

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55: 1 0 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES
FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE KINGDOM REBELLION

"**Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not receive evil?**" This was the question Job put to his wife as he sat covered with boils from head to foot (**Job 2:10**). In view of the title of this study it may be well for us to paraphrase his words and ask: Shall we receive only pleasant truths from the Word of God and ignore that which is unpleasant? My own response to this question has already been publicly demonstrated. I have chosen the way of truth.

My studies in the Word have brought the conviction that the final years of the kingdom of God will be characterized by an absence of all restraints, and the cessation of the Spirit's work as the restrainer. In doing this God will put all subjects of His beneficent government to the test to see if they have learned obedience. Arising out of this test will be a rebellion against God's government.

While this is the teaching of God's Word, it is quite difficult for many to believe that after centuries of divine rule during which men have witnessed and enjoyed the benefits and blessings that accompany God's government that there could ever be a rebellion against it.

Much of the difficulty here rests upon misconceptions and a failure to lay hold of all the facts. For example, while the Bible tells us that there is to be a revolt, it does not say that it is successful or that God's government is overthrown by it. It is the work of a small minority, and any temporary or apparent success it seems to enjoy is by divine consent in order to test the loyalty of all subjects. Some of its success is due to the fact that the loyal subjects of God's kingdom cannot use force of any kind against it. Under God's rule all who take the sword will perish with the sword (Matt. 26:52). The saints must wait, suffer, and even die if necessary until such time as God's government goes into action against evil men once again.

It is indeed blessed to know that at a time when divine government seems to have vanished and the rebellious ones are doing as they please, God has already given the

word of assurance that **"the kingdom of God is near at hand"** (Luke 21 :31), and that it will act in due time. It will also help our understanding of this rebellion if we remember that it arises out of a condition permitted by God for the purpose of producing an **"hour of testing which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth"** (Rev. 3:10).

In previous studies it has been set forth that we are now living in man's day, and that this day reaches its summit in and under God's administration of grace. This day of man is to be followed by the day of Christ, which is another designation of the kingdom of God. The day of Christ is to be followed by "the great and notable day of the Lord." Since the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night (2 Peter 3: 10), we cannot point to any event or time that will mark its beginning. But there is evidence that it begins at the time when God, without prior announcement removes all restraints. In due time men will discover by observation that sin is being practiced by some, and that it is not being punished as quickly and surely as it had been since God first assumed sovereignty. This will be no puzzlement to the saints of God who know His Word. They can take refuge in the divine declaration: **"Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him"** (Eccle. 8:12).

Concerning the coming of the day of the Lord, Paul gives us this valuable word in **2 Thess. 2:3, 4: "Let no one delude you by any means: for that day (the day of the Lord) shall not come except there be a rebellion (*apostasia*) first, and the man of lawlessness be revealed, the son of destruction, who is opposing and lifting himself up over all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, demonstrating he himself is God."** And since this man of lawlessness is destroyed by the blazing forth of Christ's parousia, it is evident that all this takes place before the actual second coming of Christ Jesus. It is his return that puts down this rebellion.

Under God's government, practically all divine operations will be manifest, that is, open and public. They will not be "in secret" and "untraceable" as they are today. From these all men will learn of the joys, blessings, and satisfaction from walking in harmony with the great moral law that will be in operation at that time. All God's works shall praise Him, and His saints will bless Him. They shall speak of the glory of His government, and talk of His power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts and the glorious majesty of His government. See Psalm 145: 10-12.

The world that God will then establish (Psa. 96: 10) will be one of divine justice, where none will ever be punished unless they deserve it, where only the guilty will suffer. Furthermore, in the world to come man will be so hedged about by the blessings of God that there will be every incentive for doing good, and nothing but

loss and sorrow will come from doing evil.

It may be that at this time Satan will again challenge God as he did in the days of Job, saying: **"Does mankind fear and serve you for nothing? Have you not placed a hedge about him on every side? You bless the works of his hands when they are good, and you punish him when they are evil! But just take away your restraints, loose his bands and untie his cords and you will see how quickly he will arise in rebellion against you and turn to me!"**

Note carefully that I do not say this is the way it is going to be. All I say is that this did happen in Job's case, that the book of Job was written for our instruction, and that it is highly illuminating that Satan is described as **"the accuser of the brethren"** (Rev. 12:10) at the time this rebellion is taking place.

There is a vast amount of Scripture which deals with this time of man's testing and the rebellion that comes out of it. All the revealed truth concerning the seventieth week (a seven year period) of Israel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27) is related to this. All of Psalm 2, Psalm 83, Matthew 24 and 25, and most all of Revelation has to do with this time. Furthermore, the definite, **antisemitic** character which this rebellion takes on is clearly set forth in these passages. Our space will permit only a brief dealing with two of them.

Psalm 2 opens with a question: **"Why do the nations rage and the peoples imagine a vain thing?"** Here nations and peoples are portrayed under the figure of a mighty sea, a likeness often used of the nations (Isa. 57:20). In order for this question to make sense the nations and peoples would first need to be quiet and peaceful, then suddenly become tumultuous, even as the sea does at times. As Rotherham puts it: "We are indebted to Delitzsch for calling attention to the obvious but much overlooked circumstance, that those kings and counselors who are discovered in rebellion when the psalm opens, have already come under obligation to Jehovah and to His Anointed One. They are already under the restraints of duty to Jehovah and to His Christ; since it is under those restraints that they turn restive, against those restraints that they rebel." (Studies in the Psalms, page 52).

A further description of the conditions that caused these questions to be asked is found in versus 2 and 3: **"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us"** (Psa. 2:2, 3).

This declaration indicates that the kings and rulers of the earth, who before this have been fully submissive to the divine government (Isa. 2:2-4; Isa. 60:3, 11; Psa. 22:28,

72: 11, 138:4) have suddenly "Set themselves," a term which Delitzsch says means **"rise in rebellion."** They have sat in assembly together against the LORD (Jehovah) and against His anointed one. Since the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus of the New Testament, the "anointed one" here cannot be Him. This refers to the kingship of David over Israel under the government of God, a fact that is clearly set forth in Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23,24; Ezek. 37:24, 25; Hosea 3:4,5. The rulers of the earth have agreed to break the bands of Jehovah and His Anointed One. They determine to cast their cords from them.

It is quite clear from the balance of this Psalm that the greater part of these kings and rulers are turned away from their purpose by the wooing, subduing words of Jehovah as He exhorts them to act wisely and accept His instruction (Psa. 138:4). They are invited to resubmit themselves to Jehovah, serving Him with reverence and rejoicing in Him with humility. If they fail to do so, they are warned that they will perish when the full heat of His anger is manifested. This wooing, quieting note, along with its strong warning, is characteristic of that time when Jehovah shall "shepherd the nations with a rod of iron."

It is in Psalm 83 .that the antisemitic character of the rebellion is revealed. In the first verse God is seen holding His peace and remaining quiet in spite of the vast amount of evil activities that have suddenly appeared. The second verse declares that His enemies **"make a tumult,"** and His haters are "carrying the head high." Details of their actions are declared in verse three as being: **"They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people (Israel) and consulted against your hidden ones (the divine ekklesia in Israel).** Their purpose is disclosed in verse four: **"Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel maybe no more in remembrance"**. In verses six to eleven divine punishment is cast down upon them, the ones who said: **"Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession."**

It is at this point in history that Psalm 11 becomes entirely applicable. It declares: **"Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup"** (Psa. 11:6). We read of this again in Rev. 18:8. It is evident that this is a discriminating judgment that touches only the wicked, and it brings to an end the rebellion against the government of God.

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