

HEAVEN:
The Place of Everlasting Paradise!

Message 18
Jeremiah 31:31-37

INTRO: I will try to bring our studies of this subject to a close in a few more messages. It is not that we are almost out of material, especially on the time period we are considering at this point. It is that my own understanding of this time period is quite small and the amount of material left is voluminous.

We have come to where the millennial reign has been set up; the temple is set up, and Christ is ruling on earth. We have almost reached the final great divine trial of mankind. The millennium itself is a divine trial of sinful mankind. Let me mention once again, that those who enter this time in their resurrected bodies have been delivered forever from the sin nature and never again come under temptation to fall into sin.

And in this message, I want to seek to give us a little idea of just how perfect the circumstances in this time period are for those who do not yet have resurrected bodies. J. Dwight Pentecost wrote a book published in 1958 called, "Things to Come." I recommend this book for all interested in studying prophecy. And he has one section on the millennium where he lists the blessed conditions. His list has 24 points and I will give only a few of those and go over only a few of the Scriptures he points out.

Now as I studied this aspect of the millennium, I have come to the persuasion that if you want to know what it will be like in the eternal state, which we have not yet come to; you need to know what it will be like in the time of the kingdom of God, or as we know it, the millennium. Here we have a description of what it will be like for those who enter this time period in their physical bodies. They have come through the tribulation and have entered the kingdom of God. Here is described the hope of the Israelite in the OT. For those who enter this time in their resurrection bodies, I think, it will be even better. And in the conditions that describe this time period, we get a foretaste of what our experience in Paradise will be like after this time period is over. Only, that next time period will never, never end. For this reason it is worth it for us to study these conditions.

h. Conditions in the millennium

-GLORY: First, let us begin our look at the conditions in the millennium or the kingdom of God by considering Ezekiel 43:1-5 (read). God once more dwells with man in the temple. Go with me to Isaiah 40 (read 1-5). Here we are told that the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

-KNOWLEDGE OF GOD: Second, mankind will come to an incredible knowledge of God. This will be a time of unparalleled learning. Let us go to a few passages in Isaiah to see this (read 2:2-4). The Lord's house, that is the temple, will be established on the top of the mountains, that is in Jerusalem. And ALL nations shall flow to it. I expect that one of the thrills in the life of every person, is the opportunity to go to Jerusalem from time to time. And one of the great things they will look forward to is to be taught by the Lord. They say to one another, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob." There is only one place on earth that fits that description. And they will say to one another, "He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths."

Now listen to Isaiah 54:13-14, "All your children *shall be* taught by the LORD, And great *shall be* the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established; You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; And from terror, for it shall not come near you." So, Habakkuk 2:14 says, "For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea."

You see, when the millennium begins, every person on earth will be a Christian. So when God promised the new covenant in the OT this is what He promises: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the

hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 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."

So, not only will the glory of God now once more dwell with man but to begin with, all will know Him. And from there the knowledge of God will expand and become exceedingly great.

-HEALTH:

But there are more great changes. When we looked at what I believe will be the millennial temple, we saw that a river issued forth from the throne of God on the top of Mount Zion. We saw how that it ran into the Dead Sea, and it was dead no more. Now let me show you something else in Ezekiel 47:12 (read). What we have here is very similar to the eternal state that we will see later. However, what is significant here is that it says there will be all kinds of trees growing beside this river. And these are very interesting trees. Their leaves do not wither. Their fruit does not fail. They bear fruit every month. The fruit is good for food, and the leaves of these trees are good for medicine.

We turn now to Isaiah 65 (read vs. 20). There will be no still born or crib death in the millennium. A father will not accidentally run over his son, and a son will not accidentally shoot his father. A very young death will be 100 years old. It is also evident from Revelation 20:7-9, that the whole earth is populated during this time period. I am not sure what is meant by a sinner being 100 years old will be accursed. But Vine's comment on this passage may be right,

that someone who insists on living in sin will be given time up to 100 years old to amend his ways before his life is taken. It seems that those who struggle with health issues will be healed in this time (read Is. 29:17-18; 35:3-6).

-PRODUCTIVE LABOR: One may wonder what it will be like in this time. Will there be labor. Will people work? For this we go to Isaiah 65 (read 21-23). Isaiah 62:8-9 says, "The LORD has sworn by His right hand And by the arm of His strength: 'Surely I will no longer give your grain As food for your enemies; And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine, For which you have labored. But those who have gathered it shall eat it, And praise the LORD; Those who have brought it together shall drink it in My holy courts.'"

-ANIMAL KINGDOM: Let us just briefly note what will happen to the animal world, according to Isaiah 11 (read 6-8). Go with me to Romans 8, a NT passage that speaks of this (read 8:18-23).

-JUSTICE: Furthermore, this will be a time of perfect justice. We have mentioned earlier that those who are born in this time period to those who survived the tribulation will still have a sin nature. One of the things this time period will reveal will be that the sin nature in man is tremendously powerful, even when the devil is bound. But the Lord Jesus will rule with the Church and those resurrected from earlier times and He will rule in justice.

A passage very familiar to us from Scriptures we often hear at Christmas is Isaiah 9:6-7. It says, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given..." What we are not so familiar with, is what the rest of this passage speaks about. It says, "Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from this time forward, even forever."

The Berean Call has just reported that a man by name of Duke Amachree, in Brittain has been fired

from his job with Wandsworth Council. The reason? Gross misconduct. And what was this gross misconduct? He suggested to a client with an incurable disease not to give up hope but try putting her trust in God. The tribunal said that the Wandsworth Council had not discriminated against this employee who had an unblemished record for 18 years. The charge of gross misconduct was correct and they took the view that Duke had breached confidentiality by letting people know what was happening.

Injustice in courts is common around the world. Sometimes it seems incredible what is happening and it is happening at an increased rate. It is then hard for us to fathom a time period of 1000 years where justice will be perfect!

-PEACE: In the conditions in this time period there are several descriptions of those inner feelings we love to experience again and again. Let us begin with the sensation of peace. Peace, as I describe it is the absence of friction. Let us consider first at international peace. In Micah 4:1-5 and Isaiah 2:4 it says they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Weaponry is turned into farming tools. Here we have the picture of international peace. Never has the desire for international peace reached the extent of what we see today.

I remember hearing Yitzak Rabin, who was then the prime minister of Israel, when he made an agreement with Yasar Arafat and President Clinton say, "No more bloodshed, no more war" and then not long later he was shot. The desire and drive for peace in Israel is so intense today, that I can see how they will surrender great things if they can but see a glimmer of hope for peace. In this time period Rabin will be right, "No more bloodshed, no more war!" Violence will come to an end.

But this time period is not only a time of international peace, but personal peace as well. What would you give for a time when there were no

worries or concerns in your life, and there was no friction between people? Verse 4 says that in this time everyone will be sitting under his own vine and under his own fig tree. Grape juice, the favorite drink; and olive oil, such a treasured commodity in Israel will be something everyone possesses. And there will be nobody to threaten them. There is no fear and peace reigns. Do you know how we know this is all true? Verse 4 tells us, "For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." This year, on Jerusalem Day, in the midst of all Israel's difficulties, Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, after having quoted Psalm 51:18 said this in his speech, "We are blessed to be the generation that witnessed the redemption of Israel and its revival, and there is nothing and no one that will stand in the way of this resurrection. We will continue to develop our city, which has been united; and we will continue to tell the truth. If there is one thing I believe, it is that God would never lie. Thank you." And yes, mister prime minister, we believe that too. Micah 4:5 says we can believe what is written here because the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

The millennium, from start to finish, will be a time of such peace as has not been known since the day Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree.]]]

-JOY: Then it will be a time of joy. As a Scripture for this point I chose Isaiah 9:3 (read). In verse 6 we have a prophecy of Christ's birth, and then His rule in the millennium. Note in verse 7 that of the increase of His government and peace, which we have just looked at, there will be no end upon the throne of David. So verse 3 says, "You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy". Now let me make a brief note that the KJV has the word 'not' in the text, and so it says God has not increased the joy. This is a textual difficulty which I think is rendered rightly by the NKJV which says God has increased their joy. The immediately following words give evidence for this for they say, "They rejoice before you..."

But I chose this passage because there is some explanation of what is meant by this word translated 'joy'. As I see this word 'joy' it is a feeling, a sensation that exhilarates the soul. It feels good.

Isaiah 9:3 says the nation has been multiplied and the joy increased. What would we not give for an increase in joy? We do almost anything to experience joy. But our text gives us a picture of what this joy is like. It is like the joy which farmers experience in the time of harvest. Almost everybody here knows what the joy of harvest feels like. Maybe the grain yield is very high, or all the grain is in and it is OK that it is snowing outside. The harvest is in and safe, and the wet snow that is falling is no threat. And this good feeling may linger for days. How would you like an increase of that?

In our text it is further described as being like when people divide spoil. In war, when a nation was defeated, the conquerors divided the spoil. They got all kinds of things for free. They were theirs for the taking. It is like finding something very valuable and it is yours because you found it. It creates a wonderful feeling inside that sometimes permeates our being for a long time.

Now I want to show you what is incredible in our passage. It says, "They rejoice before You!" In the millennium people will come to rejoice before the LORD. It is like as if we got a greater joy out of going to church than out of harvesting or dividing the spoil! It is like going to Church and finding real fulfilling joy in coming before the Lord and listening to His voice. It is like having the same feeling in coming before the Lord that you get out of the harvest or dividing some spoil or finding some great treasure! None of us would ever miss church if that is what happened to us there.

The theme of joy occurs again and again in the time of the kingdom of God. But Isaiah says God

will increase the joy. And it will be a very great joy they will experience before the Lord. It will be the kind of joy experienced in harvest time or in the time of dividing spoil.

I wonder this morning, what would you give to have your joy multiplied? Now I have no doubt whatsoever that those who go to heaven and then later receive their resurrected bodies experience this joy over and over again. Here we are talking about those who live in their temporary bodies and their joy is increased! What will it be like for those who have resurrected bodies?

So, this is a time of incredible peace, and a time of increased joy. And still, there is another great feeling related phenomena that will be experienced there. It is that of comfort.

-COMFORT: I hope in some way I can communicate a little of what comfort means. Go with me to Isaiah 12 (read chapter). Now I do not have time to prove that all the passages I am using are passages that refer to this time of the kingdom of God, or the millennium. But in 12:1 it says, "And in that day..." That day refers, as I see it, to the millennium. And God says Israel, and thus the redeemed of this time period who enter it alive will say, "O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, your anger is turned away, and You comfort me."

Now the Hebrew word here is 'racham'. When it is used in certain forms such as the one in which it is used in this passage; it means 'to comfort'. Here we have another word that speaks of the feelings or sensations, and a feeling we greatly treasure. It is when we lose something precious to us, that we need comfort. When some loss occurs in tragedy, we need comfort. This word 'racham' is often used in Scripture for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. There are some of you here who have experienced the loss of a loved one, someone who was very close to you and though you have been comforted many times, at other times you may still feel the loss very deeply.

I want you to go to a passage of Scripture with me (Genesis 24:67). Sarah, Abraham's wife had passed away and that was a very big loss to Isaac. He could not get over the loss of his mother, though I understand, by this time 3 years may already have passed. You see, when you experience a loss, it may take much time before you are comforted. There may be losses for which we will never find full comfort on this side of heaven.

Now I want you to notice what happens to Isaac. Eliazar has found, with the Lord's help, a wife for Isaac. And when Rebekkah became Isaac's wife, he was finally comforted regarding the loss of his mother. You see, something had replaced what he had lost in his mother, and he was comforted.

You may be here this morning and you have experienced the loss of a loved one and it is much longer than three years, and still you have not been comforted. At times something triggers your memory and you cry again. I want to, with all confidence assure you, that if you live faithfully as a Christian, when you get to glory, there you will be comforted. There is coming a time when every last sensation of loss will be replaced so that you will never feel the loss again. The Lord will comfort you and you will finally, no longer carry that dreadful sense of loss. You will have been comforted.

I want you to turn with me to a very helpful passage (2 Cor. 1:3-4). There is comfort here on earth, but I propose to you that the comfort experienced by the living in the millennium will be comfort multiplied. And the comfort that will come after sin is finally and fully done away, will be comfort completed forever! Those of you who are feeling the pain of loss because I have reminded you of your loss, I want to comfort you with that comfort that is not yet comfort complete, and here it is: When you stand before your Maker, when He has cleansed you completely, He will comfort you. And when He is all done, nothing painful will be left. You say, "Could

this be true with my loss? Maybe you do not know the nature of my loss." Listen, if you have lost someone or something very close, I do not know the nature of your loss. I have never lost anybody very close. But I do not need to know the nature of your loss to tell you what I just told you. I can tell you this by the nature of our great God and I know He will satisfy every loss completely. When He has comforted, the comfort will be complete and we will see more of that later.

CONCL: So, we bring our studies of this time period to a close by finishing with a consideration of how glorious it will be. Here is a thousand year stretch of eternity which is given to us in Scripture in great detail. What we see in this time period was the hope that carried the OT believer through life's trials. Here is what Abraham and Moses and David, and all other OT saints longed for.

When the Church was born, a new hope arose for these believers. They would be raptured before this time. That is the hope of the pre-trib, mid-trib and post-trib believer. It is that hope that is called the 'blessed hope' of Titus 2:13. But here in the millennium, the hope of the OT believer will be realized.