

# PT074

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## Confidence About the Earthly Triumph of Christ's Kingdom

By Dr. Greg Bahnsen

As We Asked Dr. Greg Bahnsen to Give Us a Short Introductory Article 'Heavy with the Scripture,' We Are Pleased to Serve You Up His Offering. And We Thank Greg for His Willing Spirit!

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). The Messiah's reign has been established on earth (Matt. 12:28; 28:18). He need only ask the Father, and the nations will be given to Him for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Ps. 2:8). With that end in mind Christ commissioned the church to make all the nations His obedient disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). Having bound Satan so that He is restrained from deceiving the nations (Rev. 20:2-30, Christ is now despoiling Satan's house (Matt. 12:29). This is why the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the onslaught of Christ's church (Matt. 16-18). Crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9), Christ has been enthroned at God's right hand "henceforth expecting his enemies to be made the footstool of His feet" (Heb. 10:13).

Do we expect what *Christ expects* to take place in history? Is His expectation that all nations and all enemies shall be won over to Him which is an expectation based on the Father's promise, nothing more than wishful thinking? No Bible-believing Christian would say that. However, many would *postpone* the fulfillment of Christ's expectation to *after* His second coming - despite the "realized" nature of the preceding Bible passages (their clear application to this present age). Premillennialists postpone Christ's triumph to a future millennial age, while amillennialists postpone it to the future new heavens and earth. Postmillennialists, as genuinely "realized millennialists," expect Christ's subduing of his enemies to be accomplished *before* the second coming. So did Paul. "For He [Christ] must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet; the LAST enemy that shall be abolished is death" (1 Cor. 15:25-26) - pointing to the resurrection of believers "at His coming," which brings "the end" (vv. 23-24). All other enemies will be put under Christ's feet, therefore, *prior to* His coming (prior to the end).

This is the postmillennial *confidence* we should all share. It is not enough to be an "Optimistic amil" who believes that widespread triumph for Christ's kingdom is *possible* and who personally

*hopes* it will take place. The Bible message about Christ's kingdom is stronger and more definite than that. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from henceforth and forever. The *zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this*" (Isa. 9:7). God's kingdom shall grow from a stone to be a mountain that fills the earth, and "the dream is certain" (Dan. 2:35, 44-45). The confidence of the prophets was that all nations would flow into the church to be nurtured by God's word, live by His just standards and learn peace (Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3). "In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace until the moon be no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth ... And His enemies shall lick the dust ... All nations shall serve Him" (Ps. 72:7-11). "All the ends of the earth shall turn unto Jehovah" (Ps. 22:27), and then shall "the earth be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

How shall this be accomplished? The New Testament clearly points us to the enabling presence of Christ with the church, the preaching of the gospel (Matt. 28:18-20), and the powerful work of the Pentecostal Spirit (e.g., Acts 2:32-41). With such resources the kingdom of Christ will be characterized by surprising growth (Matt. 13:31-33). Christ shall draw all men to Himself (John 12:32) and "lead justice unto victory" (Matt. 12:20). The preaching of the gospel - the sword from Christ's mouth - shall utterly conquer the nations (Rev. 19:11-16). The fullness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, provoking even the Jews - all Israel - to be received again and saved, signifying veritable "life from the dead" for the world (Rom. 11:11-15, 25-26). We should conclude, then, that Christ has set before His believing and persevering church "a door opened which none can shut" - consequently, that even the most antagonistic opponents shall bow down, and Christ's church shall enjoy with Him authority over the nations (Rev. 3:7-9; 2:25-27; 20:4). That is not just a vain hope, but the promise of God.