

The Manifestation of Christ, as a Savior to His People, a Cause of Great Joy.

by John Gill

The manifestation of Christ as King and Saviour brings great joy to the spiritual Israel, as he delivers them from sin and wrath to come and brings them salvation.

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 12:40, Isaiah 25:9, Zechariah 9:9, Luke 2:10

Topics: "The Kingship of Christ", "Joy in Salvation"

Description

John Gill preaches about the profound joy that comes from the manifestation of Christ as the Savior of His people, drawing parallels between the joy in Israel at David's kingship and the greater joy found in Jesus Christ, the King Messiah. He emphasizes that this joy stems from Christ's work of salvation, which includes atonement for sins and the imputation of righteousness, making it accessible to all, including the chief of sinners. Gill explains that this joy is spiritual in nature, arising from faith in Christ, and is meant to be a constant experience for believers, culminating in eternal joy in the presence of God.

Transcript

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST,

AS A SAVIOUR TO HIS PEOPLE,

A CAUSE OF GREAT JOY.

1 CHRONICLES 12:40.

For there was joy in Israel.

In this chapter we have an account of the association of great multitudes of the people of Israel unto David: first in his exile, when he was obliged to flee from Saul, and was persecuted by him from place to place. In different places, whither he was obliged to retire, many came unto him; as, at the cave of Adullam, in the hold in the wilderness, and at Ziklag. The names, numbers, and characters of those persons that gathered together to him at these several times and places, are mentioned in the beginning of this chapter.

In the latter part of it, we have an account of the tribes, that came to him at Hebron to make him King over all Israel; (1 Chron. 12:23). These are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord. All these men of war that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David King over all Israel (1 Chron. 12:38). This was after he had reigned over Judah seven years and an half.

Upon this, there was a feast made for this great company; and there they were with David three days, eating and drinking what David had provided for them. Those at Hebron, those of the tribe of Judah, with the assistance of others, brought bread, meat, meal, cakes of figs, bunches of raisins and wine and oil, with oxen and sheep abundantly: for the inhabitants of Hebron, and the tribe of Judah, were not sufficient to have regaled this great company. Then follow the words I have read; For there was joy in Israel.

The civil war, between the house of Saul and that of David, was now ended. The man, who was the darling of the people; who was a wise prince and a successful general; who had the good of his country at heart; and from whose administration the people had raised expectations, being now, by divine appointment, made King over all the tribes, there was joy in Israel. But great as that joy was, there is abundant reason for much greater in the spiritual Israel, on account of David's illustrious son, the King Messiah, the Saviour of his people; whom God hath set, as King, over his holy hill of Zion, and given intimations of his Kingly office in various prophecies of the Old Testament.

For thus it is written: Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem. Behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation (Zech. 9:9). It is also intimated in prophecy, what should be said upon this joyful occasion. This is our God, we have waited for him; and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation (Isa. 25:9). It is in this view of the words, that I shall endeavour a spiritual improvement of them, by showing, I.

The cause of joy in Israel, with relation to the King Messiah, the Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ. II. Where, and among whom, this joy is and will be. And, III. The nature of this joy: by which it may be judged, in some measure, whether it is pure and genuine, in those who profess to have it. I. I shall consider the cause, the reason, the matter of this joy, as it relates to the King Messiah, the Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ: and this with respect to every manifestation of him, as the King, the Saviour of Israel.

First, in the Flesh; then in his coming to his people at conversion; and then in the latter day, both in his spiritual and personal reign. At each of these periods there has been, is, and will be great joy; and that more abundantly than when David was made King over all Israel. 1. His coming in the flesh is a matter of joy, as he then appeared King of Israel, and the Saviour thereof. He came as a King; not as a temporal, but as a spiritual one. The Jews expected him as a temporal King; and it is very probable the wise men of the East, had no other notion of him, when being led by the star, they came and inquired where he was, that was born King of the Jews.

But though he was a King, as he confessed to Pilate, yet he was not a temporal monarch. His kingdom, as he told him plainly, was not of this world. His kingdom came not with external pomp and grandeur. He appeared, not as a temporal prince, with majesty and glory; but in the form of a servant. He came, not to be ministered unto, to be served and waited upon in a grand and pompous manner; but to minister; to be a servant, and to give his life a ransom for many. In short, his being King in Israel, is no other than being the Redeemer and Saviour of his people.

For he came not to judge the world, to rule and govern it, in the manner as kings and princes do: but to save the world so that the work he wrought, as a Saviour, as the King of Israel, and deliverer of his people, was, truly speaking, the cause of joy. There was joy in Israel upon his appearance as the King of Israel. Now, as such his business was, in general, to work out salvation; in particular to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and to make atonement for the sins of his people: all which lay a solid foundation for joy in the spiritual Israel, or among the people of God, who have any notion of these things.

His great work was to procure salvation for his people: for that is the thing on account of which the church is called upon to rejoice at his coming. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! for thy King cometh having salvation. Salvation! that is the thing which is the source, the foundation of spiritual joy in Israel: the salvation of the souls of men. Thus the apostle Peter stiles it; Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Your Souls, which are so valuable and excellent, of more worth than the whole world: and by how much the soul is more excellent than the body, by so much the more great and excellent is the salvation of the one than the other: and, therefore, the greater reason for joy.

If a corporal salvation lay a foundation for joy, as it often does; then much more the salvation of the soul; which is wrought out by Jesus Christ. This is an eternal salvation. God, as the God of nature and providence, is our King and our God, working salvation in the midst of the earth. He is the author of every deliverance therein, and on that account to be praised; and gladness appeals in those who are sharers therein. But the salvation that Christ, as our King, and our God, is the author of, or has wrought out for his spiritual Israel, is a spiritual and eternal salvation.

Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; and therefore justly occasions great rejoicing. This is a salvation from sin, and from wrath to come, from eternal death, and from every spiritual enemy. It is a salvation from sin. Christ is called by the name of Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins. From the sin of their nature, or original sin; and all consequences of it from actual transgression; sins of heart, lip, and life of omission and commission, greater, and lesser sins.

Christ saves from them all. It was foretold of him that he should redeem Israel from all his iniquities. The salvation wrought out, is a salvation from wrath to come, which sin is deserving of; on account of which it is revealed from heaven, and comes upon the children of disobedience; and every sinner may expect it. Christ saves his people from wrath to come. Being justified by his blood and righteousness, they are saved from wrath through him. In short, they are saved from hell, death, and every enemy whatever; and therefore, there is great reason for joy in Israel.

This work of salvation is what his divine Father called him to, and gave into his hands. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: he means the work of salvation. God sent him in the fullness of time, to be the Saviour of men. He came into this world, to seek and to save them that were lost: lost in Adam, even in his fall. He is become the author of eternal salvation. He has obtained eternal redemption for his people, and that by himself, without the assistance of any creature, angel, or man.

His own arm hath wrought salvation. It is a complete work. Now it is matter of great joy in Israel, that Christ is come as a King and a Saviour; and hath wrought out salvation; And the rather, in as much as this salvation is for sinners; and for the chief of sinners. It is for sinners; and indeed, none else could stand in need of it; nor do any but sensible sinners see their need of it. The whole need not a physician, a Saviour, but they that are sick. Christ came not to call the righteous, self-righteous persons, that imagine their own righteousness will be sufficient to justify them: he came not to call these, but sinners to repentance.

This salvation is for the chief of sinners. If it were for sinners of such and such a size only, whose lives were not tarnished with any notorious crime; or who had lived very regular lives, and had committed only some few faults that are common to all mankind: had this been the case, Saul the persecutor, the blasphemer, the injurious person, would have had no part in this matter: but it was the foundation of his faith, hope, and joy, that this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

The Corinthians, of whom the apostle says, such were some of you (having given a list of the vilest sinners that ever lived), would not have been washed, sanctified, and justified, had Christ wrought out salvation for sinners only of such or such a size: but it is for the worst and vilest of sinners, that this salvation is wrought out. It is to be had freely; and that is another cause of joy in Israel. Salvation is by the free grace of God, not by works. If it were only for persons so and so disposed: so and so qualified; or who had done such and such works of righteousness; there would be great reason for despondency in the minds of many persons: but it is not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.

Not of works, lest any man should boast. Salvation, and the blessings of it, may be had freely. For though our Lord exhorts persons to come and buy of him gold tried in the fire, and white raiment, expressive of grace and the blessings of it; they are to be bought without money, and without price. The salvation that Christ hath wrought out, as King, which occasions joy in Israel, is a great salvation; it cannot be said how great it is. Eternity itself is not enough to set forth the greatness thereof.

How then shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Salvation wrought out by the great God; a salvation wrought out for great sinners, obtained at a great expense, even the precious blood of Jesus: for we are bought or redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold: but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. A salvation expressive of the greatest love; of the love of the Father, in giving his Son: and of the Son in giving himself; and it is hard to say, which is the greatest.

A salvation complete. A salvation of the whole man, soul and body. A salvation from every sin, and from every spiritual enemy. A salvation to the utmost; a salvation that secures grace here, and glory hereafter; and on account of which, those who share in it, are said to be complete in Christ. This is a salvation in which the glory of God is greatly concerned, as well as the interest of his people secured. The glory of all the divine perfections are secured in this salvation.

Mercy and truth here meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. The angels saw this, and praised the Lord at Christ's incarnation: they sung, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men. On account of this great salvation, wrought out by the King of Israel, when he appeared in our world, there was joy in Israel, and good reason for it. A particular branch of his work, as King of Israel, was the working out an everlasting righteousness for his people.

When he is prophesied of as the King of Israel, that should appear in the fulness of time, he is spoken of under this character; The Lord our Righteousness. It is said, the Lord will raise up to David a righteous Branch; and a King shall reign and prosper. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the name, whereby this King, this righteous Branch, shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness (Jer. 23:5, 6). He is the author of righteousness, and his work was to bring in everlasting righteousness.

He came into this world to fulfil all righteousness: not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. He is the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes: and this causes joy. Hence says the church, I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10). In the like exulting strain does she express herself in another place, Surely in the Lord have I righteousness; and in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory (Isa. 45:24, 25): make their boast, rejoice, and be glad, that they have a righteousness in Christ, and are justified by it.

This righteousness is truly called in Scripture, the righteousness of God; because he that wrought it is God as well as man. Hence the apostle, speaking of the gospel, says, Herein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith. And again, The righteousness of God is unto all, and upon all them that believe. A righteousness it is which God the Father approves, and is well pleased with; because quite agreeable to his law, and to his justice. He therefore imputes it freely to his people, without works.

This righteousness is entirely agreeable to the law of God, and answerable to all its demands: for though its commands are exceeding broad, this righteousness is of equal extent. The law indeed is said to be magnified by it, and made honorable: more honorable than it could have been by the most perfect obedience of angels, or of men. It is a righteousness with which the justice of God can find no fault; but is entirely satisfied with. Those that are justified by it are without fault, even before the throne of God, as the Judge of all the earth: for, by this righteousness, they are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses: they are acquitted from all sins.

Those whom God clothes with change of raiment, or with his righteousness; he causes all their iniquities to pass away. They are without spot and blemish; and hence they are accepted with God, through his righteousness. They are comely, through that comeliness put upon them. This is matter of joy; and the rather, because this righteousness is to be had freely. Those whom God justifies by it, are in themselves ungodly. He imputes righteousness to them without works; without any consideration of any works of theirs.

It is a gift which they receive of him; and proceeds from the abundance of grace. It is by faith that this gift is received; even righteousness from the God of our salvation. The grace of faith, by which a soul receives this righteousness from the Lord, is also the gift of God. In virtue of this righteousness being imputed, and applied to the soul by faith, it enjoys much solid peace and comfort. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. The effect of this righteousness is peace, quietness, and assurance for ever.

These are not the effects of a man's own righteousness, or of works done by himself; for they yield no satisfaction, when he reflects upon the impurity of them, and upon the imperfection that is in them: but the righteousness of Christ lays a solid foundation for peace. Hence the kingdom of God is said to consist not in meat and drink, but in righteousness and peace: first righteousness, then peace. The righteousness of Christ imputed and applied: then solid peace and comfort.

This righteousness entitles to eternal life; and it is only the righteousness of Christ that can give this title. The justification therefore that arises from it, is called the justification of life. Now all these, and many other things, that might he said of this work of righteousness which Christ hath wrought, lay a solid foundation for joy in Israel. We may observe, before we conclude this head, that the work of Christ, as our King and Saviour, was to make atonement for sin; to finish transgression, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

He came into our world, in our nature, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. God set him forth in predictions, and sent him forth in the fulness of time to be a propitiatory sacrifice for sin. Propitiation is made by him and believers, by faith receive it. This causes joy in Israel; for we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement: received it in our hearts, and so feel great joy on that account: and there is great reason for it; since Christ hath done that which the blood of millions of slain beasts could not do: namely, take away sin, or make atonement for it.

This he hath done by the sacrifice of himself: he, by one offering, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. This sacrifice is of a sweet smelling savor to God; and therefore must occasion joy in Israel. It is the work of Christ manifest in the flesh, that is the cause of great joy in Israel. 2. The spiritual coming of Christ in the hearts of his people at conversion, is another event, that causes joy in Israel. In conversion he breaks open the everlasting doors of their hearts, and enters in as the King of glory; sets up his throne; forms a governing principle in the soul, which reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life by him.

This occasions great joy. When Christ is revealed as a Redeemer and Saviour; when he is made manifest in the hearts of his people, as the hope of glory; it occasions joy to a poor sensible sinner, who before thought himself just ready to perish; having scarce any hope at all of being saved; there being nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation to consume him, justly, because of his sins. Now to have Christ revealed to him as a Saviour, to have hopes of pardoning mercy, and of a perfect righteousness through him; what joy must this create in his soul? as in the first followers of our Lord; who, when they had found him, cried out with an ecstasy of joy, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.

So Nathaniel speaks of him, in a rapture, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel! that is, the Redeemer and Saviour of men. Thus it was with Zaccheus, when the Lord called him by name, and bid him come down: it is said, he came down, and received him joyfully. Thus it was with the three thousand, who cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do? What will become of us? Is there any hope? An intimation being given that there was pardon through the blood of Christ, they gladly received the word.

And thus it is with every sensible sinner, into whose heart Christ comes: there is great joy on that account. Similar joy is also experienced by the saints, in the manifestations of divine favor after desertion. When Christ has withdrawn himself from his people, when they do not enjoy that communion with him as they used to have; when, they seek him earnestly, in this and the other ordinance, and at last find him; then they adopt the church's words in the Song of Solomon, I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me: all which is expressive of the joy of a sinner on finding the Beloved.

Thus it was with the disciples of our Lord, when he had been absent from them; of whom it is said, Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. And every true believer is so, after a time of darkness and desertion, when he is visited again with his sensible presence: for Christ is his all. None in heaven or upon earth like him; and he stands in every endearing relation to his people; and he never pays them a visit, but he brings something along with him, which occasions joy.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you. Whenever he comes he always brings something with him, which renders him welcome unto them. But, 3. In the latter day, when Christ will be more manifest, and, like David, will be King over all the house of Israel, and over the whole world; then there will

be joy and gladness. In the spiritual reign of Christ it will be so, The four and twenty elders; that is, the ministers of the gospel church will fall down, and give thanks to him that sits upon the throne; because he has taken to himself his great power, and reigns.

There will be joy in Israel, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; when he will destroy Antichrist, with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming. Then prophets, evangelists, and all the saints will be called upon to rejoice and be glad, because God hath shewed his justice in taking vengeance on Antichrist, and the Antichristian states. Read the first and sixth verses of the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, and you will see what joy there will be in Israel on that account.

There will be joy in Israel, when the Jews shall be converted; when the Lord's ancient bride, the church, shall be ready, and there will be a grant for her to be clothed with fine linen, clean and white, and then will be the marriage of the Lamb: when Gentiles, in all parts of the earth, will be converted, and called upon to rejoice. Great joy there will be in Israel, in his spiritual reign when there will be so much increasing light in the world: yea, when the whole earth will be enlightened with the glory of the uncreated Angel of God's presence; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; when the watchmen, and all the saints, shall see eye to eye, in a wonderful manner; when there shall be peace and harmony among the people of God, Ephraim shall no more vex Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim: when brotherly love, according to the name of the Philadelphian church state, shall take place; when holiness shall be common among all that name the name of Christ; when the kingdom of Christ shall be enlarged from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; when he will be King over all the earth; and when there shall be One Lord, and his name one.

Was there great joy in Israel, because David was made King over all the tribes of Israel? much greater will the joy be, when Christ shall be King over all the earth and much more when he shall appear, personally, without sin. unto salvation; when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and when Christ shall take up his residence among his people when there will be no more sorrow, no more pain, and all tears wiped away from their eyes. There shall be great joy in Israel, when Christ shall reign before his ancients in Jerusalem gloriously; and they also with him, in glory; which state will issue in ultimate happiness.

Then those who are made Kings and Priests unto God shall be in his presence, where is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. We must now inquire, II. Where, and among whom, is this joy? In Israel. This, in a spiritual sense, we must understand, not of the people of the Jews only, who were of the natural stock of Israel; but of the Gentiles also, that are of the spiritual Israel of God. There was joy among them, on account of Christ's appearance in human nature as King of Israel: for his incarnation was not only on account of the Jews, or his people among them; but of the Gentiles also.

Therefore, the angels that brought the news, declared, they brought good tidings of great joy to all people (Luke 2:10, 11). The death of Christ was not for the Jews only, or for the Lord's people among them; no, not for that nation only, but to gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad: Christ became the propitiation, not only for the sins of the Jews (as John says), but for the sins of the whole world; that is, for all the elect of God, without difference.

So there is joy in Israel, not among the Jews only, but among the Gentiles also, the whole Israel of God. This is especially the case with every true Israelite, when Christ is revealed in him, the hope of glory; for it is an ingredient in the character of a true believer: We are, says the apostle, the circumcision who worship

God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Among these Christ reigns, as King. He is set as King, upon the holy hill of Zion.

There he is acknowledged as King. The church says, The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us. These rejoiced in him, as their King; agreeable to that command, Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King (Ps. 149:2). Here the gospel is preached, glad tidings of peace and salvation by Jesus Christ, which occasions joy in Israel. Here the ordinances are administered; which, to those that believe, are means of joy and gladness. This may be said of Baptism; and the ordinance of the Supper is a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees well refined (Isa. 25:6).

There was a great feast on account of David's being made King over all the tribes; and this occasioned joy in Israel. But we have a greater feast than that, which the Lord hath prepared for his people in Sion; and it is the cause of greater joy. Here is a feast of fat things for his people to feed upon, in commemoration of what the King of Israel, the Saviour, has wrought for them. There will be joy in Israel in the latter day, both in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ.

There will be great joy, when there shall be but one fold, and one Shepherd: when David's son and Antitype, the King Messiah, shall rule over all the elect. Then they will be called upon to rejoice; as it is written, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. III. I shall now say something of the nature of this joy in Israel, on account of these things: but here I shall be very brief. This joy is not carnal, or concerning carnal things: it is of a spiritual nature, and comes from the Spirit of God.

It is called the joy of our Lord; from its accompanying faith in Christ. Where there is faith, there is, more or less, joy, and as faith increases, so will joy; and therefore it is called, the joy of faith. Hence the apostle prays, that the Romans might be filled with joy and peace in believing; believing in him, as their atoning sacrifice, and their justifying righteousness. Joy comes through believing; and it is only believers in Christ, that have any real experience of this spiritual joy.

It is a joy that the world knows nothing of; a stranger intermeddles not with it: one that is a stranger to God, to Christ, and salvation by him, knows nothing at all of this joy. It is a joy that is unspeakable, and full of glory; that is better experienced than expressed; and sometimes it is so great that it cannot be told. As there is a sorrow in the saints, which is only expressed by sighs and groans, and cannot well be uttered; so there is a joy they cannot well express.

It is well said to be unspeakable, and full of glory. Believers rejoice in hope of the glory of God. It is a joy to be constantly exercised. Rejoice evermore, is an exhortation of the apostle. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice. There is always reason for rejoicing in the spiritual Israel, let their case and circumstances be what they may; as the prophet says, Although the fig-tree shall not blossom; neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Let the circumstances of believers be what they may, there is always occasion for joy. It is true, indeed, this joy may be, and often is interrupted: partly through the corruptions of nature; partly through the temptations of Satan; and partly through divine desertions; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. But, then, it may be again revived, and increased: according to that promise, The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord; and the poor among men shall rejoice in the holy One of Israel (Isa. 29:16).

Increase it may, partly by means of the word and ordinances but chiefly through fresh manifestations of interest in Christ, and the shedding abroad of his love in the heart. This joy will be, at last, full and complete. In the heavenly state, the true Israelites will be called to enter into the joy of their Lord; and will be introduced into his presence, where there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Let us now consider what experience we have had of this spiritual joy.

What sort of a joy is ours? Is it of this kind? Is it such as is attended with faith in Christ, which springs from a view of his work, what he hath done for us, his having wrought out salvation, brought in a righteousness, and made an atonement for our sins by his blood? Is it founded upon these things, or is it not? If we are partakers of this sort of joy, let it be our great concern to hold fast the rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end. It is pleasing in the sight of God, that we should be joyful, and express our gladness unto him. It should be our great concern to have this joy increased; and, that it may be so, let us make use of all the means which God hath appointed for the increase thereof.

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