

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

"And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven." – Rev. 21:2.

THROUGH the Prophet Daniel and others, the Divine promise was given to Israel that at some future time the God of Heaven would set up a Kingdom on the earth; that this Kingdom would be world-wide – "under the whole heaven"; and that it would last forever. (Dan. 2:44; 7:27; Isa. 2:2-4; etc.) This Messianic Kingdom is to be established to meet the exigencies of the case of fallen humanity and to bring mankind back into harmony with the Divine arrangements. This Kingdom will intervene between the Divine Government and mankind, because the fallen race of Adam in its weak condition is unable to meet the requirements of the Divine Law.

The great Emperor of the Universe, Jehovah, has given the Messianic Kingdom to our Lord Jesus, who was the first representative of that Kingdom. While on earth, our Lord was treated with violence and ignominy. All down the Gospel Age, His disciples have been used in a similar manner. Yet the Kingdom which they represent will *surely* be established. Already the Father has appointed our Lord as King (Psa. 2:6), and will soon deliver to Him the power and glory of His office.

The object and purpose of this Kingdom is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. When it shall have been established, some of its subjects will be asleep in death and others will be awake. At that time none of the fallen race will be recognized of God as having any life whatever. The control of the whole world will be in the hands of our Lord, as the One who purchased it with His own precious blood, and who is competent to bless it, according to the promise made four thousand years ago to Abraham, that in him and in his Seed shall all

the families of the earth be blessed. – Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Gal. 3:8,16,29.

The Kingdom of Heaven, as foretold by our Lord, will come about without manifestation – outward show. (Luke 17:20, margin.) But with all these suggestions, let us not suppose that the Kingdom is to be an earthly government. On the contrary, the Scriptures instruct us that those who inherit it must become spirit beings before they can enter into it. (I Cor. 15:50-52.) The living members will all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and the dead members must be raised to receive their change before they can be forever with the Lord.

The Lord and the glorified Church will all be spirit beings, fully able to administer the world's affairs and yet be unseen by mankind. They will be manifest in the rewards, punishments and judgments of that Day. The difference between the King and the Kingdom is, that the King is the person who has authority; but the Kingdom includes both His dominion and His associates. In this case the latter are the Church, who will sit with Him in His Throne.

The Church will always be in the *heavenly condition*. Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that she will be restricted to *one place* rather than to another. The intimation is that after the Church has experienced her change, she will be absent from the earth for a while and will be brought into the presence of Jehovah, the great King. She will be arrayed in glorious clothing of wrought gold – "in raiment of needlework." (Psa. 45:13-15.) These statements are figurative expressions indicative of the beautiful character wrought out in all who become actual members of the Body of Christ.

THE SEAT OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT

Whether the New Creation are afar off or on the earth, they will ever be of the spirit nature. Their particular place is on the Divine plane. The various orders of spirit beings have each its own sphere,

but the Church of Christ has no place among them. She is invited to occupy a position next to her Lord, who is on the right hand of the Majesty on High (Heb. 1:3) – higher than all other planes of spirit being.

At the time of the First Advent, this place had not been prepared for the Church, although the Father evidently had it in mind. Our Lord ascended on High in order to prepare that place. (John 14:2,3.) This He did by making an imputation of His merit on behalf of the Church, thereby permitting them to become participators with Him in the sufferings of the present Age, that they may also become sharers with Him in the glories to follow. Thus He has prepared the way for the Church to enter the highest of all planes.

We are not sufficiently informed respecting the spirit condition to know just how possible it will be for the Lord and the Church to remain in the Father's presence and at the same time maintain the government of the earth. While this may be possible, yet perhaps it may not be a wise arrangement. Perhaps it will be necessary for them to be absent from the immediate presence of the Father, and approximate the earth.

Our thought is that The Christ will be very closely associated with the earth, just as Satan's kingdom is. Satan's seat of government is in Tartarus – the atmosphere. **[R5182 : page 52]** He and his associates, the fallen angels, are near the earth, whither they were cast down, separated from their own plane because of sin. They are invisible to mankind, however, amongst whom they have done an evil work. Satan has also his human agents – wicked men and women, who are under his control, sometimes through ignorance and superstition, and sometimes through mesmeric influence. The Scriptures inform us, however, that shortly Satan is to be bound for a thousand years; and the place which he has occupied will then be vacant. – Rev. 20:1-3.

St. Paul informs us that the Church is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, during the time of His Second Advent. (I Thess. 4:15-17.) This does not necessarily mean, however, that they will occupy Tartarus. We are told that they will be forever with the Lord; wherever He is, there the Church will be also, in harmony with the Divine will and executing the Divine purposes. Men will not see the Lord and the Church, even as they do not see Satan and the fallen angels. The Christ will be very closely associated with the earth – as before intimated – though invisible to mortal eyes. They will be doing a good work, a powerful work on the spirit plane. They will be kings and priests unto our God, and they shall reign on the earth. – Rev. 5:10.

With The Christ will be various agencies. The Great Company will undoubtedly be associated with them. Then there will be the earthly agents, just as Satan has his assistants. These agents of The Christ will be the faithful Ancient Worthies, who will render intelligent and willing service in the Kingdom of Messiah.

FUTURE SUFFERINGS OF THE ANCIENT WORTHIES

In Isaiah 11:9, the statement is made: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy Mountain." Comparing Daniel 2:35 with verses 44 and 45 of the same chapter, we perceive that in prophecy a mountain is the symbol for a kingdom. Isaiah's statement, therefore, seems to imply that under the Messianic Kingdom there will be a restraint placed upon all who do wrong. At the same time we are to remember Daniel's statement that the Kingdom is to *grow*. The prophecy is that the stone *became* a great Mountain and filled the whole earth. Many years will doubtless pass before the prophecy will be fulfilled.

As soon as the Kingdom shall have been set up in power, the Ancient Worthies will be raised from the dead as perfect human beings. Psa. 45:16 evidently refers to these faithful servants of God,

who are to be princes in all the earth. Presumably they will have a great work of instruction to do for the rest of humanity. While they will have this service to perform, nevertheless they will have great honor in doing it; for it is always an honor to serve the Lord.

The service which the Ancient Worthies will be given will be more than God would ordinarily entrust to a perfect human being. It will be a part of this service to deal with the imperfect, fallen creatures and to help them up out of sin and imperfection. While in one sense of the word this work is desirable, yet it is not what a perfect human being would prefer. These Ancient Worthies will come forth from the tomb perfect; but during the entire Millennium, they will be amidst imperfect surroundings. The world of mankind will be imperfect then as now, although gradually these imperfections will come to an end.

Adam was created perfect. After he had sinned, he was cast out of Eden to delve in the imperfect earth, and to struggle with the thorns and thistles until he returned to the dust, whence he was taken. Surely he must have suffered because of his surroundings. Our Lord Jesus was perfect. Not only did He leave the Heavenly glory, but for thirty-three and a half years He was amidst imperfect surroundings, constantly witnessing the pain and sorrow of the fallen race. To be in such surroundings must have comprised a large share of His sacrifice; for the fact that He was perfect would increase His sufferings.

In the case of the Ancient Worthies, who, as perfect human beings, will be in an imperfect environment for a thousand years, it would seem as if they will undergo much suffering. Knowing what we do of our Heavenly Father, we are inclined to believe that, if they are faithful in serving the Almighty, He will abundantly reward them, more than they could have asked. Should any one inquire, What reward will the Father give them, if they maintain their obedience? we answer, During the Millennium they will receive no

special reward for their service, so far as we can see; but we think that from God's standpoint, theirs will be a meritorious service which He will be pleased to reward. This seems to be His method of dealing with His faithful servants. Although our Lord Jesus delighted to do the Father's will, yet God rewarded Him. Our God is gracious!

We cannot think of any greater reward than to bestow the spirit nature upon these faithful Ancient Worthies. Long ago they proved their loyalty by choosing to suffer rather than to indulge in sin. There is nothing in the Scriptures, however, which says distinctly that they will ever be made spirit beings. Whatever we may suggest on this subject is purely inferential.

FUTURE REWARD OF THE FAITHFUL PRINCES

A part of the evidence leading to the deduction that the Ancient Worthies will be made sharers of the spirit nature and become members of the Great Company class is built upon the fact that they seem to be represented typically by the tribe of Levi. The fact that this tribe had no inheritance in the land seems to imply that the Ancient Worthies will have no earthly inheritance. We might think that their exaltation to be princes in all the earth (Psa. 45:16) would be an abundant reward; but inasmuch as God will give the spirit nature to the Great Company, who passed through no more severe experiences than did the Ancient Worthies, and inasmuch as the lowest form of life on the spirit plane is higher than the highest form on the human plane, it follows that the Great Company would receive at the hands of the Lord a greater blessing than would the Ancient Worthies.

Since the Heavenly Father has been pleased to arrange for the Great Company a place on the spirit plane, and since He is operating according to some general principles of righteousness, we are inclined to think that He may have something more for the Ancient Worthies than will come to the remainder of mankind. So far as we

can perceive, the Great Company have not demonstrated that they are any more loyal to Him than were the faithful Ancient Worthies. When Abraham was called upon to offer up his son Isaac, he exhibited a degree of loyalty greater than the Great Company will be called upon to manifest.

Furthermore, in Gen. 17:8, God said unto Abraham, "And I will give unto thee and to thy seed *after thee*, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Two thousand years later, St. Stephen said that God never gave Abraham so much as a foot of the promised land (Acts 7:5); but he implied that Abraham will yet receive that land and afterward *leave it to his posterity*. If the *land* is to be given to Abraham and his coadjutors, and then to be *left to his seed* and mankind in general, the **[R5182 : page 53]** thought would seem to be implied that the Ancient Worthies will pass to the spirit nature.

This same thought seems to be pictured in the Revelation. At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed, that he may go forward to test the people that are on the earth, to manifest to what extent their hearts are loyal to God and to the principles of righteousness. The result of this test will be that some will fall away. – Rev. 20:7-10.

We read, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them." (Rev. 20:9.) The "beloved city" is the New Jerusalem, the Church in glory, not the Church in the flesh. The rebellion incited by Satan will be not only against the earthly princes, but also against The Christ.

By that time having reached perfection of organism and powers, the people will assert themselves in thus going up to encompass the camp of the saints. That the Church cannot be meant is evident from the fact that human beings could not attack an unseen force of spirit beings, as the Church will then be. Just as in Great

Britain, the people have gone to Parliament to protest, so the rebellious faction of mankind will protest against their faithful princes. We fancy that we hear them say, "It is time that this government was turned over to us. We protest against your remaining in power any longer." In rebelling against the earthly phase of Messiah's Kingdom, however, they are rebelling against the Lord. Consequently Divine judgment will overtake them – "fire from Heaven."

Since this rebellion is to occur at the close of the Millennial Age, and since mankind will at that time have reached perfection, therefore, this separation of the Ancient Worthies from the rest of the world seems to imply that God has some special purpose in respect to them. The term *camp* itself implies that theirs is only a *temporary* condition or arrangement, and that God has some better thing in store for them.

If our surmise that the Ancient Worthies will some day attain the spirit nature be true, we can readily see that it will not be necessary for them to die in order to [R5183 : page 53] attain that plane of existence. If those members of the Body of Christ, who are living in the time of His Second Presence can be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," so could the Ancient Worthies have their change. If they were thus changed from the human plane to the spirit plane, they would be exchanging a perfect human nature for a perfect spirit nature as a reward for faithfulness in the service of the Lord.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD THE LAUDABLE AMBITION IN THE KINGDOM

Under the beneficent rule of the Kingdom, we may be very sure that the Lord's arrangement will be an equitable one – a fair chance for every one of the human race. It is reasonable to suppose that the general line laid down in the Scriptures will be followed respecting the earth. It is written, "The earth hath He given to the children of

men." (Psa. 115:16.) The race as a whole will have possession of the earth. God has not made any allotments. Every man will have a share in the commonwealth.

The changes will come about gradually. There will be inequalities of brain and muscle; but the Kingdom will even up these differences. There will always be some kind of incentive to energy. Either there will be an impetus of some sort, or else there will be some sort of punishment to help people along. The Lord will hold out certain inducements to those who are willing to co-operate along the line of advancement, and will impose stripes, punishments, to assist those who will not be induced otherwise. Both rewards and punishments will be in operation during the Millennium.

Looking back over the history of the world, we see that selfishness has been a great evil; yet at the same time it has worked wonders. If it were not for ambition and acquisitiveness, man would not be much above the animals. We are, therefore, to consider these qualities to be great blessings, when rightly exercised. Under the rule of the Kingdom, all possible blessings of mind and body will be held out to the obedient, so that the trend of selfishness will be offset by a more laudable ambition than at present; and as mind and body develop, the standards of humanity will rise higher, and selfishness will be more and more seen to be contemptible. When perfection is attained, everything will be done for the glory of the Lord rather than for earthly name and fame.

Gradually all mankind will come into fellowship with the Kingdom, and indirectly become associated with the Kingdom itself. Just as any good man helps the government, so all mankind will be blessed in proportion as they approve and uphold the Divine arrangements. Thus the Kingdom will be spreading for the thousand years, not only from one individual to another, but gradually back to full perfection. We read that "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:7.) It will conquer everything

before it; nothing shall stop it. After every evil thing has been destroyed, every creature in Heaven and in earth will be heard praising God. (Rev. 5:13.) Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Phil. 2:10,11), and His Kingdom shall be without an opponent "from the river unto the ends of the earth." – Psa. 72:8.

FUTURE WORK OF THE CHRIST

After the thousand years shall have been finished, the Kingdom will cease in the sense that Christ will deliver the authority over to the Father. (I Cor. 15:24.) This will not mean, however, that law and order will be disregarded as they have been during the reign of sin and death. The Messianic Kingdom will by that time have helped mankind out of their fallen condition; and therefore it is the Divine purpose that Messiah relinquish this subordinate Kingdom, in order that it may merge into the Empire of the Great Jehovah, of which it will ever after be a part.

Justice then will operate. Mercy will no longer be required; and the Heavenly Father will not then be pictured as a merciful King to His creatures. They will by that time be perfect so that they will *need* no mercy; and they will be glad to meet all the requirements of the Divine Government, and in so doing will be blessed.

Having terminated this work of the restitution of mankind to the plane of human perfection, our Lord and the Church will not be left without an occupation. Our Lord will continue, according to the Scriptures, to be at the right hand of the Majesty on High – next to the Father. After He has relinquished the oversight of earthly affairs, He will assume once more the position of Associate Administrator of the Universe, in connection with the Heavenly Father.

We are not to suppose, however, that the Father and the Lord will be kept busy hearing and deciding cases and in administering justice. Nothing of the kind will be necessary. The equilibrium will

be such that there will be no necessity for deciding cases. The government of the Universe will go on so smoothly as to be practically without a head, and yet there will be *the Head* – Jehovah [R5183 : page 54] Himself. Next in authority to the Father will be the Son, and next to the Son will be the Church. What work will thenceforth progress is not revealed to us, except in a very indefinite manner.

Through the aid of the telescope, we understand that the fixed stars are suns, each of which seems to have its own planetary system. It is only reasonable for us to infer that, if God made this earth a planet to be inhabited, all other planets will sometime be inhabited also; and that they will be under obligation to the Heavenly Father as a part of His wonderful Universe. So far as we can understand, the power of Jehovah is boundless. When we consider the hundreds of millions of suns and planets beyond the power of human mind to comprehend, than it is reasonable to assume that the work of The Christ will be limitless; and that some such work for creatures yet unborn will be their blessed privilege to all eternity. We wonder in amazement at the magnitude of God's goodness to us, who has lifted us up from our low condition and who will exalt to future glories interminable those faithful ones who make sure their calling and election to glory, honor and immortality.

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