the prophecy was fulfilled when King Darius of the Medes and Cyrus the Great of the Persians joined forces

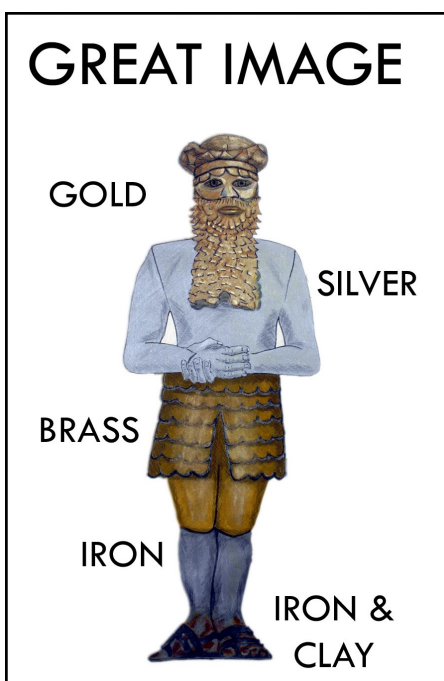
breasts of silver.

Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian empire and conquered the known world of his day around 330 B.C. The Grecian empire, represented by the belly and thighs of brass, was established. At Alexander's death, the kingdom was divided between four of his generals. The kingdom was weakened and eventually fell to the conquering Romans in 146 B.C.

The Roman empire, the last universal kingdom, was represented by the legs of iron. The feet, made of iron and clay, depict the lack of internal stability that occurred when the Roman empire was eventually divided into ten minor kingdoms. There are no more prophecies given of another earthly empire of such dominion.

Jesus Christ was born when the world was under the dominion of the Roman empire, ruled by Caesar Augustus. Daniel prophesied that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed...and it shall stand forever (Daniel 2:44).

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and conquered Babylon (Daniel 5:31). This gave rise to the inferior Medo-Persian empire which was represented by the arms and

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WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

(Continued from page 1)

Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of a stone, cut out of a mountain without hands, breaking and crushing the image. The stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This is a prophecy of the wonderful Kingdom of God which was established in the days of those kings.

Jesus is the stone which the builders rejected that became the head of the corner (Acts 4:11). He was born of a virgin and the kingdom began when Jesus came as a child as prophesied by Isaiah. "For unto us a child is born... the government shall be upon his shoulder...of the increase of his government there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

The four universal kingdoms of man fell one after another, but there is a kingdom that rose during that time that will never be destroyed. That is the Universal Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is not a kingdom of this earth but is a spiritual, heavenly kingdom that will never end. The gospel message has spread across the whole earth. Governments have tried to stamp out Christianity, but the Kingdom of God just kept on spreading.

Many people look in vain for a future Kingdom of God on this earth. The Kingdom of God is here and now. It came with the first coming of Jesus and we need not look for another age. Today is the day of salvation and this is the time that we can enter into the peace, comfort, and provision of the Kingdom of God.

-mws

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth.

Editors: Michael & René Smith

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The Gospel Truth, 605 Bishops Ct., Nixa, MO 65714 USA
editor@thegospeltruth.org

Editorial



“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

It is with thanksgiving that I worked on this issue of *The Gospel Truth*. I have walked through some of the lowest valleys of my life the last few months. While I am not completely out of the valley, God has given me the strength and fortitude to work on this publication – which I was incapable of doing a month ago. Through it all, the Lord has been with me even in the midnight hours. There were so many times I said, “Jesus, thank you for being my friend.” God has proven His love and power over and over again.

Someone shared with me that we can suffer with the Lord or suffer without Him. I praise God for the privilege of suffering with the Savior. During the trials and storms of life, there is no greater security than in the shelter of the arms of God. Heartaches and difficulties come in this life, but it is the presence of God that gives strength and courage to face another day. I can say with Job, “My redeemer liveth.” For every thorn and messenger of Satan which have buffeted me, there have been many more blessings and angels of light which have stood by my side with support and love. What a privilege to be part of the family of God. When one suffers, we all bear the pain. Thank you to each one who has and continues to hold my family and me up in your prayers. They have not been in vain.

I am so blessed to be a citizen in the Kingdom of God. I have shared some of the truths of this wonderful kingdom in this edition. Space limits me from expounding upon the extraordinary beauty and truth of the fullness of the kingdom. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will take what is shared in this publication and multiply it to the spirit of the reader. So many people are looking for Christ to set up an earthly kingdom where there will be peace and abundance. I am experiencing that kingdom here and now. While the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day. I am a part of a spiritual kingdom that can never be destroyed. The tempest may blow, but the gates of hell cannot prevail against the Kingdom of God. I would not trade the privileges of this citizenship for all the wealth and honor of this world.

Let us stay true and faithful to our Lord and King. In Him, there is peace that passeth all understanding. As I enjoy the blessings of this kingdom, I look with bright anticipation for the Heavenly Kingdom in eternity.

Michael W Smith

April 2013



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DOES IT MATTER?

“You believe what you want, I’ll believe what I want. We are all headed the same place and doctrine really doesn’t matter.” So says the ecumenical Christian.

This is an incorrect conclusion as there is a Biblical truth regardless of churches opinions and theologies.

The true doctrine of the Kingdom of God as a spiritual kingdom does matter. With correct understanding, people may then seek for the reality of it in their lives today rather than just looking to a future fulfillment which will never come.

There will be no other opportunity for sinners to be saved. There will be no second chance in a future age to make peace with God. “Today is the day of salvation.”

IT MATTERS.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SUBJECT: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Scripture Reading:

Luke 1:31-33 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Summary: The Kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom that will be established in the future but is a spiritual kingdom that is founded in our hearts through Jesus Christ.

I. Location of the Kingdom

- A. John 18:36-37 Not of this world.
- B. Luke 17:20-21 It is within you.

II. The Kingdom is Spiritual

- A. Romans 14:17 Righteousness, peace, and joy.
- B. I Corinthians 4:20 The kingdom is in power.

III. Time of Establishment

- A. Luke 16:16 Preaching of the kingdom began under John the Baptist.
- B. Luke 4:43 Jesus preached the kingdom.
- C. Mark 1:14-15 The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.
- D. Mark 9:1 Promised before the disciples’ death.
- E. Acts 1:1-3 Promise fulfilled with the Holy Spirit.

IV. Entrance Into the Kingdom

- A. John 3:3 Must be born again.
- B. Luke 16:16 Press into it.

V. Reigning in the Kingdom

- A. Revelation 1:5-6 He hath made us kings and priests.
- B. 1 Peter 2:9-10 A chosen generation, a holy nation.
- C. Romans 6:14-15 Power over sin.
- D. 1 John 5:4 Power over the world.
- E. Revelation 15:2-3 Victory over false religion.
- F. Luke 10:17-20 Power over Satan.

VI. Proof the Kingdom is Already Set Up

- A. Hebrews 12:28 We received a kingdom.
- B. Colossians 1:12-13 He has translated us in the kingdom.
- C. Revelation 1:9 John was in the kingdom.

VII. Duration of the Kingdom

- A. Isaiah 9:6-7 Established forever.
- B. Daniel 2:44 Never be destroyed.

Challenge

Luke 12:31-32 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Companion article for Bible Study

THE JEWS SOUGHT POLITICAL DELIVERANCE

The Jewish people, under the power of the Roman government, were looking for the Messiah to come and deliver them politically as a nation when He set up His kingdom. They read the prophets foretelling of a time when the Son of God would reign with authority and there would be peace, healing, and deliverances. Before the disciples received the Holy Spirit, they too asked Christ, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). The Jews, as a people, rejected Christ as the Son of God because their earthly kingdom was not restored. They and many professing Christians are looking for a time in the future when the Messiah will come and set up a kingdom on this earth. That day will never come. The Word of God teaches clearly that the Kingdom of God was established with the first coming of Jesus Christ. People waiting for a future day to come are missing out on the pleasure and joy of the Kingdom of God which is here and now.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT PHYSICAL

Jesus knew that people were waiting for the Messiah to establish a literal kingdom on this earth. So before His crucifixion, He spoke plainly to Pilate. "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight..." (John 18:36). This scripture alone dispels the teaching that the Kingdom of God is an earthly kingdom. The Pharisees demanded to know from Jesus when the Kingdom of God would come. Jesus replied "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation...behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21). The Kingdom of God is not a political government with an earthly throne and an earthly king.

THE KINGDOM IS SPIRITUAL

The Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom within the heart of every child of God. It is righteousness, peace and joy working in a believer's life (Romans 14:17). True peace is not based on external conditions or governments. Peace is the result of the work of God in the heart. Jesus said "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth..." (John 14:27).

THE KINGDOM WAS ESTABLISHED BY JESUS

John the Baptist began preaching the message of the kingdom with the entreaty to repent. "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16). Jesus taught plainly that "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The kingdom was not coming at a future date but was established through Christ. "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."



"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Mark 1:15

HOW DO WE ENTER THIS KINGDOM?

Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Man enters the kingdom when he repents of his sin and allows Jesus to become the king of his life. The power of the kingdom was fully given on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled the hearts of believers (Acts 2). The fullness of the kingdom is enjoyed through the gift of the Holy Spirit which gives power, peace, joy, leadership, and holiness.

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REIGNING IN THE KINGDOM

Jesus "...hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father..." (Revelation 1:6). Christians in this spiritual kingdom reign over sin, self, the world, and false religion. Christ is today an all-powerful king, reigning over His church (Colossians 1:18) and writing His law on the hearts of believers. Jesus delivers, heals and purifies.

THERE IS ACCESS FOR ALL

The Kingdom has been set up and is accessible to every individual through Jesus Christ. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly

fear" (Hebrews 12:28). This kingdom was foretold in prophecy and was fulfilled with the first coming of Jesus Christ. There shall be no end to this kingdom but it shall last forever (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Note: *When Jesus returns the second time, He is coming to usher all people to the judgment seat of God. This physical earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-12). The righteous will gain entrance into heaven and the unrighteous will be forever in hell. This will be studied in the next edition of The Gospel Truth.*



mws

ESSENTIALS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT AND EXISTENCE OF A KINGDOM

Summary from the writings



of H.M. Riggle, 1902

1. A KING AS THE RULING HEAD.

Matthew 21:4-5 Behold, thy King cometh unto thee...
Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

2. A THRONE FROM WHICH THE KING ISSUES DECREES.

Hebrews 1:8 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom.
Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace...

3. TERRITORY OVER WHICH THE KING HAS JURISDICTION.

Matthew 28:18 All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

4. SUBJECTS IN THAT TERRITORY TO RULE OVER.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God.
1 Peter 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

5. A LAW TO GOVERN THE SUBJECTS.

Hebrews 8:10 ... I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

CONCLUSION

All of these essentials are present and working in this dispensation of grace. Jesus Christ is the King of heaven and earth and dwells with His people. He sits upon the throne and is the head over the church. His law of holiness is in the hearts of the saints and they are reigning in this life. Hence, the Kingdom of God has already been set up.

Prophecies of the Kingdom *...and their fulfillment*



Prophecy

Fulfillment

Isaiah 2:2-4 The Lord's house established.
(Micah 4:1-7)

Hebrews 12:22-23 Ye are come unto Mt. Zion.

Psalm 2:6-9 Kingdom of the Son.

Acts 13:33 Jesus raised up.

Psalm 110:1-3 The Lord rules out of Zion.

Acts 2:30,32-36 Jesus sits on the throne.

Daniel 7:14 Kingdom of dominion and glory.

Ephesians 1:20-22 Christ has all dominion and power.

Isaiah 35:5-6 Sickness and disease healed.

Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16-17 Jesus healed all sickness.

Isaiah 35:6-7 Wastelands transformed.

John 4:14 Jesus gives living water.
John 6:35 Never hunger and never thirst.

Micah 4:3-4 Unparalleled peace.

John 14:27 Jesus gives peace.



*But ye are come
unto mount Sion,
and unto the city
of the living God.*



Question: What does the scripture mean in Isaiah 11 where the wild animals dwell together in peace?

Answer: Let us consider the passage in question. *"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den"* (Isaiah 11:6-8).

This is an important and valid question as there are many pictures that show a lion laying down with a lamb depicting a millennial reign here on

this earth when Christ sets up an earthly kingdom. That is a wrong and scripturally incorrect interpretation of the referenced passage in Isaiah 11. People have dreamed and imagined an age to come in which there is world peace and an absence of violence even amongst the animals. Man has used many colorful pictures and fanciful words to depict such a time of earthly glory.

Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God was a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly kingdom. Isaiah 11 is a beautiful, symbolic prophecy of the



“The animals listed are not speaking of the literal animal but of the corresponding animal-like characteristics of people. “

wonderful experience of peace and harmony that comes from salvation through Jesus Christ. We need not look to the future to find the fulfillment of this prophecy, for it was

fulfilled with the first coming of the Messiah.

Let us look at some surrounding verses to get the proper context of this prophecy. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah 11:1). This and the proceeding scriptures point to none other than Christ Himself who was of the ancestry of Jesse, the father of King David. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall

be glorious (Isaiah 11:10). This is further referenced to Christ in Jeremiah 23:5 and in Revelation 5:5 which reads "...the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed...."

The Apostle Paul refers to Isaiah 11 and enlightens the reader to the fulfillment in Christ. Speaking of Jesus, he says: "And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gen-

tiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:8-13).

Paul was instructing the church at Rome to accept their Gentile brethren whom had gained entrance into the Kingdom of God through the Holy Spirit. Christ was lifted up on the cross and through His death and resurrection all mankind had access to the privileges of the kingdom. Jesus was reigning not only in the Jewish Christians but in the lives of the Gentile Christians. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12).

The glorious rest that was referenced in Isaiah 11:10 was introduced to the believer in the time of Christ. The message of the Messiah was "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). That wonderful rest and peace of the prophecy pointed directly to the peace that Jesus brought to the earth. No wonder the angels declared at the birth of the Messiah, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

With this proper scriptural context, we can now begin to interpret the passage in question. We know now that we need not look to the future but to the past and present to understand what it means for wild animals to be living in harmony. Clearly, that has not happened in the animal kingdom up to this time. Let us remember that the Kingdom of God is spiritual and the rest and peace existed and still does today amongst

true children of God. So we turn to a spiritual understanding of the passage. Prophecy is often given in symbolic language and so it is here in Isaiah 11. The animals listed are not speaking of the literal animal but of the corresponding animal-like characteristics of people. This is a common practice not only in the Old Testament but also of the New. The prophet Ezekiel said, "Her princes in the midst thereof are like



Isaiah 11:6-8 tells a story of natural enemies being at peace one with another... the weak and the strong... all quietly abide together

wolves ravaging the prey, to shed blood... (Ezekiel 22:27). Jesus told His disciples, "Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves" (Luke 10:3). Jesus, referring to Herod said, "Go ye, and tell that fox... (Luke 13:32). The people referred to were reflective of the nature of the analogous animals. Wolves represent people who were out to destroy others. Lambs

are reflective of humility and meekness. A fox would represent someone who is crafty.

So Isaiah 11:6-8 tells a story of natural enemies being at peace one with another. This represents a wonderful state of harmony amongst people of all different backgrounds, characteristics, and personalities. People who are by nature defenseless live in harmony with those whom were by nature strong and devouring. The weak and the strong, the wild and the tame, the harmful and harmless all quietly abide together. How is this possible? It is not only possible but is a reality in the Kingdom of God. People of all nationalities and dispositions enter the kingdom through Jesus Christ. Their old nature is transformed and all things become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God's people today, under the reign and dominion of the Messiah, are safe and in unity. They have been partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) and the old hostile, ferocious, carnal tendencies are transformed into natures of love and peace. What a wonderful experience to be in this Kingdom today. Isaiah 11:6-8 paints a picture of the beautiful reality of God's Kingdom that is reigning today.

While we enjoy the blessings of this spiritual kingdom of peace in this life through Jesus Christ, we also look with great anticipation to the time when we shall be in Heaven in the very presence of God.

-mws



DID YOU KNOW?

Scripture: "...the sons of God saw the daughters of men...and they took them wives of all which they chose." Genesis 6:2

Time Period: Before God destroyed the earth in the time of Noah.

Sons of God: The descendants of Seth and others whom had retained God in their knowledge and worship and were of upright moral character.

Daughters of Men: The descendants of Cain and others whom had left God and followed after the ways of the flesh.

Conclusion: A believer marrying an unbeliever leads to great spiritual decline.



A Word
In Season

When I Sit In Darkness

Contact

The Gospel Truth
605 Bishops Ct.
Nixa, MO 65714
USA

Email:
editor@thegospeltruth.org

"...When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." Micah 7:8

In the darkest times of life, the Lord will come and break the darkness with the light of His love and truth. In the days of physical pain, mental anguish, or a hurting heart, the presence of the Lord will surround us in the security and knowledge of His concern and healing virtue.

There will come a time that you may find yourself sitting in the dark--not moving or going forward. Though the future looks bleak and the outcomes uncertain, there is peace in resting in the light of the Lord. It is in His light that we can find courage and strength to face tomorrow. The Lord desires to come and sit with you and bring light through His acceptance and everlasting love for you. The world is dark and is growing darker, but the eternal truth of God's Word brings a ray of light that shows us the way out of darkness.



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD

Though the world may look bleak and though situations in your own life may be dark, Jesus came to this world to bring hope where there was despair. We need not sit in the dark for long, as our Friend and Savior will come and bring light and cheer to our heavy heart.

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