

The Orderings of God

Gen. 49: 10; Isa. 25: 6-10; Ezek. 21: 25-27; 2 Thess. 2: 1-2; Rev. 22: 10-21.

From an address by N. Anderson.

There is a blessed thread running through the Word of God, indeed there is a multitude of threads, but there is no tangled skein. Praise God, all His threads are sorted out. This particular thread presses upon me with regard to our first Bible reading. One has no desire to take from the practical character of that reading nor from the practical world already given tonight. If we are to be practical in our Christian living we must have a stimulating, powerful attraction to impel us.

In our Scriptures there is a blessed focal point, not so much a code of doctrine, but a living, charmingly attractive Man. In this prophetic sketch of the tribes of Israel in the last days there is a mingling of good and bad. There is the thread of God's ordering and the ravelled thread of man's disorder. The aged patriarch sketched out what would befall his sons in their last days. Thank God, every now and again the eyes of his heart were fixed on some bright spot. As we read the first eleven chapters of Ezekiel we see the reluctant departure of the glory of the Lord from the scene into which the house of Israel, in disobedience and rebellion, had brought chaos. Yet before the departure of the glory the Spirit of God draws it all out before us in pictorial fashion. There is an amber spot, and in the midst of the brightness "the likeness as the appearance of a man." This is the vision of the glory of God in governmental majesty which will bring all into subjection to the will of God. Have we seen the vision of that Man in the amber brightness? All the threads of the governmental ways of God are depicted in this symbolic scene, indicative of the truth that God will order heaven and earth according to His own mind, and *that* by the Man in the midst of the throne.

So the aged and dying Jacob gave glimpses of that Man in Genesis 49. Turning from Reuben, Simeon and Levi, he directs attention to another of his sons, Judah. He is like a breath of fresh air in the squalor of the account of the preceding three. Judah speaks of a greater than himself, and Jacob says "unto him shall the gathering of the people(s) be." In our day with its weakness, breakdown, and consequent discouragement, the Spirit of God would urge us to be "looking unto Jesus."

The peoples, the tribes of Israel, are in confusion and continual harassment today, but all God's ways relative to them shall be sorted out for His own pleasure and their undoubted deliverance and blessing. Unto Him — "Shiloh," who shall bring in tranquillity and prosperity with security, shall they gladly gather. Yes, Shiloh shall surely come! How good it is for us to have our hearts directed to the coming One. But we recall that Daniel prophesied that Messiah would be cut off and have nothing. The sufferings of the cross preceded the coming glory. There shall be a full answer to the cross in the world to come, and then the once rejected Christ shall have everything. Blessed indeed it is for us all to "look unto Jesus," to lift our eyes from one another and to view Him now and where He is, with the assured hope of His coming again. This thread, then, runs through the Word of God and when He comes everything in heaven and in earth shall be headed up in Him. How worthy He is of that ordered place of universal supremacy. How able He is too, to sort out our often tangled affairs. Let us not fail to bring them all to Him. Speaking assembly-wise where are we *practically* in regard to the truth that He who is the appointed centre of gathering for that coming day is such for us today? Sadly, we so often take little account of this truth. We get our eyes on one another. Differences are not only multiplied but magnified. Restraint comes in, as someone mentioned in prayer. Where, brethren, does it come from? Not from the Christ of God! We sing, "How by dying Thou hast freed us, from *the man of sin and shame*." That is the source of it, whether resident in my breast or yours. May we unceasingly and

unsparingly judge ourselves. The Spirit of God would ever magnify Christ to us, in suchwise that, instead of wanting our own ways, we shall follow in the way that leads to the exaltation of the Christ for whom we wait. There is only one way for the assembly of God, and that is dominated by the glory, grace, charm, and kindness of the Man who shall yet be seen in the amber brightness of the throne of God, as described by Ezekiel the prophet. Prophecy, dear brethren, in its chief interest points us to Christ as the Centre to which all God's ways lead.

Isaiah 25

This refers to the day when the prophecy of Genesis 49 shall fructify — the day of Shiloh's coming. He then shall reign in righteousness, administering peace and prosperity. Isaiah tells us "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32: 17).

There cannot be peace and blessing, for there cannot be order, without righteousness. The establishing of righteousness will necessitate the putting down by power of all that is contrary. As regards collective exercise in the present day, if assembly life and testimony is to be maintained then righteousness must be maintained in our responsible witness. This calls for the exercise of godly discipline. If we fail to discipline ourselves, and I speak assembly-wise, the Lord may have to do it for us. If we would scrutinize and judge ourselves we should not come under the hand of the Lord in actual judgment (see 1 Corinthians 11: 30-32) "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

Brethren, in these days of general failure may we each humble ourselves before the Lord. Conformity to His Word will promote righteous conditions amongst the saints. If there is departure from the Word of God fellowship is disrupted — the honour of our Lord is wrapped up with the exercises and activities of His saints.

In Isaiah 25: 6, Jehovah intimates that He will bring in a day of festivity. He will do it righteously, for the kingdom shall be established through judgment. "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matthew 13: 41).

The Lord is the Righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4: 8). If we wish to enjoy, even in this our day, the good things of God, we must act on the principle of righteousness. In the coming day of manifestation He will take away the covering vail from the peoples and all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; He will wipe away tears from all faces. He has spoken it and He will be as good as His word. Then there shall spring from the hearts of His earthly people, the tribes of Israel, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the LORD (Jehovah); we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

They shall then confess — This is the One in whose face we once spat; from which we plucked the hair; whose back we smote; whom we pierced and crucified. They will then appreciate, when He rides forth prosperously because of truth and meekness, His right hand teaching Him terrible things, that this was the once despised Nazarene, and will then know that He who once was lifted up at Calvary was none other than the Hope of Israel — the I AM. They will prostrate themselves before Him. No longer will He bear a reed in mockery but He shall wield the righteous sceptre. Then, truly — "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psalm 110: 3). Lord, haste the day of Thy coming again!

In the prophetic meantime there will be an impostor (see Revelation 13: 11). Our Lord had said,

in John 5: 43 — "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

The beast which arises from the chaotic state of things in the post-rapture, pre-millennial, period will claim the rights due to Christ the true King of Israel. Behind the Jewish beast will be the Roman beast imbued with diabolical power. The Jews may be deceived, but not so Jehovah! According to Ezekiel 21: 25-27, He shall say, in regard to the profane wicked prince of Israel — "Remember the diadem, and take off the crown; . . . I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him."

The whole, apparently prosperous, system established by the Roman beast shall be overturned by the Righteous Judge. The head of the revived Roman Empire and his Jewish satrap, the anti-christ, shall be put down at the coming of our Lord with His saints. Then our Lord "shall be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that have believed."

What a prospect lies before us to be with and like Christ at His coming. The Assembly will radiate the glory of the One who loved it and gave Himself for it, throughout the universe of bliss and glory.

At that time the cry of joyful acclamation shall rise from earth, "He hath done this." He shall be owned as, "the Governor among the nations." It shall then be patent to all that "the kingdom is the Lord's" (Psalm 22). The true David, the warrior King, shall subdue His enemies, and as the true Solomon He shall be able to say, "The Lord My God hath given Me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent." According to Psalm 72: 15, " . . . prayer shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised. . . men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed." His people, thankful to have Him on the throne in the execution of universal dominion with all its attendant blessing, will pray that nothing might occur to bring His blessed rule to an end.

Regarding Revelation 22, we have the opportunity to be truly subject to Him in this world during the period of His rejection, whether in regard to keeping His sayings — His Word, or in the practice befitting obedience to Him — our work; all in the appreciation of Himself. He has said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last," and, "Surely I come quickly."

Yes, He is coming. This blessed thread runs through the Word from Genesis to Revelation. While we wait for Him to come let us be watching, let us be longing, and let us occupy till He comes in the energy of that grace which He supplies and in the spontaneity of affection for Him. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."