

# The Doctrine of the Millennium

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 1

### The Righteous Government of the Millennium

The cumulative evidence for the millennial reign of Christ presented in preceding discussion serves as a logical introduction to the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments fulfilled in the millennial reign of Christ. The doctrine of the millennial kingdom of God is one of the major revelations of Scripture pertaining to God's program. As a theme for theological investigation, it has attracted a host of writers who have developed the kingdom theme from various standpoints.

J. Dwight Pentecost has summarized the various viewpoints on the kingdom of God as follows: "To some the kingdom of God is synonymous with the eternal state, or heaven, into which one comes after death, so that it has no relationship to the earth whatsoever. To others it is a non-material or 'spiritual' kingdom in which God rules over the hearts of men, so that, while it is related to the present age, it is unrelated to the earth. To still others the kingdom is purely earthly without spiritual realities attached to it, so that it is a political and social structure to be achieved by the efforts of men and thus becomes the goal of the social and economic evolution to which men press. To others with the same general concept, it has to do with a nationalistic movement on the part of Israel that will reconstitute that nation as an independent nation in the political realm. Then there are those who view the kingdom as synonymous with the visible organized church, so that the church becomes the kingdom, thus making the kingdom both spiritual and political. In addition there are those that view the kingdom as manifestation, in the earthly realm, of the universal sovereignty of God, in which He rules in the affairs of men, so that the kingdom is conceived as being both spiritual and material in its concept ("Biblical Eschatology," unpublished Doctor's dissertation, p. 550).

Premillenarians of course recognize the validity of more than one aspect of the kingdom. They insist, however, that the millennial form of the kingdom of God is not fulfilled by the eternal state, nor a present rule of God in the hearts of men. The doctrine of the millennial kingdom as held by premillenarians contradicts the amillennial concept, which identifies to a large extent the kingdom of God with the soteriological divine program and denies thereby any future earthly political kingdom of the Messiah subsequent to His second advent. It should be obvious, however, that the millennial kingdom, though in some respects the consummation of much kingdom truth in Scripture, is not the sum total of God's kingdom purpose. There is, of course, a validity to the concept of an eternal kingdom to be identified with God's government of the universe. In contrast, however, to this universal aspect, the millennial kingdom is the culmination of the prophetic program of God relative to a theocratic kingdom or rule of the earth. This in one sense began in the creation of Adam in the Garden of Eden, continued through human government, was manifested in the kingly line which ruled Israel, and has its consummation in the millennial kingdom which in turn is superseded by the timeless eternity which follows. Though there is a rule of God in the present age which can properly be described by the word *kingdom*, it is not the fulfillment of those prophecies that pertain to the millennial reign of Christ upon the earth.

*The millennium government and earthly kingdom.* One of the most significant facts relating to the millennial doctrine distinguishing it from the amillennial point of view is the teaching that the millennial kingdom is a rule of God on earth, thereby distinguishing it from a purely spiritual reign in the hearts of men through centuries of human history and distinguishing it from the will of God as expressed in heaven or in eternity future. The evidence for this is so abundant that it is strange that learned men have been able to deny this plain teaching of the Word of God. Psalm 2:8 records the invitation of the Father to His blessed Son: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

Isaiah 11 paints the graphic picture of the reign of Christ on earth, a scene which cannot be confused with the present age, the intermediate state, or the eternal state if interpreted in any normal literal sense. As presented it describes the millennial earth. The righteous government of Christ is depicted in Isaiah 11:14: "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." The description which follows describes animals such as wolves, lambs, leopards, kids, calves, young lions, all of which are creatures of earth and not of heaven, and further pictures them in a time of tranquillity such as only can apply to the millennial earth. The sweeping statement of Isaiah 11:9 confirms this judgment: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." In the verses following, various countries of the earth are mentioned as having some part in the dealings of God at that time and therefore confirm that the earth is in view, not heaven. For similar passages see Isaiah 42:4; Jeremiah 23:3-6; Daniel 2:35-45; Zechariah 14:1-9.

By no theological alchemy should these and countless other references to earth as the sphere of Christ's millennial reign be spiritualized to become the equivalent of heaven, the eternal state, or the church as amillenarians have done. A righteous reign of Christ on earth is of course precisely what one would have expected from previous study of the Abrahamic covenant with its promises to the earth, the Davidic covenant relative to the Son of David reigning on the throne forever, and the many promises pertaining to Israel's regathering and re-establishment in their ancient land. The theocratic kingdom, therefore, of which the prophets spoke is an earthly kingdom which can find its fulfillment only in a literal reign of Christ upon the earth.

*Jesus Christ the supreme King of the millennial kingdom.* In Psalm 2:6, in spite of the opposition of the kings of the earth, God declares His purpose: "Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." This purpose will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom in the reign of Jesus Christ as the Son of David. As Lewis Sperry Chafer has succinctly stated: "Every Old Testament prophecy on the kingdom anticipates His kingly office: (a) Christ will yet sit on the throne as David's heir (2 Sam 7:16; Ps 89:20-37; Isa 11:1-16; Jer 33:19-21). (b) He came as a King (Luke 1:32-33). (c) He was rejected as a King (Mark 15:12-13; Luke 19:14; cf. Gen 37:8; Exod 2:14). (d) He died as a King (Matt 27:37). (e) When He comes again, it is as a King (Rev 19:16; cf. Luke 1:32-33)" (L.S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, VII, 233).

The fact that Christ will reign over the earth is of course imbedded in practically every prophecy concerning the millennial kingdom. The absolute character of His reign is indicated in Isaiah 11:3-5. This central prophecy is confirmed by the angel to Mary in announcing the coming birth of Christ in these words: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). It should be clear from the details surrounding these predictions that these prophecies are not being fulfilled in the present age, nor are they a description of the sovereignty of God in the heavenly sphere. Many other Scriptures can be cited to substantiate the reign of Christ as King in the millennium of which the following are representative: Isaiah 2:1-4; 9:6-7 ; 11:1-10 ; 16:5 ; 24:23 ; 32:2 ; 40:1-11 ; 42:3-4 ; 52:7-15 ; 55:4 ; Daniel 2:44; 7:27 ; Micah 4:1-8; 5:2-5 ; Zechariah 9:9; 14:16-17 . These passages if interpreted in the ordinary literal meaning lead to the conclusion that Christ is the King who will reign over the earth in the millennial period.

A legitimate problem has arisen in the interpretation of the reign of Christ concerning how this relates to various prophecies which speak of David as King in the millennial kingdom. References to this concept are found in Jeremiah 30:9; 33:15-17 ; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25 ; Hosea 3:5, with more indirect references in Isaiah 55:3-4 and Amos 9:11. Several solutions have been offered to resolve this problem. One of the most common is to take references to David as indicating Christ Himself as the greater David. Keil and Peters, as well as Ironside, support this view (cf. Karl Friedrich Keil, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, I, 72; Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, III, 572; and Ironside, *Ezekiel the Prophet*, p. 262). There are obvious difficulties, however, in this point of view in that Christ is never referred to as David elsewhere in the Bible though He is frequently called the Son of David, Seed of David, etc. A second view held by some interpreters is that the reference in some passages is to a future literal son of David who will sit on the Davidic throne, but who is not to be identified as Christ. Passages such as Jeremiah 33:15-21 are cited in support of this view. From many standpoints, however, this is less desirable than the first view. As many have indicated, no one today aside from Christ could prove His kingly lineage among the people of Israel. It is most unlikely that there should be another person closely related to Christ who is a descendent of David other than David himself.

A third solution of the problem is more simple and seemingly in keeping with the prophetic references throughout Scripture, namely, that by David is meant the resurrected David who shares with Christ as prince some of the governmental duties of the millennial kingdom. It should be clear from many Scriptures that the reign of Christ is shared with others. As Newell has written: "David is not the son of David. Christ, as Son of David, will be King; and David, His father after the flesh, will be prince, during the Millennium" (William R. Newell, *The Revelation*, p. 323). In the light of many prophecies which promise saints the privilege of reigning with Christ, it would seem most logical that David the king raised from the dead should be given a place of prominence in the Davidic kingdom of the millennial reign of Christ. As indicated in Revelation 19:16, Christ is "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." This would certainly imply other rulers (cf. Isa 32:1; Ezek 45:8-9; Matt 19:28; Luke 19:12-27).

*Characteristics of divine government in the millennium.* From a governmental standpoint, the reign of Christ in the millennium will have three important characteristics. First, it will be a rule over the entire earth. It was God's intent from the beginning of the creation of man that the earth should be ruled over by man. Adam sacrificed his right to rule when sin entered the human race, God's purpose, however, is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In Psalm 2:6-9 God declares His purpose to set His king in Zion who will have as His possession "the uttermost parts of the earth." In Daniel 2:35 a stone which fills the whole earth is an anticipation of the universal rule of Christ. Daniel 7:14 is explicit: "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This idea is repeated in Daniel 7:27 and becomes a frequent theme of prophecy (cf. Ps 72:8; Mic 4:1-2; Zech 9:10). The title of Christ given in Revelation 19:16, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS," makes it plain that He is supreme ruler over the entire earth.

The second important characteristic of the millennial rule of Christ is that His government will be absolute in its authority and power. This is demonstrated in His destruction of all who oppose Him (cf. Ps 2:9; 72:9-11 ; Isa 11:4). Such an absolute rule, of course, is in keeping with the person and majesty of the King in whom is all the power and sovereignty of God.

The third important aspect of the government of Christ in the millennium will be that of righteousness and justice. Most of the millennial passages emphasize this as the outstanding feature of the millennium. Isaiah 11:3-5 assures the poor and the meek that their cause will be dealt with righteously in that day. The wicked are warned to serve the Lord lest they feel His wrath (Ps 2:10-12). It seems evident from many passages that no open sin will go unpunished.

The subjects of the millennial rule of Christ at the beginning of the millennium will consist in those who survive the searching judgments of both Israel and Gentiles as the millennial reign of Christ begins. From many Scriptures it may be gathered that all the wicked will be put to death after the second coming of Christ; and only saints who have lived through the preceding time of trouble will be eligible for entrance into the millennial kingdom. This is demonstrated in the judgment of the Gentiles in Matthew 25:31-46, where only the righteous are permitted to enter the millennium. According to Ezekiel 20:33-38, God will also deal with Israel and purge out all rebels, that is, unbelievers, permitting only the saints among Israel to enter the millennial kingdom. The parables of the wheat and the tares (Matt 13:30-31) and of the good and bad fish (Matt 13:49-50) teach likewise that only the wheat and the good fish, representing the righteous, will survive the judgment. Confirmation is also found in Isaiah 65:11—66:16 ; Jeremiah 25:30-33. As the millennium continues, however, children will be born to those who are thus ushered into the millennial reign of Christ. Before many generations the children born to these tribulation saints will far outnumber their parents. They too will be subject to Christ's reign and if openly rebellious will be put to death (Isa 66:20, 24; Zech 14:16-19). While it is obvious that even under the rule of Christ there will arise from children born in the millennium those who merely profess to follow the King without actually being saints, the true character of these is manifested at the end of the millennium in the final revolt. Meanwhile they are forced to obey the King or be subject to the penalty of death or other chastisement.

*The place of Israel in the government of Christ.* In contrast to the present church age in which Jew and Gentile are on an equal plane of privilege, the millennium is clearly a period of time in which Israel is in prominence and blessing. Though many passages speak of Gentile blessing as well, Christ will reign as the Son of David, and Israel as a nation will be exalted.

Passages of the Old Testament which have been studied previously anticipating a future day of glory for Israel find their fulfillment in the millennial reign of Christ. The regathering of Israel, a prominent theme of most of the prophets, has its purpose realized in the re-establishment of Israel in their ancient land. Israel as a nation is delivered from her persecutors in the time of tribulation and brought into the place of blessing and restoration.

J. Dwight Pentecost gives an excellent summary of the important place of Israel in the millennium in the following statement: "Israel will become the subjects of the King's reign (Isa 9:6-7; 33:17, 22 ; 44:6 ; Jer 23:5; Mic 2:13; 4:7 ; Dan 4:3; 7:14, 22, 27 ). In order to be subjects, Israel, first, will have been converted and restored to the land, as has already been shown. Second, Israel will be reunited as a nation (Jer 3:18; 33:14 ; Ezek 20:40; 37:15-22 ; 39:25 ; Hos 1:11). Third, the nation will again be related to Jehovah by marriage (Isa 54:1-17; 62:2-5 ; Hos 2:14-23). Fourth, she will be exalted above the Gentiles (Isa 14:1-2; 49:22-23 ; 60:14-17 ; 61:6-7 ). Fifth, Israel will be made righteous (Isa 1:25; 2:4 ; 44:22-24 ; 45:17-25 ; 48:17 ; 55:7 ; 57:18-19 ; 63:16 ; Jer 31:11; 33:8 ; 50:20, 34 ; Ezek 36:25-26; Hos 14:4; Joel 3:21; Mic 7:18-19; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:2-3). Sixth, the nation will become God's witnesses during the millennium (Isa 44:8, 21; 61:6 ; 66:21 ; Jer 16:19-21; Mic 5:7; Zeph 3:20; Zech 4:1-7; 4:11-14 ; Zech 8:23). Seventh, Israel will be beautified to bring glory to Jehovah (Isa 62:3; Jer 32:41; Hos 14:5-6; Zeph 3:16-17; Zech 9:16-17)" ("Biblical Eschatology," unpublished Doctor's dissertation, pp. 651-52).

The lesser role of Gentiles in the millennium is the subject of many Old Testament Scriptures such as the following: Isaiah 2:4; 11:12 ; 16:1-5 ; 18:1-7 ; 19:16-25 ; 23:18 ; 42:1 ; 45:14 ; 49:6, 22 ; 59:6-8 ; 60:1-14 ; 61:8-9 ; 62:2 ; 66:18-19 ; Jeremiah 3:17; 16:19-21 ; 49:6 ; 49:39 ; Ezekiel 38:23; Amos 9:12; Micah 7:16-17; Zephaniah 2:11; 3:9 ; Zechariah 8:20-22; 9:10 ; 10:11-12 ; 14:16-19 (cf., Pentecost, *ibid.*, p. 652). Outstanding in these Scriptures is the fact that, first, the Gentiles will share many of the spiritual and economic blessings of the millennial reign of Christ. Second, they will, however, occupy a subordinate role to Israel (Isa 14:1-2; 49:22-23; 61:5-9 ). Third, as indicated previously, only Gentiles who are declared righteous by the King will be allowed entrance into the millennial kingdom at its beginning.

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## Chapter 2

### Spiritual Life in the Millennium

One of the objections frequently raised against the doctrine of the millennium is that it substitutes a materialistic and earthly kingdom for one which is primarily spiritual. Augustine, for instance, is cited as one who forsook millennialism because of its alleged carnal and sensuous character. Amillenarians frequently attempt to refute premillennial doctrine by evidence that the kingdom introduced by Jesus was a spiritual kingdom. Oswald T. Allis, for instance, writes: "The Kingdom announced by John and by Jesus was primarily and essentially a moral and spiritual kingdom" (Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 70). He goes on to say: "...from the very outset Jesus not merely gave no encouragement to, but quite definitely opposed, the expectation of the Jews that an earthly, Jewish kingdom of glory, such as David had established centuries before, was about to be set up" (*ibid.*, p. 71).

In answer to this common objection, premillenarians first of all concede that there is a present spiritual kingdom, a rule of God existing now in the hearts of men who are willingly obedient to God. To this kingdom every Christian in the present dispensation belongs. This kingdom, however, is to be contrasted to the future millennial kingdom, not by the demonstration that the future kingdom is devoid of spirituality, but rather by the fact that its spirituality is expressed in a special way, namely, the rule of Christ on earth with many accompanying special features of spiritual life and activity. Instead of a carnal and materialistic concept of the kingdom, the Scriptural description of the millennium presents a rule of God fulfilling the highest standards of spirituality.

*The glorious presence of Christ in the millennium.* Of central importance in the spiritual life of the millennial kingdom is the fact that Christ in His glorious person will be present and visible in the world during this period. This was the burden of Old Testament prophecy according to Peter: "...who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (1 Pet 1:10-11). The glories that were predicted to follow are not only that glory which is Christ's in heaven but that which is manifested to the earth at His second advent. It is stated also in Matthew: "...then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt 24:30).

Imbedded in countless prophecies of the millennium are predictions of the manifested glory which will feature the millennial earth. Isaiah writes: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it" (Isa 40:4-5).

It was a prayer of Solomon relative to the future kingdom: "And blessed be his glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory" (Ps 72:19). The glory of the God of Israel will truly be manifested in Christ in abundant measure. It is indicated in so many Scriptures that one wonders how amillenarians can equate the millennium with the inglorious present age.

H. C. Woodring has provided an analytical summary of the glory of Christ in the millennium (For extensive discussion of the glory of Christ in the millennium see Hoyt Chester Woodring, Jr., "The Millennial Glory of Christ," unpublished master's thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, pp. 62-134). The glory of the humanity of Christ is manifested in His glorious dominion (Heb 2:8-9); a glorious government, (Ps 2:8-9; 72:19 ; Isa 9:6-7; 11:4 ); a glorious inheritance of the promised

land (Gen 15:7; 17:8 ; Dan 8:9; 11:16, 41 ); a glorious prophet and lawgiver (Deut 18:18-19; Isa 2:2-4; 33:21-22 ; 42:4 ; Acts 3:22); a glorious house and throne fulfilling the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:12-16; Isa 9:6-7; Matt 25:31; Luke 1:31-33); and the glory of the kingdom itself (Ps 72; Isa 9:7; 11:10 ; Jer 23:6).

In like manner Woodring cites the glory of Christ as it pertains to His deity in the millennium. Divine attributes such as omniscience (Isa 66:15-18), and omnipotence (Ps 46:1-5; Isa 41:10, 17-18) are revealed in the millennium. As God He receives worship (Ps 46:6-11; 86:9 ; Isa 66:23; Zech 14:16-19). Other attributes and divine qualities manifested in the millennial reign of Christ are righteousness (Ps 45:4, 7; 98:2 ; Isa 1:27; 10:22 ; 28:17 ; 60:21 ; 63:1 ; Dan 9:24; Mal 4:2); divine mercy (Ps 89:2-3; Isa 54:7-10; 63:7-19 ; Hos 2:23); divine goodness (Isa 52:7; Jer 33:9-15; Zech 9:17); and holiness (Isa 4:3-4; 6:1-3 ; Ezek 36:20-23; 45:1-5 ; Joel 3:17; Zech 2:12; Rev 15:4); divine truth (Isa 25:1; 61:8 ; Mic 7:20).

The glorious presence of Christ in the millennial scene is of course the center of worship and spirituality. The many Scriptures bearing on this theme which cannot in any reasonable sense be applied to the present age nor limited to heaven point to the millennial kingdom of Christ on earth. The glory of Christ is further revealed in all aspects of the millennium and affects the spiritual life of the human race to an extent never realized in previous dispensations. describes a temple in detail as well as the ritual and priesthood connected with it. The explanation of the meaning of this prophecy has been a major problem in the premillennial interpretation of Scripture.

Five possible explanations have been given. Some have explained the Ezekiel description as either the specifications for the temple of Solomon or plans for the later temple built after the return of the Babylonian captivity. The Scriptures, however, give detailed specifications for both temples (1 Kgs 6:2—7:51 ; 2 Chron 3:3—4:22 ; Ezra 6:3-4), and a comparison of these with the Ezekiel passage will demonstrate beyond question that the Ezekiel temple is different in its structure than either of the other temples built by Israel in the Old Testament. Some have offered a third view in an attempt to explain these variations by considering Ezekiel's temple as an ideal which the returning pilgrims should have observed but did not. There is no Scripture, however, to substantiate that the returning captives knew anything of Ezekiel's temple. Still another concept is that the picture of Ezekiel's temple was intended to be a typical presentation only to be fulfilled by the church in the present age. This of course provides no exegesis of the passages and raises innumerable problems.

The fifth view, and the only one which provides any intelligent explanation of this portion of Scripture is that which assigns Ezekiel's temple to the future millennial period. Inasmuch as no fulfillment of this passage has ever taken place in history, if a literal interpretation of prophecy be followed, it would be most reasonable to assume that a future temple would be built in the millennium as the center of worship. Premillennarians such as Merrill F. Unger, Arno C. Gaebelein, and James M. Gray have written cogently in support of a future temple to be built in the millennium in fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy (Cf. Merrill F. Unger, *Great Neglected Bible Prophecies*, pp. 55-95; A. C. Gaebelein *The Prophet Ezekiel*, pp. 271-73; James M. Gray, *Christian Workers' Commentary*, pp. 265-66). Other premillennarians such as H. A. Ironside feel uncertain whether Ezekiel's temple will be built (Cf. H. A. Ironside, *Ezekiel*, pp. 284-85). Some have been troubled by the imensions of Ezekiel's temple. Though it is true that the dimensions of the future temple would not fit the temple site as used historically in previous temples, a changed topography of Palestine in the millennium predicted in many passages would permit a rearrangement of the amount of space assigned to the temple. Actually, other views do not provide any legitimate explanation of the size of the temple either, except to deny literal fulfillment.

The only real problem in connection with a future literal temple is not the question as to whether such a temple could be built in the millennium, but the fact that this would indicate also a literal interpretation of the temple ritual and sacrifices. This introduces some real problems (For a full discussion see John L. Mitchell "The Question of Millennial Sacrifices," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July 1953, pp. 248-67; October 1953, pp. 342-61). Allusions are made to these sacrifices in the details of the construction of the temple (Ezek 40:39-42) with further details on the sacrifices themselves (Ezek 43:18—46:24 ). Ezekiel is not alone in his testimony to millennial sacrifices as Isaiah refers to it (Isa 56:7) and implies the institution of a sacrificial system and observance of the Sabbath (Isa 66:20-23). Jeremiah refers to the same thing (Jer 33:18). Zechariah has similar references (Zech 14:16-21). The details such as are offered for these sacrifices make it clear that it is a distinct system from the Mosaic, but that it involves animal sacrifices as well as other forms of worship similar to that provided in the Mosaic law. The suggestion that there would be literal sacrifices in the millennium is a focal point of opposition from amillenarians and is not necessarily embraced by all premillennarians.



Objections to sacrifices in the millennium stem mostly from New Testament affirmations concerning the one sacrifice of Christ. According to Hebrews 7:27, Christ “needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself.” According to Hebrews 9:12 Christ “through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” A similar expression is found in Hebrews 9:26 where it affirms: “Now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Similar expressions are found elsewhere. The question is naturally raised why the sacrifices should be observed in the millennium if the sacrifice of Christ once for all fulfilled the typical expectation of the Old Testament sacrificial system. While other objections are also made of a lesser character, it is obvious that this constitutes the major obstacle, not only to accepting the sacrificial system but the possibility of the future temple in the millennium as well.

Those who consider the millennial sacrifices as a ritual which will be literally observed in the millennium invest the sacrifices with the central meaning of a memorial looking back to the one offering of Christ. The millennial sacrifices are no more expiatory than were the Mosaic sacrifices which preceded the cross. If it has been fitting for the church in the present age to have a memorial of the death of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, it is suggested that it would be suitable also to have a memorial of possibly a different character in the millennium in keeping with the Jewish characteristics of the period.

A. C. Gaebelein writes in support of this view: “But what is the meaning and the purpose of these animal sacrifices? The answer is quite simple. While the sacrifices Israel brought once had a prospective meaning, the sacrifices brought in the millennial temple have a retrospective meaning. When during this age God’s people worship in the appointed way at His table, with the bread and wine as the memorial of His love, it is a retrospect. We look back to the Cross. We show forth His death. It is ‘till He comes.’ Then this memorial feast ends forever. Never again will the Lord’s Supper be kept after the Saints of God have left the earth to be with the Lord in glory. The resumed sacrifices will be the memorial of the Cross and the whole wonderful story of the redemption for Israel and the nations of the earth, during the kingdom reign of Christ. And what a memorial it will be! What a meaning these sacrifices will have! They will bring to a living remembrance everything of the past. The retrospect will produce the greatest scene of worship, of praise and adoration this earth has ever seen. All the Cross meant and the Cross has accomplished will be recalled and a mighty ‘Hallelujah Chorus’ will fill the earth and the heavens. The sacrifices will constantly remind the peoples of the earth of Him who died for Israel, who paid the redemption price for all creation and whose glory now covers the earth as the waters cover the deep (A. C. Gaebelein, *The Prophet Ezekiel*, pp. 312-13).

Other writers such as William Kelly, Adolph Saphir, and Nathaniel West subscribe to the same point of view. Though West is not as sure that all of the details of Ezekiel’s prophecy will be fulfilled literally, he does say this of Ezekiel’s predictions: “But to return to Chapters xl-xlviii,—so long perplexing to so many,—the favorite retreat of postmillennialists, and the ready refuge when pressed by Chiliastic argument. Intrenched here, they deem themselves secure. How interpret these Chapters? Do they belong to the 1000 years of John? Are these also a Millennial picture? We answer, Yes. They cannot be literalized into the times of the Restoration under Zerubbabel, nor spiritualized into the times of the New Testament Church, nor celestialized into the heavenly state, nor allegorized into the final New Heaven and Earth, nor idealized into an oriental phantasmagorical abstraction. Whatever difficulties attend the interpretation which regards them simply as the expansion of Chapter xxxvii, a picture of Israel’s dwelling safely in their own land glorified, with the temple shining on exalted Zion, as the prophets have predicted it, more and greater difficulties attend any other exposition... That *bloody sacrifices* seem a stumbling block, never can avail to dislodge the section from its place in prophecy or history. The picture is a picture of *restored Israel* from an Exile point of view, when the Temple was destroyed, the City laid waste by the king of Babylon, Israel’s instituted worship wrecked, and the prophet-priest, Ezekiel, was moved by ‘the hand of God’ to comfort the exiles of the Gola! It covers, perspective, the *whole temporal future* of the people, and blends the Restoration, the Non-Restoration, the Abolition, the future Restitution, all in one. Isaiah had chiefly dwelt upon the *prophetic* side of the kingdom, in thrilling terms, Daniel dwells upon the *kingly* side and, to Ezekiel it is given to paint the *priestly* side of it” (Nathaniel West, *The Thousand Years in Both Testaments*, pp. 424-26). Though West elsewhere refers to Israel “offering perpetual spiritual sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ” (p. 239), he cannot resist the literal character of Ezekiel’s prophecy.

H. Bonar likewise writes in support of the literal view as follows: “The temple, the worship, the rites, the sacrifices, have all their centre in the Lamb that was slain. To Him they point, and of Him they speak. Why should they not be allowed to do so in the millennial age, if such be the purpose of the Father? They are commemorative not typical. They are retrospective then, not prospective, as of old. And how needful will retrospection be then, especially to Israel? How needful, when dwelling in the blaze of a triumphant Messiah’s glory, to have ever before them some memorial of the cross, some palpable record of the humbled Jesus, some visible exposition of his sin-bearing work, in virtue of which they have been forgiven, and saved, and loved,—to which they owe all their blessedness and honour,—and by means of which, God is teaching them the way in which the exceeding riches of His grace can flow down to them in righteousness. And if God should have yet a wider circle of truth to open up to us out of His word concerning his Son, why should he not construct a new apparatus for the illustration of that truth?” (H. Bonar, *Coming and Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ*, 1849, pp. 222-23).

Opponents of literal sacrifices, such as Oswald Allis, Keil, Lange, etc., have no real exegesis to offer for the Ezekiel passage and other references to millennial sacrifices. Other than to suggest that they are not to be interpreted literally, their principal argument against the literal sacrifices is the seeming incongruity of such sacrifices as properly representing the work of Christ now fully revealed historically and exegetically in the New Testament.

Floyd E. Hamilton in his discussion of the question of whether Old Testament prophecy should be interpreted literally, loses little time in plunging into the question of millennial sacrifices as a demonstration of the impossibility of interpreting prophecy literally. He dwells upon “the blood and filth” and “the stench of the slaughterhouse” as being unfit for a future temple as a center of worship (Floyd E. Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith*, p. 41). It would seem that Hamilton and others have temporarily forgotten that the entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament, while perhaps incongruous with western civilization aesthetics, was nevertheless commanded by God Himself as a proper typical presentation of the coming work of Christ. If such sacrifices were fitting in the mind of God to be the shadows of the cross of Christ, what more fitting memorial could be chosen if a memorial is desired for that same sacrifice. Obviously, a memorial is not intended to equal or to be a substitute of the real sacrifice, but as a ritual it is to point to the reality which is Christ.

The literalness of the future temple and its sacrificial system, however, is not inseparable from the premillennial concept of the millennium and, though in keeping with the general principle of literal interpretation, is not the *sine qua non* of millennialism. It is significant, however, that most thoroughgoing students of premillennialism who evince understanding of the relation of literal interpretation to premillennial doctrine usually embrace the concept of a literal temple and literal sacrifices.

If a literal view of the temple and the sacrifices be allowed, it provides a more intimate view of worship in the millennium than might otherwise be afforded and, though the system as revealed is different from the Mosaic in many particulars, it obviously has as its center the redemptive and sacrificial system.

Spiritual life in the millennium will be characterized by holiness and righteousness, joy and peace, the fulness of the Spirit, and the worship of the glorious Christ. The fact that Satan will be bound and demons will be inactive will provide a world scene in which spiritual life can abound. Premillennialism instead of denying the spiritual character of the millennium affirms its high standard of spiritual life which in many respects is far above any previous dispensation.

Dallas, Texas

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# The Doctrine of the Millennium

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 3

### Social and Economic Aspects of the Millennium

The reign of Christ on earth during the millennium, featuring as it does His righteous and universal government over all nations and characterized by spiritual blessing, obviously will affect all phases of life on the earth. Though the principal effects of the reign of Christ will be manifested in righteous government and in the spiritual realm, the rule of Christ will have extensive impact on the economic and social aspects of life on the earth.

*Universal justice and peace.* The fact that wars will cease during the millennium will have a beneficial effect upon both the social and economic life of the world. Instead of large expenditure for armaments, attention no doubt will be directed to improving the world in many various ways. Even under present world conditions, a relief from taxation due to military expenditure would have a great effect upon the economy. This coupled with absolute justice, resulting in greatly reduced crime and assuring minority people of government protection, will establish a social and economic order far different from anything the world had ever experienced prior to the millennium. Many of the prophetic Scriptures such as Psalm 72 and Isaiah 11 testify to these unusual millennial conditions. (Isa 35:1-2). The rest of the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah continues in the same theme. Plentiful rainfall characterizes the period (Isa 30:23; 35:7 ) and abundance of food and cattle are pictured (Isa 30:23-24). Though the curse on the earth is only partly lifted as indicated by the continuance of death, and will remain in some measure until the new heaven and the new earth are brought in (Rev 22:3), the land of Palestine will once again be a garden. The world in general will be delivered from the unproductiveness which characterized great portions of the globe in prior dispensations.

*General prosperity.* Widespread peace and justice, spiritual blessing, and a bountiful supply of food in every land will result in a general era of prosperity such as the world has never known (Jer 31:12; Ezek 34:25-27; Amos 9:13-14). The many factors which produce poverty, distress, and unequal distribution of goods will to a great extent be nonexistent in the millennium. Labor problems which now beset all nations will be solved, and everyone will receive just compensation for his labors (Isa 65:21-25; Jer 31:5). Thus the curse which creation has endured since Adam's sin (Gen 3:17-19) will be in part suspended as even the animal creation will be changed (Isa 11:6-9; 66:23 ).

*Health and healing.* One of the predictions regarding the coming of the Messiah was that healing from sickness would characterize His reign. Though Christ healed many in His first advent, most of the prophecies seem to point to the millennial situation. Thus Isaiah writes: "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isa 33:24). Those who have physical disability shall be healed of blindness and deafness (Isa 29:18) and healing will be experienced in a similar way by others. Again Isaiah states: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isa 35:5-6). The brokenhearted will be comforted and joy will replace mourning (Isa 61:1-3). Longevity will apparently characterize the human race for Isaiah speaks of the death of a person one hundred years old as the death of a child (Isa 65:20). The freedom from these human ills so common in the present world is in keeping with the lifting of many other aspects of the curse upon nature. Not only will people live much longer, but there will be also a tremendous increase in birth rate as children are born to those who survive the tribulation. Of this Jeremiah says: "I will multiply them, and they shall not be a few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me" (30:19-20 ). This blessing will not only characterize Israel, but also the Gentile in the millennial kingdom (Ezek 47:22).

Taken as a whole, the social and economic conditions of the millennium indicate a golden age in which the dreams of social reformists through the centuries will be realized, not through human effort but by the immediate presence and power of God and the righteous government of Christ. That mankind should again fail under such ideal circumstances and be ready to rebel against Christ at the close of the millennium is the final answer to those who would put faith in the inherent goodness of man.

## Physical Changes in the Millennium

According to millennial prophecies, many topographical changes will take place in the land of Palestine in connection with the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ. While some of these may be due to the lifting of the curse upon the earth, the alterations seem to be more extensive than this.

*The cleavage of the Mount of Olives.* In connection with the return of Christ to the earth, Zechariah 14 pictures the battle for the possession of Jerusalem which in its early stages seems to be in favor of the Gentiles. This is reversed, however, by the return of Christ described in the following words: "Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zech 14:3-4). In view of the fact that the Mount of Olives nowhere in Scripture is given a spiritualized interpretation, it seems clear that this refers to the physical Mount of Olives to the east of Jerusalem. When Christ returns, there will be where the Mount of Olives now stands a great valley extending toward the east with the Mount of Olives split in two.

The purpose of this cleavage seems to be indicated in the context as providing a temporary route for flight for those who are caught in the warfare about Jerusalem. Zechariah pictures it: "And ye shall flee by the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach until Azel; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the day of Uzziah king of Judah; and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee" (Zech 14:5). Other phenomenal things will occur at the same time. In the succeeding context a long day is described when "at evening time there shall be light" (Zech 14:7). Subsequent description pictures the "living waters" which "shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea: in summer and in winter shall it be" (Zech 14:8). It should be clear from this description that the character of the land to the east of Jerusalem shall be much different than it is now and that the changes mentioned will be a preparation for other features of the millennial kingdom. Ezekiel adds more details concerning the river with special attention to the eastward flow of the river into the Dead Sea (cf. Ezek 47:1-12). The river like the cleavage is miraculous as to its source and brings life and fruitfulness to the land through which it goes (cf. Ezek 47:7-12). The effect on the Dead Sea is to bring healing to it and not only cause fruitfulness of trees and vegetation, but also to permit fish to thrive in its waters.

Though scholars who are not premillennial have tended to give this a figurative rather than a literal meaning, the details are such that a literal meaning makes sense in the millennial context. James M. Gray writes for instance: "The whole thing is literal in fact, and yet supernatural in origin" (James M. Gray, *Christian Workers' Commentary*, p. 268).

*The exaltation of the city of Jerusalem.* More important than the changes concerning the Mount of Olives are those in which the entire land of Palestine is involved. According to Zechariah 14:10; "All the land shall be made like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's wine-presses." The effect of all the changes will be to elevate Jerusalem above the surrounding territory and to change the topography of Palestine to suit millennial conditions. This will accommodate therefore the temple of Ezekiel which would not fit Palestine in its present form.

Nathaniel West describes the changes as follows: "Jerusalem and Mount Zion, by means of physical convulsion and geological changes suddenly effected through disruption, depression, fissure, and elevation, at the Lord's appearing, shall be 'exalted' or 'lifted high,' above the surrounding hills, and the adjacent region be reduced 'to a plain,' like the Arabah, or

Ghor, that runs from the slopes of Hermon to the Red Sea. 'All the land will change itself,' and the geographic center of the reconstruction will be determined by the boundaries of the ancient territory of Judah" (*The Thousand Years in Both Testaments*, p. 289).

Charles L. Feinberg summarizes these topographical changes as follows: "All the land will be depressed in order that Jerusalem might be elevated. See Isaiah 2:2 and Micah 4:1. The directions given cannot be determined with certainty, but they prove two things: (1) the description must be taken literally (else why the abundance of detail?) and (2) the city will be rebuilt in its former extent. Compare Jeremiah 31:37, 38. Geba was on the northern frontier of Judah, probably Gibeah of Saul (2 King 23:8). Rimmon south of Jerusalem is to be distinguished from the Rimmon of Galilee (Josh 19:13) and that in Benjamin (Judg 20:45-47). The city here designated was on the border of Edom given to Simeon by Judah. The subject of *wera' amah* is Jerusalem. The verb is probably an expanded form of *weramah* from *rum*, like *qa'm* in Hosea 10:14.

"The city will be inhabited on its ancient site (for the same use of the preposition see 12:6); it will possess its old boundaries. The gate of Benjamin was on the north wall, facing the territory of Benjamin (Jer 37:13; 38:7 ). The first gate is probably the old gate (Neh 3:6). The corner gate was westward of the old gate. Compare II Kings 14:13 . The winepresses of the king were probably in the royal gardens in the valley southeast of Jerusalem. See II Kings 25:4 ; Jeremiah 39:4; 52:7 ; and Nehemiah 3:15. Not only will the city have its former bounds but its population will live therein, not to go out as captives or fugitives. They will need to fear no further hostile attacks. There will be no more curse, that complete devoting to destruction when given up by God to a curse.... The description is literal and conveys the interrelation of outward fact with inward condition, as Genesis 3 (thorns and thistles resulting from the sin of man) and Romans 8" (Charles L. Feinberg, *God Remembers*, pp. 257-58).

*Resulting changes in the land of Palestine.* The top graphical changes seem to be the preparation for the new division of the enlarged land of Palestine now embracing the total area promised to Abraham (Gen 15:18-21). Palestine is going to be divided into three parts. The northern part will be divided into areas for Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah (cf. Ezek 48:1-7). The southern portion in like manner is devoted to the tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad (Ezek 48:23-27). In between the northern and southern parts of the land is placed the "holy oblation" of Ezekiel 48:8-20, set apart in a special way as holy to the Lord. The extent of this portion of the land is described as a square twenty-five thousands reeds on each side which is further subdivided into two fifths of the area for the Levites (Ezek 45:5; 48:13-14 ), another two fifths for the temple and priests (Ezek 45:4; 48:10-12 ), and the remaining one fifth for the city (Ezek 45:6; 48:15-19 ). According to Merrill F. Unger, it is probable that of the three different cubits used in ancient Babylon the one intended in Ezekiel's prophecy was equivalent to 7.2 feet (cf. Merrill F. Unger, "The Temple Vision of Ezekiel," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 105:427-28, October, 1948). If so, the holy oblation would be thirty-four miles square and would contain 1,156 square miles. Though this would not fit in the present topography of Palestine, it seems that the changes in the land at the beginning of the millennium are in preparation for this. It would be almost impossible to ascertain any figurative meaning of these specific dimensions, and in keeping with the literal interpretation of other features of the millennial kingdom, description of changes in the land seem likewise to point to changes corresponding to the literal interpretation.

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# The Doctrine of the Millennium

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 4

### The Heavenly Jerusalem

One of the theological problems in relation to the doctrine of the millennium is the Scriptural teaching concerning the heavenly Jerusalem. This has not only confused opponents of premillennialism, but often has not been understood by those who hold to a millennial reign of Christ. Bound up in the problem also is the question of the relation of resurrected saints to the inhabitants of the millennial kingdom who are still in their natural bodies. Opponents of premillennialism have frequently heaped ridicule upon the teaching on the ground that it is impossible for resurrected beings and nonresurrected beings to mingle freely in the millennial scene. George L. Murray, for instance, refers to this when he states "... premillennialism makes no provision for the reconciliation of such irreconcilables as resurrected saints and mortal sinners in the same society" (*Millennial Studies*, p. 91). Solution to this entire problem, however, is afforded by a proper understanding of the Scriptural doctrine of the heavenly Jerusalem (cf. Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pp. 563-83). It may be demonstrated from Scripture that (1) the heavenly Jerusalem is the eternal habitation of all resurrected and translated saints; (2) the heavenly Jerusalem is in existence in the millennium; (3) the Scriptures teach that there is some participation of these resurrected saints in the government of the millennium; (4) objections to comingling or resurrected with nonresurrected beings is unjustified.

*The eternal home of all the saints.* Much of the confusion that exists in regard to the millennium and the eternal state stems from a failure to distinguish between the promises that are given to the last generation of saints who are on the earth at the time of the second advent and the promises that are given resurrected or translated saints in both the Old and New Testaments. The prophecies of the Old Testament give adequate basis for the doctrine that Israel has an earthly hope. The prophets in Israel's darkest hours painted the most glowing picture of the coming earthly kingdom in which Israel would participate as a favored nation and possess their Promised Land under the reign of the Son of David. The promises as given, however, clearly refer to those who were not resurrected and were directed to the nation of Israel as it is to be constituted at the time of the second advent, that is, the Israelites who will survive the great tribulation. They and their seed will inherit the Promised Land and fulfill the hundreds of prophecies that have to do with Israel's hope in the millennial kingdom. These promises are delineated in the Abrahamic, Davidic, Palestinian, and new covenants.

The Old Testament, however, also records promises to saints which are individual in their character. They for instance, are promised resurrection (Job 19:25-27; Isa 26:19-20; Dan 12:2-3). Along with the promise of their resurrection is the promise of reward such as characterizes God's dealings with the saints in eternity (Dan 12:3; Mal 3:16-17). In a few instances these promises specifically are related to the new heaven and the new earth and constitute a description of the eternal state which follows the millennium (Isa 65:17-18; 66:22). From these passages it is evident that the millennial reign of Christ on earth as such is not the ultimate hope of the resurrected saints, but rather of the saints who enter the millennium in their natural bodies and who are fitted for the earthly scene.

This conclusion seems to be confirmed by the New Testament revelation concerning the heavenly city. In stating the faith of Abraham in Hebrews 11 it is stated: "For he looked for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:10). It is further stated of Abraham and his descendants who died in the Old Testament that they did not receive the promises, and in fact were seeking a heavenly city: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a

city” (Heb 11:13-16). It is evident from these verses that the hope which was Abraham’s in resurrection had to do with a heavenly city rather than an earthly kingdom.

This is confirmed also by another passage in Hebrews 12:22-24 where Christians of the present age are related to the heavenly city: “But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel.” This important passage teaches that saints of all ages will be in the heavenly Jerusalem. The inhabitants of the heavenly city are itemized as an innumerable company of angels, the church, God, Jesus the Mediator, and the spirits of just men made perfect, the latter designation seemingly referring to all Old Testament saints. contemporary with the eternal state. According to this view, the city is proceeding from heaven to the earth as seen in Revelation 21:10 and is established with its foundations on the new earth. It is evident from any careful study of the millennial scene that the heavenly Jerusalem does not correspond to the earthly Jerusalem of the millennium.

It would be impossible for such a city in the size that is given, 1500 miles square, to be situated on the earth in the Holy Land. Adherents of both views therefore hold that if the heavenly Jerusalem is in existence during the millennium it is located above the earth and not on the earth. Exponents of this position point out that there is nothing incongruous with the racial background of the saints continuing in the eternal state. The word *nations* actually is the word *Gentiles* and is no more out of place than references to Israel or angels or the church as separate entities in the eternal scene. Further, the problem of the healing of the nations in Revelation 22:2 is dissolved when it is recalled that the tree of life originally existed in the Garden of Eden before sin came into being and therefore is a normal part of eternity as well. The word translated *healing* can just as well be translated *health* or *benefit* which would not necessarily mean more than *that* the leaves of the tree were beneficial in some way. Though scholars argue at length on both sides of this question, there does not seem to be any solid reason for denying the possibility that the New Jerusalem as pictured in Revelation 21:9ff is viewed from the standpoint of its descent to the earth at the beginning of the eternal state.

A third view, however, is sometimes offered which is a mediate view between the first two mentioned. This view contemplates the heavenly Jerusalem as in existence during the millennium over the earth as the habitation of the resurrected saints, and is in contrast to the city of Jerusalem located on the earth. The heavenly Jerusalem apparently is withdrawn at the time of the destruction of the present earth and heaven. Then as pictured in Revelation 21:2 it returns to the new heaven and the new earth when the scene is ready for its descent. This interpretation regards Revelation 21:9ff as the heavenly city in the eternal state though recognizing its existence in the millennium. This seems to solve most of the exegetical problems that are involved and, in fact, answers many objections to the premillennial interpretation of Scripture as a whole. It provides a clear distinction between resurrected saints who inhabit the New Jerusalem and the millennial saints on the earth who will inhabit the millennial earth. It is assumed, though the Scriptures do not state it, that the millennial saints at the end of the millennium will be translated prior to their entrance into the eternal state and thus will qualify for entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem.

*Relation of resurrected saints to the millennial earth.* Though the major difficulty of the relationship of resurrected saints to those who are still in their natural bodies in the millennium is explained by the residence of the resurrected saints in the heavenly Jerusalem, Scriptures afford several instances in which there will be some relation of resurrected saints to those in the millennial earth. Christ promised His followers that they would participate with Him in His judgment upon the twelve tribes of Israel in His kingdom. Christ declared: “Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt 19:28). A larger promise is given by reminder to the Corinthians when Paul wrote them: “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” (1 Cor 6:2). It is further promised believers who participate in the first resurrection that they “shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev 20:6). Further reference to reigning on the earth is found in Revelation 5:10 and 2 Timothy 2:12. It may be observed, however, that all of these references are not necessarily references to the millennial scene though some of them obviously are (Rev 5:10; 20:4, 6). If resurrected saints are to reign with Christ over the millennial earth, it would seem evident that there must be at least a limited amount of communication and association between resurrected saints and those in their natural bodies. If the reference in Ezekiel 37:24 to David as king over Israel is a reference to resurrected David as

ruler over the Promised Land in the role of a subruler of Christ, then further evidence is given for this comingling. As far as Scripture revelation is concerned, however, it seems to be limited to a few specific functions, and the primary activity of the resurrected saints will be in the new and heavenly city.

*Scriptural ground for comingling of resurrected and nonresurrected saints.* The objection frequently raised that any comingling of resurrected with nonresurrected beings is impossible is of course denied by the simple fact that our Lord in His resurrection body was able to mingle freely with His disciples. Though there evidently was some change in their relationship, he could still talk with them, eat with them, and be subject to physical contact with them. Further, it is clear that even at the present time there is a ministry of angels to human beings even though angels are of an entirely different order of beings than men and are invisible in their earthly activities under ordinary circumstances. Though the free mingling of resurrected and nonresurrected beings is contrary to our present experience, there is no valid reason why there should not be a limited amount of such association in the millennial earth.

Undoubtedly the millennial kingdom will be a dispensation graphically different from any previous one and involving many unique features which can only partially be understood now from the Scriptures. As a dispensation it is fitted to be climactic in its character and a divine preparation for the eternal state which will follow. The prospect for such a kingdom, however, is the answer to the world's longing for peace, righteousness, and equity which will never be achieved until Christ Himself returns to reign.

## **The Close of the Millennium and the Eternal State**

*The final revolt.* According to Revelation 20:7-9, at the conclusion of the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan, who has been bound, will be loosed again and be permitted to deceive the nations as he has done through the ages (cf. *ibid*, V, 360-1). Those who will be deceived evidently are those who will be born in the millennial kingdom whose parents previously entered the millennium in their natural bodies. Some of the children born no doubt will become true children of God, whereas others will merely profess to follow Christ under the compulsion of the absolute reign of the Lord. With the renewed activity of Satan these will be encouraged to rebel against God and according to Revelation 20:8 will gather themselves to battle against the Lord and surround the earthly city of Jerusalem. In this connection it is stated that Satan will go out "to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog..." This should not be confused with a similar reference to Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38:2 which is an event referring to a battle which probably precedes the millennium. The similarity of terms is best explained by defining Gog as the prince and Magog as the people of the prince, or the land over which he rules. So interpreted, the passage states that Satan will deceive the nations which are in all parts of the earth, both prince and people, that is, both rulers and those under them. Apparently the defection against Christ will extend even to some of the subrulers involved in the political government of the world at the close of the millennium.

The revolt will be summarily judged and the Scriptures record that "fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them" (Rev 20:9). Further, it is declared that the devil will be cast into the lake of fire, the final destiny of all unsaved. Into this place of punishment the beast and the false prophet—the political and religious rulers of the world during the great tribulation preceding the millennium—will be cast to begin their endless torment (Rev 20:10).

*The judgment of the great white throne.* It is recorded that subsequent to the conclusion of the millennium a great white throne is established, apparently in space, as both earth and the starry heavens flee away from it in the destruction of the present earth and heaven. Before this throne are assembled the dead, small and great. Though the Scriptures do not state so directly, it is implied that this is a judgment of the wicked dead who have not previously been raised from the grave. They are judged according to their works as written in "the books" which are the divine record of human activity. It is stated that the dead are brought back to this judgment, their bodies delivered from the grave, whether in the sea or on the land, and their soul and spirit are brought up from hades. The summary judgment is given: "If any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15). This is defined as "the second death" (Rev 20:14). Just as physical death is separation of the immaterial part of man from his physical body, so the second death is eternal separation of the wicked from God. There has been some debate as to the exact character of the book of life, but whatever construction is placed upon this expression as is found in Scripture the conclusion is evident that it records at this time the names of those who are saved.



Though the wicked will be judged according to their works as to degree of punishment, the fact that their names are not in the book of life is the ground for their judgment.

*The new heaven and the new earth.* According to Revelation 21:10, following the judgement of the great white throne a new heaven and a new earth is revealed to John apparently created to replace the present earth and heaven. Very little description is given of this in Scripture though it is mentioned in Isaiah 65:17 where it is stated that when the new heavens and the new earth are created the former would not be remembered. The new heaven and the new earth differ greatly from the present situation. It is declared that there is no more sea (Rev 21:1). The physical characteristics of it differ widely from the present earth as well. It may be gathered from the fact that the New Jerusalem does not need sun or moon, that the glory of the Lord will be the light of the new creation and that there will be no night. It is a scene of release from earth's sorrows. God "shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away" (Rev 21:4). Excluded from the new earth are all the unsaved described in Revelation 21:8.

A principal feature of the new earth will be the New Jerusalem pictured as a bride adorned for her husband and a city which comes down from God out of heaven to the new earth (Rev 21:2, 9-10). The city is described as having twelve foundations on which are the names of the twelve apostles. It is square in shape and has three gates on each of the four sides bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Scriptures give a graphic description of its beauty in which pure gold, which is compared to clear glass, is a principal ingredient. The walls and the foundations are garnished with precious stones, twelve of which are mentioned, apparently representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Each of the gates is a large pearl. The streets of the city are paved with pure gold transparent like glass. Other features of the city include the fact that there is no temple in it for the Lord Himself dwells in the city. Access to the city will be given to the saved, both Jew and Gentile. The gates shall not be shut, but no one will be permitted to enter who would in any way defile the city, entrance being reserved to those "that are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev 21:27). A major feature of the city is a pure river which proceeds from the throne of God and winds its way through the city. The tree of life originally mentioned as being in the Garden of Eden is here seen again bearing fruits each month. It is stated that in this new earth there will be no more curse, but instead abundant blessing from God.

A most astounding feature is the dimension of the city which is given as 1500 miles square and also 1500 high. Such a dimension quite unfamiliar even to a modern world with its high buildings would provide a city of impressive and spacious dimensions as the seat of God's eternal government and dwelling place for the saints. Expositors differ as to whether the city is in the form of a cube or a pyramid though the latter seems more likely. If in the form of a pyramid, it is possible that the throne of God will be at the top and the river of life will wend its way from the throne down the various levels of the city. In these brief terms is given a description of the ultimate resting place of the saints beyond which Scripture revelation does not go in its unfolding of the endless ages of eternity. How pale in comparison are the monuments of men! How satisfying is the revelation of the divine purpose of the grace of God in bestowing these benefits on those who have put their trust in His blessed Son! How blessed is the hope of the imminent coming of Christ which will begin that grand sequence of future events which have their goal in eternity in the glorious presence of the Triune God!

The sands of time are sinking,  
The dawn of heaven breaks;  
The summer morn I've sighed for,  
The fair, sweet morn awakes.  
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,  
But dayspring is at hand,  
And glory, glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

Dallas, Texas

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