

CHAPTER 4

SO WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE REIGN OF KING MESSIAH?

Most of the information about this in the Bible comes in the writings of the Hebrew prophets and in the New Testament book of Revelation. According to these writings, the wicked will have to submit to His judgement (Isaiah 2; Revelation 6.15-16). The survivors of the tribulation period will be gathered before Him for judgement. The wicked will be cast off the earth into the place of punishment and the righteous will enter into the kingdom (Matthew 25.31-46).

The influence of the devil will be removed as he is bound —

‘for a thousand years, and he will cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal on him so that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were finished.’ (Revelation 20.3-4)

When Messiah returns, the saints will be with Him (in New Testament terms ‘saints’ simply means those who have saving faith in the Lord). In Zechariah 14.5, we read: *‘Thus the Lord my God will come and all the saints with you.’* Jude 14 says, *‘Behold the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgement on all.’* In Revelation 19, John sees Jesus coming as *‘KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS’*. *‘And the armies in heaven clothed in fine linen white and clean followed him.’* (Revelation 19.14)

Those clothed in fine linen white and clean have already been identified in the chapter as ‘saints’ (Revelation 19.8).

So those who have been redeemed through faith in Jesus in the present age will come back with the Lord in glorified bodies and reign with Him in the renewed earth of the Millennial period. The people who will take part in this glorious event are those who have been previously taken to be with the Lord, when He will gather those who have trusted Him, to Himself:

‘For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Messiah will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.’ (1 Thessalonians 4.16-17)

They will have eternal bodies (1 Corinthians 15.53-54) not subject to death or decay.

The redeemed of Israel will also be resurrected:

'At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.'

(Daniel 12.1-2)

Following the return of the Messiah and the judgement of the wicked, the Lord will reign over the earth bringing a period of universal peace and prosperity. The Bible says that at this time the nations will go up to hear the word of the Lord in Zion, streaming to the Lord's temple rebuilt on Mount Zion which will be lifted up above the other hills around Jerusalem.

'Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; he will teach us his ways, and we shall walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.'

(Isaiah 2.2-4)

They will seek the Lord and walk in His ways. This implies a total change from the present world situation in which the overwhelming majority scoff and reject God's word and walk in their own ways to destruction. Instead of war and hostility there will a peace settlement between all nations – including the currently intractable Middle East situation – and an end to all weapons production and military training. All this will happen because the word of the Lord will go out from Zion.

The Lord Himself will be there to judge between the nations and settle their disputes. Psalm 2.9, Isaiah 11.4 and Revelation 19.15 say that He will rule the nations with a 'rod of iron' – in other words they won't be able to vote him out

of power, or start making weapons of war or doing drugs or pornography or anything else that is evil in the eyes of the Lord. This will be a benevolent rule which will be for the welfare and provision of all the peoples on the earth.

The redeemed of Israel in the dispersion will be gathered to the land of Israel and dwell there in safety:

‘He will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.’ (Isaiah 11.12)

There will be peace and blessing on Israel and the neighbouring lands:

‘In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria ... In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria - a blessing in the midst of the land.’ (Isaiah 19.23-24)

The Lord will bring about change in the natural world as the desert blossoms (Isaiah 35) and the waters of the Dead Sea are made fresh and life supporting, teaming with fish (Ezekiel 47). Even the animal kingdom will change as —

‘The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them.’ (Isaiah 11.6)

There will be abundant provision for all:

‘But everyone shall sit under his fig tree and none shall make them afraid.’ (Micah 4.4)

Such miraculous changes can only come about through the power of God. No great man can accomplish these things, so the Messiah who will do them must be more than a great man. He must be Immanuel / God with us. Rabbi Kaplan, whom I quoted earlier in this article, said:

‘The main task of the Messiah was to bring the world back to God and to abolish all war, suffering and injustice from the world.’

He also says that the Messiah is a great man, not a divine figure:

‘Along with this he (Messiah) will bring eternal peace, love, prosperity, and moral perfection to the entire world. The Jewish Messiah is truly human in origin. He is born of ordinary human parents, and is of flesh and blood like all mortals.’ (‘The Real Messiah’ by Rabbi Kaplan).

If he is mortal, how can he bring in eternal peace? What great man can truly be expected to abolish all war, suffering and injustice from the world? If we look at the Messianic programme described in the Prophets, we can see that the task of bringing all this to pass is beyond the ability of any human. The one who causes all these things to happen must Himself be a divine person. In fact a number of prophecies in the Hebrew Bible do speak of the reigning King Messiah in these terms.

The prophecy of Zechariah 14 speaks of the time of the Messianic kingdom / Millennium and shows that the One who will reign is the Lord (Adonai / Yahweh). It says:

‘The Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which faces Jerusalem on the east. ... And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be – ‘The Lord is one and His name one.’ (Zechariah 14.3-9)

The word used for Lord here is the Hebrew term ‘Yahweh’ which is only used of God. So the Lord will stand with feet on the Mount of Olives (and the rest of a body!) and be King over all the earth.

A number of other prophets speak of the Lord being present in the midst of His people.

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jeremiah 23.5-6)

This King who brings His righteous rule to Israel and the earth is identified as the Lord with the divine name for God, Yahweh, being used about Him.

‘In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: ‘Do not fear Zion, let not your hands be weak, The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One will save, He will rejoice over you with gladness.’ (Zephaniah 3.16-17)

‘Cry out and shout O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst.’ (Isaiah 12.6)

During this reign of the Messiah all idols will be abolished (Isaiah 2.17) and there will only be one Lord and one way to worship Him (and one universal language!):

‘For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language that they all may call on the name of the Lord to serve Him with one accord.’

(Zephaniah 3.9)

As people praise and walk in the ways of the God who made them they will know peace and harmony and the -

‘earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.’

(Isaiah 11.9)

There will be a good one world government and one world faith in one God revealed through Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah.

During this time children will be born in the normal way to the survivors of the tribulation. Long life will be the norm but sin and death will still be a possibility (though not for those who have previously been resurrected and come back with the Lord in glorified bodies):

‘No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days, for the child shall die one hundred years old but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.’

(Isaiah 65.20)

The Book of Revelation puts together much of the information given in the Hebrew prophets about the last days of this age. It also gives some information not contained in the Hebrew Prophets about the Messianic kingdom. It tells us that Satan will be bound and unable to deceive the nations during the 1000 years when the Lord Jesus is ruling the nations. Therefore the ability to sin will be very limited.

But at the end of the 1000 year period:

‘Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven

and devoured them. The devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.’ (Revelation 20.7-10)

There will be those who have been born in the normal way at this time, but in their hearts they are rebelling against the reign of the Messiah. They will join Satan in his final rebellion against the LORD at the end of this period. This futile rebellion will end in complete defeat for Satan and all who join with him.

This will be the end of the world as this earth is burned up and God creates a new heaven and new earth in which there will be righteousness and to which Satan and sinners will have no access. This will lead to the eternal state for believers and unbelievers alike – with only two possible destinies – heaven and hell.

Following the Millennial reign of Messiah on earth, God will create new heavens and a new earth:

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord, “so shall your descendants and your name remain.” (Isaiah 66.22)

New Testament parallel:

‘Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. ... And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them and be their God.”‘ (Revelation 21.1-4) (extracts)

Now is the day of salvation. We need to accept Yeshua the Messiah as Saviour now so that we will have a part to play in His glorious coming Kingdom.

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