

'The Lord Is There'

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of God's commitment to man and the conditions under which He will commit Himself, highlighting the role of Christ and the Cross in making way for God's presence in the Church.

Scripture: Ezekiel 48:35, Ephesians 2:19

Topics: "Commitment to God", "God's Presence"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks concludes his studies in Ezekiel by emphasizing the profound truth that 'The Lord is there,' which encapsulates God's ultimate purpose for humanity and creation. He explains that God desires to commit Himself to man, but this can only happen when man is free from the influence of Satan and is aligned with Christ, who represents the fulfillment of righteousness. Sparks highlights that for God to dwell among His people, the Church must understand God's purpose, His way, and the significance of the Cross. He stresses that the presence of God is contingent upon the glorification of Christ and the Church's alignment with divine principles. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper spiritual understanding and commitment to God's vision for His dwelling among us.

Transcript

Now this morning we have to bring these studies in Ezekiel to a close, and I think we cannot do better than come right to the end of the book itself. The last clause of this book reads like this: "And the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there." We might just put alongside of that some words from Ephesians, chapter two, verses nineteen to twenty-two: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in Whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." -

And the name of the city from that day shall be,

The Lord is there.

And, again, in Ephesians, at chapter three, verses seventeen through twenty-one: "So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him Who

is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations for ever and ever." -

And the name of the city from that day shall be,

The Lord is there.

The end to which all God's works move is this End. Everything that we have in these prophecies of Ezekiel points to the ONE END, "The Lord is there," but that is also true of the whole Bible. The whole Bible moves toward one end. It is the end for which all things were created, and that is the presence of God in fullness and in finality. The purpose of God is that He shall fill all things. So then the end is "The Lord is there."

Now there is one particular thing which is necessary for this end to be reached. God must be able to commit Himself to man. That is what God wanted to do at the beginning. It is perfectly clear in the beginning of the Book of Genesis that God wanted to commit Himself to man. He wanted to be with man. He wanted to trust man. He wanted to put all His interests into the hands of man; in a word, God wanted to trust Himself to man.

So the great question that is now before us is this, "To what kind of man will God commit Himself?" The whole Book of Ezekiel is the answer to that question. In the first place, the answer is given in a negative way. God will not commit Himself to that in which Satan has a place. From the beginning, Satan has always tried to put man in God's way. Satan had gained a place in the nation of Israel and in the nations outside, but man was made for the very purpose that God should be with him. However, Satan captured man, and he has made man the greatest hindrance to God; therefore, the glory is removed, and it goes right outside. Man as he is now defeats God's purpose. God cannot commit Himself to that kind of man. God will not commit Himself to that in which Satan has a place. Satan and his works had to be destroyed before God would commit Himself. The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil in order to make way for God, in order that God should have His place and reach His End, because God will not commit Himself to that which has not been judged in righteousness.

Now you will recall all that we have said about brass in these prophecies: the brass in the cherubims, the brass in the Man of brass, the brass of the great altar. God will not commit Himself to anything that has not been judged in righteousness. That is the negative side, but there is the positive side to our question. - To what will God commit Himself? - The positive answer has several aspects. Firstly, it is where Christ is on the other side of judgment. The Man in the Throne represents Christ as on the other side of judgment. There is a rainbow around that Throne. That rainbow is the symbol of redemption. In the Book of the Revelation, it is represented by the Lamb in the Throne. The Lamb is the Man and the Man is the Lamb. He is there as on the other side of judgment, and that is the first thing related to God committing Himself. I say, again, that God will commit Himself where Christ is on the other side of judgment - that is, where all judgment has been fulfilled.

Now you must study that with your New Testament in your hands. When Jesus went to His baptism, He said to John the Baptist: "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." His baptism was, as we know, a type of His Cross. Therefore, His baptism and the Cross represent the fulfillment of all righteousness - that is, through judgment the death of one man and the putting of a New Man beyond the reach of judgment. That is where we are by faith in Jesus Christ. That is where the Church is. In the beginning of the Letter to the Ephesians, the Church is seated together with Him in the

heavenlies. The Church is seen as on the other side of judgment because it has been raised together with Him. For the Church, all judgment is fulfilled. That is the first thing that makes way for glory in the Church. All judgment fulfilled, and that makes The Way for God to commit Himself.

Now to another aspect of God committing Himself: it is where Christ is Glorified. God will commit Himself where Christ is glorified. Here is a law of God. If God is to give Himself by His Spirit, then Jesus must be Glorified. When the glorifying of the Lord Jesus is our only object, then the Father will come in by the Spirit.

Then there is this third aspect. God will commit Himself where Jesus is enthroned in government. Where His Man is on the Throne and is Himself Governing, then God will commit Himself. Where all the authority committed to His Son is recognized and accepted, then God will commit Himself.

And then there is a fourth thing. God commits Himself where things are "according to Christ," where things take their measure from Christ. You see, these things are in this book of Ezekiel. We have been just looking at the House. We have not studied it in any detail, but what we do know about the House is that it was measured by the Man of brass. Where things take their measure from Christ, there God will commit Himself.

And then just one more thing: God will commit Himself where the Cross governs. We saw how the altar governed everything within and without the House. So where the Cross governs, God will commit Himself. The Lord Jesus is the great example of all this. God committed Himself to His Son. The Word says that God did not give His Spirit by measure to Jesus; that is, He gave His Spirit fully without any reserve to Him. When the meaning of the Cross has been laid down and established, then God commits Himself. That is God's ground.

You notice how Jesus measured everything according to heaven. We have so often pointed this out. Jesus would never be governed by the mind of man - He would never do anything, say anything, or go anywhere at the advice of man. He was all the time pushing away from Him the suggestions of men and women. He did that with regard to Satan, He did it with regard to everything. He pushed back everything that would come from man. He would only take His way and His words and His works from the Father. He measured everything according to Heaven. His was the closest walk with heaven. For every detail in His life, He took the government of heaven. Therefore, the Father committed Himself to the Son of Man.

And then we have His perfecting. He said: "I must work today and tomorrow, and the third day I must be perfected." We are told that He was made perfect through sufferings. Of course, we understand that this was not moral perfecting, for He was already perfect. It was not the making perfect of His nature, it was bringing Him to fullness, the fullness of the Will of God. He was walking every day in the Will of God. He said: "Lo, I come to do Thy Will." But the Will of God was making ever greater demands upon Him until, at last, the Will of God requires that He should drink the cup, that He should go through Gethsemane to the Cross. He was being made perfect or complete as to the Will of God; and when he was made perfect as to the Will of God, God gave Him that fullness for the Church. "God gave unto Him the Name which is above every name." God committed the Fullness of Himself to Him. I think that is all quite clear. Jesus Is The Great Example!

Now we bring this study to a close. We do so by noting three necessities for the end of God to be fully and finally reached. The Church must have three things. First of all, it must have a clear apprehension of God's purpose. It is absolutely necessary that the Church sees what God's purpose is. That is why Paul prayed

that great prayer for "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him," that the Church might have "the eyes of (its) heart enlightened." It is absolutely necessary that we have a clear apprehension of God's purpose, that purpose being that the Church should be the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, that God should have a full place in the Church. That is the first necessity - that we should see that, and that we should be governed by that vision. So it is a matter of spiritual vision or spiritual understanding, a revelation of God's purpose concerning the Church. This is why we read those scriptures at the beginning that the Church should be "a habitation of God through the Spirit," that God should be resident there and that it should be said, "The Lord is there," a dwelling of God. Unto that, we must see what God's purpose is.

The second thing is a clear apprehension of God's Way to His End, which is a clear apprehension of His House, a House suitable to Himself. That is an absolute necessity for God's End. And, thirdly, it is essential that the Church has a clear apprehension of the Cross. These three things are essential to the end that God shall be there!

Further, there are two aspects of those three things: there is the present progressive and the future perfect. Just at this present, this is not all fully true, and yet, what is in the Letter to the Ephesians has a present application. At present, this is only progressively true. That means that the Lord is more or less present as these things are true. Where there is a clear apprehension of His purpose, where there is a clear apprehension of His House, where there is a clear apprehension of the Cross, there you will find the Lord! At present, these things determine the measure in which the Lord is present, but the time is coming when these things will be complete, when He shall come to be Glorified in His saints. Then He will be manifested in His Church in fullness. And so you notice that at the end of Ezekiel, it is the city that is mentioned: "The Lord is there." The city represents the vessel in and through which God is present in government.

Well, we have given a broad outline. We have tried to make these lines as clear as possible, but comprehended in this outline there is a tremendous amount; and as I pass it over to you, I do say to you, "Go away and pray over it, do not just take it as some Bible study. Everything must have spiritual and practical value. So I say, brethren, pray over it, think over it, and ask the Lord to make it all true where you are."

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