

A Brief Outline of Things to Come

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Chapter Nine -

THE MILLENNIUM - C. I. Scofield

WE ARE TO LOOK now at the teachings of the Scriptures concerning the Millennium. The word signifies a period of one thousand years. The term itself means no more than that, and it is derived from the measure of time given to this period in Revelation 20:1-6.

In this passage we find a period of one thousand years mentioned four times. This period coincides in prophetic order with the time of blessedness on this earth under the personal reign of MESSIAH, long ago foretold by the Old Testament prophets.

It is to be regretted, however, that this word *millennium* ever supplanted the old Biblical word kingdom. Many misconceptions in people's minds might, perhaps, never have been there if we had always referred to this period as the kingdom period, the time when the kingdom of Heaven will have its manifestation.

No doubt when most of us pray, "**Thy kingdom come,**" we really have in mind the wish that more people may be converted. Some perhaps mean the bringing in of that time of which we have been told (but not by Scripture) when all the people in the world will be members of the Church. Scripture never speaks of a time in this age when the whole world would be a converted world. Only in the kingdom age will every intelligence be subject to GOD, and that is what our LORD had in mind when He told us to pray, "**Thy kingdom come.**" He referred to the kingdom foretold by the prophets, the time when the earth "**shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.**"

Remember that the Scriptures always distinguish between the Church and the kingdom. Let me rapidly give some distinctions which you yourself may verify by recourse to your Bible.

In the first place, we have in Scripture the expression "**the kingdom of GOD,**" and we may say that this expression gives its own definition. It includes whatever GOD rules over, the intelligences in any world or in any sphere who are willingly subject to the rule of GOD. If there are intelligent beings in the most distant star who submit themselves to the rule and will of GOD, there the kingdom of GOD is established; there the kingdom of GOD exists.

Secondly, "**the kingdom of heaven**" is mentioned in Scripture. That is a more limited term; it refers to this period which we call the Millennium. The "**kingdom of God**" is a great inclusive expression that takes in the whole sphere which GOD rules. The "**kingdom of heaven**" is the establishment, through CHRIST, of GOD's righteous reign on the earth. It is always limited to the earth; that is its sphere, even though glorified saints of this age and past ages are concerned

with it.

Thirdly, we have the Church. The Church is composed of those who are saved, mostly Gentiles, between the first and second advent of the LORD JESUS CHRIST until that day 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**" (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

Between those two points, the first Christian and the descent of the LORD in the air for the saints of this dispensation, the Church is being formed.

The apostle Paul said, you remember, that the Church was a mystery that was hidden from the Old Testament writers. To him was given the unfolding of that mystery, and he tells us that the Church is the Body of CHRIST and the Bride of CHRIST. The saints who compose it are kings and priests, and to them is reserved the unique distinction of reigning with CHRIST "**over the earth.**"

"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign over the earth" (Revelation 5:9, 10).

Notice that there is a limitation of the reigning of the saints. We shall not reign in Heaven; we shall not reign in that wide sphere which is called the kingdom of GOD, but we shall reign over the earth.

These distinctions are fundamental to any clear understanding of the Scriptures. The kingdom of GOD is the great inclusive term. The kingdom of Heaven has its full manifestation in the thousand-year reign of CHRIST over the earth. The Church is a distinct body of those who were saved until the descent of the LORD into the air just before the Tribulation; these will be associated with Him in the rule when the kingdom of Heaven is set up.

The kingdom of Heaven is in the kingdom of GOD, but the two terms are not synonymous. For example, the State of Texas is in the United States, but it is not the United States. Because it is in the United States it has much in common with the United States. It has the same president; the same constitution is the supreme law; the same language is spoken; but it would be mere confusion to speak of the State of Texas and the United States interchangeably. The kingdom of Scotland is in Great Britain, but it is not Great Britain. The kingdom of Heaven is in the kingdom of GOD.

Therefore, we may expect to find in the Scriptures many things which are characteristic of the kingdom of GOD but which are not necessarily applicable to the kingdom of Heaven.

The Church is in the kingdom of GOD, but the Church is not the kingdom of GOD, neither is the Church the kingdom of Heaven, although for a time the Church is to be in the kingdom of Heaven. The Church is in the kingdom of Heaven, which is in the kingdom of GOD, just as the royal family of Great Britain, for instance, may be said to be in the kingdom of Great Britain.

The Church is a body of royal priests called out during this dispensation to be co-rulers with the King Over the millennial earth during a period of one thousand years and to be forever with Him after that period is ended.

THE TIME OF THE MILLENNIUM

First of all, when does the Millennium begin? It begins immediately after the Great Tribulation has run its course.

Immediately after the Great Tribulation the LORD JESUS returns in power and glory to this earth and sets up the millennial kingdom. Let us read one or two passages Upon that point.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the Sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29, 30).

When? **"Immediately after the tribulation of those days."**

You perceive the distinction between this coming of the LORD in power and great glory to the earth after the period called the Great Tribulation and that other coming of the LORD into the air to take away His own before the Tribulation. That coming which precedes the Tribulation is visible only to those who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. It will be known to the dwellers on the earth only by the absence of those who have been taken. The other coming will be **"as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west."** It will be witnessed by all tongues and nations, and for them it will be an awful event. That is clearly established by the words of the LORD Himself.

THE ORDER OF EVENTS

In the second place, let us trace from Scripture the order of events in the establishment of this millennial kingdom.

Here I shall confine myself almost entirely to the inspired words, and I am sure that I need make no apology for reading upon such a subject as this exclusively from Scripture. It would be mere impertinence for me or any other man to ask his fellow mortals to hear his own theories about the future. We do not know what may occur one hour hence except for what GOD has revealed. To Scripture, then, we turn to learn how the Millennium will be introduced.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no one knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in Blood: and his name is called the Word of God" (Revelation 19:11-13).

Who is this personage?

In the first chapter of the Gospel of John we have this name, "**the Word**," applied to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the eternal Son of GOD. "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**" A little later we read: "**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.**"

Where is JESUS now? He is in Heaven at the right hand of the FATHER. In this passage we see prophetically, through the vision of the apocalyptic seer, the moment when Heaven is opened; and JESUS CHRIST, "**the Word**," issues forth, not now to become the babe of Bethlehem, but the man of Calvary, armed as for war, "**his vesture dipped in Blood.**"

Next the prophets describe the arrival of the LORD JESUS with the armies of Heaven upon the earth[/b]" (Revelation 19:14). This is the time when the seventieth week of Daniel, the Great Tribulation, ends. The host of the Beast and False Prophet will be gathered against the Jewish remnant in Jerusalem.

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears. . . Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about" (Joel 3:9-11).

"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle" (Zechariah 14:2).

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army" (Revelation 19:19).

Just at this crisis the LORD appears in glory and delivers the beleaguered Jewish saints.

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came" (Daniel 7 :21, 22).

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. . . And the Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:3, 4, 9).

"And the beast was taken [slain], and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image" (Revelation 19:20).

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:1, 2).

Now keep the connection. In the vision of John on the Isle of Patmos we have seen Heaven opened and the LORD descending with His mighty ones to the earth. He comes at a time of crisis on the earth, when the saints who have turned to Him during the Tribulation are at their utmost

extremity, and He delivers them. He wins the great final victory.

The next act in the mighty drama is the final regathering of dispersed Israel. A remnant has been in the land through the Tribulation, but now the nation is to be brought back. Observe how this follows the coming of the King:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth"
(Jeremiah 23:5).

This is not a question of the reigning of GOD in Heaven. His throne is in the heavens, and it has never been shaken and never can be; but here we have the promise that David's great Son will be One who will reign and execute judgment and justice on the earth. Did He do anything of that kind when He came before? Did He reign in prosperity? It is said that He was crucified through weakness and that He had **"not where to lay his head."** Even the fowls of the air and the foxes of the earth were better off than He. Was there any fulfillment of this promise then? Do you not see that the fulfillment of this prediction requires the return of David's Son to this earth?

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

In Matthew 25:31-34 we have the next event in order:

"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."

The group on His right hand forms the Gentile nucleus of the population of the millennial earth. Those upon His left hand go away into eternal punishment. The basis of judgment is the treatment that they have accorded His "brethren," the believing Jewish remnant, during the Tribulation just ended.

I am aware that the judgment of Matthew 25, the judgment that our LORD declares to be the judgment of the nations, has been confounded in the minds of many with the judgment of the Great White Throne, as recorded in Revelation 20. But surely no one needs to be confused.

Note, first, the difference in time of the two judgments.

The judgment of the living nations takes place when CHRIST comes in glory. The judgment of the Great White Throne takes place after a thousand years of His presence on the earth.

Note also that in the judgment of the Great White Throne only "the dead" are raised and stand before GOD. In the judgment of Matthew 25 there is no resurrection at all. It is simply a judgment of the nations.

It should ever be borne, in mind that these prophecies deal with the nations of Christendom, to whom the Gospel has gone.

What follows? **"In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely"** (Jeremiah 23:6).

Did that happen when the Lord was here before? On the contrary, we know that almost immediately after His final rejection and crucifixion the Roman armies came up to Jerusalem, destroyed the city, together with nearly half of the inhabitants, and carried the remainder into captivity. Nothing in all the calamitous history of this wonderful city was so terrible as the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. But read Jeremiah 23:7, 8:

"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land."

Is not that explicit enough? Has that ever been fulfilled? A remnant of the Jews are to be in the land during the Great Tribulation, and they will turn to the LORD JESUS as their MESSIAH. He will come back, first of all, for their deliverance and then for the judgment of the Gentiles according to their treatment of Israel.

It is such a wonderful regathering!

"They shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt."

That was a wonderful deliverance. An old shepherd, an eighty-year-old Jewish man, brought millions of slaves out from under the power of the mightiest monarch of those times without a soldier or a spear, with just a shepherd's staff. The waters of the Red Sea were divided, and Israel passed through and into the wilderness dry-shod. Then forty years later the waters of the Jordan were parted, and the Israelites passed into their own land dry-shod. I repeat that these were wonderful deliverances; yet the coming deliverance of Israel will be so much greater and so much more marvelous that the wonders of the first exodus and deliverance will be forgotten.

In **"the wilderness of the people"** JESUS meets them, and they receive Him as the CHRIST, that is, the MESSIAH.

That introduces the Millennium.

Millions of souls now living have never heard the Gospel. To them, or to those who may at that time be unevangelized, Israel becomes a missionary nation.

"And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing . . . Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the

Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:13, 22, 23).

At last there will be a converted world; but it is in the kingdom of Heaven, not in the period of the Church.

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

What will be the form of government and the order of society during the Millennium?

The government will be a theocracy. GOD Himself will rule over the earth in the person of JESUS CHRIST, the Son of David.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5).

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 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 forever" (Luke 1:30-33).

Where will be the seat of that government? Let us read from Isaiah 2. **"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem"** (v. 1). (The word was not concerning Washington, London, Paris, Vienna, or Berlin, but concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Let us take it for granted that the Spirit of GOD knew how to dictate His messages.)

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Jerusalem is to be the seat of the government.

Israel will have the first place among nations during the Millennium. At the present time the nations are a headless body - there is no chief nation. If we pointed out one nation as the head, our claim would instantly be contested. Today the whole sphere of the Gentile world is divided, localized, with no nation at the head; and there never will be any nation at the head again until Israel is the head. Proof of that is found in the writings

of the prophets.

Concerning Israel GOD said:

"And I will restore thy Judges as at first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isaiah 1:26).

To the apostles He said:

"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" (Matthew 19:28).

The office of judge in Israel was not a judicial office, but an administrative office.

Concerning the manner of governing during the Millennium, we gather a hint from Luke 19. We read that a certain nobleman goes into a far country to receive a kingdom. After a long time the nobleman, having received the kingdom, returns and reckons with his servants. To one who had received one pound and had gained ten pounds, the king said, **"Well, thou faithful servant . . . have thou authority over ten cities."** Do you understand? Where is this authority to be exercised? Will it be in Heaven? Are there many cities in Heaven? No, Heaven is one city.

This could not be any place except on the earth.

In Hebrews we find the distinct statement that **"unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world [or age] to come,"** but unto us. We have, in short, this thought: The administration of the kingly authority of CHRIST over the earth during the Millennium is through restoration of the administrative office of judge over Israel and through the personal service of saints in their glorified bodies over the Gentiles; the heavens and the earth, so to speak, come together during that period of one thousand years.

THE CONDITION OF THE EARTH

What will be the condition of the earth during that period?

When the prophets paint the picture of the millennial earth, they dip their pens in the rainbow. Their descriptions are incomparably beautiful.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding . . . and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:1-4).

On the one hand it will be a condition of tranquillity, blessedness, and peace; on the other hand it

is instant destruction of the insubordinate, or rebellious. We are living in a time when GOD is forbearing with wicked men; it is the time of His patience. The Millennium is the **"kingdom and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ,"** and whatever wickedness shows itself is instantly judged.

Even the nature of the animal kingdom is to be changed.

"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."

There was no ferocity among the beasts in the Garden of Eden. Ferocity has come in with the Fall; all creation fell with man (Romans 8). We learn also in Romans 8 that even nature will be delivered from its bondage, or corruption, so as to share the glorious liberty of the children of GOD.

". . . the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Creation delivered! Creation set free! All the forces about us, the mighty energies of nature, are to be put to the service of man.

What will be the manner of worship on the millennial earth? Ezekiel describes to us not only the distribution of the Holy Land to the tribes of Israel but also the erection of the magnificent millennial temple. There are to be offerings, memorial sacrifices, not expiatory sacrifices.

Zechariah adds another significant truth with regard to the Gentile nations:

"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 sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' 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 11:7-9).

Is that not beautiful?

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:10).

That is just one of the prophetic pictures of the condition of things during the Millennium. Of this age of blessedness the prophets give picture after picture. Let us turn to Romans 8:19-21.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

Pilgrimages from all the nations of the earth will wend their way annually to that most magnificent city, as it will then be the center of the millennial earth's splendor, civilization, and worship. Every eye will be directed there to the worship of the King, the Lord of hosts.

What is to be the end of all this? Alas, dear friend, one shrinks from opening that page; but it must be. Will it always be true that man, tried in every way, is a failure? It has been true, has it not? Man, put in the Garden of Eden, in a paradise where every wish was anticipated, disobeyed the only command that GOD gave him; and his life there closed in judgment; he was expelled. That man's descendants became so wicked that it was mercy to blot them out by the great judgment of the Flood.

Again there was the dispersion caused by the confusion of tongues at Babel. Was it not judgment that sent them forth as wanderers over the whole earth? Then the LORD finally sent His Son - perfect loveliness - into the world. He was spiked to a Cross, the deathbed for the Son of GOD. The picture which the prophets give to the close of this present age repeats the same story of apostasy.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Revelation 20:7, 8).

No sooner is Satan loosed than he finds a vast multitude ready, as now, to obey him and to believe his lie rather than GOD's truth. After a thousand years of the manifestation of perfect righteousness, perfect peace, and perfect blessing on the earth, there is still latent in the human heart that pride which is ready to become insubordinate to so gentle a ruler as JESUS.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Revelation 20:9).

That is the last of the earth judgments.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Revelation 20:10, 11).

This is not the judgment of the living nations, which takes place when the LORD comes. That is to have taken place on earth; this judgment will be in space.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Revelation 20:12,14).

Then what?

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Revelation 21:1).

The long, strange, tragic drama of earth has ended.

Eternity has begun.

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