

Prophetic Views of the Messiah's Kingdom

by Thomas Reade

The sermon explores the prophetic views of the Messiah's kingdom, emphasizing the importance of prayer and the outpouring of the Spirit in advancing the glory of the Church and the salvation of the world.

Scripture: Psalm 85:10, Isaiah 9:7, Isaiah 65:17, Ezekiel 47:1, Hosea 10:12, John 8:12, John 14:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Hebrews 9:28, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Kingdom Of God", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches on the prophetic views of the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, emphasizing the increase of His government and peace without end as foretold in Isaiah 9:7. The sermon delves into the believer's ability, through faith, to see the unseen glories revealed in God's word, which reason cannot grasp. It highlights the necessity of faith, prayer, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the Church's prosperity, holiness, and glory, as described in Ezekiel's vision of the temple and the living water symbolizing the Spirit's flow. The sermon encourages fervent prayer, unwavering trust in God's promises, and active participation in advancing the reign of grace on earth, leading to the ultimate fulfillment of God's kingdom.

Transcript

62. PROPHETIC VIEWS OF THE GLORY OF THE MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." Isaiah 9:7

As the astronomer, through his powerful telescope, discovers worlds unseen by the unassisted eye, so the believer in Jesus, through faith in the prophecies and promises of God's word, beholds these glories to be revealed, which the eye of reason has not seen, and which the natural understanding cannot comprehend.

How delightful is the study of the Holy Scriptures. Faith is the key which unlocks the treasury. Jesus is the sum and substance of the Sacred Volume. Jesus is the Sun, placed in the center of this system of grace and mercy; around whom, all his ransomed ones, move in willing obedience; from whom, they all derive their light and warmth; to whom, they are all attracted, by the powerful influence of his Spirit. But as in the natural, so in the spiritual system, there is a counter-tendency. If left for one moment to themselves, these ransomed ones would fly far off from the center. Nothing keeps them in the path of holiness, but the attractive influence of the Sun of Righteousness. How experimentally true are the words of the poet-

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love
Here 's my heart--O take and seal it,
Seal it from your courts above."

How glorious, how happy, will that period be, when the "law in the members shall no longer war against the law of the mind;" when only one influence will be exerted, the influence of holy love, ever drawing the heart nearer and nearer to Jesus, the source and center of felicity. This blessedness is now, in part, experienced by the true believer. It shall be more delightfully enjoyed in the reign of the millennium. But the fullness of this bliss is reserved for the heavenly state.

Is it not strange, that creatures, born for immortality, should be so indifferent to joys like these? Why is it so? The Bible tells us- because of unbelief. We are blinded by the god of this world. We are sunk in earth-born cares and pleasures. Like worms of the earth, we creep out of our holes, and crawl in the dust; when, like the eagle, we should be soaring upwards, until the earth disappears from our view. Alas! how fallen are we! Sin has marred the image of our God, in which man was originally created, and now we bear the image of the evil one. We are a compound of brute and devil.

This is a most unwelcome truth to the pride of the natural man. We would sincerely exalt ourselves to the highest pitch of excellence; at the very time, when the truth of God proclaims our guilt and misery, "He that commits sin, is of the devil." "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild donkey's colt." Let us, then, rejoice, that "salvation is of the Lord," that he does not desire the death of a sinner; that he has "so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Yes! let us rejoice, that the reign of darkness shall not always continue; for as sin has reigned unto death, so grace shall reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. This reign of grace is now progressing; for Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth. But his kingdom is opposed by wicked men and evil spirits. His people are now in an enemy's country. They have to buckle on their armor, to take their weapons, and to fight under the banners of the Captain of their salvation. Outside the pale of his Church, are millions of Heathens and Mohammedans, who set themselves against the faithful soldiers of the Redeemer. Within his Church, are formalists, and hypocrites, who darken the truth, who despise the saints of the Most High; who belie their baptismal engagements, and who virtually unite with, and strengthen the hands of the infidel and the profane.

How precious is the book of God, which unfolds to us a brighter scene than this. Jesus, indeed, even now reigns in the hearts of his people. But, as yet they are only a little flock. Oh! how painful is the view of the present state of the world. Take, for example, one single large town, composed of one hundred thousand souls. As we walk in the streets, crowds of immortal beings press us on every side. Can we, in charity, hope that one in every twenty, is truly a child of God, a member of Christ? not a nominal, but a real Christian? Happy, indeed, were it so.

We cannot read the hearts of men, but we can read their lives. Does the great mass of our population live as Christians should live? as those should live, who have been admitted by baptism into the Church of Christ? Alas! no, the world reigns in the hearts of thousands. The chains of worldly pleasure, profit, and

power are thrown around their affections, and make them willing slaves to the God of this world. Oh! how much should the true believer be engaged in prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit; and in multiplied exertions, to stem the torrent of iniquity, and to promote the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Three things are perceivable in Prophecy-

- I. The prosperity of the Church, in its enlargement, holiness, and glory.
- II. The outpouring of the Spirit, as the great means for promoting this state of earthly blessedness.
- III. The spirit of prayer, which is promised, and shall be imparted, as the dawn of this predicted felicity.

The prophet Ezekiel, in his description of the temple, which may refer to the millennial reign, beautifully describes the living water, issuing from the altar, emblematical of the Holy Spirit flowing to us, through the atonement of the Son of God. On either side of this river, which deepened as it flowed, so rich and full is the grace of God our Savior, "were very many trees," full of fruit, "whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed;" showing, how every spiritual blessing grows on the banks of this celestial stream, which makes glad the city of God.

The streamlet, which at first was ankle deep, increased as it flowed, until it became a mighty river, in which a man might swim. How descriptive this of the Messiah's kingdom, which he himself compared, in its beginning, to the mustard-seed; which, though the smallest of all seeds, grows to be the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds lodge in the branches of it. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." The stone, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision, cut out without hands, and which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth, is the kingdom of the Messiah; the reign of Jesus shall be co-equal with eternity. Every one who is taught of God, will feel the necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence; will rejoice in the promise that it shall be imparted; will acknowledge the duty of seeking for it; and will use the means for its attainment. Oh! that the dew of divine grace may descend upon the souls of all who labor to promote this happy reign of righteousness, until they arrive at that blessed abode.

This truth is clear from divine revelation, that nothing but misery and desolation will overspread the earth, "until the Spirit be poured out from on high." Then "the wilderness shall be a fruitful field," showing the happy change in the Gentile world, and among all who know not God, whether Jews or Christians; and "the fruitful field," those cultivated parts of the earth where the gospel is planted, "shall be counted for a forest," at once, permanent and useful, for "judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

Who would not pray in the words which Jesus has taught us; "Your kingdom come." Oh! that our hearts may unite with the inspired Apostle "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." "The only wise God and our Savior," has connected the means with the end. As of this, so of every other spiritual gift and grace, the Lord will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. To obtain this blessing, how fervent was Isaiah "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burns. And the Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory and you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God."

How blessed would be the result, did ministers and people thus unite in prayer, and endeavor to advance the glory of the Church, and the salvation of the world. To animate us to this delightful exercise, this concert of prayer; how gracious is the promise of Jehovah; "Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth--so wonderful that no one will even think about the old ones anymore. Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation! And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness. Her people will be a source of joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people. And the sound of weeping and crying will be heard no more. I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking to me about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers! The wolf and lamb will feed together. The lion will eat straw like the ox. Poisonous snakes will strike no more. In those days, no one will be hurt or destroyed on my holy mountain. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

This blessedness will, then, be preceded by the united, believing, fervent, unceasing prayers of the Church. But how abundant is the grace of God! "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," is the voice of Him who never said unto the seed of Jacob, "Seek you me in vain." "Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters." Gospel blessings may well be called waters, from their rich abundance, from their purifying, fructifying, and refreshing quality. There is a sea of love and mercy, an ocean, into which the sins of believers are cast to appear no more forever. "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," "In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve."

If such blessings were vouchsafed to the ancient Church, when brought out of her captivity, what mercies are now in store for the Church of Christ militant, upon earth, when the Spirit shall be poured out in rich effusions upon all her members, when "judgment shall run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Then "wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of our times." "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "Hostile nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;" "they shall learn war no more; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Then Jesus will "speak peace to the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

And will this glory rise upon our earth, shrouded as it is with darkness? It will, for thus says the Lord; "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering for my name shall be great among the heathen, says the Lord of hosts."

The Jews shall then adore their long-neglected Messiah. Now, they are suffering under the fulfillment of this righteous judgment; "The children of Israel shall abide many days (already amounting to nearly eighteen hundred years) without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice." But then, at this glorious period, when Jesus shall take unto him his great power, and reign as King supreme, it is graciously promised, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David Their King; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."

How inexpressibly precious are these prophecies respecting our fallen race. They are like the rainbow on the cloud. They assure us of mercy; that we shall not be destroyed by a deluge of wrath. But while they breathe loving kindness, they call upon us to pray, to praise, to work with all our might, that we may become the honored instruments in the hand of our God, for helping forwards, and hastening this reign of grace. God is pleased, in general, to work by means. He could preserve us without food, but this is not his

appointment. He could bring about the world's regeneration by a single word, but this is not his plan. The Church of Christ is the medium through which he is pleased to communicate his blessings. For this end, he has appointed his ministers, as his ambassadors, as his stewards, as his laborers, as his watchmen. He commands all his people to work while it is day; to put forth all their powers, before the night of death comes.

"There are two little words in our language," remarks that lamented Missionary, John Williams, "which I always admired, try and trust. You know not what you can or cannot effect, until you try; and if you make your trials in the exercise of trust in God, mountains of imaginary difficulties will vanish as you approach them, and facilities will be afforded which you never anticipated."

What an encouragement is this for the Christian laborer. When Christ said, "Stretch forth your hand;" through faith, the man stretched out his withered hand, "and it was restored whole, like as the other." Let us implicitly obey the injunctions of our Lord. With the command he graciously imparts the power to labor, and the will to serve. He, who gives the command, makes his people willing in the day of his power. He imparts his consolations. He places underneath the everlasting arms. He enables them to endure unto the end; and then gives them a crown of life, which fades not away.

If this be the end of the righteous, believers should not be afraid to die. Jesus has declared, "I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Blessed revelation! Jesus, the Savior, the Friend of sinners, has the keys of the invisible world. If we wanted to enter into some place of security, or happiness, we would feel easy if we knew that the keys were in the possession of a Friend, who dearly loved us, and sought our highest felicity. We would not fear a repulse, when we came to knock for admittance. But how different would be our feelings, if these keys were in the hands of an implacable enemy, who sought our destruction; or in the hands of a sovereign, against whom we were living in open rebellion, and from whom we could expect nothing but death. That a period of grace and glory, such as the Church has never yet experienced, will bless our world, is clearly revealed in the Scriptures of truth; but to determine the manner and circumstances of the reign of Christ is not required. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children." In the midst of tribulation, we have prophecies of glory, and promises of rest, to cheer us. We may never live to see those days of the Son of Man; but we may now, by faith, enjoy his presence in our souls; the indwelling of his Spirit in our hearts. We may now rest in the love of God; repose on the faithfulness of Christ; and be refreshed with joy and peace through the Holy Spirit.

If this is our happy experience, we need not perplex our minds, whether the reign of the Messiah will be personal or spiritual. We know that Christ shall "appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." We know that he will come "with clouds, and every eye shall see him." But the mode of his coming must be determined by the glorious event, when, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God."

O! Almighty Savior, enlighten the eyes of my understanding by the beams of your Spirit. Enable me rightly to discern the truths of your word. Do not allow me to reject your revelations of glory, because I cannot comprehend them; nor to cavil at the mysteries of your grace, because I cannot explore them. Make my soul as a little child, humble, teachable, and obedient to your will. Give me a heart to mourn over sin, both in myself and others; a heart to rejoice over your mercies; a heart to love you supremely, for all that you are to me, as my present and everlasting Portion.

O in mercy keep me from the evil that is in the world; from the errors which, like hemlock, grow in the gospel field- your visible Church. Preserve me from being led away by the opinions of men, however great in name, renowned for learning, or extolled for piety, if such opinions be repugnant to the plain declarations of your word. Give me courage to reject, whatever opposes your Truth, though it be silvered over with age, or be sanctioned by ancient Councils. May I never forget that I must be judged at your tribunal; that the words which you have spoken shall judge me at the last day. Teach me, then, O Lord, to cease from man; to place my whole reliance upon You; to follow, through the teaching of your Spirit, the light of your holy word.

Oh! You, who are the Light of the world, be my guide. Wherever I see your footsteps, there may I plant my own. Shield me from the subtle attacks of Satan. Guard me against the flatteries and frowns of the world; and, when brought by your grace to the brink of Jordan, conduct me in mercy through the rolling stream, until I reach your blissful presence in the celestial Canaan. All praise to Sovereign Grace!

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