

## **The Earthly Kingdom of Jesus Christ, Part 1**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1335

We're coming to the close of our series on prophecy, and tonight we come in our sequence to the last great facet of what we have been covering in prophecy. We come to the earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ. Now as we begin our study, we're going to be looking in Revelation 19 and 20. But to begin with from the very remotest point of antiquity from the furthest historical point in time, men have longed for and men have asked about the possibility of a utopia. An age in which righteousness and peace should prevail in the world and which oppression and war should cease.

Poets have written about it. Folk singers still about it. Politicians promise it. Prophets forecast, and the world cries for it, but nobody ever brings it. But if you study the Bible, you again will find that the promise of God is that there will be such a utopia. And on the record of past performance we can believe what God says, if not, poets, folk singers, politicians and would be prophets.

God says there will be an earthly utopia. And there will be a king who will make it that and the king's name is Jesus. It will be the final phase of God's rule on earth. Now this particular age of blessedness is not just hinted at in the Bible, it is in many ways the theme. This particular kingdom, the thousand year earthly kingdom comes under various titles. For example, it is called in Matthew 19:28 the regeneration, and it certainly is the rebirth of the earth.

It is called in Acts 3:19 the times of refreshing. It is called in Acts 3:21 the times of restitution. It is called in Philippians 1:6 the day of Christ. It is called in Ephesians 1:10 the fullness of times. The concept of an earthly kingdom in which God rules directly on earth through the Messiah Christ comes in many different terms in the Bible. It's a repeated promise.

Now the coming earthly kingdom is just one phase of God's rule in the world. God has always mediated His rule on earth. One way or another, God always mediates His rule. When man fell in the very beginning, God still mediated His rule on earth. He mediated it through conscience. Originally, man was the king of the earth. Adam literally ruled in the earth. And then he fell and conscience became king and God ruled through man's conscience.

The conscience proved to be an inadequate thing. Every man going his own way and so God instituted human government and God mediated the rule through human government. God designed to control man through the use of government and He instituted capital punishment.

And then God mediated through the patriarchs and the men who really were the kings of the early years were Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph. Following them, God again mediated His rule and He mediated His rule through the judges and the prophets and the kings. And these were specially chosen people who maintained God's ethics and God's morality and God's truth in the world. Then God sent His king. But as the indication is His king was rejected.

Now we're living in an age when God mediates His rule through the believers. The Holy Spirit in the world and in the believer. God is now mediating in this world through us. We are salt and we are light. But there's coming a day when God is going to mediate His rule directly through that man whom He has chosen even Jesus Christ.

And so I say then that the kingdom, this would be the kingdom right here, is the last phase of God's rule on earth. God has always ruled through one of these media. But lastly, He will rule through the actuality of Christ on the earth. That is the final phase. And it's interesting that in the kingdom period all that was lost in the fall is restored. That's why it's called the times of restitution or the regeneration.

Christ then is coming to recapture paradise lost. When Jesus comes and the kingdom comes it is going to be paradise regained. Now in the biblical doctrine of the kingdom of God we have the Christian philosophy of history. If we understand...there's two kingdoms, you need to understand this. God's universal kingdom means He rules the universe. That's just a great big general term for God's rule in the universe.

But then there is the term, and these are terms used by Alba McLean which have been picked up by most Christian theology, teachers, and students. The second kingdom is His mediated kingdom or His mediatorial kingdom. In other words, He has a very general universal rule, but He has a direct rule which He mediates. That means there's a mediator. He has somebody rule in His place on earth, whether it was Adam or whether it was conscience or patriarchs or prophets or kings or judges or whether it is the Holy Spirit in the believer or whether it is Christ. That is His mediatorial work and it has to do with His kingdom on earth.

Now when we look at the mediatorial kingdom on earth, we see the Christian philosophy in history. History is just God's rule starting with Adam and going right through until Christ restores the place that God intended man to have as king of the earth. Now it all ends, we believe, in the kingdom of Christ on earth. There has to be a restitution for the fall. There has to be a recovery of the mess that the earth is in.

Now it's interesting and I want to give you this because I think we ought to be aware of it that there are many different views about this kingdom. And I don't stand here representing all of Christian

theology by any stretch of the imagination. A good portion of it, yes. Personally I believe those who are right, I represent. But I have to say there are other opinions and I want to just give you an idea what they are.

There are two opinions at least that believe that future kingdom is strictly spiritual. One group says when it talks about a kingdom it just means Christ's general rule in men's hearts or God's general rule in men's hearts. So anything about the kingdom could mean any kind of spiritual rule in anybody's heart. You couldn't narrow it down to a thousand years. You certainly couldn't necessarily narrow it down to an eschatological thing. That is something to happen at the end of time. It's just a general big sweeping thing.

There's a second group that say no the kingdom means the church. We are that earthly kingdom and that's it. It's just a spiritual church. Nothing literal, nothing physical on earth, not a real reign of Christ on earth, just as He reigns in the church. But secondly, there are two other groups that say it is not spiritual, it is physical. And this is the liberal end of theology that's even further out than the last group. There's some evangelical men in the last group. But this is the liberal group. They say that the kingdom promised in the Bible is purely social.

That it is a result of a social economic and kind of political evolution and it...we're just going...the world is going to get kind of a lot better and politically and economically we're going to bring in a sort of physical kingdom. And there's another group that says that the kingdom is nothing more than the nationalistic political rise of Israel.

So there are at least two groups that slap it in the spiritual dimension and two that throw totally into physical, we stand in the middle, not to compromise but we think that's scriptural. We say the kingdom is, yes, spiritual. It will be the reign of Jesus Christ in men's lives. Yes, physical. It will be the literal reign of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem on earth. And so we would then take that particular view that says it's spiritual and physical. It is the sovereign rule of God mediated on the earth through the actual person of Jesus Christ who will be here.

Now we said the Lord is going to take the church away, stay seven years and bring them back and set up His kingdom. And we actually believe that He will return. We say in our last few studies that He's going to come back and His feet are going to stand where? On the Mount of Olives, that's pretty clear to me.

There are all kinds of people who want to explain things away. I'd rather just take it at the fact that it's...God has communicated what He wanted us to know. Now when Jesus returns at His second coming, the church has been raptured, seven years later He comes back. It is then that He sets up this final phase of God's kingdom on earth. Paradise regained.

Now as we come to Revelation 19, we have some of the features outlined for us and we'll go as far as we can in understanding these various features tonight. And I won't even list them all. I have at least six point down here and I'm just going to give them to you one at a time because you'd only be confused if I was to rattle them all off.

The first thing, and I'm just going to give you characteristics of the kingdom and I hope when we're done you'll understand that it has to be earthly and it has to be spiritual as well, not just politically. The first point that we want to understand in Revelation 19 is the rule of the Son. Point one, the rule of the Son.

The first characteristic of the kingdom is that it is the rule of Jesus Christ on earth. The kingdom begins when the Son arrives. Now the time of the kingdom, you say when's it going to happen? I can tell you exactly when the kingdom is coming. You didn't know that, but I can. It's right in the Scripture. It's in Matthew 24:29. Just listen, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days."

Now when is the kingdom going to come? Immediately after the tribulation, "then the moon will not give us light, the stars will fall from heaven, then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, 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 and He shall send His angels with a great sound of the trumpet to gather together His elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other."

Now here it is that Christ gathers all the elect from one end of heaven to the other and He comes in glory. And it happens immediately after the tribulation. When does the rapture happen? Before the tribulation. So the time of the kingdom is at the second coming of Christ following the tribulation. Now just to give you a picture of what the king looks like when He arrives, let's go back to a familiar passage in Revelation 19:11.

Now Christ and the church have been in heaven for seven years during the tribulation, but all of sudden it's time for the kingdom. The tribulation is going to come to an end. And verse 11 says "I saw heaven open 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 like the flame of fire. On His head were many crowns and He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself. He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and His name is called the Word of God." And we know who it is, Jesus Christ.

"And the armies that were in heaven followed Him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white, and clean. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword that with it He should smite the nations and He shall rule them with a rod of iron. And He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture on His thigh a name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

Now that indicates He's coming to reign. Now you say who is this? Well, first of all His names show us who He is. He is called in verse 11 faithful one and true one. He is called in verse 13 the Word of God. He is called in verse 16 King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the coming king none other than Jesus.

But not only do His names show us who He is, so does His appearance. It says His eyes were as a flame of fire. And, of course, this speaks about His righteous judgment. It says upon His head, in verse 12, were many crowns. His right to rule. The king above kings. His vesture was dipped in blood, not so much His own blood as the blood of those that He has conquered. And not only His name and His appearance tell who He is, but so does His activities. He judges and makes war, verse 11. He descends from heaven, verse 11. Verse 14, and He leads armies with Him. And you see the sharp sword that goes out of His mouth in judgment.

This has to be a coming king and it has to be Jesus Christ Himself. At the inauguration then of the kingdom on earth, watch this, at the inauguration of the kingdom on earth our Lord will come down from heaven. Now listen, He will come exactly as He said He would, personally. Acts 1:11, "This same Jesus shall so come in like manners as you've seen Him go." He will come personally.

Two, He will come visibly. In fact, the whole world is going to see Him and they're going to be so scared they're going to cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them to hide them from His face. He is going to come gloriously in power and great glory. And He is going to come with hosts of angels, according to Matthew 24 and 25. And with the saints already raptured, Revelation 19:14.

Now who's going to be with Him? The saints who were raptured from the New Testament age and also the saints of the Old Testament and their spiritual bodies will return with Him. You say well, how do you know that's us? 1 Thessalonians 3:13, a wonderful verse don't ever forget it. It says this, "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." All who were in heaven, the spirits of the Old Testament saints and the resurrected glorified bodies of the raptured church will all be coming because He is coming with all His saints, you see.

There won't be any saints left out. And certainly the promise to the church is this in 1 Thessalonians 4:18, that once we go to be with Him, "so shall you ever be with the Lord." So where He goes we go. He comes, we come with Him.

And so Christ comes and He arrives on earth and He ends the tribulation in the holocaust that is described in verses 17 to 21. "The birds of the air are called together to have a great supper." And the Lord comes down, of course, in terrible destruction, verse 19, "saw the beasts and the kings of the earth." That's the antichrist, the beast. "And their armies gathered to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was taken with Him, the false prophets that

wrought miracles before Him with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

"And the remnant was slain with the sword of Him that sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." By the very word of His mouth He destroys the ungodly across the face of the earth in His return. I guess it is nothing could be more ironically appropriate than for God to permit the military assembly in Palestine to be wiped out because that was the very land where a satanically inspired world once passed judgment on the very king that is going to win that very victory.

And while all the previous judgments, watch this, in the book of Revelation have been carried out by angels, this one is carried out by the king Himself. This is the final devastation of the world at the end of the tribulation. And so Jesus is the one who returns. The rule of the Son is what the kingdom is all about.

God is going to rule through Jesus Christ. Every Old Testament prophecy on the kingdom, this is exciting, every Old Testament prophecy about the kingdom anticipates Christ's kingly office. No prophet ever views the kingdom without seeing the Messiah as the king. Psalm 2:6, the Father says "Yet have I set my king upon the holy hill of Zion.

You remember that 2 Samuel 7:16 when David was given the great promise from God that "from Him would come a king who would reign an eternal kingdom." And that was the seed of David the Messiah. Jesus, even at the very beginning when He first came, came as a king. He was born a king.

In Luke 1:32, the angel said to Mary, "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 and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

The Bible always anticipates Christ as the king. And you know when the world rejected Him, they rejected Him as king. They didn't want Him as king. In Mark 15:12, Pilate answered and said unto Him, "What will you then that I do unto Him whom you call the king of the Jews. And they cried out again, crucify Him." And you remember that they were loud and clear and saying we have no king but Caesar. He came as a king. He was born as a king. He told Pilate on another occasion "to that end was I born."

He was meant to be God's king. He offered a kingdom. He said "repent the kingdom is at hand." But He was rejected as the king. He even died as a king. What did they put on His cross? Jesus of Nazareth, what? King of the Jews. And beloved believe me when He comes back again, look at it,

Revelation 19:16, "He will come back as a king." The Old Testament prophecies, the word of God on the arrival of Jesus, all of it points to the fact that He is the king.

There is coming a utopia, believe me. Now I'm an optimist, a biblical optimist. There is coming a utopia. But there's only one individual who can make that utopia happen, and that is the king whose right it is to rule and it is none other than Jesus Christ. He is the king. Once rejected, He comes again as king. And believe me there's going to be an absolute character to His kingdom.

There are not going to be any options when He comes again. In Isaiah, there are several passages that are powerful, but one that we all know well and I review it only for you to remember is this. "For unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called wonderful counselor. The mighty God or God champion, the Father of eternity, the Prince of Peace." Now watch, "Of the increase of His government in peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to order it and to establish it with justice and with righteousness from hence forth even forever."

And just in case you think it won't happen, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. God will bring His kingdom and His king will be Jesus. You say, but Jesus was killed. Yes, but is alive and He has been since He rose from the dead and He'll be returning. He is the king. So the first feature of the kingdom is the rule of the Son. And my we could study multitudes of Old Testament passages that point this out. I've only barely skimmed the surface.

Second point, the kingdom will then be characterized by the removal of the serpent. First of all, the rule of the rule of the Son, secondly the removal of the serpent. Who at this point in time is the king of the earth? Satan. Now if Jesus is going to come to reign, the thing He's going to have to do is dethrone the existing monarch. And for that we come to Revelation 20.

As the kingdom begins, there's one rebel left to get rid of, Satan himself. You know, the Lord has been getting rid of the rebels right up to this point. Many of them were destroyed at Armageddon. You can see that right in 19:21. And you say well, weren't there some Gentiles that didn't get killed at Armageddon? Sure there were plenty of them. But you know what happened to them, we covered that in our message some weeks ago on the judgment of the nations. All the Gentiles that were still alive after Armageddon were gathered into a valley created by the Mount of Olives, remember?

And there they were gathered into the valley of decision and they were judged and if they were not believing in Jesus Christ, they were cast into everlasting punishment. So they have been dealt with. The rebels according to Ezekiel 20, the rebels in Israel have been purged out. "Fallen angels have already been defeated and cast down." And that happened in Revelation 12, didn't it? When Michael the archangel and his holy angels through them out of heaven. And they're already defeated foes.

The beast, the antichrist, the false prophet, they've already been cast into the lake of fire, verse 20. There's only one rebel really left and it's Satan himself. And if the kingdom is to be totally Christ's, then the ruler of this world must be vanquished. There could never be a thousand years of peace and righteousness on earth while the great enemy of God was still at large. And so God removes Him. The defeat came at the cross. The final sentencing comes here.

Look at verse 1. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." Now here comes another judgment angel. All through the book of Revelation you have judgment angels carrying out the judgments. And here comes another one and he has a key to the bottomless pit. You know, I...we see all these little pictures of Hell and we always see that Satan is kind of presented as the proprietor. And we hear people even talk as if Satan was the proprietor of Hell. Satan is not the proprietor of Hell. He's just one who's incarcerated there. The person with the keys is God Himself.

And so God dispatches an angel with the keys and He has the key to the bottomless pit. Now that is not Hell proper, that is the word in the Greek, abysas. It is the word which could translate abyss. You say well what is the abyss. That is the place, now watch, that is the place where demons are bound. Now there was some angels that sinned in Genesis 6, stay with me. And you remember what their sin was? Cohabiting with women and trying to produce some kind of a strange unredeemable hybrid and God destroyed it all in the flood. But these angels were thrown into a pit and bound there. And so there was a place for bound demons.

Now that's exactly where this angel is going to stick Satan. He has the key to the abysas. To the abyss. And now you'll notice that the beast and the false prophet in 19:20 were cast into the lake of fire, that's Hell. But these demons were in the pit. And so Satan is to be bound and thrown not in the final Hell, Satan's going to get to the final Hell, there's no question about that. That's in, I think its Matthew 25:41 gives us an indication of that. "Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

So he'll get there eventually, but for the thousand year kingdom, he is going to be stuck in the abyss with the rest of the bound demons. Now I want you to notice this thing. It says that the key was possessed by this angel. Do you know there's an interesting thing in Revelation 9, that angel opened the pit another time. And you know what he did that time? He didn't put anybody in. He let them all out. In Revelation 9, the angel unlocked the pit and all the demons came out. Why? Because in the midst of the tribulation God let Hell have its day on earth and the demons ran all over the earth. But now the angel unlocks the pit not to let them out, but to put somebody in.

And I like the fact that he has a...not just a chain in his hand, but a great chain. You know, demons can make short work of chains. Read Mark 5, remember the mad man in Gerasenes, they kept



putting things around him. First rope and then all kinds of different things, and finally chains and what did he do to all of it? He broke it. But this is a chain that he can't handle. Verse 2, "And he laid hold on that dragon, that old serpent," nothing new, you think people in this world who have this big Satan worship kick think they would...they think they've discovered something new. "He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent who is the devil and Satan and bound him a thousand years and cast him into the abysas and shut him up and set a seal on him that he should deceive the nations more till the thousand years shall be fulfilled and after that he must be loose a little season."

Now Satan is bound for the thousand year kingdom. Jesus is going to rule on the earth and He's going to rule without rivalry. So Satan is incarcerated. Now notice him by his name. He's called the dragon. That refers to his bestial cruelty. His oppressive powers. He's called that old serpent, the same one that was in Eden, nothing new. He's called the devil, which diabolist means a slanderer, a liar. He's called Satan. That means accuser. And he's the one who always accuses the brethren, night and day before God, Revelation 12:10 says.

Well, the rule of the Son and the removal of the serpent, and this is victory of Christ over His foe. Now you say, you know, isn't that wonderful, Satan is going to bound for all that thousand years. Will there be sin in the kingdom if Satan isn't there? People always ask this question. Will there be sin in the kingdom? Of course there will be sin in the kingdom. You say why? Because you don't need Satan to sin. You have a sin nature. You can bind Satan and all you're doing is destroying the hierarchy of his rule on earth. That doesn't really have a whole lot of effect on what a sinner does. You say well, how did sinners get into the kingdom to begin with? Watch, those people who are saved people, who are alive when Jesus returns, He won't kill them. He won't destroy them. There will be living Jews and there will be some of those Gentiles, right, who believe in Jesus Christ who are the sheep Gentiles, Matthew 25. They will be alive. They will go into the kingdom alive. They will be righteous and they will be holy, but they will be saved sinners, right?

And they'll still have sin natures and they'll still sin, just like you and I do as Christians. So there will be sin. And you know we always want to say oh the devil...you know, that's a cop out. Every time you say oh Satan's...Satan made me do it. Oh that it...what a cop out. You know, I heard people...I hear this all the time. People say oh the demon of lust it is bothering me. Get away, get away Satan.

You don't need any demon to lust. John says the lust is of the flesh. You don't need any demon to mess you up in the area. You'll do fine without them. That's the point. So in the kingdom, you're going to have all the same things, there just won't be any structure. There won't be any overall organization, there won't be any plotting going on at a higher spiritual level.

Now he's thrown into the abyss, seven times the word abyss is used. In Revelation it always refer to the place where fallen angels are imprisoned and Satan is going to go there. Now you know it's interesting that way, way back even in Isaiah's day, the prophets of old knew that this was going to

happen to Satan. Isaiah Chapter 24, one of the most interesting verses in Scripture. "It shall come to pass in that day," that's a great day of the kingdom, "that the Lord shall punish," watch, "the host of the high ones that are on high and the kings of the earth on the earth." The host of the high ones, demons.

"And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit and be shut up in the prison and after many days shall they be visited. Even Isaiah new that demons are going to be incarcerated. But only for a time, then they're going to be visited by God and transmitted into Hell, finally.

But Satan is going to be bound. Now notice at the end of verse 3 that it says that he's going to be loosed for a little season and we'll see the significance of that in a minute. Have you ever thought about this, the Lord's Prayer, the disciples' prayer, Matthew 6? Think of this, "thy kingdom come." Now you remember that don't you? That prayer is a prayer for the kingdom. "Thy kingdom come," then it says, "deliver us from evil." And the Greek is deliver us from the evil one.

The only time that you'll ever be delivered from the evil one is when the kingdom comes. That's why that prayer says "thy kingdom come," "deliver us from the evil one." That goes together. When the kingdom comes, the evil one is set aside. But believe me the kingdom with all that it's going to be is also going to be a great demonstration of human depravity isn't it? It's going to show once and for all that the devil didn't make you do everything that you did wrong. And that excuse, "oh the same one in the garden, the serpent beguiled me." See? That's the cop out ever since Eve.

Well, the next feature in the kingdom, the rule of the Son, the removal of the serpent, the third one, the reign of the saints. What's going on in the kingdom with us who are there and with those who are in physical bodies alive? And incidentally there are going to be saints that are going to be translated in their glorified bodies and they're going to be ones in physical bodies and we'll be mingling together.

You say how can that happen? That's no problem. The Old Testament, angels came and went and conversed with men. It's going to be kind of neat. All right, the reign of the saints verse 4 to 6 to add to the rule of the Son and the removal of the serpent.

With Satan out of the way, the kingdom gets rolling. And as John looks at this kingdom in verse 4, he really sees some fantastic things in a beautiful panorama. Verse 4, and John says, "I saw thrones and they sat upon them. And judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God and who had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark on their foreheads or in their hands and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Now that's the reign of the saints. You say well, who gets to reign. It's simple, it says "I saw thrones and they sat upon them." The they do. And not only do the they, but the them do too. It says in the next phrase, "and I saw the souls of them." So you have the they and the them reigning in the kingdom. Well, you say that's real good John. Who are they and who are them?

Well, the them is obvious. The souls of them beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God who had not worshiped the beast. Now what era would those have had to come out of? Tribulation saints. So the them would be the tribulation saints. You say but what about the they? Who sat on the throne? Oh, who would that be?

And you know you could...can't believe all of the stuff that goes on to try to figure out who they are. Now I have a simple formula to figure it out. Are you ready? Here it comes. To whom did God promise that they would reign with Him? Okay, to whomever He promised it, that's who the they are. It's simple enough. I don't know why would anybody be confused.

Now, I'll show you who He promised. First of all, Daniel 7:18, just write those down. Daniel 7:18, "But the saints of the Most High," watch, "shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever." Verse 27 of Daniel 7, "And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

Now in Daniel's day, who were the saints? Old Testament saints. So first of all, God promised Old Testament saints that they would take the kingdom and possess it forever. The second group, He made a promise to another group. In Matthew Chapter 19, verse 28, well Peter in verse 27 said, "Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?" Peter wanted a reward for his faithfulness. And Jesus said unto them, "Verily I say unto you that ye who have followed me," watch, "later on in the regeneration," and what did I say that's a name of, the kingdom, "later on in the kingdom when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, you shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

So Old Testament saints are going to reign, Daniel 7. Matthew 19 says who else is going to reign? The twelve apostles, the twelve apostles are going to sit on twelve thrones. You say is anybody else going to reign, I hope, I hope. Yes, 1 Peter 2:9, one little indication. "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." Now the indication of royalty is important, isn't it? A royal priesthood, that talks about reigning. That talks about royalty.

He's talking to the church, but let me give you another thought. 1 Corinthians 6:2, Paul said, "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world." And he said that to the Corinthians. So that means the Old Testament saints, apostles in the gap between the Old and the New Testament and thirdly, New Testament saints. That all makes up the they. And the tribulation bunch makes up the them. You put it all together, you know who's going to reign? Every saint of every age is going to reign in

the kingdom.

You know so many times that we announce that the kingdom is for Israel, the Gentiles have the idea that they're going to be scrubbing celestial floors or, you know, doing some kind of real crummy stuff in the kingdom while everybody in Israel gets the goodies. But the Bible promises to all saints of all ages that they're going to reign. And incidentally there are going to be children born in the kingdom. Did you know that? In fact, there's going to be...they're really going to be born. Because there's going to be health in the kingdom like never in the history of man since the fall and people are going to be super productive. And the children who then respond to Christ during the kingdom, they'll be exalted and they'll reign too. And their children will reign.

It's a question of everybody reigning at the beginning. You know, it's a whole lot of kings and no subjects. But eventually when children are born, there's going to be children who do not respond to Christ honestly. On the surface they will, they'd have to conform, but inside they're not.

So it's simple who it is. It's all the saints. You say well, now what does it mean we're going to reign with Him? What kind of thing is going to be going on? Well, I want to show some of the most fantastic things. You know, there's been so much written about utopia, but here it is. I mean, this is it. What's going to happen on earth? Well, let's look first of all during a thousand years, what's going to be going on politically?

Politically, number one, the universal rule of Christ. He is going to reign over the whole earth. Write down Psalm 2, verse 6-9. He's going to reign over the whole earth. That's the political picture. There's only one king in the earth, that's Jesus Christ. In Psalm 2, verse 6, "I have set my king upon my holy hill. I'll declare the decree. The Lord has said unto me thou art my Son this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, I'll give thee the nations for thine inheritance," now watch, "and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

It's going to be a universal rule by Jesus Christ, the Son. And you can find this repeated many places in your Old Testament. You can find it in Daniel. Daniel makes the same promise that the Son is going to rule and that is indicated in Daniel 2:35 where he says, "The stone cut out without hands smashes all the rule of man and it fills the whole earth." It's going to be a universal rule by Jesus Christ. He's called King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Secondly, politically, it's going to be an absolute rule. An absolute rule. There will be tolerated no rebellion. He's going to rule with a rod of iron. Let me read you a fascinating account in Psalms 72. Listen to this, verse 9. "They that dwell," and this is talking about the kingdom. "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him and His enemies shall lick the dust." Absolute rule with the rod of iron.

"The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents. The kings of Sheba and Sheba shall offer gifts. Ye all kings shall fall down before Him. All nations shall serve Him." You see? Absolute rule. There are no exceptions in the kingdom at all. In Isaiah 11:4, "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."

In other words, the whole earth is subject. So it's a universal rule, politically second it's an absolute rule. Thirdly, it's a righteous rule. In the midst of this beloved it's going to be a righteous rule. It's not going to be a dictatorship that is unrighteous, but it's going to be a righteous dictatorship. He will rule justly.

In Isaiah 11:3, "He shall make of him quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes." No, no, no. "Neither reprove after the hearing of His ears." He's not going to be a superficial judge. Listen, "But with righteousness shall He judge." Now that's the important thing.

What is the political scene in the kingdom? Christ rules universally, He rules absolutely, He rules righteously, perfect justice. And you know something, the most wonderful thing that could ever happen to this world would be to bring it into unity under one leader, if it was the right leader.

I believe, and I'm sure many of you do, that the finest kind of government in the world is a dictatorship if you have Christ as the dictator. The second thing, that's political. What about the spiritual life? What's going on spiritually in the kingdom and we're just touching this, barely touching it? What is going on in the kingdom in terms of spiritual things?

Well, first of all, Israel. Israel's going to be converted and brought to the land. That's the big spiritual plus in the kingdom that we first run into in the Bible is the tremendous restoration of Israel. Now those people who have been a part from God since Jesus came who have rejected their Messiah will be brought together regenerated, converted, planted in their land, have the wonder of ruling with their Messiah.

Verse 5 of Jeremiah 23, "Behold the days come saith the Lord, that I'll raise unto David a righteous branch," listen, "and a king shall reign and prosper and execute justice and righteousness in the earth." Won't that be nice? Everybody gets the right deal. Listen to the next verse. "In His days, Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely." There it is a converted, regenerated, restored people. They'll receive the land that God promised them originally.

And oh my, it's going to be such a time of blessing. Isaiah goes over this in so many passages. Let me just give you a few because I think it's so beautiful what's promised to Israel. In Isaiah 61, the last

part of Isaiah, you could just read through it yourself and find so many beautiful features, but Isaiah 61:3. He says...well, Christ, of course, is speaking here prophetically and verse 3, Christ says, "I am come to appoint unto those who mourn in Zion to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment for praise for the spirit of heaviness that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified."

In other words, Messiah says I'm going to change everything. I'm going to let them turn in their ashes for the joy of the oil of joy and all of these things. "And they shall build the old wastes. They shall raise up the former desolations. They shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations and foreigners shall stand and feed your flocks. And the sons of the aliens shall be your plowmen and your vine dressers."

So Israel in a very special way is going to rule. "But you shall be named the priests of the Lord. Men shall call you the ministers of our God. You shall eat the riches of the nations and in their glory shall you boast yourselves." In other words, tremendous blessing for Israel. All the other nations subjected to Israel.

In the very next chapter 62, Isaiah says in verse 2, "And the nations shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory. And thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Israel's going to get a new name. "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. For thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah." You say what's that? That means my delight is in her.

This is the remarriage of God with an adulteress wife. My delight is in her. "And then they land Beulah." You know what that means? Married. God's going to rejoin Himself to Israel. "For the Lord delighteth in thee and thy land shall be," what, "married."

Oh it's going to be a tremendous time for Israel spiritually. But though it is a special time for Israel, beyond that, let me give you some of the...just a quick look at some of the spiritual features of the kingdom. I'm just going to suggest to you, if you want to write down a verse, that's fine.

One, the presence of Christ. The presence of Christ, won't that be fantastic? Actually, Jesus will be here. You say, you mean and if somebody's there they could take an airplane over to Jerusalem and see Jesus? I believe that. Now I don't know whether you'd take...if you're a glorified saint, you won't need an airplane, but if you're just a plain old every day guy, you might need an airplane. But Israel is going to be conducting tours all the time. They are now, but then the king is going to be there.

The presence of Christ, Psalm 72:19 promises that. Psalm 72 is a great, great Psalm of the Messiah and His kingdom. Secondly, the presence of truth. Isaiah 11:9 says everywhere is going to be truth.

Can you imagine a world where there's only truth? Can you imagine that? Where error is immediately crushed as soon as it reveals itself. In our world we continue to ask ourselves about who can we believe and the credibility gaps get bigger and bigger and bigger all the time don't they?

Imagine a whole world where everybody tells the truth. Whoa. Thirdly, righteousness shall flourish. Righteousness shall flourish. Psalm 72:7, have you ever noticed how the holy people are the oppressed in our society? What did Paul say? "Ye in all that live godly in this present age shall suffer," what, "persecution." But not in that age my friend. All they that live godly in that age are going to be on top. It's going to reverse. The judgment's going to come on those who don't live godly. Righteousness will flourish.

Psalm 72:7, I like it. Are you ready for this? "Peace shall reign," oh terrific. Isaiah 2:4, "Peace shall reign." That's because the Prince of Peace is going to be here. There will never be any peace without the Prince of Peace will there? Never. Peace shall reign. Here's another one. You like this? "Joy shall abound." Can you imagine a happy world? Can you imagine turning on the news at night and say well here are the lists of the happy things that occurred today."

See? And then run down all...the sports news, everybody won. See. Joy shall abound. Instead of the terrible drone of tragedy that we always hear, joy will rule the world and peace. You want to know something else? Special Holy Spirit power. Joel 2:28, repeated by Peter in the book of Acts, "your young men shall see visions, dream dreams, your daughters will prophesy." Fantastic explosion of the Holy Spirit in the kingdom. That's what that prophesy is referring to.

"I will pour out my spirit on," how much flesh, "on all flesh in the last days." Can you imagine a world dominated by peace and joy and dominated the Holy Spirit's power? And when evil rears its head, it is crushed immediately by the iron rod of Jesus Himself. What a world.

Fantastic, and you know in a spiritual sense there's going to be a new temple in that day. Ezekiel 40 to 48 describes that. That would make a great study. Sometime we'll have to study that. A new temple where there will be worshipping, in the new temple. You say what would we be doing in the temple? Celebrating the Lamb, the real Lamb, the final Lamb in remembrance of what He did for us.

So spiritual life includes the presence of Christ, the presence of truth, the flourishing of righteousness, peace shall reign, joy shall abound, the Holy Spirit's power shall overrule the world and we'll be worshipping in a new way in a new temple the same old Christ that we've worshipped all along. So spiritual life is going to be glorious.

You say John, that's a political picture. And again, let me hasten to say this isn't covered at all. This just skips across the top. And that's great on the spiritual, but what about the physical? I've heard so much about the curse of the earth being reversed. What happens in the physical?

Do you know what's going to happen in the physical world? I am so excited about this. I was working in my yard Saturday, yesterday, thinking about this. Oh Lord, when the kingdom comes no weeds. Now the first thing that's going to happen physically in the kingdom is the curse is lifted. You know, the curse has touched the earth itself. You know that in the garden you see did Adam and Eve have to cultivate anything and plow and dig and sweat? No. Did they have to earn their bread by the toil of their brow? No. It was all growing and luxuriant and beautiful and watered by God. And all Adam had to was just go around and fancy it up here and there.

Man, won't that be exciting? To be able to be occupied with other things giving glory to God and not the just fiddle around in your yard. Isaiah 11, verses 7-9, listen to this. And this is part of the reversing of the curse. Listen, well, we'll start in 6. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb." Can you...that's just fantastic. They can take all the bars out of all the zoos in the kingdom. "And the leopard shall lie down with the kid. And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together and the little child shall lead them."

What a picture. All of these wild animals and a little child leading them around. "And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together. And the lion shall eat straw like the ox." All the natural enemies, all of a sudden that's eliminated. Verse 8, "And the nursing child," can you imagine that little nursing baby, "shall play in the hole of the snake and the weaned child shall put his hand on the aspden." Every time I think of that I'm reminded that my wife says her kids aren't playing in the snake pit, kingdom or no kingdom.

But anyway, she won't have to worry because she won't be there in a physical body. She'll be raptured and glorified by the time she gets there. But it's exciting to see the reverse of all these things. Natural enemies are eliminated. Fantastic. And verse 9, "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." Even the animals are going to know the Lord. Even...you know that the whole creation groans, right?

Romans 8, "waiting for this." Waiting, fantastic. The curse is going to be lifted from the earth. Oh there's more. Isaiah, just...I can't resist giving you a couple of these. Isaiah 30:23, "Then shall He give reign for thy seed with which thou shalt sow the ground and bread of the increase of the earth and it shall be fat and plenteous. In that day shalt thou cattle feed in large pastures." Things are going to grow faster.

"The oxen likewise and the young asses that till the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan." There's going to be an abundance of things even to feed the animals.



It's exciting to think about. In Chapter 35 I think there's just a couple of verses too that we might add. "The wilderness," verse 1, I like this. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom," what, "like a rose. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it. The excellence of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."

Now if you've never been to Israel you don't know what it means when it says the glory of Sharon will be given to the wilderness. All you've got to do is go down to Jericho and see what's down there, that's east from Jerusalem. And then go west from Jerusalem and go to the valley of Sharon and you'll know what the difference is. The valley of Sharon is so gloriously fertile and beautiful and the other is just desolate. But all is going to become like Sharon in that day.

Verse 7, "The parched ground shall become a pool." Fantastic. "The thirsty land springs of water in the habitation of jackals where each lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes." Water every where. It's fantastic. God...when I think...and so do some scholars that when the Lord opens that valley in Jerusalem when He comes that it may release the waters of the Mediterranean to fill right up into that area. And then God is going to create streams in the desert and water every where. It's fantastic.

The curse is lifted. Something else about the kingdom. You just have to know this physically, plenty of food. Plenty of food. Now I know for some, that's a problem. But I don't know how the Lord will take care of that in the kingdom. But anyway, Joel 2:21, this is terrific. "Fear not oh land, be glad and rejoice for the Lord will do great things." The land's got it tough nowadays. "Be not afraid ye beast of the field for the pastures of the wilderness do spring. For the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength."

Listen, "Be glad then ye children of Zion. Rejoice in the Lord your God for He hath given you the former rain moderately and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floor shall be full of wheat and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I'll restore to you the years that the locusts hath eaten." How many crops were lost through the locusts? "And the cankerworm and the caterpillar and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you." God used those to punish Israel.

And the...and He says, "And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord your God who hath dealt wondrously with you and my people shall never be ashamed and you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel and that I am the Lord your God and none else and my people shall never be ashamed." Plenty of food in the kingdom.

I'll tell you something else that's going to be in the kingdom. Health, fantastic health and healing for people who are somehow ill. In Isaiah 29, listen to this, verse 18. "And in that day shall the deaf hear

the words of the book and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."

One of the first things that happens in the kingdom, the deaf hear, the blind see. Healing, and over in Isaiah 33:24, no wonder Isaiah talked about this so much, fantastic. "And the inhabitants shall not say I am sick, the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." In other words, you never get sick as a punishment. There will not be that kind of sickness. There will be total and free forgiveness. And of course, in Israel's context that was such an important statement. 35:5, Isaiah, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be open, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the lame man leap as an hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, for in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert."

In Isaiah 65 verse 20, "There shall be no more in of an infant of days." Listen to this. "No more baby of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." No little babies are going to die. No more just an infant of days, nor an old man that dies before his time. "For the child shall die a hundred years old." When somebody dies a hundred years old, you'll say oh they just died a child.

"But the sinner being a hundred years old shall be a curse." Life is going to be long. People are going to live...if you died a hundred you're going to be considered a child death. Healing, health like never imagined. Well, physically the curse is lifted, plenty of food, health and healing. One last thing, Jerusalem is going to be exalted.

Glorious Jerusalem exalted, how fantastic. That's what it's going to be like in the kingdom. That's what the reign of the saints is going to be like when the serpent is removed and the Son rules. But it isn't going to stay like that all the time, because at the end there's going to come a terrible revolution when Satan is released. And we're going to see what happens. And we're going to see what happens then when at the end of the kingdom all those for all time who have rejected Jesus Christ are brought before the great white throne. And we'll wait and see that next time.

Let's bow in prayer. Father, we do thank you tonight for fantastic joy that's in our hearts as we contemplate the kingdom. And Lord, we recognize that it is not because we deserve that we'll be a part of that ultimate utopia. It is because of the precious blood of Jesus Christ and the infinite grace of a loving God. Father, we do not exalt over those who will be absent from the kingdom, but who will die the second death. Father, we feel terrible sorrow for them.

Father, thank you for the wonderful promise of such a glorious kingdom and the promise that will be there in glorified bodies enjoying every minute of it. And then when the kingdom is done at the end of that thousand years we'll just go into the eternal kingdom forever and ever.

Thank you Lord for such a promise. Oh God makes us grateful enough to want to invite others to be a part of the kingdom. Make us grateful enough for Your grace to do what You've asked us to do and

tell every soul we meet. And Father in the midst of the sorrows of this life, give us overwhelming joy in anticipation that no matter what happens in this life, it's only a drop in eternity. No matter what sorrow and grief we may bear here for the cause of Christ, it's absolutely pales in the light of the kingdom.

Thank you for being the sovereign of the world. Thank you for the fact that Jesus is coming and He's going to reign as king of kings and Lord of Lords. And dear God, if there's someone in this building tonight who's not ready for His coming, who's not prepared, who's never given his life to Jesus Christ, may this be that night when he does that. To this end we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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