

The Golden Age

by G. Campbell Morgan

The Golden Age is a period of time when Christ will reign on earth, bringing peace, prosperity, and freedom from sin.

Scripture: Genesis 22:18, Psalm 72:1-4, Isaiah 11:1-4, Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 56:6-7, Isaiah 65:20, Amos 9:11-14, Zechariah 9:9, Luke 1:32-33, Romans 8:19-23

Topics: "The Reign of Christ", "Restoration and Peace"

Description

G. Campbell Morgan preaches about 'The Golden Age,' a future time when Christ will reign personally over the earth, bringing peace, justice, and restoration. He emphasizes the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel's restoration and the blessings that will flow from Christ's reign, including the transformation of nature and society. Morgan describes a world where righteousness prevails, children play safely, and the earth is freed from the curse of sin, highlighting the significance of Christ's authority as both King and Judge. He encourages believers to anticipate this glorious future while experiencing the blessings of Christ's reign in their lives today.

Transcript

ANTICHRIST destroyed, Israel restored, and Satan bound-the personal reign of Christ will begin. Of that reign it is difficult to give anything approaching a full and direct description. A study of Old Testament prophecy may help Bible students to form some idea of the glories of that time. Let us look at a few of the chief features as thus revealed, considering first the Millennium¹ order, and then taking some glimpses at the blessings resulting.

Jesus will be King, in as direct and positive a sense as any ruler the world has ever known, but much larger empire and more autocratic sway. He will be Judge as well as King, and the final Arbitrator in any disputes that may arise among men. In Luke i. 32, 33, we read:

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; end of His kingdom there shall be no end."

That announcement made to Mary concerning Jesus has never yet been fulfilled, but will be when the time comes for His personal reign.

He will be the King of God's ancient people gathered to Jerusalem; and, through them, the Governor of the whole earth. Psalm lxxii. has first application to King Solomon, but can only find lasting fulfillment in Jesus Christ. It opens with the words,

Give the King Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the King's Son.

Then, in verses 8, 9 we have this prediction,

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; And His enemies shall lick the dust."

In Zech. ix. 9 we read,

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass."

The next verse contains a quotation from the Psalm just mentioned which confirms the application of that Psalm to Christ, because He has already literally fulfilled the foregoing words of Zechariah which speak of the mode of Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

The remainder of the prophecy in that latter verse will be fulfilled in the Millennium.

Zechariah viii. 1-8 reveals the centre of government.

Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

Palestine, reinhabited by the nation of Israel, is to be redivided; and each tribe will return, not to the section of land previously occupied, but to a portion which stretches from the seaboard across the land. Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, and will possess a temple far larger and more magnificent than before, the size of which is given by Ezekiel. The city will not merely be the seat of rule exercised over Israel; but the metropolis of government for the whole earth, and the centre for the world-wide worship of God. In the past its sacrifices and oblations pointed on to Christ ; but these, restored it! the Millennium, will be offered in memory of the work which Jesus accomplished by His Cross. In Jerusalem Christ's laws and decisions are to be made and given; and from thence edicts will go forth affecting the whole of mankind.

All Gentile nations will come into a place of blessing as a result of this restored nationality of Israel. You will find promise of this in Gen. xxii. 18:

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

That prophecy has never been realized, except, to some extent, in the first advent of Christ; but it awaits complete and very literal fulfillment in the age to come. The same truth is taught in Isa. lvi. 6, 7:

"Also the strangers, that join themselves to the Lord, to minister unto Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast by My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on Mine altar: for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples."

As to the method of government, all the nations of the earth will be subdued to Christ's rule and will pay tribute to Jerusalem and to its King. It does not necessarily follow that they will all be loyal in heart. Sin will still be upon the earth, but held in repression, to be dealt with at the close of the Millennium.

The great deceiver of the nations having been bound, and cast for a thousand years into the abyss, Christ will exercise autocratic rule through His chosen administrators: that is, through His ancient people, and, in some measure, through His heavenly people, the Church, who will be associated with Him in His reign over the earth. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2).

Having thus briefly considered the Millennium¹ order, let us endeavor to see some of its glorious advantages by reference to the visions of the prophets. Amid the groaning of oppressed men under the foolish and iniquitous forms of government which have blighted human life, how we long for a single Authority, just and final. That is exactly what the earth will have for a thousand years, when the One, rejected of old, is King in actuality.

The principles which will regulate government in that age are briefly and clearly stated in Isa. xi. 1-4:

"And there shall come forth a Branch out of the stock of Jesse, and a Branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."

Then for the first time in the history of man, righteousness and judgment will be perfectly wedded. Today the law, made for the sinner, too often hits the saint. Human judgment is always given upon evidence which result from a fallible seeing of the eye and hearing of the ear. But Christ, as an omniscient, as well as omnipotent Judge, will know the secret inward motives of the hearts of men. When cases are brought to Him by His administrators, His decision will, therefore, be perfect in equity. "With righteousness shall He judge the poor." He shall pronounce His sentence strictly on the basis of that intimate knowledge which cannot characterize the judgments of this age, under limited forms of government. We sometimes say oppressed nations need mercy and pity. Nay, it is rather strict, impartial judgment that is required. The most merciful thing in the economy of God is, that when His King comes to execute judgment and truth, the exercise of these attributes will be based upon His infinite, unmistakable knowledge of the hearts,

thoughts, and intents of men.

Another phase of blessing is revealed in Rom. viii. 19-23:

"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Creation is to be freed from its groaning and travailing in pain; the blight upon nature will be removed ; and a perfect manifestation of its beauty will take the place of all it now suffers in company with fallen humanity. Turning to Old Testament words on the subject, read Isa. xi. 6-9:

"And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

You cannot spiritualize that passage. It is a plain statement of the fact that, under the sway of our Redeemer, the ferocity of wild beasts shall depart, and nature itself shall feel the blessed influence of the reigning Prince of Peace.

I have been asked whether the Golden Age will be marked by dietetic abstinence from flesh; While I do not believe in vegetarianism for to-day, except under certain conditions, I may express the belief that nature itself will then be free from everything which savors of cruelty; for, "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." Certain it is that the lower animals will be vegetarians, for, "The lion shall eat straw like the ox."

I dare not linger upon these attractive pictures of nature restored, but must take them in rapid sequence.

Isa. XXX. 24, 25: "The oxen likewise and the young asses that till the ground shall eat savory provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. And there shall be upon every lofty mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall."

Isa. xli. 18-20: "I will 'open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."

Isa. lxxv. 25: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox: and dust shall be the serpent's meet. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord."

These passages, taken almost at haphazard from among many, are predictions of what shall surely come to pass. When man, God's crowning work, first sinned, he dragged down all creation in his fall ; but when Jesus shall come again, to reign in the power of His Cross, Passion, and Atonement (for that is to be the strength of His rule), then the whole creation shall feel the touch of His presence, and shall respond to His redemptive work. Ferocity shall be driven from the beasts, roses shall bloom in the desert; and the whole of nature which to-day is blighted and cursed by sin shall be perfected in beauty, because the King, Who has redeemed man and the earth, shall Himself be Governor.

What of man in that period of the Millennium? His physical being is to share in the general blessedness:

Isa lxxv. 20: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old, and the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

Premature death shall be unknown, and physical vitality shall be strong and generous. There are three verses which speak of the children under the reign of Jesus.

Psa. lxxii. 4: "He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy."

Isa. xi. 8: "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den."

Zech. viii. 6: "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

What is the King's ideal for child-life? Play! With what shall they play? With that from which to-day we carefully and necessarily guard our little ones. "The weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den" ; while a little dimpled fist shall be entwined in the mane of the lion to lead about that royal playmate! What a glorious picture of childlife in the day of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ!

In Isa. lxxv. 21, 22 we have a glimpse of millennial social conditions:

"They shall build houses"--well, that goes on now "and inhabit them." The persons who do this to-day are few and far between. "They shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree shall be the days of My people, and My chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

It will be a great change; but when Jesus is King, profit shall go to the toilers.

There will also be unparalleled commercial activity:

Zech. xiv. 20, 21: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLY UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto the Lord of Hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall eat of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts"

The sanctuary will be free from the trafficker, and the trade of the nation will be characterized by being "Holy unto the Lord." Another note to the same effect is sounded in Ezek. xxxiv. 24-26:

"And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land"--that is, men who prey upon the people shall then have no existence --"and they shall dwell securely in the wilderness,

and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in its season; there shall be showers of blessing."

See the security of life under the government of Jesus, when men sleep in the woods with no sense of dread. A closing glimpse comes through Amos ix. 11, 13, 14:

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old. . . . Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them."

A poetic description of the prosperity that shall attend man's labors in the coming days of the King.

I have found it increasingly difficult to confine myself to a comprehensive view of topics, any one of which might have occupied more than a whole chapter of this book. I have tried to give a general survey of the years when nature shall be freed from the curse; man realize full physical strength; profits go to the toilers; commerce be consecrated to God; men dwell in security; prosperity bring the plowman upon the heels of the reaper; and, above all, when missionary enterprise shall be at its highest and best-when God's ancient people shall go forth to all lands with the story of the Cross for the healing of the nations; when, hearing that story, men of distant lands shall take hold upon him that is a Jew, and shall say-" We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

These glimpses of happy times to come require me to repeat that sin will not be exterminated during that period; but instead of being rampant, as it is to-day, daring to lift its head and laugh in the face of righteousness, it shall lick the dust and be kept in check by the presence of the Master. Then shall men know, as never before, the possibilities of humanity and of the earth under the righteous reign of God's own King.

In conclusion, it is always of practical value to know God's ways of dealing with men. If all this is to happen under the reign of Jesus by and by, surely those who have already crowned Him King may, even to-day, know something of the blessedness of the reign that is coming.

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