

# The Lamp of Prophecy

or

Signs of the Times

by

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### WILL THERE BE A MILLENNIUM BEFORE CHRIST COMES?

**"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords"** (I Timothy 6:13-15).

I WANT TO try to let Scripture answer this question:

"Will that glorious period be brought about through the efforts of the church of GOD before the second advent of our Lord JESUS CHRIST or will it take place after our blessed Lord appears?" We have read of the appearing of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, "**which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.**" What does this really mean? In what time or times will He thus be manifested as King of kings and Lord of lords?

Here we find two schools of thought among Christian teachers - those who believe that the Lord JESUS CHRIST must come first before the Millennium can possibly be ushered in are generally called, for convenience sake, "pre-millennialists," while those who believe that the Kingdom must first come and then that the Lord will come at the close of it to wind up the affairs of this world are generally called "post-millennialists."

Let me make myself clear as to one thing:

I do not question for a moment the sincerity of brethren who hold views differing from me in regard to the prophetic future, but I quite recognize the fact that there are many of my post-millennial brethren and my a-millennial brethren who doubtless love the Lord JESUS CHRIST far more intensely than I do and who would be willing to endure far more for His name's sake than I have ever endured. I do not question their piety; I do not question their love for CHRIST; I

do not question their orthodoxy.

Some few years ago it was my great privilege to sit at the feet of Dr. A. T. Robertson as he gave a course of lectures on the Epistle to the Colossians directly from his Greek Testament in Calvary Baptist Church in New York City.

He was conducting a ministerial conference, and it was my privilege in that conference to give a series of addresses from my English Bible (because I am not scholar enough to give them from a Greek Testament and most folk are not scholars enough to follow me if I were) and I was rather gratified to see the great man sitting down before me every day. I recognized Dr. Robertson as undoubtedly the outstanding Greek scholar of America, if not of the world, and yet that dear, kindly man of GOD sat and listened to a poor insignificant person like myself, and he was just as gracious and just as attentive as anyone could possibly be.

I went through the two letters to the Thessalonians, and at the close of the last address, Dr. Robertson came to me and said, "Well, this is the first time that I have ever listened to anyone go carefully through those Epistles from the pre-millennial standpoint, and I must say that my judgment has gone with you through the entire series. I have never definitely declared myself as a pre-millennialist, but I think if I had my life to live over again I would be much more positive concerning this for I have never in all my ministry known a pre-millennialist who was a Modernist." I thought that was an interesting testimony. There is that about the pre-millennial position that necessitates a belief in the full inspiration of this Book. Everything is based upon that. And that is one reason why, though I can respect the views of brethren who look at it from another standpoint, I think it is important to reiterate from time to time the pre-millennial teaching of Holy Scripture.

I remember a great many years ago, I do not think I could have been more than twenty-two years of age, it was my privilege to participate in a Bible conference in San Francisco.

On that occasion I listened to one of the biggest preachers I have ever known in my life, Dr. A. J. Frost. I may have been so small then that he looked bigger, but I think he must have weighed three hundred pounds. In those days, everyone rode bicycles, and he had to have one made to order to hold his immense body. He was one of the greatest Bible teachers I have ever listened to, and I recall his giving an address on eight reasons in proof of the pre-millennial coming of CHRIST. Unfortunately I did not have the good habit of taking notes and so did not get all of his points clearly in mind, but the general idea has never left me and the impression made has been with me all the years since. While I cannot follow exactly the order he did, I want to take this up in a similar way.

There are clear, definite, logical reasons for believing that the Lord JESUS CHRIST must come before the Millennium dawns. First, there can be no Millennium until our Lord JESUS CHRIST comes again because there can be no Millennium until Satan is bound. I wish you would think that through, because if I am wrong there, I shall be wrong in the next point. There can be no Millennium until our Lord JESUS CHRIST comes again because there can be no Millennium until Satan is bound. Is that not clear from Scripture? Is it not evident from the study of the twentieth chapter of Revelation that if we are to believe in a Millennium at all we have to believe that that Millennium cannot begin until Satan is bound? Very well, that is the major premise. But Satan is to be bound at the second coming of CHRIST; consequently there can be no Millennium

until CHRIST comes. Is that not perfectly clear?

Turn back to the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, and you have that glorious vision of the descending CHRIST. He is pictured there as a mighty warrior riding on a white horse clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of GOD. He is riding forth conquering and to conquer, and it is as He descends that the mighty angel lays hold of Satan and binds him for one thousand years, and that is the beginning of the thousand years of blessing.

Then again, there can be no Millennium until the second coming of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, because there can be no Millennium until the Antichrist is destroyed.

Think that through. You cannot conceive of CHRIST and Antichrist reigning at the same time, can you? And if the time is coming when CHRIST is going to reign supreme over all the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, manifestly Antichrist, the false Messiah, must be destroyed first. But now the Antichrist is to be destroyed at the second coming of CHRIST, consequently there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes.

I do not care who you may understand the Antichrist to be. It does not alter the argument in the least. You may think that the Antichrist refers to some false religious system like, for instance, Mohammedanism, or if you are a Catholic, you may think that the Antichrist is Protestantism. If you are a Protestant, you may return the compliment and think of the Antichrist as the papacy. You may think it refers to some specific individual. Some of us believe the Antichrist will be a personality, an individual who will yet arise in this world and will be recognized and owned by many as the CHRIST of GOD. But it does not make any difference as to who he may be.

The point I want to bring out is that there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes because there can be no Millennium until the Antichrist is destroyed, and Antichrist is to be destroyed at the second coming of CHRIST. The Scripture that deals most fully with this is the second chapter of Second Thessalonians.

In that chapter you have the description of the lawless one who "**exalteth himself above all that is called God, . . . whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming**" (II Thessalonians 2:4, 8) and the coming refers to that second coming of CHRIST. So it is at the second coming that Antichrist is destroyed. And then we have this wonderful, glorious kingdom age.

There can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes because there can be no Millennium until Gentile power and authority is abolished; Gentile power and authority will be abolished by the second coming of CHRIST.

I could refer to many Scriptures to demonstrate the proof of that, but take the second chapter of Daniel, where you have that great metallic and mud image representing the times of the Gentiles. There you come on down to the last condition of Gentile dominion, ten kingdoms bound together acting under one head, like the ten toes on a man's two feet, representing the last Gentile powers. And then you read this: "**Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, . . . and filled the whole earth**" (Daniel 2:34, 35).

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST applies that falling stone to Himself; He says, "**The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder**" (Luke 20:17-18).

When He was here on earth, Israel stumbled over the stumbling-stone; they have been broken to pieces and scattered all over the world, but when He comes again Gentile power and authority will be arrayed against Him, but He shall smite them all in judgment.

Therefore, there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes.

Then again, in the fourth place, we believe there can be no Millennium until the coming again of our Lord JESUS CHRIST because there can be no Millennium until Israel will be restored to the Lord and to their own land, but Israel will be restored to the Lord at the second coming of CHRIST. Consequently there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes.

We turn to the Book of Zechariah for proof of this, and there see the people of Israel at last brought to repentance, broken down before GOD, confessing their sins and failures. That is the trouble with them now. They are going back to the Land of Palestine, but the greatest trouble with Israel is they are constantly justifying themselves instead of owning their sin before GOD.

I have talked with hundreds of GOD's earthly people and have expressed my sincere sympathy with them in their suffering, but the moment I try to bring before them the suggestion that this is because of their rejection of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, they are on the defensive.

They do not want to confess that; they seek some other reason for their sorrow; but some day the nation as a whole will be brought to repentance. And when will that be? When they look upon Him Whom they have pierced. And when will they look upon Him Whom they have pierced?

In the first chapter of Revelation we read:

**"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him"** (verse 7).

It is when our Lord JESUS CHRIST comes again, when His feet will stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, when He presents Himself the second time to His people, that **"they shall look upon me whom they have pierced"** (Zechariah 12:10) and cry, **"What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends"** (Zechariah 13:6).

Then they break and confess their sins and **"mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn"** (Zechariah 12:10).

Then the Spirit from on high will be poured out on them and their hearts will be turned back to GOD, a nation will be born in a day, there will be a regenerated Israel, and they will be gathered back to the land of their fathers, and GOD will fulfil all the promises made to them through the

prophets throughout the centuries.

Let me remind you of this- there can be no millennium until CHRIST comes because there can be no Millennium until the first resurrection, that is, the resurrection of the saints who have died all down through the centuries. These saints who have died are to have part in that great kingdom; they are to reign with CHRIST when He reigns. Manifestly they must be raised from the dead before that can be true, but the resurrection of the saints will take place at the second coming of CHRIST, consequently there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes.

Whether one thinks of Old Testament saints or of the saints of the church age or whether he thinks of those who shall die under the Antichrist in the days of the Great Tribulation yet to come, they will have part in one of the cohorts of the first resurrection.

That term includes all the people of GOD who will be raised prior to the reign of CHRIST.

Our Lord's own resurrection was the beginning of the first resurrection. Turn to the twentieth chapter of Revelation, and see how two very distinct cohorts are brought before us there.

In the fourth verse, we read: "**And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them** [or sitters upon them] **and judgment was given unto them.**" There you have the saints of the Old Testament times and the present church age who will be raised when "**the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord**" (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

**"I saw thrones, and sitters upon them."**

But look at the next company: "**And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**" (Revelation 20:4). That is the last cohort.

What about the wicked dead?

**"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."**

There can be no Millennium then until after the first resurrection.

The saints who have died must be raised because they are to have part with CHRIST in that glorious kingdom era, and they will be in their physical, resurrected bodies.

Further, there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes because there can be no Millennium until the Rapture, the change of the living believers of this dispensation, for we are promised a

part in that glorious kingdom. We are not to be down here for CHRIST to reign over us, but yonder with Him in the heavenly Jerusalem to reign with Him over a regenerated world.

**"This I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God";** so we must have our glorified bodies, our changed bodies in order to participate in that wonderful reign of our blessed Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Daniel says that **"the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom"** (Daniel 7:22 ) and we will be fitted for our part in that kingdom by the Rapture, that is, those who live until the coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

The Apostle tells us in the fifteenth chapter I Corinthians, **"Behold, I show you a mystery [I tell you a secret]; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"** (vss. 51-53).

That glorious event will take place when? At the coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Then there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes because there can be no Millennium until that event has already taken place.

And then, linked very intimately with that, there can be no Millennium until after the judgment seat of CHRIST. But the judgment seat of CHRIST takes place at the second coming of the Lord; therefore there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes because the judgment seat of CHRIST is the place where the works of saints are judged. Saints are going to stand before the Lord JESUS CHRIST in order that He may give them their rewards and tell each just what part he will have with Him in that coming kingdom.

Therefore, you cannot have the Millennium until the judgment seat of CHRIST. He will say to one, **"You were faithful in a few things, have thou authority over ten cities:"** and to another, **"Have thou authority over five cities."** And you must stand there before His judgment seat and have your works appraised. You are saved by grace, but you are awarded according to your works. Think of one who has lived in a great city and perhaps never was heard of beyond a few blocks from his home, but this one lived devotedly for the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Imagine that one standing in the presence of the Lord at His judgment seat, and Him saying: "I took note of you when you lived down there in Chicago. You were faithful in a few things; you were real, true, devoted, and so I tell you what I am going to do. I am going to reign in righteousness for one thousand years, and I am going to make you mayor of Chicago. You go back to that city where you were unknown but where you lived for Me, and take charge of it."

The Lord is going to fit His servants, each one, for the place He has for them, but you see, there can be no Millennium until this inquiry into the works of the believers has gone on, until the Lord has brought everything to light and has apportioned everyone's reward.

And then let me go a little further.

There can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes because there can be no Millennium until the judgment of the living nations.

The nations as such are not going to be destroyed when JESUS comes to reign. There will be millions of earth's inhabitants living in ignorance of His Word when He will begin His thousand-year reign, and the people composing these nations are to enter into the Kingdom, but before they do there must take place the judgment of the living nations. But that is to take place at the second coming of CHRIST.

Consequently there can be no Millennium until CHRIST comes.

Turn to Matthew 25:

**"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations"** (verses 31, 32).

Do not make any mistake about this. This is not the judgment of the wicked dead; this is the judgment that takes place when CHRIST comes; and in accordance with the decisions of this judgment the nations will have their place in His coming glorious kingdom.

**"Before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."**

And you remember how He will reward the one and deal in judgment with the other according to their treatment of His brethren. That must take place before His kingdom is fully established here on the earth and in accordance with that the nations that have His blessing will go into the Kingdom and have their place in it and enjoy the benefits of His righteous reign.

While Scripture tells us of a glorious era when righteousness will prevail over all the earth before the close of time, it also tells us that when our Lord comes back again He will find a very different condition of affairs. There is not one Scripture that intimates that our Lord will return to find a converted world, that He will find nations subject to His holy will, but the very contrary.

What did the Lord JESUS Himself say?

**"As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"** (Matthew 24:37-39).

If you admit that there must be an age of righteousness before this world comes to an end, you must also admit that that cannot be until after CHRIST comes, because when He does come He will not find the earth in any such condition. How was the world in the days of Noah? Corruption and violence filled the earth. And what do we see all about us today? Corruption and

violence everywhere. The people of GOD are still just a little flock. After nineteen centuries of Gospel preaching, the conversion of the world seems as far off as ever. We have seen in our own day whole nations who once professed to receive the Gospel trampling the truth of GOD beneath their feet. Europe has become a foreign mission field to which we send missionaries in order to carry the Gospel to a people sitting in darkness, "**to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**" (II Corinthians 4:6).

We thank GOD for every victory of the Cross in pagan lands. We thank GOD for the thousands and millions who have been brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, but we are not going to shut our eyes to facts. There are more heathen in the world today than when JESUS said to His disciples, "**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost**" (Matthew 28:19).

His servants have carried the message; millions have believed it; but the converts to Christianity have not kept even with the birth rate. So if we had to bring in the Millennium with our best efforts, we might well become discouraged. But we realize that conditions are exactly as our Lord predicted they would be.

He says: "**And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh**" (Luke 21:28).

And so instead of becoming discouraged, we are encouraged. JESUS will soon be here.

"**The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely**" (Revelation 22:17).

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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