

COME UNTO ME

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE KING OF KINGS AND HIS KINGDOM

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful (Isaiah 32:1-5).

Some believe that this prophecy refers to good King Hezekiah, who was to succeed the wicked Ahab.

It is possible that these words have such a reference, but it is very common with Isaiah to mix his prophecies with several intimations of the Messiah; and in most cases where other persons may be immediately alluded to, Christ is principally intended. The promise of the Messiah was the great pledge of the Jewish National security, and this was often introduced to cheer the minds of the godly in those evil times.

The verses may therefore be understood as a prophecy of the Messiah's Kingdom. Indeed the second verse, "**And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,**" seems to be inapplicable to any other. Christ alone can fully answer to the description given. This is also true of verses three and four. "**And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.**"

This fully agrees with other predictions concerning the Kingdom of Christ. Note further Isaiah 29:18, "**And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.**" This is the meaning of Isaiah 35:5, "**Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.**"

In this description of the Messiah's Kingdom, there are three or four things by which it shall be distinguished. First, there is the Sovereign of this Kingdom. Second, there are the Satisfactions of this Kingdom.

First, the sovereign of this kingdom: **“A King shall reign in righteousness,”** will be considered. This is one of the blessings of this matchless reign, and stands in opposition to all other kingdoms and governments upon earth.

There have been but few kings who have reigned in righteousness, or princes who have ruled in judgment. Some of them have been mere usurpers of public authority. They have taken the power into their own hands without right, merely by might. Justice is nothing to them or with them. Power is everything. Even many of those who have not been guilty of usurpation, have shown but little regard for justice and mercy in their administration. History is stained and stigmatized, blotted and blemished, with the records of the tyrants of the ages. George Washington was absolutely right when he refused the crown of the United States of America, saying that although he himself might prove to be a good sovereign, there was no means of knowing what his heirs would turn out to be.

But Christ has a right to reign. He is placed on the throne by the highest of all authorities. The Lord has said of Him, **“Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.”**

It is further spoken of Him, **“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.”** His kingly prerogatives are also due to Him on the ground of His terrible humiliation and suffering.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:5-11).

There is further the tremendous assurance that the Father has vested in the Son all power in heaven and in earth. By no stretch of the imagination would anyone, believer or unbeliever, say that this Jesus, the virgin-born only begotten Son of God, reigns over the universe by any other than His own definite right. We know by the authority of the Bible that God has crowned Him. We know further that angels have crowned Him. With all of our souls, we are striving to see to it that men will not be the last to crown Him.

When the governor of a state, or the President of the United States pardons a criminal before he has finished his sentence, in reality it is a violation of justice and judgment. This is so because all human systems of government are finite, and lack the even balance that only God can maintain.

But Christ Jesus causes grace to reign unto righteousness, unto eternal life. Under His government, mercy and truth meet together; and all that He does is in the way of righteousness. What a glad cry that is of the **Psalmist, “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”** How gloriously the prophet proclaims the eternal truth, **“And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reign.”**

Think of the confident utterance ringing down the corridors of time, the logical conclusion of the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:21, “**That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.**” There could be no moral warrant for the forgiveness of our sins, no positive confidence of the fact that we have eternal life, no definite hope of our salvation, unless the righteousness of God as well as the mercy of God had been displayed in the fact of redemption.

The righteousness of other kings and rulers consists only in rewarding the good, and punishing the evil. This, in general, is the very utmost that human institutions are able to accomplish. But Christ does more than this. He subdues the heart, and restores the world to the love of truth and holiness.

His kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness, of peace, of joy in the Holy Ghost. Whenever it shall prevail universally, the earth will be full of righteousness and peace. Here, again, is the song of the Psalmist, “**Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and shalt govern the nations upon the earth.**” Again the Psalmist sings, “**Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**”

In the same chapter of Isaiah from which we drew our text, we have the prophet saying to us, “**Then 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.**”

The fourteen points, the Atlantic Charter, the Four Freedoms, peace conferences, peace treaties, peace gatherings—all have dismally failed. No longer are the statesmen of the world talking about war to end war. As a matter of fact, all they can hope to do, even as they themselves say, is to have peace in our times.

What a terrible burden and tragedy it is to know that before our children get too old to bear arms, this world, unless the Lord Jesus comes again, will be inundated in a welter of blood, that will make the wars that have gone on hitherto look like a bunch of small boys playing with tin soldiers on a nursery floor. Here is offered to us the Prince of Peace, the Reign of Peace, the Kingdom of Peace. Here is proposed to the nations and generations of men a peace treaty, a peace conference, a peace plan that will prove to be inviolate.

This peace, this righteousness will embrace every detail of the lives of all mankind. It will go into the realm of politics, of science, of education, of religion.

- It will mean peace in the home.
- It will mean peace in the market place.
- It will mean nationally, and in the relations of nation to nation.

Those also who act under the authority of this Prince of Peace, as “Princes” under a king, shall proceed upon the same principle. All of his servants that are around about him shall “**rule in judgment,**” for thus his kingdom shall be administered throughout eternity.

Consider next the satisfactions of that kingdom. **“And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.”**

Saints will grow in grace and spiritual gifts. Sinners will be converted. The blind shall be made to see. The deaf shall be made to hear. Their discernment shall be quick, and their attention ardently excited.

The figure here is quite clear. The **“eyes”** of those that saw under the Old Testament were generally very **“dim”**; and even those of Christ’s disciples at the beginning of their dealings with the Lord were not much otherwise. However, when the day of Pentecost came, and the Spirit was poured out upon them, they were all eye, all ear, all heart. Even those who have been **“rash”**, learn the heavenly wisdom, like Saul of Tarsus, and many others of his kind through the ages.

Ignorant and unlearned men, like Peter, began to **“speak plainly”** and in a manner that all their adversaries could neither gainsay or resist. Part of this undoubtedly was fulfilled through past ages. The most of it, however, remains to be accomplished when the kingdom of God has been established upon this earth, when Christ returns to reign upon the throne of His Father, David. As a matter of fact, in a degree, these are still the effects of the gospel. Even today, all about us, it is all that which our text has prophesied.

See how quickly the Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding of the twice born by the reading and the hearing of the Word.

The evils to which we are exposed in the present life, are here compared to **“winds and tempests,”** consuming draughts and burning suns; all of which in those eastern-climates are much more intense than they are in ours. The poets of our land, the authors, using the similes and the metaphors of their trades, exhaust language in the same description to tell us of the vicissitudes of our lives.

In opposition to those evils, Christ is a **“hiding place, a covert, rivers of water, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”** How beautiful the imagery!

How photographic in its intense delineation! The scenery in the language is that of an excessively dry, hot desert. In the very midst of the burning desolation, there appears a huge protecting rock, with streams of water flowing down its seamed, riven sides, affording safety and refreshment to the weary traveler. Some of the ills to which we are liable in the present world, and from which Christ becomes a shelter and a refuge, must be mentioned here.

First, is the wrath of God.

To this, we are all exposed as sinners, as to a stormy wind and tempest. It besets us in this life. It overcomes us in the life to come, unless we find shelter in the Rock of Ages.

The Mighty sovereign of this blessed kingdom shields us by bearing that wrath Himself. To Him the guilty must flee as to their own refuge. God tells us, **“The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”**

The Holy Spirit further invites us, **“that by two immutable things, into which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”**

There is no other place of safety in all this wide world. There is certainly no other place of security in eternity in the life to come. Jesus is definitely named the Rock of Ages. Truly the people sing that wonderful song,

“Oh, Jesus is a rock in a weary land,
a shelter in the time of storm.”

We are also exposed to the prevalent calamities of life. Does war hang like a bleak, black, blighting, blasting shadow over our heads? They that dwell with this Sovereign, dwell securely. **“He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks. Bread shall be given to him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty. They shall behold the land that is very far off.”**

Do afflictions overtake us? Do pestilences and plagues await us? He is our hiding place and refuge. **“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”**

Surely there is no one within the sound of my voice who has not been cheered, comforted, sustained, uplifted by the cry of the Psalmist, **“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my strength and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor the arrow that flieth by day; nor the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.”**

Is there anything that I, in my poor, stammering way, can add to these wonderful assurances of God’s Holy Word? Surely my own interpretations, my own illustrations, would be banal, cheap, even obscuring. I leave these words with you, that they may bolster up your courage, increase your faith, reassure your confidence.

We are all exposed to the terrors of death. This is the last and the very greatest enemy of all. Even in this Christ is our refuge from its power. He gives us the victory. He gives us safety there also.

We have the clear unmistakable revelation of God's Book, "**But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.**"

Have I not the right then to speak thus? Nothing in the past, nothing in the present, nothing in the future, can mar the satisfaction of those who are the subjects by faith of the wondrous sovereignty of this mighty sovereign. The promises of His word and the consolations of His gospel are as "**rivers of water**" in this dry land in which we find ourselves. His power, His faithfulness, His love preserve us from temptation, as the shadow of a great rock from the sultry sun. Oh, what wondrous fate, what joyous satisfaction! Oh, what perfect satiety there is in this matchless kingdom!

Consider, last of all, the citizens of this kingdom. You will find their description negatively and positively in verse five, "**The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful.**"

This is really the nature of Christ's kingdom, much as some people hesitate to believe it. Ultimately it separates between the precious and the vile. Where its truths are readily accepted and believed, its tendency is to make men, in reality, that which they only appear to be—"**liberal,**" "**bountiful,**" truly good.

Throughout the ages it has been doing just that. It has raised up a set of men in all the years, whose study it has been to serve the Lord of lords, then by His directive will to diffuse knowledge and happiness wherever they have gone. Whence is the source of genuine liberality and benevolence, if it is not the gospel? It seems to be quite different in this our day and time.

You will note by heartbreaking observation that where but little religion prevails, sinners often pass for saints, and the "**vile**" person is accounted "**liberal,**" especially if he be great, and high, and mighty in the world. Too often such characters are complimented, a great deal being made of a few ostentatious actions, as if they were prodigies of virtue.

Where the gospel is truly practiced, in proportion as the kingdom of our Lord prevails, and the light of the gospel is diffused, character will be better estimated, and men will be regarded and trusted more according to what they really are. The lofty of this earth may not even find ingress as citizens of the kingdom we are contemplating. No earthly virtue, no human prestige, no social standing, no political preferment, no financial acquisition can take the place of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, of repentance, of faith, of the new birth, which are the absolute essentials for citizenship in this mighty dominion.

Again we find that where little religion prevails, I mean true religion, mere nominal professors may be counted as Christians. As Christ's kingdom advances, all their hypocrisy is, and in increasing measure shall be, detected and exposed.

We find this to be the case in the story of the New Testament. The Jewish rulers, the scribes, the Pharisees, the priests, were reckoned good people in their day of ignorance and corruption. The whole nation was deceived by their pretensions.

John the Baptist, followed by Jesus Christ, tore away the veil of their excuses, of their posturing, showing them to be carnal worldlings, with all the corruption and degradation of their damnations upon them, and in them. You remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, **“Woe unto you scribes; woe unto you Pharisees, hypocrites!”**

To this day the gospel strips men of their false disguises, and shows them as they are. Nothing but true religion can stand the gospel test. Again you remember that it was foretold of the coming of Christ, **“that the thoughts of many hearts should be revealed;”** and it was so. **“Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; aye the sword shall pierce through thine own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed.”**

Who then, may become a citizen, a subject of that marvelous, desirable kingdom? What are the conditions for citizenship? Listen carefully while God speaks to your heart.

“Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

“The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, in thy heart, that is the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the kingdom of God, saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.”

There are your conditions. There are your doors of admittance. You must repent of your sins, of every one of them, in the sight of God. You must confess the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour before men. The Holy Spirit will do the rest. Upon your repentance, upon your faith, upon your confession, the wondrous miracle of regeneration, of the new birth will be worked in your heart, and you will become a child of God, a child of the King, a blood brother, a blood sister, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, I have preached my sermon.

- What think ye then of this King, and of this Kingdom?
- Are you willing that he should rule over you?
- Is He to you as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land?

- Do you make Him your only refuge?

You can if you will. He offers Himself to you.

The shadow of His blood-stained cross is even now cast over your life.

His pierced hands are even in these moments stretched out to you,

- Pleading that you turn your back upon the tempests, the storms of life,
- Pleading that you come into the shelter of this haven of rest,
- Pleading that you anchor your soul in His bosom.

Will you, right now, will you swear off allegiance to the ruler of the kingdom of darkness? Will you, this minute, swear allegiance to King Immanuel?

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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