

Thy Will Be Done on Earth

"God shall send Jesus, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, spoken of by all the prophets"—Acts 3:30

THAT CHRIST will return to earth, no one who believes in the inspiration of the Scriptures can deny. As he ascended to heaven before the eyes of his wondering disciples, hardly had his form disappeared from view, when two angels suddenly appeared and told them:

"This same Jesus . . . SHALL SO COME in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Acts. 1:10-11.

The hope of the reward to be received at his return became the outstanding desire and expectation of the true Christians of every age. This hope is stated by Paul in Col. 3:4—

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, THEN shall ye also appear with him in glory."

To the earnest, enlightened watcher for Christ's return, this hope is more than a mere expectation of a marvellous event; it is a *burning, impelling desire*, not only that he come, but that such a one be fully prepared, *waiting and longing* for that coming.

The purifying effect of this hope is shown by one of Christ's beloved apostles in 1 John 3:2-3—

"We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him . . . And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

The apostle Paul tells us that—

"Christ, was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation"—Heb. 9:28.

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IT SHOULD be evident to all, that if we are to look for him in the true scriptural sense, we must know the PURPOSE of his coming. That purpose is explained by Peter—

"And He (God) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

From this scripture testimony we note the following facts—

1. Christ is to remain in heaven until a DEFINITE TIME, then to return to earth.
2. This return is to occur at a time fixed in the purpose of God for the restitution or restoration of certain things, a restoration promised through ALL God's prophets.
3. This restoration of things spoken of by the prophets is to be accomplished by Jesus Christ when he returns to earth.

To determine what Christ is to do when he returns, we need only to discover *what it was the prophets said would be restored*. To say a thing is to be RESTORED, it is evident that it once existed and is now in a state of decay or dissolution. What did the prophets predict would be restored?

In the beginning God created everything "very good," Peace, purity and contentment reigned supreme. Man, in a state of innocence, was in perfect harmony with his Creator. The earth and all that it contained, was just as God intended.

But sin entered. The earth and man upon it were cursed. The scheme of things God had provided for man was wrecked. Man was estranged from his Maker and became a sinful, dying creature, without hope, except God should provide a way for his redemption.

God provided a way of redemption in the Seed promised to the woman, which should "bruise the serpent's head," or *destroy sin and its consequences*. But this restoration was not to be accomplished by sending individuals to heaven at death; not by sending the bulk of humanity to roast in hell fire for eternity, transporting the good to heaven and then burning up the earth! God by his prophet Isaiah (45:18) shows He has a different purpose—

"God himself that formed the earth . . . He created it not in vain. HE FORMED IT TO BE INHABITED;"

And, as we shall see, His final purpose is that it be inhabited by immortals.

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TO RESTORE the earth to Edenic blessedness by removing the curse which was placed upon it because of sin, is, in general, the purpose for which Christ is coming, for we are told in Rev. 22:3—

"For there shall be no more curse."

But the removal of the curse will involve *the establishment on earth of a divine government with Christ as King*. Through his rule over the nations of the earth for a thousand years, this purpose will be accomplished (1 Cor. 15:25-26)—

"For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

At the end of this reign, Christ's work having been fully accomplished, when all enemies, even sin and death, have been abolished, Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to the Father that "God may be all in all," as at the beginning—

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (1 Cor. 15:24).

The setting up of this kingdom requires the restoration of a number of things, the fulfilling of certain promises which God made by the mouth of His prophets:—

1. It involves the restoration of His ancient kingdom of Israel which is to be the "first dominion" of that kingdom. Christ had taught his apostles to expect this for they asked:

"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

In fact, he had told them (Matt. 19:28) that they would—

"Sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Moreover the angels told Christ's mother that God would—

"Give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever."—Luke 1:31-32.

2. This purpose involves the restoration of David's throne and kingdom as promised to David.—2nd Sam. 7; Acts 2:29-30; Eze. 21:27; Amos 9:8-15.

3. David's people, chastened, purged of the rebels, purified and sanctified, will be "planted in a place of their own to move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them ANY MORE (2 Sam. 7:10; Eze. 37:21-22).

Ezekiel, chap. 48, describes this "place" where the restored tribes of Israel will be settled, where a magnificent Temple, a "House of Prayer for all people," will be located, with Christ's twelve apostles reigning over them.

4. Jerusalem will be restored as the capital city of Christ's kingdom, which means that it will be the capital city of the world—Isa. 65:17-18; Jer. 3:17.

5. The land of Canaan, promised to Abraham, Christ and all that are Christ's will be restored forming the territory for the "first dominion" of the kingdom, which will eventually fill the whole earth.— Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; Gal. 3:27-29; Rom. 4:12-25.

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LET US note this work of restoration in the order in which it will occur at Christ's return:

1. Christ returns to the earth "as a thief."—Rev. 16:15.
2. The dead are raised.—1 Thess. 4: 13-17.
3. Christ sits in judgment upon all the responsible of mankind, when the righteous will be separated from the unrighteous.—Matt. 25:31 -46.
4. Immortality conferred upon the righteous; the rejected driven away in shame and contempt to suffer punishment, ending in eternal death.—Matt. 25:46; Dan. 12:2.
5. Christ will organize the accepted and immortalized saints into an army of world-conquerors to subdue the nations of the earth.—Rev. 2:26; Psa. 149:6-9.
6. Christ and the saints destroy the great confederacy of nations that come against the Holy Land at this time— Eze. 38; Dan. 11:40-45; Zech 14:1-12.
7. The "Everlasting Gospel" is proclaimed to all the world, calling upon all people to—

"Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; worship Him that made heaven & earth."

8. Many will submit (Eze. 38:23) immediately, but apparently the greater portion of earth's inhabitants must be subdued by fiery judgments, or else suffer destruction.

Many world rulers, Papal and Protestant apostate leaders, influenced and abetted by the false prophet, the Pope of Rome, will naturally oppose him who proclaims himself the imperial and ecclesiastical head of all the nations of the world. But their utter destruction is the reward of their folly. All opposition ceases, and the whole world submits to Christ. He is now "king over all the earth," the true "Pope" or spiritual Father, of all people—Is. 9:6; Rev. 19:11-21; Ps. 72:11.

9. Peace and righteousness now bathes the earth from pole to pole. The nations will convert their weapons of war into implements of husbandry, and will study war no more, for the Prince of Peace is here.—Isa. 2:1-4.

In contrast to the injustice, inequality and oppression of human rule, will be justice, mercy and righteousness.—Isa. 11.

Instead of a multitude of sects, ignorance and superstition:

"They shall all know the Lord from the least to the greatest."

With one language and one religion, all will call upon the Name of the Lord with "one consent."—Zeph. 3:9-9-

Crime, corruption and violence will be suppressed, even ferocious animals and poisonous serpents will be tamed or eliminated, for saith the Spirit (Isa. 11:9)—

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain."

Poverty and misery will disappear, for there will be an abundance for all, equally distributed.—Psa. 72:1-4, 12-14.

Life will be not only delightful but greatly prolonged: one will be considered a child at 100 years old—Is. 65:20-23.

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"*Then cometh the end.*" In the 20th chapter of Revelation we have a symbolic picture of the beginning and the ending of Christ's reign. At the beginning Satan is bound, or sin, in its various manifestations among men, is restrained, to bring about that state of righteousness to which we have previously referred.

As Christ's rule nears the end "Satan is loosed a little season," which permits the exposure of what smouldering opposition to Christ remains. The last rebellion against divine authority is wiped out. There is a resurrection and judgment of those who had died during the Millennial reign. Every vestige of sin and its works is destroyed—

"There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away."—Rev. 21:4.

God will then be all in all. At the beginning there was only God; at the end—God. A thousand years' reign to make the world divine. This is what Christ will do when he comes.

What a glorious hope! May we now make our calling and election sure that we may have a share in the work of fulfilling God's glorious purpose on earth! —O.B.
