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MESSIAH'S KINGDOM SOON TO BLESS

Prophecies Indicate That "The Time Is at Hand."

God's Typical Kingdom—Overturned 606 B. C.—Great Line of World-Empires—"The Times of the Gentiles." Israel's "Seven Times" of Chastisement—The Two Synchronous—About to Expire—Now—The Fifth Universal Empire—Spiritual, Invisible—The "Better Resurrection" at Hand—"The Desire of All Peoples" is Jerusalem and Messiah.



PASTOR RUSSELL

Atlantic City, N. J., Jan. 25.—Pastor Russell is here today. We report his sermon from the text: "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same. . . . I will overturn, overturn, it: . . . until He comes whose right it is; and I will give it Him."—Ezekiel 21:26, 27.

The Pastor pointed out that according to Scripture Messiah was to be of King David's lineage. For several centuries the royal family of David's line had a precarious course. King Zedekiah, the last of the line, lost his crown in 606 B. C. He is the king referred to in our text. Since then there has been no king of David's lineage. Neither the Maccabees nor the Herods were Jews at all. The kingdom is still overturned, the foreordained time for its re-establishment not having come.

"Times of the Gentiles."

Then the Pastor explained that although there were Gentile kingdoms long before Israel became a monarchy, yet God recognized none of them, but entered into covenant relationship with Israel only. After the verdict of our text was given against Israel, to hold good until Messiah's Reign, then Divine providence recognized one great line of world-empires. These were given leasehold privileges covering the period of Israel's overturning—until the time for Messiah's Kingdom.

The speaker then pointed out that Moses had prophesied Israel's chastisement, and in symbolic numbers foretold that it would last "seven times." The Gentile Times, or years, are likewise seven. Both periods begin to count at the same time, and will end simultaneously. When these end, Messiah's Kingdom will begin its Reign. Israel will be associated with Messiah's Empire as His earthly people—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets being made princes in all the earth, as promised in Psalm 45:16.

Next the Pastor declared that God through the Prophet Daniel gave us two pictures of the "seven times" of Gentile supremacy. One was a vision given King Nebuchadnezzar, who overthrew King Zedekiah. It gives the worldly view of Gentile governments. The whole period was represented by a glorious image, whose head was of gold, etc.

Given the pointer that Babylonia represented the head of gold, any school boy could show that Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome were the other Empires. The feet represented Rome ecclesiastical, with her daughters dominating Europe today. Messiah's Kingdom is symbolized by the stone which struck the image on its feet and demolished it.

The other picture was a vision given the Prophet Daniel, in which these Gentile kingdoms were pictured as beasts. In contrast, Messiah's Kingdom was represented as human.

Where Are We Now?

The Pastor then showed that in Scripture a "time" is a symbolic year, i. e., each of its days is symbolic of a year, lunar time—360 days. Hence "seven times" equal 2520 years. Reckoning from the date of Zedekiah's dethronement, we have 1915 A. D. This indicates that in 1915 Messiah's invisible Kingdom will be in power, the Gentile lease will have expired and Israel's disfavor will have ended. The Prophet Daniel foretold a great Time of Trouble at that time. See Daniel 12:1.

The Scriptures teach that for centuries Satan, a spirit being, has exercised great power amongst men—an evil influence—which God has permitted, with certain limitations. Satan's reign has been one of sin; Messiah's will be one of righteousness. Both Empires are spiritual, invisible to men; both operate through man.

The Pastor then set forth the Scriptural proofs that the Jewish "fathers" are to be "princes in all the earth." This implies their resurrection at no distant day. They will be raised perfect, examples of what mankind may attain. The prospect of this "better resurrection" stimulated them to heroic lives of faith and obedience to God.

According to Scripture, said the Pastor, there will be no more war after the great trouble of 1915. The princes of Israel will have dictatorial powers backed by the spiritual Kingdom—just what the world needs.

The Law Covenant will be in power, but not as before. That will be the regime of the New Law Covenant, with Messiah as Mediator. Gradually the stony condition of heart common to humanity will give place to tenderheartedness—the true human nature, as before Adam fell, will prevail. All who refuse to make progress, after one hundred years' probation, will be counted unworthy of future favors, and will be utterly destroyed.

BROOKLYN TABERNACLE BIBLE STUDY ON

GOOD CONFESSION VS. BAD CONFESSION.

Luke 12:1-12—Feb. 22.

"Whoever shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father who is in heaven."—V. 8.

A LARGE crowd surrounded the Savior, anxious to hear Him. Jesus addressed His disciples, saying, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Here, as elsewhere in His teachings, Jesus used leaven as a symbol of an evil influence. We know not one instance in which leaven is used to represent anything good or pure.

Jesus declared that the hypocrites practised by the Pharisees were leaven, sin, contaminating. His disciples should be honest, sincere, pure, free from cant and deception. He declared that ultimately all hypocrites and sinners will be uncovered. Undoubtedly He meant that during His Kingdom the secrets of mankind will be exposed. No doubt this will constitute the basis of the shame which will be the punishment of many, as foretold.

Fear Not Persecution.

Jesus intimated that honesty of life would bring His followers persecution from hypocrites; but that they should not fear, even though it resulted in their death. The life worth considering is the everlasting one which eventually may be attained through the merit of Jesus' sacrifice. They should have no fear of man, but fear lest they be separated from God.



"Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees."

"Fear Him who after He hath killed the body hath power to cast into Hell." The word Hell here is Gehenna in the Greek. Primarily, this is the name of the valley outside Jerusalem into which offal was cast for utter destruction, and into which the vilest criminals were cast after execution—not to torment them, but to imply that there was no future for the wicked. Jesus used Gehenna as a type of the Second Death, the portion of all who intelligently, deliberately, sin against knowledge.

As God's people become intimately acquainted with Him and realize that He is the Friend of all who love righteousness, their love for Him increases. As God forgets not the sparrows, so He will not forget them. Even a hair of their heads could not be injured without His knowledge and permission. Everything He permits to come to His children will work out for them some blessing.

"Confess Me Before Men."

Jesus' words were addressed to His disciples, not to the masses. None could deny Him who had never acknowledged Him. Whoever professes to be His disciple, and then ignores the Master's teachings, misrepresents Him, denies Him, and will not share in the glorious presentation of the Bride, in the end of this Age.

The masses, of course, were in doubt. Some even derided Jesus, saying that He had a devil and was mad. The Master declared that such misunderstandings and slander were quite forgivable if done ignorantly. But when some went beyond this, and declared that His good works were accomplished through Satanic power, they were committing inexcusable sins, which could not be passed over.

The Master's teachings were purity itself. His conduct, His sayings and His miracles were all good works. Only wilful perversity could attribute these to Satan. The fact that they would never be forgiven does not signify, however, that the villains were lost. They would suffer punishment proportionate to their wilfulness. If the punishments bring reformation, well and good; if not, their course will eventuate in utter destruction—the Second Death.

Few subjects are less understood than the sin against the Holy Spirit. The word spirit here stands for influence, power. The spirit of Satan is the power, influence, adverse to God and righteousness. The spirit of Truth, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, represents Divine influence, power. Each individual's responsibility is proportionate to his enlightenment. The mentally and morally blind have comparatively little responsibility, because they do not appreciate clearly the distinctions between the spirit of Truth and the spirit of Error, the Spirit of God and the spirit of Satan.



Gehenna—Type of Second Death.

Sin has wrought death, not merely to man's body, but to his mind, his conscience. Ability to discern between right and wrong therefore varies. Additionally, some have opportunities for instruction more than others. The world in general knows not God, and hence could not sin against the Holy Spirit to a degree punishable with the Second Death.

The Lord's faithful followers were to expect that amongst their tribulations would be false accusations which would bring them before magistrates. The disciples, usually unlearned, would feel great trepidation in the presence of educated officials. They were to know, however, that the Lord's blessing would be upon them, and were to commit all to Him. Nothing in this implies that Christian ministers should not study their subject.—2 Tim. 2:15.

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