

The Reign of Christ

Pasture for the Flock of God · Revelation 20

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The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The LORD at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies: He shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head (Psa. 110).

In the opening words of this psalm, the first “LORD” is in capital letters, and, when found so printed, generally indicates that it means Jehovah. The verse therefore might be read, Jehovah said unto my Lord;

that is, Jehovah said unto Christ. This verse is frequently quoted in the New Testament. It was by it that Jesus so put the Pharisees to silence, that no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions {Matt. 22:46}.

Our Lord searched their consciences about His own blessed person. He said, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David {Matt. 22:42}.

This, so far as it went, was quite true. The blessed Lord therefore went on to say; How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son? {Matt. 22:43-45}.

This is and always has been the difficult problem for man to solve. How could Jesus be both David's Son, and David's Lord? The answer is simple enough. As David's Lord, He was the Creator of David, for God created all things by His Son; but as born of Mary, who was of the house and lineage of David, He was David's Son. This first verse, therefore, announces the coronation of Jesus, after He had accomplished redemption and rose from the dead. It is Jehovah, His God, who had forsaken Him on the cross in righteousness, because our sins were upon Him, righteously welcoming Him as the Conqueror of all our enemies, and the One who triumphed over death, Satan, and the grave, and installing Him in the highest place of honor, power, and glory. Sit thou on My right hand {Matt. 22:44}.

As Jehovah's righteous servant, then, He is crowned with glory and honor, and there He waits till His enemies be made His footstool {Heb. 10:13}.

When the time comes for Jehovah to bid Him to arise and take to Himself His great power and reign, He will then put all enemies under His feet {1 Cor. 15:25}.

It is important also to notice here that our Lord interprets the first verse of this beautiful little psalm as referring to Himself, and gives us David as the author. David is here speaking prophetically, and elsewhere he is called a prophet

(Acts 2:29, 30); and this psalm gives us a fair specimen of the scope of Old Testament prophets. We are told that it was by the Spirit of Christ that they testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which follow. They therefore passed from the sufferings to the glory or reign of Christ. This present interval of the church-time did not form a part of their prophetic ministry, for prophecy is connected with the earth; whereas the calling, standing, and relationships of the church are heavenly. We must not, then, expect to find any notice of the Church of God in the Old Testament prophets, except here and there typical representation, which they evidently did not and could not enter into. This psalm therefore, immediately after introducing us to the rejected Messiah, as now crowned with glory and honor, passes on to His reign over the living wicked, and the restoration of His ancient people to blessing in the earth. Let us never forget, then, that the scope of the Old Testament prophets was, as we are told, that of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which follow {see 1 Pet. 1:11};

but that glorious workmanship of the Holy Ghost which comes in between Christ's sufferings and reign, the Church of God -the body and bride of Christ -- needed further revelation, and to be made known by different instruments, even the apostles and prophets of the New Testament (Eph. 3). To turn therefore the psalms, and the other prophesies before Christ and His apostles, into instruction concerning the church, as if it were their sphere, is to miss the mark entirely, to mistake the simple ministry of the Spirit, and to mystify some of the clearest statements of divine inspiration. Isaiah tells us that he wrote concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and David is called the sweet psalmist of Israel; and while the writings of both abound with most precious statements of the ways of faith, and pious sentences suited to God's people in every dispensation, yet there is the absence of those soul-elevating and essential doctrines of Christianity, of nearness to God, acceptance and completeness in Christ, union with Christ, and the present liberty of sonship with the veil rent, and present indwelling of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven to abide with us for ever, and such like teaching, with which the inspired epistles abound. We find here, like in almost all the writings of the other prophets, that the Lord's judgment of His enemies -- the living wicked -- is connected with blessing to the Jews. While ruling in the midst of His enemies, Jehovah will send the rod of thy strength out of Zion,

when, it is added, thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power {Psa. 110:2, 3}.

It is impossible to apply this last sentence to the present time. By "thy people" in the prophets we are to understand God's earthly people, the Jews. Now we see they are not willing. Occasionally a solitary Jew may receive Jesus the Lord as his Savior; but as a people they still pride themselves on the traditions of the elders, and reject the true Messiah. This is the day of divine grace. Now grace reigns through righteousness. Now enemies to God are saved, and publicans and harlots receive Christ, which self-righteous people do not. It is the glad tidings of divine grace, even to the chief of sinners, that God now preaches. But when Jesus the Lord takes unto Himself His great power and reigns, it will be emphatically the time of His power; for His enemies will be made His footstool. Then every knee will

be made to bow to Him, and every tongue confess His name. Then, while treading down the wicked, reigning in righteousness, He will arise upon Israel as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. Then His people now not willing in this day of His grace, will be willing in the day of His power,

and that too in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning {Psa. 110:3}.

At the sunrise, the bringing of that day of Christ's reign into existence, the Jews will be thus blessed. Like Thomas, they will not believe till they see, though we know the sweetness of those precious words, Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed {John 20:29}.

When the Messiah comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and every eye sees Him -- when those who pierced Him look up and behold Him, they will mourn, until, like Joseph in the day of his power comforted his brethren, and established them in confidence before him, by the revelation of himself, and his forgiving love, according to the will of God, so Jesus will manifest Himself to them in this the time of His power, and establish them in confidence and blessing according to the purpose and grace of God. Observe here that the coming of the Lord for us is not named, not even alluded to, because it was not the province of Old Testament prophets to do so. The revelation of our special blessings, the calling and peculiar standing and hope of the church, were reserved for the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, those who were so gifted by the ascended Christ, the Head of the body, the church, from whom all the gifts for the edifying of the church flow down. From them we know that the revelation of the mystery, the church, was in other ages not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that is, since Jesus was glorified, and the Holy Ghost came down. It is from Paul's writings, then, we learn that Christ will descend from heaven; and we shall be changed and caught up to meet Him in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. And this we know, from other Scriptures, must take place before the Lord is publicly manifested from heaven in flaming fire,

with His mighty angels, to execute vengeance, and put all enemies under His feet. At that time we shall follow Him out of heaven (Rev. 19). I repeat, then, how closely the prophets confined their ministry to the sufferings of Christ and the glories which follow, and how silent they are about this present wonderful work of divine grace, not according to prophecy, but according to eternal purpose, in calling out the bride of Christ, and the formation of the church, which is His body. This point is not without its importance for our hearts, and helps to clear souls from much of the terrible confusion of thought and doctrine current at this time. In turning again to the short psalm we are considering, the personal glory of the One who will thus reign is again referred to in the brief sentence, Thou hast the dew of thy youth {Psa. 110:3}.

And surely this is none other than, though man, the unchangeable Jehovah. It is Jehovah-Jesus. Perfect as He is, and was, in every respect, neither time nor circumstances can alter Him; hence the Holy Ghost by an apostle styles Him, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever {Heb 13:8}.

Again, it is touched on in another psalm, and quoted in Heb. 1: Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end (Psa. 102:25-27).

His official glory as a Royal Priest is also mentioned in the Spirit's contemplation of this scene of power and great glory: Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:4).

Observe here the immovable foundation of this official glory -Jehovah's oath; the perpetuity of it -- "for ever"; also the royal majesty of it -- "a priest . . . after the order of Melchizedek." According to the testimony of an inspired prophet, Israel is to know Him, like Melchizedek, to be both a Priest and a King; that as Melchizedek was priest of the most high God, and king of Salem, and Scripture is silent both as to his beginning and end, he was thus a suited type of Him who is the Son of God, and abideth a Priest continually, and who, according to Zechariah, shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and shall be a Priest upon His throne {Zech. 6:13}.

What glorious majesty is here! When we search the Scriptures, what reality and soundness appear! Surely He shall wear His many crowns then; for He is worthy, however much He is still despised by men. How brief the space of time may be ere all this will be realized! At the longest, it can be but a few more risings and settings of the sun before the Scripture must be verified: Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him {Rev. 1:7}.

Not then to be mocked and wear a crown of thorns; but to wear His many crowns, be clothed with a vesture dipped in

blood, and have a sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of His mouth, that with it He should smite the nations, &c. "This earth, the scene of all His woe, A homeless wild to thee, Full soon upon His heavenly throne Its rightful King shall see. "Thou too shalt reign; He will not wear His crown of joy alone: And earth His royal bride shall see Beside Him on the throne. "Then weep no more; 'tis all thine own, His crown, His joy divine; And sweeter far than all beside, He, He Himself, is thine!"

And how solemn is the fact that He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet {1 Cor. 15:25};

not some enemies, but all enemies; not subdue some things, but subdue all things unto Himself. Now we can sometimes scarcely distinguish between the "friends" of Jesus and His "enemies." Now the proudest of His foes often lifts his head in defiant arrogance and effrontery. Now the boldest blasphemers of His holy name are among the prosperous of the world. Now the true friends of the Lord Jesus are often among the poor and afflicted of the land, little known and less considered; but then all will be changed. Now God is long-suffering, and preaching grace; then the Lord Jesus will reign in righteousness, and execute judgment. Now the sons of God are not manifested; but then shall they be seen reigning with Christ, and the world will know that the Father hath loved them as He loves Jesus,

His beloved Son. Then how eternally wide the contrast -- the friends of Jesus sharing His honor and glory for ever, while all His enemies are trodden down as ashes under the soles of His feet! How unspeakably important it is then now to be assured that we are reconciled to God, and friends of the Lord Jesus Christ! The truth is that we were all enemies to God by wicked works -- the natural heart at enmity against God and Christ: loving what Christ hates, and hating what He loves. So alienated from God were we, and such sinners by nature and practice, that we needed reconciliation to God. The ground of true peace and reconciliation was laid for us in the precious blood of Christ. He made peace through the blood of His cross {Col. 1:20}.

Enemies therefore become true lovers of God, and friends of the Lord Jesus, by being reconciled to God by the death of His Son {Rom. 5:10}.

Such only are Christ's true friends. All else are His enemies, and must ere long be made His footstool. The question, then, for every one to enquire is, "Am I a friend or an enemy of the Lord Jesus?" The point is vital. Eternal consequences hang upon it. Everlasting glory or everlasting punishment depends on your being His friend or His enemy. The friends of Jesus love Him. They hearken to His sweet voice. They serve Him, and are not ashamed to confess His name before men. And He loves to hear us bear witness to Himself now during this time

of His rejection. He said, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God {Luke 12:8}.

We show our attachment, interest, and friendship by confessing Him. Mark, it does not say confessing religion, or confessing a creed, or confessing denominational distinction, but confessing Christ -- Whosoever shall confess Me.

And this is so precious to the Lord Himself, that He says He will confess such before the angelic hosts in heaven. Oh the blessedness of thus being reconciled to God! Every question of sin and guilt cleared, every fear removed, all the accusings of conscience having been met for us for ever on righteous, holy grounds, by the precious blood of Christ! And now, born again and indwelt by the Holy Ghost, in the hope of being caught up to meet the Lord in the air at His coming, what a real delight to our hearts it often is to take our place as His friends! May e help us in this yet more and more! "Not half His love can I express; Yet, Lord, with joy my lips confess, This blessed portion I possess, O Lamb of God, in Thee! "Thy precious name it is I bear, In Thee I am to God brought near, And all the Father's love I share, O Lamb of God, in Thee! "And when I in Thy likeness shine, The glory and the praise be Thine, That everlasting joy is mine, O Lamb of God, in Thee!"

But how unutterably dark is the contrast of being an enemy to God and to Christ! What did Jesus say of such? He that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God {Luke 12:9}.

Oh, how solemn for Jesus to disown any connection with that person! Not only to say to such, I know you not Matt. 25:12},

but to say of such before the myriads of holy angelic hosts in heaven, "I know him not." Professor he might have been, a celebrated theologian, or an ecclesiastical dignitary of exalted position on earth, but never reconciled to God by the death of His Son; still in his sins, with all his orthodoxy, theological acquirements, or ecclesiastical elevation, the solemn words must inevitably fall from the lips of Jesus, "I know you not"; and He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. Not all the luxury, safe custody, or power, of the most costly, most elaborate palace on earth, can keep the mightiest of royal personages from falling under the iron rod of the Son of God when He thus reigns; for we are told that He shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath {see Psa. 110:5}.

No shams will avail then, no earth-born security can hide a soul from being detected and brought under the righteous sway of Jesus then; for He will be manifested as the only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords

{1 Tim. 6:15}.

Each person, high or low, bond or free, will then be judged according to the rule of righteousness. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies (Psa. 110:6).

And yet how few seem to believe such divine statements! It only shews how earnestly people may cling to a creed, because they have either inherited it, or adopted it as their own, without ever seriously considering its import. For instance, if you put before some people such Scriptures as those which unquestionably set forth the reign of the Lord Jesus executing His righteous vengeance upon living people, you will be often met by the reply, "I do not believe that Christ is coming again personally and visibly to act like this on the earth." And yet they often repeat as a part of their creed that "He will come to judge the quick and the dead." The word "quick," as many know, is an old English word which means "living." But when people read in Scripture that Jesus will judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1), or repeat as part of their accustomed creed, "I believe that He will judge the quick and the dead," who really believes the words they read or utter? And yet nothing can be more clearly set forth in Scripture, and that over and over again, than that the Lord will sit on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens TILL His enemies be made His footstool, and that He will come forth in flaming fire, and every eye shall see Him; that He will strike through kings in the day of His wrath, judge among the heathen, fill the places with the dead bodies {Psa. 110:5, 6}.

Moreover, at that time, according to Rev. 19 and other Scriptures, He will find the beast at the climax of his antichristian wickedness in league with the false prophet, whom the Lord will at once slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming. This may be implied by the words, He shall wound the heads over many countries (Psa. 110:6).

Sure it is that in those fearful judgments the blessed Son of man, unto whom all judgment is committed, will be executing the will of God, and in this scene of unparalleled desolation will find communion and refreshment: He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head (Psa. 110:7).

How very solemn this is, and yet how clear and distinct is the warning note! The wrath to come {Luke 3:7, 1 Thess. 1:10}

is fearful indeed; and, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. Happy are those who are now turned from enemies to friends, by being reconciled to God by the death of His Son; for be assured that God hath highly exalted that blessed One, who humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And it is His determinate purpose and counsel, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth, and under the earth (the infernal regions), and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Remember, dear friends, that Jesus is now at God's right hand, crowned with glory and honor. There He will sit until His enemies be made His footstool. And never forget that in this awful scene He will shew no respect of persons; for He will reign in righteousness -- not mercy, but righteousness; and that He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.