

GIFTS WORTH THE MONEY

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Hundreds of Articles

which will make appropriate and useful Christmas Gifts can be found here, and if the gift is for Father, Mother, Sister, Brother or Sweetheart you will have no difficulty in making your selections here:

A Few Suggestions for You:

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INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. BELLERS, Acting Director of the Sunday School Course in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR DECEMBER 24

UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN.

LESSON TEXT--Isaiah 9:1-7.
GOLDEN TEXT--For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.--Isa. 9:6.

The Christmas lesson naturally and logically follows the three lessons we have just had from the book of the Revelation where Jesus in his glory had been portrayed, and the ultimate success of his work is foreseen in the new heaven and the new earth. Isaiah saw the vision of his first coming. John saw the vision of his second coming, when what he began the first time shall ultimately be accomplished. The prophecy here spoken was uttered during the reign of Ahaz, B. C. 738 to 725. The king of Assyria was attacking Syria. The tribes of northern Israel were carried away as captives. Judah was in danger of invasion. (See II Kings 15:29.) Isaiah was preaching in his home city, Jerusalem. His vision of the Messiah Savior was not more than 900 years before John saw the vision of the glorified Jesus.

I. **Darkness Versus Light** (vv. 1-5). We need to go back into the eighth chapter to get the full historical situation of this part of the lesson. Ahaz, trembling in Jerusalem, had with him the Prophet Isaiah, the wisest and greatest man in his kingdom, yet Ahaz listened not to his words of warning and rebuke. He doggedly pursued his own course and sought help in every other quarter than the right one. This explains Isaiah's words, "The people that walked in darkness." Primarily he may have referred to those of the hills of Zebulun and Naphtali, the Galilee of the nations (John 1:40; 7:52) and the light which shone in them, which was the light of the world, Jesus of Nazareth (John 8:12). But there is a larger application in this verse to the whole world which lay in darkness until Jesus came, and the whole world has seen or shall see the great light (Luke 1:78-79). With the coming of light comes the increase of joy (v. 3, R. V.). In Israel there is to be, through Christ, a wonderful increase (Isa. 40:29-32; Zech. 10:8). In Christ there is to be great joy, the joy of harvest and of victory. The religion of Jesus Christ is pre-eminently the religion of joy (Acts 8:8; Phil. 4:4; I Peter 1:8) but the Child that was to be born was to be a Deliverer too, for the "yoke of burden" was a tax of \$1,800,000 that had recently been levied by the king of Assyria. It was a night of thick darkness for Israel. Then, even as now, we have the moral darkness. (Read Rom. 1:23-32.) But the prophet saw the joy of deliverance. Jerusalem had been left in peace. Hezekiah succeeded his father, Ahaz, and entered upon a religious revival in the kingdom. The people who had walked in darkness had seen a new light. The prophet saw the dawning rays through the midst of this darkness of ignorance being removed. He also saw the coming of the Light of Men 700 years later, and the multiplication of the nations, the increase of their joy.

II. **Unto Us a Son is Born** (vv. 6-7). The greatest joy for Israel in Isaiah's time was in this vision of the Messiah, the promised Savior. Isaiah is looking ahead seven centuries. We are looking back nineteen. He was to be king over his people. Name and title is here given. (1) "Wonderful" because of his nature, being both human and divine. The word made flesh and dwelt among us. (2) "Counselor," one who has the wisdom to guide himself and others. No one guided by him has ever failed of true success. (3) "The Mighty God." He was truly God so that we can trust him to the uttermost. He can also save to the uttermost. (4) "Everlasting Father," expressing his divine loving kindness and self-identification with the Father. (5) He is also "Prince of Peace," the one who rules so that peace and prosperity abide in his kingdom. He brings peace between man and God, and between man and man. He is the peace of the soul as well as bringing peace to the soul. The completeness of this picture which Isaiah saw is the one which St. John saw, of which we have been recently studying. These two verses are marvelous ones, not only because of the clear prediction of Jesus of Nazareth, made more than seven centuries before his first advent but marvelous also for the fullness and richness of the revelation they contain concerning the person, character and work of Christ.

Our Lord's earth life began at Bethlehem, but he was from all eternity (John 8:58-59; John 1:1-2).

As a man is not at peace with God he cannot be at peace with himself or his fellows; but as Jesus restores peace between man and God, he also restores peace to the heart of the individual (Phil. 4:7).

Sunday school officers and teachers should realize the difference between the peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and the peace of God (Phil. 4:7).

Let us see to it that in the fullest sense our scholars may have the Prince of Peace in their lives.



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