

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: 6b  
The Incredible Journey  
Of The  
Church Age Believer  
February 29, 2004

INTRO: I wonder, do you at times get tired of this sin sick world? I am sure you do. Sorrow and sin and sickness abound on every hand. Trials and difficulties and pressures face us for much of our journey. I want us to turn to a hopeful passage this morning (read Romans 8:18-23). Oh, there is good news. Out of the four great sections of the believer's journey, only the first has so many unpleasant places. From there on, for the Church age believer it is glory.

Some glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away;  
To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away.

When the shadows of this life have gone, I'll fly away;  
Like a bird from prison bars has flown, I'll fly away.

Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away;  
To a land where joys will never end, I'll fly away.

I'll fly away O glory, I'll fly away;  
When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.

Oh what a wonder is the life of the believer, a life filled with such a lively hope! Oh that this dark world would turn to the living God, then they should soon find hope for their empty, grasping and groping souls. I think it is fair to say that we hear heaven and hell mentioned many times in our churches in this community. But there is one thing we almost never hear, and that is what it will be like when we fly away and we are on yonder blissful shore. From phase two through four in this series, we have a description of what it will be like.

You will recall how man fell into sin in Genesis 3. Our Catechism falls into three sections: 1. Creation 2. The Fall of Man and, 3. The Redemption of Man. You will recall in the fall of man how God said to Adam in Genesis 3:17, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': 'Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In

the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground..."

I look forward to gardening again this spring. But if we get to garden this year, I know our garden will grow weeds. And it may be a bad year. It may be a year when there are potato bugs or it may freeze just before the corn is ready. Then I know it is possible that some tragedy might befall our family and we may not enjoy gardening at all. I wonder, how many of you are tired of breakdowns; weeds; accidents; quarrels; fights; news of earthquakes and famines and wars and death again and again? Does the Bible give us hope of better days?

Well, I have good news for you. There is a time coming upon this earth where life will be all of what we always wished for and more, and that time is the millennium. No, it is not yet heaven, the final ultimate bliss but it is a superbly wonderful time in many ways. We saw in our last message that this world will then be governed from Israel by the Lord Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. Now all of that is true beyond a shadow of doubt. And this morning we want to look at the spiritual life of mankind and what will happen to nature in the millennium.

## 2) Spiritual life in the millennium

In our last message we began looking at how the millennium continues. We saw that the Lord Jesus Christ was the head of government and that Israel was the nation from which the world was governed and Jerusalem is the capital city of the world. We learned this from two covenants or agreements made in the OT.

Now we want to look at another covenant spoken of in the OT that shows us what spiritual life will be like during this time. It is called the *new covenant* in contrast to the old covenant which was the Sainiatic covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34, read).

When the Lord Jesus came to earth He offered the new covenant (Matt. 26:26-30). The Jews rejected the New covenant and then an unprophecied phenomena took place. The Church was born (Acts 2). Now believers could enter the new covenant or the new deal or new agreement by faith. And we have the new

agreement in a nut shell in John 3:16. God's part of the new agreement is to give His Son for the world. Man's enters this agreement by believing on the Son, and the benefits are that God gives to man eternal life.

Now let us look at Jeremiah 31:33 once more. Now notice that the Lord says in verse 33, "...after those days (the days of the making of the new covenant) says, the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Now this much of the NC we have entered into all ready. But this new covenant has not yet been accepted by Israel, nor has it been completely fulfilled. Notice now how it continues, "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them," says the Lord. 'For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

What will be the spiritual climate in the millennium? No more evangelism necessary! Glory, what a time that will be. According to J. Dwight Pentecost the millennium will be characterized by righteousness, holiness, obedience, truth and **fullness of the Holy Spirit**. All people, all over the world, and all people that will be born will know the Lord, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

Where will they worship? Interestingly, Ezekiel 37 describes the regathering of Israel to their land and their rebirth as a nation. That began in earnest in 1948. Then in Ezekiel 38-39 tells us of Russia and various other lands coming to destroy Israel. Then in chapter 40-43 we have a description of a temple that is to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The description is not of the temple of Solomon because the dimensions do not match. It is not the temple rebuilt by the Jews at the return of the Babylonian captivity because the measurements do not fit it either. It is not Herod's temple, which existed when

Jesus was on earth because it does not fit the description given here. It does not seem that it can be the temple of the tribulation because of its size and the time it would require to build it. It is not the temple of the new heavens and the new earth because it does not have a temple (Rev. 21:22). So where does this temple fit? It is no doubt that it is the temple in which people worship during the millennium.

[[During the millennium temple sacrifices will take place again. You say, "Isn't that strange. Why would God reinstitute the sacrifices?" Some time ago I spoke with a missionary friend from British Columbia. We were discussing eschatology. He said, "I would believe in premillennialism. It makes the most sense and does the most justice to Scripture but I can hardly accept it because then the temple sacrifices will be renewed (if we take Scripture literally) and I see no sense in that at all.

Let me draw a picture in your mind. Here we are in the millennium and it has gone on for 300 years. Millions of babies are born and grow up in a time when the devil is bound. There are some old-timers who came through the tribulation and tell these children what it used to be like. Now imagine these children being educated. There is no crime, no violence, even the animal kingdom is at peace. There are no floods, earthquakes or other catastrophies. Yet these children, like all other children are born with a sin-nature and they must be saved. Somehow it is almost impossible to teach them that they need to be saved. It is for this reason I think the animal sacrifices will take place. Dr. Harold Willmington gives these four reasons for these sacrifices:

- A reminder to all of the necessity of the new birth
- An object lesson of the costliness of salvation
- An example of the awfulness of sin

-An illustration of the holiness of God

My Christian friend, you and I will be there. Isn't it high time to be checking out where we are going?]]

### 3) Nature in the millennium

Now, you might say, since man's spiritual state is lifted to such a high plain, what will happen to the sin cursed earth? What of the ravenous tiger or lion, or the slippery snake? What of thorns and thistles and wild oats? What of earthquakes, floods and hurricanes? How do these fit into the millennium?

Did you know that prior to Isaac Watts, who lived 1674-1748, hymns were not sung in the church? They sang the Psalms. Isaac Watts introduced the modern hymns to the church. He wrote such Hymns as "O God, Our Help in Ages Past; When I survey the Wondrous Cross; Jesus Shall Reign; Alas and Did My Savior Bleed; Am I a Soldier of the Cross and Joy to the World."

I highly doubt that Watts was what we call a premillennialist but he captured the millennium in some of his songs, one of those being, *Joy to the World*: (Turn to 125).

"Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her king!" When does Jesus come as king? In the millennium. "Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing." When does nature sing? In the millennium. "Joy to the earth the Savior reigns..." Again this happens in the millennium. "Let men their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found." When does that happen? In the millennium. "He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love..." When does he rule

the world with truth and grace? When does He make the nations prove the glories of His righteousness? In the millennium.

Will there actually be a change in nature? Will the curse be removed? Well we want to look at that.

One event that takes place when Jesus returns to earth gives us a picture of the change that takes place in nature in the millennium. We have seen some events of Zechariah 14 in earlier messages. Look at Zeck. 14:3-10 (read). The country from 10 miles north of Jerusalem to 35 miles south of Jerusalem will become a plain. Furthermore, a river will flow from Jerusalem. Half of the waters will flow to the Mediteranian Sea and half to the Dead Sea. How this water affects the Dead Sea is typical of what happens to nature in the millennium. After Ezekiel describes the temple in the millennium he also describes this river we have just seen coming from Jerusalem (Ez. 47:1-12). Now note carefully what verse 10 says!

Now I mentioned that I want to go fishing in the millennium. Do you think that is possible? Do you think after we are resurrected we will be able to eat and enjoy the earthly things we enjoy now? Well, let us read 1 John 3:2 (read). You see, when He comes we will be like Him. Well, what is He like? We can find this out by seeing what He was like after the resurrection. Let's go to John 21:1-14 (read). Now why do you suppose that the Lord Jesus was resurrected with a body and that He could eat and drink and live like we do here on earth? It is because He, along with all believers, will live in the millennium and then on the new earth forever. And He and we will have a body and experience life in the body for all eternity! We will see that in the next phase of the Church age believer's life.

Now, back to the Dead Sea in Israel. I have been there at the Dead Sea. When you travel from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea you go down,

down, down. Eventually you can see the Dead Sea and about that time you come to a sign which says, "Sea Level." From there to the Dead Sea is yet another 1300 foot drop. The Dead Sea has the Jordan River coming into it on the north end. If one put a fish in this water that fish would turn its white stomach up and die in minutes. This water is literally loaded with minerals. The mineral wealth of the Dead Sea is phenomenal. When I was there I saw people floating around in this water. You can take a newspaper and read it while you float on your back and you do not need a life jacket for that.

Notice that along the bank of this river there will be trees of which the fruit will be used for food and the leaves for medicine!

That brings us to another consideration during the millennium, health and age (Is. 33:24; 35:3-6; Jer. 30:17). A child will die at 100 years of age (Is. 65:20). Today medical research and the needs for medical cures are constantly on the rise. A special issue of Time magazine of the Fall of '96 says on the cover: "Inside: the latest on; cancer, aging, aids, fertility, organ transplants, mental illness and more..." Those are concerns taken care of in the millennium.

There is yet another area that will be greatly changed in the millennium. That is the animal kingdom. In our age there is a longing by the animal kingdom for the millennial age (See Romans 8:18-23. This longing will be fulfilled in the millennium (Is. 11:3-9; Is. 65:24-25).

CONCL: Well, in conclusion, do you know of any other belief or faith that holds out a more wonderful hope of the future than the Bible? Let me just inform you here that the best is yet to come. We haven't seen the best yet. But as we look to the future let us think of this wonderful time that the Scriptures give us a window into, and let us view the land the Bible calls Beulah land. I have asked our song leader to lead us in the hymn, *Beulah Land*. This song was written by Edgar P. Stites and the music was written by John R. Sweeney. Ira D. Sankey, song leader

for D.L. Moody sang this song at his friend, John Sweeney's funeral. Sankey says this song has been sung in every land where Christ is known.

This has always been one of my favorites and now, having studied it some, it is has become even better. The phrase *beulah land* occurs only once in the Bible. I have tried to discover if the writer was a premillennialist or an amillennialist. However the writer intended it, it is a beautiful millennial song coming from a millennial passage (Is. 62:1-5).

The words *beulah land* means *married land*. Israel will be married to the land of Canaan, that is, it is a permanent relationship.



