

## Psalm 110:1, Occupy Till I Come

This is Al Wagner, a minister of the APC, coming to you for the word of God and the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. My objective once again is to show you that the Bible is the word of God by the O. T. prophecies that have been fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus. Many interpreters unfortunately, though they exemplify a reverent spiritual tone and manifest a great deal practical teaching in many prophecies, allegorize and spiritualize references to the Kingdom of God on earth, where our Lord will come back to earth to rule from pole to pole and from sea to sea and where national Israel will be restored. This is the Kingdom that our Lord taught us to pray for in His teaching on prayer. *Thy kingdom come!*

The Lord Jesus, just prior to His crucifixion and resurrection, taught that He would arise from the dead and ascend to the right hand of God, where He would receive His Kingdom, and, after an indeterminate period of time, return to put all his enemies under his feet and to establish that eternal Kingdom. This was prophesied in Psalm 110:1. *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* And then in verses 5,6 of that Psalm, *the Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.* At that time He shall establish His Kingdom. Paul in Hebrews 10:12,13 quotes this Psalm, *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting, till his enemies be made his footstool.* Paul tells us that Christ, having *perfected forever them that are sanctified by one offering, by one sacrifice for sin*, at his first advent, *sat down on the right hand of God*, calmly and patiently expecting or waiting for the saving of His elect and the subjugating of all rebels against God, for *He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom the Father hath ordained*, (Acts 17:31). He will yet say as Isaiah prophesied, *I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments...for the day of vengeance is in Mine heart*, (Is 63:3,4).

With the teaching of passages such as Psalm 110 and Is 63 in mind the Lord instructed His apostles in this truth in the very important Parable of the Pounds. Note the setting and introduction to this parable. Luke 19:11,12. *And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.* There is no room left for doubt as to the purpose for which these words were spoken. We are told that our Lord Jesus Christ *added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.*

Just prior to this the Lord Jesus said to one Zacchaeus, *Make haste, and come down*, (Zacchaeus had been in a tree to observe the Lord Jesus), *for today I must abide at thy house.* We are not told all that was said at the home of Zacchaeus, but we get an indication, when the Lord said of him, *This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* One of the promises God made to Abraham was that he would inherit, personally, the land of Canaan. Steven reminded the Jews that God *gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child*, (Acts 7:5). Abraham believed that he would receive it in the resurrection, see Heb 11:13-19. Also see the many promises made to Abraham and particularly to his Seed in Gen 12:2,3,7; 13:15,16; 15:4; 17:4,6,7; 21:12; 22:17,18. *Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ; and he saw it, and was glad*, Jn 8:56. He saw not only the first coming, but he looked for him to *appear the second time without sin unto salvation!* He looked for the resurrection day!

You will remember what the Angel Gabriel said to the Virgin Mary, *Thou shalt call his name Jesus*, which name means Savior, *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end*, (Lk

1:32,33). Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, when he regained his speech, echoed this by exclaiming that by this Son of David, *we should be saved from our enemies...to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham*, Lk 1:69-73. These sentiments were held by all the godly of the time. Consider the sayings of Simeon and Anna also in Luke 1. All the godly looked for the Messiah to come in His Kingdom, where He *shall break in pieces the oppressor, and have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river unto the end of the earth*. Ps 72:4,8.

The Lord's disciples believed the Scriptures of the O.T. and heard, not only the Jewish teachers, but the teachings of the Lord, whom they believed to be the Messiah. They concluded that something great was about to happen. And they were right. But regarding that event that was to *immediately to appear*, they were quite mistaken!

They concluded that the Kingdom of God would now be established. Now Jehovah would *make the enemies* of David's Lord *his footstool* (Ps 110:1). Now the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Seed of David would crush the head of the Serpent, (Gen 3:15). Now, the King would *build up Zion, and appear in His glory* (Ps 102:16). Now He would take *the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, and break His enemies with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel* (Ps 2:8,9). Now He would *smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips slay the wicked, and would assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth* (Is 11:4,12). Now would the LORD *gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle...then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations,...and the LORD shall be king over all the earth* (Zech 14:2,3,9). Now the LORD *will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS* (Jer 23:5,6). Now *the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven would 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*, (Dan. 7:27). Now He *would reign in mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously*, (Is 24:23). The disciples were not wrong in their belief and hope that Messiah would personally reign in his kingdom, but they were wrong in the timing of it!

The disciples made two mistakes. First, they read the Scriptures "with blinders on." They saw what they wanted to see! Do we all not tend to concentrate on the prospects of blessings to come more than the troubles due to us for our sins? Our sinful hearts tend to pass over our sins, or, at least, mollify or diminish them. We tend to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think! *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know*, (1 Cor 8:2). Second, they followed the interpretations of their teachers. In other words they followed the *traditional* teaching! When we hear doctrines over and over from those we respect for their learning, these doctrinal teachings become traditions. These traditions may be good or bad, right or wrong. I remember hearing a preacher from Scotland pronounce *s-a-y-s* says. I thought "doesn't he know English?" Doesn't he know the way to pronounce says is sez? Then I thought we pronounce *days-days; bays-bays, hays-hays, lays-lays. rays-rays, ways-ways*. Why do we pronounce says-sez and not says? Then I thought his pronunciation, not mine, was probably correct! I had been taught from my youth to pronounce *says-sez*. Was my pronunciation wrong? Was my tradition incorrect? This was a good lesson to me regarding tradition! We must be especially careful, when we hear Scripture interpreted. We must be like the Bereans, who were more noble than the Thessalonians, who received the Bible as the Word of God, because the Bereans not only listened to the Apostle, but searched the Scriptures to confirm the truth of what he said. The Lord's disciples were wrong in their traditional teaching that the Kingdom would *immediately* appear, when the Messiah appeared.

I am indebted to J. C. Ryle for his thoughts on this parable. "It was a great mistake undeniably. They did not realize that before all these prophecies could be fulfilled, *it behoved Christ to suffer*. (Luke 24:46). Their hopeful expectations passed over the crucifixion and the long parenthesis of time to follow, and leaped forward to the final glory. They did not understand that Messiah would *be cut off* at the first advent and then reign at the second advent. They did not perceive that the sacrifices and ceremonies of the law of Moses were first to receive their fulfilment in a better sacrifice

and a better high priest, and the shedding of blood more precious than that of bulls and goats. They did not comprehend that before the glory Christ must be crucified, and an elect people gathered out from among the Gentiles by the preaching of the Gospel. All these were dark things to them. They grasped part of the prophetic word, but not all. They saw that Christ was to have a kingdom, but they did not see that He was to be wounded and bruised, and be an offering for sin. They understood the end of the second Psalm, and the whole of the ninety-seventh and ninety-eighth, but not the beginning of the twenty-second. They understood the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, but not the fifty-third. They understood the teaching of the crown and the glory, but not that of the cross and the shame. Such was their mistake.

It was a mistaken interpretation which the disciples were partially clinging to even after the crucifixion and resurrection. They said, *Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* (Acts 1:6) Notice Christ did not deny a visible, earthly kingdom. He only corrected their error as to the time of its appearing. He did not say that there would not be a restoration of the kingdom to Israel, only that the times and seasons were not for them to know. This mistake was referred to by Paul in 2 Thess 2:2, *Be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first.* In both these instances the old Jewish tradition passed over the crucifixion, and focused only on the teaching of the kingdom.

I believe many Christians have fallen into an error parallel with that of the Jewish church in the time of the Lord. It is an error less fatal in its consequences than theirs, but an error far more inexcusable, because we have had more light. If the Jew thought too exclusively of Christ reigning, has not the Christian thought too exclusively of Christ suffering? If the Jew could see nothing in Old Testament prophecy but Christ's exaltation and final power, has not the Christian often seen nothing but Christ's humiliation and the preaching of the Gospel? If the Jew dwelt too much on Christ's second advent, has not the Christian dwelt too exclusively on the first? If the Jew ignored the cross, has not the Christian ignored the crown? I believe there can be but one answer to these questions. I believe that we Christians have been very guilty concerning a large portion of God's truth. I believe that we have cherished an arbitrary, reckless habit of interpreting first advent texts *literally*, and second advent texts *spiritually*. I believe we have not rightly understood *all that the prophets have spoken* about the second personal advent of Christ, any more than the Jews did about the first. And because we have done this, I say that we should speak of such mistakes as that referred to in our text, with much tenderness and compassion.

I entreat you to consider calmly whether your opinions about Christ's second advent and kingdom are as sound and Scriptural as those of His first disciples. I entreat you to take heed, lest insensibly you commit as great error about Christ's second coming and glory, as they did about Christ's first coming and cross. I beg you not to dismiss this subject as a matter of curious speculation, and one of no practical importance. It affects how you would witness to the unconverted Jew. Unless you interpret the prophetic portion of the Old Testament in the simple, literal meaning of its words, you will find it no easy matter to carry on an argument with an unconverted Jew.

You would probably tell the Jew that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. To those Scriptures you would refer him for proof. You would show him Psalm 22, Is 53, Daniel 9:26, Micah 5:2, Zech 9:9, and 11:13. You would tell him that in Jesus of Nazareth those Scriptures were literally fulfilled. You would urge upon him that he ought to believe these Scriptures, and receive Christ as the Messiah. All this is very good. So far you would do well.

But suppose the Jew asks you if you take *all* the prophecies of the Old Testament in their simple literal meaning? Suppose he asks you if you believe in a literal personal advent of Messiah to reign over the earth in glory, a literal restoration of Judah and Israel to Palestine, a literal rebuilding and restoration of Zion and Jerusalem? Suppose the unconverted Jew puts these questions to you, what answer are you prepared to make?

Will you dare to tell him that Old Testament prophecies of this kind are not to be taken in their plain literal sense? Will you dare to tell him that the words Zion, Jerusalem, Jacob, Judah, Ephraim, Israel, do not mean what they seem to mean, but mean *the church of Christ*? Will you dare to tell him that the glorious kingdom and future blessedness of Zion, so often dwelt upon in prophecy, mean nothing more than the gradual Christianizing of the world by missionaries and Gospel preaching? Will you dare to tell him that you think it *carnal* to take such Scriptures literally, *carnal* to expect a literal rebuilding of Jerusalem, *carnal* to expect a literal coming of Messiah to reign, *carnal* to look for a literal gathering and restoration of Israel? Dear Friend, if you are a person of this mind, take care what you are doing? Do you not see that you are putting a weapon in the hand of the unconverted Jew, which he will probably use with irresistible power? Do you not see that you are cutting the ground from under your own feet, and supplying the Jew with a strong argument for not believing your own interpretation of Scripture? Do you not see that the Jew will reply that it is *carnal* to tell him that the Messiah *has* come literally to *suffer*, if you tell him that it is *carnal* to expect Messiah to come literally to reign? Do you not see that the Jew will tell you that it is far more *carnal* for you to believe that Messiah could come into the world as a despised, crucified man of sorrows, than it is for him to believe that He will come into the world as a glorious King? Beyond doubt He will do so, and you will find no answer to give.

I commend these things to your serious attention. I entreat you to throw aside all prejudice, and view the subject I am dwelling upon with calm and dispassionate thought. I beseech you to take up anew the prophetic Scriptures, and pray that you may not err in interpreting their meaning. Read them in the light of those two great pole-stars, the first and second advents of Jesus Christ. Bind up with *the first advent* the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, the preaching of the Gospel as a witness to the world, and the gathering out of the election of grace. Bind up with *the second advent* the restoration of the Jews, the pouring out of judgments on unbelieving Christians, the conversion of the world, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom upon earth. Do this, and you will see a meaning and fulness in prophecy which perhaps you never yet discovered.

I am quite aware that many good men do not see the prophetic subject as I do. I am painfully sensible that I seem presumptuous in differing from them. But I dare not refuse anything which appears to me plainly written in Scripture. I consider the best of men are not infallible. I think we should dread Protestant traditions not according to the Bible, as much as the traditions of the Church of Rome.

I believe it is high time for the Church of Christ to awake out of its sleep about Old Testament prophecy. From the time of the old Father, Jerome, down to the present day, men have gone on in a pernicious habit of "spiritualizing" the words of the Prophets, until their true meaning has been well nigh buried. It is high time to lay aside traditional methods of interpretation, and to give up our blind obedience to the opinions of even godly writers with regard to unfulfilled prophecy. It is high time to fall back on the good old principle that Scripture generally means what it seems to mean, and to beware of that almost incredulous argument, *such and such an interpretation cannot be correct, because it seems to us carnal!*

It is high time for Christians to interpret unfulfilled prophecy *by the light of prophecies already fulfilled*. The curses on the Jews were brought to pass literally, so also will be the blessings. The scattering was literal, so also will be the gathering. The pulling down of Zion was literal, so also will be the building up. The rejection of Israel was literal, so also will be the restoration.

It is high time to interpret the events that shall accompany Christ's second advent *by the light of those accompanying His first advent*. The first advent was literal, visible, personal, so also will be His second. His first advent was with a literal body, so also will be His second. At His first advent the least predictions were fulfilled to the very letter, so also will they be at His second. The shame was literal and visible, so also will be the glory.

It is high time to cease from explaining Old Testament prophecies *in a way not warranted by the New Testament*. What right have we to say that Judah, Zion, Israel, and Jerusalem, ever mean anything but literal Judah, literal Zion, literal Israel, and literal Jerusalem? What precedent shall we find in the New Testament? Hardly any, if indeed any at all. There are really only two or three places in the whole New Testament where such names are used decidedly in what may be called a spiritual or figurative state.' The word 'Jerusalem' occurs eighty times, and all of them unquestionably literal, save when the opposite is expressly pointed out by the epithets 'heavenly,' or 'new', or 'holy.' 'Jew' occurs a hundred times, and only four are even ambiguous, as Romans 2:28. 'Israel' and 'Israelite' occur forty times, and all literal. 'Judah' and 'Judea' above twenty times, and all literal. This is found in *Bonar's 'Prophetical Landmarks.'* p.300." end quote of J. C. Ryle