

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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| <b>Series:</b> | <b>The Heidelberg Catechism</b>                       |  | Pastor/Teacher    |
| <b>Number:</b> | <b>88</b>   |  | Gary L.W. Johnson |
| <b>Text:</b>   | <b>Acts 1:6-11; II Thess. 1:6-10; II Peter 3:3, 4</b> |  |                   |
| <b>Date:</b>   | <b>August 14, 2016 a.m.</b>                           |  |                   |

### The Kingdom... Come

#### Lords Day 48

#### Question 122. Which is the second petition?

**Answer:** "Thy kingdom come"; that is, rule us so by thy word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to thee; (a) preserve and increase thy church; (b) destroy the works of the devil, and all violence which would exalt itself against thee; and also all wicked counsels devised against thy holy word; (c) till the full perfection of thy kingdom take place, (d) wherein thou shalt be all in all. (e)

(a) Matt.6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Ps.119:5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Ps.143:10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. (b) Ps.51:18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Ps.122:6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Ps.122:7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. Ps.122:8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Ps.122:9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good. (c) 1 John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Rom.16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. (d) Rev.22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Rev.22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Rom.8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Rom.8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (e) 1 Cor.15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Herman Witsius, in his classic exposition on the Lord's prayer notes that, "various passages of Scripture do certainly speak as if the *kingdom* of God, or, which is the same thing, the *kingdom of the heavens*, were not to be expected till after the Messiah had appeared. Hence John and our Lord himself said, 'The kingdom of Heaven is at hand' (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). Christ 'was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come.' Joseph of Arimathea 'waited for the kingdom of God' (Luke 17:20). It is not improbable that the phraseology, taken in this sense, was borrowed from the Prophet Daniel, who, after describing the four great monarchies of the then known world, calls our attention to the kingdom of God in Christ, to which all the Godly looked forward with eager desire. 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve

him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.’ (Dan. 7:13, 14).

“In the Gospel, accordingly, the kingdom of God is scarcely ever used in any other sense than as denoting *that state of dignity and freedom which belongs to the church of the New Testament under the reign of the Messiah*. That kingdom of God is distinguished, not only from the *universal* kingdom, or kingdom of *nature*, which is always the same; but from the *special* kingdom of God, as it existed under the Old Testament. At that time it was a *civil* kingdom, accommodated to the character of a single nation, - a *ceremonial* kingdom, abounding in figurative representations, - and a *spiritual* kingdom, though ‘in bondage under the elements of the world’ (Gal. 4:3). But now it has nothing human, - no rulers or elders who might seem to share with the heavenly king in the government of the church, - nothing worldly, - no *worldly sanctuary*. It is in every respect the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the heavens.”<sup>1</sup> In II Peter 3:3, 4 the apostle refers to scoffers who mock the second coming of Christ – Peter specifically links the coming of the kingdom with Divine judgment.

“The idea of divine judgment,” writes Paul Helm, “is integral to the gospel. Take it away and what Christ did is essentially changed; in fact, what he did not longer makes sense.”<sup>2</sup> You would think that professing evangelicals would be united in affirming this important truth. Think again. A growing number of people who proudly claim the label “Evangelical” have completely jettisoned the whole concept of divine judgment (and have re-defined the gospel in the process).<sup>3</sup> The gospel (good news) proclaims salvation by Jesus Christ. What is salvation? It is rich in meaning and significance. It means a lot of things that imply blessing and joy. One of these is *deliverance*. Salvation does imply escape from danger. It does denote release or redemption. From what? Judgment. None of us relish being judged, and since we have an aversion to the thought of judgment, we tend to give it little or no thought - or worse yet, to dismiss the concept of divine judgment as a medieval concept that we need not concern ourselves with in our more enlightened age. Think again. The Scriptures speak loud and clear on this subject (and very frequently).<sup>4</sup> Judgment is said to be supremely the work of God (Matthew 18:35; II Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 11:6; James 4:12; I Peter 1:17, 2:23; Revelation 20:11, 12). This work is accomplished by Jesus Christ who has been appointed to this task (John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42, 17:31; Romans 14:9). We are told that Christ will summon all before His judgment seat and judge them in strict justice according to their works (Matthew 25:32; Romans 14:9-13; II Corinthians 5:10; II Timothy 4:1, 8; I Peter 4:5; Revelation 19:11-21). This work is accomplished by Jesus Christ who has been appointed to this task (John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42, 17:31; Romans 14:9). We are told that Christ will summon all before His judgment seat and judge them in strict justice according to their works (Matthew 25:32; Romans 14:9-13; II Corinthians 5:10; II Timothy 4:1, 8; I Peter 4:5; Revelation 19:11-21). These works are the expression and product of the heart and extend even to the very words (Matthew 12:36) and secret purposes of the heart (Romans 2:16; I Corinthians 4:5). Everything will be revealed (Matthew 6:4, 6, 18; 10:26; Ephesians 5:11-14; I Timothy 5:24, 25). The norm for this judgment will be the entire Word of God in both the Law and the Gospel (Romans 2:12; Matthew 25:32; Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:12).

## **I. THE APPEARANCE OF THE JUDGE**

The contrast between Christ’s first and second coming is stated in terms of “weakness” and “power.” His first appearance was, in the words of William Bates: “to be the mediator between the righteous God and sinful man, by patiently suffering the most afflictive evils; to propitiate the incensed justice of heaven against us; to restore us by humility who fell by pride; to illustrate his signal love to us, to recommend by the efficacy of his example, the meek suffering all the transient evils of the world: but the second will be to perform the last act of his regal office, to determine the eternal states of angels and men, and suitably in the glory of his Diety. The divine oracles were never less obscure than in describing the first and second coming of the Messiah; the eclipse of the Sun of Righteousness, and his future glory: and the most clear accomplishment of them in his humiliation, is a convincing visible argument they shall be fulfilled in his exaltation.”<sup>5</sup>

## II. THE MANNER OF HIS APPEARANCE

His personal appearance will be *glorious*. He will be attended with *holy angels*, and He will sit upon a visible throne of glory. The glory is the glory of His Father (Matthew 16:27).

## III. THE PURPOSE OF HIS APPEARANCE

He will bring salvation (Hebrews 9:28) and execute judgment (Matthew 16:27; II Timothy 4:1). This day of God's judgment is described as majestic (II Thessalonians 1:9; Jude 14). "It is clear," says Leon Morris, "that the Judge is understood as a regal personage, and One whose appearance is awe-ful beyond description, as dispensing final justice with a royal hand. This great day is everywhere assumed throughout the New Testament. There are preliminary judgments of God throughout history. But at the end there will be the climax, that which proceeds out of the preliminary and partial judgments, and which perfectly fulfills all that they foreshadow."<sup>6</sup>

**CONCLUSION:** The Bible declares that those outside of Christ (in unbelief) are the *enemies* of Christ (Romans 5:10; 11:28; Philippians 3:18; Colossians 1:21; Hebrews 10:13). In Psalm 2 we read of the Son's anger and wrath and in Revelation 6:16 we read of "the wrath of the Lamb." Some people have a difficult time reconciling this startling image with that of the sweet and lovely Jesus they have grown so accustomed to hearing about. Jesus did come to seek and to save sinners (those deserving wrath). He came in the form of a servant and in humiliation to accomplish redemption (Philippians 2:5-11). Listen to John Calvin: "He appeared thus, then, to be made obedient in our name, as was necessary to satisfy for our sins. But now He will come to be Judge. He has been judged and condemned so that we might be delivered before the judgment seat of God, and that we might be absolved of all our sins. It will no longer be a matter of coming in such humility. He will come then with the Angels of His glory. That is what St. Paul meant by saying that the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will be dreadful."<sup>7</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> H. Witsius, *The Lord's Prayer* (rpt. P&R, 1994), p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Helm, *The Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell* (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989), p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> This attitude was blatantly demonstrated by one of the leading spokesmen for "New-model" Evangelicals. Robert Brow in his article "Evangelical Megashift: Why You May Not Have Heard About Wrath, Sin and Hell Recently," *Christianity Today* (Feb. 19, 1990), p. 12-14. He concludes by saying that "no one would deny that it is easier to relate to a God perceived as kindly and loving." In other words, since the concept of divine judgment is unpleasant, we need to adjust our view of God and make Him more likeable. Despite the fact that distinctively Christian terms are used to describe this kinder, gentler, user-friendly gospel, it is not the true Gospel. Many years ago C.H. Spurgeon warned the church about such false claims. "It is mere cant to cry, 'We are evangelical: we are all evangelical,' and yet decline to say what evangelical means... You may believe anything, everything, or nothing and yet be enrolled in the 'Evangelical' army – so they say." cf. John MacArthur, Jr., *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* (Crossway, 1993), p. 194.

<sup>4</sup> Noted New Testament scholar, Joachim Jeremias, wrote: "The message of Jesus is not only the proclamation of salvation, but also the announcement of judgment, a cry of warning, and a call to repentance in view of the terrible urgency of the crisis. The number of parables in this category is nothing less than awe-inspiring." *The Parables of Jesus* (MacMillan, 1972), p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> *The Complete Works of William Bates IV* (rpt. Sprinkle, 1990), p. 395.

<sup>6</sup> Leon Morris, *The Biblical Doctrine of Judgment* (Eerdmans, 1960), p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> John Calvin, *Sermons on the Saving Work of Christ* (Baker, 1950), p. 298.