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PAST AND FUTURE KINGDOM OF GOD

A Restitution Theme

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GROANING CREATION DELIVERED FROM BONDAGE OF
SIN AND DEATH

THE LORD'S PRAYER FULFILLED

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. vi:33).

"When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts viii:12).

How few understand the meaning of these texts; and yet the anticipation of the establishment of this kingdom, and of their own participation in its glories, has cheered in their sufferings the faithful children of Abraham from the time the first promise was given: "In thee shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." 'Twas the burden of many of the songs of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel; his last prayer was for the Great King; his last words were of him. Isaiah's splendid poetry depicts it. The simple but fervent language of Jeremiah is full of it. And Ezekiel, during their captivity in Babylon, comforts the mourners of Judah with prophetic strains, and is himself comforted with a vision of its glories and beauty: none of the prophets forget it. 'Twas the good tidings of this kingdom which were preached by Jesus and his Apostles. 'Twas the power of truth concerning it which called out the first churches from the traditions and idolatries of their forefathers, and the hope of it was their support under the sufferings, even unto death, which were the consequences of their following the commands of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth. Reader, do *you* understand the things concerning this kingdom. Recollect they are *part* of the *faith* which *justifies*. Abraham believed the promises of God, and it was counted to him for righteousness; and no one ever yet was justified in the sight of Jehovah, but by believing his promises. Now, if we do not know what they are, we most certainly have not believed them, neither are we partakers of the divine nature; for it is by the knowledge of these exceeding great and precious promises, that we are made partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter i:4).

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In order to understand these things of the kingdom, it is necessary to trace the history of the Israelitish nation, beginning with the call of Abraham and pursuing the narrative to their second dispersion; for "To them pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; and of them as concerning the flesh, the Christ came." (Rom. ix:4, 5).

Abraham was the son of Terah, descended from Shem, of the sons of Noah; he dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, surrounded by idolatry and ignorance (Jos. 24:2). God, who "seeth the end from the beginning," and "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and who designs to bring back this earth—this rebellious portion of creation to its allegiance to him, the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, in order that his will may be done in earth as it is done in heaven, has determined for this purpose to establish a kingdom, under a King of his *own choosing*, whose *righteous* scepter should first subdue the human race to his sway, and whose wise institutions shall then discipline them, and fit them for immortality. This Omniscient God chose Abraham to be the father of the great nation which he intends to exalt, and consequently of his anointed King; but inasmuch as he always tests the faith and obedience of his creatures before he honors them, he commanded Abraham to leave his country and his kindred and go into a land to which he would direct him; and we are told (Heb. xi:8), "He went out, not knowing whither he went." He was also told that "in him all the families of the earth should be blessed." What a thing for a comparatively obscure individual to believe, that *he* should be the channel of blessing to the whole world, that world which lay under the curse of God, in darkness and the shadow of death! God leads this individual into the land of *Canaan*, and there appears to him giving this promise, "Unto *thy seed* will I give this land" (Gen. xii:7). The promise is repeated in Gen. xiii:15-17, with this addition, *To thee* will I give it, *and to thy seed for ever*." Here was an assurance to Abraham that he would live for ever, and his seed also, for to inherit the land *for ever, they must live forever*. He then asks for a token (Gen. xv:7, 8), that he himself should inherit the land, and God confirms the covenant to him, telling him he must first sleep with his fathers, that his descendants should be sojourners in a strange land, and afflicted for a certain period, but that God will execute judgment on their oppressors and bring them out with an increase of wealth in the fourth generation, leading them into Canaan. The boundaries of the inheritance are then fixed, viz.: from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates.

In Gen. xvii the promises concerning the land and the nation are renewed, and the right of circumcision instituted as the seal of the covenant: a son is also promised to him by his wife Sarah, now in her old age, to whom the promises are to be confirmed. Now Paul says in Gal. iii:16: "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made (i. e. concerning the inheritance), and he saith not, And to *seeds*, as of many; but as of one, And to *thy seed*, which is *the Christ*." From this we learn the meaning of the repetition of the word "seed" in so many passages. To Abraham and his one seed the land is promised for an everlasting *possession*, but the multitudinous seed, the nation, is to *dwell* in the land. The distinction is very evident in what is said to Isaac (Gen. xxvi:3, 4). In the third verse the *one* seed is spoken of; in the fourth, the multitudinous seed, or the nation.

Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob; the younger, Jacob, is chosen by God as the heir, and in the blessing of his father the dominion is mentioned: "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be Lord over thy brethren,

and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee." There is something further to be noticed in the parting words of Isaac to Jacob: "And God Almighty bless thee, and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to *thee* and to thy *seed* with thee." Thus we see he must have expected to inherit the land at the *same time* with the *one seed*. Gen. xxxv:11: "Kings shall come out of thy loins." So that from comparing these different clauses, so to speak, in the covenant, we conclude that the one seed means a *great king* who shall be the heir of all things, though others may share with him and under him the different blessings. After Jacob, the promises are deposited among his twelve sons; and in his dying words to these twelve we learn a few more particulars: Judah is made the royal tribe, and the expected king is styled "Shiloh," which means "*the giver of peace*;" his dominion over the world is also predicted (Gen. xlix:10), but the pre-eminent promises of fruitfulness are Joseph's. See verses 22, 26; I Chronicles v:1, 2.

These then appear to have been the expectations of Abraham and his family which they built upon the promises God gave to them:

First, that their descendants should become a great and mighty nation, through whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Second, that a great and powerful ruler or king should arise out of that nation, whom they style "Shiloh," or "*the giver of peace*."

Third, that this Ruler, *with the fathers*, should *possess* the land of Israel from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, and that he should have the dominion of the world.

Now as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve sons of the latter sunk into the grave without seeing any part of these promises being fulfilled, it follows, of necessity, that they must be raised from the dead to receive them; and to this agree the words of the Spirit by Paul (Heb. xi): "By faith Abraham when he was called to go into a country which he should *after* receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out;" "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise * * * These all died in faith, *not having received the promises*, but having seen them *afar off*, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them; and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth." Since then the eye of *faith* beheld these glorious things connected with *the nation of Israel as established into a kingdom afar off*; since too they were "*everlasting*," the faithful must have been aware that whatever intervened before the accomplishment, must be merely provisional or temporary; and yet these very temporary things were the pledge and earnest of the certainty of everlasting things, as they were also a means of working out the purpose of God in relation to the latter.

After the death of Jacob and his twelve sons, the period of the oppression and affliction of the Israelites, by the Egyptians, commenced: this was predicted in Gen. xv. The people had grown and multiplied in Egypt, and when the time of promise drew nigh, that is, the promise made by God to Abraham, that he would bring them out of the land of their bondage in the fourth generation leading them into Canaan, a deliverer was raised up for them; and with mighty signs and wonders did God redeem *his nation* from their slavery. He brought

them into the wilderness, and there in Horeb at the foot of Sinai, *he gave* them laws, *making a covenant with them* in which they solemnly engaged to keep his statutes, on which condition they were to dwell in the land promised to their fathers; but if they broke this covenant a series of curses were to come upon them, and in the end they were to be cast out of their country, and remain wanderers among the nations, until their chastisement should be accomplished, and they confess their iniquity; *then* he would remember his covenant made with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, and restoring them to his favor, re-establish them as a nation, to be no more removed.

The generation who received the law did not enter the land; they perished in the wilderness, but their children recognized the covenant as binding upon them, and under Joshua they are led on to conquer the Canaanites. After his death they are alternately rebellious and obedient, God himself being their *King* governing them by judges. By and by, however, impatient of dependence upon God which such a state of things required, forgetting the *promised* Ruler, they demand a king. God in his anger gives them Saul for a short time, and then rejects him, choosing David, whose name means "*the beloved*," and who becomes at once the type and the ancestor of the Shiloh. His occupation was that of a shepherd; he was anointed long before he came to the throne, and during Saul's life-time he advances the power of the kingdom by defeating many of Israel's enemies. On the death of Saul, the tribe of Judah, from which he sprang, proclaim him king in Hebron, and at the end of seven years all Israel recognize him as their sovereign. At the head of his "mighty men" he overcomes his enemies, and then desires to build a temple for Jehovah, for that God to whom he owes every thing; this gives occasion for the Lord to send a prophet to David; and in 2 Sam. vii, we have the record of the EVER-LASTING COVENANT made with him, which he says (2 Sam. xxiii) was "ordered in all things and sure," and was "all his *salvation and desire*," although at present there was no appearance of its accomplishment.

The promises contained in this covenant are styled in Isa. lv "the sure mercies of David;" also Acts xiii:34. They speak of a time when, free from all affliction and oppression, the nation of Israel shall be planted in their land never to "*move any more*;" they speak of a son of David, who shall be set over his kingdom, who shall build a temple to the Lord, and whose throne shall be established *for ever*. Of this son God says: "I will be his father, he shall suffer for the iniquity of men; but mercy, nevertheless, shall not depart from him." A promise is also given to David that he himself shall witness this establishment of his throne and kingdom: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever *before thee*," that is, "in thy sight:" therefore we conclude since the setting up of this king and kingdom were not to take place until after David slept with his fathers, and yet he was to witness it, of necessity he must be raised from the dead and live for ever.

Now that Solomon who immediately succeeded his father was not this promised seed is evident:

First, from the fact that Solomon was made king *before* David's death;

Secondly, from David's styling this covenant "the law of the man," or "the Adam," which related to his house for a *great while to come*;

Thirdly, from his last words (2 Sam. xxiii), when describing the character of the royal descendant: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in

the fear of the Lord." He also adds that the members of his house were "not so."

Further, David did not witness the reign of Solomon. Now if Solomon were not this prince, which it is evident he was not, the fulfilment of the promises is yet in the future, for there has never been a King of Israel at all answering to this description; as we shall see from the remainder of the history we are pursuing.

David died; and Solomon immediately sets about to build a temple. His reign was to be a peaceful one, and his name Solomon, signifies "*peaceable*." In these respects, and in building a temple, his kingdom typified that of Shiloh, or the "*peace-giver*." A type is a miniature and imperfect representation of something far greater and more perfect than itself. Thus David in his suffering character under the reign of Saul, was a type of the Beloved King in his sufferings from the world; in his warlike reign of forty years, a type of the Messiah as the conquering Prince: and Solomon's peaceful and magnificent reign shadowed forth (but oh, how faintly) the glories of the kingdom, when that great temple shall be built which shall be "a house of prayer to all nations," and to which "they shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of the tabernacles" (Zech. xvi:16; Isa. lvi:7).

But Solomon in the latter part of his reign oppressed the people, and moreover fell into idolatry: after his death a deputation was sent to his son Rehoboam, who succeeded him, requesting him that he would lighten the burdens of his people; but rejecting the advice of his senior counsellors, and following that of the young men, which was more congenial to his own mind, he returned as an answer, that whereas, "his father had chastised them with whips he would do it with scorpions," etc. (I Kings xii). This enraged his subjects, and ten of the tribes revolted, making Jeroboam the son of Nebat king, as had been predicted; but two, Judah and Benjamin, clave unto the house of David, and henceforth we must look on these latter as "*the kingdom of Judah*," whose capital was Jerusalem, and where the law of God was still in a measure respected. The ten tribes were recognized as the "*kingdom of Israel*;" their capital was Samaria, and to prevent the people from going up to Jerusalem to worship, Jeroboam set up two golden calves, one in Bethel, the other in Dan, and established idolatry as the national religion.

From this period a succession of wicked princes reigned over Israel, and though pleaded with from time to time by the spirit of God in the prophets, yet three hundred and ninety years after their separation from Judah, the measure of their iniquity was full, and Shalmanesar king of Assyria executed upon them the sentence pronounced by God; they were carried away into captivity: and have continued in dispersion to the present time; and inasmuch as the eyes of the Lord are said to be "upon that land" (Deut. xi:12), "he thus removed Israel *out of his sight*," and in the day of their restoration, *yet future*, their manifestation will be *like* a bringing out of graves; for truly they are hidden and cannot now be recognized as the nation which the Lord would have blessed, since no one can say, "These are Israel." With respect to Judah, of necessity, it must remain a distinct nation until the birth of Messiah; its kings, too, were not so utterly depraved; Jehoshaphat, Josiah, and Hezekiah successively stem the torrent of wickedness and idolatry, but at length even Judah's iniquity reached such a height that seventy years' captivity in Babylon

was decreed, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of that empire became the instrument of the Almighty's vengeance.

It was during this captivity that the prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of the kingdom in its restored state under the second David, the prince mentioned (xxxiv:23, 24; xxxvii:24, 25; xlv; xlvi). Daniel, another of the captives of Judah, was favored by visions, not only with regard to his own people, but also to the fate of the Gentile powers even to the time when "the kingdom and dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (7:14). After the seventy years were expired, by command of Cyrus, king of Persia; whose empire had superseded that of Babylon, the Jews headed by Ezra, returned to Jerusalem; and in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah we have an account of their re-settlement, and of the building of a temple which was so far inferior to the former one, that it drew tears from the old men, who had seen the glory before the departure for Babylon (Hag. 2:3).

An attempt was made by Nehemiah to restore the observance of the law, with some success, and in this state they continued, alternately oppressed and at peace with the Gentile powers around them. The kingdom of David was not, nor has it ever yet been re-established; the Maccabean race of the tribe of Levi succeeded in rescuing their country from Syrian oppression, and, contrary to the law, were made kings: they reigned one hundred and twenty-nine years, until the Romans set up Herod. During his reign *Messiah* was born, and was put to death when the second Herod was governor in Galilee, and Pontius Pilate the Roman deputy in Judea. Having thus rejected and crucified the long-expected One, because blindness had happened to them, that the purposes of redemption might be fulfilled; the cup of their iniquity was full, and about the year 70 A. D., an entire dispersion of the remnant of Judah took place; the city was razed, the temple burnt by the Romans under Titus, and from that period the nation has never been restored to their own land, but remain a persecuted and a scattered race. Jerusalem has continued in the hands of the enemies of the Lord; on the very hill where stood the temple, the dwelling-place of Jehovah, a Moslem mosque glitters in the sunlight, and from it resounds the sentence which insults both Jew and Christian, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet"!

Can this state of things be allowed by the jealous God to continue? Shall the place where his honor once dwelt—the sanctuary of his holiness, the Mount Zion which he loved, and of which he hath said, "This is my rest *forever*, here will I dwell, *for I have desired it*"—shall the mountain of his holiness be forever defiled by the Gentile abominations? Shall his people, who though sinful, are yet beloved for the father's sake, be the scoff and byword of those who are equally guilty with themselves; the taunt and reproach of them who reject "the *glory*," as the Jew rejected the *humiliation* of the Messiah? Or rather will he not descend from the place where he now stands as High Priest in the Holiest of Holies, and vindicate his own honor, and the honor of God his Father, by taking to himself his great power, by gathering his brethren, the dispersed of Israel and Judah, from the four corners of the earth, re-establishing them in his and their land under his own dominion, thus rebuilding the tabernacle of David that is fallen down, at the same time destroying their oppressors, the enemies also of his reign; enlightening the blinded and delivering the oppressed nations, extending his righteous sway wheresoever the children of men dwell, and causing the beams of his truth to dissipate the gloom which now envelopes the earth, and with his mighty arm rending

asunder the veil that is spread over all people? Yes truly, "For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations." To his Son Jesus Christ he saith: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession; thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psa. ii:8, 9). Again, in Luke i:32, 33, before his birth, the angel says: "He shall be great, and called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

We conclude, then, that the "kingdom of God" is "*the kingdom of Israel;*" that its former organization according to the law of Moses, and under the kings of Israel and Judah was intended to be only temporary, "until the Seed should come, to whom (and concerning whom) the promises were made;" that to fulfil the promises contained in the covenant with Abraham, and in the one made with David, the Israelitish nation must be everlastingly established in their own land, under Messiah their Prince, the territory of whose kingdom shall extend from the river of Egypt unto the river of Euphrates, and whose empire shall comprise the whole earth, having for its metropolis Jerusalem, emphatically styled "*the city of the Great King.*"

To make the subject clearer, and to confirm the evidence already deduced, we shall quote a few passages from the word of God in order to show the reader

I. *That the kingdom of Israel is "the kingdom of God."*

II. *That the Israelitish nation shall be restored from their present dispersion, and be everlastingly established under the Messiah their Prince and his co-heirs.*

In I Sam. viii:6, when Israel had demanded a king, God says they thus had rejected *him*; and in chapter vii:12, "The Lord your God was your King."

Isaiah xli:21: "Produce your cause, saith Jehovah, bring forth your strong reasons, saith the *King of Jacob.*" xliii:15: "I am the Lord your Holy One, the Creator of Israel your King." xlv:6: "Thus saith the *Lord the King of Israel*, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts, I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no *God.*" In Psa. xlviii:2 Zion is called the city of "*the Great King,*" and thus the Savior names Jerusalem in Matt. v:35; and in the eighth verse of Psa. xlviii, "The city of the Lord of Hosts, the city of our God." Are not these sufficient confirmation that the kingdom of Israel was and is, *the kingdom of God?*

Isaiah xi:10: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Egypt, and from Elam, and from the islands of the sea, and he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the *outcasts of Israel* (that is, the ten tribes), and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

Isaiah xlix, after having said Messiah should be his servant to raise up

the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, in the 18th verse Zion is told to lift up her eyes, and behold, for all her children gather themselves together: "For thy waste and desolate places, and the land of thy destruction shall even be too narrow for thee, by reason of the inhabitants," etc. Isaiah lx tells of the restoration of Jerusalem to more than former glory; also the two following chapters.

Jer. iii from verse 12 to 18, and verse 17: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord to Jerusalem; and in those days shall the house of Israel walk with the house of Judah, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers."

Jeremiah xxiii:5: "Behold the days come, said the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch," etc. Chapter xxx: "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Verse 9: "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." The remainder of this, and the next two chapters, speak of the restoration, also the latter part of xxxii:36-44; xxviii:7-26; Ezek. xxxvi:6-24, and then their conversion to the Lord is predicted in verses 25-27. Chapter xxxviii gives a symbolic representation of their restoration, under the figure of the resurrection of an army, whose bones were dried and scattered; and verse 25, we see the everlasting nature of their re-establishment. Again, in chapter xxxiv:21-29, God says: "Neither will I hide my face *any more* from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

We see in these passages that their Great King is sometimes called Jehovah, and sometimes David; this is because he is son of David as well as Son of God. Passages might be multiplied; but surely these are sufficient to show that there is a restoration of the twelve tribes *yet future*, for the ten, properly called Israel, have never been restored since their dispersion by Shalmanesar king of Assyria; and when Judah and Benjamin did return from Babylon, the regal government of the family of David was not re-established, and never has been since. In fact, no prince of the house of David has, or ever can reign again, until Messiah; for the Lord says to the last prince in Ezek. xxi:26, 27: "Remove the diadem, 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." We know that the one "whose right it is," is the promised seed of Abraham, who shall inherit all things, and the promised seed of David, who should establish David's "throne and kingdom for ever in his sight."

Thus we have seen that the children of Israel and Judah will be everlastingly established in their own land under the Messiah their Prince, and we know that Jesus of Nazareth is this Messiah, this Anointed King; and though he once "came unto his own, his own received him not," though the keepers of his Father's vineyard slew him, yet God raised him from the dead, "and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places," there to remain until the times of the restitution of all things: the restitution of the nation to the land, the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, the restoration of the faithful dead (*those who have died in faith not having received the promises*) to life, never again to die, that they may witness the glory of Messiah; and the resto-

ration of an obedient and teachable spirit to the now blinded and rebellious children of Abraham.

But besides the witnesses of the Shiloh's glory mentioned, Isaiah xxiv:23, under the title of "his ancients," there are to be *sharers* in that glory, *co-heirs* of that *kingdom*. Isaiah xxxii speaks not only of a *king*, but of "*princes*;" and Psalm xlv, after extolling the king, introduces a queen to notice. Now refer to Daniel vii: the prophet having had a vision of the four Gentile monarchies, namely the Babylonian, then existing; the Medo-Persian, about to supersede it; the Grecian under Alexander and his four successors; finally, the Roman, with its tenfold division, and the rise of the Papal horn, or power; beholds "the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" given to the Son of Man; but not to him *alone*, but to "the saints of the Most High" also, who are to *reign with him* everlastingly. But no one can legally inherit the throne of David, who is not of the *seed* of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David; and no one in the family of David has any right to its possession but the Lord Jesus Christ.

How then can this difficulty be surmounted? The exclusive right appertaining to one person only, that person Jesus the Son of Mary, and yet to fulfil the prophetic Word there must be *co-heirs*: and a participation is offered to *whomsoever* desires them, both Jew and Gentile. John, the forerunner of the Lord, preached the glad tidings or *Gospel* of the kingdom in order that men might become heirs of it. Jesus did the same, the apostles also; the language of the invitation runs thus: "Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." On what grounds then can this be extended beyond the one seed of David? Simply on these grounds: Every king has an undoubted right to have a queen to share his throne, and thus the great King of Israel, Jehovah's Anointed One, before entering on his dignities and honors, makes choice of a royal spouse. This title is given to the congregation of faithful ones, who believing the gospel, accept of the conditions proposed; they are elsewhere styled "his church," which word "church" means an assembly called out for some specific purpose. The purpose for which the church of Christ is "called out" from a world lying in wickedness, is to partake of his kingdom and glory; the design of the publication of the Word of God concerning this kingdom, is to "take out," first from the Jews, then "from among the Gentiles, a people for *the name of the Lord*." (Acts iii:26; xiii:46; xv:14). By taking the *Name* of the Lord in a *ceremony* appointed for *that purpose*, such persons are constituted of the mystical spouse of the heir to David's throne and kingdom; being thus made *one with Christ*, they become of the *family of David*, of the *tribe of Judah*, of the *seed of Abraham*; and thus Jehovah says (Isaiah lv:9): "I will bring forth a *seed out of Jacob*, and *out of Judah an inheritor* of my mountains, and mine *elect* shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there."

There is one characteristic appertaining to the Rulers in the kingdom of God, which we have not yet noticed. We have seen their persons must be deathless, sinless; but this peculiarity relates to their *office*; they are *priests* as well as kings. The combination of the pontifical with the regal office is not uncommon in some countries even now, though it never was permitted under the *former temporary* establishment of the Israelitish kingdom. The following passages are conclusive on this point: Zech. vi. 12, 13, in speaking of the "Branch," (of David, that is Christ Jesus) Jehovah says, "He shall sit

and rule upon his throne." Rev. 1: 6: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us *kings* and *priests*," Rev. 5: 10; "And we shall reign *on the earth*."

This priesthood is not the Aaronic order, but the order of Melchisedek, who was King of Salem, and priest of the Most High God in Abraham's days; and not only is it of greater antiquity, but *superior* to the Levitical priesthood, in every point of view; as was remarkably manifested by Abraham's offering tithes to Melchisedek. As Paul so ably argues these points, we refer the reader to his epistle to the Hebrews, from which he will also learn that the inauguration of Messiah to this order of priesthood is declared (Psalm cx.) in the words: "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek." Of this order the Lord Jesus is now the Great High Priest; at present he is within the Holiest of Holies, there interceding for us.

But he will return, and then there are other sacrifices which he will either superintend or ordain. We learn this from Ezekiel xlv:17. Since the prince of Israel does this, those who are *one* with him must also. The Levitical priesthood will likewise be restored, as we learn (Isa. lxvi: 21; lxi: 6); and since we cannot suppose that immortal beings could have anything to do with bloody sacrifices, we conclude that the mortal priests are the official sacrificing priesthood (Ezek. xlv: 15-21), whilst the saints, the *royal priests*, act as Intercessors and Mediators between God and man, as did Moses, probably too, as living oracles declaring the will of God; for since their nature will be conformable to the divine nature, being formed after the model of his only begotten Son, their wills must be his will.

But though every member of the body of Christ will share in these offices, yet some are placed in more honorable stations than others, even as some now attain to a nearer likeness to the image of their Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus. Every man's reward shall be according to his work. There is an excellent illustration of this in Luke xix: 13-27; to one is given authority over ten cities, to another authority over five, while the unprofitable servant is cast out of the kingdom entirely.

The jurisdiction of the twelve apostles is plainly stated (Luke xxii: 29, 30; Matt. xix: 28) to be over the twelve tribes of Israel. We are not informed how far the extent of the dominion will be given to the Great Apostle of the Gentiles, but it is not improbable that as far as his labors extended, whilst every other saint will be honored accordingly, since the empire of the King of Israel will in time extend over the whole earth. "Of the *increase* of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David" (Isa. 9: 6, 7). He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law."

This, then, is the sum of the matter. God is about to establish his kingdom, to connect the nations into one great empire, the metropolis of which shall be Jerusalem. "And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. xiv: 9). "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered together to the name of the Lord to Jerusalem" (Jer. iii: 17). At Jerusalem there will be a temple built, to which all nations shall send repre-

sentatives to worship, to offer offerings and suitable oblations (Ezek. xl., and four following chapters; Isa. lvi: 8). "*Even them (the sons of the stranger that join themselves unto the Lord), will I bring to mine holy mountain, and make them joyful in mine house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar, for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.*" Zech. xiv: 16: "*It shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations that come against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.*"

That Jesus of Nazareth is that man whom God hath ordained to rule over the world in righteousness, and that he unites in his own person the offices of King and Supreme Pontiff: he being the Anointed One, that is, the Christ. That united with him in these offices are his saints, the members of his mystical Bride, the Church; his ancients or elders sitting down in the kingdom and witnessing his glory. That the subjects of his kingdom are the *twelve* tribes of Israel, restored to their own land, building houses, planting vineyards, and their numbers increased as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the seashore, on whose hearts the law of God shall be inscribed, and who will therefore be "the righteous nation" of Isa. xxvi: 2. That the *subjects* of this empire are all the nations on the habitable globe, Pagan, Papal, Protestant and Mohametan, who shall cast their idols and foolish traditions to the moles and to the bats, walking no longer "after the imagination of their own hearts:" to whom the Lord shall speak peace; who, having beaten their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, shall learn war no more, but shall say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord (that is Zion), to the house of the God of Jacob, for he will teach us of his ways, and we will *walk in his paths*: for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. ii: 2). Then will be fulfilled not only in the earnest, as at the present time, but in the fullness, that gracious promise made to Abraham, the father of the Israelitish nation: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." Then will be fulfilled the last words of David: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord: and he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Then will David's last prayer be answered, that beautiful prayer contained in Psa. lxxii. Then may it be said to Jerusalem: "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning *are ended.*"

We have given few quotations from the New Testament, but we beseech the reader to examine whether or not this gospel of the kingdom was preached by the Lord and his apostles; we shall, however, conclude with a passage from Revelations xx: 4, 5, 9: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the *word of God*, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his *mark* upon their *foreheads*, or in their *hands*; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years: but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on *such* the second death hath no power, but they shall be *priests of God*, and of *Christ*, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

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