

THE BRIGHT PROSPECT
OF
THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST



ISAIAH 8:19-9:7

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Isaiah 8:19-9:7

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I INTRODUCTION – THE DARKNESS OF SIN’S CAPTIVITY – ISAIAH 8:19-22

C. H. Spurgeon comments on Isaiah 9:1-2. “It is noteworthy that the clearest promises of the Messiah have been given in the darkest hours of history. If the prophets had been silent upon the Coming One before, they always speak out in the cloudy and dark day; for well the Spirit made them know that the coming of God in human flesh is the lone star of the world’s night.”¹ So here the prince of the prophets graphically describes the darkness overwhelming Israel before he proclaims the coming of vanquishing light.

In John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Christian, in rags, with a burden on his back and a book in his hand, desires to escape judgment and death in the dark City of Destruction, but he does not know which way to go. Evangelist directs him to a distant light (II Pet. 1:19) to which, in spite of the opposition of his family, he runs with his fingers in his ears crying out, “Life, life, eternal life.”

In Isaiah we see a similar predicament. There is repeated contrast between the darkness of sin, corruption, idolatry, and the light of God’s glory and righteousness (Isa. 60:1-3, 19-20). Over southern Israel (Judah and Jerusalem), there is a blanket of darkness, and the consequent prospect of condemnation and judgment.

- Judah is worse than dumb domestic animals (1:3).
- Judah is like a sick putrefying body (1:6).
- Judah has hands full of bloodshed (1:15).

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 36:2163.

- Judah's women are haughty, vain (3:16).
- Judah's men are totally perverse (5:20-23)
- Moral and religious darkness prevails (5:30b; 29:15).

But does not America at this very hour, this Christmas season, reflect similar marks of darkness? We are a nation wallowing in Sodom-like mire, worshipping at the altar of mammon, offering sacrifices of endless entertainment, carnal gratification and self-deification. In the name of vaunted freedom we are becoming more and more enslaved. In claiming greater enlightenment, we are becoming sinister, utterly decadent. A "jackass knows where to bed down in safety, but our people are more stupid; they prefer the cold of the night" (cf. Isa. 1:3).

Our princely privileges in this wealthy land are being prostituted for the sake of insatiable self-indulgence. From our presidency down to our children we are increasingly a cursing, swearing, blaspheming people, and the media only reflect this foulness. Our men are becoming more ungracious, rude, base, mean, lewd, while our women are more brash, immodest, loud, defiant. Our children are becoming more uncontrollable, guilty of adult crimes; their discipline is passé, while sex is flaunted and precociousness is cute and amusing. Consequently our churches have become places of entertainment, ear-tickling ministry, worship of the self, religious sentiment and pluralism, not truth, righteousness, judgment and grace. So darkness continues to descend upon us as the recent elections well indicate.

However Isaiah does not leave us without hope. In the midst of pervasive depravity Israel is yet instructed that there is the glorious prospect of darkness giving way to light. For this reason he is rightly called the evangelical prophet; he is also the prophet of gospel light in the face of satanic darkness. Hence there is the proclamation of:

- Cleansing from sin (1:18).
- The triumph of the glorious kingdom of God (2:2-4).
- The virgin birth of Immanuel (7:14).
- The prospective reign of David's greater Son (11:1-9).

- Darkness will give way to light (29:18-19; 42:16).

But now especially note Isaiah 9:2, “The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those whose live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.” If then light is to be proclaimed to Israel, do we not then have good reason to believe that this same gospel light is the hope of darkening America? Yes, although we ought to tremble at the fact of this light having *already* been poured out upon our forefathers, and now we treat it with indifference, disdain! yet we assuredly do still have hope, that is if we rightly understand the first coming of Jesus Christ at such a season as Christmas.

A. The character of Israel’s apostasy, vs. 19-20.

At the time that Isaiah writes, bad King Ahaz the apostate rules over Judah, the southern kingdom. In spite of Isaiah’s advice, he has sought help from pagan Assyria, not the Lord. He “made his son to pass through the fire,” as an offering to Molech, the Ammonite god (II Kings 16:3). He placed an Assyrian type altar in the temple court, closing the sanctuary (II Kings 16:10-16). He introduced Baal worship, high places, idolatry (II Chron. 28:2-4, 23-25).

1. Apostasy from the Spirit of God, v. 19.

“When they say to you, ‘Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people consult their God? *Should they consult* the dead on behalf of the living?” Isaiah is faced with the shameful reality of Israel suggesting that he should employ occultism, witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy, etc., that is extra-biblical revelation. It is the carnal pursuit of novel religious experience, indeed anything other than the will and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Formerly Israel had known the presence of the Holy Spirit under the leadership of David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jothan. So it is absolutely absurd for the living to seek counsel from the dead!

2. Apostasy from the Word of God, v. 20.

“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn [light] .” Here is Isaiah’s steadfast response, that is his recourse, without any deviation, to the objective,

written revelation of God's "law" and "testimony." He is responding, as a faithful prophet, especially to the leaders of Israel's apostasy. If they do not proclaim the Word of God, but some pagan substitute, this proves that they, for all of their religiosity, are full of darkness. So: "The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (Ps. 119:130).

B. The fruit of Israel's apostasy, vs. 21-22.

Apart from the godless leadership of Israel and its desolating effect upon the southern kingdom, there will result utter discouragement and despair throughout the land. All of this is a prelude to God's merciful intervention into the hopeless gloom of humanity. Christmas ought always present this contrast of man's despair with the visitation of Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinners, though it rarely does.

1. Desolation leading to the despising of God, v. 21.

"They will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward." The bottom line result of Israel's godless pursuits is desolation, that is spiritual, material and economic ruin, then realization of it having reaped bitter fruit as a result of what was sown in rebellion, then anguish, torment, and finally frustration expressed in rage! With this venting of the irrationality of sin, looking upward, even God is condemned for such a state of affairs! So rabid godlessness is seen to have its own harsh reward that, humanly speaking, has no remedy in view.

2. Darkness leading to despair of God, v. 22.

"Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and *they will be* driven away into darkness." Here Israel's prospect is only despair, seeming abandonment by God. There is no thought here to look upward toward heaven for mercy and light. All is the "gloom/dimness of anguish" and the implicit prospect of being divinely cast aside and thus led into captivity. Such is the end of those who earlier sought their own freedom and desired to be released from the cords of God's holy restraint (Ps. 2:1-3, 9). The picture is that of the title of H. G.

Wells last book, "Mind at the End of its Tether," in which he argues that human existence is about to be extinguished!

II THE ILLUMINATION OF GOD'S GREAT LIGHT – ISAIAH 9:1-7

A. The geographic dawning of the Light, v. 1.

"But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make *it* glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles." If the preceding revelation of such calamitous bad news portrayed Israel in the south, and indeed man in general, as being in such a hopeless condition, what follows gloriously declares the sovereign grace and covenant faithfulness of God that redeems from the pit, the miry clay, the blackest darkness. Here the principle of Paul is well illustrated: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20). This is what "Joy to the world" is really about, what "Hark the herald angels sing" really proclaims.

We really need to remember that the northern kingdom of Israel was taken away captive to Assyria in 722 BC, especially the upper and lower regions of Galilee (II Kings 15:29), while Isaiah now probably writes only a few years after this tragedy. So the memory is still fresh in the memories of those living in the southern region of the land. Surely the post-captivity period of the north, here attributed to the sovereign judgment and "contempt" of Jehovah, had indeed produced "gloom." The tribal territories of Zebulun and Naphtali, especially the towns of Capernaum, Tiberias, Nazareth, Cana, Bethsaida, etc. west of Galilee, were yet to be visited with "light," that is divine glory. Though the unsophisticated rural north country will be visited with the outshining of the glory of God, the radiance of His appearing (Heb. 1:3). Here the words of Isaiah 55:8-9 are well illustrated. "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" So Nathaniel asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46). And in the light of this, how thankful we ought to be, that God upholds His agenda, and not that of man!

But when did the Galilean region see such great light? When did that ravaged northern land find privilege and divine visitation? Even the Jewish

understanding of this verse has most often referenced the coming of Messiah! However it is, more specifically, the coming forth of Jesus of Nazareth that so obviously is the fulfillment here, as Matthew 4:12-17 upholds. In that region:

- He cast out demons and raised the dead.
- He healed the deaf, blind, leprous, paralytic.
- He offered blessedness to those seeking righteousness.
- He chose the twelve apostles as church foundation blocks.
- He miraculously fed five thousand, then four thousand, and offered himself as the bread of life.
- He forgave sin

Luke 4:14-15, 43-44 tells us:

- He came in the power of the Spirit to Galilee.
- His fame spread throughout all that region.
- He taught in the synagogues and was praised by all.
- He preached the dawning of the kingdom of God.

But did Jesus Christ deny these indications that he was in fact the very Light of the world? No, rather he positively affirmed that He was in fact the very Light of the world.

- When he read the Scriptures in the synagogue at Nazareth, he declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind" (Luke 4:18).
- In Jerusalem he proclaimed, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. . . . I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness" (John 8:12; 12:46).
- How well the Son of God understood man's blind condition, his groping, stumbling ways. So he exhorted: "If anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him. . . . Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness

does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light" (John 11:10; 12:35-36).

When is it that a person most appreciates the light? Surely it is when he is fully acquainted with sustained darkness. It is said that the darkness is deepest just before the dawn.

- Then there is joy at the breaking of a new day.
- There is great relief when we see light at the end of a long tunnel.
- But when that darkness is deeply rooted in the soul, how joyous is the response when true light bursts forth (John 9:25).
- Charles Wesley, drawing on his own experience, describes this awakening, this illumination of his soul, as follows:

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

Notice in the verses that follow on, in vs. 2-7, the effect of the coming of God's great light, His Son.

- Depression, gloom, and despair give way to joy and gladness (cf. I Pet. 1:8), v. 3.
- The burden of guilt, captivity to Satan, the personification of darkness, are gone, vs. 4-5.
- The new righteous administration of Christ is inaugurated, v. 6a.
- There is exaltation in the divine sovereignty of this new Ruler as "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace," v. 6b.
- We enter into the promised reign of the seed of David, an eternal reign of justice and righteousness, v. 7a.
- We are assured that nothing in hell or on earth shall thwart this reign of the Light of the World, for, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts [His divine, sovereign enthusiasm] will accomplish this," v. 7b.

To millions of people this Christmas, the only understanding they will have of the prospect of light will be man's shabby and tawdry efforts at self-illumination. How pathetic and empty they are! "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness, is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ' (II Cor. 4:6). Can you say with Wesley that the dungeon of your heart has flamed with light, a saving knowledge of Christ? This is at the heart of what it means to understand the coming of Jesus Christ.

B. The fruit of the Light, vs. 2-5.

It needs to be understood that both "gloom" in v. 1 and "light" here in v. 2 are essentially moral designations that contrast "sin and judgment" manifest in Israel, with "truth revelation and righteousness" that is of the very character of the God of Israel. Further, the presupposition is that Israel is now overwhelmed with this moral darkness; though *now* it does not foolishly pretend that darkness is light and light is darkness, as formerly (Isa. 5:20; cf. Matt. 6:23). The recent pall of judgment is too convincing of the reality of sin! This is a far better ground for the revelation of good news.

1. The dawning of light in the land, v. 2.

"The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them." The people of Israel may be likened to despairing prisoners who are hopelessly held captive within a murky, dismal prison, that is designated as the "dark land" of Israel. Their only hope is not cunning and ingenuity in terms of planning an escape, that is personal initiative whereby they can bring light to their darkness; they have no hope except the sovereign, gracious intervention of God, His self-revelation according to the good pleasure of His will (Acts 12:7). And this is exactly what we are told here: "the light will shine on them." This is *not* the impartation of light *within* mankind in general. This is *not* the fanning of inward flickering light already existing *in* all of the souls of humanity, but heaven-sent, glorious revelation that *confronts* dead souls, that appears before them where they live. Even then not all will welcome this illumination when it stares them in the face (John 3:19-20).

Of course this divine visitation of light is Israel's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom Simeon declared, as he held the baby Jesus in his arms: "For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a Light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32). So Jesus declared that, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life" (John 8:12). Hence those who do not follow Christ remain in darkness, indeed they become more hardened in their darkness than ever before. True followers of Christ have "the Light of life," that is holy life, the life of God, the life of His Spirit, the life of truth illumination, the life of gospel understanding. Jesus is intent on clarifying His exact meaning here when He says that He is "Light." He does not merely mean radiance, brilliance, outshining as at the transfiguration (Matt. 17:2). Rather the "Light" he confers on dead sinners is "life," that is "eternal life." He embodies and confers "the Light of life" (cf. John 20:31; I John 5:12). As J. C. Ryle puts it:

He [the believer in Christ] shall not grope in doubt and uncertainty, but shall see the way to heaven, and know where he is going.—He "shall have the light of life." He shall feel within him the light of God's countenance shining on him. He shall find in his conscience and understanding a living light, which nothing can altogether quench. The lights with which many please themselves shall go out in the valley of the shadow of death, and prove worse than useless. But the light that Christ gives to everyone that follows Him shall never fail.²

2. The dawning of gladness in the land, v. 3.

"You shall multiply the nation, You shall increase their gladness; they will be glad in Your presence as with the gladness of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." Here the LORD, through Isaiah, addresses Messiah, cf. v. 4, and declares some of the fruit of His redemptive labors. There is still a pitiful remnant in the north, intermingled with Assyrians, but this will eventually change to a great increase (Isa. 26:15; 66:8; Zech. 14:10-11). The congregation of the truly redeemed in Israel (not the church) will be enlarged in two ways. First, a saved remnant will be enlarged to include a *great fulfillment* of Israel as a nation (Rom. 11:12), a *resurrection* of

² J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John*, II, pp. 85-86.

Israel as a nation (Rom. 11:15; cf. Ezek. 37), a *whole lump* of Israel as a nation (Rom. 11:16). Second, the Gentiles will be incorporated or engrafted into the one people of God (Luke 2:32; John 10:16; Rom. 11:23) that yet retains distinction between Israel and the Gentiles.

But further, Messiah will instigate a blessed revival in the hearts of that great assembly of the saved nation of Israel that results in passionate gladness and rejoicing. What will be the chief cause of this radical outburst of praise? It will be the fact that Israel is “in Your presence” (cf. Ps. 16:11). So the Lord Jesus will “grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. . . . You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast. Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs” (Isa. 61:3, 6-7). And the Gentiles also will learn of this blessedness and rejoice with equal exuberance in Christ.

3. The dawning of emancipation in the land, v. 4.

“For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian.” Here Isaiah reminisces, implicitly concerning Israel’s deliverance out of Egypt under Moses and explicitly from the Midianites under Gideon. Also there is inference concerning the Assyrian captivity that still stands. But this bondage too, indeed subsequently that of Babylon and Rome, shall eventually pass and be broken by the Light of the world. All world powers, even when they congregate together in the League of Nations or the United Nations, are incapable of ushering in true peace. It is the same with regard to man’s numerous vain attempts to experiment with a variety of communal societies, to introduce a new governmental structure by political theory or a social contract that supposedly brings forth a form of paradise on earth. It is impossible for man, contentious and selfish in his heart, to heal his own sickness, to set himself free from his own paralysis. Rather, as indicated here, it is Christ alone who “shall break the yoke of . . . their [human] burden.”

4. The dawning of peace in the land, v. 5.

“For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, and cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.” The weapons of Israel’s enemies shall ultimately come to naught. “And He [the God of Jacob] will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war” (Isa. 2:4; cf. Mic. 4:1-3). Here the consummation of the saving work of Christ is revealed, his birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, session, and return for judgment and the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21). At Christmas we remember the earthly commencement, the inauguration of this panorama of redemption, and in terms of Jesus Christ, so many people today go no further than this wondrously announced beginning. To stop here is like having children and always treating them as children even though they have become adults. It is like being married and constantly dwelling on the wedding day over the years rather than seeing it as the commencement of a developing, maturing union. But notice the swift change from the “child” to the “Wonderful Counsellor, [the] Mighty God, . . . [the] Prince of Peace” in vs. 6-7. So today we are drawing close to the climax of the saving work of Christ. “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him” (Rev. 1:7). “We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (I John 3:2).

C. The Person of the Light, vs. 6-7.

There is a degree of progression from the dark night of sin enveloping Israel in 8:19-22, to the geographic dawning of enlightened emancipation in 9:1, to the fruit of this enlightened emancipation in 9:2-5, to the divine embodiment of this enlightened emancipation in 9:6-7. The personal element in terms of defining the promised light has been shrouded with a lack of specificity. Messiah has been hinted at, that is until in vs. 6-7 He is revealed with a panorama of grandeur, a sudden bursting forth of glorious details that boggle the mind in terms of their description of the Lord Jesus in both humble and exalted terms.

1. The divinity of the Son of God, v. 6.

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” The preceding revelation of Israel’s morally sick condition is not going to be dealt with in vague and abstract terms, as if by means of the light of enhanced education, improved respect for Torah, or better rabbinic and priestly leadership. No, the Redeemer of Israel is, of necessity, to be a most personal visitation of God the Father’s atoning Lamb, His only-begotten son. So to begin with, Messiah’s entrance onto the world stage is briefly described in infantile terms as of a “child” and “son,” indicating astonishing condescension. Here is stark contrast with the bloody tyranny and human despotism that Israel has suffered up to this point, vs. 4-5. Humanly speaking, “How could there be hope in a “child”? However we would better translate here, “a child has been born, . . . a son has been given.” The perfect tenses here simply stress prophetic certainty, whatever human scorn may be cast upon this astonishing prospect. But furthermore, He will be heir to “the government,” that is “the throne of David,” v. 7, over Israel, which will also incorporate the Gentile nations (Isa. 52:15; 60:1-3; 61:10-11; 62:1-2; 66:10-12; 18; Matt. 28:18-19; I Cor. 15:25). Then this “child” or “son” is given His inherited titles that so comfort and encourage His citizens.

- a. “Wonderful Counselor,” in the realm of wisdom. This Messiah will be a delightful, righteous, benevolent despot. The prudence of His administration will prove to be astonishing, marvelous, far beyond that of Solomon. He will not have any need of advisors; the world will flock to His throne. So, “the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD” (Isa. 11:1-2; cf. 28:29).
- b. “Mighty God,” in the realm of sovereignty. Here the humanity of Messiah is now attested as equally being deity; He is the God-man, a mystery to human understanding, yet so frequently attested to in the New Testament (John 1:1; 20:28; Col. 2:9). As Charles Wesley has so clearly described the Lord Jesus.

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Let earth and Heaven combine,
Angels and men agree,
To praise in songs divine
The incarnate Deity,
Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made Man.

He laid His glory by,
He wrapped Him in our clay;
Unmarked by human eye,
The latent Godhead lay;
Infant of days He here became,
And bore the mild Immanuel's Name.

- c. "Eternal Father," in the realm of transcending time. Literally Messiah is the "Father of eternity," yet not the person of God the Father. Why? Because the New Testament never so equates the Son and the Father; rather the Son, though equal in essence, yet is functionally always subordinate to the Father. So also in the Old Testament (Ps. 2:6-12). Here Messiah, having been appointed to this kingly reign by His Father, is a Shepherd, in a father-like manner, for all of eternity.
 - d. "Prince of Peace," in the realm of blessed, righteous dominion. Having "made peace [between God and man] through the blood of His cross, . . . [and] disarmed the [alien, worldly, Satanic] rulers and authorities" (Col. 1:20; 2:15; cf. Rom. 5:1), He establishes His consummate kingdom of peace over the world, reigning from Jerusalem, the capital of "holy peace" (shalom, cf. Ps. 72:1-7; Isa. 66:10-13). In other words, Messiah will work peace within the hearts of elect Jew and Gentile as the basis of His economic administration so that "Jerusalem will dwell in security" (Zech. 14:11; cf. Isa. 65:17-19; 66:10-13; Jer. 33:14-16).
2. The dominion of the Son of God, v. 7.

"There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this." King and kingdom are indivisibly

related, so are Governor and government, Prince and principality. So here the government of the Messiah/Governor is summarized, along with the overruling, passionate interest of the Father, the LORD of Israel. The primary focus is upon a restored and spiritually resurrected Israel, a reversal of centuries of dispersal, disdain, and despair. Hearts of stone will be replaced with hearts of flesh, poverty will be replaced by prosperity, anti-Semitism will be replaced with pro-Semitism (Ezek. 37:21-23). So the Gentiles will also be the objects of this climax to the saving work of Christ (Zech. 8:20-23).

But when all has been said and done, this great gospel work will be according to the fervor and ardor and zeal of “the Lord of hosts.” His interest is so far removed from a casual, relaxed, occasional attitude. Rather He is unswerving in His gracious determination to save sinners, Jewish first, but also Gentile (Hab. 3:12-13; Rom. 1:16). Should not the objects of this salvation likewise be zealous? So Spurgeon comments:³

But, last of all, if God is thus zealous for the crown rights, the kingdom of Christ, let us be zealous too. This is not the day of zeal, this is the day of cleverness and achievement; it is not the day of solid earnestness. It is the day of mere sensationalism, and nothing more. Oh! what a sight it would have been to have seen old John Knox, when old and worn, go up into his pulpit, and though before he began to preach he seemed so weak that he could scarcely stand, yet he did not proceed far in preaching up the Master’s name, before, as an old historian says, “he did seem to use such force that one would think he would dash the pulpit into fragments” — dash it into shivers, I suppose, before the Popish priests and hypocrites of the age. How his eyes flashed fire as he spoke out his Master’s truth, as he denounced Popery, and held up the truth and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

We want more men of this sort. Oh! that God would but send us one such, and then to back him a race of Covenanters, who should with their very blood dedicate themselves to the truth and the Kingdom of Christ against the insidious advances of Popery and the infidelity of Rome and hell, which are twin brothers. Oh! that once again the Church were earnest to have no head or king of the Church but Christ, no creed but the Bible, no baptism but the baptism which he has taught, no sacrament but what he reveals, no doctrine but what that book dictates — the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. Oh! God of zeal, drop thy zeal upon us now, and make us zealous too,

³ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 60:3432.

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even we, by blood redeemed, by thy Holy Spirit, inhabit, consecrate us
afresh, for Jesus' sake. Amen