

What The Christian Owes the Jew

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Chapter 2 - The Chosen People of GOD

The Scriptures teach conclusively that the Jews are GOD's chosen people. There could be no greater honor to a people than that the only begotten SON of GOD should be born of one of its maidens -- Mary, a Jewess. Now, let us study some earthly things.

"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, If I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12)

The Kingdom of GOD and the doctrine of the second birth do not seem, on the surface at least, like earthly things. Yet, since these are the things of which JESUS had been speaking to Nicodemus, the Kingdom of GOD and the doctrine of the second birth must be classed among the earthly things. Our LORD's declaration that Nicodemus was a teacher, or master (John 3:10), makes it evident that the explanation and justification for so startling an appellation, are to be found in the very Scriptures which the learned rabbi professed to teach. An examination of these Scriptures will show that this is the truth.

One of the Scriptures which Nicodemus ought to have been exceedingly familiar was that of the prophet Ezekiel. Read carefully Ezekiel 37:21-28:

"And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My

tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezekiel 37:21-28).

If you have not already observed them, let me point out the promises of GOD which are made in the passage of Scripture just quoted:

1. The Children of Israel are to be brought back into their own land.
2. The two kingdoms, Judah and Israel, are to be united in one indissoluble kingdom in the land.
3. One KING is to reign over them all.
4. This KING is "David my servant." "David" here speaks of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who will be the one KING over all.

That CHRIST is to be KING on the throne of David is evident by the statement of the apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost, when, speaking of David in the Psalms, (Acts 2:30) he said:

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;"

The prophet Isaiah foretold it:

"Unto us (That is, unto Israel) a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . And his name shall be called, the Mighty GOD . . . Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom."

When He was born He was called the KING of the Jews. When He rode into Jerusalem, He was saluted as the King of Israel, the SON of David; above His Cross was written, "This is the King of the Jews."

GOD will be, in a special and covenant way, in the person of His SON, the GOD of this kingdom. This is the Kingdom of GOD. It is a kingdom in Israel set up on earth. It is an "earthly thing" not because it is of the earth, but because it is displayed in the sphere of the earth.

Note carefully what is said in Ezekiel 36:26-27:

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

This is regeneration, pure and simple.

When this regeneration is to be accomplished is set forth in Ezekiel 36:24:

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land."

Evidently, the reference is to the setting up of the unfailing kingdom in Israel, and when the king shall have come. That regeneration opens the door to literal earthly blessings, as may be seen by reading 28 to 30 and verse 33 to 38 of the same chapter, the 36th, in Ezekiel:

"And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen . . . Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD."

Thus regeneration is one of the earthly things, not because it is of the earth, but because it is one of the characteristics in the kingdom of GOD in Israel as seen in its display in the sphere of earth.

In the fulfillment of covenant promise, the SON of GOD came as the beloved of the FATHER, as the KING over Israel. Nicodemus, one of the rulers in the Sanhedrin; one who ought to have known all about regeneration, seeks an interview. He never rises to the idea that this JESUS is the Holy One of Israel, his KING. He sees Him only as a teacher sent from GOD. The LORD comes down to his level. He takes the part of the teacher and says to him, "You come to learn the truth; you want doctrine -- very well, I say to you that the fundamental thing to know is regeneration, for without a second birth no man can enter, no man can even see the coming kingdom in Israel." Nicodemus is all in darkness. Then JESUS seeks to remind him of the prophet Ezekiel. He says, "**Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.**" He tells him that this new birth must be the spirit, and in saying so, quotes the very thought, and, almost the very words of Ezekiel. But no ray of light flashes through the darkened mind of this teacher in Israel. His manifest ignorance here is the reason for our LORD's seemingly singular rebuke, "**Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?**"

He does not understand these "earthly things." How could he understand "heavenly things?" By "heavenly things" our LORD meant the Church. The Church is a body of persons called out of all nations to a faith in a crucified and risen CHRIST, exalted to be the second Adam, and the new head, in whom all things in Heaven and earth are to be united. Each one of this body is born from above, receives new life from the risen Man, is linked up with Him in vital union forever, and forever is indwelt by His Spirit.

This body of persons is not called to dwell on earth, as Israel, but to walk through it as pilgrims

and strangers, testifying against it. In the new era which will dawn at the coming of CHRIST, they will dwell with Him in Heaven, and reign with Him in associated glory over the kingdom of GOD in Israel, as the Bride, the Queen Consort of the KING; as it is written in Revelation 5:10 and in Daniel 7:27:

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole Heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

These are the heavenly things, not because they are more divine or spiritual than the earthly things, but because Heaven, and not earth, is the sphere in which the church is to be displayed to the glory of GOD's grace.

This distinction between the heavenly and the earthly things is made constantly in the Scriptures -- in Ephesians 3:15, "**Of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named.**" The apostle speaks of the family in Heaven and the family on earth. That is to say, of the Church and Israel -- the one above, the other below, in the final order of the kingdom.

Our LORD was absolutely precise in the use of His terms. He told the exact truth about Nicodemus. If the latter did not comprehend the MASTER when He spoke of earthly things, how much less could he have understood Him if He had spoken of heavenly things?

This interview not only shows the wisdom of the LORD; it clearly manifests the inexcusable blindness of Israel, and justifies GOD in bringing in the new dispensation of the Church -- this hour of the heavenly calling and measureless grace, not to Jews only, but also to the Gentiles; while at the same time it teaches us the necessity of rightly dividing the Word and the times of GOD, and seeing to it that we do not confound the earthly and the heavenly things.

~ end of chapter 2 ~
