

# SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER    ISA. 55:10    FOR THE EATER  
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

## THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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### THE KINGDOM RESTRAINTS

"As I live, saith the Lord God, . . . I will rule over you." This is the word of Jehovah to Israel in Ezekiel 20:33. And this is not true of Israel alone, for in Psalm 67:4 it is decreed that **"He shall judge the peoples righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth."** Furthermore, by many plain statements in the Word of God it can be established as positive and dependable Biblical theology that the day will surely come when God will assume sovereignty over the earth and its inhabitants, take to Himself His great power, and Jesus Christ (*Yeshua ha-Mashiach*) will govern the world from His throne in heaven. In that day we will be able to say in truth: **"Jehovah has become King: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; He will judge the peoples righteously"** (Psalm 96: 10). This will be the kingdom (government) of God upon the earth.

It is the supreme duty of all governments to bring every possible benefit to all under their rule, and to erect and fully enforce proper restraints for inhibiting the acts of all who do contrary to the public good. This is the avowed purpose of God's government as can be seen in such passages as Psalm 67:2, 145:15, 16; Psalm 37:9, 22. In fact, one very important characteristic of the divine rule will be the restraints that are to be uniformly and equally placed upon all men and nations alike. These restraints will be a fixed characteristic of the world that God will establish (Psalm 93: 1), and no man will dare to challenge them. When the kingdom of God is a reality, a moral law will be in operation, one that will be as all-pervasive as the law of gravitation is today.

The kingdom of God is the subject of the Bible, and it has so many aspects that a lifetime of study and writing would not be sufficient to bring them forth, but the student of God's Word will always find profit and make progress in giving consideration to a single aspect. We need very much to possess a solid Biblical concept of the restraints that will operate when God governs.

One very important restraint is that every man upon the earth, without exception or distinction will be given a portion of God's Holy Spirit. God's twice-spoken promise will surely be fulfilled: **"It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh"** (Acts 2: 17, Joel 2:28). This portion of God's Spirit will in no way be separated or cut off from God, and it will establish an actual communication network between God and every living individual through which He can speak to all at once or to a single person, operating even to the extent declared by the prophet Isaiah: **"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left"** (Isa. 30:21).

This is a promise of explicit directions that will be given to every subject of God's government whenever any step is to be taken in things that pertain to God. Those who refuse His instructions will be subject to immediate retribution from the hand of God. There will be no delay in executing the sentence against any evil work (See Eccles. 8: 11). Imagine, if you can, what a restraining force this would be if it were in operation today.

Of course, under God's government, in all matters wherein God has already spoken or provided previous examples of His will and way, man will be expected to make his own enlightened judgment. Whenever God does give a revelation concerning His way, a man's response will test his submissiveness. Submission in advance will be a required attitude for all who live when God governs.

A very strong restraining force in the kingdom will be the swift capital punishment for any sin that warrants such drastic consequences. This need never happen and it may never happen, but the possibility of it will ever be present. If it does take place it will be humane and just. It is very hard today for men to put another man to death. All methods of execution are quite cruel. But when God governs, all He needs to do is withdraw the breath of life from a man and death will follow immediately. Jeremiah spoke of this when he said: **"But everyone shall die for his own iniquity"** (Jer. 31 :29, 30).

That there will be swift punishment for acts of iniquity is clearly demonstrated by records given in the book of Acts. God's government was then in operation so far as believers were concerned, even though it was only "in part" (1 Cor. 13:9-10). Ananias and Sapphira died because they lied to the Holy Spirit and misrepresented their giving (Acts 5:1-5). Their sudden death caused such fear among those outside of the believing circle that for a time no one dared to link themselves with the apostles (Acts 5: 13).

In 1 Cor. 11 :30 (an Acts period epistle) we find that many in Corinth were weak

and sickly, and some were dead; and all this was because they had sinned against the light that was their portion as a result of being under God's government, which was then in the ear stage of its development. (See Issue No. **SB048**). These condign punishments were a powerful restraining factor in the Acts period, and they will be so again when God governs the earth. They will not be then "in part" as they were in that time, but will be total. Every sin and transgression will receive its just recompense of reward.

However, the most important restraint under God's government will be the ministry of God's Spirit acting in the world as a *Parakletos*. This word indicates one who is positioned alongside another to guide, advise, and support in any matter that pertains to government. It is a legal term, somewhat like our word *advocate*, as it is well translated in 1 John 2: 1. This great work of the Spirit is described in some detail in John 16:7-11, which I will translate more literally than it is in the KJV:

**"Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away. For unless I go away the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you. And, coming He will make the facts known to the world concerning sin, concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment." John 16:7-11.**

In spite of the problems that this passage imposes upon the interpreters of God's Word, we can rest assured that the promise of an Advocate was made to the eleven apostles, and it also tells of a ministry He will perform in and for the world. The Greek word translated "reprove" (KJV) in the passage is *elegcho*, which after much study I have concluded means "to apprise," that is, to inform or to make the facts known. This passage is clearly one dealing with government and it has no application to God's present administration of grace. Under God's government the Holy Spirit will be the one true source of information concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. This will be a powerful restraining force, and we know that when He does it, sin will be restrained, righteousness will be practiced and judgment will be followed.

The fact that the work described in John 16:7-11 is one of restraint becomes quite clear in 2 Thess. 2:6-7. The truth here is somewhat obscured by the weak translation given to the word *katecho*. It is rendered "withholdeth" in verse six, and "letteth" in verse seven, but it should read "restraineth" and "restrain" in these two occurrences.

Weak translations of this passage (and of John 16:7-11) are usually given and eagerly seized upon in order to make this great work of the Holy spirit to be something He is doing today. It is usually explained as meaning "to hinder," when it accurately means "to restrain." The reader, I am sure, can see the difference between *hindering* and *restraining*. A great variety of things may hinder the flow of a river, but on it goes. However, a dam will prevent its flow entirely and keep it under control.

Second Thessalonians was written in the Acts period when the Spirit of God was acting as an Advocate to the apostles and as a restrainer of iniquity among the subjects of God's government. However, this aspect of His work does not carry through into the dispensation of God's grace. But when God assumes sovereignty, and the manifest government of God is a reality in all the world, the Holy Spirit will then act as the restrainer of iniquity throughout the inhabited earth. The result will be that iniquity will be restrained, not simply hindered. "**They shall proceed no further,**" is the word of Paul (2 Tim. 3:9). "**Evildoers shall be cut off,**" is the declaration of the Psalmist (Psalm 37:11). "**All iniquity shall stop her mouth,**" is the word in Psa. 107:42. Words such as these speak of restraint, not hindrance.

The work of the Holy Spirit as a restrainer will characterize God's government until this One "**Gets out of the way**" (2 Thess. 2:7). This is the meaning of *ek mesou genetai*, not "be taken out of the way" as the KJV renders it. He gets out of the way and this ends His restraining work. A false doctrine has been built upon this mistranslation which teaches that God's Spirit is removed from the earth, a favorite message of the prophets of doom. The true teaching here is that His work as the restrainer is suspended. This is done in order to again let men and nations walk after their own ways. This will demonstrate and test what they have learned during the centuries of divine rule.

The kingdom of God is a time for learning. In fact the chief purpose of eonian life, which is life under God's government is the eon to come, is that men might be knowing the Father, the only true God, even Jesus Christ (*Yeshua ha-Mashiach*) whom He commissions (John 17:2).

Will men learn of His love and affection? Will they learn that His way is always good, even the best? I am sure that most of us will, but, alas, some will not. And if they do not then they will have to be eliminated. There is at the end of God's government a time of trial which will try everyman dwelling upon the earth (Rev. 3:10). See Issue No. **SB040**. He will yet gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and they which do iniquity (Matt. 13:41). It is the removal of the restraints that leads to all these becoming manifest.

**End Issue No. SB113**