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## **"SALVATION UNTO THE END OF THE EARTH"**

Before leaving his disciples our Lord said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" ... and will show you things to come; ... he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John 16:12-14.)

After his death and resurrection, when the waiting Church were baptized with the Spirit, at once the things which the prophets had written and which they had hitherto been unable to understand, began to be made plain to them.

Peter did the opening work and called attention to the glad tidings as shown by the Prophets. He first quoted the prophecy of Joel (chap. 2:28,29) concerning the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit upon God's servants and handmaids and upon all flesh. His next reference was to David's prophecy of our Lord's exaltation. And the Spirit calling to mind the glowing language of the various Prophets, he boldly proclaimed the *restitution of all things*, declaring that it was "spoken by all the holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).

This was the work of the Spirit as the comforter, bringing to their remembrance the statements of the prophets, and revealing the significance of those statements, thus instructing and comforting them by showing them things to come. We would naturally expect that joy would fill all hearts at the sound of such blessed tidings; but it was not so. The religious teachers of that day were grieved at this teaching and sought to silence them, but Peter and John, being filled with the Spirit, replied: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"—what we know of God's plan.

We find exactly the same condition of things to-day. While those who are filled with the Spirit rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the lukewarm professors turn a deaf ear to the truth and are grieved that the people are being taught these things.

Since Peter has called our attention to all the prophets as heralds of the good news, we have been noticing particularly some of those uttered by Isaiah. Some will reluctantly admit that some time in the distant future there will be a restoration of Israel to their own land—that is, of all those living in that day; but for what purpose or advantage, either to themselves or

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others, they seem to have no idea. But Isaiah makes it very plain that the great restitution refers to nothing so insignificant. In the following text Jehovah is addressing our Lord Jesus, saying, that to raise up or restore Israel is "a light thing," only a small part of the work. The restitution spoken by the mouth of all the prophets since the world began, means "*salvation unto the end of the earth.*" "And now, said Jehovah, it hath been a light thing that thou art to me for a servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and the preserved of Israel to bring back; and I have given thee for a light of nations, to be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6—Young).

This implies a resurrection—restitution—of all the living and dead ones as Peter preached. In the light of this declaration from the mouth of Jehovah himself—that Christ shall be for salvation to the end of the earth—we read in Isa. 35 the glowing description of that time, now near at hand, when "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them." "They (earth's redeemed millions) shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God," then made so manifest to all. In chap. 26, verse 19, God emphatically declares: "Thy dead men shall live ... Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust ... and the earth shall cast out the dead." And Jeremiah adds his testimony, saying: "They shall come again from the land of the enemy"—death (Jer. 31:16). Such tidings seem almost too good to believe, but the Lord reminds us that it is He who has declared this, saying: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts [plans:: than your thoughts [plans]. ... For ye shall go out [of the prison of death:: with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isa. 55:8-12).

Those whose faith staggers not at the promises of God, are commissioned to encourage those of weaker faith (Isa. 35:3,4): "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance (to bind the adversary—Satan—and destroy his works—Rev. 20:2; 1 John 3:8), even God with a recompence; he will come and save you." Verse 5: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped," for "The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9), and all will be able to see and hear the truth. Streams of water (truth) shall break forth in the desert, "And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. In the habitation of dragons where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." When, under the reign of Christ, truth shall thus refresh the earth, error and vice (symbolized by dragons) shall give place to the rapid and healthy growth of virtue.

Verses 8 to 10 show the particularly favorable circumstances under which the world, during the next age, will be disciplined and restored. The way by which they will be led back to human

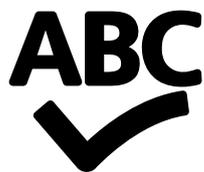
perfection, is here called a *high way*, not a narrow way, such as that in which the consecrated of this age walk to gain the prize of the high calling to immortality, the Divine nature. We who are running for this prize find ourselves hedged about continually and sorely pressed by the adversary who, during the next age, will be bound. The easy and gradual ascent of the *high way* will be clear and plain to all, so that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein," for all the stones—stumbling blocks—shall be gathered out (Isa. 62:10). Present temptations to evil will be removed when Satan is bound and men will be saying, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths (Isa. 2:3).

The work of restitution will be a gradual work, the awakening from death being only the beginning of it; it will require the whole thousand years to fully complete it. Those years are therefore called "the times (years) of restitution" (Acts 3:21). Only those who flee from the defilements of sin shall go on this high way of everlasting continuance of life. Verse 9: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there." All obstacles to growth and development of perfect manhood shall be removed, but the redeemed—all mankind ransomed from death by the precious blood of Christ—shall walk up to perfection if willing to forsake their sins.

Verse 10: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." When we realize that this salvation extends to all the families of the earth, we see the force of Jehovah's statement: "It hath been a *light thing* that thou art to me for a servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and the preserved of Israel to bring back." Not only shall that work be accomplished, but, in addition to that, Christ is also given for a light to all nations, and for "salvation to the end of the earth." R. W.

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