

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGES

A Comprehensive View of God's Great Plan from
Eternity to Eternity Illustrated with Chart

By

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE THOUSAND YEARS' REIGN OF CHRIST ON EARTH

From Genesis to Malachi we find a note of praise, as lawgiver and historian, psalmist and prophet constantly refer to the Kingdom Age, when the Messiah shall reign.

From Matthew to Revelation we find first John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, then all His apostles taking up the theme, filling in many details concerning His kingdom of peace and righteousness. The "*millennium*," we call it, though this word is not found in the Bible. Derived from two Latin words meaning "*a thousand*" and "*year*," this term has been applied by man to the thousand years' reign of Christ on earth. Six times in the twentieth chapter of Revelation we are told that the Kingdom Age will last a thousand years. And we believe the record to be the inspired, infallible, inerrant, eternal Word of God!

In our study today we want to see what the Holy Spirit tells us in the written Word regarding the blessedness of this age of righteousness and peace. Pages and pages of our Bible are given over to this theme; we can do little more than cull a few selected passages for our study today.

To David and to his house God promised a "**kingdom**" and a "**throne**" to be "**established for ever**" (II Samuel 7:8-17; Psalm 89:3, 4, 20-37; and many other passages). That is why the Jews were looking for a King as their Messiah, the "**Prince of the House of David**." They blindly overlooked the prophecies concerning His first coming into the world as a suffering Saviour, because there are so many more prophecies of His earthly reign.

In fulfillment of God's covenant with David, Jesus, the Son of David, was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, the king. The Angel Gabriel had announced His coming to Mary in these wonderful words:

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33).

Then Jesus came. He presented Himself to Israel as her King, but Israel rejected Him. Jew and Gentile crucified **“the King of the Jews”** and the Saviour of the world. With Calvary’s cross the Age of Grace began, this Church Age in which we are living. God is now calling out the bride of Christ, composed of Jew and Gentile — **“to take out . . . a people for his name”** (Acts 15:14).

We are not left in doubt as to what will follow this age; for the Lord speaks plainly through the pen of the inspired writer, saying

“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:16-18).

This golden age, long heralded by the inspired writers, from Genesis to Revelation, will surely come to pass upon the earth; for **“all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen”** (II Corinthians 1:20). And, even as God has said in His Word, it will be a time of glory — glory for the Lord Jesus, glory for His church, glory for Israel, glory for certain Gentile nations, and glory for the physical creation.

Glory For Christ

Nearly two thousand years ago the first part of the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6 was fulfilled: **“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”**

When He returns to rule, the latter part of that prophecy will be fulfilled: **“And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever”** (Isaiah 9:6,7).

When He came to suffer and die, He laid aside His eternal glory — not His deity; when He comes again, it will be with great power and great glory. In His resurrection body He will return, and His kingdom will be literal and real.

As the omnipresent God, He is with us now. **“Lo, I am with you always,”** He tells us; and this is very true. In the person of His Holy Spirit He never leaves us or forsakes us. But as a Man, the Lord Jesus is not on the earth today. **“He came unto his own, and his own received him not”** (John 1:11). The world thrust Him out at the point of a spear. And now He sits at the Father’s right hand, interceding for us, waiting until His enemies shall be made His footstool (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:13). But that day for which He is waiting will come — it seems to be even at our doors. The heavens will open, and the crucified, risen, glorified Lord Jesus will come back to earth. **“His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives”** (Zechariah 14:4).

From this and other Scriptures, we saw in our last study that His return will be personal, visible, and bodily.

The Father's Word to the Son will be fulfilled in that day: **"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion"** (Psalm 2:6). And again. **"Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows"** (Hebrews 1:8, 9; Psalm 45:6, 7).

His sway will be limitless; His dominion, more autocratic than that of any earthly king. **"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth"** (Psalm 72:8).

By His Word He will rule over every government, over every nation. It is optional now whether or not we obey the Word of God, because we are living in the day of grace; but then He will rule in holiness and righteousness and justice. Happy will be that man who obeys the King when Jesus comes; but if he disobeys, he will be **"cut off"** as were Ananias and Sapphira when they let Satan fill their hearts **"to lie to the Holy Ghost"** (Acts 5:1-11).

When God says He will set His King upon His **"holy hill of Zion,"** He means that Jerusalem will be the metropolis of the world, the capital city of the King. Many portions of the prophetic Scriptures declare that His Word shall go forth from Jerusalem, even unto the ends of the earth.

It will be glory for Christ, when He comes again!

Glory For The Church

When Jesus comes back to reign, it will be glory for the church.

In our former studies we have sought to make very clear the Bible teaching concerning God's purpose for this age, the translation of the church, the seventieth week of Daniel, and the return of Christ with the church when He comes to establish His millennial kingdom. We shall not go into these events here, except to remind ourselves of a few of the many reassuring passages that guarantee this glorious future for the bride of Christ.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall" we "also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

We shall **"ever be with the Lord"** (I Thessalonians 4:17).

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together . . . The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:16-18)

We are made **"kings and priests,"** or *"a kingdom of priests unto God"* (Revelation 1:6).

We shall have our resurrection bodies, our spiritual bodies, with no physical limitations. Distance and space will mean nothing in that day; for as the risen Lord, **“the firstfruits of them that slept,”** could pass through closed doors and ascend up into heaven, so we too **“shall be like him”**; our bodies shall be **“like unto his glorious body”** (I John 3:2; Philippians 3:21).

It will be glory for the church in that day to be back on a renovated earth, restored to its Edenic state. We shall come back to the scene where our battles with Satan have been fought, where we have struggled and been misunderstood. The Lord Jesus is preparing us now for that time when we shall know why we were led by sorrow’s ways. He was the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And He knows the end from the beginning; He knows that one day we, too, shall understand. **“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him”** (II Timothy 2:12).

Christ, the King, will exercise authority in that day; and with Him will be associated the twelve apostles. In Matthew 19:28 we read the Lord’s own promise to them: **“In the generation when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”**

Isaiah 1:26 will then be fulfilled — a promise to His chosen people: **“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.”**

A judge’s office in ancient Israel was not judicial; it was administrative. Christ will be King indeed; but, as members of His bride and joint-heirs with Him, these twelve apostles will judge their kinsmen according to the flesh, then reestablished in their own land of promise.

A hint regarding the way in which the Gentile world will be governed is suggested in the Lord’s parable of the ten pounds, recorded in Luke 19:11-26. To one faithful servant the King shall say, **“Because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities”**; to another, **“Be thou over five cities.”**

Now, my friend, heaven is one city; and it is very plain that this **“authority”** will be exercised on earth, in a literal kingdom, over which will be a literal King, the Son of David, seated on David’s throne. Thus the church will rule **“and reign with him a thousand years”** (Revelation 20:6) — the twelve apostles judging the twelve tribes of Israel; other members of His body exercising **“authority”** over the Gentile nations — all in the name of the King of kings and Lords of lords.

It will be glory for the church when Jesus comes!

Glory For Israel

It will be glory for Israel when Jesus returns to rule.

God’s unconditional covenant with Abraham will then be fulfilled. The hopes and dreams of all the prophets will be realized, when the King comes back to reign!

Regathered to her own land, trusting in the finished work of her Messiah on Calvary, this nation which, in spite of bitter persecution, has been miraculously preserved by God throughout the ages, will enjoy the chiefest place among the peoples of the earth. A fountain of cleansing will be opened for Israel “**a fountain filled with blood,**” the blood of Christ her Passover Lamb. And God’s chosen people will know then that their redemption is all of grace.

In Chapter Five of this series on “*God’s Plan of the Ages*” we studied about “The Two Covenants,” outlining Israel’s future in the millennial kingdom.

Will you, my friend, turn to that study and read again this description based upon the eternal Word of God concerning the future of the nation of Israel? We shall merely restate here the five thoughts developed in this former study:

- (1) Israel will be regathered in the land of Palestine;
- (2) Israel will be reconciled to God by the acceptance of Christ as her Messiah;
- (3) Israel will become a “**praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame**”;
- (4) Israel will occupy the religious leadership of the world;
- (5) Jerusalem will be a city of righteousness and the metropolis of the world.

It will be glory for Israel when Jesus comes! Never again will she be plucked from her own land. And she will know of a surety that the God of Abraham is the Lord Jesus Christ, her Messiah and King.

Glory For Certain Gentile Nations

“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: 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. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:31-34, 39. Read this entire passage carefully).

This prophecy of our Lord concerns the judgment of the Gentile nations when He returns in glory; and the reward for receiving His “**brethren**” and their message is entrance into “**the kingdom,**” the millennial kingdom of Christ.

Now the Lord’s “**brethren,**” according to the flesh, are Jews; and those referred to here are the hundred and forty-four thousand Israelites who will preach “**the gospel of the kingdom**” during the seventieth week of Daniel.

We have repeatedly referred to these messengers and their message in our former studies.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

All the Gentile nations will have the opportunity to receive or to reject the message. Some nations will receive it; and to them the King will say when He comes in glory: “**Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**”

Other nations will reject the message of the coming King and His kingdom; and to them the returning Lord will say: “**Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels**” (Matthew 25:41). Their punishment they will have brought upon themselves, because they rejected the “gospel of the kingdom” and the coming King.

God alone knows which nations will enter into that glorious kingdom; but it would seem to us that those nations which have “**trodden under foot the Son of God, and . . . counted the blood of the covenant . . . an unholy thing**” would be among those who, with “**strong delusion,**” shall “**believe a lie**” — Satan’s lie as presented to the world in the person of the Antichrist. (See Hebrews 10:29; II Thessalonians 2:11).

Possibly, the heathen nations which for many generations have been, in large measure, in gross darkness will be among those which will receive the message of “**the gospel of the kingdom**” in that day. God alone knows. But it behooves any nation to trust in the living God.

Blessed will be those nations which enter into the millennial kingdom. In that day Christ “**shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more**” (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3).

The world today is torn with strife and envy and hatred and rumors of wars. There will be no lasting peace until Jesus, the Prince of Peace, comes back to take the reins of government. But He is coming again. And how the world needs the King of glory!

Glory For The Physical Creation

One of the most beautiful pictures in all the Word of God is that of a renovated earth, restored to its Edenic state.

The Garden of Eden was beautiful — before the curse came, as a result of sin. There were no thorns before Adam and Eve disobeyed God, but the ground was cursed for man’s sake; and ever since Adam lost dominion over the earth, “**thorns and thistles**” has the ground brought forth (Genesis 3:17, 18).

It was more than nineteen hundred years ago that the Lord Jesus went to Calvary, wearing a crown of thorns, in His death bearing the very symbol of the curse. And as the Lord of all the earth, He purchased redemption for the earth, as well as for fallen man — on Calvary. That is why He is called “**the last Adam**” (I Corinthians 15:45); He has brought back the estate which “**the first Adam**” lost — and more.

There were no thorns in Eden; and Adam had dominion over a very beautiful earth. When Jesus comes, the curse that came when Adam fell will be removed. Then **“instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off”** (Isaiah 55:13).

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad . . . and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. . . . In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 35:1, 2, 6).

Animal life was not ferocious in the Garden of Eden; and when Jesus comes, even the animal kingdom shall be at peace.

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:6-9).

“We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22). But when Jesus comes, **“the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God”** (Romans 8:21).

It will be a time of glory for the physical creation when Jesus comes again!

The New Jerusalem

Somewhere in God’s great universe there is **“a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”** (Hebrews 11:10). It is the New Jerusalem; and when Jesus comes to earth again, that city will come down and shine, as a great chandelier, over the earth (Revelation 21:10). The saved nations will walk in the light of it (Revelation 21:24). Later it will ascend again, while the earth is being purified by fire, and while the new heaven and the new earth are being brought forth.

In our next study, in which we shall consider the events to follow the millennium, we shall refer to this subject in some detail.

- We shall see why Satan is to be **“loosed out of his prison”** for “a little season” (Revelation 20:3, 7).
- We shall see why the **“fire”** comes **“down from God out of heaven,”** purifying the earth for all eternity.

It is during this **“season”** that the New Jerusalem will ascend again. Just here, however, let us note these two descendings of the heavenly city:

(1) In Revelation 21:1-8 we have a picture of the eternal state; and in point of time concerning things to come, this last book of the Bible really closes here — though, of course, all that follows is the inspired Word of God;

(2) from Revelation 21:9 to the end of the book we have a kind of postscript, wherein the Holy Spirit reverts to the millennial reign of Christ, taking us back, as it were, to show us the New Jerusalem in its relation to the kingdom of Christ on earth during the thousand years.

In other words, by the time we read as far as Revelation 21:8, we have gotten the outline picture of the events which will come to pass, not only during the millennium, but from the close of Christ's earthly reign even unto the eternal state as well. Then with Revelation 21:9 the Holy Spirit takes us back to the tribulation period and "**the seven vials full of the seven last plagues,**" filling in many details concerning the New Jerusalem in its relation to the millennial earth.

In this connection, let us note also that the New Jerusalem is a heavenly city; whereas the earthly Jerusalem in Palestine will be the capital city of the world during the reign of Christ on earth.

Again, "**the gates**" of the New Jerusalem "**shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there**" (Revelation 21:25; 22:25); but in the earthly city His servants "**shall serve him day and night**" (Revelation 7:15). They "**shall serve him day and night in his temple**" — the Jewish temple in the earthly Jerusalem; but John wrote of the New Jerusalem, saying, "**I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it**" (Revelation 21:22).

The New Jerusalem, "**having the glory of God**" (Revelation 21:11), will be the home only of those whose names are written "**in the Lamb's book of life**" (Revelation 21:27).

My brother, "**Is your name written there?**" Accept Jesus as your Saviour, "**the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29). Then you will reign with Him when He comes in glory. Then you may "**enter in through the gates into the city**" where "**there shall be no more curse,**" where there shall be "**joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**"

~ end of chapter 14 ~

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