

The Divine Tapestry

PART 83

Jeremiah 31:31-40

“The New Covenant”

Presented by

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March 20, 2011

Mark Hitchcock writes, “Humanity has always dreamed of a utopia, a great society, a paradise on earth, a return to the Garden of Eden. But the Bible is clear that sinful humankind can never produce such a society on earth by its own strength and ingenuity. However, when the Lord Jesus returns to this earth in power and glory, God’s Word tells us that he will reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords for one thousand years.”¹

The question remains: How will he lead his people while their human/fallen nature remains? Jeremiah reveals how the future will be revolutionized by a New Covenant.

THREE THOUGHTS ON THE MILLENNIUM

- Jeremiah's message refocused on the Millennium:
 - The Millennium will be a time of **restoration** and **reward**.
 - The Millennium will be a time when the **promises** of God are **realized**.
 - The Millennium will be a final **test**.

TWO BATTLES IN THE BACKDROP

- **Punishment** (judgment) had brought **discouragement**.
(Answer 31:23-26)
- Men were **"living"** in their excuses. (Answer 31:27-30)

THE NEW COVENANT

- **“New Covenant”** - appears only here in the Old Testament.

- The promise is:
 - God’s **principles** will fill them from **within**.

 - God’s **passion** will transform their walk from **duty** to **devotion**.

 - God’s **presence** will flood them with **forgiveness**.

- These promises must be fulfilled by a **literal** reign of Christ, over **Israel**, in the **Millennium**.

TWO QUESTIONS

Q. Doesn't the New Testament say we are in the New Covenant?

A. Key blessings are experienced now, but the fulfillment is still **future** (Hebrews 8; 12:24; Romans 11:25-27; Ephesians 3:3-7).

Q. What should I do now?

A. Watch and wait with **wonder**.

“The Millennial Kingdom (Joy to the World or Satan’s Chain and the Saints’ Reign)

Humanity has always dreamed of a utopia, a great society, a paradise on earth, a return to the Garden of Eden. But the Bible is clear that sinful humankind can never produce such a society on earth by its own strength and ingenuity. However, when the Lord Jesus returns to this earth in power and glory, God’s Word tells us that he will reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords for one thousand years. Before Christ begins his reign, he will have Satan bound and cast into the bottomless pit so that Satan can no longer deceive the nations (Rev. 20:1-3). Then Christ will begin his reign of one thousand years. (Notice that the thousand years are referred to five times in Revelation 20:1-6).

The Key Passages on the Millennium While Revelation 20:1-6 is the only passage in the Bible that records the length of Christ’s reign on the earth, it is certainly not the only passage that refers to his kingdom. The Old Testament is literally filled with long passages on the millennial kingdom. Numerous students of Bible prophecy have noted that there is more prophetic material devoted to the subject of the Millennium than to any other single end-times topic. Therefore, it is critical that we gain at least a basic understanding of the millennial kingdom.

For starters, here is a list of ten of the most important Old Testament passages on the coming kingdom:

1. Isaiah 2:1-5
2. Isaiah 11:1-16
3. Isaiah 32:1-20
4. Isaiah 35:1-10
5. Isaiah 60:1-22
6. Jeremiah 31:1-40
7. Jeremiah 33:1-26
8. Ezekiel 37:14-28
9. Amos 9:11-15
10. Zechariah 14:6-21

The Nature or Conditions of the Millennium During the millennial reign of Christ, the earth will experience a return to conditions similar to those of the Garden of Eden. It will literally be heaven on earth as the Lord of heaven comes to live among his people.

The Bible has a lot more to say about the Millennium than most people realize. Here are ten of the most prominent conditions that will prevail on the earth during the reign of Christ.

PEACE All wars will cease as the world unifies under the reign of the true King (Isa. 2:4; 9:4-7; 11:6-9; Zech. 9:10).

JOY When Isaac Watts wrote the song “Joy to the World,” he did not write it to be a Christmas carol. Rather, he penned this song to announce the glorious second

coming of Christ to rule and reign on this earth. Think of some of the words of the song – ‘Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her king...No more let sins and sorrows grow...He rules the world with truth and grace!’ This is a song of the Millennium, when full joy will come to the world (Isa. 9:3-4; 12:3-6; 14:7-8; 25:8-9; 30:29; Jer. 30:18-19; Zeph. 3:14-17; Zech. 8:18-19; 10:6-7).

HOLINESS The word *holy* means to be ‘set apart’ to God for sacred purposes. The kingdom of Christ will be a holy kingdom. Everything in it will be set apart to God for his use. The holiness of the Lord will be manifest in his own person as well as in the citizens of his kingdom. The land, the city, the temple, and the subjects will all be holy unto the Lord (Isa. 4:3-4; 35:8; 52:1; Ezek. 43:7-12; 45:1; Zech. 8:3; 14:20-21).

GLORY The effulgent glory of God will be fully manifest in Christ’s kingdom (Isa. 35:2; 40:5; 60:1-9; Ezek. 43:1-5).

JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS When the millennial kingdom begins, only believers will inhabit it. However, these believers will still have human bodies with a fallen nature and will be capable of sin. Humanity’s sin will be judged by the administration of perfect justice at the hands of the Messiah (Isa. 9:7; 11:5; 32:16; 42:1-4; 65:21-23). He will rule with ‘a rod of iron,’ restraining and judging sin so that the prevailing atmosphere in the kingdom will be righteousness (Isa. 11:1-5; 60:21; Jer. 31:23; Ezek. 37:23-24; Zeph. 3:13).

FULL KNOWLEDGE The teaching ministry of the Lord and the indwelling Spirit will bring the subjects of the kingdom into a full knowledge of the Lord’s ways (Isa. 11:1-2, 9; 41:19-20; 54:13; Jer. 31:33-34; Hab. 2:14).

ABSENCE OF SICKNESS OR DEFORMITY Our politicians are constantly working on plans to provide better health care for the citizens of our nation. In the Lord’s government, the health plan will be out of this world. The King will be both ruler and healer. Christ will heal all diseases and deformities among his people (Isa. 29:18; 33:24; 35:5-6; 61:1-2). As a result of this health-care plan, people will have extended life spans, like those who lived before the Flood. A person who dies at the age of one hundred in this kingdom will have died very prematurely (Isa. 65:20).

UNIVERSAL WORSHIP OF GOD All the inhabitants of the earth will join their hearts and voices in praise and worship to God and his Son, Jesus Christ (Isa. 45:23; 52:7-10; 66:17-23; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:2; 14:16; Mal. 1:11; Rev. 5:9-14). This worship during the Millennium will be centered in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; 60:13; Ezek. 40-48; Joel 3:18; Hag. 2:7, 9). One important aspect of worship in the Millennium is that animal sacrifices will be reinstated in the millennial temple (Isa. 56:6-7; 60:7; Ezek. 43:18-27; 45:17-23; Zech. 14:16-21). These sacrifices will not be offered to take away sin. No animal sacrifice can ever take away sin (Heb. 10:1-2). Rather, these sacrifices will serve as a powerful memorial to the one sacrifice for sin forever, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They will serve, like the Lord’s Supper today, as a perpetual vivid reminder of the holiness of God, the awfulness of sin, and the horrible death the Savior died in our place.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY There won’t be any need for rescue missions, welfare programs, food stamps, or relief agencies in the kingdom. The world will flourish

under the hand of the King of heaven (Isa. 35:1-2, 7; 30:23-25; 62:8-9; 65:21-23; Jer. 31:5, 12; Ezek. 34:26; 36:29-30; Joel 2:21-27; Amos 9:13-14; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 8:11-12; 9:16-17).

THE PRESENCE OF GOD The greatest thing about the kingdom is that Christ himself will be there. God's presence will be fully recognized, and the Lord's people will experience fellowship unlike anything they have ever known with him (Ezek. 37:27-28; Zech. 2:10-13). The city of Jerusalem will be called Jehovah Shammah, which means "The Lord is There" (Ezek. 48:35)...

THE PURPOSES OF THE MILLENNIUM The Millennium will serve at least four important functions in the plan of God.

TO REWARD THE FAITHFUL During the millennial kingdom, Christ will award the saints positions of authority based on their degree of faithfulness in this life (Luke 19:16-19).

TO REDEEM CREATION When Adam and Even sinned in the Garden of Eden, God pronounced a series of five curses. He pronounced these five curses against the serpent, Satan, the woman, the man, and nature (Gen. 3:14-19). From that time until today, the earth has lived under this curse, as evidenced by 'thorns and thistles' and the hard work that is required by humans to scratch out food from the ground. The new crop of crabgrass in the lawn each spring is a small, yet vivid reminder of the curse.

Romans 8:19-22 poignantly describes the curse on nature:

All creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse. All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

One important function of the Millennium is to reverse God's curse on creation. In the kingdom, all animals will revert back to being plant eaters, as they were originally created (Gen. 1:30). The wolf and lamb will live together in harmony, and a child will be able to play next to a poisonous snake (Isa. 11:6-9). The earth will become amazingly productive and beautiful as even the deserts blossom with flowers (Isa. 35:1-7). The whole earth will be like a huge Garden of Eden.

TO RECOGNIZE THE PROMISES OF GOD God made three great unconditional, unilateral, eternal covenants that will find their fulfillment in the millennial kingdom with the regathered, restored nation of Israel. These three promises are known as the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the New Covenant.

The Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:18-21) is God's threefold promise to Abraham of descendants, land, and blessing:

1. Descendants – God promised that Abraham’s descendants would become a great nation (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:16; 15:5; 17:7; 22:17-18).
2. Land – God promised Abraham that his descendants would be given a piece of land to call their own forever. The land he promised includes the modern-day nation of Israel and part of modern-day Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq (Gen. 15:18-21). This unconditional promise has never been fulfilled in history but will be fulfilled in the Millennium when Christ gives the Jewish people the land God promised Abraham (Isa. 60:21; Ezek. 34:11-16).
3. Blessing – God also promised Abraham that through him and his descendants, all the world would be blessed. Certainly this prophecy has been partially fulfilled in the blessing that has come to all the world through Abraham’s greatest descendant, Jesus Christ. However, the final blessing from Abraham through Christ will come during the wonderful conditions that will exist on earth during the Millennium.

God’s promise to David (The Davidic covenant) also has three basis parts (2 Samuel 7:12-16):

1. House – this refers to David’s dynasty or the royal family;
2. Throne – this refers to David’s authority or right to rule; and
3. Kingdom – this refers to David’s realm or political kingdom; which is the nation of Israel.

God made an eternal, unconditional promise to David that someone from his house, or dynasty, would sit on his throne and rule over his kingdom forever. This promise will be fulfilled only when Jesus Christ, who is in the line of David, sits on David’s throne in Jerusalem, ruling over Israel in the coming kingdom and on into eternity (Ezek. 37:22-25; Amos 9:11-15; Zeph. 3:14-17; Luke 1:30-33, 69).

The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34), or God’s promise to Israel, also contains a threefold promise:

1. The forgiveness of sins – God will forgive Israel for her sins;
2. The indwelling Spirit – God will place his Spirit in the hearts of the people to personally instruct them in his way (Ezek. 36:24-26); and
3. A new heart – God will give his people a new, clean heart with his law inscribed upon it.

While believers today enjoy all of these benefits as a result of the new covenant in Christ’s blood (Matt. 26:28), the specific promises in Jeremiah 31:31-34 will find their ultimate fulfillment for Israel in the millennial kingdom, when the Jews are restored to the land with Christ as their King (notice that the context of the covenant, Jeremiah 31:35-40, is the future kingdom).

TO REAFFIRM THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF HUMANITY God’s Word clearly teaches that humanity is sinful both by nature and by practice. The millennial kingdom will be the final, conclusive proof of this fact. During the Millennium, Satan

will be bound for one thousand years, and the Lord Jesus himself will be personally present, ruling and reigning on the restored earth. Yet the Bible teaches that in spite of these perfect conditions, a host of people who are born and raised during this time will reject the Lord in their hearts. They will outwardly conform to avoid judgment, but inwardly they will harbor a rebellious heart against the King of kings.

When Satan is released for a brief time at the end of the Millennium, the Bible tells us that he will gather 'a mighty host, as numberless as sand along the shore' (Rev. 20:8) to try to destroy Christ, his city, and his people.

The Millennium will prove beyond any doubt that regardless of heredity, circumstances, or environment, humanity is incorrigibly sinful apart from God's saving grace. As Dr. Pentecost notes:

*The millennial age is designed by God to be the final test of fallen humanity under the most ideal circumstances, surrounded by every enablement to obey the rule of the King, from whom the outward sources of temptation have been removed, so that man may be found and proved to be a failure in even this last testing of fallen humanity.*¹²

¹Excerpt from *THE COMPLETE BOOK OF BIBLE PROPHECY*, Mark Hitchcock, p. 77, Copyright © 1999 by Mark Hitchcock

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