

# God's Unshakeable Kingdom

*“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*

**THE YEAR 2019 WAS, LIKE** many which preceded it, full of mixed reviews, depending on one's perspective of events. Among those more optimistic about current conditions, emphasis is most often put on the United States economy, which is now entering its eleventh year of “recovery” since the great recession of 2008-2009. Strictly according to the numbers, the U. S. stock markets performed very well in 2019, establishing new highs on numerous occasions during the year. Others point out that unemployment in this country reached lows in the past year which have not been seen in over half a century. Continued low interest rates during the year are

also generally considered to be a positive factor for the overall performance and growth of the economy.

However, for many the generally positive economic news in 2019 harbors considerable uneasiness as to the future, as people wonder when and how severe the next economic slowdown or full-blown recession will be. Are we creating another economic “bubble” which will soon burst? Are the positive aspects of the economy so tenuous that even a small “hiccup” in national or world affairs will have a major negative domino impact?

Aside from what might be considered the generally good performance of the United States economy during the past year, most of the other major issues facing this country as we enter 2020, both on the domestic as well as the international fronts, present a much more sobering picture. We note below just a sampling of the ongoing events, issues and challenges that are significantly impacting this country as we begin the New Year:

Trade war with China and other countries.

Immigration policy, reform and enforcement.

Mass shootings, and the related gun control debate.

Out of control homelessness, especially in major western U. S. cities.

Continuing healthcare debate, rising costs, and insurance availability.

Climate change, global warming, and related environmental issues.

Cybersecurity concerns within government, business, infrastructure and private homes.

Energy debate regarding use of fossil fuels, wind, solar, and nuclear power.

Continued concerns with regard to rogue nations such as Iran and North Korea.

Distrust of Russia and its leaders.

Nearly constant conflict in the Middle East, involving most recently Israel, Syria and Turkey.

Possible rebuilding and strengthening of ISIS and other terrorist organizations.

Impeachment proceedings and uncertainty as to possible outcomes.

Presidential election year in 2020, with over twenty candidates currently running.

From the vantage point of the average citizen, the above list, which is only a partial tally of the many critical issues facing this country today, presents nearly insurmountable challenges for finding and implementing reasonable solutions. To the sincere student of the Bible, however, upon the pages of Scripture lie the only truly viable answers to these and the many other problems facing this country and the world. These solutions are centered in the loving plans and purposes of the Creator, our Heavenly Father, who will soon manifest them to all nations, societies and peoples of the earth.

## **DISTRESS, PERPLEXITY AND SHAKING**

Considering the foregoing brief review of man's present situation, it is safe to say that as we enter the twentieth year of the "new millennium," the world is most assuredly in a precarious position, aptly described by Jesus as "distress of nations, with perplexity." (Luke 21:25) It is the time foretold in other prophecies of the Bible when, symbolically speaking, there would be a great "shaking" in order

that everything out of harmony with the divine will might be removed.

In the context from which our opening text is taken, the Apostle Paul prophetically likens this present time of shaking to the upheavals of nature that occurred at Mount Sinai when God's law was given to Israel and his covenant was established with them at the hands of Moses. The reason for this comparison is that the time is soon approaching for the inauguration of the "New Covenant" to be made with the "house of Israel and the house of Judah," by which the divine law will be given not only to Israel but also to the Gentiles and all people.—Jer. 31:31-34; Isa. 49:5-13; Acts 15:16,17

The giving of God's law to Israel through his servant Moses at Mount Sinai involved certain natural disturbances. The mount, as Paul describes it, "burned with fire," and there was "blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words," a voice which the apostle says, "shook the earth." (Heb.12:18,19,26) This language describes, in a prophetic manner, the world trouble, distress and turmoil of our day which will accompany the overthrow of Satan's empire, and which will "bind the strong man." (Matt. 12:29; Rev. 20:1-3) Then will come the establishment of God's kingdom, under the rulership of Christ, whom Paul says will be the "mediator of the new covenant."—Heb. 12:24

In verse 26 the apostle refers to the "shaking" that would occur in connection with the inauguration of the new covenant. Here he quotes from Haggai 2:6,7, which reads, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth,

and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." The "heavens," the "earth," the "sea," and the "dry land," are all symbolic expressions referring to various aspects of the "present evil world," which will be removed and replaced by God's kingdom of righteousness.—Gal. 1:4

The literal heavens that we observe are made up of the sun, moon and stars. Jesus said that in connection with the "distress of nations" there would be, symbolically speaking, "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." He then explains what these signs would be—namely, that the "powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21:25,26) The "heavens" mentioned by the prophet Haggai and by Jesus in the foregoing passages well represent the various aspects of spiritual control and influence among mankind by means of the many religions and religious institutions of the earth.

In the symbology of these prophecies we may think of the "earth" and the "dry land" as the more or less stable, material aspects of human society. However, this stability is lost because of the great shaking of all the earth's societal attributes, which Jesus says brings about the "distress of nations." The land, also, is "dry" in the sense that there is a famine in the land, not of literal water, "but of hearing the words of the LORD."—Amos 8:11

Haggai refers also to the shaking of the "sea," to which Jesus adds the descriptive words, "the sea and the waves roaring." The literal roaring of the oceans and waves are of such force that in times of severe storms no manmade power can control them. Similarly, the symbolic roaring of

the restless, discontented masses of mankind are a force and strength that no earthly power or government can subdue nor control. Indeed, throngs of people today are combining their energy and influence in rebellion against former norms as they clamor for rights, whether real or fancied.

What a vivid picture we thus have of our world today! The prophet Isaiah wrote, “Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!” (Isa. 17:12) We have witnessed this “rushing” and “roaring” as it has continued throughout the year just past, and, at the beginning of 2020, it is unabated.

We note again the significance of the words in Jesus’ prophecy that the “powers of heaven” shall be shaken. It is true that, generally speaking, church membership is still relatively strong in many parts of the world. Fear of the unknown future of the human race, perhaps, causes many to seek some sort of religious haven. However, religion has lost most of its control over world affairs, while irreligious conduct, godlessness and crime all continue to increase. This breaking down of religious standards and the weakening of godly influences in the consciences of the people have contributed much to the fear and perplexity that now plague the world in which we live.

## **THE REMEDY**

The remedy for all this is, as noted earlier, the kingdom of Christ. Every footstep follower of Jesus hopes to have a share in the work of this kingdom. It is reassuring to note that in the Bible’s prophecies

pertaining to the time of “shaking,” through which we are now passing, frequent mention is made of Christ’s followers, and of the glorious hope which supports them in this “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation,” prophesied by Daniel. His words are immediately followed by the promise, “And at that time thy people [God’s people] shall be delivered.”—Dan. 12:1

In the prophecy of the 46th Psalm we are provided this same line of thought. Because “God is our refuge and strength,” the psalmist writes, “Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”—vss. 1-3

After mentioning the Lord’s provision for his people who are dwelling in the “tabernacles of the most High,” the psalmist continues, “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her.” (vss. 4,5) In this prophecy, all human institutions, kingdoms and governments are shaken and removed. Paul describes it as “the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”—Heb. 12:27

What are those things which “cannot be shaken?” David’s answer is, “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.” The reference to “she” is that of the “bride of Christ,” the class of footstep followers of Christ being developed during the present age, who will be joined in “marriage” to Jesus, the Lamb of God, to rule with him in his Messianic kingdom. (II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7; 21:2) We note the

harmony of David and Paul's testimony. "She" shall not be moved, David says, and that "which cannot be shaken," of which Paul writes, is the kingdom of Christ in which his faithful "bride" will share.

The "kingdom which cannot be moved" has not yet begun to rule over mankind. However, the development of those who would eventually be its rulers began at Jesus' first advent. In his parable of the wheat and the tares, the "field," which he said symbolizes the world, was sown with wheat seed. This "good seed," Jesus explained, represents the "children of the kingdom." At the time of "harvest," the tares, or false grain, are removed, and the members of the wheat class are exalted and "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:24-30,36-43) We see, then, that the kingdom "wheat" class, which began its development nearly two thousand years ago, is to be completed at the end, or harvest, of the present age, and will then take control over the earth.

Thus, while everything else is shaken to the point of being removed, "she," the wheat class, the bride of Christ, "shall not be moved." Maintaining her standing of favor with the Lord, in his due time, she is exalted to live and reign with Christ. (Rev. 20:4,6) What a comforting assurance this is as we face the uncertainties of 2020. This does not mean, however, that the Lord's people will necessarily be shielded from trouble. We may expect to share in many of the experiences which come upon the population in general.

The Lord's promise that "she shall not be moved" does not apply to our fleshly life or circumstances. Indeed, those who hope to actually and fully receive



the “kingdom which cannot be moved” must daily sacrifice the flesh and its interests. They continue, daily, to present their bodies “a living sacrifice,” and it is only when that sacrifice is completed, even “unto death,” that these will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom.—Rom. 12:1; Rev. 2:10; II Pet. 1:10,11

Although we know that we must suffer and die with Jesus if we are to live and reign with him, we can, nevertheless, view the increasing chaos of the world with a peace and tranquility of mind and heart that the majority of mankind cannot possess. We can have this hopeful and reassuring viewpoint because we know the meaning of the events which are taking place around us. In short, they give notice that the world is nearing the time when its long looked-for age of prosperity, health and life will become a reality.

The world today sees many looming threats on the horizon. Many are concerned by the thought that the laws, institutions and governments that have held the world together up until now are rapidly losing their stability. It is not a pleasant outlook, either for the present generation or for the present-day children who will make up the next generation. Indeed, as many people view current conditions, they see a dark night before them, with little hope for the light of a new day.

### **MAN’S EXTREMITY—GOD’S OPPORTUNITY**

The Scriptures, however, speak differently. While “weeping may endure for a night,” the psalmist says, “joy cometh in the morning.” (Ps. 30:5) Man’s present extremity is to be God’s opportunity, which

he will exercise through the agencies of Christ's kingdom. When the time comes for the power of this kingdom to manifest itself, the people will have learned that they cannot solve their own problems. They will then know that while technology, science and other types of knowledge can accomplish many wonderful things for man's benefit, they cannot raise a barrier against the tide of human selfishness, greed and desire for power.

Meanwhile the Lord, in his wisdom, has permitted man to develop the potential to destroy his own world by various means. It is because of the foretold "increase of knowledge" in this "time of the end" that man has been able to devise and construct their terrible implements of destruction, whether they be nuclear armaments, chemical and biological weapons, terrorist bombs, or the many other examples of destructive instruments found in the world today. (Dan. 12:4) Because of this, and without excusing man's own responsibilities in the matter, some of the prophecies represent God as destroying the selfish institutions of earth which have given rise to these awful tools of devastation.

Quoting again from the 46th Psalm, we read: "The heathen [or nations] raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted." (vs. 6) The prophecy continues with verses 8 and 9: "Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire."

The divine permission of evil along all lines is in order that man may learn firsthand the terrible

results of sin and his own part in it. (Rom. 7:13) It is not difficult to see that even a limited use of the present potentials for mass destruction will help the world to realize more vividly than at any time in the past the utter futility of this means of settling disputes. Thus, the people will be more willing and ready to accept the kingdom rule and abide by its righteous regulations.

In verse 10 of Psalm 46 the Lord speaks prophetically to a devastated world, saying, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen [or nations], I will be exalted in the earth." There is much noise in the world today, as represented by the claims and counter claims, the boastings, the threatenings, of the various nations and their leaders. God, however, is not in their thoughts. They use the created things of God to prepare for the destruction of one another, but ignore the Creator who brought into existence the very elements which they improperly use.

Thankfully, this will not continue forever. In God's due time, when his wisdom decides that the people of earth have learned the necessary lessons, through his kingdom agencies then prepared and ready to function, he will say, "Be still, and know that I am God." Many today wonder what God is doing about the chaotic and distressing conditions of the world. Indeed, many doubt that there is an all-powerful Creator at all who is able and willing to do anything for his human creatures. These doubts will soon be swept away, however, when the kingdom which cannot be moved begins to exercise its righteous rule over the nations.

Zephaniah 3:8,9 is another prophecy which emphasizes this thought. We quote: “Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.” Then the prophet adds these heart-assuring words concerning what God has in store for man following this period of great trouble: “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”

In the original Hebrew, the expression “one consent” means “one shoulder.” In Isaiah 9:6,7 we are told that the righteous kingdom soon to come will be upon the “shoulder” of the son given “unto us” by God to redeem the race from the penalty of sin—Christ Jesus. Zephaniah’s prophecy assures us that after Satan’s world is destroyed in the great time of trouble, the people will be enlightened, and will support Christ’s new government with one accord, together putting their “shoulder” to it. What a glorious prospect!

## **THE NATIONS’ DESIRE**

In the prophecy of Haggai 2:7, previously quoted, we have a somewhat similar thought. “I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.” The legitimate and righteous desires of the nations will, of course, be fully satisfied by the kingdom of Christ. However, throughout the centuries the nations have had other “desires” that will not come to them in the kingdom. Their desire for conquest and control of

other nations will not be satisfied, nor will they be permitted to exploit one another.

The *Rotherham Emphasized Bible* seems to give the proper thought of this prophecy. It reads, "I will shake all the nations, and the delight of all the nations shall come in." This suggests that the true desire and delight of the nations then will be to serve the new king and to cooperate in the arrangements of the kingdom. Haggai's prophecy was given in connection with the rebuilding of Israel's temple at Jerusalem, and projects the prophetic significance of that work down to this end of the age when soon the symbolic "holy city, new Jerusalem," will come down "from God out of heaven."—Rev. 21:2

We are informed that in this "new Jerusalem" the "Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (vs. 22) Then, in corroboration of Haggai's prophecy, John the Revelator tells us that the nations "shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. . . . And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."—vss. 24,26

The Biblical expressions, "holy city," "new Jerusalem," and "government," are all symbolic of the kingdom of Christ, that glorious kingdom which the footstep followers of Jesus are now endeavoring to prove worthy of "receiving." This kingdom will not be "moved." It is a sure inheritance for all who put their trust in it and prove worthy to share in its glory.

We do not know the details of what the world's experiences will be throughout 2020, nor, indeed, of our own. We do know that, regardless of what

may happen, the kingdom which we are being prepared to “receive” will not and cannot be moved. It is a certainty because it is promised, designed, and prepared by God, our loving Heavenly Father. The only question at all is concerning our own individual worthiness to enter into that kingdom as a joint-heir with Jesus.

One service we can render to the glory of God is to bear witness to the kingdom, assuring the people that a glorious new day is approaching. This is our great privilege, and it is this the psalmist foretold that the Lord’s people would be doing, when he wrote, “All thy works shall praise thee O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom,” the kingdom which is unshakable and immoveable.—Ps. 145:10-12 ■