

The Coming King and His Kingdom – Part 2

Once again it is my joy to be able to open up the Word of God to you this morning. The last time we were together we embarked upon an expositional journey through the Bible focusing on God's marvelous plan of redemption especially as it relates to the coming King and the kingdom. This is a parenthesis or a digression in our verse by verse study of the book of Revelation and it is a parenthesis between the explosion of heavenly praise that is found in chapter 19 verses one through 10 where heaven is anticipating the return of the Lord and between his actual Second Coming in verses 11 through 16. So we are pausing for a few weeks between the anticipation and the actual event.

If you ask many Christians, "What does the Bible say about Christ as King? What does the Bible teach about a kingdom on earth?" Unfortunately, many Christians are left a bit speechless: "I am not real sure what the Bible says, but I am sure it has much to say."

Oh, really? "Well, tell me," a person might ask. "What is going to happen when the Lord returns in all of his glory? I hear you Christians talking about a Second Coming. What is going to happen? What will he do?"

"Well, that is a very good question."

And the person might even ask, "What about Israel? What about Jerusalem? We hear these various things. What about the rest of the nations?"

Well, if you are like most Christians you are not real sure how to answer many of those questions and, therefore, something needs to be done about that. And, certainly, that is my role, to help you as a pastor/teacher to understand these great truths because, friends, all too often not knowing is tantamount to not caring. And sometimes not knowing really says something about your desire to understand about one third of the Bible. So, therefore, we digress in an effort to comprehend the big picture of Old Testament prophecies along with what the gospel writers and what Jesus and the apostles had to say about the coming King and kingdom which we will look at more next week. These are magnificent truths that, I pray, will ignite your heart so that we can all join together in heaven's glory in praising God for his coming to earth and to understand those things related to the earthly kingdom.

But I must confess. There is also another reason why I feel it is important to study the King and the Kingdom. And that is to humbly do battle against the hermeneutical device—hermeneutics is the science and the art of biblical interpretation—but to do battle against that hermeneutical device of allegorizing or spiritualizing certain texts of Scripture, especially those in the Old Testament in an effort to somehow support some theological system.

This is very prevalent in our culture today and the Church community. Rather than seeing the present Church age as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and the Church as a continuation of the messianic program that is set forth in the Old Testament, many people insist that the Church now has replaced Israel, that the Church is spiritual Israel. Israel has been completely and utterly disenfranchised and all of those passages relating

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to an earthly kingdom really have nothing to do with an earthly kingdom, but really a spiritual kingdom and, therefore, we are living in the kingdom now.

And, frankly, it is impossible for me to understand how so many people, dear brothers whom I love, who hold to a high view of Scripture, can possibly embrace a hermeneutic that denies the inerrant, infallible record from saying what it means through the normal, plain meaning of language. I fear to do so is to unwittingly stand in judgment of God's revelation and subtly replace it with my own.

Historically there were two groups that could not stomach the Old Testament prophecies concerning a future earthly kingdom for ethnic, national Israel ruled by Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah King. The first group was the unbelieving Jews. As you know, they hated Jesus. And to say that Jesus of Nazareth was their Messiah, that he was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy was not only repulsive, it was blasphemy. Yet, that was the obvious conclusion of the Old Testament Scriptures.

And so they thought, "That can't be tolerated." So what they did was they changed the system of biblical interpretation and they had a new hermeneutic that they implemented, one of a non-literal approach to Scripture which, frankly, is the kabalistic system that you see in Jewish thought this very day. Kabala means "receiving" and they believe that mystically you receive these hidden truths from the Old Testament and so forth.

So that was one group that couldn't stand the idea of Israel or of Jesus being the Messiah. But another group that could not stand the idea of Israel eventually being part of this kingdom was believing Christians in the post apostolic world. In fact, as we look at history, we see that within a century and a half after Christ's ascension, the Christian community had become so thoroughly convinced that God was finished with the Jews, to the point, frankly, of anti-Semitism, that they could not embrace any of the biblical promises of the future for a national Israel, for a literal earthly kingdom. And so they readily adopted Greek philosophies, especially that of dualism where things that are spiritual are good, but things that are material are evil and so therefore we couldn't have a literal, physical kingdom because that would be evil. That would be carnal. They also embraced the spiritualizing method of interpreting Scripture introduced by Philo and Origen and so forth.

And, as a result of all of that we have replacement theology as it is many times called where Israel has now been permanently replaced by the Church, that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan of redemption, that Israel's national identity has been permanently eliminated, if you will, that ethnic national and territorial Israel is now absorbed into the universal Christian Church.

Now the problem with that is that is not what Scripture plainly says. The only way you can get that—and they will agree—is to spiritualize the Word of God and to not take it for what it says.

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This was so prevalent that by the fourth century one of the Church fathers, Augustine, along with most of the Christian Church of that day fully believed that the Church was the earthly representation of the heavenly city of God and it was anticipating a heavenly consummation. And, of course, this was reinforced by Augustine's famous yet obviously mistaken interpretation of Psalm 59 verse 11. There we read, "Do not slay them, or my people will forget; Scatter them by Your power, and bring them down, O Lord, our shield."¹ Now this was referring to the enemies of the world, the enemies of God, the wicked. But Augustine interpreted it as the Jews. "Do not slay them," meaning the Jews, "or my people will forget, but rather scatter them," meaning the Jews, "by your power."

In other words, literally make them homeless wanderers and bring them down. So David's enemies were wrongly interpreted to be the Jews that must, therefore, be considered enemies of the Church. And the implication was that the Church now was to enforce some kind of perpetual humiliation for the Jews, that it was a divine mandate, that now the Church must assist God in making his covenant people vagabonds upon the earth, permanently dispersed, disgraced, and despised.

And years later the reformers rightfully adopted Augustine's soteriology, in other words, his doctrine of salvation which was accurate. But with it they brought the baggage of an errant eschatology, an errant understanding of future things, that of replacement theology which today goes by a number of names, Amillennialism, Supersessionism... it is essentially Roman Catholic eschatology.

This position was so dominant that by the 15th century in his last sermon, just before his death an Augustinian monk by the name of Martin Luther pleaded that all of the Jews be expelled from Germany. And, of course, this began to set up the mindset even in the Church that would kind of turn a person's head later on when Nazi German began to come to the forefront.

Well, over the years, the allegorizing method used to justify this kind of thinking has been legitimized in the eyes of many because it has been adorned with the trappings of erudition. It is now the province of the scholar because it is only the scholars that can really understand these deeper meanings of Scripture that somehow escapes the mind of the uneducated pedestrian that has the audacity to think that the Word really means what it says.

But, dear friend, this method, I believe, is foreign. It is certainly foreign to me and it is frightening. I have been called to stand before you and say, "Thus saith the Lord," not "Thus saith Dave Harrell or somebody else." I am horrified at the prospect of somehow giving the impression that I am participating with God in the act of revelation and telling you, "Well, yeah, I know that is what it says, but that is not what it means. Let me tell you what it means because I have the education and the insight and the spirituality to help interpret it for you."

¹ Psalm 59:11.

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Well, forsaking any arcane or esoteric principles of interpretation and with no agenda of any hidden meanings, we are going to return, once again, to the Word of God. We are going to look at what it says plainly. We are going to use the normal meaning of language so that God can tell us what he wants to say.

Beloved, this is not the province of the scholar, nor of the mystic, but of every man and woman and boy and girl who understands language and who is willing to humble themselves before the Word of God and let the Spirit of God speak to them. We must not despise the teachings of Jesus. We must not despise God's covenant people, but rather let the Word speak for itself. And behold, frankly, the amazing grace of God as it is manifested in God's covenantal promises and the way he fulfills them even with his people Israel who are now his beloved enemies.

So, again, this morning I must approach this more as a professor than a preacher. And I hope you will continue to bear with me. It will be impossible to take notes, so you can get all of this transcribed for you.

But remember that in the first part of our study which has now been a couple of weeks ago, the study of the coming king and his kingdom, we examined, first of all, the kingdom of God in the Old Testament. And there, by way of review, we learned, number one, that from all eternity there has existed a universal kingdom of God or a dominion of God whereby he rules over his creation. Secondly, we learned that the Word of God speaks of a mediatorial kingdom where God ruled through divinely chosen representatives, human representatives who would speak on his behalf and who would represent the people before God. And throughout Old Testament history we witnessed a divine government upon the earth through a variety of mediators, men who would serve in the functions of prophet, priest as well as king. And ultimately only the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ can fulfill all three functions of prophet, priest and king, and he will do so when he returns and rules, the final phase of this mediatorial kingdom upon the earth.

The Old Testament also reveals, as we studied before, a future earthly kingdom. Over and over again the Old Testament Scriptures speak of God establishing an earthly kingdom ruled by the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet Daniel tells us in chapter two verse 44, "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."²

You will recall that we learned that before this kingdom comes upon the earth the Old Testament predicts many preparatory events that will occur. The prophets speak of a time called the day of the Lord, a time that is unrevealed and indefinite in length, but a time that will begin with the darkness of divine wrath that will ultimately give way to the light of divine blessing upon Israel as well as many Gentile people who will come to a saving knowledge of Christ.

² Daniel 2:44.

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And then, of course, the Lord will return, the Messiah King will establish his mediatorial kingdom, his mediatorial government upon the earth for 1000 years and ultimately that kingdom will be merged into the universal kingdom which will be perpetuated forever as Scripture speaks in 1 Corinthians 15:24 through 28 and Daniel seven and Isaiah nine and so forth.

Now, this morning we are going to see that the Old Testament also describes amazing blessings that are going to come upon the earth during this kingdom age. And, folks, here is where it gets exciting. Here is where we will begin to understand what we are going to see when we return with Christ at his Second Coming and we rule and reign with him. And, therefore, this is where we really need to understand these things to raise that level of anticipation and joy and excitement so that when we come again, now, to Revelation 19 and we study the King returning, we know what he is returning to and what is going to happen.

So, regarding these blessings, first of all, we are going to see that the world will be ruled by the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let that soak in for a moment. Can you imagine that? Isaiah 32:1. “Behold, a King shall reign.”³ And in chapter nine verse six, “And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”⁴

Boy, we are a long ways from that today, are we not? He goes on to say, “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”⁵ The psalmist tells us in Psalm 89 verse 14 that righteousness and justice will be the foundation of his throne. And the Lord speaks through the prophet Jeremiah in chapter 23 and verse five and says:

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'"⁶

Beloved, can you imagine a day when the world will be dominated by truth, by holiness, by righteousness, by justice rather than all of the lies and the spin and the wickedness and the oppression we now experience? His unrivaled omnipotence will enforce these moral principles. We read in Psalm two verse nine that the king will rule the nations with a rod

³ Isaiah 32:1.

⁴ Isaiah 9:6.

⁵ Isaiah 9:7.

⁶ Jeremiah 23:5-6.

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of iron. “Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”⁷ And, according to Isaiah 26:9 because of this, “The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.”⁸

Amazing. Yet, bear in mind that in the midst of justice he will also extend mercy in dealing with the ignorant and with the erring. Isaiah 16:5 says that, “in mercy shall the throne be established.”⁹ And in Isaiah 40 beginning in verse nine through verse 11 we read that the King will rule with a strong hand. And yet it goes on to say that he will at the same time “feed his flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”¹⁰

The Old Testament also reveals to us the unique role that we as saints will have in the administration of this mediatorial kingdom. For example, in Daniel chapter seven beginning at verse 13 we read that the saint of the most high shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.” There are other passages that speak of this as well. For example in the New Testament Paul tells us 2 Timothy two and verse 12 that “we shall reign with him.”

The prophets also describe the role of the living nation of Israel. And, again, keep in mind, I am just giving you some samples of Scripture here. We read in the Old Testament that God’s covenant people, the chosen of Abraham’s seed will finally experience the complete fruition of the covenant that God gave to Abraham, and at that time he will grant them international supremacy.

I might add as a footnote, those who insist that Israel is permanently disenfranchised, that they are permanently forgotten by the one who originally elected them by his grace would do well to remember the words of the Lord in Isaiah 49 verse 14. “But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me.”¹¹ To which the Lord replies:

Can a woman forget her nursing child
And have no compassion on the son
of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I
have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually
before Me.¹²

Beloved, it is fascinating that even the Gentile nations and their respective rulers will be included in the political framework of the mediatorial government. We see in the Word of God that the cultural values peculiar to various nations will be preserved insofar as the contribute to the good of all, that they will be consecrated according to Micah chapter four verse two, “to the Lord of the whole earth.”

⁷ Psalm 2:9.

⁸ Isaiah 26:9.

⁹ Isaiah 16:5.

¹⁰ Isaiah 40:11.

¹¹ Isaiah 49:14.

¹² Isaiah 49:15-16.

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In that day, the psalmist tells us in Psalm 47:9, “The princes of the people have assembled themselves as the people of the God of Abraham.”¹³ We read even that each nation will be owned by Jehovah according to the prophet Amos in chapter nine verse 12, “as nations that are called by my name.” And, again, the psalmist tells us in Psalm 72:11 that all nations shall serve him. And in verse 17, “his name shall endure forever.”

Zechariah writes in chapter 14 verse nine in that day, “The LORD will be king over all the earth.”¹⁴ And, once again, Daniel 7:14, “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”¹⁵ So, as we look at the Old Testament we see that the world will be ruled by the Messiah.

But, secondly, we discover that the Messiah’s reign will radically alter every aspect of life in the world as we know it. So much so that the prophet Isaiah describes it as a new earth in chapter 65 verse 17. As we study the Old Testament we see that God will anticipate and provide for every human need as we see in Isaiah 65:24. And, ultimately, he will work through the chosen nation of Israel. In Isaiah 27:6 we read that God will fill the face of the world with fruit and there will be an abundance of salvation, literally salvations. The idea is that every aspect of human life will experience the effect of his regal activity. You see this more in Isaiah 33 verse six.

The prophets detail the impact of the future kingdom that will radically transform every aspect of human life. And, beloved, keep in mind herein is the power of the cross, to save countless of millions for his glory and then to reveal those whom he has glorified, this glorified assembly, to reveal us when he returns and then to display his glory upon a renovated earth for 1000 years. Beloved, this reign will so thoroughly transform the world that we will, again, see it in every aspect of life.

First of all, we are going to see it spiritually. From the very beginning of the king’s arrival there will be an outpouring, according to Zechariah 12:10, of the spirit of grace. We read that the miracle of regeneration will begin with Israel as they are gathered back into their own land according to Ezekiel chapter 36 verses 24 through 38. Along with the new birth whereby the Holy Spirit of God will be poured out upon Israel and upon all flesh according to Joel two 27 through 28.

And the result of this will be absolutely staggering. It will produce a new and more complete sanctification among the redeemed who will live upon the earth during that day. Zephaniah speaks of this in chapter three beginning at verse 11.

“In that day,” he says:

You will feel no shame Because of all your deeds By which you have rebelled against Me; For then I will remove from your midst Your proud,

¹³ Psalm 47:9.

¹⁴ Zechariah 14:9.

¹⁵ Daniel 7:14.

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exulting ones, And you will never again be haughty On My holy mountain. But I will leave among you A humble and lowly people, And they will take refuge in the name of the LORD. The remnant of Israel will do no wrong And tell no lies, Nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths; For they will feed and lie down With no one to make them tremble.¹⁶

His reign will also transform the world morally and socially and even politically. Today we witness the insanity of sin in every system of our government and every system of our culture. It is as though Romans one has now come to complete fruition, that man has been given over to a worthless mind to do things that are utterly insane. But during the messianic age when the Lord is king over all we read according to Isaiah 40 and verse four that the crooked shall be made straight. He will reign upon Mount Zion which will be the capital city of the world. In fact, Zechariah chapter eight verse three calls Jerusalem “the city of truth.” And according to Isaiah 42:3 the “King will bring forth justice in truth and it will happen from that city.”

As a footnote, Jerusalem has always been considered the center of the earth, the crossroads of the world where the continents of Africa and Asia and Europe all connect. Ezekiel even described it as the navel of the earth in chapter 38 verse 12. And, beloved, when the Messiah king returns according to Zechariah 14 there will be a great geological transformation, especially in this region, in the region of Jerusalem. And, apparently, the surrounding land will be leveled to a plain and the city of Jerusalem will be elevated to a position of prominence for all to see. In fact, as we look at this with other passages, it may well be the highest elevation in all of the world during the messianic age. And all of this will accommodate the vast expansion of the millennial temple and the city that Ezekiel describes in chapters 40 through 48.

The prophet Isaiah tells us in chapter two beginning in verse two.

Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths" For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.¹⁷

Can you imagine the President of the United States teaching the Word of God before Congress, before the Senate on television? Can you imagine our political leaders teaching us the Word of God? Can you imagine that? It is the way it will be during the Messianic age. Only it will be the Lord himself teaching. Instead of all this social engineering, all this talk about man made global warming and the redistribution of wealth by taking money from those who work and giving it to those who won't and all of this silly stuff

¹⁶ Zephaniah 3:11-13.

¹⁷ Isaiah 2:2-3.

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that we see today. We are going to have the Word rightly, perfectly divided and its principles enforced by the Lord himself. In Isaiah chapter 30 verse 20 we read he will be your teacher.

Your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.¹⁸

In Isaiah chapter 54 verse 13 we read that, "All your sons will be taught of the LORD."¹⁹ And in Isaiah 32 beginning in verse five, I love this. It says, "No longer will the fool be called noble."²⁰ My, that will be a switch. He goes on to say:

Or the rogue be spoken of as generous. For a fool speaks nonsense, And his heart inclines toward wickedness: To practice ungodliness and to speak error against the LORD, To keep the hungry person unsatisfied And to withhold drink from the thirsty. As for a rogue, his weapons are evil; He devises wicked schemes To destroy the afflicted with slander, Even though the needy one speaks what is right.²¹

Beloved, as we look at the Old Testament prophecies we see that during the kingdom age there will be no need for militaries because there will be no war. The psalmist tells us in chapter 46 verse nine, "He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire."²²

Oh, child of God, please hear me. In holy fury the Lord of hosts is going to descend upon the rebels of the world at his Second Coming and the slaughter of Armageddon and he is going to rescue Israel from their hour of peril. Scripture is so clear about this. And then he promises, for example, in Hosea chapter two and verse 18, "I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land, And will make them lie down in safety."²³

The prophet Micah tells us in chapter four beginning in verse three:

And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war. Each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.²⁴

¹⁸ Isaiah 30:20-21.

¹⁹ Isaiah 54:13.

²⁰ Isaiah 32:5.

²¹ Isaiah 32:5-7.

²² Psalm 46:9.

²³ Isaiah 2:18.

²⁴ Micah 4:3-4.

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We also learn that during the glorious days of the messianic kingdom, the effects of sin upon society and even the environment will be reclaimed. Imagine a day when there will be no more pollution, no more toxic waste, no more environmental disasters, no more slums, no more governmental housing projects. The prophet Isaiah tells us in chapter 61 verse four, “Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.”²⁵

Also during the kingdom age all of the social injustices will be reversed. Think of the current mistreatment of the elderly, of the unborn, of the diseased and the disabled and the oppressed and the poor. Beloved, all of this is going to cease. As Isaiah tells us in chapter 42 verse three:

A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.²⁶

And the psalmist tells us again back to Psalm 72 and verse 13:

He will have compassion on the poor and needy, And the lives of the needy he will save. He will rescue their life from oppression and violence, And their blood will be precious in his sight.²⁷

Beloved, can you imagine a day when the elderly will be treated with dignity and when children would be able to exist in safety and in security? In Zechariah chapter eight we read of that day. In verse four we read:

Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.’²⁸

What a picture of peace and serenity when the Prince of Peace comes and establishes peace.

Now, historically, we know that the Jews have been the most despised and persecuted people on earth. You can take all of the other people who have been persecuted, put them all together and it will not equal the amount of persecution that the Jews have endured.

²⁵ Isaiah 61:4.

²⁶ Isaiah 42:3-4.

²⁷ Psalm 72:13-14.

²⁸ Zechariah 8:4-5.

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Of course, they have been targeted by Satan who has done and continues to do all he can to thwart the purposes of God against his covenant people, especially those purposes as they relate to the coming King and the kingdom. But during the messianic age anti-Semitism will cease and the curse of their unbelief will be lifted. Zechariah prophesies this in chapter eight verse 13. “It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing.”²⁹

All nations will one day recognize and even rejoice in the supremacy of Israel over all of the nations. Again, Zechariah eight verse 23. “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.”³⁰ Finally, those who were originally intended to be the custodians of truth who failed so miserably will once again fulfill that which God originally intended them to fulfill, a role that now temporarily the Church is fulfilling.

The coming kingdom will also radically alter that physical world. We are unsure as to what all that will mean. I will give you a few Scriptures to describe this, but we know it will be a renovation of the earth. It will not be a recreation. That will happen at the end of the millennial kingdom. But it will be a renovation where somehow the earth will return to a state like it was in the Garden of Eden. The Old Testament prophets indicate enormous changes both geologically as well as in terms of climate. And, of course, one will affect the other as we know.

During the final judgments of the day of the Lord we know that the Lord will undergo cataclysmic changes. Isaiah chapter two verse 19. “Men will go into caves of the rocks And into holes of the ground Before the terror of the LORD And the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble.”³¹ Literally, to shake. In Isaiah 24 verse 20 we are told that the earth will reel to and fro like a drunkard.

In Ezekiel 38:19 we read the Lord saying through his prophet, “In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.”³² And in verse 20 he says, “The mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground.”³³

We know that today most of the earth’s surface is not suited for cultivation, with tillable land disappearing at a frightening rate around the world. But in the kingdom this will not be the case. In fact, there are promises regarding the abundance of rainfall that will produce enormous crops. For example in Joel two you will read of this, rain that will come at the proper times.

²⁹ Zechariah 8:13.

³⁰ Zechariah 8:23.

³¹ Isaiah 2:19.

³² Ezekiel 39:19.

³³ Ezekiel 39:20.

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Ezekiel tells us in chapter 34 verse 26, “I will cause the shower to come down in his season.”³⁴ And In Isaiah 30 verse 25 we read how that there will exist streams of water in new and unlikely places. There we read, “There shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of water.”³⁵ And Isaiah tells us in chapter 35 verse six, “In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.”³⁶ And in Isaiah 41 verse 18 he says, “I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys.”³⁷

We see that the Lord will also cause the streams to flow apart even from the normal hydrological cycle such as pictured in the stream that is described in Ezekiel chapter 47 verses one through 12. In fact, Zechariah tells us in chapter 14 verse eight, “And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.”³⁸ And in Isaiah chapter 35 verses one and two we read, “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly.”³⁹

In the kingdom age God will also drastically alter the animal world. He will lift the curse upon them, a curse that we read about, for example, in Romans eight. The prophet Hosea tells us in chapter two verse 18, “In that day I will also make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, The birds of the sky And the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land, And will make them lie down in safety.”⁴⁰

Even Ezekiel prophesied concerning their safety in chapter 34 verse 25. “They shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.”⁴¹ In fact, this will be a time when animals will revert back to their original existence in the Garden of Eden when all animals were herbivores. God will lift the curse even of the terror of man. You will recall in Genesis 9:2 when the animals came off of the ark God told Noah that from here on out the animals will be absolutely terrified of man. During the millennial age that curse will be lifted.

Isaiah speaks of this in chapter 11 verse six. He says it will be a day when:

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with
the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze,
Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox.

³⁴ Isaiah 34:26.

³⁵ Isaiah 30:25.

³⁶ Isaiah 35:6-7.

³⁷ Isaiah 41:18.

³⁸ Zechariah 14:8.

³⁹ Isaiah 35:1-2.

⁴⁰ Hosea 2:18.

⁴¹ Ezekiel 34:25.

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The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.⁴²

It will also be a day when all physical infirmity and deformity will be remedied. Isaiah 35:5 tells us, "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."⁴³ Disease will also be controlled supernaturally, perhaps through types of prevention and cure that we don't fully understand today. Isaiah 33:24 tells us, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick."⁴⁴ Can you imagine that? We are constantly praying for those who are sick.

In Ezekiel chapter 47 verse 12 we read that, "All kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail."⁴⁵ And then it goes on to say something very interesting. "Their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."⁴⁶ We are even today finding more and more cures through the things that God has created.

Long life will prevail during the days of the kingdom. Isaiah 65 verse 20. "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be thought accursed."⁴⁷

Well, finally, dear friends, God speaks to us through the Old Testament prophets concerning the radical changes in religious life in the world. Can you imagine a day when there is one world religion, but it is true, it is perfectly righteous, it glorifies God completely? And the Lord is its shepherd. This will happen when the priest king rules from his throne. Zechariah six verse 12.

"Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices."⁴⁸

And, as I said earlier, Israel will be restored once again to be the witness nation of Jehovah for which it was originally intended back in Exodus 19:6. Remember there he said, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."⁴⁹

This will finally happen. And despite their abysmal failure, Isaiah prophesied of a better day in chapter 61 verse six.

⁴² Isaiah 11:6-8.

⁴³ Isaiah 35:5-6.

⁴⁴ Isaiah 33:24.

⁴⁵ Ezekiel 47:12.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Isaiah 65:20.

⁴⁸ Zechariah 6:12-13.

⁴⁹ Exodus 19:6.

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“But you will be called the priests of the LORD; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God.”⁵⁰ And as we study the Scripture we see that God will even provide faithful shepherds to the people to feed them. Jeremiah 23. And in this important ministry even the tribe of Levi will, once again, play a very important and significant role as we read in Jeremiah 33 verses 17 through 22. According to Zephaniah 3:20, “At that time,” the Lord promises to Israel, “I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth.”⁵¹

Beloved, think about it. There in Jerusalem the covenant God of Israel will reign as the mediatorial king. Zechariah 8:3 tells us, “Thus says the LORD, ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.’”⁵² And, of course, we can read in Ezekiel chapter 40 through 48 the details of the future millennial temple that he will build, great details where, once again, the shekinah glory of the living God will manifest itself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there in Ezekiel chapter 43 verse seven the Lord says, “Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever.”⁵³

Haggai prophesied to them concerning this glorious millennial temple that will exceed anything that the world could ever imagine, anything that the world has ever seen. There in chapter two verse six we read, “For thus saith the LORD of hosts.”⁵⁴ Don’t you love that? I mean, you can’t get any more authoritative than that.

For thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts. The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the LORD of hosts. The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the LORD of hosts.⁵⁵

And in that temple Ezekiel’s prophecy tells us that even a new system of animal sacrifices will be instituted, one that is radically different from the Aaronic system in the Old Testament that we read about. Even as the symbolism of the bread and the cup remind us here in the Church age of the unimaginable price that Jesus paid for our salvation, we discover in the Old Testament that there will be five different offerings, four of them blood letting, that will be distinctive to Israel’s worship and will serve as a perpetual reminder to them of that same sacrifice, the sacrifice of their Messiah, one that he made for them, the very one who now lives in their midst.

⁵⁰ Isaiah 61:6.

⁵¹ Zephaniah 3:20.

⁵² Zechariah 8:3.

⁵³ Ezekiel 43:7.

⁵⁴ Haggai 2:6.

⁵⁵ Haggai 2:6-9.

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No wonder the Lord reveals to us in Revelation 19:1-10 the eruption of heaven's praise in anticipation of the Lord's return.

I ask you. Do you join in that praise? Do you join in that anticipation or are you more excited about the Superbowl? Beloved, only when we fully grasp what the Lord has done for us, what he is doing in us and what he is going to do that is beyond our imagination, only then will we be able to fully praise him as we should and anticipate the glories of his Second Coming.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. Cause them to change our hearts. Lord, may they motivate us to live out lives that give glory to you. Lord, may we see that there is nothing in earth, nothing in our lives that should hold a greater priority than loving the Lord our God with all of our heart and mind and soul and strength, loving our neighbors as ourselves and living in light of your soon return. Lord, overwhelm those who do not know you as Savior. Convict them of their sin. May today be the day that they bow themselves before the cross and cry out for your mercy. May today be the day when they experience the miracle of the new birth, that they, too, can join in with the hope of the redeemed. For it is in Christ's name that I pray. Amen.

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