

Receiving a Kingdom which Cannot Be Moved

*“Wherefore we
receiving a
kingdom which
cannot be moved,
let us have grace,
whereby we may
serve God
acceptably with
reverence and
godly fear.”
—Hebrews 12:28*

WE ARE LIVING IN WHAT the Scriptures foretold would be a time of shaking. Haggai prophesied, “I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations.” (Hag. 2:6,7) Paul, when quoting from this passage, explained that in this foretold time of shaking, much

which constitutes this present evil world will be removed—everything that is mingled with sin and selfishness. He also speaks of those things “which cannot be shaken,” and assures us that these will “remain.”—Heb. 12:26,27

THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

The things which cannot be shaken are those which pertain to the long-promised kingdom of

Christ. In our opening text, Paul mentions that we will receive a kingdom which “cannot be moved.” Various passages of Scripture present the viewpoint of the kingdom having its rightful place in the earth. Based on these, and the prophetic signs of our day, we believe that the kingdom’s establishment in power and great glory for the blessing of all the families of the earth with peace and life is near at hand.

In our Lord’s parable of the wheat and the tares, the wheat is said to represent the “children of the kingdom,” which was sown by Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel Age, and the tares represent the “children of the wicked one,” Satan. We are told that in the harvest at the end of the age the tares are gathered out of the field, representing the removal of all things which “offend” and “do iniquity.” It is then that the righteous “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (Matt. 13:37-43) Connecting this parable to the words of Paul previously cited, the tares are part of that which is shaken and taken away. The wheat, however, relates to that which “cannot be shaken.”

In Psalm 46:1-5, we have another prophecy of the time in which we are living. In this passage, we see the shaking and removal of “mountains,” and the roaring of the “sea.” Even “the earth”—present sinful arrangements of society—is “removed.” The Lord’s truly consecrated people, however, are given the assurance that he is caring for them. “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved,” is the assurance that is given to them in this prophecy.

Thus, while now is a shaking time, when the very foundations of man’s world continue to crumble,

we are in the process of development to ready us to receive a kingdom which cannot be moved. This is the long-promised kingdom of the Messiah, and we are a very favored people to be receiving such a kingdom, if faithful to our consecration vows.

What does it mean to be “receiving” the kingdom? Jesus said to his disciples, and to us, to “seek . . . first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” (Matt. 6:33) Peter admonished faithfulness in order that we might have an abundant entrance into the “everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:10,11

The expression, “kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” is used in the Bible from different standpoints. Sometimes it refers to the rulership aspect of the Messianic kingdom. We believe this is true of Jesus’ admonition to seek first the kingdom, and of the statement in our text which says that we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved. It is true also of Peter’s admonition to seek an abundant entrance into the kingdom.

There are other references to the kingdom, however, which relate to the blessings to be received by its subjects—“all the families of the earth.” (Gen. 28:14) One of these references is found in Isaiah 2:3. Here the kingdom is symbolically described as a great mountain. The prophecy reads, “Many people shall go and 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.” While we today recognize the blessed promise of receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, the

subjects of that kingdom are not yet saying, “Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.”

RULERS SELECTED

The rulers of the kingdom must first be selected from mankind, and prepared for the high position they will occupy in that kingdom. This great work has been in progress since Pentecost. Jesus was the first of the spiritual rulers to qualify for this high position. He is the “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” (Rev. 19:16) Those who, throughout the present Gospel Age, have been willing to suffer and to die with him, have also proved worthy to live and reign with him. The work of calling and testing these still continues. They are those who, through their faithfulness, are “receiving a kingdom” from this standpoint.

There are also to be human representatives of the kingdom’s spiritual rulers. The work of selecting these earthly representatives was conducted by God during the ages preceding Jesus’ First Advent. The Scriptures indicate that the first of these to qualify was Abel. (Heb. 11:4) The last was probably John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said that, although none born of women was greater than John, the “least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” (Matt. 11:11) This does not mean that John the Baptist will not be in the kingdom at all. It simply means that he will not be one of the heavenly, or spiritual, rulers in that kingdom.

The human representatives of the kingdom, who were God’s faithful servants of past ages, are described as those who will be “princes in all the

earth.” The *Rotherham Translation* says “rulers in all the earth.” (Ps. 45:16) Jesus prophesied that in the kingdom mankind would come from all parts of the earth and sit down with these Ancient Worthies to be taught by them. (Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28,29) In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, Paul mentions a number of these faithful men and women of old, and tells of their steadfast loyalty to God under the most difficult circumstances. He also explains that, despite their great faith, God has “provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”—Heb. 11:39,40

The “better thing” which God has provided for the followers of Jesus during the present age is their spiritual reward and the privilege of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. (Rom. 2:7; Rev. 20:6) It is through faithfulness to the terms of this “heavenly calling” that we will receive the position of rulership in the kingdom. (Heb. 3:1) Meanwhile, we rejoice in prospect of the blessings which the Lord has promised to shower upon the world of mankind through these heavenly and earthly rulers of the kingdom.

The Messianic kingdom is portrayed in Micah 4:1,2 as the “mountain of the house of the LORD,” which is to be established upon the “top of the mountains.” In this prophecy, the two ruling phases are referred to as “Zion” and “Jerusalem.” We believe that in this prophecy the spiritual, or heavenly, phase of the rulership of the kingdom is symbolized by Zion, and the earthly phase by Jerusalem. The law of the Lord “shall go forth of Zion”—that is, from Jesus and his faithful followers, glorified and enthroned as the spiritual rulers of the

kingdom. The “word of the LORD” shall go forth “from Jerusalem”—the earthly rulership phase of the kingdom. The expression “word of the LORD” would seem to imply the interpretation and teaching of the “law” which will originate from symbolic Zion, and be presented to the people by the Ancient Worthies, Christ’s earthly representatives.

THE KINGDOM’S BLESSINGS

Countless wonderful blessings will reach the people through the arrangement of the Messianic kingdom. Micah’s prophecy (vss. 2-4) speaks of learning God’s ways, of beating “swords into plowshares,” and assures us that “none shall make . . . afraid.” There will be security for all—symbolized by everyone dwelling “under his vine and under his fig tree.” Truly the blessings of the kingdom will be rich for all who become its faithful subjects.

In Isaiah 25:6-9, the kingdom is again symbolically described as a “mountain.” Here we are informed that in this mountain the Lord will prepare for all people—the subjects of the kingdom—“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.” We are also assured that in this symbolic mountain the Lord will “swallow up death in victory,” and that “the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces.”

These are among the blessings which will be made available for the subjects of the kingdom. These blessings to mankind are not presently available here in 2014. Rather, they must wait until the final member of the rulership phase of the kingdom has completed his course faithfully

“unto death.” It is from this standpoint that we are now in preparation for receiving the kingdom. The plan of God cannot fail. All human plans and works are failing, being shaken by the winds of selfish strife. The kingdom we are receiving cannot be moved, for God is in the midst of those who compose this kingdom class, and he is more powerful than all the enemies which might be arrayed against them.

HOW RECEIVED

The method by which we are “receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved” is stated by Paul in our text, where he says, “Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” From this statement, we see that the Lord is pleased to give us this high position in the kingdom—but not unconditionally. There are certain terms attached to the receiving of this marvelous gift, and on our part, it is the meeting of these terms that is involved in our receiving the kingdom.

This is just another way of saying that we need to make our “calling and election sure.” (II Pet. 1:10) The process of receiving the kingdom calls for faithfulness to the divine will, the details of which God reveals to us day by day. We cannot know with any degree of certainty what trials and testings lie ahead. However, we know that if we hold fast and depend upon the grace of God, and are wholly devoted to the doing of his will, we will be in a position to receive that kingdom which will soon remedy all earth’s ills.

We know that the Lord will continue to work in and through us to do his good pleasure. We do not

know how rapidly Satan's world will continue to deteriorate from its present "shaking." However, we have the promise that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28) Thus we can press forward with confidence, knowing that while all the world may deride our choice, it matters not, for we have accepted a call to glory, honor, and immortality, and to a position in that kingdom of divine promise which soon will be established for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

In order to receive the kingdom which cannot be moved, we must abide by the terms of our calling. One of these terms is that we must deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow the Master. (Matt. 16:24) Denial of self implies being emptied of self, and filled with the Holy Spirit of love. The meeting of this condition immediately places us in a position contrary to the world. It means that all we do will be done not for ourselves but for the Lord, for his people, and for his cause. From the human standpoint, we might wish to take sides in some of the world's controversies, but the terms of our receiving the kingdom which cannot be moved do not allow this. We will continue to live in this world, but not be of its spirit.—John 17:11-16; I Cor. 2:12

Being emptied of self, and filled with the Spirit of the Lord, mean that the fruits of the Spirit—love, peace, joy, gentleness, etc.—will manifest themselves in our daily dealings with one another as brethren, as well as with the world. Having denied self, we will not be seeking our own desires, but will gladly continue to sacrifice those things which might be rightfully ours in order that others might be blessed.

This will not be easy in a selfish, sinful world, but it is one of the ways in which we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved.

LAYING DOWN OUR LIVES

Another of the terms of receiving the kingdom was expressed by Jesus when he said we should love one another as he loved us. (John 13:34; 15:12) Later, John explained what this means—that it called for the laying down of our lives for the brethren. (I John 3:16) Many in the world will lay down their lives for one cause or another. Today this is seen on the “battlefields” of one or more of the internal conflicts now raging in different parts of the earth—Ukraine, Gaza, Iraq, Syria, and other wars and struggles taking place in various countries.

The world will continue to pursue its aims, and many will sincerely give their lives in the service which they believe to be right. However, we are enlisted in the greatest of all causes. It is the means through which God has promised to establish a powerful government in the earth to provide blessings for the people which they are unable to secure for themselves. It is a position of rulership in this kingdom that we will receive if we are faithful in sacrificing our all in ways directed by the Heavenly Father.

Thus we are to continue to lay down our lives for the brethren, as this is one of the means by which the grace of God is working on our behalf. Our brethren, likewise, are laying down their lives for us. Let us be faithful in this cooperative work whereby all the true followers of the kingdom are being prepared for their places in the kingdom.

We are also laying down our lives for mankind as a whole. Paul refers to this as a baptism for the dead. (I Cor. 15:29) This statement is not to be taken literally, but symbolically. It is our privilege to be joint-sacrificers with Jesus, who laid down his life to redeem mankind from sin and death. The redemption of the world is not involved in our sacrifice. Nevertheless, if we prove our willingness thus to be conformed to Jesus' sacrificial death, we will have a share in the blessing of mankind with peace, health, and life. It is in this way that the benefits of Christ's sacrifice, including those of his body members, will reach the world through those who are now receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved.

What this means is that we are dying for a cause, the Messianic cause, the cause of the great Creator, which cannot fail. Millions of people will experience disappointments throughout the coming years before the establishment of Christ's kingdom. Their plans, schemes and efforts will be shaken and crumble before them. Where they perhaps hope to find light, they will stumble further into darkness. However, it will not be so with those who are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved. We will know that every evidence of the failure of man is but an added assurance that the kingdom of the Lord is near, so we will lift up our heads and rejoice.—Luke 21:28

We will not rejoice because the world is suffering, but rather in the added evidence that all suffering is soon to be brought to an end through the agencies of the kingdom which we are receiving. No matter what the near future holds for the world, we know that for us it will continue to mean the

blessing of the Heavenly Father—that blessing which maketh rich, and to which no sorrow is added. (Prov. 10:22) Thus we can look ahead with confidence, because by God's grace we are working toward the fulfillment of the conditions upon which we may hope to share in that kingdom's rulership.

PROCLAIMING THIS HOPE

It would seem that there are yet various developments to take place in the world before the kingdom of Christ will be manifested for the blessing of the people. However, we can proclaim to the people, as we have opportunity, that we are living in the last days of the reign of sin and death, and that the kingdom of the Messiah is near, yea, “even at the doors.” (Matt. 24:33) Indeed, bearing witness to the Gospel of the kingdom is one of the ways in which we have the opportunity of proving our worthiness to receive that kingdom which cannot be moved. Paul expressed the great importance of this when he said, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”—I Cor. 9:16

The prospect for the consecrated people of God is a bright one. We see, and also experience, many of the troubles which are upon the world. Yet, by the eye of faith, we see through and beyond these chaotic conditions to the establishment of the kingdom, in which we have been promised joint heirship with Christ. The hope of sharing with Jesus in the rulership of this kingdom is a joy set before us which gives us courage to endure the light afflictions of the present, knowing of the eternal weight of joy and glory that will follow.—II Cor. 4:17,18; I Pet. 1:3-5

Let us remember that in order to ultimately receive our position in the kingdom, daily faithfulness to the terms of our covenant of sacrifice with God is necessary. We can rejoice that the grace of the Lord is promised to the faithful. By this grace, we can continue to serve him faithfully with “reverence and godly fear,” until we hear those much longed for words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”—Matt. 25:21,23 ■

“All who seek the LORD will praise him. Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy. The whole earth will acknowledge the LORD and return to him. All the families of the nations will bow down before him. For royal power belongs to the LORD. He rules all the nations.”

—Psalm 22:26-28, New Living Translation