

**Isaiah 9: 6 and 7; “The Increase of Christ’s Government”, A Sermon
for the Christmas Season, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
December 21st, 2014, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

When verse 7 speaks about “the increase of Christ’s government and peace”, and “its having no end”, it cannot mean that the Lord Jesus Christ will come to have a greater power of sovereignty over people’s lives than He presently does; or that He has come to have, since His resurrection. He now has “all power and authority in heaven and earth.” So I conclude that the increase of His government and peace must be in relation to His rule in the lives of each one of His Elect; and also in the progress which His kingdom makes among the nations of the world at certain points in the History of Redemption, as the Elect are gathered in through the preaching of the Word.

This is how I want to approach this subject this afternoon. 1st of all – I want us to look at the Father’s work in relation to the increase of Christ’s government. Then 2^{ndly} - I would like you to look with me at the Church’s work, which is to proclaim Jesus as the Prince of Peace. And then 3rd – I would like us to look at the Spirit’s work in relation to bringing the increase to pass. There is much that could be said on these subjects, but I will try to be very concise and just give you an overview, or a taste, of what is being spoken of here.

1st – I want us to look at the Father’s work in relation to the increase of Christ’s Government.

Let us understand as we read these verses, that the Father has purposed that all things will eventually be subject to His Son. He has purposed to have all things under His Son’s feet by the end of this Church age that we now live in. Until that time the Father is engaging in the great work of providentially ordering many things in order to bring about the advance of His Son’s kingdom. You will see this if you will turn with me over to Psalm 110, verse 1. “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” “The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion, ‘Rule in the midst of Your enemies!’”

Now this is a prophecy of God the Father who is addressing God the Son in language which reveals to us what the Father will most certainly and definitely labor to accomplish on behalf of the advance of His Son’s kingdom. It is God the Father who will so providentially order all the events of human history in order to make His Son’s enemies a footstool for His feet. The Lord Jesus, it is saying here, will not return the second time until this is so. The Father sent out the rod of Christ’s strength, out of Zion, the Church. He, by the power of the Holy Spirit, sent forth the Apostles themselves to preach of our glorious Christ. He began this good work on the Day of Pentecost, and 3,000 people were saved. The Father’s doing this, His sending forth the Holy Spirit, was called the Promise of the Father in Acts 1: 4.

The rod of Christ’s strength is the gospel of our salvation. It is the good news of the great work that Christ accomplished by His being born into this world; taking upon Himself human nature, and then living and dying to the glory of the Father. It is in this way that the Father intends to bring about the salvation of all of His Elect people. In this holy way of sending forth the preached word; the Father intends that Christ’s kingdom and peace increase. The Father’s expressly stated purpose is to make Christ’s enemies His footstool.” I believe that He does this in two ways. All men are by nature God’s enemies because of their sin.

Turn over with me to Romans Chapter 5 and verse 8 – “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for the us.” “Much more then, having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” We see here that Christ died for sinners; for all that the Father would draw to Him. The Father’s purpose in regard to the Elect is that at the time of His appointment, He and the Holy Spirit would most certainly convict the chosen ones of their sin and draw them to see their need of Christ.

The means that the Father and the Spirit very deliberately and definitely employ convince the sinner of the loveliness of Christ in His righteousness, and the suitability of Christ to save them from their sins. They convince the sinner that this is the only way that they will find eternal life. Regenerating grace is given and the sinner's hard and resistant heart is changed, and opened to receive the truth of the gospel. Light is shined into the sinner's heart, to give an understanding of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The sinner in whom God is thus working, embraces Jesus Christ by faith. They receive the Word of truth as it is preached to them, or shared with them; and they are most definitely saved. God Himself begins this good work.

There is no doubt about the work of the effectual call and the work of regeneration; it cannot be denied. If a work of God is really taking place, the person who receives Christ is no longer an enemy of Christ; they want the Lord to rule over them. They are willing to submit to Him in accordance with the truth of the Word of God. This word is that which will lead them and guide them in accordance with the working of the Father and the Spirit. Flesh and blood had not revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ, but it was the Father in heaven who had revealed it to him.

The Father, working in this holy and wonderful way, is increasing and establishing the government of Christ. Peace is made, between God and the elect sinner, on the basis of Christ's finished work. The enmity is taken away. God's righteous judgment and His justice have been satisfied in Christ, and so God's wrath is removed and the sinner is made a saint, and brought into Christ's kingdom. The other way that Christ's enemies are made a footstool by the Father's working, is for the Father to "send out His word of His judgment" to bring the pride and strength of unrepentant sinners down. In this, His justice is demonstrated and both individual persons and even kingdoms which set themselves up against Christ will be utterly and eternally destroyed.

You find this kind of language laid out very clearly in Psalm 2, language which reveals the Father's purpose to make all of Christ's enemies His footstool. "Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?" "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision." "Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion." "I will declare the decree: The Lord said to Me, You are My Son, today I have begotten You." "Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.

So you see, the Father's work with men and nations is to sift them and to save some, and to sift them and destroy others; those who will not repent about His Son being Lord of all, Savior of all, and Judge of all. The application ought to be obvious. Is Christ your Savior, and is He your Lord? Have you received the testimony of the Father concerning the Son which is found in the Gospel; the rod of His strength? Are you now working together with the Father to promote the glory and the kingdom of Christ?

How blessed is the person who puts their trust in Christ! "Kiss the Son, lest the Father be angry and you perish in the way." "Be wise O kings; be instructed you judges of the earth." "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." Know that the Father will make all of Christ's enemies the footstool for His feet. When the Father completes this work in all the generations of the Church age, the time will have come for the Prince of Peace to return.

2nd – I would like you to look with me at the Church's work, which is to proclaim Jesus as the Prince of Peace.

Verse 7 – "Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever." Ask yourself, this afternoon, if you are working together with God and His plans for the Church? Are you one who is praying and working for the increase of Christ's government in your own life, and in the life of others? For Christ is risen from the dead. He is

living, and actively governing the whole world; and He is particularly concerned for the growth of His kingdom in relation to your part in it, dear believer. The Father and the Son intend that His Church will conquer with the gospel in all the earth. If this is not true, then why the Great Commission? Let me ask you: Are you praying for the advance of Christ's gospel so that there will be increase brought to His Church? Are you witnessing to Christ's power to save sinners, to those around you? The "throne of David and His kingdom" which is spoken of here in verse 7, I believe, is His Church.

For the promise here in Isaiah 9: 7 was not simply for Old Testament believers. It is for us, for there will be no end to His bringing peace; it will be that Christ will order it and establish His kingdom of righteousness with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. Christ is presently reigning over His people in all of His churches all over the world. They are His loyal subjects. But there are still many people and whole nations who do not give our God and His Christ their supreme loyalty. He has been given power over all flesh, that to as many as the Father has given to Him, He will give them eternal life. (John 17, verse 2) And this He most certainly does now, from heaven.

But let us realize that He is not reigning over all flesh in the same way that He does over His Church. Those who are many people who are not presently a part of His Church; people who do not want this Man to rule over them. They have rejected His right to rule over them. Nevertheless, you and I must not be hostile to them. We must preach to them the gospel of peace. In their believing in Christ, peace will be established between God and men. And having believed in Christ, they will become peacemakers; those who also preach the gospel and the word of truth which will bring peace also between men, and even nations someday. the Prince of Peace is presently reigning in heaven and He is sovereign over all men, even though so many resist the truth.

Let us remember that our God is the all-powerful God. All of Christ's enemies will be put under His feet, and all who believe the gospel shall be saved and brought to worship at His feet. The Father and Christ certainly have the power to do this. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15: 25 – "For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet." "But when He says 'All things are put under Him,' it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted." "Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

Now these are very interesting verses, and should be, to all who love Christ, and who want to see His kingdom advance in their hearts and lives. Christ is presently reigning, and yet all things are not subject to Him, as of yet. The verses that I just read to you say so. "He must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet." Christ is presently sitting at the right hand of the Father. He has a government which is upon His shoulder. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the Prince of life. He is the Prince of Peace. There will most definitely and most surely be an increase in His government as the elect are gathered.

And there will also be an increase in His government, His ruling among all the nations, as His Kingdom comes and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. For it is in the increase of Christ's government and peace that God is glorified. It is when the throne of Christ's kingdom is "ordered and established with judgment and justice"; that God's plans which were formed long ago with perfect faithfulness, will come to fruition; and then at the Father's time, the end shall come. Christ will then return and raise the dead and judge the world. And Christ will hand the Mediatorial Kingdom back to His Father, as it says in 1 Corinthians 15: 24. "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

But verse 6 of our text says that His name shall be "the Prince of Peace", and "of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end." You and I ought not simply be looking for the end of the age and Christ's Coming, as glorious as this will be. For we have much work to do in terms of spreading the gospel of peace. Because Christ has done this glorious work of redemption, God the

Father will bless Christ's Church in her efforts to preach peace, through Christ's work, to all the nations of the world. Romans 10: 15 – "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" "And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" "And how shall they hear without a preacher?" "And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" "As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!'" Let us always keep in mind the promises of God.

According to many texts of Scripture, there will come a set time later in this present evil age when God the Father will providentially order events so that Christ's kingdom shall prevail. It will be a time when Christ will bring peace to the nations. He will begin with the nation of Israel. Some believe that God has cast them off, but surely, according to Romans 11, He has a further purpose for their salvation as a nation. How will this come about? Humanly speaking, it will come about by Christians praying for the peace of Jerusalem; praying for the Jews to receive the gospel of peace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Divinely speaking it will come about when God decides that He will graft them into the Church. Romans 11: 15 – "For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" And verse 23 – "And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again." And listen to Ezekiel 37: "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore." "My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people." "The nations also will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."

3rd – I would like to very briefly mention the Spirit's work in relation to bringing this increase to pass.

Our text says, "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall accomplish this." Let us remember that only the Lord Himself can bring about the great changes in people's hearts so that they will love the Prince of Peace and His Kingdom. But let us also remember that the Holy Spirit can work strongly in our hearts, to increase Christ's government and to promote that peace which people so desperately need to have extended to them in the gospel, and through the way that we live our lives. The Spirit can, according to the will of God, increase His blessed influences in us, more and more, so that what it means to be a Christian will be known and understood and appreciated by people around us more and more.

And so, in conclusion, we can say that as these things come to be seen more and more in any given church of Christ's people, there will be an increase in the government, the righteous rule of Christ in that Church. And then, when the Spirit is poured out upon many congregations in revival, an increase of peace will also be seen in the world at large. The Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, is so wonderfully great, that He can bring peace to all the ends of the earth, if it is according to His will. Psalm 46: 8 – Come behold the works of the Lord, who has made desolations in the earth." "He makes wars cease to the end of the earth."

And Isaiah 2: 2 – "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it." "Many people shall come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." "He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; 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."

Since our God has given us such precious promises, let us pray for the Prince of peace to come to us by the pouring out of His Spirit in greater measure, so that "the increase of His government and peace" will come in a greater way than it ever has before. Let us pray for the spiritual reign of

Christ to be extended over all nations. Let us pray for Christ's kingdom to come; that many would be converted, and that Christ's glory and power would be known in a greater way in the salvation of sinners and the strengthening of His people. We know from these promises that it will surely come at the Lord's appointed time. Psalm 102, verse 12 – "But You, O Lord, shall endure forever, and the remembrance of Your name to all generations." "You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yes the set time has come." "For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust." So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Your glory." "For the Lord shall build up Zion; for He shall appear in His glory."