

The Place of Everlasting Paradise!

Message 15

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1-14

INTRO: We have come, in these messages, to the time of blessedness promised again and again in both the Old and New Testaments. Peace and righteousness are key words describing this time. Man will be at peace because the Lord Jesus will rule. We saw that in Isaiah 9. We read in the last message, Isaiah 11:1-9. It pictures the animal world at rest. No more dog eat dog, or lion eat lamb. The Lord Jesus envisioned that day in His teachings. Paul pictured that day in his teachings. Turn to Romans 8:18-23 (read).

In these messages, that time is about to begin. In the last message we looked at the transition from the tribulation to this time. We recommended that in those first 30 days spoken of by Daniel the prophet a number of significant events will happen. Satan will be bound. Then all those who are left alive after the tribulation will be gathered together to be judged. The unrighteous are cast into hell and the righteous are invited by the Lord Jesus to enter this millennial kingdom (Matt. 25). At this time, the Christians who died in the tribulation, along with OT saints are resurrected and they, along with the Church, live and reign with Christ for 1000 years. What an incredible transition!

Furthermore, Daniel spoke of another 45 days. I want you to see this again Daniel 12 (read 11-12). Verse 12 says, "Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days." That is 75 days after the close of the tribulation. Now, who will not wait and come to this time? Well, let me tell you who will not come to that time. The unrighteous who are alive at the end of the tribulation! Only the righteous living will inherit this kingdom. The Bible clearly says that. Only they come to this time. No unsaved person goes into the millennium.

So what we have in Daniel is first the 30 days after the tribulation and then the 45 days that follow the 30 days. So, we are ready to consider those 45 days, and I think that Dr. Harold Willmington may be right that the Lord Jesus will set up His government in those days. Now I also propose that in these last 45 days, the Lord of lords and the King of kings will order Jerusalem cleaned up and

prepared for the largest feast this world has ever experienced to that time!

d. Government set up

So, we begin with the setting up of the government of the millennial age. It is beyond all question that Jesus Christ will be the Chief ruler of this age. The form of government will be what we call a theocracy. Our Canadian governmental form is a democracy. That is rule by the people. But this will be a theocracy, or rule by God. God will rule through His Son, Jesus Christ. I want us to go to several Scriptures to see this (Isa. 2:2-4; 9:3-7; 11:1-5 and many others especially in Daniel). This is not only an OT teaching. Consider Luke 1 (read 26-33).

But the Lord Jesus will appoint many other rulers and judges. Turn with me again to Matthew 19 (read 27-28). The phrase 'the regeneration' here refers to the time we are talking about. Look now at Luke 22 (read 24-30).

It seems to me from Revelation 20:4-6, that many of those who have part in the first resurrection will also rule with Christ in the millennium. Turn now to Luke 19. Jesus has been at Zachaeus' house for night, you know the story. He is on the way to Jerusalem, where, not too many days later, He will be killed. It is a very steep and long path from Jericho to Jerusalem. And as they are going they are discussing how soon this kingdom we are talking about will be set up. From this passage we understand that they expected it to be set up very soon, and from all prophecy it would seem to be the correct view to take at their time.

With that, consider verse 11 (read). You see, the very time we are talking about this morning, was the topic they had on mind that day. And they expected that very shortly this kingdom would now be set up. So Jesus gives

them a parable (read 12-27). First, as to their expectation that the kingdom would now soon be set up He informed them it would be like a noble man who went into a far country. This indicates it will be some time yet. And He tells them that the noble man, which represented Himself, and His going back to heaven, wanted them to do business till He returned. He further told them that when He returned, they would be rewarded according to their faithfulness in doing business. And in the parable He says their rewards would be ruling over various cities. This, along with Matthew 25:14-30 speaks to those of us in the Church age and indicates that we too will reign with Him over various places. So, the government of the millennium is made up of resurrected people.

We are told in the OT what king David will be doing. Turn with me to Ezekiel 34 (read 20-25). You can read on in this passage and find what will happen. Let me give you with this also Jeremiah 30:1-9. What we are told is that king David will reign again. Now it is questioned whether these passages speak of Jesus as the Son of David, or David himself. It is a rather complicated question which I don't want to take time for other than to say I believe David will rule again. Jesus will rule the world. David will rule Israel and the 12 apostles will rule the twelve tribes of Israel. We will rule in various other parts of the world, which will very quickly be repopulated by those who come through the tribulation alive.

So I propose that the government of the millennium will be centered in Jerusalem with Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords. David will rule. The apostles will rule. The Church will rule. Those who are faithful in the tribulation and die, will rule.

Well, with the tribulation past; the antichrist and false prophet in hell; the

devil bound; the judgment of the living at the end of the tribulation over, the tribulation and OT saints resurrected, and the millennial government in place, I think we come to Daniel's words in Daniel 12, "Blessed is he who waits and comes to the one thousand, three hundred and thirty five days." I think it may well speak of the official beginning of the millennium.

e. Official beginning of the millennium

We now want to look at the official beginning of this time. Some messages ago, we were in Revelation 19, and we saw the Lord Jesus seated on a white horse with the armies of heaven with Him. And later we saw Him come to earth and defeat all His enemies. But just before He came down we read something very important. We want to read that once more (19:6-9).

Now I propose that before the marriage supper of the Lamb takes place the things we have just looked at in the 2 previous messages take place. First, the Lord defeats the antichrist and the false prophet and casts them into hell alive. Then He binds Satan and judges those left alive at the end of the tribulation. He resurrects the righteous dead of the tribulation and the OT and then prepares Jerusalem for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

So, let us reread Revelation 19:7-9. I have given you the marriage procedure of Jewish weddings. The last part is the marriage supper. In Revelation 19 Christ and the Church are married, and the last part of the marriage is to take place. Now I want you to note an important question. The Lord tells the Apostle John in verse 9, "Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" And then, as though we might find this hard to believe He said to John, "These are the true sayings of God."

Now, here is the important question: Who are the invited guests to the marriage supper? Listen carefully now. You may wish to argue with me. First, they are not the believers of the Church age. The Church is the bride and you never invite the bride to the marriage supper. If there is no bride there is no supper. You do not invite the bride to her own wedding reception. No bride, no reception. It is guests that are invited to the reception.

Second, it will not be the antichrist and his armies that are invited. They are destroyed. Third, it is not the unsaved living at the end of the tribulation, because they are judged and cast into hell, and furthermore, no unsaved person enters this time. So, who are these invited guests? And here is my proposed answer. I believe it will be the saved people who come through the tribulation alive, and all the resurrected saved people from Adam to John the Baptist of the OT time.

Now I want to take you back to a scene that took place a long time ago. It was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, just before the last Passover Jesus attended. Jesus had gathered with His disciples in an upper room. Tomorrow He will die. Then Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink from it all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Then to this He added this most significant statement: "But I say to you, 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."

When Jesus said these words, He was referring to this very time we are considering right now. The millennium is His Father's kingdom. The Jews, at each Passover to this day, have four cups of wine. They correspond to the four, 'I wills' of Exodus 6:6-7. The first cup

is the cup of sanctification; the second the cup of judgment; the third the cup of redemption, and the fourth, the cup of praise. When Jesus took the cup and gave it to His disciples to drink, it was the third cup, the cup of redemption. He did not drink from the fourth cup then and said He would not drink of it until He drank it new with them in His Father's kingdom. And the cup He drinks new with them in His Father's kingdom will be, not the cup of sanctification, or judgment or redemption. It will be the cup of praise.

How many of you have seen an artist's conception of this cup in glory? A table is set and it stretches out until you can see it no more and still there are more cups? It is the time we are talking about that is pictured. It takes place here on earth. Now does He drink this at His inauguration or is it at this marriage supper? I do not know, but I propose it is at the marriage supper.

Now I must draw one more picture for your imagination as you try to get this future scene. Let me give you the setting first and then the Scripture. Jesus has preached His first great and powerful sermon called the Sermon on the Mount. He and this great crowd of people are coming down the hillside a leper came and worshipped Him and He healed Him and touched him.

And when He had entered Capernaum, there by the side of the Sea of Galilee a Roman centurion came to Him about his son who was paralyzed and dreadfully tormented. And Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." And the centurion said, "I am not worthy that you should come to my place. I am also a man in authority and I understand authority. I recognize that You are in authority in the spiritual realm. All You need to do is speak a word right from where You are and he will be healed."

Now this man was a Gentile. And when Jesus heard this He marveled and said, "Assuredly I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel." He is talking to Jews and in my words He says, "Wow! Look at this Gentile, whom you call dogs. But he has more faith than any of you! Incredible!"

Now I want you to go to Matthew 8 to see the next verse for yourselves (read 11). He said many would come from the east and the west. Well, we are from the west. And Jesus said many of us would sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. That is the kingdom we have been talking about this morning.

Now I want you to put your imagination to work. You see, Adam and Eve will be there. Enoch will be there. Abel will be there. Noah will be there. David will be there. Uriah the Hittite will be there. Daniel will be there. Job will be there. And you will say to yourself: "I have wondered about something. I must go talk with Daniel." And off you go to find Daniel.

Now you see, when Jesus spoke and taught, He did so with this whole picture in mind. Much of this the Jews understood, because they had the OT Scriptures. What has happened to us is Amillennialism began to be taught and it erased all of this from our understanding and now it is new teaching to us. Jesus' parables come to life with this understanding of the kingdom of God. The OT prophets all of a sudden speak English, when we understand what God prophesied through them.

f. Temple rebuilt

I believe one of the things that will begin almost right away in the millennium will be the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Here the book of Ezekiel is very helpful. The book of Ezekiel has 48 chapters. The last 15

chapters are prophetic of the restoration of Israel, the tribulation and the millennium.

The prophecies we see being fulfilled today are the restoration of Israel. I want to show you just how relevant these prophecies are to today. Let us begin by reading 36:16-28. Verses 18-20 were fulfilled from AD 70 to 1948. Then in 1948 God did a most incredible thing and Israel, against all odds, became a nation again. Today we are in verses 21-24 (read). From verse 25 on is future.

Now look at chapter 36 (read 1-5). That is today precisely! You know from the news how Israel is in difficult times because of the Palestinians and world opinion and the rest of the Arab world. So, look at what God has to say about this in chapter 35 (read 1-15).

Go with me to chapter 37. Let us read verses 1-3 which describe Israel before 1948 (read). Now look at what God says will happen (read 4-8). That is today. Now look at verse 9 (read). This is future. This, I think, speaks of spiritual life. It has not happened yet but it will.

Well, verses 9-14 deal with their spiritual restoration, and when that happens we will be at the time we are discussing this morning and we find that in verses 15-28 (read). We note in this passage again that David will be their king in the millennium. Verse 26 then speaks of this covenant of peace and that is the millennium. But what I wanted to bring us to is the last part of verse 26-28 (read).

CONCL: So, we conclude and in concluding let me remind you that when we refer to our experience in 'heaven' we are talking about that which happens after death or after the rapture. For those of us from the Church age, the millennium happens after our death or after the rapture, it matters not whether you hold to a 'pre' or 'post' trib position. So, all of what happens in the millennium is part of our 'heaven' experience, or better, I think, our 'Paradise' experience.

So, I have recommended to you that in the first 30 days after the tribulation Satan is bound; tribulation and OT saints are resurrected, and those left alive at the end of the tribulation are judged. The unrighteous of those are cast into hell. The righteous go alive into the millennium.

I have also proposed that in the next 45 days the government of the millennium is set up. Jerusalem is prepared for a very big feast and then the millennium officially begins. In this time, I believe the marriage supper of Christ and the Church will take place. It will be a very incredible feast and peace and joy will fill every person. This is part of our 'Paradise' experience.

Last, we began to consider that one of the first major events to take place is the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. We just introduced this subject and will continue it next Sunday, Lord willing.