



# TWO KINGS.

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## TWO KINGS.

(REV. IX. 1-11; ACTS XVII. 1-8.)

I THINK I am beginning to value the Book of the Revelation more than ever. God saw that any one who would serve Him at the end of the dispensation would need this book. It says it is the revelation which God gave to Jesus Christ, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. That is to say, if any one was to serve God intelligently, in a time that was shortly to come, they would need this revelation. The great value of it is this, that it expresses the true character of everything. It is as if God, who sees everything perfectly, tears away the mask

which Satan has put upon evil, and shews things in their true character.

I want to shew that in divine reckoning there are two powers that bear rule over the souls of men. I am referring to the control that exists over every man's soul. The Revelation makes clear that there are two great powers that have rule over the souls of men. The one is Abaddon, in the Hebrew tongue, and in the Greek Apollyon. They both mean the same, but the Spirit of God has put it like this to shew that this great ruler has dominion over Jew and Gentile, that is, over all men. His sphere extends to every man. The meaning of the name is the destroyer.

Scripture tells us where the

seat of his power lies. It says he is the angel of the bottomless pit. Of course I know very well that he does not move amongst men telling them that he has come from the bottomless pit and has come to destroy them. He is transformed into an angel of light, and His ministers into ministers of righteousness, but in the Revelation God takes the mask away, and He exposes the true position.

I would like you to have some idea of what is meant by the bottomless pit. It is not a material thing; it is not anything to do with what is physical. It means that the source of Satan's influence and the place where he has his seat is down in the depths of darkness and sin and

ruin, depths that cannot be measured. I would like you to take a note of that word "bottomless"—down, down, down, where there is no bottom. I say again, I do not refer to what is physical. It is to give us a sense of where Satan's influences come from. Bottomless! And in that bottomless pit it says they have a king, and his name is the destroyer. Out of that awful depth which no one can fathom, comes up a smoke which darkens the sun and the air, and out of the smoke come influences, powers that are the servants of Apollyon for the destruction of men.

I want also to call attention to another king. Paul preached that there was "another king, one Jesus." The place from whence

He came and the place to which He belongs, is far above all heavens. He is called in the Gospel of Luke the Son of the Highest. That again does not allude to what is physical. It refers to heights of glory, and power and blessedness. Scripture speaks of the third heaven, and the heaven of heavens, and far above all heavens. That is the place from which Jesus came. That is the place where the King whom Paul preached had His home and His seat, and His name is called Jesus.

*Another King*, one Jesus! He is the Saviour. The king that comes from the bottomless pit is the destroyer. Every soul on earth that has reached the age of responsibility is directly under

the dominion of one of these kings. I would like you to lay hold of that. We are either subjects of the destroyer, and his real object is to drag our souls down into those immeasurable depths, or we are the subjects of the King who is the Son of the Highest, whose name is the Saviour. He is stretching out His mighty hand to deliver us from the power of darkness and to bring us into His kingdom, as the Son of God's love.

There is nothing between; either you are the subject of the destroyer and bound for the bottomless pit, or you are the subject of the Lord Jesus Christ and bound for heaven. The gospel comes to men because it is the power of God unto salva-

tion to every one that believes. It is the power that God uses to reach your soul, and lift you out of the dominion of the destroyer, and bring you into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

I would like to go back again to Revelation ix. Out of the pit, it says, there came a smoke, and it darkened the sun and the air. That is, dear reader, spiritual influences come abroad upon the earth from the pit, with the result that the light from heaven is shut out. The light from heaven comes from the sun and the air. But the smoke from the pit, the darkening, the death-bringing influences of Satan are abroad on the earth, and out of that smoke come what are spoken of as locusts. In regard to vege-

tation I suppose nothing is more destructive than locusts. They are used by the Spirit of God as representing the various influences *which Satan uses* to darken the minds of them that believe not, so that they should be destroyed. That is his object. He does not bear the name of destroyer in this world. He bears the name of an angel of light. He professes to bring light.

My reader, the smoke of the pit is permeating Christendom to-day. The minds of men are being darkened ; the blessed light of heaven that has shone is being darkened by the smoke of the pit. And it says, "they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails." The end of their activities will

be to destroy men. Men are giving their ears and their minds to the smoke of the pit, the darkening influences of unbelief. I would warn those who are young that there are abroad in Christendom teachings, doctrines, that claim to be light, that profess to bring increased light to men, but are deceitful and destroying.

The locusts have faces like men. They profess to be marked by intelligence, but they are the instruments of the destroyer, they are dragging men's souls down to perdition. In listening to Spiritism, so-called Christian Science and other teachings which shut out the God and Christ of the scriptures, men are giving their hearts over to the dar-

kening influences of the pit, and the ruler of that pit is the destroyer. There is no other object before him but to destroy them.

I want to shew that the greatness of Jesus, the blessed Saviour, was such that He took men out of the dominion of Satan, and He held them in the kingdom of God, and that is what He is going to do with myriads of hearts to-day. The Lord said that when the strong man keeps his palace, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he comes, He binds the strong man and takes from him his weapons, the weapons in which he trusted. Satan was that strong man keeping his goods in peace, until a stronger than he came. The stronger than he was Jesus, *an-*

*other King.* I would like you to get hold of that—another King, One Jesus.

I will illustrate the conflict between these two great powers on three or four occasions in the gospels. It speaks of the Lord Jesus being led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, shewing how real was the conflict between these two kings.

A man was found on one occasion of whom it is said, that he was full of leprosy. He was a man that, under the destructive influence of the destroyer, had been brought into the state that scripture sets forth as full of leprosy. He had been corrupted by that awful disease in every part of his body. His mind had become depraved ; his

lips had become corrupt ; his ears were defiled ; his throat was an open sepulchre ; his hands were unclean ; his feet were leprous ; his heart was corrupted. Leprosy is a figure of sin, and it says that this man was full of it. He was held by the destroyer by sin, one of his greatest weapons to hold man, to get him into his grasp and hold him, and drag him down to the pit—this leper was in that condition. The Lord Jesus appeared within the view of that man, and with divine light in his soul he comes up in the wretchedness of his state, and he kneels down and says, “ Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” And the Lord Jesus stretched out His hand, that mighty hand,

and He touched the leper and said, "I will; be thou clean." "Where the word of a king is, there is power," says the scripture, and none can say, "What doest thou?" There was the King of heaven, His name Jesus, the Saviour, stretching out His hand of power to take that poor man out of the control of the destroyer and bring him into the kingdom of God.

Now do not let us look at that as only a beautiful picture. That is also what has happened to many hearts. I am bound to say that there are many of us who have felt something of what that leper felt, who have felt the reality of sin corrupting our minds, corrupting our lips, corrupting our hearts, corrupting

our hands, our feet, and in despair we have said, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" That is the cry of a man in all the misery of sin corrupting every part of him. We found another King, One Jesus. We have found a Saviour who has taken us out of the dominion of sin and brought us under the rule of God and heaven.

I allude to another instance, a case of a woman whom the Lord Jesus met. It speaks of a certain woman who had a spirit of an infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed down so that she was wholly unable to lift herself up, and the Lord says of that woman, "whom Satan hath bound." You might say it is not nearly so

serious as the leper, just simply a woman that can only look down ; all she can see is her home or her household, her dress, her earthly pleasures and her business, the source from which she gets her livelihood. That is all she sees, she is bowed together and looks down. That is where most of us were. Satan has bound her !

God made man *upright*. He made him with the intention that he should be able to *look up to heaven*. One of Satan's deceptions that come out of that smoke is that he binds men and women so that all they can see is the earth. Their whole lives consist in just looking down on the earth. The Lord says, "whom Satan hath bound." I believe

there are many like that. It does not mean what can be seen as corrupt. Many go on with their business, their homes, the pleasures of this life, and never once look up to God. The Lord says, Satan has bound her. The chains from the pit have laid hold of that woman, she is being dragged down by the destroyer. That is her position.

Now the King appears from heaven, from far above all heavens, His name, Jesus the Saviour, and looking upon that woman He said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." Immediately she became straight and glorified God. Immediately she had to do with God she became straight and praised God. She was translated out of the

power of Apollyon, the king of the bottomless pit, and brought into the kingdom of God by Jesus, the other King. Now, dear reader, the Lord has done that to many. I believe there are many who once lived like this woman, whose whole heart and time and life were spent in relation to the earth, to money, to home, to the pleasures of this life, and never a thought about God ; but the Saviour has come and broken those bonds, and has enabled us to stand and look up to God, and glorify Him. He is prepared to do that to-day, and He is doing it. May He do it for you !

There are further instances, for we read later on in the Gospel of Luke that there was a blind

man sitting by the wayside near Jericho begging. Jericho was the city that was cursed, and he was outside it. He was near the place of the curse, and the Lord Jesus was moving towards that city. The god of this world has blinded the minds of the men of this world that believe not. The smoke is darkening the light of heaven, and there this man sat, a beggar in darkness and under the power of darkness, under the control of Apollyon the destroyer. And the One that came down from heaven comes. The Lord says, "I came down from heaven." The destroyer comes up to him from the bottomless pit, but the Lord says, "I came *down* from heaven." And coming down from heaven He

moves towards that blind man and he got light into his soul.

The King of heaven is near, One called Jesus, the Saviour. The blind man realises that the opportunity of his life had come, to be translated out of the authority of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. He cried out, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." He was not to be turned aside, the opportunity of his life had come.

My reader, this may be yours. The Lord Jesus is ready to take you out of the power of darkness and bring you into the kingdom of God. This man cried out so much the more, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me"; then the Lord commanded him

to be called. And they came to Bartimæus and said, "Rise; he calleth thee." And throwing aside his garments, he came to Jesus. And the King said, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" You see the King of heaven has everything to give. "*What* wilt thou?" There is no limit to what is in the hands of Jesus. "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hands." So that the Lord says, "What wilt thou?" He replied, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." He wanted to come out of that dark region in which he lived, where no light from heaven ever reached his soul, into the light of the blessedness of God. And the Lord said, "Receive thy sight: thy

faith hath saved thee." It says also that he followed Jesus in the way, glorifying God. You see, he had been brought into touch with God. He followed Jesus in the way. He never moved another step under the influence of Satan, but held by the power of Jesus he followed Him in the way. This man, under the influence of the destroyer, was taken by the hand of Jesus and brought into the kingdom of God.

And so we pass on in our thoughts and come to Calvary. There is a scene of impenetrable darkness. The smoke is coming up out of the pit there, it is so dense that it is the darkest moment in the history of the world. The Lord said of it,

“This is your hour, and the *power of darkness*,” and the darkness from beneath was coming up, darkness which found expression in hatred. Intense hatred was there at Calvary. The Lord says, “They hated me without a cause.” A touching word is that. Can you name a cause why you are hating Jesus? Think, dear reader, of the venom, of the hatred that caused them to spit upon His blessed face, and put a crown of thorns upon His blessed head, and when He said, “I thirst,” they gave Him vinegar. This, and much more, was the darkness that had come up from beneath and found expression in human hearts against Jesus.

In that darkness there are two men, one on the right and

the other on the left. They have been the subjects of the king of darkness, of the destroyer, having done his will all their days, and just about to go down into the pit eternally. In that dark scene there shone rays of divine light and glory. The light of heaven shined out in all its brilliancy. No one can approach Calvary without feeling the darkness that is there, and in that scene there shone the brightest ray of heavenly glory, Jesus says, as He looks around, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." These words were the very light of heaven. The origin of such a prayer as that was in the heart of the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity. Nothing more lofty in the universe

has ever been expressed on earth. "Father, forgive them." There is nothing of the smoke of the pit about that prayer. It came from the heart of the high and lofty One. He dwells in the high and holy place.

The brilliancy of that light shone into the soul of one of the thieves who were crucified with Him, and he looks and sees another King, One Jesus. Up to that moment he had been held by the destroyer; and on the very brink of the pit his soul is directed to another King, One Jesus, the Saviour, and in the light that he has got from the prayer that came from the lips of Jesus, he turns to the Lord and he says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest

in thy kingdom." The King is there and the kingdom is His. The thief is taken from the very brink of the bottomless pit and brought into the kingdom of God, and to the very paradise of God.

Just one other word, Jesus is not on earth now, as the scripture says, "The surpassing greatness of his power . . . which he wrought in Christ in raising him from among the dead, and set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality and authority, and power and dominion." He is still another King, One called Jesus. He is still active through the whole scene, stretching out His hand to save.

I refer you to Saul of Tarsus,

too, a man who expresses the very character of the pit. In his hatred of Christ, in the insolence of his heart, he breathed out threatenings and slaughter. He travelled the road to Damascus, and as he drew near to that city there shone upon him a light above the brightness of the sun at midday. Hitherto in the hands of the destroyer, a tool and a slave of Satan, the light of heaven shone upon him and he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" If there is one unconverted man, woman or child reading this paper who has hitherto turned away from Jesus, let me ask you in His name, Why? Can you give heaven a reason why that blessed One should not be your Lord?

Can you give heaven a reason why you reject Him ?

Jesus says from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?" Saul says, "Who art thou, Lord ?" and the answer comes, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." The king of heaven bears that blessed name of Jesus. "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." And, my dear reader, as Saul fell to the ground, and accepted the authority of Christ, he passed out of the dominion of the destroyer, he passed out of the danger of the pit, and henceforth lived as a subject of Christ, as a subject of the Lord, the King of glory.

There are these two kings ; one is active by subtle influences, and he is active everywhere to

destroy your soul ; he is trying to get you into the pit. That is the truth of the revelation of God. Satan, I know, transformed into an angel of light, is nevertheless the destroyer, seeking to bring you down to where he is. The other King is the Son of the Highest that has come down to earth, and He bears that blessed name, Jesus, the Saviour. He stretches out His hand to take men out of the authority of darkness and bring them into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Why not accept His authority over you ? " If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved." Salva-

tion is the transfer of the soul from the dominion of the devil and of this world into the kingdom of God where Christ is Lord. May the Lord grant to each one that he might see the mighty hand that touched the leper, that gave the blind man sight, stretched out to save. "I stretched out my hand and no man regarded." The Lord's hand is stretched out in salvation. It says, "no man regarded." May the Lord grant that we may not disregard that blessed hand that is stretched out for the salvation of men and for our deliverance from the destroyer.

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