

## **The Place of Everlasting Paradise!**

Message 14

Scripture: Daniel 12

INTRO: I have been seeking to change and add to our view of heaven, or as I have called it, 'Everlasting Paradise'. In younger years I did not hear messages on the rapture or the millennium. What I did hear was that we were to be ready at all times because Jesus could come at any moment and then we would be either cast into hell or we would go to heaven with Him. And if one died before that, he or she would either go to heaven or hell. I had been told numerous times that He would come as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so would be the coming of Christ. I heard also that the stars would fall from heaven. There my end time teaching came to an end, and it was scary. I hoped I would be OK, but I had no assurance of that.

Somehow, though I was taught nothing about taking the Scriptures literally or figuratively, from the time I was saved I never questioned that one must interpret the Scriptures literally. When I read books written by those who interpreted the Scriptures literally, and they pointed to those things that were happening and would yet happen, I found something very comforting and very exiting. I learned that through the prophetic Scriptures, God had opened windows and let us look into the future.

When the Lord was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorah, He said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?" God Almighty felt obligated to let Abraham know what He was going to do before He did it. The prophet Amos said in 3:7, "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." Revelation 1:1 says, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants - things which must shortly come to pass."

Today, in the Church, we have hidden the light of God's prophetic word under a basket. This morning we are going to look at the beginning of a new era, an era we call the millennium. J. Dwight Pentecost, in his monumental work on the prophetic Scriptures called, "Things To Come" these words regarding this time period: "A larger body of prophetic Scriptures is devoted to the subject of the millennium, developing its character and conditions, than any other one subject." And could it be true to say that in the Church we know less about this than any other subject?

I speak this, not to your shame, no, I speak it to the shame of the preachers and teachers of the Word of God.

In our last message, we saw the closing of the tribulation period. Israel's seventieth week had come to an end. The earth, ravaged by war and in tatters from the natural disasters brought on by Almighty God Almighty has hushed and it lies there like a wounded animal in its last throws of life. But not all is grim. A rider on a mighty white steed sits relaxed on His horse. Around Him is a white robed throng. They too, are unperturbed. You see, that rider was introduced to us as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is in charge. He has no misgivings about what lies before Him and He is about to begin giving orders. Planet earth has a new 'one world ruler'.

One other introductory point: Why talk about the millennium in messages on Paradise, or heaven? Because we will be there. This is part of our experience of Paradise! For us, this is not something that happens before Paradise, this is part of it.

#### 4. The Millennium

##### a. Evidence for the millennium

So, let us begin this message by giving some evidence for the millennium. Let me give you one example from the OT (Is. 9"6-7). Now all kinds of Scriptures in the OT speak of this time period but none tell us it is 1000 years in length. For that we have one major passage in the NT. So we turn to Revelation 20 (read 1-6).

What an incredible window into the future! I ask you this morning, do you believe it literally? Five times in five verses it gives the phrase 'one thousand years'. If that is not enough for you, it occurs once more in another time period in verse 7.

Let me give you an assignment. If you have a Bible with notes, read through the book of Isaiah and see how often this time period is referred to. If you read the prophets you will find them speaking of this time period and the

tribulation over and over and over. This is called the 'Day of the Lord'. There is the night, the tribulation; and the day time, the millennium.

By the way, for those interested in reading on the subject of heaven, Randy Alcorn's book, simply called, 'Heaven' is a very insightful treatment of this subject. But in doing such a good job of taking a literal approach, the subject of the millennium is the weakest part of his book. If you are interested in further reading on this subject, Joni Erikson too, has written a book on it. It is called, 'Heaven: Your Real Home.'

b. The OT picture of the millennium

As I worked through the material for these messages I gained a new picture of the millennium which I feel I must share with you. I want to show you briefly what the OT prophets saw. They saw ahead of them, looming in the distance, black clouds of trouble. Daniel describes this time of trouble. Listen to Daniel 12:1a, "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time." Listen to Jesus in Mathew 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."

This time of trouble, often called 'the Day of the Lord' in the OT is none other than that which we call the tribulation. But, these prophets foresaw a time following that period and it would be a time of great blessing. Turn with me to a very familiar passage but one which we apply on the half of it (Is. 9:6-7). Now look at Isaiah 11:1-9 (read). So the OT prophets saw a time of trouble, followed by a time of peace and prosperity, a time when Messiah would come and reign.

Now let me tell you what no OT prophet saw. They did not see that between that time of trouble and that time of blessing would come a time period of at least 2000 years that would be called the Church age (read Eph. 3:1-7).

Now why did I show you this picture? Because all the prophecies in the OT to the millennium, and there are very many, describe what for those of us of the Church age will happen in that which we call 'heaven'. It makes no difference if you are a pre-tribber, mid-tribber or post-tribber. We all see this the same. All those of the Church age will have their glorified bodies by the time the millennium starts. Only those who live through the tribulation will still have their physical bodies.

With that, let me lay to rest one argument against the millennium. If, what the premillennialist proposes is correct, then there will be resurrected and un-resurrected people living together on earth at the same time and that for 1000 years! Some who argue against the literal view of interpreting prophecy point out how ridiculous it is to think that both resurrected and un-resurrected people could live together on earth. But all you have to do is read the Gospels, and you find the resurrected Jesus living and eating with un-resurrected people.

Let me here also put to rest another thought that has troubled some. Life in the millennium will not be perfect, as we will see. Will it be possible for resurrected individuals to sin during this time? The answer is that once a saved person is resurrected, they are forever through with sinning! As I see it, they will not even want to sin.

#### c. Transition to the millennium

Now we want to see how the transition from the tribulation is made into the millennium. Right after the tribulation, there are several very

important things that must be done before the millennium officially begins. But before we look at those, let me show you how Daniel speaks about this transition. We go to Daniel 12. Verse 1 briefly describes the tribulation (read). Verse 2 begins to describe this transition, with one of those events that takes place here as we will see shortly (read). Verse 3 shows some of the rewards of the righteous (read). Verse 4 describes the time between when Daniel gave these words until the end, and it describes our age so precisely it cannot be improved upon (read).

Daniel then takes us back to the middle of the tribulation to introduce us to this transition time (read 5-7). Verse 7 speaks of a time, times and half a time. I will not take time to explain this except that speaks of 3 ½ years. That is the 1260 days or the 42 months the book of Revelation speaks of. This is the last 3 ½ years because verse 7 says, "...and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished."

In verse 8 Daniel requests information in order to understand what he has been told (read). And in verse 9 he is answered (read). Verse 10 then says that many will be purified and made white and refined but the wicked will do wickedly. Daniel is then told that the wicked will not understand but the wise will understand. Today there is an understanding of such books as Daniel and Revelation as has never been before. I would venture to guess that the book of Revelation has had more commentaries written on it in the last 150 years than in all the preceding years.

And that brings us to the explanation of this transition time. Let us read verse 11 (read). The sacrifice that is taken away is the sacrifice to God Almighty in the middle of the tribulation. The abomination of desolation is when the antichrist sets himself up as God in the temple (Dan. 9:24-27; 2 Thess. 2).

Now in our verse it gives the number 1,290 days. The time, and times and half a time is 1260 days. So this is 30 days past the end of the tribulation. What is significant about these 30 days? Well, let me show you the first thing I believe will happen, so we go back to Revelation 20. Let us read 1-3 (read).

For 1000 years Satan is rendered powerless. He is bound. He will not have access to man for this period of time. You see, when the disciples asked Jesus what they should have for leaving their jobs and possessions Jesus informed them what their portion would be in 'the regeneration'. This is that regeneration. Satan is bound, the curse, it appears is removed and it will be Paradise on earth!

I have told you this before, but I repeat that this is what our supposed Christmas song talks about, the song called 'Joy to the World'. It says, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come." It does not say we have gone to Him. It says He has come. Then it says, "Let earth receive her King." That is what we have seen this morning. Later it says, "No more let sins and sorrows grow..." The Lord Jesus will rule over man and not allow sin and sorrows to grow. But it goes on to say, "...nor thorns infest the ground." The curse is removed. The earth was cursed and that curse is removed. Now, the song says, "He comes to make, His blessings flow, far as the curse is found." The curse is now found all over the earth, but then His blessings will flow just that far. Last, it says, "He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and the wonders of His love." Satan is bound.

So we go back to Revelation 20. There is another matter to take care of in those 30 days. I told you the book of Revelation is very chronological. So we go to Revelation 20:4 (read). I propose that we have two events in this verse. The first event is found in the

first sentence, "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them." Now this is a very difficult sentence in itself because we do not know who the antecedent is of the pronouns 'they' and 'them'. Later I will tell you whom I think it refers to. For now, I want to show you how things happen here.

Let us go to Matthew 13. In this chapter the Lord gives 8 parables. The last parable is with regard to this judgment we are considering (read Matt. 13:47-50). Now verse 49 says this is the end of the age. That is just before the millennium begins. The angels are sent forth to gather all remaining living people at the end of the tribulation for the judgment we now have in view.

Let us now go to Matthew 25 (read 31-46). We note now that verse 31 informs us that this takes place when Jesus returns in His glory. That is Revelation 19. And all the nations are gathered before Him (that is Revelation 20:1-3. Then He sets the sheep on His right hand and the goats on the left. You see, they are placed on the right or on the left, not on the basis of what they have done, but on the basis of what they are.

And then they are judged. I believe that it is this judgment that Revelation 20 speaks of when it says 'judgment was committed to them.' Now here it is important to read 1 Corinthians 6:1-2 (read). Incredible, isn't it?

Each person alive at the end of the tribulation will be judged. But what I think happens is that the Lord commits the judgment for each of these living people to His saints. They in turn judge each of those people who are alive at the end of the tribulation.

Now these people are separated on the basis of whether they are sheep or goats. Then they are judged according to what they have done. The lost then are cast into hell to reap their

rewards there. The righteous, on the other hand do not go to heaven. They are living beings yet. So look at verse 34 (read). The righteous are invited to come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the earth. That is the millennium.

You see, in Matthew 5:5 Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit," not heaven, but, "the earth". Now look at chapter 6 (read 9-10). This all happens here after the tribulation.

(Break here if needed.)

Now there is another event that happens here, and I think it occurs during those 30 days as well. We go back to Revelation 20. We have read the first sentence of verse 20. Now look at the second sentence (read vs. 4b). What we have is the resurrection of the tribulation saints. They now receive their bodies. But I think Daniel gives evidence that the OT saints are resurrected here as well (read Dan. 12:1-2). Now, it would be hard to guess how long all this will take but I believe this is some of what will happen in those 30 days. Daniel 11:11 speaks of 1,290 days here. That is 30 days past the end of the tribulation.

Now note with me carefully Revelation 20:3, with the preceding context in mind (read). Those raised to everlasting life have part in the first resurrection and I believe these are OT believers who are raised at the end of the tribulation. This means such people as Adam and Eve, Methuselah; Abraham; David; Job etc... right up until John the Baptist. They live once more, never more to die.

So we have considered the first 30 days after the tribulation closes. Let me read a paragraph on these 1290 days from Dr. Harold Willmington in his book on the OT called "Basic Stages in the Book of Ages": "This period refers to the same as mentioned above, but includes an additional 30 days. Although



we cannot be dogmatic, it would seem reasonable to conclude that an additional month will be needed to carry out the sheep and goat judgment mentioned in Matt. 25:31-46" (375).

We want to go on from there, because we have more information from Daniel. In Daniel 12:12 it says this, "Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1,335 days." Let me quote again from Dr. Willmington, "Here again a period of time is added, 45 days. What will be the need of these 45 days? It may be the time necessary for setting up the governmental machinery for carrying on the rule of Christ. Dr. Franklin Logsdon has written the following words concerning the additional 75 days (30+45) beyond the 3 ½ year period. '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 20. 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 will likewise attend to certain matters" (Basic Stages pg. 375-376).

So, I propose the seventy five day period between the tribulation and the millennium will be a busy time. Jerusalem which was ravished by war will need a lot of work to prepare for the inauguration of the King of kings. You see, during the millennium, Jesus, pictured as the husband of the Church, will now begin to rule the world for 1000 years! Jerusalem will be the capital of the world. Of all the earth, this is the place God chose to place His name.

CONCL: So, we bring this message to a conclusion and I ask, is there evidence for the millennium? If one holds to a literal interpretation of Scripture, there is no way around it. If one says, "Well, the Jews rejected Christ. All the promises to the Jews now belong to the Church" then one has

to spiritualize huge sections of Scripture. And what happens is that where God opened a large window into the future, a big black curtain is pulled over that window and we can no longer see what is to happen. Is there evidence for the millennial reign of Christ? Tons of it!

What picture did the OT prophet see? He saw dark clouds coming his way, so dark that such clouds had never been seen before. But after that came a picture of peace and righteousness, with Messiah ruling on earth. What he did not see at all, was the time period of the Church age in between. It is this Church age time that is about to end with the rapture, and then that dark period will come into actuality.

But after that dark period, Christ, as the OT prophet foresaw, comes to this earth to rule. That is what we have in Revelation 19. He is the one on the white horse. And He comes to earth with His wife, the Church and the first thing He does is to squelch all rebellion. The antichrist and the false prophet are cast alive into hell and a hush falls over a war ravaged earth.

First thing on the agenda after this is the capture and binding of Satan. He is bound for 1000 years. That is what the Bible says. Then all the people left alive are gathered for judgment and they are judged. The unrighteous are cast into hell, and the righteous enter the millennium. Those who died as Christians in the tribulation and the OT saints are resurrected at this time. This is the transition from the tribulation into the millennium!!! All of this is what for the Church age believer is referred to as 'heaven'.