

**“What it means to be Reformed”; Session # 25 – Sola Gratia – “Many People Praying for Christ’s Kingdom”, prepared for the Adult Sunday School class on January 18th, 2014, by Pastor Paul Rendall.**

**Read Zechariah 2: 10-13** – “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion!” “For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, says the Lord.” “Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people.” “And I will dwell in your midst.” “Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.” “And the Lord will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.” “Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation.”

**Read Zechariah 8: 20-23** – “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hosts.’ “I myself will go also.” “Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.” “thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”

I have been trying to show you the connections between the Doctrine of Election and the time period of the Millennium, the Thousand Years of the book of Revelation. I am attempting to stir up this church and all Reformed churches to reconsider their eschatological views of the Bible if they are not Postmillennial in their view. This is because of the plain declaration of God that there yet awaits in the future, in latter part of this present evil age, before Christ’s Second Coming, a time in which God will choose certain nations to come into the kingdom of His Son, and many among those nations shall be saved. This, by the way, is an impetus for each of us to pray, and corporately all of us to pray that prayer of our Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom Come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6: 10)

Isaiah 27: 1-6    Psalm 72: 8-11    Isaiah 2: 1-4

**Johnathan Edwards from his treatise – A Humble Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God’s People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ’ Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture-Promises and Prophecies concerning the Last Time –**

“In this chapter we have a prophecy of a future glorious advancement of the church of God; wherein it is evident, something further is intended than ever was fulfilled to the nation of the Jews under the Old Testament. For here are plain prophecies of such things as never were fulfilled before the coming of the Messiah: particularly what is said in the two last verses in the chapter, of “many people and strong nations worshiping and seeking the true God,” and of so great an accession of Gentile nations to the church of God, that by far the greater part of the visible worshipers of God should consist of this new accession, so that they should be to the other as ten to one, a certain number for an uncertain. There never happened anything, from the time of the prophet Zechariah to the coming of Christ, to answer this prophecy: and it can have no fulfillment but either in the calling of the Gentiles, in and after the days of the apostles, or in the future glorious enlargement of the church of God in the latter ages of the world, so often foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, and by the prophet Zechariah in particular,

in the latter part of this prophecy. 'Tis most probable, that what the Spirit of God has chief respect to, is that last and greatest enlargement and most glorious advancement of the church of God on earth; in the benefits of which especially, the Jewish nation were to have a share, and a very eminent and distinguishing share. There is a great agreement between what is here said, and other prophecies, that most manifestly have respect to the church's latter-day glory: as that in Isaiah 60:2-4. "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee: and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee." That whole chapter, beyond all dispute, has respect to the most glorious state of the church of God on earth. So Isaiah 66:8. "Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Shall a nation be born at once?" Isaiah 66:10, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her." Isaiah 66:12, "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." Micah 4 at the beginning; "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it; and many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." See also Isaiah 2 at the beginning. There has been nothing yet brought to pass, in any measure to answer these prophecies. And as the prophecy in my text and the following verse does agree with them, so there is reason to think it has a respect to the same times."

### **He further says:**

"We may observe who they are, that shall be united in thus seeking the Lord of Hosts: "the inhabitants of many cities," and of many countries, "yea, many people, and strong nations"; great multitudes in different parts of the world shall conspire in this business [Zechariah 8:20-22]. From the representation made in the prophecy, it appears rational to suppose, that it will be fulfilled something after this manner; first, that there shall be given much of a spirit of prayer to God's people, in many places, disposing them to come into an express agreement, unitedly to pray to God in an extraordinary manner, that he would appear for the help of his church, and in mercy to mankind, and pour out his Spirit, revive his work, and advance his spiritual kingdom in the world, as he has promised; and that this disposition to such prayer, and union in it, will gradually spread more and more, and increase to greater degrees; with which at length will gradually be introduced a revival of religion, and a disposition to greater engagedness in the worship and service of God, amongst his professing people; that this being observed, will be the means of awakening others, making them sensible of the wants of their souls, and exciting in them a great concern for their spiritual and everlasting good, and putting them upon earnestly crying to God for spiritual mercies, and disposing them to join with God's people in that extraordinary seeking and serving of God, which they shall see them engaged in; and that in this manner religion shall be propagated, till the awakening reaches those that are in the highest stations, and till whole nations be awakened, and there be at length an accession of many of the chief nations of the world to the church of God. Thus after the inhabitants of many cities of Israel, or of God's professing people, have taken up, and pursued a joint resolution, to go and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of Hosts, others shall be drawn to worship and serve him with them; till at length "many people" and "strong nations" shall join themselves to them; and there shall, in process of time, be a vast accession to the church, so that it shall be ten times as large as it was before; yea, at length, all nations shall be converted unto God. Thus "ten men

shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, of the skirt of him that is a Jew" (in the sense of the Apostle, Romans 2:28–29), "saying, We will go with you; for we have heard, that God is with you" [Zechariah 8:23]. And thus that shall be fulfilled, Psalms 65:2, "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

"In October, A.D. 1744, a number of ministers in Scotland, taking into consideration the state of God's church, and of the world of mankind, judged that the providence of God, at such a day, did loudly call such as were concerned for the welfare of Zion, to united extraordinary applications to the God of all grace, suitably acknowledging him as the fountain of all the spiritual benefits and blessings of his church, and earnestly praying to him, that he would appear in his glory, and favor Zion, and manifest his compassion to the world of mankind, by an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit on all the churches, and the whole habitable earth, to revive true religion in all parts of Christendom, and to deliver all nations from their great and manifold spiritual calamities and miseries, and bless them with the unspeakable benefits of the kingdom of our glorious Redeemer, and fill the whole earth with his glory. And consulting one another on the subject, they looked on themselves, for their own part, obliged to engage in this duty; and, as far as in them lay, to persuade others to the same: and to endeavor to find out and fix on some method, that should most effectually tend to promote and uphold such extraordinary application to heaven among God's people. And after seeking to God by prayer for direction, they determined on the following method, as what they would conform to in their own practice, and propose to be practiced by others, for the two years next following, viz., to set apart some time on Saturday evening and Sabbath morning, every week, for the purpose aforesaid, as other duties would allow to everyone respectively; and more solemnly, the first Tuesday of each quarter (beginning with the first Tuesday of November then next ensuing), either the whole day, or part of the day, as persons find themselves disposed, or think their circumstances will allow: the time to be spent either in private praying societies, or in public meetings, or alone in secret, as shall be found most practicable, or judged most convenient, by such as are willing, in some way or other, to join in this affair: but not that any should make any promises, or be looked upon as under strict bonds in any respect, constantly and without fail to observe every one of these days, whatever their circumstances should be, or however other duties and necessary affairs might interfere; or that persons should look upon themselves bound with regard to these days in any wise as though the time were or the setting them apart for religious purposes were established by sacred authority: but yet, as a proper guard against negligence and unsteadiness, and a prudent preservative from yielding to a disposition, that persons might be liable to, through the prevalence of indolence and listlessness, to excuse themselves on trivial occasions, it was proposed, that those that unite in this affair, should resolve with themselves, that if, by urgent business, or otherwise, they were hindered from joining with others, on the very day agreed on, yet they would not wholly neglect bearing their part in the duty proposed, but would take the first convenient day following for that purpose. holy, or the setting them apart for religious purposes were established by sacred authority."

### **Read Isaiah 19: 18-25**

**Commenting on Isaiah 19: 21, Joseph Benson says in his commentary** – "But though this prophecy concerning Egypt might have its first accomplishment in the deliverance of the Egyptians from the Persian yoke by Alexander the Great, and in that knowledge of the true God, and of his revealed will, which many of the Egyptians received under the government of the Ptolemies, through their intercourse with the Jews, and the translation of the Jewish Scriptures into the Greek language; yet, doubtless, this prediction has a further and higher aspect, as

commentators in general have understood it, and refers to that spiritual redemption and salvation which the Egyptians, among many other ignorant and idolatrous Gentiles, were to receive, and actually did receive, by the coming of Christ, the great and only Saviour of lost mankind, and by the publication of his gospel to them. This appears still more evidently from the verses which follow. But the full and final accomplishment of this, as well as of many other important prophecies, shall not take place till Mohammedanism and idolatry shall be completely overthrown, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

**Joseph Sutcliffe says in his commentary on Isaiah 19: 21** – “Isaiah saw that Egypt would be a sanctuary for the Jews who should escape the sword of the Chaldees: and at one time the number of the refugees was so great that “five cities did literally speak the language of Canaan.” Alexander the great was a savior to them, and the Ptolemies were their patrons. God blesses the nation that receives his exiled people. This prophecy may however have a reference to the future conversion of Egypt to the Christian faith.”

**Charles Spurgeon says on Isaiah 19: 21** – “This is a very remarkable prophecy. Attempts have been made to explain it, as if it were already fulfilled. I believe all such attempts to be utter failures. This promise stands on record, to be fulfilled at some future day. In those bright days for which some of us are looking, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, so the waters cover the sea, then shall this word to Egypt be verified; yea, and God shall be glorified both by Egypt and Assyria, as well as in the land of Israel. This ought to be an encouragement to carry on missionary operations with great vigor. Here is a distinct promise for Assyria and for Egypt. Let not the missionary be afraid, even if for thousands of years to come there should be little apparent success to the preaching of the gospel. If the Lord should tarry another six thousand years, ay, sixty thousand years—and he may—we are still to go on working, and still to go on laboring, looking for his coming, and expecting it, but not relaxing our efforts because he pleases to delay it, for the Lord has sworn that all flesh shall know his glory, and you may depend upon it, there is no spot of earth that shall be left to be Satan's dominion. It shall be conquered for Christ, and in truth he shall "see of the travail of his soul, and he shall be satisfied.”

**The Savoy Confession of 1658 says this in its 26th Chapter, Paragraph 5** –

“As the Lord in his care and love towards his Church, hath in his infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own glory; so according to his promise, we expect that in the latter days, antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the kingdom of his dear Son broken, the churches of Christ being enlarged, and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.”

**Rev. John Howe speaking on Ezekiel 39: 29** – “**The Prosperous State of the Christian Interest, before the end of time, by a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit; considered in Fifteen Sermons.**” (1678)

“That such scriptures have been fulfilling ever since the first dawnings of Christianity, there is no doubt; but the magnificence of the expressions of many of these prophecies, seem yet to be very far from being answered by correspondent effects. The passage in Joel 2. 28. where it is said, that "the Spirit shall be poured forth upon all flesh," we are told, in Acts 2. 16. that it

had its accomplishment : " This is that which was spoken by the prophet," saith Peter, when the people began to wonder at what they saw, upon that strange pouring forth of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. But it is plain, that he did not intend, that the completion of that prophecy was confined to that point of time. For afterwards, in verse 37, he tells them that were now awakened, and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do ?" that they must "repent and be baptized, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." For, saith he, "the promise" (that promise most apparently, that he had reference to before,) "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off', even as many as the Lord our God shall call." So that all that was intended in that prophecy is not fulfilled, till God hath done calling. And many other scriptures seem to intimate,

that there shall be a time of far more general calling, than hath been hitherto; when the receiving and gathering in "of the Jews shall be as life from the dead," as a resurrection from the dead, Rom. 11. 15. And when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, ver. 25. The way of speaking implies, that that fullness or plenitude was yet behind, to succeed after the apostle's time ; and no such time hath succeeded yet."

"Secondly. There are many scriptures also, that speak of the great improvement and growth of Christians by the Immediate Work of the Spirit of God. When I say, immediate, I do not mean, as if it did work without means; but that by the means it doth itself immediately reach its subject; and therefore, that all the operations of the Spirit, whether in converting or in building up of souls, lie not in the instruments, but strike through all, so as to reach their subject. But that only on the by. Many scriptures speak of the great improvement of the church in point of holiness; so that it shall increase, not only in extent, but in glory, and in respect of the lustre, loveliness and splendour of religion in it ; that it shall become a much more beautiful and attractive thing, according to the representation which it shall have in the profession and conversation of them that sincerely embrace it. Which I suppose to be more especially pointed at in such passages as these. Isaiah 60: 1, 2, 3. " Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people ; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." This speaks that religion should be so glorious a thing in its own subject, as by that means to be inviting and attractive to those that were without the church; and so doth directly and immediately speak of such an effect, as should be wrought by the Spirit of God upon persons seriously religious themselves, to make them far to excel and out shine the glory of former times and ages."