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## BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD

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### THE ULTIMATE HOPE OF THE WORLD

BY  
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As one looks out on the world today as stumbles and staggers along like a drunken man towards its elusive goal of world peace and security, there is nothing quite so disconcerting to the mind of man as the belief in the philosophy that our future, and all that it holds for us, lies in our own hands. This is not a truly American philosophy, but one of atheism, materialism and infidelity. It is a mistaken philosophy made popular by men with no vision, faith, or hope, beyond their own finite wisdom and knowledge.

#### **God's Sovereign Purpose**

I would therefore have you turn with me to the Scriptures and consider what is the hope of the world in the light of God's sovereignty and His predetermined purposes.

Our first Scripture is that of Philippians 3:21. In the immediate context of this verse Paul has been speaking of a people who, though professedly religious, were the enemies of the cross of Christ, "Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things," Phil 3:18-19. These verses might well be used to describe the general condition of all men who labor outside of the Christian faith. As long as they remain in this unspiritual condition, no matter what their efforts and goals may be, because they mind earthly things, and make no recognition of the God in whom they live and move and have their being, their end is destruction. They cannot build anything that will endure, because they are building on wrong foundations.

In contrast with these earthly minded people, Paul speaks of a people whose hope lies in the promises of God and the coming again of Jesus Christ.: "Who shall change our vile body (or the body of our humiliation) that it may be likened unto his glorious body. According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself!" Phil.3:21. Most people, I fear, only

read this verse to get out of it the glorious truth of the change that shall come when the bodies of our humiliation are made like unto the body of our risen Lord. But the verse does not stop here. Pointing to the power whereby God is able to do this, Paul goes on to say, "According to the working whereby God is able even to subdue all things unto himself." The Weymouth translation says, "Who, in the exercise of the power which he has, even to subject all things unto himself." A question that needs to be raised and answered here is this. Just how sovereign is our God? To say that God is sovereign is to say that He is "supreme in power." He is Almighty; there is nothing that is not under His dominion and control. What I want to know is, do you believe this? Over what is God sovereign? Over just a few things, such as the element and the physical creation? Are we to understand that He is sovereign over everything but the devil and man? The reasons that questions like these demand an answer is that many by their theology have pictured man and the devil as producing a situation contrary to the will of God. If this be true, then here is a realm over which God is not sovereign. But what saith the Scriptures? In the text which we have just read Paul says that God, in the exercise of the power that He has, is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Do we believe this or don't we? Is God able to subdue the wicked, the unbelieving, the rebels against His will? Will any of you sit there and deny that the sovereign power of the God you worship does not extend to such as these? Are they not among "the all things" that God by His power was able to subdue unto Himself?

### **Man's Free Moral Agency**

Truths such as I am presenting to you today are seldom considered by the saints, because they are little taught from the average pulpit. The sovereignty of God has been hidden behind a wall of teaching that magnifies sin, the devil, and man's free moral agency, out of all proportion. The fact is they have been deified above the power of an infinite loving God to successfully cope with them. Whenever anyone undertakes to show that when Christ died for the sins of the world, He provided a salvation that is much more embracing and inclusive than has been commonly taught and accepted in the creeds of the day, he is usually met with a bitter display of hostility. Instead of hailing with delight the thought that God might in very truth provided a salvation and spiritual blessings for poor unfortunate peoples who have lived and died without the religious advantages enjoyed by us, they tend to act like Jonah who went into a pout when God failed to destroy the city of Nineveh upon their repentance. Why should Christians continue to contend for "abounding sin" in a day when God said that where sin abounded, grace would much more abound? Should we not rather, be thankful that such a thing might be so, and at least take the time to search the Scriptures with an open mind to see if it be true?

Immediately you begin to teach that God is much better and more kindly disposed toward mankind than many people have been led to believe, then they seem to get the idea that you are preaching salvation in some other way. But it is the same Saviour, the same salvation, and the same means of obtaining it. While God must punish the wicked and unbelieving for their sin, it is a flat contradiction of Scripture to say that God's punishments are purposeless, and that in due time God cannot subdue even His enemies unto Himself. Let us not forget that every believer in Christ was at one time alienated from God, and it was only conviction and wooing of the Spirit that eventually drew Him to Christ. Christ Himself said, "No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him." Then let us not be quick to condemn eternally~ those whom God has not yet drawn, or won to Himself. That God is both able and willing to dispose of His enemies by reconciling them unto Himself~just as He did you, if you are a Christian~is to many misinformed and uninformed Christians a rank heresy. But is it? Because a doctrine is contrary to those which are commonly received as orthodox, does not make it false. Even Paul was called a heretic because he preached a gospel that was at variance with the accepted traditions of the day. The big question is, what do the Scriptures teach?

### **God's Power to Save**

Turning to the 45th chapter of Isaiah, after God had declared that He, Jehovah, was God alone, and the Saviour of men, He then says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall

swear.” These words are addressed, not to Israel alone, or the church of God as such, but to all mankind. All are here bidden to look unto the true and living God. In Him, Who alone is real and true, can man find deliverance from sin and from temporal and spiritual ills. And all who are thus called to look to Jehovah for salvation are destined to find it. This is not my teaching—it is God’s. In Psalm 22:27, we find the Psalmist saying in this connection: “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.” Surely no thoughtful and informed persons will say that God’s purpose in creating man is to end in chaos and confusion—but in righteousness and peace and order, to the glory of God. The great majority of men are not to end up in an endless hell cursing God forever for the day they were born; they will ultimately learn their lesson and turn unto their Maker in adoration and worship. God says, “The word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return.” In other words, here is a declaration of the purpose of the true and living God that has gone forth in righteousness, and it will not return until every jot and tittle of it has been fulfilled. Upon this end God has set His heart; to this end He swears as God is God, that it will be accomplished. And what is that? As Isaiah uttered these words, I believe he had before his mind a time when “All the ends of the earth” will be saved. He is here uttering the words of the Lord concerning the day when He shall have subdued all things unto himself. It is a time when every tongue shall solemnly and reverently invoke the name of Jehovah. Let us praise God that it is so! And should we not expect it with a God who is sovereign?

### God’s Ultimate Triumph

Just why must we look for a world subdued by the devil and the power of darkness? Or why must we concede that the great majority of mankind are lost to the devil, while the best that God can do is take a small remnant off to heaven someplace? It should begin to dawn on us pretty soon that there is something wrong with our theology or, that we are holding to traditions that make the Word of God of no effect. It is true that in spite of the ministry of the Christian church these past two thousand years, the world was to become so lawless and corrupt that it would approximate the evil in Noah’s day; but the Bible nowhere declares that this struggle would end in victory for the devil. All that is taking place today is in harmony with the divine purpose, else it would not have happened. It is all preparatory to the judgments which will usher in the kingdom of our God and the millennial reign of Christ. What would appear to be the triumph of evil—even as at Calvary—will actually mark the beginning of the restoration of all things. Instead of evil ultimately corrupting and spoiling the whole of mankind, our wonderful Lord has made provision whereby evil shall be completely eliminated from mankind by the blood of His cross. Christ said, “If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me,” John 12:32. According to the holy purpose of our merciful Lord, the day is to come when the elimination of sin shall have become a glorious reality. Paul tells us in I Cor. 15:25,26 that Christ must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Since the wage of sin is death, then to eliminate death, sin must first be put away. The sin of the world has already been laid on Jesus Christ; it but remains for the world of men to believe and be saved. Let us not forget that the fulfillment of this does not rest on man’s faithfulness, but on the sure Word of God. God has sworn by Himself; the word has gone forth from His mouth and shall not return until every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear.

### God’s Will for All Men

Now then, what does God mean when He says that unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear? “Kneeling” and “swearing to” are acts of homage and of loyalty and faithfulness, and this is their meaning here. There is nothing in this kneeling and swearing allegiance to God, of force or compulsion. It is the voluntary act of willing hearts. In Phil. 2:10,11 we find Paul saying: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (or Jehovah), to the glory of God the Father.” Paul is simply confirming here what was written in Isaiah 45:23—that the day was destined to come through the preaching of the gospel of Christ when all idolatry, heathenism, and paganism would be forever gone. All men will eventually come to know and worship the true and living God, whose name is Jesus, or Jehovah. While the world today is still very far away from having realized this subjection to God, the sovereignty of Jehovah and His faithfulness to His promises assures us that it must ultimately come to pass.

Now the question is, are we going to believe this, or are we going to cling to the tradition that our Lord is just a “would-be Saviour,” who would have all men to be saved, who is doing the best He can, but will have to settle for a pitiful remnant of the human race? Phil. 3:21 declares that God is able to subdue or subject all things to Himself. Seeing that He has this power, dare we say that He has not the love or the desire to do it? I think you know my answer. The question is, what is yours?

About now I hear someone saying something like this: “But would it not be unjust for God to resurrect the wicked and, after a period of punishment and correction, give them another chance? Do they deserve to be saved? will they not just get what is coming to them?” Time will permit only a brief answer here, but let me ask you who are saved, did you deserve life? Were you saved because you were better than some others who were not? Is your standing before God today based on what you merited or

deserved? It is not! And I would also like to ask, was your salvation a thing of chance? Was it? In John 6:44 Jesus says: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Then the idea of a first and second chance does not even enter the picture. The natural man is dead in trespasses and sins, and only as he is quickened by the Spirit of God can he receive life from God.

Has it never seemed strange to you though God wills for all men to be saved, He is not able to have His will fulfilled? Man, in his ignorance and spiritual depravity, wills not to be saved, and he is perfectly able to have his will in the matter. What a strange theory possesses men—that the power of the creature is greater than that of God, and that regardless of God's purposes in the world, man is finally able to wreck them because he does not will to do what God wants him to. In Eph. 1:11 Paul says of God that "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." He does not need to take counsel of men or angels. Though their wills may differ with His, it is not in their power to force their will on God, or keep Him from doing His. The God who created man in the first place knows what is in man, and He knows how to appeal to man to bring about a voluntary subjection to His will. In Psalm 119:67 and 71 the writer declares, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. It was good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." Our Lord Jesus Christ learned obedience, or He learned the will of God by the things which He suffered. And so it is with all men. Though it may take longer and more suffering to bring us to the place of submission and obedience, we will all eventually arrive.