

The Righteous Government of the Millennium

An Earthly Reality

The role that God intended for Adam (man) from beginning was to carry out the stewardship of God over the earth. God visibly walked with Adam, fellowshiping with Him in the cool of the evening prior to Adam's fall. Under the fall, the governments of sinful men have been nothing more than a failed stewardship. The appearing of the Lord God to men through history is actually a rare thing. He chose to reveal Himself to Abraham through whom He established for Himself a people to be His "servant" on the earth. They were ordained and set apart by God to be His witnesses to the nations; a unique people.

It is through the fathers, law and prophets that the Lord spoke yet even with their unique and privileged role, the nation failed to live up to the calling of God for them through their long history of sin and rebellion, the ultimate display of which was shown in the nation's rejection of their true King. But God had always intended something better as the author of Hebrews states:

"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"? And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM. "

Heb 1:1-6 (NASB)

This can only be understood within the context of the humanity of God. As God, Christ always enjoyed glory and worship as Himself (John 17:5), but it is only within the context of "becoming flesh" (John 1:14) that the words of the author of Hebrews along with all of the prophecies concerning the Messiah can be realized. As a man, the righteous Son of God has inherited "all things"; the promised rule over the nations (Ps 2), the seat of glory at the Father's right hand along with a more excellent name in His "Sonship"; glory that will command the worship of the angels. Remember Isaiah chapter 1? The very image of a Man seated on the throne of God above all authority - even the angels is what caused them to rebel. Jesus is that image shown to angels.

The only way that man's intended stewardship of this current created earth can be realized is through the visible, physical government of the Son of Man. The only way that the promises given to Israel, which we have looked at, can be fulfilled is through the visible, physical reign of Jesus, their Messiah. The only way that the promises of God to His Son can be realized is through the visible, physical reign of the Son as King of the Jews and the nations. None of these facts can be either reduced to a mere "spiritual" rule in the hearts of men or simply projected forth to His eternal rule over the new heavens and new earth.

Session 24 -The Millennium

The Supreme King

When all things are made new, prepared for eternity, there will be no need for rule and authority to be expressed through enforcement because only the righteous ones of the “first resurrection” will be dwelling there. The authority of the Godhead will be fully understood and His righteous standard will not be simply obeyed by the inhabitants of the eternal kingdom, it will be a part of their identity. But before that, it is an absolutely necessary component of the glorification of the Son that He be given His inheritance on the earth as King of Kings.

All of the sinful kings of the earth will gather to prevent this day as we have seen in Revelation 19:17-20 (see also Rev14:19-20; Ps 2:1-9; Is 66:15-16; Joel 3:12-21; Mat 24, 25; 2Th 1:7-9; etc.) But God’s King will be installed to receive His inheritance; “the nations”. Although Jesus was born as King (Lk 1:32-33), he was rejected as King (Mk 15:12-13; Lk 19:14) and then killed as King (Matt 27:37). But this didn’t change His kingship, nor was carried out contrary to the sovereignty of God (Acts 2:23). And when He comes again to this earth it will be as King! Every prophecy concerning the kingdom intended for Israel and its effects on the nations are linked to His kingship (Is 2:1-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 16:5; 24:23; 32:2; 40:1-11; 42:3-4; 52:7-15; 55:4; Dan 2:44; 7:27; Mic 4:1-8; 5:2-5; Zech 9:9; 14:16-17).

His Government

The extent of His rule will be the whole earth as the only Man who is worthy and able:

"But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession."
Ps 2:6-8 (NASB)

"You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."
Dan 2:34,35 (NASB)

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed."
Dan 7:13,14 (NASB)

The justice of His rule is another important aspect to the kingdom. This will be true for the poor and meek (Is 11:35) and also for those who refuse to serve the Lord (Ps 2:10-12). We have already looked

Session 24 -The Millennium

at the judgements at the Lord's return, just prior to His millennial rule that will result in the wicked being cast into hell to await the Great White Throne judgement. We also looked at redeemed humanity who survive the tribulation and are welcomed into the kingdom. However they will yet remain in their natural bodies that will still have sin as a part of the natural flesh.

This is permitted by the Lord for the express purpose of Jesus being able to demonstrate His ability as King of kings to be able to rule over sin EFFECTIVELY. So as generations are born to the redeemed, they will grow up under and be required to submit to the authority of Christ. For those who openly rebel against Christ and His government, justice will be swift and result in death (Isa 66:20, 24; Zech 14:16-19). More subtle rebellious attitudes will also be dealt with.

His government will bring to the whole earth the revelation of His:

Omniscience (Isa 66:15-18)

Omnipotence (Ps 46:1-5; Isa 41:10, 17-18)

Righteousness (Ps 45: 4,7; 98:2; Isa 1:27; 10:22; 28:17; 60:21; 63:1; Dan 9:24; Mal 4:2)

Mercy (89:2-3; Isa 54:7-10; 63:7-19; Hos 2:23)

Goodness (Isa 52:7; Jer 33:9-15; Zech 9:17)

Holiness (Isa 4:3-4; 6:1-3; Ezek 36:20-23; 45:1-5; Joel 3:17; Zech 2:12; Rev 15:4)

Truth (Isa 25:1; 61:8; Mic 7:20)

The Millennial Temple and Worship

Perhaps one of the most debated topics of the millennium is the temple and a sacrificial system that is part of the worship of the Lord. Ezekiel 40:1-46:24 describes with incredible precision this temple and the priesthood and worship associated with it. What Ezekiel describes cannot be confused with previous temples as they are described (1 Ki 6:2-7:51; 2 Chr 3:3-4:22; Ezra 6:3-4). There has never been a literal fulfillment of this temple as described by Ezekiel in history and since Revelation 21 states that the New Jerusalem of the new heavens and earth will have no temple, we cannot conclude that this temple is a description of an eternal temple. So how are to understand this temple?

Just as the proper rendering of the mediated rule of God through Adam on the earth will be realized in the 2nd Adam, the full extent of righteousness through faith will be realized in Israel, and likewise the nations, when the feasts and associated sacrifices that are known as "the oracles of God" are practiced with full belief and understanding of the One that they pointed to; Jesus. The obvious confusion lies in the fact that the New Covenant in Jesus's blood is the final "once for all sacrifice" (Heb 7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:10). The most important thing to remember in light of this is that the author of Hebrews also points out that "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (10:4). The whole sacrificial system was intended to point to what Jesus would do (Isa 53:10-12).

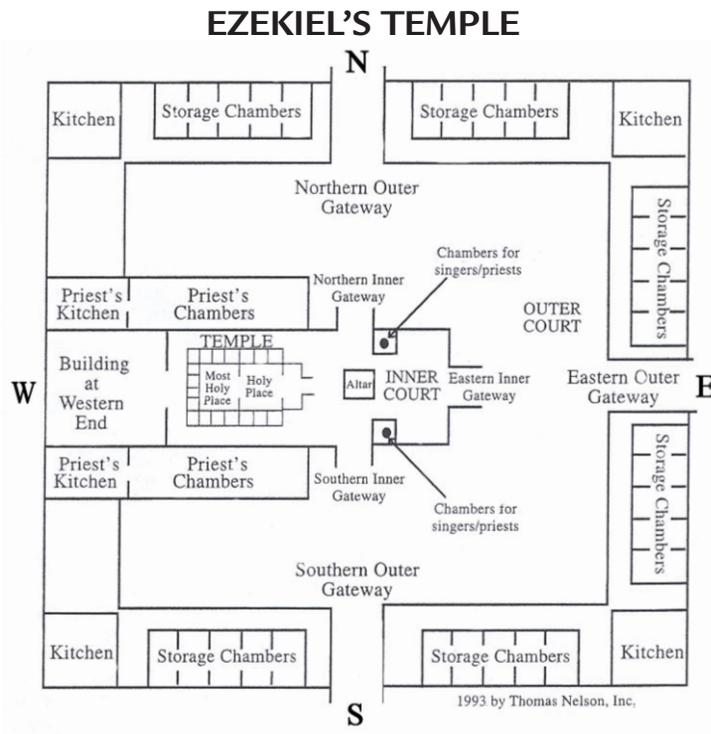
In his article on the subject, "Christ's atonement and animal sacrifices in Israel (Grace Theological Journal 6:2 (1985): 201-217), Dr John Witcomb summarizes the purpose of the millennial temple in this way:

" The future function of the millennial temple (Ezekiel 40-48) has long been problematic for

Session 24 -The Millennium

dispensationalists in view of the finished work of Christ. Light is shed on this problem by noting the original theocratic purpose of OT sacrifices. This purpose was functionally distinct from that of the redemptive work of Christ. Millennial sacrifices will not simply memorialize Christ's redemption but will primarily function in restoring theocratic harmony. The differences between the Old Covenant stipulations and those of Ezekiel 40-48 can be accounted for in terms of this solution."

Isaiah talks about the sacrificial system and includes the Sabbath (66:20-23). So do the prophets Jeremiah (33:18) and Zechariah (14:16-21). The Lord rested from the act of Creation on the seventh day and then He used this template when establishing the seventh day as a day of rest for man to acknowledge God. The millennium will be a sabbath rest from the trials of this fallen age.



MILLENNIAL SACRIFICES	
Levitical	Millennial*
1. Burnt - LV 1:3-17	1. Burnt - Ezek 40:39
2. Grain - LV 2:1-16	2. Grain - Ezek 45:15
3. Peace - LV 3:1-17	3. Peace - Ezek 40:15
4. Sin - LV 4:1-35	4. Sin - Ezek 40:39
5. Guilt- LV 5:1-6:7	5. Guilt - Ezek 40:39
6. Drink - LV 23:13,37	6. Drink - Ezek 45:17
* Isa 56:7; 66:20-23; Jer33:18 further confirm the burnt and grain offerings.	
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MILLENNIAL FEASTS	
Levitical	Millennial
1. N/A	1. New Year Ezek 45:18-20
2. Passover - Lv 23:5	2. Passover - Ezek 45:21-24
3. Unleavened Bread - Lv 23:6-8	3. Unleavened Bread - Ezek 45:21-24
4. Pentecost - LV 23:9-22	4. N/A
5. Trumpets - Lv 23:23-25	5. N/A
6. Atonement - Lv 23:26-32	6. N/A
7. Booths - Lv 23:33-44	6. Booths - Ezek 45:25
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Society, Economics and the Physical aspects of the Millennium

Universal Peace

One of the main identities of man's self-sufficient pride is peace amongst men and nations without the acknowledgement of God and His Christ. The cries of the leaders of the earth during the judgments of Revelation will be "peace and safety" when there is no peace. But man cannot even tame himself as Jeremiah says "The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9 KJV). But under the reign of the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6) the social conditions will be under total control as Isaiah says:

"And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war. Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the LORD."

Is 2:4,5 (NASB)

Session 24 -The Millennium

In the 72 Psalms, Solomon speaking of the future glorious kingdom of God on the earth also speaks of peace (v7).

Abundant Joy

Our world is full of sorrow and when there are occasions for joy we appreciate them as joy helps us to cope with sorrow, but in the kingdom of Christ the vast majority of what is experienced will be joy as Isaiah says:

"Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation. And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted."
Is 12:3-4 (NASB)

"To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified....Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs."
Is 61:3, 7 (NASB)

The Curse Lifted and General Prosperity on the Earth

Paul tells us in Romans that creation itself awaits deliverance from corruption:

"For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now."
Rom 8:19-22 (NASB)

The current creation will undergo a great restoration or "refreshing" as Peter put when the Lord brings His glory to visibly, physically inhabit the earth. Isaiah paints a vivid picture of some of the details of this refreshing:

"And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den."
Is 11:6-8 (NASB)

The thorn and thistle will be no more (Is 55:13) and there will be abundant rainfall (Isa 30:23; 35:7) which will turn desert places fertile (Is 35). Food and cattle will also be abundant (Isa 30:23-24). Because of the abundance of natural resources and perfect environmental conditions, a world - wide prosperity will be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Millennium (Jer 31:12; Ezek 34:25-27; Joel 2:21-27; Amos 9:13-14). Just compensation for labors will be experience by all (Isa 65:21-25; Jer 31:5).

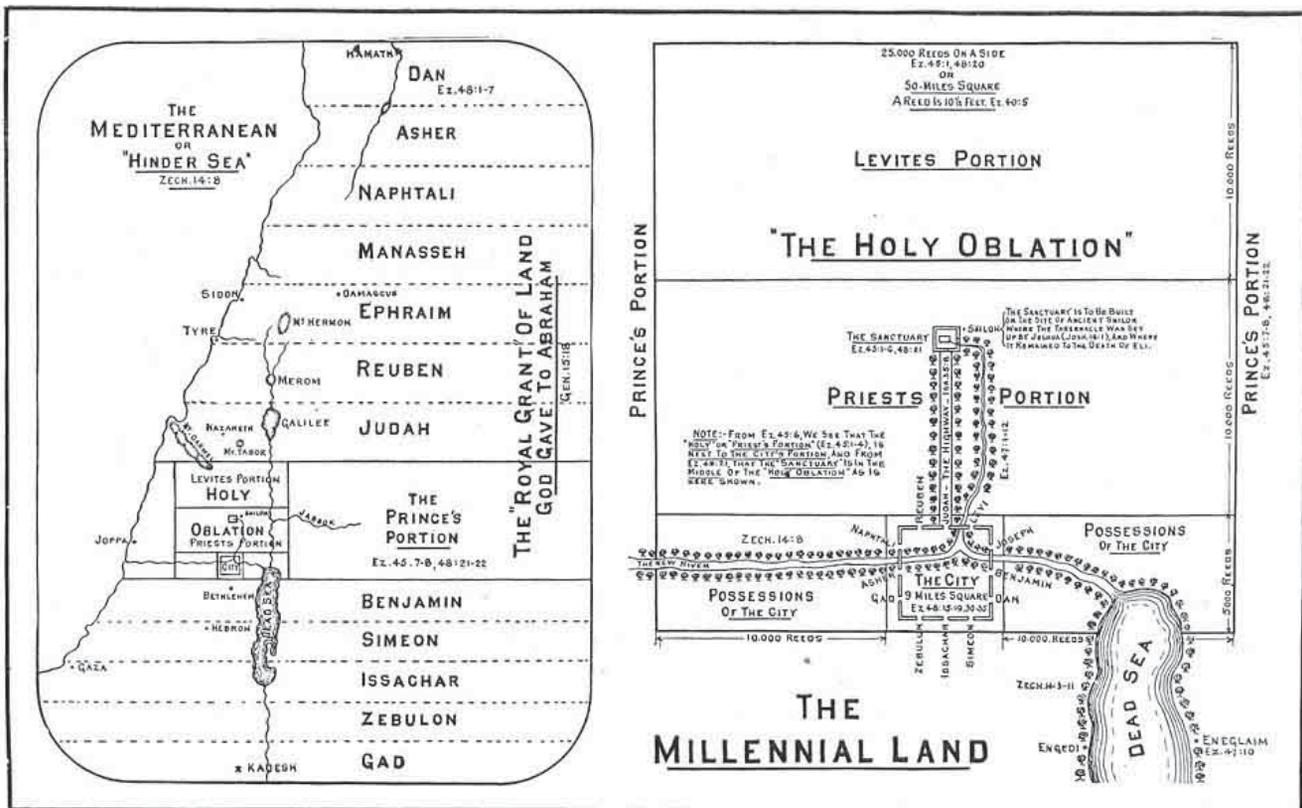
Healthy Life

Although Christ healed many during His ministry and extended those gifts as “signs” for Apostolic affirmation, the Bible seems to demonstrate that as the gospel spread and time in the early church went on the sign gifts began to diminish. Paul himself had afflictions that the Lord would not remove and even though the Lord does still heal through our prayer and His grace, it is not healing on demand performed by individuals who claim that our life as believers needs to be characterized by health, wealth and prosperity with gifts exercised on demand.

However under the umbrella of the Lords manifest glory filling the earth, health and healing will be experienced as sickness is scarce (Is 33:24, disabilities are healed (Is 29:18; 35:5-6). Even death at 100 years of age will be viewed as an infants death (Isa 65:20). Jews and Gentiles will be multiplied on the face of the earth (Jer 30:19-20 and Ezek 47:22).

The Future Borders of Israel

Along with the temple description, Ezekiel gives the most detailed account of the actual geography of Israel under the direct reign of Christ. In the described boundaries, Israel will actually dwell in fulfillment of what was promised to Abraham in Genesis 15: 18- 21. As stated before, the greatest expansion of the Israel’s territory was under David and yet it only made up a 13th of the size that will be realized in the millennium. The northern area will be divided into areas for Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manaseh, Ephraim, Reuben and Judah (Ezek 48:1-7). The southern division will be for the tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad (Ezek 48: 23-27). In the center will be the 34 mile by 34 mile (1,156 sq. mi.) area divided between the Levites (Ezek 45:5; 48: 13-14), the temple and priests (Ezek 45:4; 48:10-12) and the remaining fifth of the city (Ezek 45:6; 48:15-19).



Session 24 -The Millennium



“From the Nile to the Euphrates”
(Genesis 15:18)

