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The zeal of the Lord of Hosts

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this," Isaiah 9:6-7.

I read the above verses in my Bible reading yesterday morning, as might well many of you. They come at the end of one of the sections designated for reading, if one follows Robert Murray McCheyne's Bible Reading Calendar.

These words immediately seized upon my heart and I was made to consider how that the Lord ZEALOUSLY engages in the accomplishing of His eternal purpose in mercy and grace toward His people.

God's people, at times, have been deceived to foolishly think that God has grown careless and indifferent toward them and His cause. Christians have often been heard to say, like Martha of old, "Lord, dost thou not care . . ." Luke 10:40.

How wrong it is to think for a moment that the Lord has ceased to 'care' for any of His people at any time.

"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee," Jeremiah 31:3.

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me," Isaiah 49:15-16.

Such is the perpetual, unfailing love and care that God has for His people.

In the verses before us (Isaiah 9:6-7) there are some wonderful truths.

1. HERE IS ENCAPSULATED THE GRAND PURPOSE OF GOD

At the core of God's plan is the establishing of a kingdom!

"To order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice. . ."

From all eternity, God has ordered all events to this end - the establishing of a kingdom.

1. It is a Kingdom belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ. 'His kingdom.' The person referred to is Christ. The Lord of Glory is ever working toward the glorious establishing of Christ's Kingdom. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Philippians 2:9-11.

Here is the glorious objective of the Triune God! The acknowledging that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

As we are called upon to live in the midst of a generation that dismisses the very existence of God (the greatest of all blasphemies!) let us ever remember that the final outcome of all things is set forth here in Paul's words to the Philippians, and it will be as we, who love the Saviour, have witnessed and ever sought to bear testimony to and longed after!

2. The character of the KING is set before us here. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The



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mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

How wonderful are the characteristics of the KING as set down in these words!

He is a child born. The Lord of Glory, in order to carry out the merciful design of His Father, became man. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth,” John 1:14. The ‘Incarnation’ of the Second Person of the Trinity was essential to the accomplishment of God’s plan of redemption. The Shorter Catechism put it thus:

Q 21: Who is the Redeemer of God’s elect?

A : The only Redeemer of Gods elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

Q22: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A: Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Our blessed Saviour is the ‘eternal Son of God’ Who ‘became man and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.’

He has been revealed to us as such through the gospel and the Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit that this is so. Hence, our deep sense of vexation and dismay when we hear His blessed name disparaged and belittled by men. How offensive it was for our Prime Minister, Boris Johnston, to so abuse the Sabbath Day, the Lord’s Day, yesterday by choosing it for the announcing of more commonplace news regarding regulations for the attempted control of Covid-19!

Praise God, it will not always be so!

He is a Son given. The Lord Jesus took upon Himself human flesh and was born at Bethlehem. BUT, He is also a SON given. His incarnation had a date on which it began but His Sonship is eternal! There was a time, a moment, when ‘He, the Son of God, became man.’ BUT there never was a moment when He became the Son of God. He was eternally the holder of that glorious position. He is “God blessed for ever. Amen,” Romans 9:5. Such subtleties of definition and grammatical terminology in Holy Scripture are to noted most carefully.

All government is upon His shoulders. We must never forget that God is ‘still on the throne’! Can we ever forget those glorious words of the apostle? “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,” Romans 8:28.

‘All things work together’ for the good of God’s people, those who ‘love’ God, because Christ rules in Heaven and is above all the machinations and schemings of devils and men. At Calvary, when, as never before, it seemed that the devil and men had bested God, instead, as the apostles proclaimed: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it,” Acts 2:22-24.

The apparent defeat of Calvary and its sad events, indeed, all other apparent set backs for the gospel cause, are ordained of God from all eternity and any who fail to understand this are rightly termed ‘fools’!

“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself And he said unto them,



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These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," Luke 24:25-27, 44-47.

No, dear Christian, the Lord Jesus "ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men," Daniel 4:17.

His titles portray His glory. What titles are bestowed upon our Redeemer! "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace", Isaiah 9:6.

WONDERFUL. The word is derived from that which means 'wonderful, beyond our full understanding'. Who can understand the fulness of our Saviour's person and glory. Such fulness truly is 'FULL OF WONDER'! Yet men belittle and despise that name and it is the most commonly used curse word amongst men!

COUNSELLOR. Christ is the source of all good and wise counsel and advice. His words alone are utterly without error or folly. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen," Romans 11:33-36.

"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men," 1 Corinthians 1:24-25.

"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Colossians 2:2-3.

I could multiply such wonderful assertions of the wisdom of Christ.

THE MIGHTY GOD. What clearer evidence can there be of the deity of the Lord Jesus. It was part of His testimony unto men that He was GOD! "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life," John 5:17-24.

What is to be noted here is the lack of any denial by Christ that He did indeed claim to be equal with the Father. Had the Jews mistaken His words, and He had not claimed this and if He was not indeed equal with the Father, then the Saviour would have been quick and most adamant in His denials. BUT He made no such rebuttal of the allegation for it was true. He did claim to be equal with the Father!

Again referring to the Sorter Catechism, we quote it regarding the deity of Christ.

Q 6:How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A :There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three



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are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

The verses given as proof texts are as follows.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matthew 28:19.

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one," 1 John 5:7.

Yes, Jesus is the MIGHTY GOD!

THE EVERLASTING FATHER. This title is not to be confused with the title of the FIRST PERSON of the TRINITY! The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons as is stated in the quotation we have given from the Shorter Catechism.

However, Christ is a 'Father' with regard to His chosen ones, who were given Him as His children and offspring in the covenant of redemption. They have been adopted into His family that is named for Him, and who are regenerated by His Spirit and grace. To these he is an 'everlasting Father', feeding, caring for, guarding and ultimately, like the Good Shepherd of the parable (Luke 15:4-6) will bring His "many sons unto glory," Hebrews 2:10.

He is indeed an everlasting Father to His people.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE. Peace is what mankind has ever longed after. It must be said that the peace men desire is not the peace spoken of here! Man seeks an 'peace' in which he can live and do as he likes. That is a peace that can never be! Man, the sinner, in every thought, word and deed, acts in defiance of true peace. He is at war with God and as such, is at war with his own wellbeing. It is illustrated in the actions of the heroin addict. They indulge themselves in this narcotic in an effort to embrace a peaceful, joyous environment. Instead, they bring misery and hurt upon themselves for they act in war against themselves!

Christ, however, is the Prince of Peace. He is the true and sole author of peace. He has said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," John 14:27.

His peace is bestowed wherever He is received as a Prince. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts," Colossians 3:15. Where Christ reigns, peace reigns. "The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace," Psalms 29:11. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength," Isaiah 26:3-4.

This then is our God and Saviour!

II. THE FUTURE OF GOD'S PURPOSE IS STATED HERE.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

1. Of what God has purposed to accomplish for us through Christ, there shall be no end. In a world in which everything is marked by 'change and decay', such a truth is sweet indeed! The word 'increase' means 'great' and as such it is translated in Isaiah 33:22. So we might read our text as: "Of the greatness of his government and peace there shall be no end . . ."

In Daniel's vision of the end of this age and the destruction of the empire of the Antichrist, we read: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to



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pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth," Daniel 2:34-35. The stone represents the Kingdom of God and, falling upon and destroying the kingdom of Antichrist, it then grows and becomes a 'great' mountain, filling the whole earth. Of that Kingdom, there shall be no end! So said the angel to Mary. "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end," Luke 1:30-33.

2. That Kingdom will one day centre upon the throne of David, and the kingdom of Israel. "Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it." Many sadly reject this prophetic truth even though it is repeated throughout God's Word most plainly.

Jerusalem features in a most wonderful way in God's future plans for this earth. It is to that very location the Saviour will return. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east," Zechariah 14:4.

Who is it among God's people who will deny the literality of this word! Did not the angels say on the day of the Saviour's ascension from the Mount of Olives: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," Acts 1:11. That can only endorse the words of Zechariah.

In coming back to Jerusalem, it is to accomplish His purpose of reigning over the world from the throne of David. The Psalmist David set forth God's degree regarding this in Psalm 2:7-9. "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

3. It will be an everlasting Kingdom. This was a reign that would encompass the whole of mankind. The 'uttermost parts of the earth' will become Christ's possession, and that for ever. It is true that the earth is the Lord's but He has yet to take possession of it. The 'promised land' was the property of Israel but not until the days of Joshua did they take possession of it!

It is said of Abraham "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise," Hebrews 11:9. What a picture this is of our Saviour. Just as the land of Canaan was promised to Abraham but neither he nor his descendants 'enjoyed' full possession of the land for many years, yet the time came when they did enter into their promised possession.

So it is with the Lord Jesus. He has been promised a possession and it presently is His by right but as yet He has not taken possession of it. But He will! At the return of our great 'Joshua', when in power and great glory He will arise to judge the earth, then "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," Psalms 72:8. And as Isaiah in our text says of His earthly kingdom: He will "establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever," verse 7.

One final thought and it is based upon the words which first caught my attention.

III. THE LORD IS ENGAGED IN THE BRINGING IN OF HIS KINGDOM WITH ZEAL.

"The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this," verse 7.

What God has planned God will fulfil!

1. God has ever carried out His purpose with zeal. The word 'zeal' carries the meaning of 'jealousy,



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passion'. There is no slothfulness or carelessness with the Lord. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness," 2 Peter 3:9. What the Lord has not the slightest trace of in His nature, He is not pleased with in men! Yes, He is 'longsuffering' but He was that because of man's carelessness and indifference to His commands and His kindness. Though these demanded swift judgment, they did not bring immediately judgment against such carelessness. The Psalmist sums it up well. "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Psalm 130:3.

The Psalmist rightly said: "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth," Psalm 86:15.

His longsuffering and patience toward mankind must not be mistaken for any form of apathy with regards His eternal purpose. No, His longsuffering is but evidence of His 'zeal'! He is passionate in His determination to gather the last of His elect in to the fold of redemption and all things are subject to that purpose.

2. The 'deadline' set by the Lord for the accomplishing of all things will be kept. "And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry," Habakkuk 2:2-3. The vision spoken of here is one related to the return of Christ and the establishing of His earthly Kingdom as verse 14 shows. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea," Habakkuk 2:14.

The Lord is ever conscious of the trials and the difficulties of His people here on this sinful earth. He is in no way indifferent. The Saviour Himself states that. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily," Luke 18:7-8.

The present 'delay' is born of mercy and a determination on the part of the Lord to accomplish His purpose to the full.

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2 Peter 3:8-9. The Lord 'delays' in order that He might bring to repentance all of His elect people. Note the phrase 'longsuffering to us-ward.' The 'us' there are, of course, His elect, His sheep which He will pursue until He has rescued the very last one. Then "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," 2 Peter 3:10.

3. The Saviour was seen to manifest this zeal during His ministry. "And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," John 2:13-17. Here was the passion of the Saviour at work!

Nothing vexes the Lord as does the defiling of His Father's house! Every Christian who is involved in the defilement of God's house today by being in membership of an apostate denomination should bear this in mind.

Those who might not sin in that fashion should nevertheless bear in mind the zeal that the Lord manifested toward the wrong-doing and sins of the Corinthians! "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world," 1Corinthians 11:29-32.

We ought to note and fear the zeal of the Lord.



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4. What a promise is contained in these final words. "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." Yes, we need have no fear that what God has planned He will bring about.

Long ago I discovered what I consider a wonderful word in Jeremiah. "And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD. Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant," Jeremiah 51:24-29.

God's purpose against Babylon shall be accomplished indeed. It will be an utter ruin that will be brought upon her. In the previous chapter of Jeremiah we read in verse 40: "As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein."

That prophecy was not fulfilled in BC 538/9. Daniel chapter 6 records the defeat of the Babylonian Empire and the capturing of the city by the Medes and Persians and Daniel continued there for many years as an advisor to the Medo/Persian leadership. As recently as the time of the second Iraq war, when the USA and the UK and other allies overthrew Saddam Hussein, the ruins of the city were still occupied, even by elements of the allied army!

No, Jeremiah's prophecy against Babylon awaits a complete fulfilment, even that mentioned in Revelation 18.

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and



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precious stones, and pearls! for in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

Yes, we can be absolutely certain it shall all come to pass for "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

Rev Ivan Foster.

May 11th, 2020.



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