

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: 6a
The Incredible Journey
Of The
Church Age Believer
Jan. 4, 2004

INTRO: It is hard to do a series of messages in our setup here. So it is necessary every message to go back to the last message and remind us of where we are in the series. We have covered two of the four phases of the Journey of the Church age believer. The first takes us from the moment of salvation until we reach heaven. The second covers 7 brief years in heaven. The third phase begins when believers come back to earth to help the Lord Jesus fix the ultimate state of chaos resulting from the devastating tribulation period. The third phase begins with the preparation on earth for the millennium. That is what we looked at in our last message. Three significant events prepare this world for the millennium. First is the binding of Satan. Then all tribulation saints who died or were martyred during the tribulation are resurrected. And I believe that at this time, the Old Testament saints such as Adam, Abraham, Isaac, David, etc... are resurrected. That leaves two groups of people unaccounted for: those who are alive at the end of the tribulation and all unsaved dead from Genesis 1:1-Revelation 20. We will learn about the unsaved dead at the end of the short season which takes place after the millennium. Those who are alive at the end of the tribulation are judged at the beginning of the millennium. The unrighteous are cast alive into hell. The righteous are rewarded and they enter the millennium. In our last message we left off with this judgement having taken place.

We are now ready to consider the millennium. What will it be like during the millennium? We want to begin looking at that topic this morning but we will not finish this topic today. This next summer, if the Lord waits that long, my brother wants to take us fishing on the ocean. We have learned to love the ocean. I don't know if I have told you, but I plan, if at all possible to go fishing in the millennium. You will find this hard to believe, but I plan to fish the Dead Sea. If you think that is utterly impossible, you must hear the next message! I think that the Apostle Peter is going to be very interested in going fishing there too. He never fished there during his years as a fisherman, but that day is coming. If you think the risk worth it, I'll take bookings now for \$250.00.

Well, what will the millennium be like? That is our topic for this morning. Let's begin by reading Micah 4:3; Isaiah 9:6.

3. Description of the millennium

J. Dwight Pentecost writes in his comprehensive treatment of the prophetic Word of God, "A larger body of prophetic Scriptures is devoted to the subject of the millennium, developing its character and conditions, than any other one subject." Two outstanding words describing the millennium are *righteousness* and *peace*.

The Lord Jesus, in His model prayer for His followers, said, "In this manner therefore pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed by Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Whether we realized it or not, everytime we pray this prayer we are calling on God to set up the millennial kingdom and someday soon that prayer will be answered.

For a Biblical contrast between the tribulation period and the millennium consider Joel 3:9-10 and Isaiah 2:4.

a. Its commencement

When will the millennium begin? Daniel gives us some interesting days to consider. In 12:11 he tells us that from the abomination of desolation to another significant time there will be 1290 days. That time period extends 30 days past the second coming for His second coming is 1260 days after the abomination of desolation. Then in Daniel 12:12 he writes, "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty five days." Charles Ryrie says, "...this must mark the beginning of the actual functioning of Christ's millennial reign."

In our last message we spoke of the last half of the tribulation being 1260 days. But I mentioned Daniel's 1335 days. That takes us 75 days past the end of the tribulation. Listen to Dr. Harold Wilmington, quoting Dr. S. Franklin Logsdon who says this, "We in the United States have a national analogy. The President is elected in the early part of November, but he is not inaugurated until January 20th. There is an interim of 70-plus days.

During this time he concerns himself with the appointment of Cabinet members, foreign envoys and others who will comprise his government. In the period of 75 days between the termination of the Great Tribulation and the Coronation, the King of glory likewise will attend to certain matters" (pp. 196-197).

So we have looked at the time the millennium begins and three things that happen to prepare for it. Now let's look at how it begins. (Read Rev. 19:7-9) In my understanding of the Scriptures the millennium will begin by the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Now there is not full agreement among scholars as to whether the marriage supper takes place in heaven or on earth. It is my own view that the bride prepares herself in heaven for the marriage supper but the marriage supper will take place on earth.

While Jesus was still on earth, after the last supper, He said, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (read Matt. 26:29, see also Luke 22:18). Now the significance of this passage is that Jesus said He would not drink of the fruit of the vine again until that day when He would drink it new, "...with you in My Father's kingdom." That is He would not drink of it again until the millennium.

I would conclude therefore that the marriage supper will take place on earth and it is here that Jesus will once more drink wine. Further, it is of interest that in the Jewish Passover service there were 4 cups of wine corresponding to the four "I wills" found in Exodus 6:6-7.

1 The cup of sanctification 2 The cup of judgement
3 The cup of redemption 4 The cup of praise

When Jesus celebrated the last supper with the disciples, it appears that He took the third cup, the cup of redemption. It was fitting because He would very soon give His life for mankind's redemption. Now there is only one of the four cups

left and it is the cup of praise. It is this cup Jesus will drink, I believe, at the marriage supper of the Lamb here on earth.

Did you know that here at TEC we pray every Sunday morning for the millennial kingdom? When Jesus taught His disciples to pray after this manner, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come..." He was speaking of the millennial kingdom, the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth. It is in this kingdom, when it is here on earth, that Jesus will drink the cup of praise and I expect it will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Try to picture this supper where all the saints of all ages are gathered with the Lord Jesus Christ. Over there at one of the tables is Adam, his wife Eve. Abel is there. At another table you see Abraham and Sarah. Of course their son Isaac. With them is Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel. Over there is Martin Luther. At another place is Menno Simmons. Does that seem impossible?

There was a time when Jesus was in Capernaum. His reputation for healing had spread through the land. While He was in Capernaum a Roman centurion (a centurion is a commander of 100 soldiers) came to Jesus and let's read what took place (Matt. 8:5-10).

Now this centurion is a Gentile, like you and I. When Jesus saw his simple faith He immediately thought of possibly just such a setting as the marriage supper which begins the millennium. Then He said, "And I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

Where will you and I sit at this supper? Well, you tell me when we have a wedding meal, where does the bride sit? At which table? That tells you where you and I will sit, for we will be the new wife of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you again: When we go to be with the Lord, will it be boring? Can you even imagine or

picture yourself in the things we have spoken of? I find it all a bit fantastic myself but I know God's Word is true and so I believe it.

So let us look at how the millennium continues.

b. Its continuation

We have considered the beginning of the millennium and how it will begin. Now we want to consider what it will be like during the millennium. Again, I want to say that the teaching on the millennium in Scripture is so extensive that we can only take an overview of it in these messages.

1) The government of the millennium

How will the millennium be governed? Or will it be governed? The government of the millennium will be a theocracy, that is a government run by God. In our day we exalt democracy, rule by the people, as the best system of government. But theocracy, rule by God, will be much better. And the man who will be in charge for God here on earth, we read about in Isaiah 9:6-7 (read).

There are two OT covenants that tell us the country from which the world will be ruled. They tell us what will be the capital city. They tell us which family will rule.

-The Palestinian covenant: Gen. 17:7-8

There is a covenant often called the Palestinian covenant. I don't like the name. It refers to the land of Israel as Palestine and this land never has officially been Palestine and it never will be. I read of a Jew recently who argued with someone about this matter. So the Jew said, "Give me the name of a king or queen of Palestine." Of course there never has been a leader of such a place.

So it might be better to refer to it as the Israeli covenant. However that all may be, in this covenant God promises that the land we now

call Israel will have borders much greater than they are now. Some time ago I spoke with one of the missionaries we had for a mission's conference. He felt that the Jews today had taken the land from the Palestinians and that the Palestinians had rights to the land. I took such a hard stand against him that I felt I might almost have offended him. I want to tell you too, God gave this land to the Jews forever and not to any Ishmaelite descendents such as Yassar Arafat. Make no mistake about it this land never did belong to the Palestinians.

This missionary said that my eschatology makes me so pro-Jew I close my eyes to reality. I said, "My friend, I am pro-God and pro-Bible first and that makes me pro-Jew." I tell people that my grandfather Schlamp was born in the same city as Adolf Hitler. I had thought he was born on the same day but I found that grandfather was 2 years older than Hitler. My grandfather came from Austria to Canada when he was 2 years old or the year Hitler was born. Grandfather found a girl of low German background, Anna Wall, and married her. He learned low German and his life among the Mennonites formed a somewhat milder spirit in him but at heart he was still very German. I have the same blood flowing in my veins that. It encourages my hot temper. I am thankful to a Jew by name of Jesus Christ who has changed my life. I tell people that it gives me great joy as a German to say, "I love the Jews." I look forward to spending time with my Lord in that wonderful land of Canaan now called Israel.

So let me say simply this: In the millennium, Israel will be the country from which the world is governed. Now as to the place and family who will rule, this is to be found in the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16, read).

In this covenant we find that house and kingdom of David will be established forever. The year, 1948, is a very significant year with regard to that promise. In that year Israel became a nation. Many have been the sorrows for Israel

both just prior to that date and to our very day. Even today, this tiny nation faces immense odds. And during the tribulation this will become even worse. But immediately after the tribulation, the Lord Jesus will come back to earth with His new wife, the Church, and He will set up His government in Israel, as a leader in the family of king David. And He will rule forever.

Some years ago I was talking to one of the teachers who had come to teach at CSB. He had received his Bible training from Regent Bible college and because of their shaky teaching on end times he ended up holding the amillennial position. He said that one of the reasons he did not hold to premillennialism is because the Bible promised that the throne of David would be established forever and the millennium according to premillennialists was only 1000 years. So he ended up believing that this eternal kingdom must be in heaven not on earth. But the facts are Jesus Christ will rule on earth forever. We will see that when we find that there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

God gave the land of Canaan to Israel forever. God said He would establish the Davidic kingdom forever. I want to tell you in no uncertain terms that that kingdom will be forever as we shall see later. God means what He says! In the millennium Jesus Christ will sit on the throne of David in the city of David, which is Jerusalem, and the whole world will be blessed by Him. Israel, Jerusalem, the family of David will rule for all eternity! Such is the teaching of divine Scripture.

Concl: The actual millennium begins, I think, 1335 days after the middle of the tribulation according to Daniel. That is 75 days after the end of the tribulation. It begins, I believe, with the marriage supper of Christ and the Church. Then it continues with Christ on the throne of David ruling the world from Jerusalem, in the land of Israel.

How is your journey in the here and now? Is it tough? Do you face many perplexities? My pilgrim friend, may I encourage you to press on there is glory ahead. In this life, we are only in the first phase. But by faith we see the other three ahead of us. The second is there, just ahead of us. That is our hope!

Recently in Bible School we were memorizing Romans 8:26-27. It says, "Likewise also, the Spirit helps in our weaknesses..." So when we are weak and laden with the burdens of life, the Holy Spirit comes along to help us in our weaknesses. But the verse begins with, "Likewise also..." There is something else that helps us in our weakness. And the context, I think, indicates that this other thing that helps us is our hope. Now everything in these messages from the beginning of phase two on, gives us the content of our hope.

On New Years I spoke to you from Ephesians 1 where Paul prayed that: "...the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened..." And then he gives the first purpose why he prayed like this. It is that they might know what is the hope of their calling. In these messages we learn what is the hope of our calling. May it carry us through all the dark days there may come in our lives. May we look up and watch and wait, expecting Him until He comes. And when He does, Oh the glories that lie before us! I am sure that what we see is but a glimmer of all that will be there.

