

HEAVENLY & EARTHLY CALLINGS

Part III

The Church's Calling, Israel's Calling
One Heavenly, the Other Earthly

By Arlen L. Chirwood

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all (Gen. 14:18-20).

That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Gen. 22:17, 18).

There were two times in history when the nation of Israel was placed in a position where the Jewish people could enter into and occupy the kingdom. The first was under Moses and later Joshua following the Exodus from Egypt, and the second was under Jesus the Christ 1,500 years later.

The Earthly

The proffered kingdom during the days of Moses and Joshua had to do with *the earthly* segment

of the kingdom. The Israelites had been called out of Egypt to realize an inheritance in another land, and that other land was *the earthly land of Canaan*.

The nation under Moses, at Kadesh-Barnea, rebelled against God and His appointed leader Moses. Because of unbelief, they refused to enter the land and, under God, take the land; and, within their actions, they even went so far as to seek to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt (Num. 13:26-14:4).

This resulted in the entire accountable generation, save Caleb and Joshua (because they possessed "another spirit" relative to entering the land), being overthrown in the wilderness during the next thirty-eight and one-half years (Num. 14:5-38).

And then Joshua, after the overthrow of the entire accountable generation and after the death of Moses, led the second generation of Israelites into the land (Joshua 1:1ff).

The Israelites entering the land under Joshua though, along with succeeding generations of Israelites, never realized the fullness of the purpose for their calling. This failure was the result of unbelief and disobedience at different times on the part of the people. And the attitude and action of the people in this respect governed the attitude and action of God in this same respect (Lev. 26; Deut. 28).

God's blessings would follow Israel's belief and obedience, resulting in the surrounding Gentile nations also being blessed. But exactly the opposite would result from unbelief and disobedience. There were curses rather than blessings, and a withholding of blessings from Israel resulted in a withholding of blessings from the surrounding Gentile nations as well.

The kingdom reached its greatest heights during the days of David and his son, Solomon. But following the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death, things took a different turn entirely. The nation, through disobedience, became entrenched in a downward course from which there

would be no return, leading to Gentile captivity and the Times of the Gentiles.

God's call to His people to "humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways" (II Chron. 7:14) — through the ministry of the Prophets — went unheeded.

Thus, Gentile powers were eventually allowed to enter the land and take the people captive, uprooting the Jewish people from their own land and transporting them to Gentile lands. The Assyrians came down and took the northern ten tribes into captivity beginning about 722 B.C., and the Babylonians came over and took the southern two tribes into captivity beginning about 605 B.C.

The removal of the southern two tribes, completing a captivity and removal of the Jewish people from their land by Gentile powers, began the period known as "the times of the Gentiles," which extends from that point until the end of the coming Tribulation.

The kingdom was taken from Israel at this time, along with the Glory; and neither will be restored to Israel until the coming Messianic Era (Ezek. 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23; 43:1-5; cf. Luke 9:32; Acts 1:9; I Tim. 3:16).

Though the Jewish people were allowed to return from captivity seventy years following the Babylonian captivity, only a remnant returned; and though the Temple was rebuilt, it housed no Glory.

And the same holds true today. Though the nation has been allowed to return, only a remnant has done so; and though Israel will shortly rebuild her Temple, it will house no Glory.

Another parallel relative to Israel past and present also holds true. The remnant forming the present nation, as the remnant forming the past nation, will be uprooted and driven to the ends of the earth. The former occurred under the Romans, beginning in 70 A.D., and the latter will occur under Antichrist, beginning in the middle of the Tribulation.

And as the Temple built by the remnant

returning to the land following the Babylonian captivity was later destroyed (in 70 A.D.), so will it be with the Temple which Israel is about to build. It too will be destroyed (Dan 9:26; Matt. 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24).

Israel, with her Temple (housing the Glory of God once again), will be restored *only after* the Times of the Gentiles has run its course and *only after* Messiah returns. Christ, *Himself*, will personally restore the nation (Deut. 30:1-3; Matt. 24:30, 31), and *He, Himself*, will personally build the Temple (Zech. 6:11-13).

(The return of a remnant of Jews from the Babylonian captivity in history and the return of a remnant of Jews from a worldwide dispersion during modern times — both *allowed* by God — though numerous parallels exist, they are not really the same type restoration at all.

Israel, in history, had completed God's required seventy years in Gentile captivity [Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10-14]. Israel, today, has not completed God's required four hundred and ninety years in Gentile captivity. Seven years yet remain [Dan. 9:24-27]. Israel could not return in history until God's required time in Gentile captivity had run its course; nor can Israel do so today.

The restoration of a remnant in history was *under God's direction, at His command*; the restoration of a remnant today has been *the result of a Zionistic movement, under man's direction and command*.

God simply *will not allow* the Jewish people to return from their present dispersion among the Gentiles, *under His direction and command, until the full time covered by the four hundred and ninety years has run its course*. To state otherwise would have God acting contrary to His revealed Word — an impossibility.)

The Heavenly

The preceding forms a brief historic and prophetic overview of *the earthly* segment of the kingdom, which could be understood following the days of David as *the kingdom covenanted to David* (II Sam. 7:4-17; cf. Luke 1:31-33).

However, there is another segment of the kingdom which also, of necessity, had to be offered to Israel; and that other segment is *the heavenly*.

This segment of the kingdom was offered to Israel at the time of Christ's first advent. Scripture clearly reveals that the earthly segment of the kingdom was not in view at all at this time. *Only the heavenly segment was in view*.

John the Baptist preceded Christ with the message:

“Repent ye [a plural pronoun in the Greek text, referring to the entire nation]: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand” (Matt. 3:1ff).

John was the forerunner of the Messiah (v. 3); and he appeared, calling the nation to *repentance* (a change of mind), announcing that *the kingdom of the heavens* (the rule of the heavens over the earth) was *at hand* (i.e., had drawn near and could have been established because Messiah, the Messianic King, was present [cf. Matt. 2:2; 27:29, 37]).

(The expression, “the kingdom of heaven,” appearing thirty-two times in Matthew's gospel [KJV, et al.], should literally be translated, “the kingdom of the heavens.” The word “heaven” is always plural and preceded by the definite article in the Greek text.)

Then after John was imprisoned, Jesus took up the message (Matt. 4:12, 17), later He called out twelve disciples to carry this same message to the people throughout the land of Israel, and later yet He called seventy others for the same purpose (Matt. 10:1ff; Luke 10:1ff).

Thus, the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was extended to Israel initially by John the Baptist and for a subsequent three and one-half years by Christ and His disciples — the Twelve, and then the Seventy.

But, after all had been said and done, the nation, because of the attitude of the religious leaders in Israel, rejected not only the offer but even went so far as to reject and crucify the One Who had

made the offer (Matt. 12:22-32; 23:1ff; 27:17ff).

Israel's rejection of the kingdom of the heavens anticipated the Church being called into existence to be the recipient of that which the nation had rejected (Matt. 16:1-18). And the announcement concerning the matter was subsequently made to the religious leaders in Israel, as recorded in Matt. 21:43, immediately prior to the events of Calvary:

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God [that part of the kingdom which had been offered, *the heavenly*] shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

The heavenly segment of the kingdom was taken from Israel in view of the Church being called into existence to be the recipient of this offer. And Israel, from that point forward, in line with Matt. 12:31, 32, could not bring forth fruit relative to *the kingdom of the heavens*.

Israel, relative to this segment of the kingdom, could no longer bear fruit, “neither in this world [‘age’], neither in the world [‘age’] to come.” That encompassed the two ages covering the whole of the time set forth by the seven days in Genesis chapters one and two, which covers the 6,000 years comprising Man's Day and the 1,000 years comprising the Lord's Day, the Messianic Era.

But note that this is relative to *the kingdom of the heavens only*. It has nothing to do with the kingdom covenanted to David, the earthly segment of the kingdom.

This earthly segment of the kingdom can *never* be taken from Israel, and Israel will one day be very fruitful, *on the earth*, when Messiah returns and this segment of the kingdom is restored to the nation.

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