

The Millennial Kingdom

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According to the 1999 Israeli press, psychiatrists are expecting an increase in a condition they have labeled, "Jerusalem Syndrome." For many years mental health workers have treated tourists who become emotionally overwhelmed by a visit to the Holy Land. Although some are only temporarily caught up in an apocalyptic hysteria, others take on the identity of various Bible characters while visiting the Holy Land. Officials expect a wave of people who believe they are playing a crucial role as the Millennium approaches.

We are going to break this study down into systematic and scriptural sections so that we can grasp the overall teaching about the earthly Millennial Kingdom that is someday going to be established upon planet earth.

The Interpretation of the Millennium

The term "millennium" is simply a word that has been derived from Latin which means "*one thousand years.*" This term is a combination of Latin roots. One of them is "mille" meaning thousand which is used in such words as milligram and millimeter. The other root word is "annus" meaning year which is used in such a word as annual. Many of our theological words have a Latin base to them. The Millennium or thousand years is derived from the passage found in Revelation 20:1-7 where the term thousand is used six times to emphasize the literal reign of Christ on planet earth. Mentioning a number six specific times would indicate that John was not conveying a symbolic number but presenting a literal understanding of the 1,000 years. The term for "thousand" in this prophetic passage is the Greek word "chilioi" from which is derived chiliasm or the study of the thousand years.

All evangelical Christians will agree that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. However, not everyone shares the same convictions about the details of Christ's return and the interpretation of the Millennium as found in the Bible. In this study we are going to argue for a literal interpretation of the Millennium. If we take the Bible literally and do not allegorize the simple truths of Scripture, we will arrive at the

conclusion that there will be a literal one-thousand-year reign of Christ over planet earth. There are three major views of the Millennium that are taught today and we need to be somewhat familiar with them.

1. AMILLENNIALISM

When placing this letter and prefix “a” before a word it means to negate the word. In other words, it nullifies or denies the word as being true. Therefore, the word amillennial actually means no millennium. So when the letter “a” is placed before the Latin word it cancels out the millennium and the word literally means “no thousand years.” We might call this the “no-millennium” system of thought. The proponents of this view do not teach a literal millennium kingdom reign over earth. They do not believe that Christ will literally reign over the earth for a thousand years.

The means they do not accept the literal interpretation of Revelation 20 in relationship to the 1,000-year reign of Christ and surrounding earthly events. Instead, they see the thousand years as figurative, claiming that the number should not be taken literally. Many today espouse an Augustinian view of the millennium and reject the literal reign of Christ over the earth. This view was first proposed by Augustine in the fourth century and has been the favored position of the Roman Catholic church ever since. This is because Augustine was the forerunner of Roman Catholic beliefs and doctrine. Amillennialism is the common view held among Reformed Protestant denominations.

Many amillennialists interpret the thousand years or millennium as a representation of how Christ rules over His people today in a spiritual kingdom composed of people. In other words, the Millennium to them is actually a picture of God’s kingdom of people that He is ruling over today. Others see the Millennium (1,000 years) as a symbolic portrayal of the believer’s victory over Satan through their union with Christ. Still others picture the Millennium (1,000 years) as a picture of heaven which is the blessed state that God’s people enter after death. Others see the Millennium as reference to the eternal state and order that will one day be established on earth. These views are varied and insufficient because they do not accept the literal teaching

and plain sense of the word of God. For an exhaustive treatment of Amillennialism see the author's study titled "Amillennialism (Replacement Theology)."

The amillennialist believes that God has abandoned Israel and is finished with His national people forever. In short, Israel will not receive any of her earthly promises. Therefore, they must get rid of the Millennium as a literal promise given to Israel. Of course, the Scriptures clearly teach that God is not finished with national Israel (Rom. 11:1-2, 15, 25-27). In addition, the amillennialist also teaches that the Church of today has supplanted or taken over the place of national Israel and is now God's new Israel (Replacement Theology). In fact, this new Israel (the Church) has been given the kingdom and covenant promises of the Jews in a spiritual way. Therefore, the earthly kingdom promises are changed into spiritual promises that are given to the Church for today. In short, the earthly kingdom promises are transferred into spiritual promises for the Church today instead of a literal earthly Millennium or literal reign of Christ over the earth.

There is a story told to the effect that a Jew, being in the company of a Christian, took up a New Testament and opened it to Luke 1:32, 33: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." Turning to his Christian friend the Jew asked, "How do you understand that Scripture?" The Christian answered, "Oh, it's figurative language, descriptive of Christ's spiritual reign over the church." "Then you do not take it literally?" asked the Jew. "Certainly not," replied the Christian.

The Jew made this further remark, "Then why should you expect me to take literally what precedes, where the Scriptures say that this Son of David shall be born of a virgin? Do you believe that literally?" "Surely," answered the Christian. The Jew continued, "Why do you accept verse 31 as literal, but explain verses 32 and 33 as figurative?" "Because," answered the Christian, "verse 31 has become a fact—Jesus was so born. It is indisputable evidence." "Ah," said the Jew, "I see! You believe the Scriptures when you see them fulfilled. I believe them because they are the Word of God."

The amillennialist is simply not fair and honest with his interpretation of Scripture. In the context of two verses like Isaiah 9:6-7 they can claim literal interpretation for one verse regarding Christ's first coming to earth (vs. 6) and then spiritualize the kingdom of Christ in the next verse to mean something other than His earthly rule (vs. 7). *Christ's first advent is taken to be fulfilled literally but the events associated with the Second Advent are not taken literally.* The interpretive scissors of amillennialism cuts the truth right out of the Bible of Christ's earthly kingdom rule and tries to edit God's mind. Here is another case in point.

The passage of Revelation 20 follows in sequential order from Revelation chapter 19:11-16 which envisions the return of Christ to earth. It is both an oddity and absurdity to then interpret Revelation 20 as something other than a literal reign of Christ after Christ has already returned to earth. Most amillennialists make the claim that Satan will not be bound during a future prophetic period during a Millennium but that he is actually bound today (Rev. 20:2) in the sense that he cannot defeat the church and keep people from getting saved by the Gospel. Of course, this is a fallacy of the worst sort (1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Luke 8:12). The claim is then made that Revelation 20:4 and the first resurrection of saints is actually a metaphor for spiritual regeneration or the new birth. The 1,000-year kingdom concept of Revelation 20:4 is construed to mean the time when God's saints die and go to heaven to reign with Christ.

The Bible in Revelation 20:4-5 clearly teaches two resurrections that are separated by 1,000 years. The first group of saints are raised before the 1,000 years (vs. 4) and the second group of unsaved people are raised after the 1,000 years (vs. 5). The amillennialist cannot believe that the first resurrection is a literal resurrection or else he would have to believe in the literal 1,000 years that follows this literal resurrection. Therefore, he must allegorize and change the meaning of the first resurrection to mean spiritual regeneration (new birth) and also change the meaning of the 1,000 years. Taking the 1,000 years to be literal would upset the amillennial eschatological scheme which believes there is only one resurrection of all people on the last day and no literal kingdom over the earth. Therefore, they need to spiritualize the first resurrection (vs. 5b) by claiming that it refers to the continuous fulfillment of resurrected souls or the

salvation of souls (new birth of believers) throughout the present period in which we live. They claim that the reference to the first resurrection speaks of the time when people are regenerated; it's then that their soul is resurrected from the dead and Christ in a spiritual sense begins to rule in their hearts as the King. At death this reign continues in heaven, as also pictured by this verse.

Alva McClain observes:

“If the people involved were beheaded physically, and then lived again, common sense would suggest that they received back the same category of life that had been lost.”

It's very clear that the first resurrection is speaking of physical resurrection to enter the Millennium and not some kind of spiritual resurrection.

Amillennialism also disguises itself with the newer term called Preterism. This is another Latin term that speaks of something that is already past. This view holds that the bulk of the prophecies in Revelation were fulfilled with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D and the judgments associated with this time. The preterist does believe in a final judgment following a metaphorical millennial kingdom, but he teaches that all other prophecy has already been fulfilled. Preterism has many flaws. First, most biblical scholars believe that John wrote Revelation around 95 A.D. How can he then prophecy about something that took place in 70 A.D.? When was the mark of the beast implemented (Revelation 13:16-17)? When did the Euphrates River dry up (Revelation 16:12)? Why is there no record of 100-pound hailstones falling from the sky (Revelation 16:21)? Furthermore, why was Israel dispersed for nearly two thousand years and reborn as an independent nation in 1948?

These questions cannot be answered with any intellectual honesty while adhering to the preterist view. God is not finished with Israel and the Bible prophecy must be taken literally for the Bible to make logical sense. Someone once wrote: “When the literal sense makes good sense, be careful not to make nonsense.” Those who spiritualize the Bible when it should be taken literally do God's Word a terrible injustice (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2).

2. POSTMILLENNIALISM

The postmillennial view of the Millennial Kingdom was all but extinct but in the last 35 to 40 years there has been a resurgence in this concept and view of the Millennial Kingdom. This system of millennial thought was developed in the 16th century. The view holds that conditions on earth will gradually improve over time evolving into a world that has become “Christianized” and ready for the Second Coming of Christ to start eternity. The prefix “post” before Millennium means that Christ comes after the Church has already Christianized the world through spreading the Gospel. In other words, Christ returns only *after* the thousand years (a figurative expression of a long period of time) has expired. Liberal postmillennialism teaches that the world will be transformed through humanism and the social gospel. Adopting the evolutionary thought man was advancing it was taught that the world become a better place to live and develop into a utopia and the 1,000 years of peace and prosperity.

Postmillennialism became all but extinct after two world wars, the Great Depression, and the unchanging moral decay and sinful degradation in the world. However, this teaching began to be revived in the 1970’s once again. Today it appears under the disguise of modern terms such as “Dominion Theology,” “Reconstructionism,” and “Theonomy” which is the idea that the Church is going to reconstruct society and take dominion of the world, through instituting God’s Old Testament Law on society, before Jesus Christ comes back to earth to start eternity. Therefore, Christ will come back “post” or after the Church establishes this utopia on planet earth. *Postmillennialism is a man-made millennium.* Man is responsible for transforming society, people, and ushering in the golden age of peace and tranquility on earth when there will be no war and strife.

Similar to Amillennialism, this view claims that the kingdom of Revelation 20:4 is primarily Christ ruling in the hearts of His people (the Church). According to the postmillennialist this reference does not refer to a literal time when Christ will return to earth and set up a kingdom since the church is said to set up the kingdom as a result of Christ ruling in their hearts. Revelation 20:4 needs to be interpreted figuratively in this system to once again mean that Christ is ruling His kingdom only in a spiritually sense through His people in the world

today. The postmillennialist believes that the thousand-year reign of Christ in Revelation 20 is figurative and represents a time when Christ reigns in the hearts of believers to give them victory. This in return will eventually usher in a time of earthly rule that consists of peace and prosperity on planet earth.

In short, the Millennium of Revelation 20 is not a literal kingdom rule of Christ on earth but Christ reigning over His people in a spiritual kingdom today. It is really the rule of Christ in the hearts of men (Luke 17:21). *As men come to faith in Christ and submit to His rule the promise of the kingdom is seen on earth in a greater way.* More people being converted bring the promise of the kingdom that much closer. Wherever men believe in Jesus Christ, commit themselves to Him, and obey Him, the kingdom is present and spreading. *The kingdom is not something that is to be introduced cataclysmically at a future time when Christ returns.*

In actuality, the kingdom is here and now. It is growing gradually like leaven (Matt. 13:33) as we head toward the time when peace will reign on earth. *The kingdom is arriving by degrees upon planet earth.* It is being introduced progressively. Of course, this is shoddy theology because it rejects the literal interpretation the Bible. The kingdom is not here on planet earth today in any spiritual form. The kingdom is a *prophetic* event that deals with the future reign of Jesus Christ upon planet earth (Revelation 19:11-16). You will note that it's King Jesus who is going to judge the world and establish His kingdom – not the church (Revelation 14:14-20).

This system is a fanciful dream. The church will not transform society. The Scriptures say that society is gradually getting worse (2 Timothy 3:1-13 – “perilous times shall come” and “evil men and seducers shall was worse and worse”). Furthermore, after the world wars and continuing wars that plague our society today one must deceive themselves into thinking that the world is getting better. The League of Nations was unsuccessful. The United Nations is not successful either. We can't have peace without the prince of peace ruling on planet earth. The saints are not going to bring in the kingdom in any fashion or various stages of degrees. Jesus Christ is going to return and bring in the kingdom with His own power and might. The saints will not nor can they bring in the kingdom (see Daniel 2:44; 7:20-22;

27). It will take the King of Kings to bring in the earthly Kingdom. There can be no peace on planet earth until the Prince of Peace returns (Isa. 9:6).

This postmillennial movement is being promoted today by some in the modern day Charismatic movement such as Pat Robertson. Other men such as D. James Kennedy promote this view of the Millennium. These men do not believe there will be a literal Millennium over earth which Christ rules but that the Church, over which Christ reigns today, will eventually improve society, bring in the Millennium and reign victoriously. This is why these men major on speaking out against the social ills of our society. They believe that the mandate for the Church is to reconstruct society and make it better.

One can hardly wonder how D. James Kennedy can espouse this view of the Millennium since he is constantly speaking out against the departure of this nation from its historical Christian roots. He should be able to see the hopeless slide of this nation and world into the devil's lap (1 John 5:19). In a September 1994 plenary speech to the Christian Coalition national convention, Rev. D. James Kennedy said that "true Christian citizenship" involves an active engagement in society to "take dominion over all things as vice-regents of God."

The entire Reconstructionist Movement stands on a false premise since the Law was given to govern the nation of Israel, a separate entity from the church, and not all world government is expected to follow the Mosaic Law (Romans 9:4-5; Exodus 19:3-6). The nations today should follow and use the Noahic covenant as a form of governing principle to follow which was given for the entire world to follow after the flood and throughout the changing dispensations (Genesis 9:1-16).

To the postmillennialist, Christ has transferred the blessing of the kingdom from Israel to the Church. And the new Israel (the Church) is to gain dominance over the world and usher in the kingdom. The Great Commission given by Jesus was a commission to dominate the entire world and rule it victoriously (Matt. 28:19-20). Satan has been bound or defeated in this present age by the death and resurrection of Christ. This allows the triumph of the church to take place. After the

kingdom has arrived through man's efforts and is established for some time, it's only then that the King will return. However, a cursory glance of Scripture will tell us that the world is not overtaken and controlled by the church and righteousness when the King returns (Psalm 2; Rev. 14:8-29; 16:13-14; 19:17-21).

3. PREMILLENNIALISM

Premillennialism is the view that Christ's Second Coming will occur before the Millennial Kingdom is established. It teaches that the Millennial Kingdom is a future, literal, 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth – a time when Christ will rule on the throne of David in Jerusalem. In the early church, premillennialism was called *chiliasm*, from the Greek term meaning 1,000 used six times in Revelation 20:2-7. Charles Ryrie cites essential features of premillennialism as follows: "Its duration will be 1,000 years; its location will be on this earth; its government will be theocratic with the personal presence of Christ reigning as King; and it will fulfill all the yet-unfulfilled promises about the earthly kingdom." These are the basic tenants of premillennialism.

Before Augustine (A.D. 354-430), for the first three hundred years of the church's existence, the premillennial view of Christ's Second Coming was the only view to be found in the church. *The earliest interpretation of the millennial reign of Christ is that of premillennialism.* In premillennialism, words mean what they normally mean in everyday usage, while at the same time it allows for legitimate figures of speech. Because of this the one thousand years mentioned six times in Revelation 20 is taken literally and refers to a literal reign of Christ over the earth in the future. The simple thesis of premillennialism is that Jesus will literally return to the earth before (pre) the Millennium begins and that He himself will inaugurate and rule over it. In contrast, amillennialism sees the kingdom of God, not as a literal kingdom, but present now "in the hearts of man," and postmillennialism sees Christ returning to earth after the Millennium is already finished. The word "premillennial" itself is derived of two components: "Pre" signifies *before*, and, "millennium" denotes a period of *1,000 years*. This teaching suggests that Christ will return before the Millennium is established and establish a literal earthly reign over planet earth.

Premillennialism holds that after a period of tribulation, Christ will return to physically establish His Kingdom on earth for a period of one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2; Zech. 13:2). This return will occur before the Millennium is established over the earth. This is why it is called premillennialism. Christ comes *before* the Millennium is established. This opposes postmillennialism (Christ's comes after the kingdom is established) and amillennialism (there is no earthly kingdom). *Premillennialism is the only system of interpretation that teaches Christ will establish a literal kingdom over the earth that will last one thousand years.* The literal interpretation of the Scripture will bring a person to this conclusion.

Remember that the literal interpretation of the one thousand years was abandoned due to the rise of allegorical interpretation which was influenced by pagan philosophy. Others taught that the Millennium would be a time of sensual indulgence and this also sparked a figurative interpretation of the thousand years. Postmillennialism and amillennialism teaches that we are in an allegorical millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ and dismisses the whole idea of Christ returning before the kingdom is established. But premillennialism teaches that Christ will come *before* the kingdom has been established and that He, as the King of the Kings and Lord of Lords, will set up and establish a Kingdom that will last one thousand years (Rev. 19:11-16).

Premillennialism teaches that during the Millennium, Satan will be bound and unable to deceive people. It takes this prophecy literally and with a futurist interpretation. After the Millennium, Satan will be set free for a time (Rev. 20:3), but his rebellion will be quickly vanquished or brought down by God (Rev. 20:7-10). As already mentioned, the premillennialist teaches that there will be a literal one-thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth where the Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected to rule with Christ (Rev. 20:4, 6). The first resurrection has to do with *literal* bodily resurrection of the saved whereas the second resurrection (Rev. 20:5) has to do with the unsaved that will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). A period of 1,000 years exists between these two distinct literal resurrections (Rev. 20:5 - "but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"). Premillennialism

takes the first resurrection of Revelation 20:4 in the most natural interpretive sense. It sees it as a literal resurrection.

In other words, Premillennialism accepts the literal resurrection and naturally accepts a literal Millennium. Only a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:4 will arrive at Premillennialism. A literal resurrection and Millennium compliment one another. The Premillennialist is consistently literal in his interpretation of Revelation 20:4-5. The amillennialist interpretation of this text in Revelations 20:4-5 claims that the first resurrection refers to a spiritual resurrection of the soul instead of a bodily and literal resurrection. If the amillennialist takes the resurrection to be literal, then he would have to also take the 1,000 years to be literal. This would upset his system of eschatological interpretation which teaches there will be no literal Millennium over the earth and only one literal resurrection on the last day.

The key belief of every premillennialist list is that the Kingdom is literal and is still future whereas the amillennial system of interpretation denies the literalness of a future earthly kingdom, claiming that it is an allegorical kingdom over which Christ rules today in the hearts or people. Premillennialism teaches that Christ will come before the kingdom (1,000 years) is established and set up the kingdom whereas Postmillennialism teaches that Christ comes after the kingdom has already been established and runs its course. The premillennial view adheres to a literal interpretation of the Bible. This means that it does not spiritualize/allegorize the texts of Scripture that teach numerical truth and literal prophetic events.

Certainly Paul believed in the literal fulfillment of the covenant promises when saying in Acts 26:6-7: “And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”

The Promise of the Millennium

I hate weeds. If there is one thing I hate, it's pulling weeds from gardens and flower beds. Someone has invented a product that will keep weeds from growing. It's called "preen" and this product stops the weeds from germinating and producing roots. The world will forever be grateful to the man who invented this product. If you can stop the roots from starting you will have no weeds! We can rejoice when weeds have no roots. However, just the opposite is true with the roots or origins of the Millennial Kingdom. The promise of the kingdom does have strong roots and these roots cannot be pulled out and stopped from producing.

The promises given to Israel concerning the Millennial Kingdom are founded upon unchanging covenants such as the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:7-8, 13, 19; 1 Chron. 16:17; Psalm 105), Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 30:1-10), Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16; 23:5; Isa. 55:3), and New Covenant (Isa. 24:5; 61:8; Jer. 31:26-34; 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 36:26-27; Heb. 13:20).

The roots of the Millennial Kingdom can be clearly traced back to the Davidic Covenant and the promise that were given to David. This covenant promises that David will always possess a seed (posterity that can produce a king), kingdom (sphere of rule), and throne (place of rule and a king that will reside over Israel) that will be eternal and envisions a time when David's descendent will rule on the throne in Jerusalem without interruption.

David had become firmly established as king over the entire nation of Israel (2 Sam. 7:1) and he expressed the desire to build a permanent house of worship for God in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 7:2-3). Through Nathan, the prophet, God revealed that it would be Solomon, David's son, and not David himself who would build the house of worship (2 Sam. 7:4-7, 12-13). Please note that David wanted to do something for God but God promised to do something for David. Sometimes we must simply let God do it His way! God did not allow David to build the Temple, but He did establish a significant covenant with him. Since God made this covenant with David, theologians have called it the Davidic Covenant. Although this passage does not call God's promises to David a covenant, other passages clearly indicate that

God was establishing a covenant with His servant (2 Sam. 23:1, 5; 2 Chr. 7:18; 21:7; Ps. 89:3–4, 28–29, 34–37; Jer. 33:19–26) and like the other covenants it was an eternal covenant built upon the faithful promise of God (2 Sam. 7:15, 23:5; Ps. 89:3-4; 20-37; Jer. 33:19–26). This covenant has special significance concerning the future Kingdom of God that is foretold in the Bible.

Promises Were Given to Four People.

a. Abraham

God gave the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his Jewish seed “for ever” (Gen. 13:15) by “an everlasting covenant” (Gen. 17:7, 13, 19; 48:4) for “an everlasting possession” (Gen 17:8) which by its very nature will take eternity to fulfill its promises! God repeatedly promised Abraham that his descendants, the Jewish people, would dwell in their land forever. They would experience an uninterrupted time of peace, prosperity, and perfect conditions in the boundaries of the Promised Land that were originally given to Abraham. Since these promises were never fully and finally realized, they will be fulfilled in the future during the Millennial Kingdom.

Jesus gave this promise in Matthew 8:11: “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”

2 Samuel 7:10

“Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.”

In the Davidic Covenant, God made promises to the nation of Israel (2 Samuel 7:10 – “my people”) and promises to give them a permanent possession of the Promised Land. This is what God is going to do. Notice the “I will’s” of God. Friend, this promise was given a long time ago. Actually, God said this over three thousand years ago, and it has not yet come to pass. But God is going to make good on His promise. Israel will one day be planted back in her land forever and never again “be afflicted” by their enemies and never

again be moved from the Promised Land in the original borders and dimensions that God gave to them.

In short, the Arabs are not going to win the battle! God is going to give to His ancient people Israel the full dimensions of the land and they will possess the land forever without repercussions from their enemies. Someday national Israel will not have to worry about bombs and scud missiles flying into Jerusalem. They will not have to worry about terrorists. This will be fulfilled during the Millennium or the 1,000-year reign of Christ and in the eternal kingdom that follows the millennial reign.

c. David (through Solomon)

God also made promises to David's Son Solomon (vs. 12–15 – “thy seed after thee”). God would give to David's seed (Solomon) a kingdom to rule over (establish his kingdom - vs. 12b), and allow Solomon to build the temple (vs. 13 – “He shall build an house”). Furthermore, the Lord promises to establish “the throne of his kingdom forever” (vs. 13). The legal right to a ruling throne and eternal kingdom was promised to David's Son – Solomon. God promised to establish the national throne of Solomon's kingdom forever.

This presupposes or assumes that there would always be a male heir in Israel ready to rule in Solomon's place that has a legal right to rule through Solomon and eventually fulfill the throne and kingdom promise that was given to him. A king would always be available to sit on the throne (see 1 Chr. 22:6–10). It also certainly is teaching that one day a ruler would arise that would rule over Solomon's kingdom forever. God would always have a man ready for the throne of Solomon. God pledged that Solomon's kingdom would never pass away permanently, even though it might not function at all times. It is a fact of history that Solomon's kingdom has not functioned at all times since God made this promise, but this divine pledge was a guarantee that his kingdom would always have the potential of being restored to full function and that someday another King in Solomon's line would take over his throne and rule forever in a kingdom.

Someday another person in Solomon's line is going to reign on the throne of Solomon and He will be a King who will "stablish the throne of his kingdom forever" (vs. 13b). This coming King is a greater than Solomon (see Matt. 12:42) and his name is Jesus Christ who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The ultimate fulfillment of this promise will take place when Jesus returns to earth and when He rules in Solomon's place and establishes a kingdom (the Millennium). This will be fulfilled in the Millennium or the 1,000-year reign of Christ. This man will rule over his own kingdom (Christ's earthly kingdom) forever and forever! Note: The millennial earthly kingdom of 1,000 years (Rev. 20) is the time when the Son establishes authority over planet earth (see 1 Cor. 15:24). It's the first phase of the eternal kingdom that was promised to Solomon. But this kingdom will turn into an eternal kingdom on earth that will last forever (the eternal state). How wonderful and glorious it is.

The point is this; there will be an heir of David who will rule a kingdom that will be established forever. *The legal right to rule a throne and kingdom forever comes through Solomon's line.* Ultimately this finds fulfillment in the Messiah who will rule forever over the eternal kingdom (Psalm 45:1-6).

A final promise given by God to David through Solomon was that He would oversee Solomon as a father would oversee his child and bring necessary chastening, discipline, and mercy upon Solomon (2 Sam. 7:14-15). These are good quality traits for all of us as fathers to possess as we seek to raise our children. Our children need chastening, discipline, and the demonstration of mercy and love (balance!). If you want to be a true father, then get fathering God's way!

The promises of that are most important to this study are the ones concerning David.

There are three major promises that make up the Davidic Covenant.

1. An eternal seed (vs. 16) – a seed forever (a physical people that can bring forth the kings – word "house") thine house shall be established forever

There is a **present** promise (Israel will always exist as a people) and a **prophetic** promise (Israel as God's people will rule with Him eternally or forever in a kingdom).

Present Promise

God promised, "thine house ... shall be established forever before thee." The term "house" refers to David's physical seed (posterity or people) who come from David's physical line (Psalm 89:3-4, 36; 2 Chron. 21:7). David is ultimately promised that he would have a family of people (house) which stems from his loins that would someday inherit an eternal kingdom over which a king will rule. But this promise contains more than this.

This promise presupposes (assumes) that God would keep the Jewish people alive and the dynasty or physical line of the kings coming into the world through David's physical line. The "house of David" refers to the physical seed of David (Zech 12:10). David himself would not build the literal physical temple (2 Sam. 7: 13) but God promises that David would have another kind of house (physical descendants) that come forth from his own loins that would one day rule in an eternal kingdom. The promise is that David's people would always exist so they could receive the promised kingdom someday. This Davidic promise guarantees that the royal line (lineage) of God's people would never cease from being a people through whom the royal kings could be physically born. There would always be a king that had David's royal blood flowing through his veins. The promise is that a line or house of people (posterity) would continually extend from David and would be the divinely recognized royal line through which a king would one day come. A seed forever!

The "house" promise presupposes that there will always be a royal line of people (royal dynasty) stemming from David or a royal seed will always exist and continue forever. David would always have physical seed and an heir to His throne. This was directly promised to David in verse 11 (Read vs. 11). "He will make thee an house" – this may be speaking once again of David's royal dynasty of people or seed through which kings would be born and be able to reign (see 1 Chronicles 17:10b – "the Lord will build thee an house"). God will never give up on Israel

Thus, God was promising that David's seed or the royal line of his ancestors would produce the kings and that they as a people would endure forever. Turn to Psalm 89, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David, my servant: Thy seed (David's royal seed or lineage - people through which the kings would come) will I establish forever" (vv. 3–4). Again He said, "His seed (people) also will I make to endure forever" (v. 29), and "His seed (David's royal seed or people or lineage - through which the kings would come) shall endure forever" (v. 36).

Even when David's descendant, Jehoram, did evil as the king of Judah, "the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David" (see *2 Chronicle 21:7*). There would always be Jewish people in the world and there will always be a king ready to rule through the Davidic line. God would not go back on His promise. David would have a seed forever (a posterity or people that could produce the king).

Prophetic Promise

Of course, the ultimate promise and fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant is that the house (David's posterity) would actually rule with Christ forever in the kingdom. There would be a group of Jewish brethren in the future who would rule with Christ forever and forever ("thine house shall be established forever"). Someday God will bring His people ("house") into the Promised Land and they will reign with Christ forever with Christ as their King (See Luke 1:33). Jesus will reign over His house forever and forever. God is not finished with His people! He is going to bless their house forever and forever.

2. An eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7:16 - a kingdom forever)

The second major promise God made to David was, "thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee" (v. 16). A kingdom refers to an earthly sphere of rule over a political body of people.

There is a present promise (the kingdom will always have the potential to be restored) and a prophetic promise (it will last forever when it is restored).
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Present Promise

This promise presupposes (assumes) that David's posterity (Israel) will always possess the legal right to inherit a literal, earthly kingdom that will never be taken from them. *God pledged that David's kingdom would never pass away permanently, even though it might not function at all times.* Indeed, it was interrupted when Judah was finally taken into exile (2 Kings 25:1–21). It is a fact of history that David's kingdom has not functioned at all times since God made this promise. But this divine pledge was a guarantee that David's kingdom on earth would always have the potential of being restored to full function in the future. Temporary interruption and even postponement of a kingdom program does not mean that is annulled.

Because of this guarantee of the Davidic Covenant, Jews who lived centuries after David's kingdom had ceased to function, still clung to the hope of that kingdom's restoration. Thus, when Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, throngs of Jews cried out, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father, David, that cometh in the name of the Lord" (see Mark 11:10). Israel and the Jews believed what God has said in the Davidic Covenant.

The people were waiting for the coming of David's son to sit on David's throne and rule over David's house (posterity or people). To deny this is to deny undeniable facts recorded in Scripture! When Jesus was ready to ascend to Heaven, His disciples asked if He would restore the kingdom again at that time. Acts 1:6 reveals: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The promise to the Jewish people is that they will always have the right to possess a literal, earthly kingdom and this right will never be taken from David's posterity.

Prophetic Promise

As we have already said, the promise ("thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee") does not guarantee the earthly kingdom rule would never be interrupted but it does promise that it always has the potential to begin functioning once again. This promise also has a prophetic note attached to it. It's a promise that

one day David's kingdom will become an eternal or unending kingdom without interruption (Hosea 3:4, 5). Dear friend, someday the complete and final fulfillment of an eternal uninterrupted kingdom will be fulfilled. There is coming a future day when Israel's earthly kingdom will begin to function again as it did in the days of David and Solomon and when it does it will never again be interrupted or taken down for it will turn into an eternal kingdom that will have no end (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14).

Someday the Jews would enter into this kingdom blessing forever. The Jewish people knew that the Davidic Covenant promises portrayed a literal fulfillment whereby a king would return and restore the theocracy to Israel that would one day last forever. There are many significant Old Testament references concerning the future Davidic kingdom (Jer. 23:5-6; 30:8-9; 33:14-17, 20-21; Ezek. 37:24-25; Dan. 7:13-14; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 8:11; Zech. 14:4, 9).

Luke 1:32-33 says:

“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.”

The Davidic promise is seen in these verses. The angel Gabriel announced that Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the King who will come to restore David's kingdom. When Jesus finally comes back to the world as the final Davidic heir to the throne He will rule the world forever for “his kingdom there shall be no end.” My friend everything that God has said will come to pass! Jesus has the royal and physical right to rule upon the throne of David and someday when He returns to earth He is going to reestablish the kingdom rule to earthly Israel in the land of Palestine and rule and reign for 1,000 years and then turn the kingdom into His eternal reign on planet earth (Revelation 11:15 – “and he shall reign for ever and ever”).

Zechariah 14:9 says:

“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.”

Psalms 2:6

“Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.”

Isaiah 9:7

“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.”

The promises of the Davidic Covenant speak of an eternal seed (posterity) being ruled in an eternal kingdom where there will be an eternal king from David's line ruling on an eternal throne. Solomon in all of his glory and power never obtained permanent possession of the land in a kingdom rule (Gen. 17:7-8) nor did he occupy all the land in an eternal kingdom. He merely collected tribute money from others who were in the land (2 Chron. 8:8). Temporary ownership is not everlasting ownership or ruling authority over a kingdom that will never end. Since the eternal or unending fulfillment of this covenant has not been fulfilled in Israel's history, because of its unconditional character (2 Sam. 7:13, 16, 23:5; 1 Chron, 17:12; Isa. 55:3; Ezek. 37:25), there must be a future literal fulfillment attached to the covenant. The Davidic Covenant demands a literal fulfillment. I don't care what the amil's and posts say! This means that Christ must come back to sit on David's throne on the earth and reign over David's people forever! Israel will be brought back to her land of inheritance and Christ will rule over Israel in an eternal kingdom. What a glorious promise this is!

Amos 9:11

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.”

The tabernacle of David refers to the lineage of people that have come from David's loins. This expression was used figuratively of David's royal family or people when they lived under the glorious reigns of David and Solomon in their kingdom. Today the national people of Israel are viewed as a fallen tent because they are scattered all over the earth and in need of a restored earthly kingdom. They are a people who need both spiritual and physical repair in that

they need to be saved and have the glory of their earthly kingdom restored. The Jewish people of today are viewed as the broken down “tabernacle of David” since they, as David’s people, have been scattered all over the world, fallen into sin, departed from the truth concerning salvation through the Messiah, and no longer possess an earthly kingdom over which a righteous king rules.

But in the coming day of Christ’s return to earth Israel will be regathered, saved, and enter the earthly kingdom blessings. They will be like a broken down tent that is restored to its former glory when they are regathered together, saved, and once again have their earthly kingdom restored. Someday God is going to once again rebuild the fallen state of the Jews in that He will save them and restore their earthly kingdom. According to the promises of the Davidic Covenant Christ (the King) will build again the fallen and lowly state of the Jewish people by saving and then restoring the physical blessing of the kingdom to the Jews so that the nation will be “as in the days of old” (the days when David and Solomon reigned in a literal earthly kingdom). Since the olden days there has been an interruption in God’s program for Israel but this in no way contradicts future fulfillment as promised in the Davidic Covenant. Interruption does not mean the whole kingdom program is set aside.

Acts 15:16 promises:

“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up”

Isaiah 11:1

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

Jeremiah 23:5

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

Jeremiah 33:14-22

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house

of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

“And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.”

Isaiah 55:3

“Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him *for* a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.”

A Davidic descendent will one day come which will restore the theocracy to Israel and once again bring the people of Israel back into her land to receive the eternal promises of the Davidic Covenant, which is an eternal seed dwelling in an eternal kingdom where an eternal throne will be established over which an eternal king will rule forever.

2 Samuel 7:16

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

3. An eternal throne (“thy throne ... forever” - 2 Samuel 7:16). This speaks of a king forever (royal descendent to reign).

There is a **present** promise (Israel will always have a royal descendent) and a **prophetic** promise (a royal descendent will rule eternally or forever in a kingdom).

Present Promise

The third Davidic Covenant promise concerning David was, “thy throne shall be established forever” (v. 16). Other statements concerning David’s throne (2 Sam. 3:10; 1 Kings 1:37, 47) lead to the conclusion that this is a reference to the ruling authority, which David exercised as king. This ruling authority would never cease through successive generations. A throne speaks of the right to rule and points to the promise that there will always exist in the Davidic line a descendent that would have the royal authority and right to rule as king over Israel. Israel would always have a king forever – a king in the royal line that would have the right to rule and be ready to rule.

David would be the first king in a line of royal or regal rulers (a dynasty of rulers) that would never be destroyed. God would always have a king present who is in the physical line of David. David would always have a ruling seed (ruling descendent) and heir to His throne. *The right to rule on the throne will always belong to David’s offspring.* Even though the line of David sinned grievously, God would carry through to the end His purpose with David and his royal line. And God did just that. He brought the Lord Jesus Christ into the world who will one day rule in David’s line as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

God pledged that the ruling authority which David exercised would never pass away permanently, even though it might not be exercised at all times (2 Chron. 7:18 – “There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel” – see also Jer. 33:20-21). Once again it is a fact of history that David’s ruling authority has not been exercised at all times since God made this promise, but this divine pledge was a guarantee that David’s ruling authority would always have the potential of being restored to full exercise. To put it another way, it was a guarantee that a royal descendant of David would always be available to exercise that authority when circumstances would so permit. God also declared that He had sworn to build up David’s throne “to all generations” (Ps. 89:3–4).

Prophetic Promise

Peter declared that God had sworn with an oath to David “that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne” (Acts 2:30). The ultimate fulfillment of this promise of the Davidic Covenant (eternal throne) will take place when Jesus returns to planet earth to rule and reign upon David’s throne in Israel. Because of this guarantee of the Davidic Covenant, several centuries after David’s ruling authority stopped being exercised, the angel Gabriel could declare concerning David’s descendant, Jesus, “the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever” (Luke 1:32–33). The very fact that Gabriel could make such a promise clearly indicates that even though David’s ruling authority had been inactive for several centuries, it had not passed away permanently. It also indicates that some day the ultimate Davidic King (the Messiah) will rule on His throne forever.

Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would reign “upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom” and then states that it will be “for ever” (Isa. 9:7). Isaiah prophesied concerning the Messiah, “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 justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever” (Isa. 9:7). This is the ultimate prophetic fulfillment of this verse.

Once again, the eternal throne of David promises that there will always be a man in Israel who has the royal authority to rule. And one day Jesus Christ will actually come back to earth, as this man who is an heir to David’s throne, and reestablish the royal and legal authority promised in the Davidic Covenant. The throne of David will once again be restored when Christ, the physical seed of David, returns to reign over all the earth and sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem to rule as the eternal King. King Jesus is the climactic figure of the Davidic dynasty line is Jesus Christ (Messiah). Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the ruling kings that stem from David and the One who will actually rule someday in Jerusalem as the son of David (Matt. 12:23).

The Conclusion

God stated no conditions when He established His covenant with David. Thus, the Davidic Covenant is unconditional in nature. The fulfillment of its promises depends totally upon the faithfulness of God. It is not dependent upon the faithfulness of David or his descendants. This means that the promises are certain to be fulfilled. The certain fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant is emphasized several times in the Bible. In Psalm 89:28-37 God declared that His covenant with David will stand fast, that He will fulfill its promises in spite of disobedience by David's descendants, that He will not permit His faithfulness to fail. To emphasize this all the more, God said, "My covenant will I not break, nor will I alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David" (vv. 34-35).

Psalm 132:11 asserted that God will not turn back from what He has sworn to David. After David's descendants had sinned grievously for centuries, God stated that just as humans cannot break the day and night cycle which God has established, so His covenant with David cannot be broken (Jer. 33:20-21). Again He asserted that He will set up a righteous descendant of David to rule as King (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:14-17; Ezek. 37:24-25; Amos 9:11). Later still God declared His intention to fulfill the promises of the Davidic Covenant in Jesus Christ (Lk. 1:31-33). In all these statements God stated no conditions and left no doubts concerning the covenant's fulfillment. In light of all the Biblical factors examined, it can be concluded that Jesus Christ will fulfill God's promises to David in the Davidic Covenant in the future (after His Second Coming to earth). He will do this by establishing and reigning over a literal, earthly, political kingdom for 1,000 years on this present earth, just as His ancestor David reigned over a literal, earthly, political kingdom on this present earth. If Jesus were to reign over a different kind of kingdom than David did, then He would not really be sitting on David's throne exercising David's ruling authority over David's kingdom. Thus, the Davidic promises will be fulfilled literally by King Jesus just as the Scriptures teach.

Ever since the kingdom was lost, due to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, the Jewish people have been taken under Gentile rule instead of their own kingly rule. Daniel prophesied of the world

nations that would rule over Israel preventing a kingdom to be established that would last forever. Assyria, Babylon, Medes/Persians, Greece, Rome and a coming Revived Roman Empire would rule over the people and keep them from experiencing the eternal promises and blessings of the Davidic Covenant. There has never been an eternal earthly reconstruction of the theocratic kingdom. There has certainly never been a royal or kingly seed in Israel's history that has restored an eternal earthly kingdom and at the same time restored the Davidic throne eternally in the originally stated boundaries of the Promised Land that lasts forever. Only Jesus can reinstate an earthly theocracy over Israel that will last forever. This is because He is the king of kings and Lord of Lords and lives eternally.

Throughout history the kingdom program related to all of Israel's earthly covenant blessings (eternal land, kingdom, and king) has been interrupted with the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities and the Gentiles ruling over Israel. Today the kingdom program for Israel has been postponed (Matt. 21:43). However, after Israel is finished being under Gentile domination and the period known as the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) has run its course, God is going to give the Jews a New Covenant that will save an unbelieving nation (Rom. 11:25-26; Heb. 8:12-13). This will prepare them spiritually to be able to obey God's moral laws so that they can receive and enjoy the benefits of the eternal blessings of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. Their salvation will cause the Messiah to bring them back into the Promised Land whereby they, as a new regenerate people, can enjoy the promises of the Abrahamic, Palestinian, and Davidic Covenant as an obedient people. Jesus will restore the tabernacle of David (David's people and kingdom – Acts 15:15). An everlasting kingdom will be established for Israel that will never again bring them under Gentile domination (Dan. 2:44).

Revelation 11:15 says, "The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Luke 1:33 again reads:

"And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The Old Testament prophets expected a literal fulfillment of these promises. The covenant wording demands a literal fulfillment. The Jews in Jesus day were looking for the fulfillment of the covenant promises. Therefore, the time is coming as prophesied in the Davidic Covenant when a king will return and establish the kingdom over Israel forever. Israel will then experience the literal fulfillment of their Davidic covenant promises – an eternal seed will rule in an eternal kingdom over which an eternal Davidic King will rule on an eternal throne. Micah 5:2, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.”

The Timing of the Millennium

A Christian woman was once talking to a servant of Christ about the assurance of her safety in the Saviour and said, “I have taken a single ticket to Glory, and do not intend to come back.” Whereupon the man of God replied: “You are going to miss a lot. I have taken a return ticket, for I am not only going to meet Christ in Glory, but I am coming back with him in power and great glory to the earth.” This is very true. Dear friend, every child of God should have the hope of one day returning to the earth with the Lord in order to rule and reign with Him (Rev. 19:11-16). But when will this take place? What is the timing of the Millennium?

The Scriptures teach that the Millennium will occur after Jesus Christ returns to earth in His Second Coming. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is going to return “after the tribulation of those days” (Matt. 24:29). This refers to the seven-year Tribulation Period which will fall upon the earth after the Rapture of the Church. It’s after Christ’s Second Coming to planet earth as clearly outlined in Matthew 24 that Jesus will establish His kingdom as outlined in Matthew 25.

Matthew 25:31

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”

Matthew 25:34

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

All dispensational premillennialists will agree that Revelation chapter 19 envisions the time of Christ’s coming to planet earth following the terrible Tribulation Period that has fallen upon mankind. In Revelation 19:11-16 we read about the *return* of Christ. In Revelation 19:17-21 we read about the *retribution* of sinners for when Christ returns He is going to destroy the armies that are prepared to do battle with Him and also cast the beast and false prophet into the Lake of Fire. Then, following the return of Christ and the retribution of sinners, we discover that Christ will *reign* in the Millennium or His one-thousand-year rule over planet earth (Revelation 20:1-6). So the timing of the Millennium is very easy to ascertain. The one-thousand-year rule of Christ will take place following Christ’s return to earth. When the King comes back the King is going to reign. You can’t have a kingdom without a king. The King is coming!

Isaiah 32:1

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.”

The Scope of the Millennium

The Bible prophecies concerning the Millennium, or 1,000-year reign of Christ on planet earth, indicate that His rule will be universal in scope. It will encompass the entire globe. The Scriptures are very clear on this.

Psalms 72:8

“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river **unto the ends of the earth.**”

Zechariah 9:10

“And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from river even **to the ends of the earth.**”

Zechariah 14:9

“And the Lord shall be **king over all the earth**: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.”

Daniel 2:35

“Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to 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.**”

Jeremiah 23:5

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute **judgment and justice in the earth.**”

The fact of Christ’s future universal rule over planet earth cannot be denied or dismissed by the amillennialist. Christ has never ruled the earth before but He will someday rule the entire planet when He returns as the Messianic and Davidic King. To claim that these prophecies somehow picture Christ ruling over the Church today, or Christ ruling in individual human hearts that are yielded to Him, is exegetical fraud. No person who believes in the clear presentation of Biblical facts concerning prophetic truth would ever come to this conclusion.

The Preparation for the Millennium

My wife will sometimes bake bread for the evening meal and I can smell that bread all day long when I am studying. It sets the tone for a good evening meal. Every woman knows that there are preparations that need to be done so that the evening meal can be served to the family. Whether it’s baking bread or making a roast preparation is necessary. In a similar way, when Jesus comes back to earth there are some preparations that need to be done so that the millennial reign of Christ can occur over the earth. In order to prepare for the Millennial Kingdom or the reign of Christ over the earth several events will occur.

A. The Judgment of Living Nations

The Judgment of the living nations found in Matthew 24 and 25 is an event that leads to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. They are not passages of Scripture dealing with the Rapture of the Church since in the Rapture of the Church (the secret coming) Christ takes His Church or bride home to Heaven (John 14:1-3). In the Rapture we will be “caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:17) to ultimately return to Heaven with Christ and be married to Him (Rev. 19:7). Matthew 24 does not envision a time of rapture but Christ’s revelation to earth or when He comes back to reveal Himself to the world and rule on planet earth in the kingdom (Matt. 25:34). Therefore, the context is talking about “the coming of the Son of man” (vs. 27) to establish His earthly kingdom over planet earth.

Matthew 25:31

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”

This is not the secret Rapture but the Second Coming of Christ to earth when He will sit upon David’s throne in Jerusalem and rule as the King (Luke 1:32-33). These chapters deal with Christ’s return to the earth as the King and the preparation that must occur before His rule over the earth. They do not deal with the Rapture when God’s people are rescued from planet earth and taken to Heaven. The mystery of the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-52) and the Second Coming are two distinct events. If we confuse these two events then our eschatology of Matthew 24 and 25 will not make sense. Let me repeat. The Rapture of the church is a distinct event from Christ’s Second Coming to earth.

In the Rapture Christ returns *for* His saints (1 Thess. 4:17) in order to take them back to Heaven. In the Second Coming Christ returns *with* His saints (Rev. 19:14 – “the armies of heaven followed him”) to rule and reign over the earth. Matthew 24 and 25 cannot be referring to Christ’s coming for the Church in the Rapture since it occurs after the Tribulation Period (vs. 29). The Bible does not teach a post-tribulational Rapture (Rev. 3:10; 1 Thess. 1:10). The Rapture is not going to occur when Jesus comes back to earth. The Rapture is a

pretribulational event that rescues people from planet earth (1 Thess. 5:2-4, 9-10). The Rapture takes God's people to Heaven for seven years in order to be with Christ in the place that He has prepared for them (John 14:1-3).

There is no mention of people returning to Heaven in the context and flow of Matthew 24-25. Just the opposite is true. The context speaks of Christ ruling over the earth as King (Matt. 25:34, 40) and judging the earth in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom. None of this said to occur at the Rapture. This context is dealing with "the coming of the Son of man" (Matt. 24:27) in relationship to His return to earth for His kingly reign. The Rapture and God's people in Heaven are not the subject matter of these chapters and therefore they cannot be referring to the Rapture of the Church.

The subject matter found in Matthew chapters 24 and 25 has to do with the King's judgment of the living nations that remain on earth following the Tribulation days. In these chapters we have Christ judging the surviving nations of the Tribulation Period. The context of Matthew 24:29 says that Christ will return "after the tribulation of those days" and what follows is a scene of judgment and preparation for the Millennial Kingdom. The only correct approach to Matthew 24-25 is a futurist interpretation.

The preterist (past) interpretive approach of Reformed Theology attempts to interpret the judgments of Matthew 24-25 in relationship to the AD 70 Roman judgment that fell upon Israel. Why do so many do this today? It's because they don't want any future for Israel as a national people since the Church in their scheme of theology has supposedly replaced Israel. They can't have God working with two different classes of people. Therefore, a literal Tribulation Period, a literal Jewish nation in the future, a literal Millennial Kingdom, a literal future for Israel in the Kingdom, and for some extreme preterists, a literal Second Coming of Christ to earth must be done away with. Why? It's because these events would shatter their amillennial (no millennium) interpretation of the Bible and prophecy. Let me just say one thing. To try and interpret Matthew 24-25 as referring to past historical events in order to get rid of Israel is like trying to eat noodle soup with a fork. It can't be done. Trying to interpret Matthew 24-25 historically is what I call the schizophrenia interpretation of these

Bible verses. These verses are dealing with the future and not the past.

There is coming a time of terrible Tribulation over the earth that the world has never before experienced (“such as was not since the beginning of the world” – Matt. 24:21). We look at New Orleans and see this is as a terrible tragedy but think of how terrible it will be when God sends His cataclysmic judgment all over the world. The world has not yet witnessed the thunderbolts of God’s wrath like it will during the seven-year Tribulation Period. There is coming a time of terrible tribulation upon planet earth. You might call me a prophet of doom and gloom but this is what the Bible teaches. God is going to judge mankind on planet earth for his wickedness. Sin cannot go unchecked forever. However, the point we are studying is that following the Tribulation Period and His Second Coming Christ will judge the people of the world. Let’s examine the two classes of people that Christ will judge.

1. The Jewish nation.

Jesus wants to gather His national Jewish people together under His rulership (Matt. 23:37) but because of Israel’s rejection this will not happen until they confess that He is their Messiah at His Second Coming (Matt. 23:38) when He finally does regather them (Matt. 24:30-31). This is the setting and backdrop for Matthew 24-25. It’s a Jewish setting. This can be further proven since Christ was talking to the people about their Jewish temple (Matt. 24:1). He was not talking about church truth in these chapters but Jewish people and events that revolve around them during the coming Tribulation Period. Christ was directly talking to the disciples who were Jewish (Matt. 24:1-2, 4, 6, 9, 15-22).

Jesus had been talking about the Jewish people and how they, as a national people with their appropriate “tribes” (vs. 30), will one day be gathered together at His coming (“and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other” - Matt. 24: 31). This envisions the time when Israel, who is called God’s elect nation (“Israel my elect” - Isa. 45:4), will be regathered from all parts across the globe and be brought together as a national people to be examined and judged. God is going to accomplish this through

angelic means. Christ assures us that there will a generation of Jews (“this generation” – vs. 34) living during the time period of the Tribulation Period who will witness the signs (“when ye shall see all these things” – vs. 33) that will be taking place on earth and who will be able to discern that His coming or return to planet earth is near (“know that it is near, even at the doors”).

This is a Jewish generation and not a church generation! The church generation will not see the signs of the Tribulation Period. The context has reference to Christ’s coming to earth to judge planet earth and the Jewish people during these coming days will be able to know by the events that are occurring that Christ’s Second Coming to earth is near. The Jews we will be able to look for signs in these days. This reminds us of the old saying: “Signs are for Israel – not the Church.” In other words, the nation of Israel can look for the tribulation signs that will occur during this future time period (Matt. 24:3-26) and know that when they see the *signs of the times* (tribulation signs occurring) that Christ’s Second Coming to earth is near.

The Church today is never told to look for signs that must occur before the Rapture. Many people get caught up in what they call “the signs of the times” but really we are never told to be looking for signs in connection with the Rapture. The Church is to be listening for the sound of the trumpet and looking for the Savior to return at any moment. *No signs need to be fulfilled in order for Christ to return in the Rapture. God never said that specific signs must occur before He returns in the Rapture.* Of course, we can’t help but see general trends (global dependency on each other, European Common Market, Israel in the land, wars and rumors of wars [terrorism], the increase of natural disasters) developing today that would tell us that God’s Word is true, that we are headed toward the Tribulation Period, and the Rapture is going to take place just as God promised. There are prophetic stage-setting events occurring in our world today that is preparing the world for the Tribulation Period.

These events are not specific signs that *must* occur before the Rapture can take place but *general trends* that inform us that what God has said is going to happen. The prophetic stage-setting events taking shape in our world today inform us that the Rapture can’t be

far away. One thing is certain. The Rapture is the next prophetic event on God's calendar. So the Church was never given specific Tribulation signs that had to occur before Christ comes in the Rapture. However, there are specific signs that must take place on earth before Christ's Second Coming can occur. In spite of all the signs occurring no Jew will be able to discern the exact time of Christ's Second Coming to earth (Matt. 24:36).

When Christ returns the national Jewish people are going to be regathered, as depicted in Matthew 24:31, and then judged, as depicted in the following verses of Matthew 24:36-25:30. Contextually this fits since Jesus has been speaking about Israel and since Israel is regathered. The chronology of events also stresses the truth that Israel is in the Lord's minds. At the Second Coming to earth the Jews are going to be regathered before the King in order to experience an examination and judgment at the hands of the Messiah. This judgment is designed to separate saved Israel from unsaved Israel which will ultimately be determined by their manner of works. Paul reminds us that "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26) and officially declared as being forgiven by the Messiah and King.

This expression "all Israel" can only refer to believing Israel who has placed faith in her Messiah, either before or at Christ's Second Coming, for the rest of unbelieving Israel will not enter the kingdom ("and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" – vs. 26). Indeed, an examination and judgment of Israel will occur at the Second Coming to determine those who are saved and unsaved. Matthew 24:36-25:30 reveals that the salvation of the Jews, who actually came to faith in the Messiah during the Tribulation Period, will be determined on the basis of their works or overall manner of living. Their works will confirm their salvation in the Messiah.

This examination and judgment will occur somewhere in a place called the wilderness ("I will bring you into the wilderness" and "Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt" - Ezek. 20:33-38). Perhaps the place will be Kadesh Barnea for it's here the people were historically examined for their faith and judged by the Lord for their lack of faith or unbelief (Numbers 13:26-14:1-35). They wondered in this area for 38 years before entering the Promised Land. Consequently, the wilderness of Kadesh ("a sanctuary in the

desert”) became a place of judgment where the rebellious people were sentenced to complete forty years of wandering. The point is this. As the original Exodus from Egypt brought Israel out of bondage into the wilderness, so God’s new exodus would also bring Israel from the countries of the world where she has been scattered, in order for God to examine her once again in the wilderness of Kadesh Barnea. The Messiah and returning King will determine which Jews are going to enter the Millennial Kingdom.

So these parables are important lessons that relate to Israel. The context and flow of the Matthew 23-25 all relate them to Israel and specifically to a future “generation” (Matt. 24:34) of Jews that will experience the Tribulation Period and then the Second Coming of Christ to earth. Most of the parables in the New Testament relate directly to Israel. Often they relate to Israel's rejection of Jesus as their Messiah and speak of consequences that will flow from such an act. Christ told His disciples in Matthew 13:10 that He would speak "unto them" (Israel) in parables in order to blind them to the truth because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. So everything in the parables that follow in some way relates to Israel.

The Jewish judgment of Israel at the Second Coming is demonstrated in three ways:

- a. They are judged as servants (Matt. 24:37-51).

The unsaved world living during the Tribulation Period, along with unbelieving Israel, will not be prepared for the Kings return. They will be living for themselves as the people did in the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26- 27; 2 Pet. 2:4- 11). The point appears to imply luxurious and unprepared living that is independent of God. In Noah’s day the flood came suddenly upon the unbelieving world and “took them all away” (vs. 39). The same will be true when Jesus returns as the King. The judgment associated with the Second Coming will sweep upon them like a flood. Jesus explains what the judgment will be like. Two Jewish people will be doing their normal routine of work when suddenly the King returns and takes the unbelieving Jew into judgment while the believing Jew is left to enter the Millennial Kingdom (vv. 40-41). Although these verses have been used as

Rapture passages they are actually a reversal of what is going to take place in the Rapture.

In the Rapture the saved are going to be taken and the unsaved are left on earth to be judged during the Tribulation Period. When Jesus returns as the King in His Second Coming the person who is taken away into judgment is the unbeliever and the believer is left on earth to enter the Kingdom. How do I know this? The context gives us the answer. Who was taken away in the days of Noah? It was the unbelievers who were taken into judgment (vs. 39). Noah sailed across the seas in the ark of safety. The same will be true when the King returns. The unbelieving Jews will be judged while the believing Jews will be saved and enter the Millennial Kingdom.

Fienberg states:

“The ones left will enjoy the blessings of Christ’s reign on earth, just as Noah and his family were left to continue life on earth. This is the opposite of the rapture, where those who are left go into the judgment of the Great Tribulation.”

The people in Noah’s day were indifferent. Although they were warned that a flood was coming, they lived as if they were flood-proof. Let me tell you, they didn’t have flood insurance! When the flood came, they were unprepared, outside the only place of safety – the ark. That is just the way it will be when Christ returns in His Second Coming. Only those Jews who are in saved, who are in the ark of safety, will be delivered and enter the earthly reign of the Messiah.

The Jewish people were to “watch” for Christ’s Second Coming to earth and be saved or spiritually prepared for His return (vs. 42). When the day of reckoning and judgment comes the unsaved Jews will be held accountable for their sinful actions. Jesus then explains that if a “goodman” or householder (head of the home and homeowner) would be prepared or ready for a thief to break into his home then the thief would not harm his family (“suffered his house to be broken up” – vs. 43). In a similar way the Jewish nation should be prepared for Christ’s appearance in His Second Coming by being saved. When Jesus said, “Therefore be ye also ready” (vs. 44) he as talking about the Jews being spiritually prepared to meet the Messiah

when He returns. The only way they could be prepared to meet the Messiah is to be saved. In this context, being ready seems to refer primarily being saved, of being spiritually prepared to meet Christ as Savior and King rather than their Judge. Thus, our Lord is letting Israel know that they need to be prepared for His return, whenever that is. Preparation is made when one trusts Jesus as their Messiah. Since no man knows the hour of the Second Coming (vs. 36) it's vitally important that the Jews be spiritually prepared for His Second Coming. *Jesus is like a thief in one respect and many Jews will not expect His coming.*

The point of this parable is that if a homeowner knows the general time when a thief will break in he will prepare accordingly. The signs of the times during the Tribulation that Jesus revealed (vv. 5–22) were given to enable the Jewish people to know the general time Christ will return to earth. Consequently, Jewish people living during the Tribulation should prepare themselves. They should be saved and ready to meet their Messiah when he returns. The sad conclusion is that many will not be ready and spiritually prepared for His Second Coming for they were not able to discern the signs of the times (Matt. 16:3).

The illustration of servants being rewarded when Jesus returns at His Second Coming applies to the Jewish people. Saved Jews are compared to a faithful and wise servant who fulfills his duties (vv. 44-46). No man's salvation comes as a result of His service and work but the *fruit* of his salvation is demonstrated by the manner in which he lives. Works are always an *evidence* of salvation; they are never the *ground* of salvation (Eph. 2:8-10; James 2:26; Titus 2:10-14). The prophetic portions of Scripture that we are dealing with do not talk about the ground of salvation but the genuine fruit that comes from salvation. The way of salvation is not addressed in Matthew 24-25 but the evidence of salvation is alluded to by the manner of faithful servants, righteous living, wise living, faithful service, and loving actions are commended by the King. The Jewish people will be rewarded when Jesus returns for the Bible says that "he shall make him ruler over all his goods" (vs. 47). The reward is actually a place of recognition and honor in the coming Millennial Kingdom.

The unsaved Jews are compared to an “evil servant” (vs. 48) who fails to comply with God’s holy standard. The delay of his master’s return means that he can ride roughshod over other people and mistreat them (vs. 49). The analogy to the Second Coming of Christ is clear. There will be those Jews who will think that they can live the vanity fair life and ignore Jesus Christ. They will not be saved and prepared to meet the Messiah when He returns for he will come “in an hour that he is not aware of” (vs. 50). In other words, unbelieving Jews will not be prepared to receive the Messiah when He returns. Their hearts will be hard and they will reject his messianic claims and kingliness. Therefore, when Jesus returns in His Second Coming He will take the unsaved Jew, the wicked and evil servant, and cast him into the judgment of Hades (vs. 51).

The unsaved Jews will not enter the Millennial Kingdom. Instead, they will enter judgment and experience “weeping and gnashing of teeth” or intense wailing and the gnawing of teeth in pain in view of the agony of their judgment. Dear friend, God is still a God of judgment and when Jesus returns He is going to judge the unsaved Jews by casting them into the temporary holding tank of Hades (the place of suffering in the middle of planet earth) where they will await their resurrection at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

b. They are judged as virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).

This parable also deals with the Jews living in the Tribulation Period. This is seen from various facts. The flow of context favors this view (Matthew 24:3, 8, 14, 15, 30, 31, 33, 42, 44, 47, 51). The mention of “my brethren” (Matt. 25:40) or the Jewish brethren of Jesus Christ later in the chapter, also verifies that God still has Israel in mind. The subject being discussed is the end time, the final years before the kingdom is established on planet earth. During this time the church will be absent from the earth (John 14:1-3; Rev. 3:10). Therefore, this section deals with a Jewish period of time and not truth that is directed toward the church.

This prophetic parable pictures a Jewish wedding march. In the phase of the Jewish wedding festivities called “the taking of a bride” the bridegroom would come to escort his bride back to his father’s house and chamber to consummate the marriage. This would be a

time of festivity and much like a parade as we know it today. This march had ten virgins. The nighttime procession would use lamps to light the way because ancient cities did not have streetlights. This is the background of the prophetic parable. Now how does it relate to Israel? Remember, the flow of the context has been talking about national Israel. This same thought is reestablished in Matthew 25. In this parable Israel as a nation is pictured as ten virgins who needed to carry lamps in the wedding march or processional.

The expression “kingdom of heaven” (vs. 1) in Matthew speaks of the time when heaven will rule the earth in the Millennial Kingdom. The time reference points to the time when Christ returns to rule planet earth. The events associated with Christ’s Second Coming and kingdom rule are “likened” or compared to ten virgins who were waiting for a bridegroom to come and claim his bride. They were to be ready for the appearance of the bridegroom so they could follow in the processional and enter the wedding feast and festivities at the home of the bridegroom’s father.

Possessing oil illustrates the concept of being prepared. Lack of oil represents being unprepared for Christ’s Second Coming. This is the way it will be for Israel when Christ returns. There will be saved Jews who are pictured as virgins who have kept their lamps burning and foolish virgins who have left their lamps go out (vv. 2-9). These verses reveal that when “the bridegroom cometh” (the Second Coming – vs. 6) then those Jews who are prepared and have their lamps burning will be able to follow the Bridegroom (the Messiah) into the festivities and feast of the Millennial Kingdom. There were five foolish virgins (representative of unsaved Israel) who were not prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. Those who were saved, as illustrated by their oil burning lamps, were able to follow the bridegroom when he came into the marriage feast (vs. 10). In a similar way only the saved Jews will be able to enter into the Millennial Kingdom when Christ returns to earth. Unsaved Israel in the Tribulation will not know that Jesus’ coming is near and she will not be spiritually prepared for it. His coming will be sudden when it is not expected (Matt. 24:39, 50).

Sadly, when the bridegroom came five of the virgins, who did not keep their lamps trimmed and burning (representative of unsaved

Israel), were not ready and “the door was shut” (vs. 10) and therefore they could not enter into the wedding banquet and festivities with the bridegroom. This is a very clear picture how the door of the Millennial Kingdom will be shut to unsaved Jews (Matt. 22:1-14). The unsaved at the time of the Lord’s Second Coming will say “Lord, Lord, open to us” (Matt. 25:11) but the door of entrance into the Millennial Kingdom will be shut and they will not enter as unsaved Jews (Matt. 7:21-23). Just as Jesus said, “I never knew you” in Matt. 7:23, so here He says, “I know you not” (I don’t know you – Matt. 25:12). One thing is certain. Entrance into the kingdom is only by new birth (John 3:5). No unsaved Jews will enter the kingdom (Matt. 13:43). For this reason, the Jewish people living during the coming Tribulation days should be saved, prepared, and watching for the return of “the Son of man” (Matt. 25:13) to establish the Millennial Kingdom.

c. They are judged as stewards (Matt. 25:14-30).

The final parable related to Jewish judgment can also be seen in Matthew 25. Let’s review the setting for the parables and points of Mathew 24-25 once again in order to see their Jewish connection.

Matthew 21:43

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

Matthew 23:33

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

Matthew 23:37-38

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

Jesus signifies by these statements that He was temporarily setting aside the nation of Israel for her unbelief in Him. As a result, He would judge her in the AD 70 Roman judgment (‘house is left unto you desolate’). This judgment occurred historically to teach that God

had temporarily set aside national Israel (Rom. 11:12 – “if the fall of them be the riches of the world”) from the place of blessing. This sets the stage for the parables that follow. Israel (vs. 2 - “Jesus said unto them” - His Jewish disciples) would experience an AD judgment under the Romans (Matt. 24:1-2), illustrating how they would be officially set aside from the place of blessing until His Second Coming at the “end of the age” (Tribulation Age – Matt. 24:21). Another “generation” of Jews (Matt. 24:33) or “nation” (Matt. 21:43) who are alive during Christ’s Second Coming will receive Him as Messiah and say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23:39). This will be the time when Israel is regathered to enter the glorious kingdom (Matt. 24:31).

When Christ returns the national Jewish people are going to be regathered, as depicted in Matthew 24:31, and then judged, as depicted in the following verses of Matthew 24:36-25:30. Everything in the parables of Matthew 24-25 in some way relates to Israel’s judgment at the Second Coming.

This prophetic parable continues to address the Jewish nation and how the Messiah is going to judge them when He returns. One again the “kingdom of heaven” (25:14) speaks of the time when heaven will rule the earth in the Millennial Kingdom. The Second Coming and the events associated with this coming kingdom are likened or compared to a master who travels into a far country and requires his stewards to be faithful while he is gone (Matt. 24:14; Luke 20:9). Most of the *parables that Jesus taught are kingdom parables which reference His earthly messianic rule over the earth*. This means the parables are set in the context of Israel’s rejection of the Messiah and His kingdom during His earthly ministry, the temporary removal of Israel from the place of privilege and blessing, their future discipline during the Tribulation Period, and the events that are associated with Christ’s Second Coming to earth. This kingdom parable is no exception. In this particular parable the master went on a journey and gave each servant a specific amount of money, talents. This reflects how Jesus ascended back to Heaven (Acts 1:9-11) before His Second Coming (Acts 1:6) and how Israel was to be a good steward during the King’s absence.

Of course, this is not true of Israel today nor will it be true of many Jews who are living when the Messiah returns in His Second Coming. They are not good stewards that express faithfulness to God in their everyday service to God, living, and actions. In other words, Israel is not faithful to her God. In this parable the master gave every steward the amount of money which he could handle (“according to his several ability” – vs. 15). In other words, the amounts were in keeping with the steward’s abilities. God knows what we can handle and what we cannot handle and requires us to be faithful with the things that he has blessed us with (1 Cor. 4:2). To whom much is given much is required (Luke 12:48). The parable reveals that two out of the three servants were good stewards of the money that the master gave to them. They gained interest on their money by using good business sense (vv. 16-18). However, the one unfaithful servant hoarded what was given to him, hid his money in the ground, and failed to invest (vs. 18).

Eventually the master returned (“the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them” – vs. 19). This refers to the Second Coming once again, as do all the other references in these kingdom parables, and envisions the time when Israel, as Messiah’s servants, is going to be examined (vs. 20). When King Jesus returns to earth those faithful stewards (representative of saved Israel), who have invested wisely, will enter the Millennial Kingdom and be rewarded for their faithful stewardship (“Well done, thou good and faithful servant” – vs. 21).

When the King returns He is going to allow saved Israel to enter the Millennial Kingdom and express thanks to them for their faithful service. Their allotment and reward in the kingdom will be to rule with the Messiah and King Jesus in direct proportion to their faithfulness (“faithful over a few things” and “ruler over many things” – vv. 21-23). When the King says, “enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (vv. 21, 23) it is a reference to the Millennial Kingdom and the joyous time it will be for saved Israel (Isa. 55:12). Please note that God honors faithfulness in relationship to “few things” and will reward us in relationship to how faithful we are to that which He has entrusted to us. Little is much when God is in it! We must learn to be faithful over the small things that God entrusts to us and when we are we can be sure that God will reward us in eternity. Reward is associated with the Millennial

Kingdom and the Jewish people taught that they would receive reward according to their faithfulness (Matt. 16:27).

The unfaithful steward that did not earn any money from the one talent given to him began to speak against his master when the master returned. When the third steward said his master was a “hard” man (a harsh man and man without mercy – vs. 24), he meant that he exploited the labor of others, namely himself, and his other slaves. He claimed that his master took advantage of the work of other people and did not reward them properly. This unfaithful slave evidently felt that his master would not share many of the rewards of his labor with him if he proved successful and would punish him severely if he failed. So he figured he was in a no-win situation. The fact that he had received less than the other slaves also seemed to make him resentful and he ignored his responsibility to the master and his obligation to discharge his duty. We can conclude that this steward showed no love for his master while he blamed him and chided him and attempted to cover up his own failure. This servant was an unbeliever for no genuine servant would entertain these kinds of thoughts of His true Master.

The obvious connection with Israel is this. When Jesus returns as the King unsaved Israel (representative of the unfaithful steward) will be give many excuses for their unfaithful commitment to their Messiah but in the end their excuses will not stand the test. The same was true during His earthly ministry when He offered the kingdom to the Jewish people. Jesus gave another parable to illustrate how unbelieving Israel gave many excuses or not accepting Him as the King and Messiah.

Luke 14:16-24

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the

house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.”

These people in this parable represent the remainder of humanity. They are the spiritually needy people, ceremonially unclean Jews and Gentiles (outcasts from a Jewish perspective), who not only lived during Jesus' day but who would also live in the ages that follow, in the period of time that precedes the millennial banquet and the beginning of the earthly kingdom. The invitation anticipates the Great Commission, the spreading of the Gospel to the Gentile masses, and the Gentile people who are saved and spared to enter the earthly kingdom (Matt. 25:31-40) during the Tribulation Period, which is a time preceding the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom on planet earth. According to God's dispensational plan the kingdom would be postponed (Matt. 21:43) and a Gospel outreach (salvation invitation) would take place prior to the arrival of the kingdom throughout the Church Age and Tribulation Period (Matt. 13:18-23).

When returning to Matthew 25 we discover that this man's excuse was that he feared his master but it was not genuine. The steward claimed to be “afraid” (vs. 25) of the master for his harshness and unfairness and therefore hid his money in the earth to at least return the original amount. Of course, this was not true. The master saw through this cover-up excuse. If he really feared his master he would have at least put the money into a place of saving's and earned some additional money on it (vv. 26-27). In other words, if the steward or servant really did fear his master he would have tried to earn some “usury” or interest on the money with the “exchangers” (money broker and banker - vs. 27). However, the unfaithful steward failed to do anything with the one talent given to him. This is why the master called him a “wicked” and “slothful” (lazy) servant (vs. 26) which simply means to be unfaithful. This of course depicts unsaved Israel who at Christ's Second Coming (“at thy coming” – vs. 27) will give all kinds of excuses for not being faithful in their service to the Messiah.

But Jesus as the King will not accept their excuses. He will deem them wicked and lazy.

Rather than giving this servant increased responsibility the master took back the talent he had entrusted to him indicating that it should be given to those who know how to use their money wisely, even if one already has ten talents (vv. 28-29). Verse 29 explains what verse 28 means by expressing a principle for the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 13:12). Those saved Jews who are given spiritual responsibility and use it wisely are given even more responsibility so that they can gain even greater “abundance” (reward) in the Millennial Kingdom (vv. 21, 23). On the other hand, those unsaved Jews who have nothing to give to the King when He returns will lose everything (“shall be taken away even that which he that” - vs. 29b). This simply means that unsaved Israel will lose the privilege she had to accept the Messiah as her Savior and live a life of faithfulness before Him. Jesus as the King will remove Israel’s opportunity to serve Him any further. Think of this way. All this man had to show for his life was a hole in the ground! In the end he had nothing. The same will be true of all unbelievers. They will have nothing to show for their lives.

The master then deems the unfaithful steward worthless. In a similar way Jesus as the King will also declare to the unsaved Jews that “unprofitable” (worthless - vs. 30) because they had failed to do the Messiah’s will. The King will declare unsaved Jews “wicked,” “lazy” (vs. 26), and “unprofitable” (vs. 30) servants and cast them into the fiery flames of Hades (“cast ... into outer darkness” - vs. - 30). Rather than blessing unbelieving Israel with the joy of fellowship in the Kingdom (vv. 21, 23) unfaithful and unbelieving Israel will have to depart from the Messiah’s presence much like the slave had to depart from his master’s presence in the parable. The departure is described in terms of great suffering, agony, and hardship. Such will be the case for unsaved Jews when they are cast into the fires of Hades at the Second Coming (Matt. 3:12; 13:41-42). Like the unworthy servant in 24:48-51, the unfaithful steward will be eternally separated from God. Everywhere else in Matthew’s Gospel where the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” occurs it refers to the final condition of unbelievers suffering pain and torment (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51). The darkness outside (vs. 30) contrasts with the joy inside the messianic banquet and kingdom (vv. 21, 23).

In conclusion, the unfaithful steward represents unbelieving Jews in the Tribulation who are alive when Jesus returns to earth. Christ as the King will judge unbelieving Jews as rebels (“I will cause you to pass under the rod” and “I will purge out the rebels” “and they shall not enter into the land of Israel” - Ezek. 20:38). The Messiah will keep them from entering the Millennial Kingdom (“the children of the kingdom shall be cast out” - Matt. 8:12). The angels will “gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity” (Matt. 13:41). The Messiah “shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Rom. 11:26). One thing is certain. Only saved Jews will enter the promised messianic kingdom.

Following the Tribulation Period (Matt. 24:29) there will be a supernatural worldwide regathering of surviving Israel (Matt. 24:31), and when this examination and judgment is passed, only believing Jews will remain to enter the Golden Age of the Millennial Kingdom. It will then be fulfilled that “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26). This refers to believing Israel (Rom. 2:28-29; 9:26-27) who has embraced the Messiah as her Savior either *before* or *after* Christ’s Second Coming. Together all saved Jews as a corporate believing nation, who have come to faith in her Messiah and returning King, will be officially declared as forgiven by her Messiah on the basis of the New Covenant (“For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins” – Rom. 11:27). Believing or saved Israel, as an entire nation, will then be given the privilege to enter the Millennium and inherit the covenant promises revolving around “the sure mercies of David” (Isa. 55:3; Acts 13:34).

2. The Gentile Nations

The New Testament teaches there will be two distinct judgments. The Judgment of the Living Nations or Gentile nations (Matt. 25:32) will occur “after the tribulation of those days (Matt. 24:27-29) and just before the messianic kingdom begins. Following this time of judgment saved people will “inherit the kingdom” (Matt. 25:34). However, another judgment will follow the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:7 – “when the thousand years are expired”). The one following the Millennium is called the Great White Throne Judgment. This is the time when God sends all unbelievers to hell or the eternal Lake of

Fire (Rev. 20:11–15). There are some differences between these two judgments that demonstrate they are distinct or separate judgments occurring at different times. The Judgment of the Living Nations in Matthew 24-25 will not involve a resurrection of unbelievers. It will only deal with unbelievers who are alive on the earth following the Tribulation Period. However, the Great White Throne Judgment will involve a resurrection of unbelievers (Rev. 20:12). The Judgment of the Living Nations will involve three different kinds of people (sheep, goats, my brethren) whereas the Great White Throne Judgment involves only the unsaved wicked (Rev. 20:13–15). The Judgment of the Living Nations will result in some people inheriting the earthly kingdom (Matt. 25:34) or theocracy and others receiving punishment in Hades (Matt. 25:46) whereas the Great White Throne Judgment will result in everyone being judged in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15).

There are two classes of people that Christ will judge at His Second Coming. First, He will judge the Jewish people as we have already outlined in the first three parables. Second, Christ will also judge the living Gentile masses of humanity who survive the Tribulation Period. This is outlined in the remaining portion of Matthew 25:31-46. An abrupt change occurs in Matthew 24:31-32.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”

a. The people of this judgment

After discussing the Jewish judgment within the first three parables Jesus now turns to describe a second phase of His judgment regarding the surviving nations on planet earth. Although some have interpreted the word “nations” (Matt. 25:32) to mean all people of the world, including the Jews, it seems much more reasonable in the flow of context to interpret the expression “all nations” as referring to the Gentile nations that are in direct contrast to the Jewish nation that was previously judged. The expression “nations” (ethnos) refers to Gentiles when it is used in a contrasting way with Jewish people (Luke 21:24; Acts 14:16).

The immediate context will let us know whether the term “nations” refers to Gentile humanity or all people (Jew and Gentile) as it does elsewhere (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 16:26; Rev. 15:4). The appearance of the word “ethnos” following a Jewish judgment (Matt. 24:32 -25:1-30) suggests that Jesus now has in mind a Gentile judgment as He did earlier in the parable of the drag-net (Matt. 13:47-50). When the Son of Man returns to earth, there will not only be a sweeping judgment of Jewish people, but a judgment of the great masses of Gentile humanity. The final parable indicates this judgment upon the Gentile people who survive the Tribulation Period. This interpretation links up perfectly with Joel’s prophecy which envisions the Gentile masses being examined in light of their treatment of the Jewish people (Joel. 3:1-2). This is exactly what Matthew 25 prophetically portrays. The “nations” of Gentile humanity will be judged on the basis of how they have treated the Jews (Matt. 25:40 – “my brethren”). So “all nations” references the populace of Gentile nations who are being examined for their treatment of the Jewish people. In Matthew 25:31-46 the judgment of the Gentile nations are now contrasted to the Jewish nation.

b. The glory of this judgment

Jesus mentions about returning “in his glory” (Matt. 25:31) which speaks of the visible expression of His brilliance and radiance (Matt. 24:27). Jesus is going to return to earth in “power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30). When Jesus returns to establish His earthly kingdom it will not be a secret coming, as in the Rapture, when Jesus takes away His children to Heaven (1 Cor. 15:51-52). In the Rapture Jesus is going to return in the air and then return to Heaven without any fanfare (John 14:1-3). However, when Jesus returns to planet earth, it will involve the display of Christ’s spectacular shekinah glory and presence, which will dazzle the entire world of humanity.

The text reveals that Jesus Christ will at this time also “sit upon the throne of his glory” (Matt. 25:31). This refers to the literal earthly throne of David (Luke 1:32 – “shall give unto him the throne of his father David”) that was promised through the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16). The covenant promised that an heir of King David would sit on his throne someday in Jerusalem and that this heir and throne would “be established for ever.” What a promise! Someday Jesus

Christ is going to return to earth and sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem. If words mean something then what was promised in the covenants will come to pass.

Isaiah 9:7 says:

“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.”

c. The helpers in this judgment

Jesus says that He will also return with “all the holy angels” (Matt. 25:31). The angels will apparently assist Christ in this judgment. Jesus had previously spoken of the angels’ role of assisting Him at this time of judgment (Matt. 13:41-42, 49-50; 16:27) which is connected with His Second Advent. The angels will apparently supernaturally gather the nations of humanity together at Christ’s Second Coming. First, the angels will gather the Jews together in order to be judged (Matt. 24:31) and then they will gather the Gentiles together for judgment (Matt. 25:31-32).

This Judgment of the Living Nations is likened to a harvest. Jesus said in Matthew 13:30:

“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” The unsaved will be gathered as unusable “tares” and burned while the saved will be harvested to enter the “barn” which is a reference to the earthly Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 13:43). The angles are the reapers of this judgment (Matt. 13:39). They will play an important role.

This Judgment of the Living Nations is also likened to a great sweeping net traveling across the sea catching everything in site.

Matthew 13:47-50

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they

drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

The expression “every kind” speaks of both saved and unsaved people at this judgment, which occurs at Christ’s Second Coming. The unsaved are comparable to “the bad” vessels that are cast away. Jesus then explains how the angels will sever the unsaved (“wicked”) from the saved (“just”) through angelic means. So Jesus repeatedly speaks of the important role holy angels will have in this time of judgment (The Judgment of the Living Nations) following the Tribulation Period. The judgment scene of the living nations on planet earth will set the stage for Messiah’s worldwide reign. We now must highlight the specifics of the Gentile judgment.

d. The place of this judgment

The Gentile judgment recorded in Matthew 25 may occur in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The prophetic Scripture in Joel envision the Second Coming of Christ as a time of heathen or Gentile judgment.

Joel 3:2

“I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them (pronounce sentence against them) there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”

This is the only passage in Scripture that names a potential site for this Gentile judgment which is recorded in more detail in Matthew 25. We know that the armies of Armageddon will be judged in this geographical region (Joel 3:9-16) and some suggest this is what Joel 3:2 is referencing. This may be the case. However, it is possible that the judgment of the Gentile nations, which occurs after Armageddon, will occur in the Valley of Jehoshaphat also, whereas the Jewish judgment may occur in the wilderness of Kadesh Barnea (“I will bring you into the wilderness” and “Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt” - Ezek. 20:33-38). You will remember that it was here where the Jewish people were historically

examined for their faith and judged by the Lord for their lack of faith or unbelief (Numbers 13:26-14:1-35).

The Gentile judgment may then occur in the Valley of Jehoshaphat which many have historically identified as the Kidron Valley, located on the east side of old Jerusalem. One thing is certain. The surviving Gentiles of the Tribulation Period may be required to file through this place and be judged by the King before the Millennial Kingdom is established. The angels will assist in the gathering of the Gentile masses that are left after the Tribulation Period (Matt. 13:30, 39-43).

Many wonder how God will accomplish this monumental task of judgment. How can millions of Gentile people file through the Valley of Jehoshaphat and be examined for judgment? Before answering this question, we might ask other questions? How can millions of people be raptured from the earth before the Tribulation Period? How can people die and go to Heaven? How can 100-pound hail stones and fire fall out of heaven? How can God create the world and universe in only six days? All of these events are accomplished by the supernatural power of God and this is how the Gentiles will be gathered and judged at the Second Coming. They will experience a supernatural angelic gathering and be judged by the King in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The details of how it will all be accomplished are yet to be seen. One thing is certain. It will happen somewhere just as God says. We simply accept it by faith and believe what the Bible says. Someday King Jesus is going to judge the world.

e. The examination in this judgment

When the King returns and examination is going to occur. Two classes of Gentile people will pass through the examination of the Messiah and King. They will be the saved and unsaved surviving Gentiles of the Tribulation Period. The figurative words of “sheep” and “goats” (Matt. 25:32) are used as a descriptive reference for people. You might ask, “How do you know that this is not talking about literal sheep and goats?” It’s because God is not going to judge animals at His Second Coming but people (“say unto them” – vs. 34). Furthermore, sheep cannot invite people into their homes and feed or clothe them (vs. 35).

I have never been invited into the home of a sheep and been offered warm clothing and a roast beef dinner! The reference is clearly speaking of Gentile people and there will be two classes of Gentile people judged at Christ's Second Coming – the saved and unsaved. The "sheep" are those Gentiles who are saved and the "goats" are those Gentiles who are unsaved. This is made clear when studying this prophetic passage of Scripture. This sheep and goat judgment is depicted in the Old Testament prophecy of Ezekiel 34:17: "And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams (male sheep) and the he goats." This judgment will occur prior to the Millennial Kingdom.

In Jesus' day, shepherds separated the sheep from the goats in their flocks for various reasons and at various times ("separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" – vs. 32). The people who are identified as sheep will be on the King's right hand and the goats on the left hand (Matt. 25:32). Another interesting fact is that sheep and goats in the Middle East look more alike than they do in some other places of the world. So this will be a judgment to determine which people are sheep and which are goats. This is similar to the tare and wheat judgment which takes place at Christ's Second Coming (Matt. 13:24-30). *Both these passages describe the same judgment in different ways.* In the coming day King Jesus will know who the wheat or sheep are and who the tares and goats are. He will know who is saved and who is not saved. Nothing can escape God's omniscience. You can't fool the King! You might be able to fool many people today about your salvation but one thing is certain. You can't fool God. God knows everything about you. He knows if you are saved or lost.

2 Timothy 2:19

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Let's throw in some application at this point. When we get to Heaven someday we might be surprised to find some sheep there that we thought had to be goats. We might say, "What are you doing here. I thought you were a goat." Likewise, when we get to Heaven we may find some sheep missing and discover that they were actually goats.

A friend of mine who is now with the Lord was witnessing to a man. He asked, "Are you a sheep?" The unsaved man became very disturbed and said, "Surely I am not a sheep." Then my friend said, "Then you must be a goat." Well, that made matters worse. The point is this. God's people are always called sheep (John 10:3, 16, 27) and I want to be sure that I am one of God's sheep before I step into eternity.

f. The basis of this judgment

Matthew 25:34

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The "sheep" (saved Gentiles) on the right hand (the place of privileged and blessing) will be allowed to enter the Millennial Kingdom ("inherit the kingdom"). The King who is Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will allow the sheep to enter the earthly theocracy which was promised to them even before "the foundation of the world." In other words, God had the earthly kingdom and the salvation of Gentile people in His mind from eternity past. The Millennial Kingdom and salvation of Gentiles (sheep) was not an afterthought in God's mind but His sovereign plan of the ages. The rule of Messiah on the earth over all humanity has been part of God's plan since creation. The Millennial Kingdom is a central place in God's program for humanity. The establishment of the earthly kingdom will be the fulfillment of many promises and covenants that God gave to Abraham (Gen. 12; 15; 17; 21), David (2 Sam. 7:12–16), and to the nation of Israel (Ezek. 34:20–31; Jer. 31:31–40; Zech. 10:5–12).

Mathew 25:34-40 provides us with the basis for this Gentile judgment.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty,

and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

The basis of this judgment is the Gentile treatment of people who are called the brethren (brothers) of Jesus (“the least of my brethren” – vs. 40). How often have we heard this verse (and the preceding verses) quoted and used as an advertisement to support the little children who are suffering in hospitals or who are starving all over the world? Of course, helping the little hurting and starving children is important but this is not what Jesus is talking about. He is talking about His own kinsman in the flesh – His own Jewish brethren or people (“my brethren”). Let’s study our Bibles! The expression “the least of my brethren” refers to those Jews who are living in obscurity throughout the Tribulation Period and who are experiencing hardship and persecution at the hands of the Antichrist.

This may be a reference to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who are witnessing for Christ during the Tribulation Period (Rev. 7:1-7) and spreading the Gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 24:14), or it may be a general reference to all Jews, who are being persecuted during this dreadful time (Matt. 24:16). Those Gentiles (the sheep) who house, cloth, and care for the Jewish people during the Tribulation Period, recognizing that they are God’s chosen people, will demonstrate by their love and loyalty to the Jewish people (Christ’s own brethren) that they are born again believers and prepared to enter the Millennial Kingdom. The basis of this judgment is then the Gentile treatment of the Jewish people during the Tribulation Period, whether they are the witnessing Jewish evangelists, or a general concern for the welfare of all God’s chosen people.

Let us remember that in Matthew 25 the *fruit* of regeneration is addressed and not the *way* of regeneration. The Gentile’s entrance into the Millennial Kingdom is guaranteed by new birth (John 3:5) but their new birth is evidenced by their outward manifested deeds. In this case the Gentile’s caring and loving treatment of the Jews during the perilous times of the Tribulation Period will be the outward evidence of their salvation. Jesus said that helping the Jews (“my

brethren”) during the Tribulation Period will be equivalent to helping Him (“ye have done it unto me” – vs. 40). This is because of the blood ties that Christ has with His own people the Jews.

So the basis of judgment for the surviving Gentiles of the Tribulation period will be their treatment of Israel. If they have treated God’s chosen people properly they will give evidence of their salvation and new birth and enter the kingdom. The fleeing Jews will experience great hardships during the last three and one half years of the Tribulation Period and those Gentiles who come to faith in Christ will help God’s chosen people (the Jews) in their time of terror and persecution. The Gentiles who evidence salvation by their loving treatment of Israel are termed as “sheep” (vs. 33) and they will inherit the blessings of the Millennial Kingdom (vs. 34). This reminds us once again that only the righteous will enter the earthly kingdom (Matt. 13:43).

John Walvoord makes a summary comment of this passage:
“Those described here are people who have lived through the great tribulation, a time of unparalleled anti-Semitism, when the majority of Jews in the land will be killed. Under these circumstances, if a Gentile befriends a Jew to the extent of feeding and clothing and visiting him, it could only mean that he is a believer in Jesus Christ and recognizes the Jews as the chosen people.”

Of course, this will also be true on a worldwide scale. Gentiles all over the world, who house and care for the Jewish people (Isa. 26:20), will give evidence that they are God’s sheep and saved children. Their treatment of Jews will indicate that they have accepted the message of “the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 24:14) and the “everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:6) which will be preached worldwide. As always, the Gospel message creates new life and this will be demonstrated by the way Gentiles treat God’s chosen race of people during the Tribulation Period when the Jews are under tremendous persecution.

There is some application that we can glean from these verses. Not all Scripture is *to* us but it is all *for* us (Rom. 15:4). First, God’s people are to love the Jews. They are not anti-Zionists. They love God’s chosen people and do not curse them or wish that they were dead

and off the face of the earth. People hate Jews for the simple reason that Jesus Christ came into this world through the Jewish race (Rom. 9:5). In hating Jews people also hate Christ since Jesus calls them "my brethren." You can't hate the Jews and love Jesus at the same time. This prophetic parable makes this abundantly clear.

Those who help the Jews actually manifest their love for Christ. Second, there is a general application to how God's born-again children should be a caring and loving people. We should be a people that are reaching out to those who are in great need. This is what Jesus did while He was here on earth (Luke 4:18). As God's people we should seek the opportunity to "do good unto all men" (Gal. 6:10). This is what God expects of His sheep. They are to be a caring people.

How Long Has It Been Since You...

Took the time to go see someone who lives alone?
Wrote a letter to someone who crossed your mind?
Read the Bible to someone too ill to read for themselves?
Encouraged someone who was having a hard time being a Christian?
Prayed earnestly for someone who was faltering?
Tried to have a Bible study with someone you knew was lost?
Told a teenager that you were proud of his efforts to live for the Lord?
Spent more time on your knees praying than
on the telephone talking?

**EVERY CHRISTIAN CAN DO SOMETHING TO ENCOURAGE
SOMEONE ELSE!**

At a railway station in New Jersey a little girl stepped up to a shackled criminal, and looking tenderly into his face, said: "Oh, man, I am so sorry for you." The child's sympathy made him very angry, and he tried to strike her. Her mother forbade her to go near him again. But as they all waited for the train the mother's eyes were turned away, and once more the little tot stole up to the wretched man and tenderly whispered to him: "Poor man, Jesus Christ is so sorry for you." He was startled by the comment, gave a low groan, and offered no violence. Suddenly the train came, the officers led him away, and the two parted forever. But years afterwards the man came forth from

prison a Christian and an evangelist, and he loved to tell how the compassion of the Lord Jesus from the lips of a little child broke his heart, subdued his spirit, and saved his soul.

Mr. Wesley, on a winter day, met a poor girl in one of the schools that was under his care. She seemed almost frozen. He asked her if she had no clothing but the thin garments she was wearing. She said she had no other clothing. His hand was in his pocket in an instant, but there was no money there. He went to his room, and there on the wall were all the pictures that he purchased with his money. He took them down, saying to himself: "How can the Master say to thee, 'Well done, good and faithful servant'? Thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the bitter cold! O justice! O mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of the poor maid?" So Wesley sold the pictures to get money to relieve the girl's distress and found great blessing in doing it. God wants us to express kindness toward others and when we do we evidence our salvation and receive great blessing in this life and the life to come. This is the practical lesson we learn from the Gentile sheep of Matthew 25.

g. The severity of this judgment

Matthew 25:41-46

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

The "goats" (representative of unsaved Gentiles) are seen to be on the King's left hand. Once again they are examined and judged on the basis of their treatment of the Jewish brethren who are living during the Tribulation Period ("Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these" – vs. 45). The unsaved Gentiles will not want anything

to do with God's chosen people during the Tribulation Period. Instead of helping God's people they will seek to hinder them, expose them, and harm them. Their failure to help the Jews and their fruitless living will give evidence of their unregenerate state (Matt. 7:17-18; John 15:2; 1 John 3:8). The goats (unsaved Gentiles) will then be told by the King that their refusal to house, help, clothe, feed, and visit God's chosen people also is a refusal to house, help, clothe, feed, and visit Him – Jesus Christ! This once again establishes the close connection that Jesus has with His chosen race of people the Jews. Mistreating the Jews is mistreating Jesus! Perhaps this nation needs to once again remember the portion of the Abrahamic Covenant which says, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Gen. 12:3).

The unsaved Gentiles who survive the Tribulation Period will not enter the Millennial Kingdom. Instead, they will face the judgment of the King. King Jesus will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). Depart from me! How utterly sad and hopeless these words are as they are spoken by the King in the coming day! The statement (Depart from me") is reminiscent of Matthew 7:23 where Jesus will say "depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Jesus then spoke about "everlasting fire." This judgment will be the commencement of an eternal judgment of everlasting fire that will be inflicted upon the lost.

The unsaved Gentiles will be cast into Hades (a temporary holding tank of judgment) while they await the final judgment (Great White Throne Judgment) that follows the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:7, 11-15). *The judgment of the Gentile nations at Christ's Second Coming will begin an eternity of judgment for the lost.* There are two things to underscore. First, judgment was prepared for the devil and his angels who rebelled – not for man. Calvinism teaches that hell was prepared for certain people who are not elect but this contradicts Scripture. Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels – not for people. Let Jesus be true and every Calvinist a liar!

Second, the judgment of the lost is eternal. Eternity! Who can comprehend it? The lost or unsaved do not experience annihilation as the cults teach. It would be senseless and ludicrous to say that people will experience "everlasting annihilation." This makes no

sense whatsoever nor is it Biblical (Rev. 20:10, 15). What does make sense and what is Biblical is that unsaved mankind lives forever and experiences God's eternal or unending judgment. In fact, some people will receive "the greater damnation" (Matt. 23:14). It would be senseless and pointless to say that certain people will receive greater annihilation than others. Let's stop huckstering the Bible!

The Bible teaches that the unsaved will experience unending torment and judgment at the hands of God. The Bible calls it "everlasting fire" (Matt. 25:41) and "everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46). These are clear expressions of literal judgments coming from the hands of an angry God. The lost will burn in hell for all eternity and experience great punishment at the hands of a righteous and just God who must punish sin and sinners. Something else must be said. What is eternal for the saved ("life eternal" – vs. 46) out of necessity must be eternal for the lost ("everlasting punishment"). The two words "everlasting" and "eternal" are the exact same Greek word (aionios).

Don't let the cults confuse you. There is no difference between these words. They are both eternal in the same way. You can't have one reference express and eternal reality where people live on consciously and another express a non-eternal reality where people cease to exist and never function again. Proper exegesis and the laws of hermeneutics will not allow you to do this. If eternal life means eternal conscious bliss then eternal punishment must mean eternal conscious judgment. There is something that is dog sure. Refusing to believe in a literal burning judgment, which will last forever, does not change the truth that there is a literal hell, with literal fire, where people will spend an eternity suffering for their sins. All the silly arguments that people put forth today to prove annihilationism simply cannot stand the test of Scripture. There is a hell and you are going there if you die without the salvation that Jesus Christ offers.

A dying girl said to her father, "Father, why didn't you tell me there was such a place?" "What place?" "A hell!" "Jenny," he said, "there is no such place. God is merciful. There will be no future suffering." She said, "I know better! I'm slipping into eternity this moment. I am lost! Why did you not tell me there was such a place?" If Christians could experience hell for one minute (something that could not happen) we would never be the same again. We would change our priorities and

develop a newfound love for the lost. Dear friend, we need to stop and reflect on eternity today. Imagine what it means when a person slips into an eternal hell that will never end. Cannot we allow the subject of eternal judgment to create an undying love for the lost and deep concern for our fellowman today? Dear friend, think what it means to be lost forever!

B. The Destruction of the Armies of Armageddon

In order to prepare for the Millennial Kingdom or the reign of Christ over the earth Jesus must also destroy and eliminate the armies of Armageddon. Great throngs of soldiers will be gathered across the land of Palestine in the end-times in order to gain dominance of this strategic location. However, Satan will have them gathered there in order to do battle with the returning King and Messiah. Revelation 19:17-19 and 21 give us this prophetic scenario and the mighty destruction that will be wrought by the hand of the King when He returns.

Revelation 19:17-21

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.”

Revelation 19:21 then says:

“And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

When Jesus returns there is going to be such a massive scale of death that the fowls will be summoned to eat the flesh of the millions of soldiers that are massacred in Palestine. This is called “the supper of the great God” for God will be behind this great massacre of human flesh when Jesus returns as the King. It’s God who will be

behind the angel's order that will summon the fowls to gather themselves together for this great feast of flesh. When Jesus returns He is going to return to "judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11) and trample upon the armies scattered across Palestine causing their blood to flow out like the juice flowing from the grapes in the winepress ("he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" – Rev. 19:15). The "sword of him" (Rev. 19:21) that "proceeded out of his mouth" (the word of Christ) will bring the armies of Palestine to their utter ruin and destruction. All Christ will have to say is "Be gone" as He descends from the heavens and His fiery brilliance or glory that emanates from His face will instantly disintegrate the soldiers of Armageddon leaving only a pool of blood and rotting flesh behind.

Zechariah 14:12

"And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth."

So great will be this instant massacre of soldiers that the Bible teaches the blood will flow as deep as the horses bridles across the trenches created throughout Palestine due to earthquake activity and topographical changes.

Revelation 14:19-20

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The measurement of "a thousand and six hundred furlongs" is approximately 200 miles which is the length of Palestine. Great rivers of blood will flow throughout Palestine as a result of the King's judgment upon the millions and perhaps one billion soldiers located in this land area.

C. The Judgment of the Beast and False Prophet

In order to prepare for the Millennial Kingdom or the reign of Christ over the earth the Beast and False Prophet must also be judged. The Beast and False Prophet, the leaders of the earth during the Tribulation Period, will apparently be killed (Rev. 13:10) and then immediately resurrected in order to be “cast alive” into the Lake of Fire.

Revelation 19:20 records this prophetic event:

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

The Antichrist, symbolically represented as a beast throughout the book of Revelation, along with His sidekick the false prophet, will be killed and then resurrected to endure in a physical body an eternal hell where they will be “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). The miraculous powers given to these rulers by Satan will have no impact on the King when He returns in a blaze of glory and power. They will be utterly defeated and judged for their sins.

D. The Judgment of Satan and the Wicked Spirits

When Jesus returns in His Second Coming to planet earth Satan will be confined to what is called a bottomless pit. His influence will be taken away from planet during the Millennium or one-thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth.

Revelation 20:1-3

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

The bottomless pit is evidently a specific compartment within Hades, which is at the center of the earth, where other demonic spirits are also bound in their own compartment, awaiting their future and final judgment (2 Pet. 2:4). Satan will not be able to influence the world of humanity during the Millennium or the 1,000-year reign of Christ over the earth. He will be imprisoned and His devilish activities will cease. Not only will Satan be bound during this time but also the wicked demonic spirits which followed him in his rebellion.

Zechariah 13:2

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.”

This prophetic verse envisions the time of the Millennium (“in that day”). During the establishment of this glorious reign of peace all false teachers and demonic spirits, the messengers behind false teaching, will “pass out of the land.” What a great moment this will be when all false teachers with their messages backed by demonic spirits will be vanquished. None of these people or spiritual entities will be able to enter the kingdom. Apparently the wicked spirits who followed Satan in the rebellion will also be confined to the bottomless pit during the Millennial Kingdom. This will not only be true in Palestine but all over the world.

Isaiah 24:21-22

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.”

The “host of the high ones” and “kings of the earth” refer to the demonic spirits that rule in a hierarchy over planet earth (Dan. 10:13, 20). Please notice that they too shall be cast “in the pit” when Jesus returns as the King and “shut up in the prison” which is the bottomless pit where Satan is also confined. After “many days” (the 1,000-year reign of Christ) the King will visit them in judgment (Rev. 20:10). One thing is certain. Satan and his cohorts will be confined

during the Millennial Kingdom and then forever judged after they are released to deceive the nations one more time (Rev. 20:8). Judgment in the Lake of Fire will be their final and eternal destiny.

The Participants in the Millennium

The Millennial Kingdom will be populated by several categories of people:

1. Believing Jews who are saved at Christ's Second Coming.

As we have already mentioned there will be a vast number of Jews who will call upon the name of the Lord for salvation when Jesus returns as the Jewish Messiah (Joel 2:30-32). Israel on a national scale will return to her true Messiah and accept His offer of salvation (Rom. 11:26-27; Zech 12:10-12; 13:1).

2. Believing Gentiles who are saved at Christ's Second Coming.

We have already studied how the sheep and goat judgment at Christ's Second Coming envisions the time when Gentiles, who are considered sheep, enter the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:31-36). Their faith and subsequent treatment of the Jewish people will determine their destiny in the earthly Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:34). The Bible makes it clear that there will be survivors after the Tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon, and some of them will be judged righteous and allowed to enter Christ's Kingdom. This point must be understood because some Christians teach that after the battle of Armageddon no one will be alive on earth. This is clearly not the case. Yes, the majority of the people of earth will be dead, but as Isaiah 24:6 says there will be survivors ("and few men left"). There are more than six billion people on earth at this time, so "very few" could easily mean a few million or more. Matthew 25:31-46 implies that there will be a significant number of surviving Gentiles because the "nations" will be brought before Christ at the start of his 1,000-year reign.

Because there will be no war and plenty of food, the survivors of the Tribulation Period will multiply rapidly and repopulate the earth. In fact, they will multiply to such a degree that by the end of the 1,000 years they will be as numerous "as the sand of the sea" (Rev. 20:8).

This phenomenal growth in population should not be surprising. In the Old Testament, Israel entered Egypt as a group of seventy people (Gen. 46:27). When they came out they numbered about three million. This significant increase in population occurred under horrible conditions. If a few million are present at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom, imagine the growth potential when the prevailing conditions are peace and prosperity!

3. The Tribulation martyrs who are resurrected to enter the kingdom.

The Bible teaches that God's resurrection program is in stages. The first resurrection includes those saved people who will be martyred during the coming Tribulation Period (Rev. 20:4). The fact that those who were martyred during the Tribulation Period are said to have "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" is clear proof that the Tribulation martyrs will be raised at Christ's Second Coming which has just been clearly outlined in Revelation 19:11-21. The terminology for "lived" speaks of physical and bodily resurrection as it does elsewhere throughout the Bible. Those who are beheaded can only live in one way – physically. Let the context and Bible speak for itself.

4. Old Testament saints who are resurrected to enter the kingdom.

When Jesus returns to earth the Old Testament saints and prophets will also be raised to enter the Millennial Kingdom. The Bible speaks clearly about this resurrection. Saints such as Noah, Gideon, and all the Old Testament Jewish saints will be resurrected to enjoy the promised earthly covenant blessings of the Millennial Kingdom (Dan. 12:1-2, Isa. 26:19; Job 19:25-26). All these verses are set in the context of Christ's Second Coming to earth. When Jesus returns all the regenerate Old Testament saints and prophets will be raised to receive their rewards and enter the kingdom (Rev. 11:18). Paul knew that many Jews would reach the Millennial Kingdom by resurrection (Acts 26:6-8) and Jesus spoke of the coming day when his own disciples would be ruling judges in the kingdom (Matt. 19:28) and how Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would sit in the kingdom (Matt. 8:11). Surely this means all the Old Testament Jewish saints will be bodily raised to enter the Millennial Kingdom. This will happen at Christ's Second Coming which precedes the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 19-20).

So we have seen that Old Testament saints (both Jews and Gentiles), who have died before the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and believers that die during the Tribulation, will all be resurrected and transformed into living immortals at the same time - Christ's Second Coming. This entire category of people includes believers such as Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Miriam, Joshua, Ruth, Samuel, David, Esther, Daniel, and those murdered during the Tribulation for their refusal to worship the Beast (Rev. 13:15).

5. Church Age saints who return with Jesus.

Christians that are raptured into the air at the close of the Church Age (John 14:1-2; 1 Thess. 4:13-18) will return to earth with Christ at His Second Coming. They make up the armies of Heaven that follow Christ to earth (Rev. 19:14) and the myriad of saints or "holy ones" that accompany Him (Jude 14). Since the Old Testament saints will be resurrected to enter the kingdom the Church Age saints, who are already resurrected, are seen returning with the King. They too will enter the Millennial Kingdom. The New Testament epistles affirm this as being true since they speak of the Church saints participating and reigning in the earthly Millennial Kingdom (1 Cor. 6:2; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:12; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 2:26-27).

Even the New Testament epistles teach that the saints of the Church Age should live in light of the coming earthly kingdom. The bliss ahead should be incentive to live godly right now. The privilege to rule with Christ in direct proportion to our suffering and service is an incentive to endure affliction for Christ and live godly in this present span of life. There will be reward and recognition given in the earthly kingdom based upon the righteous and devoted living that believers practice today. The Church is not exempt from the kingdom. Of course, those who live an unrighteous life, demonstrating no change in their conduct and course of living, will be banned from entering the Millennial Kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5). One again, only the saved will enter the earthly kingdom. No unbeliever will enter the Millennium. This is the uniform teaching of both the Old and New Testaments.

The Conditions of the Millennium

Isaiah is known as the Millennium prophet for he prophesied about many of the details concerning the Millennium. A vast number of our references about the conditions of the earth during the time of the Millennium (1,000 years) will be found in Isaiah's prophecy. Of course, both Ezekiel and all the prophets foretold about the Millennium. They share material about the Millennium so we can receive a better understanding about what it's going to be like when the King returns and transforms this earth. What an exciting coming day this will be for the world.

Many today reject the literal truth and details about these prophecies by following Augustine's historic error about the Millennium, who rejected a literal kingdom or Millennium over the earth. Augustine's error (A.D. 354-430) has been passed down like a plague throughout the history of the Church. Because of the influence of the mystical teachings of Greek platonic philosophy (joining philosophy with Christianity), the Church advancing in society (Christianization of the Roman Empire under the Emperor Constantine), and the gluttonous teaching of Christians concerning the Millennial Kingdom (a carnal teaching about the Millennium), Augustine chose to change the meaning of the Millennium from a literal kingdom over earth to a spiritualized kingdom or rule of Christ in the hearts of His people, between the First and Second Advents of Christ. Augustine was very influential. With the spread of this teaching regarding the kingdom or Millennium the allegorical interpretive approach to the prophets and their prophecies also took place.

People eventually began to reinterpret the prophets rejecting their teaching about a literal kingdom (1,000 years) that would be established over the earth. The understanding of these prophetic passages had to be reinterpreted to mean something other than Christ ruling over Israel for 1,000 years in an earthly kingdom or theocracy. When the error was accepted in the fourth century that there would be no millennial rule (1,000-year kingdom) over the earth then those passages which spoke about the Millennium needed to be reinterpreted and allegorized to mean something else. This is exactly what took place in the history of the Church.

The teaching of amillennialism (no literal Millennium on earth) was spread by other men like Origen (185-254), Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339), and Jerome (347-420). However, Augustine was the one who really made the no Millennium concept popular. His popularity and influence cannot go unnoticed. This false teaching was continually embraced by Romanism throughout the Middle Ages and was later adopted by many of the Protestant Reformers such as John Wycliff, Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli.

To this day the amillennialist allegorizes many of the details of these prophecies making them a reference to Israel's past history and entrance into the land of Canaan (historical fulfillment), to heaven or the eternal state where Jesus will someday reign as King over His people (futuristic fulfillment), or to the experiences of the Church today, who supposedly has inherited the promises of Israel in a spiritual way (present-day fulfillment). In other words, since it's believed that the promises to Israel have been canceled and the Church has replaced Israel, many suggest that these prophecies about the Millennium are figuratively fulfilled in the experiences of peace and tranquility of the Church today. In short, amillennial theologians spiritualize or "mysticalize" the prophecies claiming that they actually refer in some way to the experiences that the Christian Church passes through today.

The amillennialist cannot show one verse in the Old Testament, which promises a kingdom to Israel, where it says that it really means the Church. Where does it say this? On what exegetical basis, what historical, grammatical, literal, interpretative basis of the Scripture can you tell me that when God says "Israel" in either the Old or New Testaments that He means the Church? Where does it say this? This is where the burden of proof really lies. A straightforward understanding of the Old Testament leads to only one conclusion and that is that there is a literal kingdom for Israel.

Then too, there are those who understand these millennial prophecies as referring to the basic struggle that all people pass through in life. They are written at a basic level to encourage suffering saints in the knowledge that God will someday conquer all evil and make things right (idealistic fulfillment). Many times a combination of

all the above views are embraced and promoted as being the best way to understand these prophecies about the kingdom, since God is supposedly finished with Israel and has no more kingdom program for them.

Large segments of Christendom today, such as Catholics, Presbyterians, Reformed, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, Southern Baptists, segments in the Church of God, and various other denominations accept these as legitimate views of the kingdom prophecies, and view them as a sufficient explanation and understanding of what the prophets spoke about. In other words, most people understand that the prophets spoke about something other than a literal earthly kingdom over which Jesus would someday reign. They are not exactly sure what the prophets said, but they are sure of one thing, the prophets could not be speaking of a literal Millennium or kingdom reign of Christ over the earth.

The dispensational expositor of Scripture, who correctly divides God's Word into different economies with different purposes (2 Tim. 2:15), who understands that God is not finished with Israel (Rom. 11:1-2), and who does not huckster the Bible but takes it literally (2 Cor. 4:2) sees these prophecies as referring to a specific time when Christ will rule over planet earth as King and transform the earth into a glorious place of beauty and righteous activity. In short, there is no reason to reject the literalness of the prophecies about the Millennium. First, the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants all promised that Israel would be regathered, saved, and enter a time of earthly reign with the Messiah who would rule as King over Jerusalem and the world.

These promises about a kingdom and King ruling over Israel were literal, unconditional promises built upon the faithfulness of God's Word such as the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 13:15; 17:7-8, 13, 19; 1 Chron. 16:17; Psalm 105:10), Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 30:1-10), Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16; 23:5; Isa. 55:3; Ezek. 37:25), and New Covenant (Isa. 24:5; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; 50:5; Heb. 13:20). Second, there is no Scripture that says God is finished with Israel. Actually, the Scripture says just the opposite (1 Sam. 12:22; 2 Sam. 7:24; Isaiah 11:12; 43:6; 54:7; Jeremiah 23:8; Ezekiel 11:17; 36:24; Hosea 3:5; Mark 13:27; Acts 15:16; Rom. 11:26-28). Third, the

conditions described on earth can only be taken literally if one handles the Scriptures honestly. There is no reason to reject the literal nature and fulfillment of these prophecies in the exact manner in which they are stated and portrayed.

The major prophecies about the kingdom do not contain any degree of absurdity when taken literally. They present the clear truth of what a mighty God can do or accomplish by His power and greatness. Figurative language is only present when the statement taken in its normal sense would be impossible or possess a degree of absurdity if taken literally (Isa. 55:12; Ps. 57:1; Micah 1:2; Rev. 1:16; 5:6-13; John 1:29; Rev. 11:5; 17:9; 19:15; 20:1). However, even when a figurative expression is used its meaning is limited by its context. In other words, the original understanding of the symbolic must be determined by the context. This will keep the interpreter from inventing spurious interpretations of symbolic apocalyptic literature outside their prophetic contexts.

The figurative or symbolic meaning can only be correctly determined by the context and explained in the light of the overall teaching on a given specific subject. In fact, even when the prophecies of God's Word are speaking figuratively they still possess a literal fulfillment (Dan. 2:31-35; 7:1-7). *There is always a literal message of fulfillment behind the figurative.* The figurative is a colorful vehicle for presenting a literal truth (Ps. 22:16; Isa. 53:6; 1 Peter 5:8) which can be determined by the context in which the figurative appears and the overall teaching on a given subject.

Then too, sometime the symbolic is followed by a literal statement (Eph. 2:1; 1 Thess. 4:13-16). In other words, we get the exact interpretation from the very verse in which the symbolic appears. In addition, the symbolic element in Scripture is often accompanied with the use of specific qualifying words ("as" or "like," or "as it were") in order to convey to the reader that a symbol is representing something else (John 6:32; 1 Peter 2:4; Rev. 4:6; 18:12; 15:2; Isa. 53:6; Dan. 12:3; Rev. 21:21). However, God never uses these comparative words in the kingdom prophecies that speak about the Millennium. In other words, there is no reason to doubt their literal nature and description. God means what He says and says what He means! The old adage must be applied to the prophecies about the Millennium.

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense! There is no reason to reject the literal character of what these prophecies say. We must take God's Word seriously and believe what He has written. The burden of proof is always on the one who claims that a certain part of the Bible does not mean what it says!

We now want to embark on a fabulous study of the Millennial Kingdom and the conditions of the world during this dispensation upon planet earth.

Dwight Pentecost was correct when he said;
"A large body of prophetic material is devoted to the subject of the Millennium, developing its character and condition, than any other one subject."

What will conditions on earth be like during the Millennium?

1. The earth will be at peace.

Man has always dreamed of utopia. Man wants a new society or paradise on earth. However, both the Bible and the witness of history tell the story that man can never bring peace on planet earth. Man can never produce a perfect society or paradise on earth. However, Jesus Christ as the King can produce the perfect society and paradise in this world that man has forever dreamed about. It will take a mighty King who is pure, righteous, and powerful. In short, it will take the "King of all Kings" (Rev. 19:16) to restore this world to a place of peace and paradise. The messianic kingdom will be characterized by the removal of war in society and universal peace in international relations. The King, who is Jesus Christ the Messiah, will see to it that war will not be part of His kingdom.

Psalm 46:8-9 speaks of this Golden Age:

"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire."

The peace that is going to come on the earth someday is spoken of in light of the destruction of the ancient armament of that day. When the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6) is enthroned, wars will cease throughout the world. What a glorious day this will be. War will be a thing of the past. No more guns, tanks, mass weapons of destruction. They will all be gone! What a wonderful time this is going to be. No more Saddam Hussein's and Adolph Hitler's. The world will not know about Islamic radicals and terrorists in the great coming Golden Age. Jesus Christ will keep them all licking the dust!

Psalms 46 envisions this coming day of peace and tranquility. Jesus Christ is going to judge this earth and armies of Armageddon when He returns to earth ("what desolation" – Ps. 46:8) and then create peace on this planet during the Millennium ("maketh wars to cease" – Ps. 46:9). Someday when the King returns He is going to finish all wars. This will be the work of God! The Jews living during the future Tribulation Period will know that "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah" (Ps. 46:7). They will see the King return and destroy the armies of Armageddon which are surrounding them in this coming day and know that He will be their refuge. In light of His work of judgment and the establishment of His peace over the earth every Jew can "be still" (relax - Ps. 46:10) and know that God is in control and that He is moving everything toward the Millennial Kingdom, when He as the King will "be exalted among the heathen" (nations) and "be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46:10). When Jesus returns He is going to destroy the armies in Palestine and then promote peace across the globe. We can be still and relax in His sovereign conquering and kingly work over the world. My friend, the King is coming! And when He comes He is going to put down all military rule and rule as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16).

"King of Kings,
For ever and ever.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
And Lord of Lords,
For ever and ever."

In August 1741, upon reading the Scriptures about the Millennial Kingdom from the Old and New Testaments, Handel was overcome by their power. The music began dancing and exploding within him.

He immediately shut himself in and worked night and day, often forgetting to eat. The servants could, from time to time, hear his sobs as he labored over his glorious text which we now know as “Handel’s Messiah.” He finished the original libretto and score in twenty-four days. A complete musical performance of this great work requires nearly three hours; the Scripture texts, thirty minutes. Read these as Handel did and you will experience God and the Millennial Kingdom.

“King of Kings,
For ever and ever.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
And Lord of Lords,
For ever and ever.”

What councils and leagues and summits have been helpless to achieve, the Lord Jesus will bring about by His iron rod. Disarmament will pass from discussion to actuality. There will be no more peace talks or summits. All weaponry will be scrapped during the Millennial Kingdom. The King will see to it!

Psalm 72:3

“The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.”

The kingdom of Solomon that forms the background of this Psalm anticipates the Messiah’s reign. Solomon’s reign is but a faint foreshadowing of the great kingdom reign of Jesus Christ that will encompass the entire planet. This is what this prophecy is speaking about. The Psalms often have prophetic overtones attached to them pointing us into the distant future. When Jesus Christ rules and reigns on this earth, it will be a day of abundant peace unlike the earth has ever before experienced. The nations or kingdoms of the world, represented as “mountains” and “hills” (Dan.2:35; Rev. 17:9-10) will proclaim the message of peace! Jesus Christ will reign from sea to sea (vs. 8) and promote peace instead of war and bloodshed. It will be peace that extends from the glorious millennial river that will flow out of Jerusalem to all over the world (“from the river unto the ends of the earth”- Zech. 14:8; Ezek. 47:1-12).

Psalm 72:7

In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

When Jesus Christ rules and reigns on this earth, it will be a day of abundant peace such as this earth has never before experienced. The peace is promised as long as the moon and heavenly luminaries shine forth their brilliance. Jesus is going to rule from Jerusalem and enforce His earthly agenda of peace.

Isaiah 2:1-4

“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Jerusalem will become the religious center in the Kingdom age and the site of the Millennial Temple. It's here that the King will rule and promote His peace program throughout the earth. The “last days” (Isaiah 2:2) relate to the last days of Israel's history which anticipate her restoration and blessing in the Millennial Kingdom. Israel is headed toward the Kingdom in fulfillment of her covenant promises. It does not matter what the amillennialist says. It only matters what God says! The “mountain of the LORD's house” (Micah 4:1-2) refers to what was formerly known as Mount Moriah, one of the hills of Jerusalem on which the various temples of Israel were built (Solomon's and Herod's temples) and the spot once occupied by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Chron. 3:1). It was originally purchased by David (1 Chron. 21:18-30). It was here where Abraham intended to sacrifice his son (Gen. 22:2). The Jews believe that the altar of burnt offering in the Temple stood upon this very site. It is upon this same place where the Millennial Temple will be built.

Then too, the Bible suggests that Jerusalem with her future Temple will be literally raised even to a greater height due to the topography changes that take place in the city when Christ returns to earth (Zech. 14:4,10). Jerusalem and its temple will be elevated above the surrounding plain as a result of a great seismographic earthquake. The implication of this passage is that in the Millennial Kingdom there will once again be a Temple in Jerusalem which shall serve as the focal point of the worship of Jesus Christ during His kingdom rule on earth (Zech. 14:9, 16). Who can disbelieve what the Bible says when they look at it with the eyes of faith? Jesus is going to return to earth and literally reign from Jerusalem as the sovereign King.

Psalm 48:1

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”

Today Jerusalem is not the joy of the whole earth. It is the thorn in the side of the whole earth! This is a millennial psalm that envisions the time when Jerusalem will become the capital city of the earth and from where the King will enforce His program of world peace. It won't be Washington D.C. or Moscow that will be the capital of the earth in the coming Millennial Kingdom but Jerusalem. Jerusalem in the great coming day will be “beautiful for situation” (elevation) for the way it is geographically raised and elevated above the plains and the way it is promoted among the nations of the world.

Jerusalem will be situated among the nations as the capital city of the world during the Millennial Kingdom. This city will become “the joy of the whole earth” for its here where the King will reside on the throne of His ancestor David (Isa. 9:7; 16:5; Matt. 19:28; Luke 1:32-33). Jerusalem is also called “mount Zion” in this passage. Zion is first mentioned as a Jebusite fortress on a hill (2 Sam. 5:6-9). This fortress was captured by King David and was then called “the city of David” as the text in Samuel reveals. It is here that David brought the Ark of the Covenant making this hill a sacred sight. When King Jesus rules in Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom it will be called “the mountain of holiness” (Ps. 48:1) for Jesus will be ruling in the city of

Jerusalem, which in the coming day will be elevated above the plains in the restored millennial earth.

Psalm 2:6

“Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.”

The fortress and hill that David historically conquered became known as the hill of Zion. It eventually became a part of the expanding city of Jerusalem. Many times in the prophetic Scriptures we find Jerusalem being called the “holy mountain” for the very reason that Jerusalem was built on one of the hills called Zion. Also, during the Millennial Kingdom Jerusalem will be physically elevated to even a higher level when Palestine’s landscape is changed in the geographical plateau where Jerusalem sits (Zech. 14:10 – “it shall be lifted up”). Jerusalem will be visibly seen as God’s holy mountain as it sits upon the historic place of Zion. It will be holy for Jesus Christ the Messiah will reign from this historic spot and city.

Zechariah 8:3

“Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain.”

Joel 3:17 declares:

“So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.”

Isaiah 11:9 states:

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

My friend, it’s from Jerusalem, built on the holy mountain of Zion, that the King is someday going to rule and reign. And it’s from here that He will enforce peace. Jesus is King! During the Millennium “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord” (Jer. 31:34; Hab. 2:14). which means that all the world will know about Jesus Christ and what He requires of them. The idea is that people everywhere will live according to God’s principles and Word. What He says will be strictly

enforced. When the King says there will be no more war and fighting then the entire earth will obey His command. The reason why there will be no death and destruction during the Millennial Kingdom is because the entire world will know what the King requires and be forced to submit to his rule and wishes that are issued forth from His holy mountain or Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

In the Old Testament Zion refers to Jerusalem, the city that David conquered and made a capital of the united kingdom of Israel (1 Chron. 11:5; Ps. 2:6; Isa. 2:3). In a prophetic sense, Zion has reference to Jerusalem as the future capital city of the nation Israel in the Kingdom age (Isa. 1:27; 2:3; 4:1–6; Joel 3:16; Zech. 1:16–17; 8:3–8; Rom. 11:26) which Jesus Christ will rebuild to become the capital city of the Millennial earth.

Psalm 51:18

“Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.”

Psalm 102:16

“When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.”

Psalm 147:2 also states:

“The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.”

“Great day, Great day the righteous marching,
Great day, God’s going to build up Zion’s wall.”

Great day! God is going to build up Zion’s wall. What a day it’s going to be! The walls of Jerusalem will be rebuilt and the city of Jerusalem will become a place of beauty and magnificence during the kingdom reign of Jesus Christ.

Once called the "Wailing Wall", the Western Wall of the Temple Mount is referred to in Hebrew as the "Kotel", the "Wall." The West wall of the Temple Mount is said to be what was left of Solomon's original Temple after its destruction. The Western Wall Plaza has been opened since 1967 to all people as a place of prayer and study. This is also called the wall of prayer. Hundreds of prayers are put into the

cracks of the walls. There is even a place you can send your prayer and they will put it in the wall for you. Someday Jesus as the King is going to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and turn Jerusalem into a place of beauty. It's from this place that Jesus will rule and promote peace throughout the world.

In the future day Jerusalem will be seated on a hill and be a holy or sacred spot known throughout all the millennial earth. It is also said to be on "the sides of the north" (literally "the heart of Zaphon" – Ps. 48:2) which is an expression referring to some sacred mountain miles north of Jerusalem that may have been connected with Canaanite religion. In other words, what this north spot was to false religion, so Jerusalem will be to the Jews and the entire millennial earth. It is a hallowed spot and holy mountain from which the King will rule. It is "the city of the great King" (Ps. 48:2). If you deny that Jesus is going to rule and reign from Jerusalem someday, and declare peace throughout the world, then you simply don't believe what the Bible says.

Psalm 46:4

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High."

This is the earthly place of Zion, the city of Jerusalem. It is the place where the King is going to reign ("the tabernacles of the most High"). A millennial river will flow out of Jerusalem as we will see in another portion of our study. It will make Jerusalem glad and full of rejoicing.

Isaiah 2:3b-4a state:

"... for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people"

Isaiah 12:6

"Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

Isaiah 24:23

“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

Isaiah 32:1

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.”

Jeremiah 3:17

“At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.”

Ezekiel 48:35

“It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there.”

Zephaniah 3:14-17

“Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments (judgments related to the Tribulation Period), he hath cast out thine enemy (the beast of Antichrist): the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”

Israel will be joyful in the Millennial Kingdom because she will have been rescued from the Great Tribulation judgments and their enemy of foe (the Antichrist). When King Jesus sits upon the Davidic throne in Jerusalem once again God will once again be in the midst of the nation. God is described as the One who delivers the Jews from all their enemies and their sins, who rejoices over His people, who loves the Jews, and who finds great delight or joy in His people. Like a bridegroom, the Messiah will take joy in His people Israel, and they will rest quietly in the security of His love for them as His bride. Yahweh will shout with joy over His beloved Israel!

Zechariah 2:5

“For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.”

Zechariah 2:10-11

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee.”

Zechariah 14:17

“And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King ...”

Micah 4:7

“... and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.”

No person reading the simple statements of the prophetic Scriptures could ever deny that Jesus is coming back as King and is going to sit upon the throne of His ancestor David in the capital city of Jerusalem, which in this coming day will be a rebuilt city full of splendor and magnificence. Or can they? One day a well-known premillennialist shared with me how he was teaching on the subject of how God was going to bless Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. After the service a man walked down the aisle and said that if he ever preached on this subject again he would personally punch him! Of course, not amillennialists take this approach. Thank the Lord.

A teacher at Dallas seminary one day came into class and said, “I have become an amillennialist.” The students were shocked since Dallas Seminary, with its founder Lewis Sperry Chafer, had faithfully taught that there would be a literal Millennium and the covenant promises to Israel were still going to come to pass. The professor went on to explain his position. He said, “The other night I was reading in the paper about all the terrible things that are going on in the world and I said to my self, “Aaah, millennium.”

Someday Israel and the city of Jerusalem are going to experience a wonderful time of prosperity and peace. It will be during the Millennium. It's interesting that the name "Jerusalem" (Yeruwshalaim) means "city of peace." Today Jerusalem is certainly not a city of peace today. It is a city of continuing war, conflict, and bloodshed. But in the coming day it's going to be a city of peace for the Prince of Peace will rule from this rebuilt city and enforce His program of peace, not only in Jerusalem, but throughout the millennial earth. Christ will establish Jerusalem as a place of preeminence politically and spiritually in the coming day.

Isaiah 2:2 one again reads:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house (Millennial Temple in the city of Jerusalem) shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

The Bible also teaches that the Biblical imagery for mountains can refer to kingdoms (Dan.2:35; Rev. 17:9-10). Therefore, the Bible is teaching that Jerusalem will be established in "the top of the mountains" (large kingdoms of this world) and "exalted above the hills" (smaller kingdoms). There is also an allusion in this verse to how Jerusalem will become the leading power among the nations and kingdoms of the world. The literal elevated city of Jerusalem (Zech 14:10) which is called "the mountain of the Lord's house" will also become a symbol of the ruling power of the entire earth during the Millennial Kingdom. Jerusalem has a prophetic destiny that cannot be denied.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
Hark! How the Angels sing,
Hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna to your King!"

God's kingdom is pictured as being exalted above the hills the kingdoms of this world. All nations refer to the Gentile nations. Both the law (torah) and the word (debar) are pictured as continually going forth from the presence of the LORD who is king in Zion or Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3) Christ Himself shall judge among the nations. This will be that time when He shall rule with a "rod of iron" (Rev 2:27) upon the earth and compel all nations to practice justice toward one another.

To try to apply this passage to the church age as amillennialists do is ridiculous! This has nothing to do with the Church today, heaven, or the eternal state. This has to do with the King who is someday going to come back and rule this world.

Notice that Christ Himself is pictured as the judge who shall discern and direct the affairs of all nations during His Millennial Kingdom. During the Millennium Jerusalem will be exalted as the governmental center of the earth. The Messiah will exercise the office of a judge among the nations settling all international tensions (“he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people” – vs. 4) so that all wars will cease. Isaiah 2:4 says that “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” *During the Millennium the weapons of war shall be turned into tools of peace and tools to promote economic productivity.* King Jesus will not need the United Nations to set things in order and bring worldwide peace. All crime, war, and wrongdoing will be nonexistent in Christ’s kingdom administration. It will not be tolerated. As a result, the Millennium will be a time of complete international peace and safety unlike any other time in the history of the world.

Other similar verses like Isaiah 2:4 speak of the peaceful administration of the Millennial Kingdom.

Micah 4:3

“And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

In short, when King Jesus is judge He is going to lay down the law and make sure no war will occur on planet earth. He will “judge” or make the decisions or call the shots and “rebuke” the strong and mighty nations in the world causing them to come under His iron fist. He will force every nation to comply with His no war policy. The expressions “plowshares” (digging implement) and “pruninghooks” (pruning knife) speak of implements used for economic purposes instead of war. These are not verses to promote pacifism for today. These verses cannot be applied to the world today for they are

speaking about the world during the Millennium (“the world [kingdom age] to come” – Heb. 2:5; 6:5). To use them to teach pacifism is to take them out of their context and *misuse* the Bible to teach one’s own personal agenda. Let me just say this.

There is a need for war when the King is absent. However, when the King returns to earth there will be no more need for war. *When one believes in the dispensations of the Bible they will not be a pacifist.* God works in different ways throughout the changing dispensations of the Bible. Pacifism is for the Millennial Kingdom when the King is here reigning on earth and keeping this world in check. Pacifism is not for today. There is a cause for just war today and if we don’t understand this then we will be obliterated off the face of the earth by our enemies. Jesus said that “a strong man armed keepeth his palace” (Luke 11:21). That’s for today. But when we are living during the Millennium we all can become pacifists! There will be no more need for guns and ammunition for the King will rule in such a way that nations, wrongdoers, and evildoers will no longer be able to promote war and bloodshed in the world. I’m not a pacifist today. But I will be a pacifist during the coming Millennial Kingdom.

The passage, found in Isaiah 2 and in Micah 4, where “swords” will be made into “ploughshares,” is inscribed on a stone wall facing the U.N. building in New York. Khrushchev saw a figurative fulfillment of the prophecy when he visited the John Deere factory near Des Moines, Iowa: The plant was built early in World War II for manufacture of machine-gun bullets. Today it produces farm implements. Of course, these verses have nothing to do with what is going on today in the world. But someday in the future this world is going to be freed from every outbreak of war. This will take place when the King rules in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 9:6-7

“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.”

My friend, the world will never know international world peace and freedom from war until the Prince of Peace returns and establishes His government and kingdom. Who could ever deny the literal teaching of an earthly kingdom when reading the Bible for what it actually states. Christ at His Second Coming will bring peace to a war-stricken world. When Jesus comes back to this earth He is going to rule with a rod of iron and force this planet into a time of utopia and peaceful cohabitation. His government will promote absolute peace (“his government and peace”).

Christ’s millennial rule will merge into His eternal kingdom and rule (“there shall be no end” - Rev. 20:1-3). His rule will also be Davidic (“upon the throne of David”) in that Jesus is the rightful heir of David who has full authority to sit on what was once David’s throne in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 7:16). His rule will also be characterized by absolute righteousness (“to establish it with judgment and with justice”). We can be sure that Jesus will bring in the Millennial Kingdom (“The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this”). Christ’s zeal for His Word will cause Him to establish the earthly Millennial Kingdom. If Christ did not do so, then He would go back on His Word and forfeit His worthiness to be trusted.

Isaiah 14:7 envisions the Millennium:

“The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.” You can’t say this about the earth today. The earth is in turmoil and unrest today. But there is coming a time when the entire planet will be at rest. There is coming a Golden Age of utopia when there will be complete peace on this planet. What a glorious experience this will be for the world and those who are part of Christ’s kingdom rule. Age-old enemies will be at peace with one another and no more war will inflict society.

Isaiah 33:17

“Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.”

Once Israel is secure, satisfied, and at peace, then the believing remnant will see the King in His beauty and the land of Palestine whose borders are greatly expanded (“far off”).

A. J. Gordon adapted this millennial verse for one of his hymns:

“I shall see the King in His beauty,
In the land that is far away,
When the shadows at length have lifted,
And the darkness has turned to day.
I shall see Him in the glory,
The Lamb that once was slain;
How I’ll then resound the story
With all the ransomed train!
Hallelujah, Hallelujah!
To the Lamb that once was slain;
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah! Amen.”

Isaiah 33:20

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.”

Today Jerusalem is far from being a quiet habitation but someday during the Millennial Kingdom Jerusalem will be a city of peace and “quiet habitation.” There will be no Arab and Israeli war conflicts. There will be no more uprising and fighting over land. Jerusalem will be a city of peace.

Isaiah 32:17-18 is a similar verse:

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”

When righteousness is exalted throughout the world by the King then international peace and quietness will be the result. The establishment of absolute righteousness results in absolute peace.

When righteousness is enforced then peace will be the result. We can look forward to the time of “peaceable habitation.”

Isaiah 66:12

“For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.”

We have all heard the song that is derived from this portion of Scripture. “I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river in my soul.” Well, someday we are going to have peace on earth and this is what this verse is talking about. Someday there will be peace (shalom) like a river that will exist in the millennial city of Jerusalem. The uninterrupted movement of a river provides a fitting analogy for continuing peace and serenity. A river continues to move and so the peace that the Messiah brings to earth will continually flow throughout Jerusalem and the millennial earth. Gentile nations will flow to Jerusalem and experience great comfort and joy like a mother would give to her child.

Zechariah 14:11

“And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”

Zechariah 8:5

“And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”

We certainly know that this prophecy is not talking about Jerusalem today. Jerusalem is not a place of safety. Instead, it’s a place of bombs, war, conflicts, and terrorist threats. But during the Millennial Kingdom Jerusalem will become a place of safety due to the peace that the King will enforce over Palestine and the regions of the world.

2. The earth will experience joy.

When Isaac Watts wrote the hymn “Joy to the World” he did not write it to be a Christmas carol. Rather, he penned it to announce the glorious Second Coming of Christ to rule and reign on this earth. Think of some of the words: Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let

earth receive her king. ... No more let sins and sorrows grow. ... He rules the world with truth and grace.” This is actually a song written for the Millennium when fully joy will finally come to the world. When the King is in charge this world will experience joy.

Isaiah 12:3-6

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

Isaiah 14:7-8

“The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.”

Isaiah 25:8-9

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Isaiah 30:29

“Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel.”

Isaiah 55:11-12

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

These again are verses dealing with the Millennial Kingdom. When King Jesus speaks during the Millennium His Word will not return unto Him void. It will not return without accomplishing its intended purpose or goal. What the King says will happen! What He says will take place. The text then tells us what will occur when the King speaks. The redeemed Israel will “go out” of their lands of the world which they were scattered and be regathered in belief into the land of Palestine during the millennial reign. When this happens they will experience the joy of their new salvation and the peace that comes knowing that their sins are forgiven and that they are right before God. Their newfound salvation will make all nature come alive to them. It will seem that all the trees are rejoicing with them in their salvation and clapping their hands as they blow in the wind. Great joy and rejoicing will be part of the Millennial Kingdom.

Zephaniah 3:14

“Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.”

3. There will be true justice and righteousness.

When the Millennial Kingdom begins, it will be inhabited only by believers or the saved (Matt. 13:43; 25:31-46). However, these believers will still have human mortal bodies with a fallen nature capable of sinning. Furthermore, the literally millions upon millions (perhaps billions) of children that will be born throughout the thousand-year reign will need to respond to the Gospel and be saved. They will certainly be capable of sinful actions in the unregenerate state. Fallen man will still sin during the Millennium but that sin will be judged with perfect justice and righteousness at the hands of the Messiah. The King will have a perfect check and balance system that will serve perfect justice and righteousness upon sinners who seek to rebel against the King. Undoubtedly His glorified saints will have part in carrying out this justice since we too will judge the world someday and also give orders to angels so that they can execute judgment (1 Cor. 6:1-2; Rev. 5:10). In any event, perfect justice will be served and righteousness will abound.

Isaiah 11:5

“And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”

Jeremiah 23:5

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

Isaiah 32:1

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.”

Isaiah 32:16-17

“Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”

Many people think of the countryside as a gentle quiet refuge from the complications of urban life. However, in Bible times, rural areas were generally places without law and order, where everyone “did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). It was the city that tended to offer peace and protection. For this reason, Isaiah’s vision of justice in the wilderness (Is. 32:16) was a remarkable promise. The key to the transformation would be the presence of the Spirit (32:15). Whether you live in the wilderness or some other specific area in the millennial earth, as you sow the seeds of righteousness in your community, you give the Spirit an opportunity to bring a blessing to you and your neighbors. The obvious point is this. *Social justice and righteousness will permeate every aspect of life, resulting in peace, quietness, safety, and confidence throughout the entire world.* No matter where one lives justice and righteousness will be meted out in a proper fashion due to the Spirit’s work and ministry.

Isaiah 42:1-4

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the

smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.”

During Christ’s First Advent He was characterized by gentleness and patience (“A bruised reed will he not break” and “the smoking flax shall he not quench” – vs. 3) but during His Second Advent He will “bring forth judgment” (vs. 1) “in the earth” (vs. 4) and all will know that He is the King who judges “unto truth” (vs. 3). This means that Christ’s judgment as the King will be faithful, right and true. The judgment of the Messiah will be just and true in every way (Rev. 15:3). There will be no injustice and unfairness when Jesus sits as the Judge over all the earth.

Isaiah 9:7

“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.”

- a. There will be righteousness and justice carried out on acts of rebellion.

Isaiah 11:4-5

“But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove 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. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”

Christ will bring His righteous judgment on all wrongdoers immediately. Sin will not go unnoticed and unchecked during the Millennial Kingdom. Sinful uprising will be brought down immediately. No enemy or terrorist threat will be carried out. It will be brought down by the King and His millennial forces. This is why Israel will be able to dwell in safety (Jer. 23:6; Ezek. 34:25-27; Zech. 14:11). Those who are bent on doing wicked will be slain or killed and taken out of the way. The King will not put up with military revolts and rebellion within society. His reign will be characterized by justice and righteousness in that He will not allow sinful rebellion to exist during His reign.

There will not be any need for prisons and penitentiaries during the Millennial Kingdom! This form of righteous rule will be carried out throughout the entire world (“he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth” – Isa. 11:4). Jesus as the Messiah and King will rule with “a rod of iron” (Psalm 2:9) restraining and judging sin, so *that the prevailing atmosphere in the kingdom will be one of justice and righteousness*. Those who are born during the Millennium, but who fail to submit to the Lord, and who openly rebel during the Millennium, will be quickly judged by the Lord. Sin will be punished in an open and just way by the King.

Psalm 72:4

“He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.”

Psalm 2:9

“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

Isaiah 29:20

“For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off.”

The King and His reigning saints (the Church) will immediately put down all rebellion and cause sinners to be punished (Rev. 2:27) in a fashion that is in accordance with their degree of sin and rebellion. Man will still sin during the Millennium but that sin will be judged in perfect justice at the hands of the messiah and His theocratic government (Isa. 9:7). Different sins will encounter different types of punishment and various consequences.

1. For some personal sins capital punishment will be enforced.

Isaiah 65:20 states:

“There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.”

This prophecy about the Millennial Kingdom tells us that under the perfect conditions and restored environment of the Millennial

Kingdom infant death will be unknown. Infant mortality and premature death will be eradicated. Death by natural causes will not occur. One thing is certain, there will be no more abortions during the Millennium!

Although death will still be present during the Millennial Kingdom for penal reasons (breaking the kingdom laws), life spans will be extended to pre-flood days. If someone were to die at a hundred, he would be considered a mere child. Amazing! A person, presumably the one who breaks Christ's kingdom laws, who ends up dying at the age of one hundred years will be reckoned as a child. The Millennium will be a time when men shall have the potential of living for a thousand years; hence, anyone who shall die at a hundred shall be looked upon as a mere child. This seems to describe a return to conditions before the Flood, when people lived hundreds of years (Gen. 5).

Perhaps there will be those like Methuselah who live to be nearly a thousand years old (Gen. 5:27). However, in the midst of expanded life there will also be death. In contrast to the restored longevity of life for the major populace of the Millennium, the sinner will be prematurely cut off from the millennial earth. This verse tells us that certain sins will be punishable by death. The King will use capital punishment upon those offences that require His severe punishment. There will be no death from natural causes during the Millennium but death will result from criminal rebellions which will be immediately put down.

Jeremiah 31:29-30

“In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.”

This is a strange sounding verse but it again speaks of the absolute perfect justice and righteousness that will abound during the Millennial Kingdom. This saying was apparently a proverb among the exile children born in Babylon that was created to express that they suffered the consequences of their fathers' sins rather than their own (Lam. 5:7; Ezek. 18:2-3). This proverb expressed a popular misconception (cf. Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:25). However, in the future

Millennial Kingdom people would no longer repeat this popular proverb and conclude that the children were bearing the consequences of their fathers' sins. In the days of the Millennial Kingdom under the Messiah's rod-of-iron rule everyone will bear the consequences of their own actions and sins. The severity of their sin will determine the punishment.

We must understand that some of those people who are born during the Millennium will not submit to Christ in their hearts. Those who outwardly rebel during the Millennium will be judged quickly by the Lord (Isa. 9:7; 11:1-4; Zech. 14:16-18). No war or insurrection will be tolerated by the King (Isa. 2:4). Others will outwardly submit and conform to avoid judgment but they will still have a rebellious heart. We know this is true because at the end of the Millennium, when Satan is released from the abyss, the Bible indicates that He has no trouble gathering a huge army to rebel against Christ (Rev. 20:7-10).

2. For national sins plagues will be brought upon entire societies.

Zechariah 14:16-19 says:

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

There will be national punishments related to nation's defying the King's decrees. One thing is certain, no outward rebellion will go unnoticed and unchecked during the Millennial Kingdom. The King and his reigning saints (2 Tim. 2:12) will judge the world in justice and righteousness.

Isaiah 16:5

“And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.”

- b. There will also be righteousness and justice served among the people of the world.

Isaiah 11:3-4

“And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove 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.”

Jesus Christ as the King will judge fairly in the coming day. He will not judge by His eyesight or by what other say but by what He knows is true. His judgment will be perfect and therefore perfect justice will always be carried out. You won't pull the wool over the eyes of the King! He will not be like an ordinary judge who may be swayed by superficial knowledge. Christ as reigning King will treat people equally and with fairness. He will not take advantage of the poor class of people. Absolute fairness and justice will be meted out during the kingdom regarding sinners, economics, and every situation that requires judgment. Christ's reign on earth will be characterized by absolute justice and righteousness in all that is done. There will be freedom from oppression since Jesus sits at the righteous judge.

During the Millennial Kingdom there will be freedom from social, political, or religious oppression. As the world Ruler, the Messiah will see to it that the world will be judged in a righteousness manner (Isa. 2:4). As we have already stated, the Messiah will not be like an ordinary judge who may be swayed by superficial knowledge. He will judge fairly and in righteousness. The needy and the poor will not be oppressed by Him as they often are by human leaders (Isa. 10:1-2). The oppressed will be the beneficiaries of His justice and the wicked will be slain. His reign will be characterized by righteousness (Isa. 9:7; 16:5) and faithfulness as if they were integral parts of His clothing, such as a belt and sash (“And righteousness shall be the

girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins” - Isaiah 11:5 says).

Many verses speak how the needy and poor will be freed from the political and social injustices that they experience today. The King will judge those who oppress the poorer class of people and see to it that the needs of the poor are taken care of in a special way. This is because He is a king of righteousness and justice.

Psalm 72:4

“He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.”

Psalm 72:12-14

“For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.”

Jesus Christ as the King will be working for the poor class of citizens. The rich will not rob the poor in this coming day. All trials will be conducted with strict impartiality and the poor will no longer be disadvantaged. Perfect justice will prevail. Today the rich sinners can hire rich lawyers in our present justice system and get themselves off the hook. But this will not take place in the coming kingdom. No bribes will be taken and no foul play will exist in the kingdom court. No liberal judges in California will give homosexuals the right to marry. Do you know why? It's because there will be no liberal judges and practicing homosexuals that will be able to express themselves in the kingdom. The King will see to it that the court system is absolutely pure and fair in every way.

Isaiah 65:21-23

And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.

Jesus Christ as the King will be true, fair, and right in whatever He does. The King will see to it that people are rewarded for their own labors and that they are not taken advantage of by corrupted politicians, unfair taxes, and a system that drains the people of the things they have earned through hard work. There will be perfect fairness and justice served in the political, social, and economic world.

4. There will be a reversal of the curse.

During the coming Millennium there will be a reversal of the Genesis curse (Gen. 3:14-19). The lifting of the curse upon society can be seen in at least three areas.

a. People

We have already seen that death will be virtually eliminated except for sinners. Although some people will die it seems that people who submit to the King's rule will live the thousand-year span of the millennial reign.

Isaiah 65:20

“There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.”

There will be a reversal of premature death and a shortened life span due to illness and death. This is why the earth's population will explode during the Millennial Kingdom. Apparently the earth will return to the way it was during earth's early history, prior to the Genesis Flood, and people will once again live long lives due to a vapor canopy blocking out the harmful effects of radiation and the elimination of toxins in the atmosphere. *I believe that those who submit to the rule of the King will live the entire thousand years of the Millennium.* Added to this restored longevity of life, sickness or disease will apparently be eliminated due to the healing powers of the King. This is another reason why there will also be an extension of life.

Isaiah 29:18 predicts:

“And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.”

Isaiah 33:24 also prophesies:

“And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.”

Our politicians today are constantly working on plans to provide better health care for the citizens of our nation. But in the Lord’s millennial government, the health plan will be fantastic! There will be no sickness and need for hearing aids during the Millennial Kingdom. The deaf will be made to hear and the blind will be made to see. This will be true in Jerusalem and apparently throughout the ends of the earth.

Isaiah 35:5-6

“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 an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.”

The ministry of the King as the healer will be well known and seen throughout this age. Sickness will apparently be removed. There will be healing of the deformed and physical restoration during this blessed kingdom age. It will certainly be the Golden Age. There will be a supernatural work of the preservation of life. This will certainly be a wonderful time to be alive for those living in natural bodies.

Jesus demonstrated that His rule would be a rule that brings healing to people while He offered His kingdom to the nation of Israel while He was on earth. Jesus said that His kingdom was near and to verify that He was the King and what His kingdom would be like he healed many people (Matt. 4:23; 9:35). This tells us that Christ’s kingdom will be a place of healing and health. The King will bring healing to the great multitudes and masses of humanity (Ezek. 47:12).

b. Agriculture

During the Millennial Kingdom the earth will also return to a luxurious paradise which will resemble the days that existed on earth when the Garden of Eden was flourishing and highly productive. Environmental and air pollution will be nonexistence during the Kingdom.

Isaiah 35:1-2

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.”

Isaiah 35:6

“Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.”

The very first book I purchased at the used Kregel bookstore during my days of college was a devotional book written by Mrs. Charles Cowman entitled, “Streams in the Desert.” It was a book that spoke of blessing and refreshment in the midst of the difficulties of life. Of course, the book’s title was taken from this verse as a way of application but not literal interpretation. When taken literally, as it should be, the Bible is teaching that during the Millennium Kingdom (1,000 years) the parched land will become a rich agricultural land.

The dry areas or desert regions of world will become fertile and blossom abundantly. Apparently God will bring about climatic changes that will result in more rain in those areas. Places like Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon, which were becoming barren, will once again become fruitful areas of agriculture. During the Millennial reign of Christ the deserts are going to be rejuvenated and become more like a garden (“for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” – Isa. 35:6).

Isaiah 35:7 says:

“And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.”

The land of Palestine and presumably the entire millennial earth will change from dryness to a well-watered condition. Water will be plentiful and grass, reeds, and papyrus will grow, all of which require much water. Though some interpreters take these statements as figurative of spiritual blessings, it seems preferable to take them as literal statements, especially in view of the Palestinian covenant promises given to Israel (Deut. 28:1-14). What God promised in this covenant will come to pass in a literal fashion.

Isaiah 41:18-19

“I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together.”

Isaiah 43:19-20

“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.”

These Old Testament references repeatedly affirm that the desert and wilderness of Palestine will someday be transformed. This transformation will require vast quantities of water. It's interesting that a newspaper item said, “Vast quantities of sweet water buried deep beneath the Sinai and the Negev deserts have been discovered by Israel geologists. Isotope examination of the water showed that it is ancient, thus proving that the present desert area was once subject to rainfall and was inhabited.” Dear friend, it's going to happen someday just as the Bible says. This world is going to be transformed

Isaiah 29:17

“Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?”

Isaiah 32:15

“Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.”

Someday during the Millennial Kingdom, the wilderness places of Palestine and the world will become fertile and what was presently considered fertile will actually become a jungle full of large plants and lush vegetation much like the Garden of Eden.

Isaiah 30:23-26

“Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”

Ezekiel 34:26-27

“And I will make them and the places round about my hill (the hill of Jerusalem) a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.”

The hymn “There Shall Be Showers of Blessing” was taken from this millennial verse which envisions a time when the Lord will send down upon Palestine and the restored millennial earth physical showers of blessing that will water the earth and bring forth luscious vegetation and crops. The earth will become like a well watered greenhouse and have similarities to that of the Garden of Eden.

Isaiah 51:3

“For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.”

This earth is going to be similar to a greenhouse. The millennial Scriptures verify this. Apparently the agricultural curse will be lifted upon the earth for thorns, which were a sign of the Genesis curse (Gen. 3:18) will no longer grow and manifest themselves in the earth.

Isaiah 55:13

“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

This will be a great and glorious time to be living on planet earth. There will be an agricultural reversal of the Genesis curse during the Millennial Kingdom. The deserts and dry places will be no more. The thorns and thistles will vanish and all creation will be restored to the way it was during the days of Eden.

c. Animals

Isaiah makes some rather striking statements about the transformation of the animal kingdom during the Millennium. If we are to assume that a real Messiah shall come forth and rule in real righteousness and peace (Isa. 9:6; 11:3-4), then we must also view this era of real peace as extending to the real animal world as well. This is exactly what the Bible teaches. The prophecies of the Millennium predict that even the animal creation will revert back to the way it was in the original Garden of Eden and throughout the earth prior to the Genesis Fall. How was the original creation of the animal kingdom? The Bible teaches that all animals, prior to the Genesis curse, were vegetarian.

Genesis 1:29-30

“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. [30] And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.”

Please note that God said that he gave “every green herb for meat” for the entire animal kingdom. This included lions, tigers, and bears!

The original creation of animals consisted of all vegetarian animals. There were no meat eaters in the bunch! God did not create the animal kingdom to prey on one another. The animal world dwelt in harmony and freedom. This is the way it was in the beginning before sin came into the world and the world was cursed. After the curse animals apparently turned venomous and poisonous. Many vegetarian animals became carnivorous or flesh-eating animals. They turned into killers and meat eaters. Wolves began to prey on other animals, lions changed their diet from herbs to antelope, and skunks began to spray their enemies! The animal kingdom was also cursed along with man as represented by the serpent's judgment (Gen. 3:14) who by the way originally had legs!

Someday the curse is going to be reversed even in the animal kingdom. During the Millennial kingdom of 1,000 years even the animal kingdom will be restored to a time of peace. The curse of killing and terror among the animal kingdom will be lifted. What a day this will be!

Isaiah 11:6-9 reads:

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid (young goat); and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

There are those amillennialists (people who do not believe in the literal 1,000 years) that insist that these statements about the animal kingdom being restored to a peaceful coexistent state do not literally apply the animal kingdom. Rather, they apply to the Church today in a figurative way since the Church has inherited the promises of Israel and has become the new Israel (the one people and one purpose of God concept). An example of a non-literal (figurative) approach to these texts of the animal kingdom is found in the *New Geneva Study Bible* (which some consider to be the Scofield Bible of Reformed Theology). Since its initial publication it has been renamed *The*

Reformation Study Bible. According to the notes found in this Bible, verses which speak of the kingdom being free from the threat of wild animals should be understood “figuratively” to describe the “peace and security” and “reconciling love” that is found during this present age from the first advent until Christ’s return. [See notes under Isaiah 11:6-9 and Hosea 2:18. R.C.Sproul, General Editor, *New Geneva Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 1043, 1363]

The inconsistency of this interpretation is seen by comparing it with another passage which refers to the diet of animals. The *New Geneva Study Bible* takes a very literal approach in its note under Genesis 1:29-30 (a passage which says that animals were originally vegetarian). The Reformed commentary says, “Animal diets were originally vegetarian.” Why do they understand Genesis chapter 1 literally and Isaiah chapter 11 figuratively? Why does the plain sense of Scripture make good sense in Genesis 1 but not in Isaiah 11, especially when both passages are speaking of the diet of animals? Could it be that Isaiah 11, when understood literally, does not agree with their theological system which says that the kingdom is here and now, whereas the teaching of Genesis 1:29-30 does not threaten their theology?

This illustrates the point that theologians are often inconsistent when it comes to their use of the literal hermeneutic of interpretation of Scripture, and they often tend to abandon the natural and normal meaning of words when the words describe eschatology and kingdom conditions. This is because they want to do away with the literal Millennial Kingdom and the promises given to Israel to support their theory that God is finished with Israel and that the Church has replaced Israel in God’s plan.

Dear friend, there is nothing in the context or in the description of these verses or words that would warrant a symbolic interpretation of these texts. The same God who originally created the animal kingdom to peaceably cohabit together can restore the same kind of peaceable kingdom among the animal world without any problem. A reader of the Scripture must simply accept by faith what God says He can and will do.

Some amillennialists write off Isaiah chapter eleven and other passages in the Old Testament from being literal since they are said to be written in poetry. However, poetry, as opposed to narrative, does not automatically mean a passage is non-literal. For instance, Isaiah 40:3-4 is written in poetry (capital words that appear to be in the middle of the sentence indicate poetry). However, this passage was literal and was already fulfilled in John the Baptist's coming (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3). So here we have a poetic statement from Isaiah that was fulfilled literally. The same is true regarding the statements about the animal kingdom or the state of zoology.

There are some amillennialists who look at the overwhelming evidence and suggest that these expressions are literal but that they are only descriptive of the eternal kingdom, or the eternal state and not the 1,000-year reign of the Millennium. Their plan is to try and overlook the Millennium claiming that any descriptions of a kingdom in the Old Testament must be referring to the eternal kingdom and eternal state and not the Millennial Kingdom of 1,000 years. This conclusion allows them to bypass the promises to Israel and transfer them to the church in a spiritual kingdom. However, those amillennialists who conclude this forget that Isaiah envisioned a day when Jesus as the King would fulfill the Davidic Covenant and sit upon the throne of David (Isa. 9:6) and when Jerusalem and the Jews would be the centerpiece of the world one again (Isa. 2:2; Zech 8:23). This is not believed by any amillennialist since it's maintained that God is finished with Israel and Israel's covenant promises. They also fail to see that the prophecies speak of Christ ruling over enemies and death occurring during his reign (Isa. 65:20). They speak of Christ judging the sinners (Isa. 11:4; 66:14; Ps. 2:9). This is hardly a description of the eternal state (Revelation 21-22). Nice try guys!

The old saying is still true:

"If the plain sense of Scripture makes good sense, seek no other sense, lest it result in nonsense."

The point is this. When one interprets the Bible literally and believes what God says, there can be no doubt to what Isaiah is prophesying about in Isaiah 11:6-9. *There will be a reversal of the Genesis curse upon the animal kingdom during the Millennial Kingdom or 1,000 years.* The prophet Isaiah predicts that there will be peace even

among the animal kingdom. The self-taught American Quaker artist Edward Hicks loved this passage so much that he painted several very literal canvases called “The Peaceable Kingdom.” One of the animal hospitals nearby our church calls themselves the “Peaceable Kingdom.” However, today we are not living in the peaceable kingdom.

If you go to any zoo, you will not find any lions eating straw (“the lion shall eat straw” – Isa. 11:7). Today no loving mother would allow her child to play with a deadly poisonous snake (“the weaned child shall put his hand on the cackatrice’ den” – vs. 8). Today the wolf cannot lie down beside the little lamb but during the Millennial Kingdom this will actually take place (“The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb” – vs. 6). The story is told of a Russian zookeeper who made this boast, “In our zoo here in Moscow, the wolf dwells with the lamb in the same cage, something which you Americans do not have.” But he failed to mention that a new lamb had to be put in the cage every day! It will not be this way during the Millennium.

The wolf and lamb will dwell together in harmony and peace. Likewise, “the leopard shall lie down with the kid (young goat) and “the calf and the young lion, and the fatling (tame farm animal)” will lie down together (vs. 6). The “cow and the bear shall feed” together (vs. 7). They will graze side by side.

Not until the King returns will He release the animal kingdom from the Genesis curse. I don’t advise you to handle poisonous snakes and ferocious alligators today or try and sleep with a lion! In the coming Millennial Kingdom, the flesh eating animals will lie down peaceably with those animals which were once their prey. The lion and meat eating carnivorous animals will return to eating straw like the ox (“the lion shall eat straw like the ox” - vs. 7). If you go to a zoo and throw some straw in a lion’s cage he will have no interest today. But if you throw a piece of meat in the cage things will be different!

During the Millennium the animals will lose their ferocity and become like all nonviolent domestic animals and evidently become harmless to humans and other animals (“They will not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain – Isa. 11:9). Today the only way the wolf can dwell with the lamb is when the lamb is dwelling inside the wolf’s stomach!

But in the coming day all of this will be changed. Even the little children who are still not weaned from their mothers (“the sucking child” – vs. 8) will be able to play on “the hole of the asp” which is a venomous snake and “weaned child” (vs. 8), such as a little toddler, will be able to put his hand on the “cockatrice’ den” which is again a name for a poisonous snake.

Isaiah may very well have the cobra snake in mind. How many of you ladies would let your little child play over a hole that leads into a cobra’s den? Someday you will be able to let your children play with those snakes that were once poisonous for God is going to remove the curse which caused the animal kingdom to revert to killing and eating each other for their survival. Someday the curse upon the animal kingdom will be in the past. What a glorious day it will be. We won’t have to worry about being sprayed by skunks, pricked by porcupines, run over by a rhinoceros, or mauled by a man-eating tiger.

Not long ago I was walking in the neighborhood development. I witness a cat chasing a little bunny rabbit. While the cat was chasing the rabbit a hawk came flying on to the scene and grabbed the little rabbit. The bunny left off a shriek and away went the hawk with the rabbit. The cat had lost its meal! I thought to myself how the animal kingdom is certainly not at peace today. The whole animal kingdom terrorizes one another and within the animal world there is unrest and constant turmoil.

I was watching an animal program on TV and a man lived in Africa for several years filming wild carnivorous animals such a lions and hyenas. As I watched the killing I could not help but think how the animal world is cursed along with the human race. The animal kingdom has suffered because of sin as well. The man who was a professional photographer became discussed and distraught when he saw the killing among the animals for two years. At one point he filmed two younger lions eat their own mother who hung herself in a tree when chasing after a leopard. The man, who was a secular humanist, expressed these words after his filming expedition: “I can’t believe what I have seen these past two years in the animal kingdom. What I have witnessed is disheartening. The animals have only one

thing on their minds – killing and death. They will revert to anything to fulfill their obligation. It seems like something is radically wrong.”

Dear friend, something is wrong with creation. Creation is cursed by God but one day it's going to be freed from its curse. Even wild animals will submit to Messiah's rule someday, making it possible for a nursing child to play with the snakes. Little children will be able to safely play with lions, bears, cobras, and other poisonous vipers and not be harmed by them (“and a little child shall lead them” – vs. 6). What a day that will be when the children will say, “Let's go out and play with the lions!” No animals will hurt anything or anyone throughout the regions of Jerusalem and the restored millennial earth (“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” – vs. 9).

Isaiah 65:25 echoes similar words:

“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.”

Isaiah 65:25 tells us that the curse conditions will be largely reversed during the Millennial Kingdom. However, it also reveals that snakes will be an exception. Unlike the rest of the animal kingdom, snakes will not return to their pre-Fall condition but will continue to “eat dust.” Perhaps this snake status is meant to as a perpetual reminder about the terrible nature of evil and its disastrous consequences.

Ezekiel 34:25 also states:

“And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.”

Ezekiel 34:28

“And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.”

This is the promise of protection from wild animals due to the fact that the animals have reverted back to their nonviolent natures that were originally created in them at the time of creation. During the Millennium the earth will be restored to its pre-fall conditions.

Someday God will indeed completely “rid evil beasts out of the land” (Lev. 26:6) under the restored millennial earth. Yes, even the animal kingdom will be tamed and brought under the rule of the King. The Genesis curse will be lifted during the Millennium and animals will once again return to the way they were originally created to be prior to the Genesis Fall. The millennial earth will return to a nonviolent kingdom of animals that will dwell harmoniously among one another. A great day is coming!

Professor Drummond shows how a change in the surroundings of an animal will even change the structure of its body. A hunter changed the environment of a sea-gull by keeping it in captivity, so that it could only secure a grain diet. The effect was to modify the stomach of a bird normally adapted to a fish diet, until a time when it came to resemble in structure the gizzard of an ordinary grainfeeder, such as the pigeon. One thing is certain. God will change the ferocity of the animal kingdom and create a peaceable animal kingdom during the thousand years. The current food chain of the animal kingdom will be transformed.

Romans 8:19-22 teaches this:

“For the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”

The Bible teaches that we are already the sons of God but the full manifestation of this will some day be revealed when the King returns to reign with all His saints. All of creation is pictured as waiting for this revelation of the sons of God (“manifestation of the sons of God” – vs. 19) for when Jesus returns with His saints to rule this world all of creation will be delivered from its curse (“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered” – vs. 21). Creation is looking forward to the day of its deliverance (“the earnest expectant of the creature” – vs. 19). Someone wrote: “The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.” Why? For it’s then that even creation will have the curse lifted upon itself.

When Adam sinned, his transgression affected not only mankind, but all creation. Many wild animals die violent deaths. Disease afflicts birds and animals as well as fish and serpents. The results of man's sin have rippled like shockwaves throughout all creation. Paul explains that "the creation was made subject to vanity" not by its own choice, but by the decree of God ("him who hath subjected" – vs. 20) because of the disobedience of man's first federal head (Adam). However, someday during the Millennial Kingdom all this will be changed. Creation waits in "hope" (vs. 20) for its deliverance. Creation is pictured as looking back to the ideal conditions that existed in Eden prior to the Genesis curse. Then it surveys the havoc that was caused by the entrance of sin and looks forward to the day when it will once again be restored to serenity during the Millennial Kingdom and pristine conditions will once again return to the animal kingdom.

Today we live in a sighing, sobbing, suffering world (vs. 22). The whole creation groans and suffers pain like that of a woman in childbirth. Nature's music is in the minor key. The earth is racked by cataclysm. Animals prey on one another. The blight of death is on every living thing. Creation is seen to be suffering great pain because of the Genesis curse but someday it will all end. What a glorious deliverance will take place during the Millennial Kingdom when the sons of God are revealed and all the earth returns as the days of Eden prior to the curse. What a day, glorious day it will be!

5. There will be economic prosperity.

During the Millennium there will be a fully developed industrialized society that will provide for the needs of the King's subjects (Israel) and the needs of the families throughout the earth (Isa. 62:8-9; 65:21-23; Jer. 31:5). Agriculture as well as manufacturing will provide employment opportunities. Along with this will be economic prosperity. The perfect and prosperous labor situation will be based upon capitalism and free enterprise (Isa. 65:22). People will be able to prosper because of their own creativity, ingenuity, initiative, and hard work. The Bible envisions a time when the sowers will bump into the reapers! There will be economic abundance, and as a result, there will be no want throughout the millennial earth (Jer. 31:5, 12;

Ezek. 34:26; Joel 2:21-27; Amos 9:13-14 – “the plowman shall overtake the reaper”).

This is how the earth will experience economic prosperity. Those still harvesting will be in the way of those who want to plant seed. God will also bless the harvest and all people will have plenty of food to supply their needs. People will not be starving anywhere throughout the Millennial Kingdom due to the economic prosperity of the times. There will be no more pictures of starving children being flashed upon the TV screens. All peoples of the world will have food and provision. In the Millennium God will send abundant rain and the crops will be plentiful (Isa. 30:23-24). Even the animals will have plenty to eat. No one or nothing will be lacking for supply. There will be abundance and plenty for all the inhabitants of the world (Zech. 8:12; 9:17). There will no need for welfare programs or Social Security in the coming kingdom age. There will be no more need for food stamps or relief agencies. Everyone will have plenty due to the economic prosperity throughout the millennial earth.

God is going to rejuvenate the earth in spectacular ways so that there will be booming business and economic abundance everywhere. The Millennium will be an unprecedented age of prosperity. Poverty and unemployment will be unknown. No money will be spent on weapons and military advancements, which will leave great amounts of money for personal prosperity throughout the earth.

The Bible predicts how God is going to heal the waters of the Dead or Salt Sea and bring forth abundant fish. Listen to what God’s Word says.

Ezekiel 47:7-12

“Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the

fishers shall stand upon it from En-ge-di even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.”

This is a most remarkable millennial passage describing the conditions of economic prosperity and how this will become a blessing to the nations of the world. In this portion of the text Ezekiel saw a river emerging from the Temple that was flowing eastward (vs. 1). The river eventually becomes large and could not be passed over according to Ezekiel’s vision (vs. 5). The Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the earthquake that accompanies His return on the Mount of Olives will create topography changes and trigger forth new underground waters that will usher forth from Jerusalem and particularly the millennial temple (Zech. 14:4, 8; Joel 3:18). New living waters that are created from underground spring will issue forth from Jerusalem and divide its water flow between the eastern Dead Sea and western Mediterranean Sea.

These waters will actually heal the Salt Sea from its deadened and dormant state. Today nothing can live in these waters due to their content of salt. But someday the freshwaters issuing forth from the temple in Jerusalem are going to flow down into the Salt Sea and purify and cleanse its waters making them fresh (“the waters shall be healed” – Ezek. 47:8). What a fantastic prophecy this is. There is no way to allegorize these texts of Scripture without doing a great injustice to God’s Word. This is going to literally happen. The same God who created the world can revamp the land of Palestine to make it a suitable scene for all these glorious events to occur during the kingdom age.

Flourishing and fruitful trees will live along this river and life-giving waters (vs. 7) and these waters will heal the Salt Sea producing great abundance of fish (“a very great multitude of fish” – vs. 9). The

fisherman will crowd the shores and catch as many fish as they do in the “great sea” (vs. 10) or the Mediterranean Sea. Certain areas will remain marshy and salty so that the people can use the salt to meet their basic needs of life (vs. 11). Salt is essential to life, and the Dead Sea area is Israel’s chief source of salt. God will provide for all of Israel’s needs.

Added to this blessing, will be the abundant fruit which will grow on the trees along this river. The fruit will be used for food (“trees for meat” – vs. 12) and the people will never lack fruit because of the great abundance that continues to grow and thrive on the trees (“neither shall the fruit therefore be consumed” – vs. 12). These trees will actually bear fruit year round (“it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months” – vs. 12). Added to this blessing will be the leaves of the trees (“whose leaf shall not fade” – vs. 12) which will be used for medicinal purposes (“and the leaf thereof for medicine” – vs. 12). God will evidently use these leaves, which grow on the trees along this life-giving river, to meet the physical needs of the people. There may be medicinal value in these leaves that will enhance the health and longevity of people’s lives. How healing will come from the leaves is not clear. However, sickness will be eliminated (Isa. 65:20). There will be no death during the Millennial Kingdom from natural causes. God will use these trees to meet people’s physical needs. What a glorious day this will be for the earth.

The Millennial Kingdom is the gateway or entranceway that leads into the eternal state, so it’s not surprising that there will be similar trees existing in the eternal state that will also provide healing for the nations that are on the earth. The New Jerusalem will also have a river that flows forth from the throne of God and this river will produce what is called the tree of life with leaves that will be used to promote God’s life-giving purpose in the eternal earth.

Revelation 22:1-2

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

When the heavenly Jerusalem descends to the earth for the eternal state (Rev. 21:10) the waters that flow forth from the presence of God's thrones will also provide some kind of benefit for those who are dwelling upon the earth. The tree of life, reminiscent of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9), will bear fruit and bring forth leaves, promising that man will live on forever without sickness and death. The character of the tree of life in the garden was that when one eats the fruit of the tree they will live on without death (Gen. 3:22). The tree was designed to bring immortality to man. The tree in the New Jerusalem will have a similar quality and intent. Those who eat of the tree are given the promise of eternal physical health and perpetual life on the eternal earth. *The tree will apparently be used to promote God's life-giving purpose throughout the eternal earth.*

The word "healing" (therapiah) can be understood as "health-giving." The English word "therapeutic" is derived from this Greek word. There is no sickness in the eternal state (Rev. 21:4). Therefore, the leaves of this tree will not be needed for life-giving health like the trees along the millennial. This has led many to see the expression ("the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations") to simply mean that all people, those Jews and Gentiles who are not part of the Church, and who are living on the earth during the eternal state, will enjoy perpetual health. The leaves on the tree of life will be a reminder that in the eternal state there will be unending health and life for all people. Eating the leaves of this tree will give each earth dweller the promise that they will live on forever with perpetual health and blessing. The leaves will be a constant reminder that God will allow every person to live in continual health forever and forever. Therefore, the tree is simply designed to promote God's healing or health promise for those living on the eternal earth. People will experience enjoyment and blessing when eating the tree as they claim the eternal promise of health and everlasting life.

6. There will be an increase in light.

- a. There will be an increase in lunar and solar light.

The Bible reveals that during the Millennium there will be an increase in solar (sun) and lunar (moon) light. This no doubt will cause an increase in the productivity throughout the earth.

Isaiah 30:26

“Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”

This verse speaks about an increase in the solar and lunar light. The Bible predicts that at Christ’s Second Advent (“in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall” – Isa. 30:25) and presumably during the Millennial Kingdom light will be increased. When Christ returns not only topography changes will occur (Zech 14:4) but also lunar and solar changes in the light. The moon will shine similar to the sun. Isaiah is speaking about an increased brightness of the moon (lunar light) when compared to the moon’s brightness of his own day and our day. The sun will also shine “sevenfold” or literally seven times brighter than normal. Only the future will reveal how this increased light will effect and enhance the millennial earth. However, if the vapor canopy is restored, as it was prior to the Genesis Flood, these luminaries may once again shine with greater strength and not affect humans in any different way.

Zechariah 14:6-7

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.”

As mentioned above, when Jesus returns the topography of Palestine will change drastically (Zech. 14:4) but also the solar and lunar light throughout the land and presumably the millennial earth will be vastly different. Zechariah is depicting that at the time of Christ’s return and throughout the continuing millennial age the earth will not really experience “day, nor night” due to the increased light of the moon in the evening (“that at evening time it shall be light”). This verse provides us with a similar description as Isaiah 30:26. Because of the increased light of the moon the millennial earth may very well be a continuous display of light. One thing is certain about the descriptions of light during the Millennial Kingdom. *It will be a time when neither daylight nor night time will be normal.*

There will be changes in the lunar and solar light that will affect the millennial earth. Darkness may not envelop the Millennial Kingdom and the 1,000 years as it does today since the Bible says “at evening time it shall be light.” This may be one visible way to demonstrate that nothing will go unnoticed by the reigning King. The expression “the light shall not be clear, nor dark” is a difficult expression to understand. Perhaps the meaning is that the shining light during the Millennium will not be seen to be “clear” or overly bright nor will it be “dark” (obscured or clouded) in any way. It will be more of a uniform light and a light that is not overly straining to the eyes. The light that is displayed throughout the millennial earth will be such that it does not shine with the same intensity and brilliance as it does today.

Although the light may be stronger (Isa. 30:26) it may very well be displayed in a different manner throughout the Millennial Kingdom providing a perfect spectrum and system of light that is neither “clear” (overly bright and hard on the eyes) nor “dark” (obscured from clarity in any way). In short, the light displayed during the kingdom will be a spectrum of light that will brighten the millennial earth while at the same time not overpower the earth. In other words, it will be a perfect ray of light that is easy on the eyes and provide a certain atmosphere that is not known today. Only the future will help us to visibly see how different it will be during the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ.

b. There will be the light of God’s glory emanating from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 4:5 reads:

“And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.”

In this future time of blessing the glory of God’s radiance will be evident in Jerusalem (Mount Zion). The glory of God’s radiance will return to Jerusalem and more specifically the rebuilt temple and be seen as a light throughout Jerusalem and the surrounding area. As God’s glory was visible to Israel in the Exodus from Egypt in a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Ex. 13:21-22; 40:34-38; 16:10; Ps. 91:1), and which stood over the Tabernacle of old (Ex. 40:38), so also will His glory be visible when the redeemed nation will be in her land of promise (Palestine). In the kingdom age the Lord’s glory cloud will

be displayed as a luminous light. The pillar of cloud and fire will remain throughout the kingdom age as a symbol of God's manifest presence with His people (Zech. 2:5). God's glory, like a tent, will provide the promise of safety and protection for His people as described as a defence (Isa. 4:5) and tabernacle (Isa. 4:6).

Ezekiel spoke of the rebuilt millennial temple and how God's glory is going to shine forth from Jerusalem's temple in the coming kingdom age. This will be something that will be known throughout all the millennial earth.

Ezekiel 43:1-6

"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me."

Ezekiel envisioned a time when God's glorious presence would return to the temple. During the Millennial Kingdom the outward visible display of God's glory or brilliance will return to the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. This was such a spectacular and frightening brilliance that Ezekiel could only do one thing – fall down and worship! What else can we do when we see God's glory? In the coming kingdom (1,000-year reign of Christ) God's Shekinah glory will once again be displayed in the temple. This will be an awesome and brilliant display of light to symbolize God's holy presence.

The glory of the Lord came and dwelt over the mercy seat between the cherubim for the first time when the tabernacle had been completed in the wilderness (Ex 40:33–35). Later this same display of glory filled the Temple that was built by Solomon (I Kgs 8:6, 10, 11). But with Israel's constant rebellion the Lord could no longer dwell in

the midst of His people. They had defiled the Temple by setting up altars to other gods and had utterly turned their back to Him (Ezekiel 8). These idolatrous atrocities were committed by those who were not yet in exile. In sorrow, God departed from their midst.

Ezekiel 10:18-19

“Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.”

God’s departure from the temple began to be witnessed by Ezekiel. God was mounting His throne-chariot (Ezek. 1:17-20) to ride out of His temple and city. The throne-chariot began moving toward the east. More detail of this departure is then given in the next chapter.

Ezekiel 11:22-23

“Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.”

God’s glory departed from the temple in the past and for this reason the name “Ichabod” should be associated with the temple (1 Samuel 4:21-22). The glory could have returned to Israel at the Lord’s First Advent, but they rejected Him again (Mt 23:37–39; Lk 19:44). As a result, God began a program with a new people of God called the Church that has now lasted for some 2,000 years (Eph. 3:1-6). However, before Ezekiel’s prophecy is over we see the glory of the Lord returning once again to the millennial Temple (43:1–12). God is someday going to manifest His glorious presence once again in the rebuilt temple in earthly Jerusalem. This will occur during the Millennial Kingdom or the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ. God will manifest His glorious display of light in the temple area and it will be seen once again as a symbol of God’s magnificent holy presence.

c. There will be Messiah’s light of glory shining in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 24:23

“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

Apparently when Jesus Christ sits on the throne of David during the Millennial Kingdom His own glorious light, beaming forth His matchless holiness and purity, will emanate forth from his face and body. Jesus Christ will manifest His presence in Jerusalem and issue forth a spectacular display of brilliance and light. In beautiful poetically fashion, Isaiah speaks how Christ’s brilliant light will bring the light of the sun and moon to their shame (“the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed”).

Isaiah 60:19-20

“The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”

This text has often been interpreted as referring to the eternal state but Isaiah always spoke of the Millennial Kingdom in his prophecies. The context warrants the interpretation that this is the Millennial Kingdom since during the kingdom there will be punishment and death (Isa. 60:12). This will not be true in the eternal state (Rev. 21:4). During the Millennial Kingdom Jesus is really going to light things up! Although the sun and moon will continue to operate as they do today the presence of Jesus Christ sitting in Jerusalem will give the appearance that the sun will never set or the moon will never stop shining. Isaiah envisions a time when Christ’s brilliant radiance will outshine the sun and moon. Jesus will outshine them all! What a day this will be! The days of the Millennial Kingdom, which is a prelude to the eternal state, speak of Christ’s light shining from Jerusalem. The same will be true in the eternal state. Remember that the Millennial Kingdom is the entranceway that leads into the eternal state and therefore there are similar descriptions of the Millennium and eternal state that are given.

Revelation 21:23-24

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.”

These texts do not indicate that there will be no more sun and moon during the Millennium or the eternal state. They indicate that there will be no more need for them since the light of the Lamb’s glorious presence during the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal state will provide such a spectacular blaze of glorious light. The light of the Lamb will put the light of the sun and moon to shame. His brilliance will be so amazing and spectacular that Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom and the New Jerusalem during the eternal state will need no sun or moon.

7. There will be unity among the nations.

Isaiah 19:23-25

“In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”

During the Millennial Kingdom there will be free and unrestricted transportation back and forth between the Middle East nations. Isaiah is no doubt referring to literal highways that will be built to bring about this new Middle East and global unity. With unlimited resources of wealth available for research and development, one can readily imagine what highway transportation will be like during the Kingdom. Pollution free cars will evidently be able to drive everywhere symbolizing the unity the King has brought among the nations.

8. There will be purified speech.

Isaiah 19:18

“In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.”

This prophetic verse envisions the time when the original enemies of Israel will speak the Hebrew language! Apparently these cities will adopt the Hebrew language (not English) as their primary language. This is due to the respect that the world will have for the Jewish people of God during the Millennial Kingdom. Hebrew will be a common language to learn in view of the high profile that the Jewish people will possess as the King’s people.

Zephaniah 3:9

“For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.”

Some have suggested that this verse is teaching that there will be one common language during the Millennial Kingdom. However, other millennial passages seem to teach otherwise (Zech. 8:23). The word “pure” (cleansed, purified, purged) suggests that the people’s language throughout the millennial earth will be restored to a state of wholesomeness once again. It seems that the speech and language of people living during the kingdom days will no longer be defiled in any way. They will not speak against God and Jesus Christ. Instead of cursing God they will worship God (“call upon the name of the Lord”) and serve Him (“to serve him with one consent”). People living on the millennial earth will be required to possess wholesome or pure speech that is no longer defiling and defaming to God. The lips of a human race that once outwardly displayed cursing and obscenities toward Jesus Christ will now worship Jesus Christ. Only a pure or cleansed language will be allowed to manifest itself throughout the millennial earth. In any event, the fact that the millennial earth will “call upon the name of the Lord” (Zeph. 3:9) brings us to our next point.

9. There will be unified worship.

All the inhabitants of the earth will be made to join their voices together to worship Christ and the King over the millennial earth.

Isaiah 45:22-23

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”

When the King returns in His Second Coming an invitation will go out to all those surviving Gentile nations who “are escaped of the nations” (Isa. 45:20). In other words, those who actually do survive the Tribulation Period will have opportunity to be saved prior to the commencement of the kingdom. An invitation from the crucified, risen, and glorified Son will be spread throughout the earth (“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth”). The same invitation will be given during the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ. However, when Jesus returns the entire planet will bow down and worship Him as the only true God (“That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear – see also Phil. 2:10-11).

At this particular time some will bow with worshipful hearts and others will bow out of necessity and force to honor the King. Some will worship from the true sincerity of their hearts while others will worship Him out of compulsion. So at the commencement of the Millennial Kingdom the entire earth and universe will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the absolute King and undisputed Lord of all. Nevertheless, during the actual Millennial Kingdom we do see that there will be universal worship taking place.

Isaiah 66:23

“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.”

Zechariah 14:16-17

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.”

Worship of the King during the Millennial Kingdom will not be an option but a requirement for all the nations of the world. If they want physical blessings, then they will have to represent their nations in Jerusalem and send leading figures up to worship the King. The King will see to it that all nations participate in this act of worship. None will be exempt from honoring the King.

Malachi 1:11

“For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Malachi gives a glimpse of what it will be like during the kingdom. He says that from the rising of the sun until the going down of the sun God’s name will be “great among the Gentiles” of the restored millennial earth. In other words, the earth in the coming kingdom age will honor and worship the King. His name will “be great among the heathen” (Gentile masses) of the world. There will be a universal worship and acknowledgement that Jesus Christ is God and the King of Kings. No false idolatrous worship will be tolerated.

Zechariah 13:2

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.”

The statutes of Buddha, Allah, Mary, and all other pagan idolatry will be cut off from the land of Israel and throughout the millennial earth. False pagan worship will not be tolerated by the King. Jerusalem will set the pattern for worldwide worship since this city will be the millennial capital of the earth and the place of exalted worship of the King.

Isaiah 2:2-3

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the

mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

What a difference the coming millennial age will be in comparison to our own day and time in which we live. Great throngs of people will want to go to Jerusalem to see the King and listen to Him speak of His ways. They will want to worship Him and walk in His ways. This certainly is not true today but in the coming kingdom age there will be universal worship and wonder concerning Jesus Christ.

Psalm 66:4

“All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.”

This looks ahead to the Millennium and how all the earth will worship Jesus Christ as He sits as the King in Jerusalem. The Millennial Kingdom will be a true theocracy where God is worshipped and honored.

One important aspect of worship in the Millennium is that animal sacrifices will be reinstated in the rebuilt millennial temple. Many prophecies envision this.

Ezekiel 43:18-27

“And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord God; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord God, a young bullock for a sin offering. And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it. Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary.

“And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse it with the bullock. When thou hast made an end of cleansing

it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish. And thou shalt offer them before the Lord, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the Lord. Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish. Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves. And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord God.”

Ezekiel 45:15-23

“And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make **reconciliation** (“atonement”) for them, saith the Lord God. All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel. And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make **reconciliation** (“atonement”) for the house of Israel.

“Thus saith the Lord God; In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary: And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court. And so thou shalt do the seventh day of the month for every one that erreth, and for him that is simple: so shall ye **reconcile** (“atone”) the house. In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering. And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the Lord, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering.”

The Bible clearly predicts that a new temple will be rebuilt during the Millennial Kingdom and the Jews will once again begin to sacrifice animals as they did in days of old. This is the clear and unmistakable teaching of the prophetic word. If the sacrifices are not to be taken literally, why should we take the temple literally? We must simply let the Bible speak for itself on this point.

a. Rebuilt temple

What about the temple? Those who reject the literal prophecies about the Millennium and Israel's future suggest that this temple describes Solomon's temple at Jerusalem prior to the Babylonian captivity. They see these verses as a memorial of this great magnificent temple. Others conclude that this temple describes Zerubbabel's temple following the seventy years in Babylonian captivity. Some suggest that this simply is a picture of the idea temple the Jews should have built after the seventy years of captivity. Others think that this temple description figuratively symbolizes the spiritual blessings of the church in the present age in which we live. The amillennialist who takes the anti-literal view pays little attention to the details of this temple prophecy and simply equates it to the spiritual blessings the church receives since she has taken over Israel's physical blessings.

How do we react to these different conclusions concerning the temple predictions in Ezekiel's prophecies? In the first place, the descriptions of this temple are not the same as the descriptions of Solomon's temple in the Kings and Chronicles. Second, the temple that the remnant built does not come close to the description that Ezekiel gave in his prophecies. There are vast differences between the two. Third, those who suggest that it's a temple that the remnant should have build when they returned from Babylonian captivity do a great injustice to God's Word. Why should this prophecy of Ezekiel be given if it was never intended to be fulfilled? Fourth, those who suggest that this is only a figurative description of the blessings of the church today cannot explain the detailed symbolism of this prophecy and reject the literal interpretation of prophecy permitting a great fallacy by giving no exposition of the texts.

This is a weak, vague, and fanciful interpretation of these texts. It allows a person to give their own flawed opinion of what the Bible

says instead of explaining exactly what God says. The painstaking detail in Ezekiel 40—48 is similar to the instruction given to Moses for building of the Tabernacle and then to others for building the Solomonic Temple. Such detail is meaningless unless taken literally as were the Tabernacle and first two Temples. Because no textual basis exists for a non-literal interpretation, those attempting such explanations become subjective in their many and various guesses about the meaning of these passages.

Added to these rebuttals would be that the glory is seen returning to this temple (Ezek. 43:1-7) whereas the glory cloud of God's presence did not return to the second temple. Furthermore, no high priest is mentioned in the description of Ezekiel's temple whereas the Jews after their return from Babylon did once again have high priests. The changes in the dimensions of the temple are different than any other temple mentioned and cannot refer to Solomon's temple, Zerubbabels' temple, or that of Herod.

Due to the apostasy within the Levitical line, special attention is given to the line of Zadok from within the Levitical priesthood, who will be granted the privilege to serve as priests (Ezek. 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). Zadok was a faithful high priest who remained faithful during David's and Solomon's reigns. This distinction was not made in any other temples. Lastly, there were no living waters running out of the previous temples that were built which healed the waters and people (Ezekiel 47:1-12). For all these reasons and more we can conclude that Ezekiel's prediction of a future literal temple that shall be built in the millennial age. If a person believes in the literal interpretation of Scripture and God's desire to details in order to convey His Word to us, then they will come to the conclusion that there is a future millennial temple that will be built during the 1,000-year reign of Christ.

b. Restored animal sacrifices

The word translated "reconciliation" in Ezekiel 45:15, 17, 20 is the word that means to "make atonement" (kaphar). It's the same word that is used in the Pentateuch (Lev. 6:30; 8:15; 16:6, 11, 24, 30, 32-34; Num. 5:8; 15:28; 29:5). In some sense the offering of these sacrifices will be accepted by God (Ezek. 43:27). The question is, "In

what sense?" In other words, what purpose will these sacrifices have during the Millennial Kingdom?

One solution given for the animal sacrifices during the kingdom is that they will be viewed as a *memorial* of Israel's historic past, when God allowed her to offer sacrifices, prior to Christ's entrance into the world. Although the texts do say there will be atonement (Ezek. 45:15, 17, 20) in connection with these sacrifices, it's assumed by many that God will only look upon them as a memorial, reminding the Jews how He provided a system of atonement for Israel, prior to Christ's death upon the cross. The sacrifices will not be needed for any kind of temporal or ritual expiation but to remind the people of their historic past and God's grace reaching out to them. It's believed that God will use these sacrifices as a way to outwardly express His approval of His Jewish people when they bring these sacrifices (Ezek. 43:27).

The sacrifices of worship will be a memorial much in the same way the Lord's Supper is a memorial for the church today (1 Cor. 11:23-26). However, there is a better option and understanding of these sacrifices.

First, there will be a need for ritual or ceremonial cleansing for earth dwellers that are commanded to worship God. People who are still living in non-glorified bodies (unglorified humanity living in their natural and sinful bodies) during an earthly theocracy, need ritual cleansing or purification, resulting in a temporary covering for their sins, since they are required to offer sacrifices to God and worship Him during the Millennium. Without some type of atoning system for individuals and representatives of the world nations, who are required to come to Jerusalem and worship the King (Zech. 14:17-21), their lives would be in danger of the immediate judgment of God. Unworthy worshippers in their sinful bodies cannot be accepted in the presence of God. They need ritual purification and cleansing when offering sacrifices of worship.

Second, there is a need to protect the holiness of God. The sacrifices can also be viewed as a way to *protect God's holy presence* when He dwells on earth with defiled sinners, who are still living in their natural, sinful bodies, and who are required to worship God. God's

impeccable holiness and righteousness must be vindicated as sinful people come to worship Him in their earthly bodies. Therefore, a return to a sacrificial system and ritual purification and cleansing is needed for people and entire nations, who are still living in their natural and sinful bodies on earth, to keep God's immediate judgment from falling upon them, as they seek to worship Him.

The sacrificial system is not a return to a Mosaic system since there are many differences when comparing the two systems (Jer. 3:16) and since this system was done away with Christ's entrance into the world (2 Cor. 3:11). The millennial sacrificial system will be designed to demonstrate respect for God's absolute holiness as people, who are living on earth in their sinful and unglorified bodies, seek to worship God directly. Unglorified people cannot enter the direct presence of the Lord without some type of temporary atonement or covering for their sins, typified through ritual cleansing or purification. This atonement will only be temporary for when the eternal kingdom and eternal state begins all will be saved and glorified and there will be no need for ritual purification (Rev. 21:1-7).

These sacrifices do not do away with salvation through Christ. The sacrifices have nothing to do with salvation (Heb. 10:4). However, the sacrifices allow God to remain gracious to the great masses of people on earth who are still living in their sinful and unglorified bodies. Since God will once again enter the temple (Ezek. 43:1-9) and since the glorified Jesus Christ will be on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Matt. 19:28), representing God's radiant holiness (Isa. 60:19-20), there will be a need for earthly worshippers to be ceremonially purified to enter His presence. Without the sacrifices there would be *immediate judgment* upon the defiled worshippers (Isa. 60:14), who are required by God to come to Jerusalem, and without offering the sacrifices that God requires, there would also be *temporal judgments* that would be meted out upon the nations (Zech. 14:17-21; Isa. 60:12). The King will demand correct worship (purified worship) and committed worship (regular worship) during the 1,000 years.

Other prophetic passages mention these same sacrifices of worship. We will simply mention them in passing for the reader's interest.

Isaiah 56:6-7

“Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and **their sacrifices** shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”

Jeremiah 33:11

The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and **of them that shall bring the sacrifice** of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord.

Zechariah 14:16-21

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and **all they that sacrifice** shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.”

When believing in a literal hermeneutic of Scripture a person will come to the conclusion that there will be a rebuilt millennial temple designed to once again sacrifice animals as a memorial of the

atonement that God granted Israel prior to the cross of Christ and His finished work.

10. There will be comfort.

The Millennial Kingdom will be a place of comfort for restored Israel and the people living throughout the millennial earth (Isa. 12:1-2; 49:13; 51:3; 66:13). The King will minister to the needs of the people so that there will be fullness of comfort in this grand and glorious coming day. Humanity will not suffer from ill treatment, earthquakes, or starvation. Comfort will be experienced throughout the Millennial earth.

11. There will be holiness manifested.

The theocratic kingdom will be a kingdom in which holiness is manifested through the King and the King's subjects. The land of Palestine will be holy, the city holy, the temple holy, and the subjects holy unto the Lord (Isa. 1:26-27; 4:3-4; 52:1; 60:21; Ezek. 37:23-34; 43:7; 45:1; Zeph. 3:11, 13; Zech. 8:3; 13:1-2). There are two notable verses that speak about holiness. Let's look at them briefly.

Isaiah 35:8-10 prophetically reveals:

“And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

This passage of Scripture envisions the return of Israel to her land someday. For Israel's return there will actually be a highway (Isa. 49:11) that extends into Jerusalem (“and come to Zion” – Isa. 35:10) so that they might keep the millennial feasts. This freeway of pathway is called a highway of holiness or “the way of holiness” (vs. 8). No unclean person or wicked fools will enter on this path since holiness will abound throughout Palestine and the Holy Land (Joel 3:17). No wild animals will threaten the people since they will return to their

nonviolent natures prior to the fall (vs. 9; Isa. 11:6-7). Ransomed Israel will walk this holy highway and experience songs of everlasting joy and gladness. All of their sorrows and sighing shall flee away! What a glorious day this will be when the ransomed of Israel walk the highway of holiness. This highway is really a description of the way it will be throughout the descriptive of the millennial kingdom.

Zechariah 14:20-21 declares:

“In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.”

During the Millennial Kingdom holiness will be seen everywhere. What a glorious time this will be! Holiness will characterize millennial life whether that holiness be demonstrated in the public arena of life by horses wearing ringing bells that have the words inscribed on them “HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD”, or in Israel’s religious life (the cooking pots in the LORD’s house in the restored millennial temple - Ezek. 40-43), or whether it be seen in the private sector of life (“every pot in Jerusalem and Judah” – vs. 21).

Everything in Jerusalem and presumably throughout the millennial earth will be “holy” or set apart to honor the King. In this coming day all the people of Israel will indeed be consecrated (holy) to the Lord and fulfill their original holy calling (Exod. 19:6; Jer. 2:3). Wickedness that is represented by the Canaanites of the Old Testament will not have any leading role in the future Millennium. The Canaanites throughout Israel’s history represented people who were morally and spiritually unclean, reprehensible to Yahweh, and doomed to death (Gen. 9:25; Isa. 35:8; Ezek. 43:7; 44:9; Rev. 21:27). There will be no more people like the Canaanites in the land of Palestine because all living there will acknowledge Him as God and King. During the millennium no such defilement will run ramped and go unchecked. This is because the Messiah is the LORD Almighty and the Holy One, He will establish holiness throughout the glorious millennial earth!

12. There will be full knowledge and instruction throughout the earth.

The ministry of the King will be known throughout all the millennial earth. Instruction for living will issue forth from the King (Isa. 2:2-3) so that all will know about His decrees. In this coming day “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).

Habakkuk 2:14 echoes the same truth:

“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

When the Messiah rules in His kingdom, knowledge of the Lord will be worldwide. The world will know of His *will, ways, and Word*. Everyone will know of Him. *So extensive and abundant will be that knowledge that it will be like water covering the sea.* The King’s decrees and purposes will be known throughout all the earth. There will be no misunderstandings about what the King has decreed or said. The world will know the true story and the whole story about the Jewish Messiah and King. The entire planet will know about Christ’s plans, purposes, and programs for the earth. CNN will no longer be biased in reporting news. I’m not sure about this but their name will probably be changed “Christ News Network” and they will speak truth about Jesus Christ! This will truly be a great day!

Isaiah 41:18-20

I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together. That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.”

The restored millennial earth to its Eden days will cause all of mankind to “see” and “know” and “consider” and “understand” that God’s hand has created the earthly renovations to nature and planet earth. The entire world will know that God is the Creator and One who has filled the earth with such beauty, bounty, and provision.

There will be no evolutionary theory taught in the schools and colleges during the kingdom.

Jeremiah 31:34

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

What will be true of His national people Israel will also be true in some measure throughout the whole millennial earth. The millennial textbooks that teach children will have a picture of the King on them and the world will “know” about the King, who He is, and what He is doing on the earth. The textbooks during the Millennial Kingdom will not be written by humanists but by God-fearing people who will seek to spread the knowledge of the King throughout all the millennial earth. The secular humanists of our day who are bellowing forth their absurdities will be silenced and only truth about godliness and the King will be spread throughout the earth (Isa. 30:20-21 – “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying This is the way, walk ye in it”).

Micah 4:2

“And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Instruction concerning the King and His decrees and ways will be everywhere. Children will know of the King’s ways (Isa. 54:13) and God’s people will learn everything there it to know about the Messiah and King (Jer. 3:15; 23:1-4). You won’t be able to live in the millennial earth and not know about Jesus Christ who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16). Written books, magazines, news programs, the history channel, and colleges will all promote the rules, regulations, and religion of the King! Imagine how the once secular colleges with humanistic professors will be forced to turn back to God and teach His ways! They will no longer teach secular humanism, sex education, and sacrilegious evolutionism. Instead, they will teach

godliness, purity, creation, and Christ. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD (Isa. 11:9).

“Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
Great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!

He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.”

13. There will be the fullness of the Spirit.

Those who are saved and in subject to the King will experience the fullness of God's divine presence through the Holy Spirit. This is one of the promises of the Millennial Kingdom.

Isaiah 32:15

“Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.”

The Bible teaches that the Millennium will come about after the Holy Spirit is poured out on Israel (“us”) from on high (from God Himself). This will occur at the Second Advent or coming of Christ when He saves believing Israel. There will be a new manifestation and awareness of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of God's regenerate people.

Isaiah 44:3

“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”

The expression of pouring water on thirsty people means that Christ will cleanse and satisfy His people who are compared to a piece of parched ground. This verse promises that Israel, as a people, like their physical land, will be transformed for kingdom blessing. This blessing will come about by a great outpouring of God's Spirit, which

will inaugurate the Millennium (“I will pour my spirit upon thy seed”). The seed of Israel will experience both the saving and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit during the Millennial Kingdom. Redeemed Israel will prosper numerically like grass and poplar trees (Isa. 44:4). Other prophets also spoke of this future outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 declares:

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

Part of the blessing of the New Covenant ministry that is related to Israel’s regathering (Ezek. 36:24) is that He would put the Holy Spirit within their lives (“I will put my spirit within you” – vs. 27). This speaks of the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Apparently the Holy Spirit will indwell Israel as He indwells the church today. There will be a dynamic ministry and work of the Holy Spirit going on in the lives of Israel and other people living during the Millennial Kingdom.

Ezekiel 37:14

“And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.”

Once again, we discover that when Israel is regathered for the Millennial Kingdom, that God would give them the Holy Spirit, and it’s because of His ministry of power that Israel will live differently. Saved Israel will serve the Lord in the ministry and power of the Holy Spirit. The prophets repeat this truth over and over again. They envision a coming time when Israel will be regenerated and transformed by the wonder working power of the Holy Spirit. The point is this. As the redeemed of Israel enter the millennial kingdom they will have the same benefit of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as do believers in the Church Age today. Therefore, they will have an inward compulsion to do the will of God (Ezek. 36:27). What a glorious day this will be!

Zechariah also envisions this working of the Holy Spirit in Zechariah 12:10: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

The work of the Holy Spirit will be a gracious work (“spirit of grace”) upon the Jewish people that will cause them to cry out (“supplications”) realizing that they have crucified the true Messiah. The Holy Spirit will then regenerate Israel and change her into a sanctified and serving people of God.

Joel 2:28-29 says:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

This prophecy once again envisions Israel’s salvation and blessings in the Millennial Kingdom. In verse 30 we are given the prophetic signs that will occur before Israel’s blessings in the Millennial Kingdom. They will be astronomical signs following the Tribulation days just prior to Christ’s Second Advent. Israel will know that the Messiah is going to return and when He returns they will be saved (vs. 31) and then be given the blessings of the Holy Spirit during the millennial era (vss. 28-29). Please notice that the manifestations of the Spirit’s ministry and blessing upon their lives during the Millennial Kingdom will be evident in that many Jews will once again prophesy, dream dreams, and have visions.

These signs and other miraculous signs in the past have accompanied new dispensations and workings of God such as in the days of Moses and the law (Exodus 3:1-8; 7; Acts 7:36), the beginning of the church age (Acts), and now the kingdom age (Joel 2:28-29). They are actually preparatory signs that indicate God is doing something different with a new people. Similar signs, such as speaking in different languages, and many other miraculous signs, were also manifested in the early days of the church era, to

authenticate new truth and God's new working with a new people – the Gentiles (Acts 2:1-13; 5:12-16; 8:12-16; 10:10, 44-46; 19:6).

These signs indicated that God was doing something new with a different people (the church). Many times when God begins a different dispensation, with a different work, and with a different people, He allows them to manifest certain miraculous signs to authenticate the change in God's working. They are normally signs that last for a period of time and then cease.

Peter likens the blessing of Israel during the millennial age to the blessings of the Holy Spirit that came upon the church during its beginning or inception.

Acts 2:18-21

“And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The promise of the Spirit's filling which took place at Pentecost (the birthday of the church) was an example of what it's going to be like when Israel is saved at the Second Advent and enters the Millennial Kingdom. Peter said that the experience the church had at Pentecost “is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Joel 2:16). Peter is not saying that what happened to the disciples on Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. In other words, the church does not inherit the promises given to Israel in any way. This is evident for the simple reason that there were no “signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke” (Acts 2:19). No tribulational signs preceded the blessings of the Holy Spirit in the new dispensation of the church. There were no astronomical signs in the heavens that occurred (Acts 2:20). These would come at a later time when God promises to bless His national people Israel at His return. It's during this time that the prophecy of Joel will be fulfilled.

Peter tells us when the actual fulfillment of Joel's prophecy will take place. It will take place "before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (the Second Coming of Christ – Acts 2:20). In other words, the exact literal fulfillment of Joel's prophecy will occur during the "last days" related to Israel's blessings, when God will once again turn back to His ancient people of Israel, and bring exalted blessing and power upon them from the Holy Spirit. When Peter said that "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:18) He was *comparing* or *illustrating* what Joel spoke about to what was taking place on Pentecost. There is a vast difference between application and literal fulfillment. *Peter was simply applying or making a similar comparison between Joel's prophecy and what took place on Pentecost.* In essence, Peter was saying, "What took place today on Pentecost is similar to what Joel spoke about in his prophecy concerning the filling and infusion of the Spirit's presence and power."

The fact is this. Pentecost was an *illustration* of what will happen to the converted nation of Israel at the commencement of the Millennium (Joel. 2:28-32). Pentecost with the Spirit's filling and empowering ministry was similar to the way it will be when God pours out the ministry of the Holy Spirit upon His regenerate people in the future kingdom. The Holy Spirit will apparently indwell His people and empower His people for living and service in a new dynamic and wonderful way. Added to the Spirit's work will be some new signs that God has turned to bless His ancient people once again. Many of them will have visions, dreams, and prophesy. These signs will once again point to a new work of God and be a way to introduce to the world the dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom and that God is fulfilling His promises to His ancient people – the Jews.

God has not promised that we can possess the signs of the Spirit that are given at the offset of the dispensational change. However, the epistles do mention that we retain the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), the leading of the Spirit (Rom. 8:14), and the power of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25; Acts 1:8) for our lives today. Although the introductory dispensational signs and miracles are no longer with us the Spirit's work of changing our lives is still with us today (2 Cor. 3:18). Let us never forget that we need the same power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives today so that we might live effectively and

victoriously for the Lord (“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts (Zech. 4:6).

14. There will be a new awareness of the presence of God.

The greatest thing about the Millennial Kingdom is that Christ Himself will be there! God through the Messiah will manifest His presence (Ezek. 37:27-28; Zech. 2:10-13 – “I will dwell in the midst of thee”). God’s presence through Jesus Christ will be fully recognized and the Lord’s people will experience a fellowship with the Lord unlike anything they have ever known. The city of Jerusalem in the coming kingdom day will be called Jehovah Shammah - “the Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35).

As we close out this part of our millennial study let us remember that all these conditions upon the earth during the Millennial Kingdom show to us the “greatness of the kingdom” (Dan. 7:27). This will be a great and glorious kingdom when all of earth’s history comes to its climax and conclusion during this Golden Age.

The Government of the Millennium

At this point of our study we want to reflect upon the kind of government that will exist on earth during the Millennium and how it will function.

1. The government.

Zechariah 14:9

“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.”

The Bible teaches that the government form that is on earth during the Millennial Kingdom will be a theocracy. Jesus will reign as Lord! God is going to rule planet earth through His Son who is the second person of the Godhead (Col. 2:9), who exegetes and unfolds (John 1:1; 18) the existence of God to the world. This is why the Millennium a theocracy. The Lord will reign as God of very God and the sovereign King. Since this is true God will reign over the earth. The millennial form of government will not be a democracy but a

theocracy. It will not be socialism or communism but a true theocracy where Christ rules in perfect righteousness. Even though it will be centered in Jerusalem, it will extend in authority throughout the earth.

Daniel 2:35

“Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to 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 envisions the time when a kingdom will fill the whole earth. No place on earth will escape the King’s rule. Every part of the world will be under the strict scrutiny and rule of the King.

Daniel 7:13-14

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, 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.”

Daniel 7:27

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

The Messiah will not only reign as King of Israel but He will also be King over the whole earth. *Christ will govern every inch of this world.* The worldwide scope of His reign is supported by Zechariah’s description of Him elsewhere as “the LORD of all the earth” (Zech. 4:14; 6:5; see also Micah 4:13). This is confirmed by the apostle John’s identification of Him as the Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17:14; 19:16). Jesus will rule as both God and King throughout the millennial earth. The millennium will be a theocracy or the rule of God over planet earth and the Bible confirms that “the government shall be upon his shoulder” (Isa. 9:6) and “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end” (Isa. 9:7). This is God’s

government and it will be run by Him and for Him. "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 97).

2. The governors

We know that Jesus Christ will reign as King of kings (Rev. 19:16; 20:4, 6; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-5a; Zech. 14:9; Matt. 19:28; Luke 1:32; 22:29-30). However, we also read about others ruling under Him and promoting His rule throughout the earth. Let's consider those who will rule with Christ on the earth during the 1,000 year millennial reign.

a. David will function as a co-ruler over Israel.

Ezekiel 34:23-24

"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it."

Ezekiel 37:24-25

"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever."

David, as the king of Israel, is usually not viewed as being in prophecy. He was the most important kings in ancient Israel and is the one from whom the Messiah (Jesus Christ) descended. However, does king David have a future purpose in God's prophetic program? The Bible suggests that He does. The king David of old seems to have a ruling place in the coming Millennial Kingdom. These passages place David in the end times as "shepherd," "prince," and "king" over God's covenant people Israel. If taken in their plain literal (normal, natural) sense we must assume that this refers to David who will be raised from the dead at Christ's Second Advent. When Jesus returns to earth at His Second Coming the Old Testament saints will be raised from earth to inherit their earthly promises (Dan. 12:2; Isa.

26:19; Acts 26:6-8). Apparently David will be raised from the dead (Jer. 30:9 – David their king, whom I will raise up unto them”) along with the other Old Testament saints and David will have a special place in the Millennium. He will rule over Israel in Jerusalem as a co-ruler with Christ.

We can come to this conclusion for several reasons. First, Jesus Christ is never called David in the Scriptures. He is called the Son of David fifteen times (Matt. 9:27), the seed of David (John 7:42), and the Root and Offspring of David (Rev. 22:16). Second, the term “my servant, David” is regularly used for the historical David (2 Sam. 3:18; 7:5, 8; 1 Kings 11:3, 32, 34; 2 Kings 20:6). Third, the Messiah is clearly distinguished from David (Hos. 3:5; Ezek. 34:24; 37:21-25; Jer. 30:9; Isa. 55:4). Lastly, there are certain aspects of the prophecy about David in Ezekiel 45:22 that cannot refer to Christ or the Messiah.

Ezekiel 45:22 records:

“And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering.”

This is a prophetic statement concerning the restoration of millennial sacrifices. As we have seen, these sacrifices will be memorial and recall the centuries that God atoned for Israel’s sins. If the prince refers to Jesus Christ, then Jesus would be confessing that He needed the atoning sacrifices as ancient Israel did in her past. Thus, it’s highly unlikely that this coming prophetic prince in Jerusalem refers to Christ. Instead, it refers to the historical David. Also, the same prophetic prince mentioned in Ezekiel 46:16 is seen dividing his inheritance among his past historical sons. This would rule out Christ as the prophetic prince of Jerusalem since Christ did not have any physical sons.

The Scriptures seem clear on this matter. David will be raised from the dead at Christ’s Second Coming (Jer. 30:9) along with all the other Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2-3). David will then be given a position of rulership under the Messiah in Jerusalem. The resurrected David will occupy some role of governmental authority during the millennial reign.

Hosea 3:5

“Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.”

b. The twelve apostles will judge in Israel.

The Bible is also very clear on this matter.

Matthew 19:28

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Luke 22:29-30 also states:

“And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Jesus proclaimed while He was here on earth that the twelve apostles will someday have a responsibility and privilege of co-rulership with the Messiah in the coming Millennial Kingdom. They will be able to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel that are reinstated in the land of Palestine. What a promise this is! No wonder they asked if Jesus would restore the earthly kingdom after His resurrection (Acts 1:6). They were looking forward to this glorious day. Amillennialists should take note that Jesus did not correct their literal understanding about the coming earthly kingdom. However, little did they realize that there would be a different time and season for the arrival of this earthly kingdom. The kingdom would only come to earth after the Church and Tribulation dispensations have run their course.

c. The Church will co-reign with Christ.

The epistles speak of the Church saints reigning as future heirs of the kingdom (James 2:5) because we are joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). No believer in the church age will miss out on this future blessing to rule and reign with Christ in some capacity. Because we

are heirs with Christ we will all reign with Him. The Church is actually called “kings and priests” because she is given the promise that she will one day reign with Christ when He returns to earth.

Revelation 1:5 says:

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

The context of this verse is pointing to the Millennial Kingdom (“the prince of the kings of the earth – vs. 5 and “dominion forever’ – vs. 6 and “he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him” - vs. 7). These statements all point to Christ’s Second Coming as the King to rule planet earth. It’s at this time that the Church will function in a special way as God’s representative kings who rule with Him and God’s representative priests who serve and worship Him. Thus, the promise is given that the Church will rule and reign with Christ. All of the Church!

Revelation 5:10

“And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

The Bible teaches that we are already kings and priests by virtue of our salvation and blood-bought position in Christ. Because of God’s grace we will be able to rule with Him as kings and priests in the coming earthly kingdom. This is God’s promise to every believer. Some Christian teachers are now concluding that some believers won’t even enter the kingdom because of their lack of faithfulness and dedication to the Lord. This simply is not true since entering the kingdom is based upon the new birth (John 3:5). Furthermore, the fact that we are coheirs with Christ and are given the promise of rulership with Christ (“we shall reign on the earth”) would suggest that all the Church will all have some part in this coming kingdom and all will rule with Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:1-2

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints

shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"

The Bible concludes that all of the saints will judge the world someday. Paul has in mind the Millennial Kingdom or 1,000-year reign of Christ over the earth. It's at this time that the Church will be given the privilege to rule with Christ and judgment upon the people in this world. However, not everybody in the Church will rule equally. There will be different capacities of rulership and service during the coming Millennial Kingdom.

Revelation 2:26-27

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

This is actually a promise given to the Church. The degree of our future rulership with Christ, or the authority we have "over the nations" (the nations of the millennial earth), depends on the degree of our overcoming and commitment to God's works and ways in this life. As God's people overcome in their lives and live victoriously over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and serve Christ, to the same degree they will receive a place of rulership in the coming kingdom. Now don't misunderstand. We don't overcome to get into the kingdom. A person enters the coming earthly kingdom or theocracy by new birth (John 3:3, 5). However, Jesus makes it equally clear that we must overcome and live victoriously in order to receive an exalted place of rulership in the Millennial Kingdom. We must face the truth of God's Word on this matter. Entering the kingdom is one thing but a place of substantial rulership and privilege to rule in the coming kingdom is an altogether different matter.

Think of the saint's rewards. We will not all receive the same amount of reward (1 Cor. 3:12-15; Rev. 22:12). Our reward is given on the basis of our degree of service, commitment, and the way we have lived for the Lord in this present life. The same is true concerning our rulership privileges in the Millennial Kingdom. Peter suggest that we should live right (2 Peter 1:1-10) so that we might receive what he calls an abundant entrance into the kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11). This links

our living with our privilege to rule and reign with Christ. Apparently not every believer will have the same kind of blessing and rulership responsibility in the kingdom. How we live today by availing ourselves to God's divine power and divine promises (2 Peter 1:1-4) will result in the measure of our privilege and enjoyment in the kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11).

Paul seems to link our degrees of reward given at the Rapture with our privilege to rule with Christ in the coming Millennial Kingdom. It's interesting that Paul links the appearing of Jesus Christ in the rapture with the establishment of His kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1). This is not done to establish the time reference for the arrival of the kingdom. Jesus' appearing in the air (Rapture) is seven years before His appearing in His revelation to earth (Second Coming). Paul links the two appearances together in order to remind Timothy, as well as you and me today, to keep serving the great and Almighty God in light of the Millennial Kingdom. Apparently the future glory, honor, and privilege to rule will be directly related to our reward received at the Rapture (2 Timothy 4:8).

Paul is summoning Timothy to serve the Lord in the light of the coming judgment ("judge" – Bema Seat) which will take place at Christ's return for church age believers (both living and the dead). But Paul also mentions that they need to be stirred on to godly service and living in light of the establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. There is dual motive for our Christian service today. At the Rapture we will receive reward that will ultimately be recognized and honored in the Millennial Kingdom. We should also be living in light of the coming earthly kingdom and our privilege to rule with Christ. Reward and serving is linked to both the Rapture and the coming Millennial Kingdom (2 Tim. 4:8).

It's clear that our reward and the *degree* of our rulership privileges with Christ are based upon our earthly service and living for the Lord. *How much we reign with Christ is apparently conditioned upon the way that we live today in this world.* How much or how little depends upon our degree of faithfulness and commitment. Some saints will be running parking meters in the Kingdom instead of ruling with great responsibilities and privileges! Yes, we will all rule and reign with Him (Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 6:1-2; Rev. 5:10), but at the same time, some

Christians will have more privileges than others, due to their commitment to God and willingness to suffer for Him in this present life. Eternity lies ahead! Let us remember that we can only receive great privileges and honor in the coming Millennial Kingdom based upon our stand for the Lord today and how we are willing to be counted as one of His followers through suffering and hardship.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

“Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.”

There is a reminder that God has called us to live and reign with Him on the earth when His glory is manifested among the nations of the millennial earth. In other words, we should serve and suffer in light of the coming earthly theocracy, or Messiah’s rule over the earth. There is much to gain and much to lose! *We can’t afford to be negligent. We can’t afford to live for ourselves.* Let’s get our heads out of the sand! Let’s get our hearts in tune with the Lord.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:19:

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus did not say that these people would be lost from the kingdom but be the “least” in the kingdom! Apparently we too can neglect the truth of God’s Word and live in such a way that we will be the least in the kingdom. That’s why Jesus said that we must humble ourselves and become as a child in order to have greater honor in the glorious kingdom day.

Matthew 18:4

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

If you want great blessing in the coming kingdom and a *greater opportunity* or privilege to rule with Christ, then you are going to have to become as a little child. You are going to have to humble yourself

and willingly obey Christ. You must become a humble servant if you want to receive a substantial place of rulership in the coming Millennial Kingdom. God will honor humble childlike humility and service in the coming earthly theocracy.

Jesus said in Luke 13:30:

“And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

The context refers to the Millennial Kingdom when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and prophets would be resurrected to enter the kingdom or earthly theocracy (Luke 13:28). In light of this coming kingdom Jesus taught that not everyone would receive the same privileges and positions of rulership. Some of those who were first in priority, position, and power in this life may very well be last in position, privilege, and power in the next life which according to Jesus was a reference to the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus made it clear that not everyone would have equal ruling privilege in the earthly theocracy (Mark 10:28-30). How we live today will have an effect on how much or little we rule with Christ.

Someone once said:

“It’s training time for reigning time.”

How we live today is preparing us for the time we reign with Christ over the earth. My friend, we must start to focus on eternity instead of being lost in the present-day hustle and bustle of our own lives. We cannot afford to be so busy that we fail to look ahead and live in light of the future kingdom reign. We can’t afford to live selfish lives that won’t count for eternity! We are preparing today the kind of person we will be for eternity!

“Only one life,
Twilt soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Roy L. Laurin used to say:

“Measure your life by the broad sweep of eternity.”

When all the Biblical data is collected it seems that only those believers who have overcome in a practical sense are promised to reign with Christ in a special and far greater way, unlike other church

saints, who have failed to commit their lives to the Lord and serve Him faithfully. It may be that the overcomers are given the promise of “authority over the nations” (Rev. 2:26) because they are going to reign with Christ in a far greater way than those believers who have not been faithful or committed to the Lord as they could have been. There seems to be a promise that the greater service and commitment to the Lord today means the greater honor and privileges given to the believer in the future.

Matthew 25:21

“His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

John in Revelation 2:26-27 is dealing with all those Christians who have overcome in their lives in a practical way. They have lived a victorious life, they have served God faithfully, and have sought to live honorable lives that are pleasing to Him. Dear friend, it's the overcomers who will be highly honored and given much authority in the coming kingdom. The issue of unfaithful and carnal believers (1 Cor. 3:1-2) receiving lesser ruling responsibilities or privileges to rule is not considered. *In light of the Olympic Games we might say that John is focusing on the gold medal and not the bronze medal.* What John is saying is that some Christians will receive the gold medal while others will receive a silver or bronze medal. The obvious point is this. We will receive great privilege and rulership responsibilities when we live an overcoming or God-centered and victorious life. *We are to live today for the highest honor in the next life.* When we do overcome in a practical way we can be sure of a future harvest of great blessing in the kingdom. This is what John is saying to these overcomers.

d. The tribulation martyrs will co-reign with Christ.

Revelation 20:4

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his

mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

It's also abundantly clear that those saints who are martyred during the Tribulation Period will also be resurrected at Christ's Second Coming to enjoy the privilege of reigning with Christ. Imagine how much privilege one will have to reign with Christ if they have been martyred for Jesus Christ!

Revelation 20:6 goes on to speak of these tribulation martyrs and says, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

The Scriptures are very clear. Those who are martyred during the Tribulation Period will be raised at Christ's Second Advent to rule with Christ for a thousand years. This is what the Bible unmistakably teaches.

Several things should be noted about those whom the Lord will use to rule with Him in the messianic kingdom. First, they are redeemed by his blood (Rev. 1:5; 5:9-10); they are all resurrected and thus glorified (1 Thess. 4:13-16; Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:6) and they are from every period of history – Old Testament saints, Church age saints, and Tribulation saints. Dear friend, a great day is coming! Will you be part of this day? And to what degree will you rule and reign with Christ? These are eternal questions. If you are born again you will enter the messianic kingdom someday (John 3:5) and if you have been faithfully serving the Lord you will receive great privilege and responsibility in the Millennial Kingdom.

Dear friend, don't be content with business as usual. Step out for God and be willing to be used for Him. Get your life in order and get in step with the Spirit. There is no time waist. There is always time to God's will. Examine your priorities. Don't stand still. Live for God, love God, and let go of the worldly things that will not last. Let us not lose perspective. The great door of eternity lies ahead.

3. The governed

There will be those who enter the Millennial Kingdom without their glorified and eternal bodies. These people will still be subject to sin and it's these very people and those born to them who will be the subjects that will be governed. We must remember that when Jesus returns to establish His kingdom only the saved will enter the kingdom (John 3:5; Matt. 13:43) whereas the unsaved will be judged and not allowed to enter the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 13:49-50; 24:50-51; 25:40-41, 46). So who will be governed during the Millennial Kingdom?

a. Gentiles in their mortal bodies will be governed.

The surviving Gentile nations of the tribulation will enter the Millennial Kingdom. Those who are saved will enter the theocracy. During the 1,000 years millions and billions will repopulate the earth and all these people will have to be governed by the ruling and reigning Messiah. As set forth in an earlier discussion, Israel will occupy her land, which land will apparently be the seat of millennial rule (Isa. 2:1-4). This same passage as well as others (Matt. 25:31-34) gives a prominent place to the Gentiles during this period of time who will evidently be ruled by Christ, the Church, and tribulation martyrs. Many prophetic verses speak of the Gentile's participation in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa.2:4; 11:12; 16:1-5; 18:1-7; 19:16-25; 23:18; 42:1; 45:14; 49:6, 22; 59:16-18; 60:1-14; 61:8-9; 62:2; 66:18-19; Jer. 3:17; 16:19-21; 49:6; 49:39; Ezek. 38:23; Amos 9:12; Mic. 7:16-17; Zeph. 2:11; 3:9; Zech. 8:20-22; 9:10; 10:11-12; 14:16-19). There will be a large number of Gentile believers (Acts 15:16-17) living in their "natural" bodies who will make up the governed of the nations.

Since these Gentiles will still have "natural" bodies like we have they will be subject to the weaknesses of a mortal body, and will still be prone to sin. Therefore, even though they are living in a restored Paradise, they will need to be ruled with an iron scepter. Christ will not be cruel or mean, but through His co-rulers He will rule them with an iron scepter. He will enforce the laws so that there is no crime and so people can live in safety and security. The phrase "iron scepter," or "rod of iron," occurs in four verses: Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15. The application of the iron scepter during this Millennial Kingdom can be seen in the following verses: Isaiah 11:4; 14:2; 49:22,23; 60:10-14; 61:5,6; 66:12; Micah 7:14-17; and Zechariah 14:16-19.

Prophecies of Christ ruling with an iron scepter are strong evidence that there will eventually be a Millennial Kingdom populated at least in part by unsaved, mortal people. In addition, it should be obvious that these prophecies must apply to the future because they were not fulfilled during Christ's first coming. In spite of the many clear verses on this subject, there are some people who do not believe that the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth is *literal*, and others who do not believe the Kingdom is coming *in the future*. If either of these beliefs were correct, then the only people available for Christ to rule with an iron scepter would be the saved believers in the Everlasting Kingdom. Being ruled with an iron scepter is not the way most Christians envision everlasting life. Thankfully, that is not how the Bible portrays it either. It is the unregenerate, "natural" people alive during the Millennial Kingdom who will need to be ruled with an iron scepter.

The need for the iron scepter is due to the fact that these people still have a sin nature that causes them to be selfish and sinful. Although they will live in Paradise, surrounded by bounty, many of them will still find reasons to complain. That is not unusual. Both history and the Bible teach that there are many times when people, who should be happy because they are healthy, well fed, and financially secure still are unhappy and find reasons to complain constantly. The presence of these natural people in the Millennial Kingdom explains in large part why there will be disputes in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3).

The Book of Zechariah says that if any nation selfishly decides not to go and worship in Jerusalem, then that nation will have no rain (Zech. 14:17). This is an example of the natural selfishness and fleshly attitudes prevalent among people who are born during the Millennium and who are still living in their natural bodies. It is also an example of how Christ will use the iron scepter. As we will see, following the 1,000-year period Satan is loosed for a little season and will deceive many of these natural people and incite them to rebel against God and His people. Their rebellion will fail when they are destroyed by fire from heaven (Rev. 20:7–9).

Some Christians do not believe there will be a literal distinct Millennial Kingdom in the future because, to them, it does not seem possible to have people living together on the earth at the same time who have

sin-effected mortal bodies and those who have resurrected immortal bodies. So they take many verses dealing with the Millennium and “spiritualize” them by saying they are figurative and not literal. However, there is no justification for handling these verses in this manner. They are written very clearly and do not have any of the aspects of figurative language. *Just because something God says about the future is hard to believe does not mean it is not literal and true.* Where is our faith? The Bible says this is going to happen. Someday those who are resurrected to enjoy their eternal bodies will govern mortal people living throughout the earth and carrying out Christ’s rules and rod of iron policies upon these people. The fact that both of these groups of people (mortal and immortal) will be able to exist side by side during the Millennium will make this time a totally unprecedented experience.

b. Jews in their mortal bodies will be governed.

The saved Jews who enter the kingdom at the Second Coming will also enter the kingdom with mortal bodies and they too will be part of the great throngs of people that will be governed by the Messiah, David, and the apostles during this time (see Isaiah 33:22). There will be a company of saved Jews living in their physical bodies during the Millennial Kingdom. When Jesus returns to earth at His Second Coming the Jews will be nationally regathered (Duet. 30:3; Isa. 11:12; 43:6; Jer. 23:3; Ezek. 11:17; 20:34, 41; 34:12-13; 36:24; Matt. 24:31), regenerated (Ezek. 36:26; Rom. 11:26), restored to the land of Palestine (Jer. 12:15; 23:8; 24:6; Ezek. 20:42; 28:25-26; Amos 9:14-15), reunited as a nation (Jer. 3:18; Ezek. 20:40; 37:15-22; 39:25; Hos. 1:11), and related to Jehovah once again by marriage (Isa. 54:1-17; 62:2-5; Hos. 2:14-23). This is God’s covenant and clear prophetic promise for the Jews.

Now we must understand that the Jews who enter the Millennial Kingdom in their natural bodies will also be subjects of the King’s reign (Isa. 33:22; Micah 4:7; Dan. 7:27). These Jews will evidently be co-reigned by King David (Ezek. 37:24) and the twelve apostles (Matt. 19:28) as we have already seen. These Jews are said to participate with this reign and have King Jesus ruling or reigning over them throughout the Millennium. They are part of the people who will be governed during the Millennium. However, the Jews in the coming

kingdom will be highly praised and esteemed as God's people by the Gentile masses throughout the earth (Isa. 60:3; Zeph. 3:19). Let me state some prominent verses that teach this prophetic truth.

Isaiah 49:22-23

"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings (Gentile kings) shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."

Today the Jews are looked upon as a thorn in the flesh throughout the world but in the coming Millennial Kingdom they will be highly praised and esteemed by the Gentiles as God chosen people. The Gentiles will actually be Israel's servants during the millennial age.

Isaiah 14:1-2

"For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors."

Isaiah 60:14

"The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

Isaiah 61:5

"And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers."

Zephaniah 3:20

“At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.”

Zechariah 8:22-23

“Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

The nations which once usurped the authority over the Jews in past ages will find the downtrodden Jews to be God’s exalted subjects in the coming Millennia Kingdom. There will be a complete reversal of what we see today in the world. Today the Jews are looked upon as a people who cause the world great problems and heartaches. Most nations would love to see the Jews taken out of the picture. But in the coming kingdom the Jewish people, as subjects of the kingdom, will be praised, honored, and highly esteemed or respected (Isa. 45:14; 61:9; Jer. 16:19 – “the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth”). This is not happening today. The Gentiles are coming to Jerusalem to shoot and kill the Jews and not honor them as God’s chosen people. So the Jewish subjects of the kingdom will be greatly praised and seen as God’s special people.

Isaiah 61:6 concludes with these words:

“But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.”

The Bible also teaches that the saved Jewish people who enter the kingdom and who are rightly related to the Messiah throughout the kingdom age will be God’s witnesses during the Millennium.

Isaiah 43:10

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am

he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.”

Isaiah 44:8 also states: “Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.”

Isaiah 49:6

“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

These prophetic verses envision a time when Israel will be converted and become evangelists throughout the millennial earth proclaiming the Gospel of grace to the nations of the earth. What a great future day this will be for the Jewish people who are God’s chosen people. So even though Israel will be part of those mortals that are governed by the King or Messiah during the Millennial Kingdom they are seen as being highly exalted and given great respect as God’s chosen people.

The Purpose of the Millennium

Before finishing a study on such a huge topic as the Millennium we should once again refocus on the purpose of the Millennium and reaffirm in our minds why God says there must be a Millennial Kingdom. What is the purpose of the Millennium? Why must there be a Millennium? Let’s put this in a handy outline form so that we can refresh our minds concerning the exact purpose for a 1,000 year reign of Christ over the earth.

The millennium will serve at least five important functions or purposes in the eternal plan of God.

1. To restore the theocracy of God.

This is the overriding purpose of the Millennium. There must be a Millennial Kingdom to bring this world under God’s theocracy once again. We have already studied this. The 1,000-year reign of Christ or

millennial rule is the allotted time when Christ takes back the earth, which Satan usurped from Adam, who was to be God's ruling representative on earth (Gen. 1:26-29). The fact that God gave Adam this dominion indicates that God's original form of government that He ordained for our planet was a theocracy - a rule by God. In the original earth God was to be the undisputed ruler of the planet whose rule was to be administered through His regenerated representative Adam.

This rule and privilege was lost by Adam when he sinned and the world was placed under the rulership of Satan (2 Cor. 4:4; John 12:31; 16:11). It is now a Satanocracy. But someday the last Adam (Jesus Christ) is going to return to this earth (Second Coming) and restore the earth to the way it was originally intended to be – a theocracy or rule of God. Satan will be cast into the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3) and the Satanocracy will be restored to a theocracy where God rules once again over planet earth (Isaiah 9:6). During this theocracy Jesus Christ will demonstrate that He is Lord of all by subduing all acts of rebellion that are against His rule of righteousness (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). The Millennium or 1,000 years is the time that God has allotted for the theocracy to be restored to planet earth and functioning. It's the time when God takes control over all His enemies and subdues the earth for Himself. Let's review some verses dealing with the time when Christ takes back the earth.

1 Corinthians 15:23

“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.”

Paul was not concerned about detailing every future event in these passages. What he was talking about in this verse was God's resurrection program for the church. He was saying that Christ will return for those who are part of the Church and the dead in Christ will be raised (1 Thess. 4:16). It's interesting that almost 2,000 years has already elapsed before this event has occurred. Christ died some 2,000 years ago and the Church was then born on the Day at Pentecost. After an unstated period of time the Church would be raised. This resurrection will take place at the event called the Rapture of the Church.

1 Corinthians 15:24-25

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.”

Following the resurrection of the church, another period of time intervenes, 1007 years to be exact, which is the time period of the Tribulation Period and Millennium. After this intervening time period “the end” of the Millennium and God’s resurrection program will take place (Rev. 20:12 – “And I saw the dead small and great stand before God”). Just prior to this time, Christ will deliver up His kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Now remember one thing. If 2,000 years has already elapsed between Christ’s personal resurrection from the dead, and the future resurrection of the Church, then another period of time will intervene between the resurrection of the Church at Christ’s coming (the Rapture) and the ending of God’s resurrection program. This period of time is known as the Millennium or 1,000 years.

“Then cometh the end.” This probably refers to the end of Christ's Millennial Kingdom and the conclusion of God's resurrection program that takes place after the Millennial Kingdom. At the end of Christ's Millennial Reign, when He shall have put down all His enemies (2 Cor. 15:14b-25 with Rev. 20:7-9), there will be a resurrection of the wicked dead ("The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" - vs. 26). This is the last resurrection ever to take place. It occurs immediately after the Millennial Kingdom and completes God's resurrection program. The point is this. The Millennium marks the period of time when Christ will have put down every form of rebellion and insurrection that was on planet earth (“when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet”).

These verses tell us that Christ will rule for a period of time until He brings the earth under complete subjection. This will occur during the Millennium (1,000-year reign of Christ). The final phase of Christ abolishing all other rule, authority, and power will take place when He subdues the rebels that rise up against Him at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7–10). When Christ defeats this uprising he will

also destroy death (“and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire” – Rev. 20:14). Following this no person will ever die again!

Please note that the Millennium is a time when Christ takes back this earth for God and transforms this world into a theocracy which was lost by the first Adam. This is the purpose of the Millennium. This is not the eternal state for during this time enemies of Christ will be abolished and Christ will rule over them with a rod of iron. This rule also comes to an end. Therefore, this can hardly be referring to the eternal state as some suggest.

The Bible teaches that at the end of this earth’s history God will gather together the believers that are on earth and in heaven in the Millennial Kingdom. This period of time and era of history is called the “dispensation of the fullness of the times.”

Ephesians 1:10 speaks of the Millennium when it states:

“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.”

A “dispensation” (*oikonomia*) is literally “house rule” and refers to God’s arrangement, administration, or rule on the earth. The English word *economy* is derived from this Greek word. A dispensation refers to an order or a system that is put into effect; it is God’s way of doing something. A dispensation is an economy or the way God chooses to work out His purposes on earth during a specific period of time. A dispensation may fit into a certain period of time, but it actually means the way God runs something at a particular time: it is the way God does things.

The dispensation mentioned in Ephesians 1:11 is the Millennial Kingdom when God’s earthly purposes will be completed (fulfilled), and all things both spiritual and material will be brought under Christ rule. The dispensation Paul is talking about here is the millennial reign of Christ on earth during which everything will be brought under His headship or rule (1 Cor. 15:27). *Jesus Christ will be the head of all things in a direct way during the messianic kingdom.* Everyone and everything in both heaven and earth will acknowledge and respond to His authority (Phil. 2:10; Isa. 2:2–4; 11:1–10).

The expression “fullness of times” speaks of the culmination of the ages and the completion of God’s history. In other words, the Millennium or 1,000-year reign of Christ is completion of God’s program as it relates to earth’s history and “His story” as we say. All the previous workings of God throughout the ages of time were moving toward this final era, epoch of time, and the grand finale of the Millennial Kingdom when the theocracy or God’s worldwide dominion is once again restored to planet earth. God is moving everything forward to the time when Christ will rule over all things in both heaven and earth. This is the fullness (*pleroma*) when everything is going to be brought under the rulership of Jesus Christ.

J. Vernon McGee wrote:

“The *pleroma* is like a vast receptacle into which centuries and millenniums have been falling. All that is past, present, and future is moving toward the time when every knee must bow and every tongue must confess that Jesus is Lord.”

The extent of the dominion of Christ is found in the words, “gather together in one all things in Christ.” During the Millennium everything both heaven and the earth will be brought together under the rule of Jesus Christ - the one Head. This does not suggest that everyone will be saved; instead, sin’s disorder will be removed and universal peace will once again be established (Isa. 2:2-4; 11:1-10). Ephesians 1:10 is sometimes used to support the false doctrine of universal salvation. It is twisted to suggest that eventually everything and everyone will be restored and reconciled in Christ. But this is foreign to the passage.

Paul is speaking about universal *dominion*, not universal salvation. There is a difference! Someday God’s plan will be completed. Christ will rule this world and bring it in subjection to God’s rule. It will be a true theocracy once again. During the Millennial Kingdom both heaven and earth will be combined together under God’s absolute rule and authority. This will be but a foretaste of the eternal state. My friend, Jesus Christ is the center of the universe and some day during the Millennial Kingdom both heaven and earth will be integrated into one harmonious whole.

Right now we don't see the theocracy restored to this world (Heb. 2:8). The Bible states very clearly that we have not yet come to the time of the Millennium. We are under a different dispensation today; we live under a different economy. But there is coming a time when earth's history will reach its climactic point when Jesus Christ will restore the theocracy to planet earth. The theocratic kingdom will overtake this world and Jesus Christ will reign as God! How wonderful to realize that the church is part of God's great eternal program.

2. To recognize the promises of God.

There must be a Millennium so that Israel's promises can be recognized or validated as being true. God's promises given to Israel will be seen to be true and validated when they are literally fulfilled during the Millennial Kingdom. God must outwardly acknowledge that the promises He made with Israel are true and bring them to pass during the Millennial Kingdom. The Lord must demonstrate that His promises given to the nation of Israel do exist and that they are valid. He will do this by bringing His covenant program to fulfillment during the Millennium. God made three unconditional and eternal covenants that will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

These are the covenants made with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 15:18-21), David (2 Sam 7:12-16; Ezek 37:22-25; Amos 9:11-15; Zeph 3:14-17) and the nation of Israel (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:24-26). The literal fulfillment of God's covenant program with Israel will reverse Israel fortunes and bring them into a place of tremendous blessing and privilege during the kingdom age. In short, there must be a Millennium so that Israel's promises can be recognized or acknowledged and validated as being true. God's character rests upon the validation and fulfillment of these promises (Gen. 22:16; Ps. 89:3-4; Psalm 106:8; 132:11).

3. To reward the faithful of God.

In the Millennium or 1,000-year reign of Christ the saints will be awarded positions of authority based on their faithfulness in life (Rev. 2:26; Luke 19:16-19). We have already studied this out. Although the entire church will rule and reign with Christ based upon grace and our

promised inheritance with Christ (Rom. 8:17) we will not all reign in the same capacity and have the same authority and privileges. The Millennium will be a time when God's faithful are rewarded in a special way. They will be given great authority and privileges of rulership in direct proportion to how they have lived out their lives on earth. The Bible is very clear on this. Those who have overcome in this life in a practical way will receive the greater reward and privilege to rule with Christ in the coming millennial age (Rev. 2:26). They will receive the gold medal!

4. To redeem the creation of God.

The earth is not in the same condition it was when it was original created by God. If you recall, after the fall of Adam and Eve God pronounced five curses (Gen 3:14-19). The animals and earth were part of this curse. This same Genesis curse is described in Romans 8:19-22 where the Bible pictures creation under a curse awaiting their release. Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:1-7 and Ezek 47:8-12 paint some wonderful pictures of the redeemed earth during the Millennial Kingdom. During the Millennial Kingdom all creation will be redeemed from its curse. Animals will lose their ferocity and creation will be released from its bondage due to the Genesis curse.

Romans 8:21

“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

This is a valid reason or purpose for the Millennial Kingdom. Creation is pictured as waiting release from the Genesis curse. Someday all of creation will once again be at peace and harmony when the curse on creation is lifted during the Millennial Kingdom.

5. To reaffirm man's hatred of God.

God's Word clearly teaches that man is sinful by nature and practice. After the thousand-year reign Satan will be loosed for a season from the abyss and will be able to gather a rebel army who apparently never submitted to Christ in their hearts (Rev. 20:7-9). These people are the billions that will be born during the millennium. Can you even imagine the population explosion that will occur over 1,000 years?

People will live long lives. Most will not die. The population will increase at rates like this world has never seen. The Bible teaches that at the close of the Millennium Satan will lead people in a worldwide rebellion that is against God. This will prove without a doubt that regardless of heredity, circumstances, or perfect environment that man is still sinful apart from God's saving grace (Rom. 3:9-19). Imagine how people will live under the perfect circumstances of the Millennial Kingdom and the King Himself and still have hearts of rebellion!

One thing is certain; this rebellion will be crushed and all who remain after God's judgment will move into eternity. The point is this. In every dispensation (stewardship), or period of God's ordered working among this world, He has always demonstrated that man is a sinner and in need of a Savior. The Millennium, the culmination of God's ordered ages, will be no different. He will demonstrate that man is a sinner who needs to be transformed by His grace. In the dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom the responsibility of mankind, his failure, and the judgment of God will be seen. The failure of man in millennial kingdom proves once and for all that unregenerate man has a fallen nature and changing his environment will not produce change in his conduct or character. Only the new birth can change a man forever!

The Close of the Millennium

Revelation 20:7-9

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”

The Bible clearly teaches that Satan will be loosed for a "little season" following the one-thousand-year reign of Christ. We don't know how long this little season will last. However, it will be a short period of time long enough to lead unregenerate mankind in an open rebellion against the King (Jesus Christ) in Jerusalem. Who are these people? Apparently they are the people born during the Millennium who gave

outward submission to the King but continued to be rebels in their heart (Matt. 15:8). *They were born physically during the millennial reign but not born spiritually (regenerated)*. When the occasion is provided them, upon Satan's release from the abyss, they will openly rally to his cause and seek to overthrow King Jesus. What fools! Can you even imagine man trying to fight and defeat Jesus Christ?

The reference to "Gog and Magog" (Rev. 20:8) is probably a reference to the worldwide enemies of Christ that will rally together after the Millennium or 1,000-year reign of Christ. The context clearly places the battle at the end of the Millennium. I say this because Gog and Magog are also mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39 but this context refers to another battle in connection with the Tribulation events. Therefore, the Gog and Magog mentioned in this passage is probably a reference to all the people that are in open rebellion against God. Why do I say this? It's because in Ezekiel 38 Gog was the ruler and Magog was the people and both were in rebellion against God. They were also the enemies of Israel. It may be that John is using this term in a symbolic way and giving it a symbolic meaning as referring to all of humanity that is in rebellion and defiance against God and His people. In other words, by the close of the Millennium all of humanity will be like a Gog and Magog against God. Many world rulers with their nations or peoples will rise up against Jesus Christ and seek to overthrow his earthly theocracy. However, their attempt will fail.

This rebellion is going to be judged as fire from heaven falls upon them and devours them (2 Pet. 3:10). Satan himself is judged by being cast into the lake of fire where he will remain for ever and ever! All unbelievers will then be raised from the dead and judged at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). Following this judgment eternity or the eternal state will begin (Rev. 21). The purpose of the Millennium will have run its course. Jesus Christ will destroy all of His enemies (1 Cor. 15:25 – "For he must reign, till he that put all enemies under his feet") and prove that He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

With the theocracy restored to planet earth during the 1,000 years and Christ's rulership reaffirmed by His destruction of Gog and Magog, He will turn over the Millennial Kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24), allowing the eternal state to commence. The kingdom that

lasted for 1,000 years, which was designed to restore God's theocracy to the world and prove that He is Lord of all (1 Cor. 15:27-28), will merge into God's eternal kingdom which will have no end. The Millennium or 1,000-year reign of Christ is the steppingstone into the eternal kingdom.

Revelation 11:15

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

He shall reign for ever and ever! Hallelujah!