

king. He rides upon an ass to show by symbol that His kingdom is a kingdom of peace, and that He conquers by humility and service. The people give Him a royal welcome, and, to the indignation of the rulers, He accepts their homage, Luke 19 : 37-40. At a turn in the road by the southern shoulder of the Mount of Olives, they catch an impressive sight of Jerusalem, whereat the enthusiasm of the people is excited to the highest pitch. But Jesus weeps over the city (Luke 19 : 41-44), for He knows that His rejection by the rulers means the doom of His nation.

THE WORK OF THE WEEK—Most of what Jesus said and did during these days was concerned with the awful condition to which the rulers had brought the nation. By the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11 : 12-14, 20-25), Jesus sought to teach His disciples, almost as by a parable, that the Jewish people were without fruit and must perish. He now openly claims to be the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God (Mark 12 : 6-11; 35-37), and by His own authority cleanses the temple, Mark 11 : 15-19 (compare John 2 : 13-22). He also warns the hierarchy in three parables (Matt. 21 : 28 to 22 : 14), that they will be rejected, that, though they will slay the Son, the inheritance will pass to others, and that since they would not come to the Messianic banquet, the Gentiles will be welcomed in their place.

PLOTS—So far the rulers had been unsuccessful, partly because Jesus was in favor with the common people. Now they seek to entrap Him with the tribute money (Mark 12 : 13-17); but consistently with His whole teaching, He will not compromise His kingdom with those political questions, which were all important to the Pharisees and the Zealots. Jesus turns the tables on the Sadducees (Mark 12 : 18-27), and exposes the casuistry and denounces the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, Matt. ch. 23; Mark 12 : 28-34. The clouds have gathered rapidly, and the storm is ready to burst.

LESSON XXIII.

THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

SOURCES—The Synoptic Gospels : Matt., chs. 24, 25; Mark, ch. 13; Luke, ch. 21 (com-

pare also Luke 12 : 32-48; 17 : 20 to 18 : 8).

Our Lord's thought dwelt much during the last week upon the future of the Jewish nation, as well as upon that of His own disciples and the kingdom of God. Though this culminated in the great address of Matt., ch. 24, it formed a theme of discourse at earlier periods in His career, Luke, chs. 12, 17.

Matthew, ch. 24, and parallel passages deal with three distinct questions : (a) The future of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation; (b) The future of the kingdom on earth; (c) The end of the world.

(a) *The future of the Jewish nation.* Matt. 24 : 15-28, 32-34. Jesus foretells a great war, in which Jerusalem will be encompassed in an awful siege and the temple desecrated. The Lord will be coming in judgment, to visit His wrath upon a disobedient people. He warns His followers to flee, for His church is to survive the ruin of the nation. This came to pass in 70 A.D.

(b) *The future of the kingdom of God on earth.* Matt. 24 : 4-14, 42-51. The kingdom will not come with observation, that is, descend bodily from the skies, as the Pharisees teach, Luke 17 : 20, 21. Even Jesus will not visibly return when disasters gather round Jerusalem. It will be a time of great persecution for His church, and of much false teaching. But His own must invest their talents (Matt., ch. 25), and watch; for only the faith that can endure will get salvation. Jesus foretells a long future for His church on earth, good and evil struggling for the mastery; but His gospel must be preached to the whole world.

(c) *The end of the world.* Matt. 24 : 29-31, 35-41. Though "the day of the Lord," when Jehovah judges the disobedient, begins with the fall of Jerusalem, that is only the first sign of a final judgment impending upon the earth. The present heavens and earth will pass away, and Jesus Himself return to judge the whole world, Matt. 25 : 31-46. But when that shall be, even the Son of Man does not know.

THE VISIT OF THE GREEKS TO JESUS (John 12 : 20-36)—Hitherto Jesus had confined His ministry to Israel, Matt. 15 : 24. Now the wider world is seeking its Saviour, and