

God's Salvation of Entire Nations

Isaiah 2:2; Revelation 11:15

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This Lord's Day we bring the present series to a conclusion wherein we have sought to answer the question: What is a Christian nation? We have noted from a careful investigation of the Scripture that a Christian nation is **NOT** one that merely has Christian people within it (even a majority of Christian people within it); **NOR** is a Christian nation one that merely has had Christian influences within it historically to varying degrees (whether that Christian influence be the Bible made available to it and used by its citizens, Christian churches of various kinds comprising the majority of religious bodies within the nation, or political leaders who have promoted in their public and private lives various tenants of Christianity). All of these may be present in a nation and that nation may still not be a Christian nation.

What is a Christian nation? In summary, a Christian nation is one that is officially covenanted to God in which the constitution of that nation officially declares that the Triune God of the Bible (as the source of all authority) has established civil government for His own glory and civil rulers as His ministers for good. A Christian nation is one that in its constitution officially kisses the Son of God as the Prince of the kings of the earth (and of that nation in particular). A Christian nation is one that in its constitution officially declares the Moral Law of God as found in the Old and New Testaments of Scripture to be the supreme law of the land in promoting righteousness and in suppressing idolatry, false religion, heresy, and blasphemy (and every other evil). A Christian nation is one that in its constitution officially establishes biblical Christianity (as summarized in a faithful Confession of Faith like the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and in a faithful National Covenant like the *Solemn League and Covenant*) as the only national religion of that land. That is what constitutes a nation as a Christian nation according to the God's Holy Word.

Throughout this study, we have zoomed in to consider carefully as it were the individual trees of the forest (i.e. many of the particulars related to a Christian nation and the problems associated with pluralism and tolerationism). But in considering the individual trees of the forest, we do not want to lose sight of the entire forest itself (i.e. the big picture), especially as we bring this series to a close. For it is the big picture of what the Lord has promised in His Word that gives us a glorious vision and holds our minds captive to the hope that the nations of this world will in the future become Christian nations according to the biblical definition given above (all to be accomplished by the power, grace, and gospel of Jesus Christ). Thus, dear ones, let us this Lord's Day be swallowed up in the sea of God's love—God's love not only for fallen sinners as individuals, but also for fallen nations. Let us glory in the Great Commission which Christ gave to His apostles and ministers, when He charged them, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations" (or quite literally, "disciple all the nations")—not just some individuals or many individuals within the nations of this world, but rather disciple ALL the nations (as nations) in the true Christian religion as taught by Christ in the Bible. Dear ones, let your faith lay hold of the utterly amazing promise that the nations of the world will become Christian nations, for the Lord Jesus who gave this commission has all power in heaven and in earth to accomplish it (Matthew 28:18). The main points from our text this Lord's Day are the following: (1) The Time of Fulfillment; (2) The Success of Christ's Church; (3) All Nations Will Become Christian Nations.

I. The Time of Fulfillment ("And it shall come to pass in the last days" Isaiah 2:2a).

A. The prophet Isaiah was sent by the Lord to prophesy during the reigns of the following kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah—a period covering at least 50 years if not longer. Isaiah's

commission was to mercifully warn God's people of the impending judgment God was to bring upon them for their rebellion against Him (Isaiah 1:4,7). But where sin did abound grace did much more abound, and thus we see the Lord giving by the voice of Isaiah a message of hope and salvation to God's covenant people Israel (which was to come through the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ), but also a message of hope and salvation through the same Lord Jesus Christ to all of the Gentile nations of the world as well (as we shall see in Isaiah 2:2, and it should be noted that nearly the same prophecy word for word is given in Micah chapter 4).

B. As we particularly consider the text before us, we are not left without some temporal indication as to when this prophecy shall come to pass: "And it shall come to pass **IN THE LAST DAYS**" Isaiah 2:2). The term "the last days" puts the time of this fulfillment beyond the period of the Old Testament, for "the last days" (and synonymous terms) have reference in the New Testament to the time of the Messiah (between the first and second bodily comings of the Lord Jesus Christ): Hebrews 1:2 (the period of the apostles); 2 Timothy 3:1 (the last days of which Paul speaks are yet future to that of the apostles); 1 Timothy 4:1 (the period of Christian asceticism as particularly exhibited in the whore of Babylon, the Roman Catholic Church); 2 Peter 3:3 (the last days are before the bodily second coming of the Lord). "The last days" do not refer to a period of time after the second coming of Christ. In fact, "the last days" are never specifically stated to be AFTER the bodily second coming of the Lord (contrary to what is taught in Premillennialism). "The last days" do, however, specifically refer to the age prior to the bodily second coming of Christ (as noted above). Thus, we may conclude that "the last days" of Isaiah 2:2 refer to the New Covenant age of Jesus Christ between His two bodily comings. As to when (within what period of time) "the last days" this prophecy is to be fulfilled, we will comment on that a little later. We need only seek to understand whether what is prophesied by the Lord through Isaiah to occur in "the last days" has already been fulfilled or is yet to be fulfilled (which is what we shall now move on to consider).

II. The Success of Christ's Church ("that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills" Isaiah 2:2b).

A. The first piece of information identifying what shall come to pass in "the last days" is herein stated. The Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth shall enjoy by Christ's power and grace an unparalleled exaltation within the nations of the world. The faithful Church of Christ will no longer be concealed by its small numbers and despised for its purity in doctrine, worship, and government. The faithful Church of Christ in the nations of the world will enjoy as it were a spiritual resurrection that will lead not to her being diminished, but rather to her being abundantly increased as she has never been increased (both in number and in purity). Paul speaks of this time of worldwide reformation and likens it to a spiritual resurrection (Romans 11:15).

1. Clearly, there have been periods of time in Church history in which the Church (broadly and generally considered) grew to include certain nations of the world within its ranks (e.g. during the age of the Byzantine Empire and the Eastern Orthodox Church; or during the age of the Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church; or during the age of the First and Second Reformations and the Reformed Churches of Europe which enjoyed up to that time the greatest degree of purity in doctrine, worship, and discipline since the time of the apostles). But as we shall see, this time of success and reformation of Christ's Church prophesied here by Isaiah has no equal by way of extent of success and blessing among the nations of the world. Even the Protestant Reformation (though greatly used by the Lord in transforming a number of the nations of Europe) will pale in comparison to what is prophesied here in Isaiah 2.

2. What does Isaiah prophesy concerning the Church of Christ in "the last days"? Note, "that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains."

a. Isaiah is not prophesying here anything about a rebuilt physical temple in Jerusalem (contrary to the error of Dispensationalism). For the actual temple, its priesthood, and all of its sacrifices have been fulfilled and realized in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, the veil of the temple (that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies) was rent into two pieces from the top to the bottom at the time of Christ's death in order to signify and teach that the glorious realities to which these Old Testament types and shadows pointed in Christ have been fulfilled and realized so that these types and shadows have passed away never to be again rebuilt or reinstated (according to Hebrews 7:12 [priesthood fulfilled]; Hebrews 8:13 and Hebrews 9:1 [tabernacle and temple fulfilled]; Hebrews 10:1 [sacrifices fulfilled]). Thus, we must look for the fulfillment of the exaltation of "the LORD's house" not in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, but rather in the firm establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ as the chief Kingdom among the kingdoms of this world, for "the LORD'S house" (or "the temple") as an Old Testament type finds its New Testament anti-type and fulfillment in reference to the Church of Jesus Christ (e.g. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21).

b. Moreover, in prophetic literature, one will often find references to mountains which speak of kings and kingdoms (e.g. Isaiah 64:1-2 [Gentile nations]; Jeremiah 51:25 [Babylon]; Zechariah 4:7 [Persia]; Daniel 2:35,44 [the Kingdom of Christ, i.e. the Church of Christ]). Thus, in Isaiah's prophecy here in chapter 2, verse 2, Isaiah prophesies that the mountain of the LORD's House (i.e. the kingdom of Christ's Visible Church upon the earth) will become "ESTABLISHED" by the Lord (and by the civil rulers of the world) as the established religion and church in the nations of the world. The faithful Church of Jesus Christ will no longer be merely tolerated among the pantheon of officially tolerated unfaithful churches and false religions within a nation (i.e. official polytheism) in "the last days". No way! Christianity and the faithful Church of Christ will be officially "established" and promoted to "the top [place] of the mountains" (or kingdoms of the world). In fact, the Visible Church of Christ in all of her faithfulness and purity will even be exalted above the hills (i.e. civil nations themselves). Can you picture in your mind's eye such a time when the faithful covenanted Church of Christ (though small and despised at the present time) will be officially and constitutionally established and exalted to hold such a high and lofty position in the nations of this world? Then she will no longer be like a single candle upon a hill seeking to dispel the darkness of false doctrine, corrupt worship, and tyrannical government in the valleys below, but rather she will be like a brilliantly lighted city upon a hill which enlightens all the surrounding hills and valleys (and all the nations of the world) with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the doctrine, worship, and government of Christ in a covenanted uniformity among the nations of the world.

c. Dear ones, if the Lord will bring this to pass in "the last days", what need is there in your life that the Lord cannot meet? Sometimes our faith wavers in the face of severe trials where it seems nearly impossible that a child would turn from his/her rebellion to the Lord, or that a husband would love his wife as Christ loves the Church, or that a wife would submit to her husband as the Church submits to Christ. It seems nearly impossible that God would deliver you from that besetting sin that has led you into defeat time and time again. But dear ones, the hope found in this promise of the faithful covenanted Church's exaltation and establishment within the nations of the world is by far the greater (or at least more extensive) miracle. If the Lord can and will change the hearts of entire nations in "the last days" as He has promised, His power or love are not diminished at all in changing your heart, or the hearts of loved ones. For just as our hope is in the Lord to change the nations of this world (which He will do), so your hope is in the Lord to change your heart or the heart of that child, husband, wife, or anyone else. Is there anything impossible to the Lord? Yes, there actually is. It is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). But what is impossible with man in all of the circumstances that we face, is possible with God (Matthew 19:26)? Dear ones, this promise in Isaiah 2:2 is very practical even in its application to our every need. For the only question that really needs to be answered is, "How big is your God?" Is He able to establish His faithful covenanted Church as the national Church among the nations of the world? Is He able to crush that papal antichrist and to restrain idolatry, false religion,

blasphemy, and heresy in the nations of the world? Yes, for He has promised to do so in “the last days” before the bodily second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, dear ones, He is big enough to provide for ALL your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

III. All Nations Will Become Christian Nations (“and all nations shall flow into it” Isaiah 2:2c).

A. “All nations shall flow into” what? All nations shall flow into the mountain of the LORD’S house (i.e. into the Kingdom of Christ’s faithful Church upon the earth). And not a few nations, not even a number of nations (as has happened in Church history from the past), but ALL NATIONS (as civil and political governments of this world) shall flow like a mighty river into the great ocean of Christ’s covenanted Church upon earth. All nations (as Christian nations) and their civil rulers will officially and constitutionally kiss the Son of God as the God’s Christ and anointed Mediator (in fulfillment and realization of Psalm 2:8-12). ALL KINGS will bow down before Him and ALL NATIONS will serve Him (Psalm 72:11). ALL THE NATIONS will be disciplined in fulfillment and realization of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). It is at the very same time that “ALL ISRAEL” and the fullness of the Gentile nations shall come into the Visible Church of Jesus Christ (Romans 11:25-26). The kingdoms of this world (including Israel) will at that time (in “the last days”) become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15)—that is, the kingdoms of this world (including Israel) will become Christian nations. ALL NATIONS (as Christian nations) shall come and worship before the Lord (Revelation 15:4).

B. But I ask, “When has this prophecy ever been fulfilled at any time in these ‘last days’ between the two bodily comings of the Lord?” The answer is obviously “Never.” At no time have ALL of the nations of this world (as national bodies) or Israel as national body flowed into the faithful covenanted Church of Jesus Christ. At no time have ALL of the nations of the world (as national bodies) or Israel as a national body established the Christian religion as their national religion and established the Moral Law of God as revealed in Scripture as the supreme law of the land. Thus, I submit that Isaiah’s prophecy is yet to be fulfilled in these “last days” before the bodily second coming of the Lord, and it will be fulfilled by the power and grace of God.

C. Dear ones, this is the picture of the entire forest. This is the big picture. This is the glorious vision which we must ever eye with the eye of faith and with the eye of hope if we are not to be cast down by the enemy or if we are not to betray the covenanted Cause of Christ by way of compromise and backsliding, or if we are not to fall into despair at how few we presently are. Dear ones, the eye of faith and the eye of hope look beyond the present nations and churches that oppose a covenanted reformation and see by faith and in hope ALL NATIONS flowing like a mighty river into the ocean of Christ’s covenanted Church. Dear ones, let us pray that the Lord would forgive us for our doubt and unbelief and that our spiritual eyes might be opened to see the unseen hosts of heaven who will mightily fight on behalf of Christ when He makes the nations willing in the day of His power (just as the eyes of Elisha’s servant were opened to see the hosts of heaven that surrounded the enemies of God). Amen.

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