

PREACHED FOR A WITNESS.

"And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness [testimony] unto all nations, and then shall the end come." – Matt. 24:14.

We have seen from many evidences heretofore pointed out that we are now living in the time of the end of the Gospel Age, and that the special work of the present hour is the reaping of its harvest of ripened wheat under the direction and leading of the Lord of the harvest now present. Realizing this fact, not only from the testimony of the Word, but also from the actual work of harvest progressing before our eyes, and by the clearer light now shining, discerning as never before the blessed import of the glorious Gospel, we inquire, Has this Gospel been preached in all the world? We find that darkness still covers the earth and gross darkness the people; and the great nominal Church, the professed light-bearers and heralds of the Gospel of the Kingdom are also in darkness, and few either preach or realize fully this message of the kingdom. But if we consider for a moment what constitutes the Gospel of the Kingdom we will be assisted in realizing that this Gospel has been preached to every nation.

The work to be accomplished under the Kingdom or reign of Christ, is the restoration of all mankind to perfection of being and consequent eternal life, and this reign and work will be possible, because all have been redeemed from the curse of death by our Ransom or Substitute – because all were bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ.

Though the Gospel or good news of the kingdom embraces all that can be known of Christ's dominion over evil, and subjection of it, and while but a few have seen the deeper and more secret parts of God's plan, and who therefore have appreciated the "good tidings"

more fully than others, yet the central element of the "good news" has been published throughout the world to every nation. Though much beclouded and dimmed by the traditions of men and the deceptions of Satan, and so transformed as to rob it of much of its goodness, yet, we repeat, the central and vital point of the good news of the kingdom has been preached in all the world. That central point is, that "Christ died for our sins"; that by him "we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins"; that by the death of the Just One, many are justified freely from all things; that as we were condemned and delivered to the destroyer, now we are bought back with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, and are in His hands who promises to deliver the groaning creation into the liberty of sons of God; and that all accepting of Christ are to be blessed in his kingdom. This central element and first principle of glad tidings has certainly been preached in all the world, and is a fulfilment of this prediction of our Lord.

Whatever of error the nominal Church has held, this kernel of truth – redemption through the precious blood of Christ – has so far been maintained and widely heralded, though its mixture with error has greatly hindered its proper reception. Not only has the living teacher gone forth as a herald to every nation, but the Word of God, printed in every language, has been scattered like autumn leaves.

But though the good news that Messiah has come and paid our ransom price, has been so widely published, the world still shows no signs of being converted to God, and many who looked for this result are greatly disappointed. Such have entirely misapprehended the object of this dispensation in supposing it to be the conversion of the world to God, and therefore, notwithstanding the marked and foretold signs of the end, they cannot believe that we are really in its closing days.

The general object, of the preaching of the Gospel during this age, as expressed in the above text, is "for a witness unto all nations." Our Lord knew beforehand, that under the present reign of evil – under the blinding influences of the "god of this world" – the message would not convert the world, as many of his disciples have erroneously supposed; hence, instead of saying that the Gospel would be preached in all the world for its conversion, he said it would be "for a witness." [As heretofore shown, there is also in addition to this a special object for the preaching of the Gospel, elsewhere, but not here expressed, viz: the selecting of a little flock of consecrated believers, to be joint-heirs of the Kingdom with Jesus.]

But while a witness or testimony has been offered to the nations, it has not been received except by a few. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord [Jehovah] revealed?" (Isa. 53:1) (Jesus is Jehovah's arm stretched down to ransom and restore men.) If the Gospel is to be a witness to any, they must be able to see or accept of the testimony, or witness; and we see that though it has been preached to the nations FOR a witness, they were so blinded that they **[R517 : page 5]** could not receive it. But when their blindness is taken away, as we are told it shall be, then the present testimony will serve its purpose as a part in God's plan; for in due time the good news is to be testified to every individual, and the due time for opening the blind eyes, etc., so that the witness or testimony can be received, is in the Millennial Age, as we have seen.

Next let us see how the preaching of this Gospel during this age will serve as a witness in the coming age: When earth's dead millions are again restored to life, this same Gospel – good news – will be testified to all, viz: that their restoration has been brought about as the direct result of Jesus' death. Thus we read (1 Tim. 2:4-6); "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and

men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

All the restored nations having heard of this ransom will recognize the fact. Israel will remember how with wicked hands they slew the Lord. They shall remember and be ashamed; they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn over it as over the only one. (Zech. 12:10 – Young; Ezek. 16:61.) Those who lived in that day will testify that Jesus did come in the fulness of time as foretold by the Prophets, and that he was as a lamb without spot, that he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and that as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. They will also remember his claim of a coming kingdom and great power.

Others down the centuries of the Gospel Age will say, Yes, we heard of that event. Zealous disciples of the Lord went everywhere telling it; it was an unmistakable fact of history; but we heard it so often and yet saw no results from it, that it seemed like an idle tale, and we paid no attention to it.

Still others, all along the centuries preceding the advent and sacrifice, will say: We remember how we were required to offer bloody sacrifices to God for our sins; and that we could not approach him in any other way. We often wondered what it all meant, but as Paul since our day has explained, we now see, that they were all intended as types of the only acceptable sacrifice which should actually "take away the sin of the world," which the blood of bulls and goats typified, but never accomplished. Now we see that our sins have really been cancelled by his sacrifice, for as a result we are actually released from sin's penalty – death.

That marked event will thus stand out in bold prominence before all peoples and nations, and the proclamation now made will thus serve its purpose. Thus all the redeemed millions of earth, as they again step upon the stage of action, will become witnesses to the fact

that the precious blood of Christ has accomplished their redemption. Thus will the Gospel – the good news that Christ gave himself a ransom for all – be testified to all and by all, in due time. Thus "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth." Thus "he shall turn unto the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. 3:9.)

Heretofore the word preached has generally fallen upon deaf ears, and the sacred page has been opened before blind eyes, but soon, ignorance and prejudice being removed, the blind eyes shall be opened and the deaf ears shall be unstopped. (Isa. 35:5.)

Men will then recognize that the risen and glorified Christ is again present to restore and bless all the families of the earth, and that he is the great Prophet (teacher) whom Jehovah hath raised up, and they will be ready to hear and obey, as saith the Prophet Isaiah: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye **[R517 : page 6]** and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord [i.e., let us submit ourselves to the authority of his kingdom], to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths,...and all nations shall flow unto it." (chap. 2:2,3.)

How comparatively weak and ineffectual upon the world are the efforts now put forth, and how few can discern the blessed hope in the joyful message we carry! But when the great Prophet, Priest and King shall fully take to himself his great power and dominion, not only shall the prince of darkness be restrained, but all his works of darkness shall be destroyed by the bright shining of the Sun of Righteousness.

Nevertheless we see that it was necessary and expedient that the message should go unto all nations, though they did not receive it. The few who did receive it thereby received "power to become sons of God" – "partakers of the divine nature" and joint heirs of the

kingdom (John 1:12; 2 Peter 1:4; Rom. 8:17), while it also served as a witness to the nations.

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