

God's Remedy for a World Gone Mad

Today we do not need to belabor the point that the world has gone mad. This madness of the selfish world manifests itself in essentially every activity of life—national and international. Because of this, the world is filled with suffering. In large areas of the earth people are starving to death by the millions, and fear of even worse things to come fills the hearts of mankind from continent to continent. There seems to be no way to escape the blighting effect of what is taking place, despite the best efforts of our most talented statesmen and rulers to turn the situation around.

This is the time foretold by Jesus when he said that there would be “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” (Luke 21:25,26) As the world sees it, there is good reason for fear. Jesus said that with this fear there would be perplexity; and the Greek word here translated perplexity literally means “no way out.” This is why the world is filled with fear. They see no way out of the dilemma, no way out of the madness of human behavior in this time which

Jesus described as one of “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt. 24:21) In this statement Jesus is quoting substantially from the prophecy of Daniel, chapter 12, verse 1, where Daniel describes the same period as “a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.”

To emphasize how serious this time of trouble would be, Jesus adds, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” (Matt. 24:22) However, Jesus assures us that these days would be shortened by divine power operating through his church, “the elect.” In other words, Jesus agrees with the human viewpoint that there is no way out of this dilemma of human madness, but comforts us with the thought that God has provided a way out, a way of salvation for the human race from its own evil course of sin and selfishness. It is this way out which God has provided that we refer to in our title as his remedy for a world gone mad.

THE KINGDOM

In a word, God's remedy for the ills of fallen mankind is the kingdom, or government, which throughout his entire Word he has promised would be established. One of these promises concerns the coming of the great Messiah and King in the kingdom: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall

be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”—Isa. 9:6,7

The Lord has recorded numerous prophecies to give us assurance that his kingdom will be established in the earth, and in many instances this kingdom is referred to as a mountain—“the mountain of the Lord.” In Daniel, chapter 2, this mountain, according to Daniel’s prophecy, first appears as a stone which smites the unholy kingdoms and governments of this world and becomes a great mountain to fill the whole earth. Verse 45 of this chapter gives us a wonderful assurance concerning the kingdom of God. We quote, “Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” In Isaiah, chapter 25, the kingdom of God is again likened to a mountain. “And in this mountain,” we read, “shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”—Isa. 25:6

BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM

The blessings of the kingdom are set forth with some detail in Micah 4:1-4. Verse 1 reads, "In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it." It is fitting that the Lord should liken his coming kingdom to a mountain. These prophecies were addressed in the first instance to the nation of Israel, and the nation of Israel was accustomed to being ruled from a mountain. Mount Zion in Jerusalem was the national headquarters of the government which ruled over Israel. It was here in this mountain that David exercised his governmental control over the affairs of Israel, the chosen people of God. So when in this and other prophecies God spoke of his mountain being established in the top of the mountains, it would be easy for the devoted Israelite to realize that his God, Jehovah, was promising to set up a more powerful kingdom on earth than had ever been known before. And this is what it will truly be.

In Micah's prophecy of the establishment of the kingdom, an additional point of explanation and interest is introduced. Here we read that this mountain of the Lord is the "mountain of the house of the LORD." This also was familiar language to the Israelites. The Lord's ruling house in Israel was headed by David and his successors. But David and his fleshly successors

will not be the ruling house of the future kingdom of God on earth. In many instances in the past, ruling houses over nations and empires consisted of a family arrangement in which the right to rule passed on at the death of the king to another member of the same family.

This is the manner in which the prophetic house of the Lord functions. This house is composed of his sons, Jesus being supreme among them. We read that when Jesus came at his First Advent "he came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." (John 1:11,12) Under Jesus, these were the first members of God's ruling house. But in all Israel there were not enough who received Jesus to have this honor bestowed upon them; so in God's due time he turned to the Gentiles, through the preaching of the Gospel, to find those worthy of completing the foreordained number that would make up his ruling house. Much is written in the New Testament about those who have become believers since the First Advent of Jesus and who through the power of the Holy Spirit become the children, or sons, of God. To these the promise is that if they continue faithful they will reign with Christ in God's ruling house. (Rom. 8:16-19) "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified

together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”

THE LORD'S WAYS

Micah's prophecy concerning the kingdom of God declares, in chapter 4, verse 1, that “people shall flow unto it.” A similar prophecy in Isaiah 2:2-4 declares that “all nations shall flow unto it;” and in both of these prophecies we are assured that many from all peoples who flow unto the kingdom of God will say, “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—vs. 3

In this prophecy Mount Zion represents divine authority in the kingdom of God. This would, therefore, represent the spiritual phase of that kingdom, made up of Jesus and his faithful and glorified followers. We are told that the word of the Lord shall go forth from Jerusalem. Here is mentioned a wider aspect of the functioning of God's kingdom, that aspect which comes into understandable contact with the human race here on the earth. This contact will be through the ancient servants of God, such as the faithful prophets of old, and others

who served God faithfully prior to the First Advent of Jesus. Jesus said that “many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 8:11) The expression here in the Greek text which is translated “sit down” indicates that the reference is to pupils sitting in front of their master, or teacher. So the faithful servants of God of ancient times will be the ones who will communicate the word, or laws, of God to mankind in his kingdom. These we could think of as the symbolic Jerusalem of Micah’s prophecy. We have here, then, both the spiritual and the earthly phases of the kingdom, those in the earthly phase representing those in the spiritual phase and communicating to the people the law of God received from Jesus and his church.

The people and nations in this prophecy of God’s kingdom indicate their desire to know and to follow the Lord’s way. And in that time “he shall judge among many people, and rebuke [Hebrew, correct] strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—Mic. 4:3

It is interesting here to note the wide difference between the Lord’s ways and ways of selfish men. Throughout the centuries misguided human philosophy has insisted that the only way to be assured of peace is to be prepared for war. But here the Lord’s way is seen to be

different. When the people learn the Lord's ways they will give up planning and preparing for war. Instead, they will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks." Instead of continuing to build up large armies for defense, as it is styled, and thus be assured of peace, "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Think of the step forward this will be in solving the madness that is so prevalent in the world today! No longer will a mother feel that her son may be sent to the battlefield to be slaughtered. No longer will the resources of the world be drained in order to maintain vast military establishments, for they will learn war no more, neither will they practice war any more. This is the Lord's way, the way which will be instituted throughout the earth in the kingdom of God which will be established in the top of the mountains, that is, dominating the affairs of all people. We rejoice in this aspect of God's remedy for a world gone mad!

Verse 4 of Micah's prophecy reads, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." The vine and fig tree illustration contains the emphasis of economic security for all mankind. One of the causes of so much fear in the world today is the lack of economic security. The hearts of so many are filled with fear lest they lose their means of livelihood and be reduced

to a welfare status. But then none shall make them afraid through threats of being evicted from their homes, or through fear of hunger for themselves or their families. None shall make them afraid for any purpose whatsoever, and we have the most blessed assurance that “the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.” What better assurance could we have than this of the workability and the success of God’s remedy for the world gone mad?

In the world today we occasionally hear someone say—even those in high government offices—that if they could get people to do this or that, or if the government would pass this or that law, we would have peace and security. But in God’s remedy there is no place for any such uncertainties. God’s remedy is to be imposed arbitrarily and by divine power—the mountain of the house of the Lord—upon all the people and nations. They will have no choice but to obey. How they will rejoice when they recognize how wonderful the Lord’s ways really are, how after so many centuries of waiting and hoping and, on the part of some, praying, God’s way actually will be established in the earth!

MORE IS NEEDED

However wonderful the blessings of the kingdom of God will be for a sin-sick and dying world as the details are set forth in Micah’s prophecy (4:1-4), it would still come short of being a remedy for all human ills. Micah’s

prophecy shows that people will learn war no more, hence that there shall be no more war. It assures us that they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; that is, they will use the resources now devoted to maintaining war and its armaments to the promotion of peace and goodwill among the nations. It assures us that there will be economic security; that no one will fear being dispossessed of his home or going hungry. All will be blessed by prosperity and plenty in every aspect of human need.

With all these blessings being enjoyed by the human race, however, they would still be living under a terrible blight of sorrow and suffering, for it would still be a dying race. We would have a world with hospitals thickly spread everywhere in all nations, and those hospitals filled with the suffering and the dying. We would still have mental institutions, likewise filled to overflowing. Every home would be afflicted sooner or later with dread diseases, and eventually, certain death. This would not be an ideal world. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt.6:10) We cannot imagine that in heaven there is carnal warfare, nor can we imagine hunger in heaven, nor can we imagine sickness and death. So the kingdom of God will be a total remedy for the ills of mankind.

The Bible assures us that this will be the case. In a prophecy already cited in which the kingdom

of God is again referred to as a mountain, we are assured that sickness and death will likewise be destroyed. This is the prophecy of Isaiah 25:6-9. Referring to many of the blessings which shall be provided by the Lord to satisfy the desire of the people, we are told that in this mountain the Lord of hosts will “make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”

“And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.” This would seem to be a reference to the lack of knowledge which the vast majority of mankind have experienced through the ages, the lack of knowledge concerning God and his ways. The great veil of ignorance in this respect has been cast over all people, and over the nations as well. It is because the nations have this veil spread over them that they imagine they can establish peace while preparing for war. They cannot now see through this veil to understand and appreciate the Lord’s ways. But that veil will be removed, for other prophecies show that then “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” —Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14

In this mountain or kingdom of God “he will swallow up death in victory.” (Isa. 25:8) Another translation puts it even stronger saying that the Lord will strike down death in victory. Yes, that great enemy Death will be struck down by

the forces of the kingdom of God and will no longer be permitted to blight the happiness of all mankind. The prophecy continues, and says, "The Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it." What a changed world it will be under the kingdom of God when the tears are wiped from all faces! Tears are here used as a symbol of sadness, of sorrow, of pain. But all this will be done away with and joy shall break out in every city, in every town, in every village, in every countryside.

The prophecy continues by saying that the rebuke of the Lord's people shall he take away from off all the earth. This rebuke of God's people has been one of the characteristics of the reign of sin and death. Satan has stirred up his cohorts against those who are serving God, and they are rebuked, persecuted, misrepresented, so that few are really prepared and courageous enough to take a determined stand for God's ways, the ways of righteousness, of peace, of goodwill. But in God's mountain—"the mountain of the house of the Lord"—the rebuke of God's people will he take away. In one of the kingdom promises of the Bible we are told that "that old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan," the great deceiver and oppressor of the people, will then be bound. (Rev. 20:2) How wonderful are the prospects of God's promises! How bright should be our hope because of the promises of God! Verse 9 of Isaiah

25 says, "It shall be said in that day, 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."

It is true that the people have been waiting and longing for the very blessings which the kingdom of God will provide for them. They have not been aware of what the source of these blessings will be. Men have referred to the new conditions as Utopia and other pleasing names; but when these blessings are showered upon them, one of the chief blessings will be their understanding of the source. They will realize that the great God of love, who sent his Son to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world, is the Author and the Planner of this grand design which shall bring worldwide and lasting peace, together with health and everlasting life and knowledge of himself and of his Son, which will be a blessing in itself such as few of the world have enjoyed throughout all the ages of human experience.

NEW TESTAMENT CONFIRMATION

While we have been quoting largely from the promises of God recorded in the Old Testament, these precious promises are all confirmed by God through his servants in the New Testament. We read concerning Jesus, for instance, that he proclaimed the kingdom of God. But not only that, he went from place to place confirming his oral message with the miracles he performed

—the healing of the sick and the raising of the dead. The Apostle Peter in Acts 3:20-24 tells of the return of Christ at his Second Advent, and says that then the world could expect “times of restitution of all things.” God has foretold these times of restitution by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began. The restitution Peter referred to here was illustrated by the miracle he had just performed by healing a man who had been lame from birth. (Acts 3:1-8) It also includes the hope of the resurrection of the dead, as pointed out in verse 2 of chapter 4 of the book of Acts. The Apostle Paul in testifying before the Roman government said that the hope of the prophets and elders of Israel was that there would be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.—Acts 24:14,15

PAUL’S RESURRECTION LESSON

In Paul’s outstanding lesson on the resurrection of the dead as set forth in I Corinthians, chapter 15, he says, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming [Greek—presence].” In this narrative Paul is speaking of the blessings of the kingdom of God, because he follows with the statement, “Then cometh

the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”—I Cor. 15:20-26

How all-comprehensive is the thought that death itself will finally be destroyed! Of course this means that those who had been asleep in death will have been awakened to share the kingdom blessings with the remainder of mankind. And why should it not be this way? How unsatisfactory it would be to know that the living generation of humans was enjoying a perfect world, free from all the exhibitions of madness that surround us today, free also from the malady of sickness and the blight of death, and yet realize that so many billions of those who had lived in the past were missing these blessings because they had died too soon!

But that is not the way God does things! His remedy for a world gone mad is all-comprehensive. In a sense the world has been off balance ever since man first sinned against the laws of God. Each generation of the human race has experienced maladjustments of society as well as of home life. All have suffered pain and death. All have been filled with sorrow and their eyes flooded with tears as their loved ones were struck down by the grim reaper, Death. To think of all these billions as now

being outside the boundaries of God's loving kingdom provisions would be unreasonable.

There is a well-known saying among suffering and dying humans that "while there is life there is hope." But we cannot restrict the power of God to this saying. The promises of God assure us that there is hope beyond death; that the dead are to be brought back to life in what, as we have already noted, the Bible describes as the resurrection of the dead. Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." (John 5:28) Those who have done good (that is, the believers of this life) will come forth to a resurrection of life, and will live and reign with Christ in his glorious kingdom which will be the channel of blessing for all mankind. The others, as the *Revised Standard Version* more correctly translates the text, will come forth to judgment; that is, they will come forth and be placed on probation and given an opportunity to prove their loyalty to God under the favorable circumstances of that new world. What more could we ask!

In the Old Testament the resurrection of the dead is illustrated in various ways. The word resurrection itself is not used in the Old Testament, but in that portion of his inspired Word God has likened those in death to prisoners and their awakening from death to a coming out of captivity. These promises of a breaking forth by God's help from captivity are so

all-inclusive that they take in the whole world of mankind. Their being brought forth from death is described as a returning. Moses prayed, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return ye children of men."—Ps. 90:1-3

It was back in the Garden of Eden that God turned men to destruction when he sentenced our first parents and drove them out of the garden into the unfinished earth to die. That is when man's troubles really began. But Moses assures us that is not the end of God's dealings with man. Those whom he has turned to destruction will hear the wonderful command, "Return, ye children of men." Yes, Christ, who made provision for the redemption and salvation of the world through his death, will use divine power to call all the dead world of mankind to return to the land of the living.

Isaiah 35:10 contains another wonderful promise of the returning of mankind from death. This text reads, "And the ransomed [those ransomed as a result of Jesus' death on Calvary's cross] 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." What a fitting climax this is to the bright hope that is set before the suffering

world throughout this entire chapter! Beginning with the third verse we read, "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, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."—Isa. 35:3,4

This promise is especially appropriate today. This is the day of God's vengeance upon a sin-cursed and dying race. But he does not come merely to inflict vengeance upon the world, for as this promise shows, the vengeance is in the form of a recompense. His real purpose is to save and bless mankind—"He will come and save you."

Isaiah continues, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams 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." (vss. 5-7) What a change this will mean in the outlook of the world so distressed and filled with fear today! Verse 8 reads, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those [that is, for the benefit of those who are unclean, as a way of their becoming clean or righteous and acceptable to God]: the wayfaring men, though

fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there.” (Isa. 35:8,9) Then follows in the 10th verse the wonderful promise of that climax of blessing when the ransomed of the Lord shall return from death with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads. When the prophet says, “No lion shall be there,” we are reminded of the promise in Revelation, chapter 20, which tells us that Satan will at that time be bound. Satan is described in the Bible as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.—I Pet. 5:8

In that new world, after God has destroyed the enemies of righteousness and pours out his spirit upon all flesh, how wonderful will be the conditions after his remedy has been put into effect! Isaiah wrote, “Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people [the whole world of mankind] shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”—Isa. 32:16-18

That will be the time when the kingdom of God is ruling in the earth and his remedy for a world gone mad put into full operation. How wonderful indeed is the prospect before us! How wonderful indeed to realize that man’s hope for the future is as bright as the promises of God!

FINAL TESTIMONY

The final testimony of the kingdom of God is brought to us in the book of Revelation. There are many references to the kingdom throughout this book, but we wish to call attention briefly to some of the assurances we find in chapters 20, 21, and 22. In chapter 20, as we have already noted, we have the assurance of the binding of Satan. We are assured that Christ, together with his faithful followers, the church, will live and reign a thousand years to dispense God's promised blessings. We are also informed in this chapter that death and hell will deliver up the dead which are in them, and that death and hell will both be destroyed.

In chapter 21 we are told that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." (vss. 4,5) In the last chapter of the Bible, we read, "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Rev. 22:1,2) In verse 17 of Revelation, chapter 22, we read, "The Spirit and the bride

say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Could we ask for more assurances from God’s Word that he has, indeed, provided a remedy for the ills of a world gone mad? Yes, the nations need healing, and in this prophecy we are told that God has provided a means for the healing of the nations. Let us, then, lift up our heads, banishing our fears, and look forward to the near establishment of this kingdom, because there is every reason to believe—and one of them is the present madness of the world itself—that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. ■