

Psalm 85:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Analysis

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. This verse continues the poetic description of God's salvation, depicting truth and righteousness connecting earth and heaven. The imagery "truth shall spring out of the earth" (emet me-eretz titzmach, אֶתְמָה מֵעַרְבָּה תִּצְמַח) uses agricultural metaphor. Tzamach (תִּצְמַח) means "to sprout, grow, spring up"—like seeds germinating and pushing through soil. Truth isn't imposed from outside but grows organically from the earth.

This imagery may suggest several things:

1. God's truth becomes incarnate, taking earthly form.
2. Truth produces tangible, visible results in human experience.
3. God's redemptive work transforms earth itself, making it produce truth rather than thorns (Genesis 3:18).

The earth, cursed through sin, now becomes source of blessing—truth growing where deception once reigned.

"Righteousness shall look down from heaven" (vetzedeq mishamayim nishqaph, וְצִדְקָה מִשְׁמַיִם נִשְׁקַפְתָּה) completes the vertical connection. Shaqaph (שִׁקְפָּתָה) means "to look down, to gaze upon"—often describing God looking from heaven to earth (Genesis 18:16, Psalm 14:2, 102:19). Righteousness, which resides in heaven with God, gazes down upon earth with interest and intention. Heaven and earth, separated by sin, reconnect through God's salvation. Truth rises from earth; righteousness

descends from heaven. They meet in the middle—in history, in human experience, in Christ.

This vertical connection reverses Babel's confusion (Genesis 11), where humanity tried building tower to reach heaven but achieved only division. Here, God initiates reunion—sending righteousness down while causing truth to grow up. Heaven and earth, Creator and creation, divine and human, reconcile through God's redemptive intervention.

Historical Context

The Incarnation: Heaven Meeting Earth

Psalm 85:11's imagery found ultimate fulfillment in Christ's incarnation. John 1:14 declares: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Jesus is truth (truth) springing from earth—born of Mary, growing in Nazareth, living fully human life. Yet He is simultaneously righteousness from heaven—"the Lord our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6), God incarnate (John 1:1).

Jesus claimed: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Truth isn't merely concept He taught but Person He is. When truth "springs from earth," it means God's eternal truth takes concrete form in space-time history through Christ. When righteousness "looks down from heaven," it means God's perfect righteousness enters human experience through the incarnate Son. In Christ, heaven and earth kiss—divine and human natures unite in one Person.

The early church understood this vertical connection through Christ. Paul wrote that God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christ descended from heaven, took on human flesh (truth springing from earth), bore sin's penalty, and ascended back to heaven—establishing permanent connection between heaven and earth. Through Him, "we have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18).

Eschatologically, Revelation describes this complete: "And I heard a great voice

out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3). The new Jerusalem descends from heaven to earth (Revelation 21:2)—heaven's righteousness permanently dwelling on renewed earth. Psalm 85:11's poetic vision becomes eternal reality: truth fills the earth, righteousness reigns from heaven, and God dwells with humanity forever.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that truth "springs from the earth" rather than being imposed from outside, and how did Christ fulfill this?
2. How does righteousness "looking down from heaven" suggest both God's watchful care and His intention to intervene in earthly affairs?
3. In what ways did Jesus embody both truth springing from earth (incarnation) and righteousness from heaven (divine nature)?
4. How does this verse reverse the curse of Genesis 3 (thorns from earth) and the judgment of Genesis 11 (Babel's confusion)?
5. What will it look like when truth fully covers the earth and righteousness completely reigns, as prophesied in Revelation 21-22?

Interlinear Text

בָּשָׁקֵף:

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 45:8 (Righteousness): Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

John 14:6 (Truth): Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Isaiah 53:2 (Parallel theme): For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Isaiah 4:2 (Parallel theme): In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

Isaiah 42:21 (Righteousness): The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

Ephesians 1:6 (Parallel theme): To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Matthew 17:5 (Parallel theme): While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Matthew 3:17 (Parallel theme): And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Luke 2:14 (Parallel theme): Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (Righteousness): For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.