

**The Judgment of the Nations, Part 2**

Scripture: Matthew 25:32a

Code: 2379

Matthew chapter 25...this is our fourteenth message from Matthew 24 and 25 under the heading "Signs of Christ's Coming," "Signs of Christ's Coming." And we're looking at verses 31 through 46, the final section of this great sermon preached by Christ on His own Second Coming.

To get us started, let me just remind you that the disciples knew where history was headed. They were Jews. They understood Jewish history. They understood Jewish anticipation. They understood the Old Testament prophecies. And they knew that history was headed toward the glorious visible earthly kingdom of the Messiah. They knew that. They knew history would climax in a time the prophets called "The times of refreshing," or the regeneration, or the times of restitution of all things, the time when the world would be the way God wanted it to be, when the world would cease from war and know peace, when all monarchs would be set aside for one reigning Monarch, the Lord's anointed who would rule the world from the throne of David. They looked forward to the fulfillment of Malachi 1:11 which says, "From the rising of the sun unto its setting shall My name be glorious among the peoples and in every place shall incense and a pure meal offering be offered to My name for My name shall become glorious among the peoples, says the Lord of hosts."

They wanted to see the day when the glory due to the Lord came to Him. They looked forward to the day that I...that Ezekiel had spoken of in chapters 40 to 48 of his great prophecy when he described a kingdom and in that kingdom there would be built a glorious temple, a temple similar and yet distinct from any other temple the Jews had ever known. That kingdom temple would have priests and it would have offerings and it would have feasts and it would have sabbath celebrations. And all of these would be memorials looking back so that they might remember what God had done just as communion, the Lord's table and baptism is a remembrance to us of what the Savior has done.

The Jews then looked forward to the day when the kingdom would come and this glorious kingdom temple would be built and they knew there was one very great distinction because different than any other temple in their history, the temple of Ezekiel would have no ark of the covenant. Because the ark of the covenant, you see, was the representation of the presence of God and in that temple there wouldn't need to be a representation because God would be there in His presence. They looked forward to that glorious kingdom and that glorious temple and the presence of the living God.

Now as Jesus ministered and taught and educated His disciples in the things that were unfolding to them from His truth about the kingdom, they began to be excited. They began to anticipate that at any

moment the Kingdom might come. He might establish His Kingdom. And so in chapter 24 and verse 3, in the very last week before His death, they find a moment of privacy with Him on the Mount of Olives and they say to Him, "When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming and the end of the age?" Lord, we want to know about Your Second Coming. We want to know about Your establishing Your Kingdom. Really, they didn't know it would be the Second Coming because they assumed He would establish it while He was there the first time. We want to know about Your coming in glory. We want to know about the establishment of Your Kingdom, when is it going to be? When are You going to take charge? When are You going to reign? When are You going to establish the Kingdom of peace? When are You going to knock down the old defiled temple and put up the new and glorious one of which Ezekiel spoke?

He answers them in chapters 24 and 25 with a lengthy answer in which He discusses the signs of His coming and the time of His coming. He gives them very detailed signs that will mark out that it is the era of His Kingdom. But as to the exact day and the exact hour, He says no one knows, that is a secret. And because no one knows, everyone must always be prepared...everyone must be prepared at any moment to face God. Most people obviously have faced and will face God in death rather than in His coming glory. So all men and women of all time need to be ready at any moment to face God. Be it in death, brought into His presence in judgment, or be it at His coming, both are unexpected. Both are sudden. And both are final, after which there can be no alteration of course. That is determined before Christ comes, before one faces Him in death.

So, the sermon then goes through a series of signs and then discusses that no one knows the day nor the hour. And then it ends up with a warning passage. And chapter 25, really the whole chapter is warning. The parable of the servants and the parable of the virgins are parables intended to warn that you must be ready when the King comes. The virgins who weren't ready were shut out. The servant who wasn't ready was thrown out. And then comes the very judgment itself in verses 31 to 46. So He wraps up His warning section with a description of why we should be warned, why we should be ready because we face judgment at the coming of Jesus Christ. When Jesus comes, and that's why John, you remember, in chapter 10 of Revelation 8, the message, "And it was sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach." When he thought about the Second Coming it was sweet because he could see the glory of Christ and the fulfillment of prophecy and the glories of the Kingdom. But it was bitter because he knew it meant the damnation of those who were without God. And so it's a twoedged sword in that sense. And Jesus is warning. On the one hand it's greatly exciting to the believer to know that Jesus is going to come. On the other hand, it's greatly fearful because we know the finality of His coming. And so men must be prepared.

Now as we began to introduce this section, and we're going to do a little more of that introduction today. And I want to give you what amounts really to a lesson in theology if I can, but I think it's needed for you to understand this. Let's go back and see what we saw last time by way of review.

Verse 31, first of all we meet the judge. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then He shall sit on the throne of His glory." Now the Son of Man we said is the judge. He comes as King but not only as King, He comes also as judge. Because He comes as King to establish His Kingdom, He must make a decision and a determination as to who goes into His Kingdom. It's His Kingdom, He is sovereign, He is King, but He also has to make judgments about who enters in. And as John 5:22 says, "All judgment is committed to the Son." So as well as being King, He is judge and He will come to determine who goes into the Kingdom and who does not. He is the judge.

Secondly, we looked at the time of the judgment. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him." That describes His Second Coming. When He comes with all the holy angels, when He comes with the ten thousand of His saints, as it tells us in Jude 14, when He comes with all the redeemed host in heaven, as Revelation 19 describes Him riding out of heaven on a white horse accompanied by others on white horses, clothed in white linen which represents the purity of the saints. So when the Lord comes in His glory with all His angels and all His saints, it is then that verse 32 says He gathers all the people and begins the separation process. So the time of the judgment spoken of here is at His Second Coming...His Second Coming. And that will be instantaneous and immediate so that when He comes if you're not ready, as illustrated in the parable of the virgins, you have no time to get ready. You remember the virgins were told, "Go and get your own oil." By the time they went and came back the door was shut and it was over. And what our Lord is saying is when He comes you have to be ready then because there's no time after that...at His Second Coming.

The place of judgment, notice it in verse 31, "When He comes in His glory with His angels, He will sit upon His glory throne." Where by the promise of the prophets is the throne of the Messiah's glory to be? In Jerusalem on Mount Zion in the holy city for it is the throne of David. And the prophets said He will sit on the throne of His father David. And so He will come to Jerusalem. We saw in Zechariah chapter 14 how that His feet actually touch the Mount of Olives in verse 4, how that Jerusalem is impacted in verse 8 as He comes to that very holy city of Jerusalem. He becomes King over the earth. And it tells about the geography of the land having changed in verses 9 and following. So the Lord comes back to Jerusalem, right to the nation Israel to reign on the place where David himself once reigned as David's greater Son, the promised Messiah.

Joel 3 verses 13 to 18 describe dramatic changes as a valley is created when He comes, into which all the people are gathered to be judged, that great valley of decision. Not that people will make a decision but that God will make a decision about them as to their eternal destiny.

So, the judge is the Lord Jesus Christ. The time is His Second Coming. The place is Jerusalem. Now who are the subjects of judgment? And this is where I want to spend a little time this morning so that

you're clear on this. Someone said after last Sunday, "I raised more questions than I answered." And I don't want that to happen. I want to do all I can to answer your questions. And there are a lot of questions that we can't answer because we don't have information. But let's take a shot at what we do know.

Who are the people to be judged? Verse 32, before Him having come to Jerusalem, created this valley that's described in Joel, bringing all the nations into it, multitudes, multitudes of the people there to be judged, it says, "Before Him shall be gathered all the peoples," ethna, all the peoples, "and He will separate one from another like a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats."

Now, this is a moment of separation. All people are going to be separated. They're only going to be separated into two classes: sheep and goats in this analogy. Sheep go into the Kingdom, goats go out of the Kingdom. So there will only be two classes of people. As my grandfather used to say "The saints and aints." Only two classes of people, the redeemed and the unredeemed, the saved and the lost, that's the basic classification into which everybody falls ultimately and eternally. There are only two destinies, heaven and hell. And so that division must be made in regard to all people. There is no distinction here, beloved, about Jew or Gentile. That is not a distinction made particularly in this text. It's just all the people. And the distinction here has nothing to do with ethnic identity, it has only to do with relationship to Christ. All the people.

Now you say, "Well, who are these people?" Well, they have to be people that are alive when Jesus comes again. That's what I want you to understand. They will be people alive on the earth at the coming of Christ. Now you have to get this in your mind. I know we talk about it but maybe we don't sit down and meditate and visualize it. But listen, Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth like He did the first time, literally, physically, and bodily. He will be here. He will walk here. He will talk here. He will move around. People will go and see Him face to face. He will actually be on this earth. This is not wishful thinking. This is not some spiritualization. This is not a fantasy. This is not science fiction. This is fact. He will be here, actually, physically, literally, on this earth as we know this earth to be. That is what the Bible promises.

Now that means that when He comes there are going to be some people alive at that time. Those people have to be judged as to whether they go into His Kingdom, which is immediately to come, or whether they are shut out of his Kingdom. You see, they're not going to have the opportunity that everybody else has to die, basically. You know, the Lord can't wait till everybody's dead before He comes, that will never happen because people will keep reproducing. He has to end it. And so when He comes back to set up His glorious Kingdom, He has to do something with the people that are still alive, the saved and the unsaved.

Now, before we talk about who those people are, let me just give you the full scenario, all right? Keep in mind this, we're living in the age of the church we call it, when God is gathering out His church, His

redeemed people in Christ, Jew and Gentile who are one in the body of Christ. When the fullness of the church comes, or the fullness of the Gentiles as it's called by Paul, when the fullness comes and the church is complete, we're taken out of the world. That is known as the Rapture of the church, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. The church is taken out. Now what does that mean? That means that the living church, that is you and I who are alive. If Christ were to come this afternoon, we would just take off and go. And on the way our bodies would be transformed into glorious bodies like His glorious body. Philippians 3 says we'll get rid of these vile bodies and exchange them for a body like unto His glorious body, His post resurrection body. So if Jesus were to call the church out with a trump and the voice of the archangel, He doesn't come all the way down, we meet Him where? In the air, we just take off.

You say, "What about Christians that have already died?" That's the same question the Thessalonians asked, it says, "The dead in Christ shall rise...what?...first," they have sixfeet further to go, somebody says, and if we're all going to meet Him at the same time they've got to leave a little bit ahead of the rest of us. Now what is it saying? Well, you say, "Where are their spirits?" Listen, the believers that have already died, their spirits are with the Lord. What happens in the Rapture is they receive a glorified body, that's all. You say, "Well, what if there's just a pile of dust?" Don't worry about it, God will create it out of nothing anyway. So all of us, if anyone dies now, their body goes into the grave, their spirit goes to be with the Lord. The spirit does not yet have its glorified body. It doesn't need its glorified body yet, it only needs a spirit because God is a spirit and it can commune with God in a spirit. I can communicate with you in a spirit. Call me on the phone. You don't need my body to communicate with me. You can talk to me because I can communicate apart from physical presence. That's a simple analogy of like the spirit because they are spirits the real self is there, the body lays in the grave. But, the Lord promises that the body will rise, read 1 Corinthians 15, that's what it says. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye the dead in Christ are going to rise, and the body is going to come up, be joined with that spirit already with the Lord, gathered with believers who are already alive on the earth will be changed on the way up and we'll all have new glorified bodies. Spirit and body will come together in the ones that have already died, it will already be together in the ones that are still alive, but transformed. And then we have glorified form. No more sin, no more of the debilitating effect of sin, we are now like the resurrected Christ. Okay? And like the resurrected Christ, we are fit for two worlds. We are fit for heaven and we are fit for earth.

When Jesus came out of the grave, was He fit for the earth? Of course He was. He ate, He walked, He talked, they touched Him. He was able to move in this world in this dimension. He had a body that was fit for this earth. But He also had a body fit for heaven, didn't He? Because He ascended after the 40 days, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, did He not? He has a body fit for heaven. He has a body fit for earth.

Now God is going to do the same for every believer. To me it's one of the great proofs of an actual physical literal earthly Kingdom. What would be the point in giving us bodies that could be fit for

heaven and fit for earth if there wasn't to be a restored earth? Okay? What would be the point?

So the Lord then takes the church up, we all get glorified bodies and we're in heaven in our glorified bodies just experimenting like mad for seven years, having a great time. The marriage supper of the Lamb, time of rewards, time of entering into the eternal bliss of being transformed to be like Jesus Christ, we're up there having a marvelous time.

Down on the earth, the Tribulation is going on. And Antichrist is running rampant all over the earth. Hell has loosed some bound demons and belched them forth on the earth and all the demons in heaven have been cast to the earth along with Satan. And hell is breaking loose on the earth. God is judging, Antichrist is moving, hell is doing its thing, sin is running rampant, the church is taken out, the Holy Spirit stops restraining evil, and you have seven years of the whole idea of sin just running through its last gasp and God judging.

At the same time you have that, you're going to have people being saved, right? Romans 11 says, "So all Israel shall be saved," during that time. Revelation 7 says a multitude of Gentiles innumerable will be saved. It's going to be an interesting seven years. Israel's redemption, redemption of many from all over the globe as well as all the judgments and all the holocausts and all the sin running wild and so forth, that's what's going on on earth.

Now listen carefully. The Lord is getting ready to come back. But before He can come back and set up His earthly Kingdom, there are some folks He's got to take care of. And the folks He's got to take care of are Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints. What about all the Old Testament saints who died? Where are their bodies? Well, they're still in the grave. There's never been a resurrection of Old Testament saints bodies. Their spirits are with the Lord. I believe Jesus took them to heaven in His death. I believe He led captivity captive, as Ephesians 4 said it. When He was dying on the cross, His body was dead, His Spirit alive went in, took all the souls of the Old Testament saints who were in a waiting place, a good waiting place, a place of bliss and blessedness, and carried them to glory. And all the spirits of the Old Testament saints are up there. They're all there.

But they haven't yet had their body. They have to wait for the Tribulation saints who are really a sort of an addendum to the Old Testament era. It's really the seventieth week of Daniel, isn't it? In other words, the Lord was working with Israel and then Israel was unbelieving so the Lord took the church, works through the church, takes the church, redeems the church out and then goes back to finish His business with Israel and other nations as well. So Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints then who believe...say you're in the Tribulation, you believe, you're killed for your faith, your spirit will go to heaven, your body stays in the grave. Then at the end of the Tribulation, there will be a resurrection of the bodies of Old Testament and Tribulation saints.

I believe that's indicated to us as best we can understand Daniel 12, it says "At that time," the time of the Tribulation, it describes it, "many shall awake to everlasting life." And this has to do with Old Testament saints. Obviously, Daniel writing in the Old Testament. So it is at the time when Michael delivers the people from the onslaught of Satan in the time of the Tribulation that a resurrection occurs for Old Testament saints.

Now mark this. We have our glorified bodies. If they're going to go into the Kingdom, they also have to have a glorified body, right? Because the Kingdom is where? It's on earth. And if they're to receive the full benefit of a glorified restored refreshed, renewed, reconstituted and regenerated earth, they will have to have a form fit for the earth. And so they will be raised out of the grave as well, joining...new bodies joining with their spirits. And don't ask me to describe those new bodies. It's a body of resurrection, I don't...I can't describe it, it's like Christ's resurrection body, that's the best parallel because that's what it's like. But even then we don't understand the physiology of it or the supernaturalness of it. But anyway, they all have glorified bodies.

So now here come the Old Testament saints in their glorified bodies, all ready the redeemed church is there, now you've got all the redeemed of all the ages...Old Testament, church and Tribulation saints, all there in glorified bodies. And here comes the Lord with myriads of His saints and myriads of His angels out of heaven to set up His earthly Kingdom. And then the point being, those who are fit for heaven with the glorified body are also fit for earth, right? So now we can exist on the earth, we can exist in heaven. In fact, I think we'll just have a marvelous time...going any old place we want to go. I mean, no more airports...no more airports...anywhere we want to go, no more baggage problems. Boy, will that be nice. Just take our white robe and go.

I read...or Bob Hope said the other day, went to the airport, he was going to fly to the east coast. He said to the guy behind the desk, "Send one of my bags to Miami, one to Memphis, and one to New York City." He said, "Sir, we can't do that." He said, "Why not? You did it last time." But we won't have that problem.

The glorified form, the glorified form is fit for heaven. It's fit for earth. And we'll actually see, I believe, the descent of the glory of the new city of Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem sort of hovering over the earth. And we'll be ascending and descending, in and out of that glorious thing where we'll be fit for the earth much as angels in the Old Testament could converse with men, be seen by men, walk with men, talk with men and yet ascend to the very throne of the presence of God. We'll be in that glorified form. So the Kingdom then will be populated by the glorified redeemed of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Tribulation period. They're already there.

Now, that leaves us with those people who are alive on the earth. Anybody who's already died as a believer, they're going to receive a glorified form to go in. But those that are still alive and are to be brought in, those who are true believers, have survived the Tribulation, they will be brought in in their

physical form only. In other words, they'll just go right into the Kingdom living in their physical form. There's no reason to believe anything else other than that. It is an earthly Kingdom. And one of the proofs of that is that the prophets tell us there will be reproduction in the Kingdom. We know that. The Bible says that at the end of the thousandyear Kingdom, there will be a rebellion take place and multitudes all over the earth will come to fight against Christ. Well, this couldn't be the glorified redeemed and it couldn't be the unglorified redeemed, it's got to be the children of the unglorified redeemed who didn't believe. You understand that?

You say, "Well, how could people be born in that Kingdom with Christ ruling in that perfect time of the world with all the glory that's there, how could they be born and reject Jesus Christ when He's right there and they can see Him and they can touch Him and they can watch His power? How could they reject?" Well, ask yourself the question: how did they do it the first time? And you'll have your own answer. It's the sinfulness of sin. And if you don't think men are depraved, then you haven't looked at the fact that they will reject even when Jesus Christ rules the whole world with perfect wisdom, perfect love, perfect power.

So, when we come then to the Second Coming of Christ, the glorified saints into the Kingdom, they'll be coming down to it from heaven, down from heaven into it, but the ones already on earth are just going to see a change of rule. They may live in the same neighborhood, if it hasn't been blown up or destroyed or whatever. They'll have their same wardrobe. They'll have the same scars on their face. If they can't see well, they'll wear glasses. They'll have hearing aids. They'll do whatever people do. They'll probably jog...that's right, and they'll have to eat meals, plant crops, cook, depend on the services, public service will have to take place. You're going to have to have certain things that make life possible. It's going to be a world, a world of men, a world of humans unglorified. And mingling in and out of them and ruling over them will be the glorified redeemed of all the ages.

Now you say, "Well, how can a glorified person have fellowship with an unglorified person?" How could Christ have fellowship with His disciples after His resurrection? How could people in the Old Testament have fellowship with an angel, if you will? Have a meal with an angel, such as Abraham and Sarah. So there will be that mingling.

The people then who are allowed to go in in physical bodies will be the sheep, the believers. The ones who don't believe will be destroyed on the spot. They will be killed on the spot. There will be instantaneous judgment and the destruction of unbelievers and then the Kingdom will be populated only by the redeemed on the earth and the redeemed that are glorified. Now you understand, I hope.

Now may I digress for a moment? And this is for you theologians, the rest of you can indulge me if you will because I think it's important for people who are confused, and I get a lot of questions about this. And I'm trying to defer if I might to a group of people who seem to be struggling with this issue.



I want to give you an apologetic look at the earthly Kingdom of Christ because I'm constantly getting messages that people say, "Well, it isn't an earthly literal Kingdom." They say, "Well, we are amillennialists, that is we do not believe in a millennium, we don't believe in an actual, physical, earthly, visible Kingdom of Christ. We think it's a spiritual Kingdom, we think that there's not going to be an actual earthly Kingdom but there's the Kingdom of the Lord in our hearts. We take the amillennial view."

Let me talk about that for a moment because I want you to be able to answer the question when it comes up. Very much is at stake, let me give you some insights. First of all, what in the world is the point and purpose of God creating glorified human creatures who can live on this earth as it is and in heaven as it is if there isn't ever to be an earth as it is? What is the point? I believe that the resurrected Christ is a perfect illustration of Kingdom living because He could live on this earth and live in heaven. He had capacities for both dimensions. And that tells me that we will need the same capacities.

Let me give you another thought. Somebody says, "Well, this is all new, this was invented in Texas about a hundred years ago...this millennialism." It is not new. It is not new. Belief in a visible Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth for a thousand years was originally, according to Eric Sauer, the very astute German theologian, it was belief of common Christian, part of common Christian doctrine in the first century. You can go back and read those early writers like Papias and Justin and Tertullian and Irenaeus and Hippolytus and you can see that from the first to the third centuries, the general conviction of the church was that Christ would come in a literal Kingdom on earth. And Sauer says only with the start of the growing Catholicism was this lost. In those early years it was called "chiliasm" chilias, the word for thousand. It was lost by Clement and Origen about 250 A.D. and then by Augustine in 400.

But prior to that it was the conviction of the church. And in the Dark Ages that ensued out of growing Catholicism, all the way to the 1500's, like many other things it was pushed aside. But it is a biblical issue. In fact if you think it's new maybe you haven't read Revelation chapter 20 lately where it simply says "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. That couldn't be more explicit. That was not invented a hundred years ago in Texas, that's in Revelation chapter 20.

Now, the only way...another thought...the only way that a person can deny the earthly visible millennial Kingdom of Christ, that is that He's actually going to come back, He's actually going to live on the earth, He's actually going to reign here in Jerusalem, He's going to control the whole world, and we're going to be here with Him, glorified saints and there will be here non glorified saints, the only way you can deny that is to do one or two or three of these three things.

One, confuse Israel and the church. If you do that, then you can eliminate the actual Kingdom. Just make the church Israel and say we're not Israel, therefore nothing for Israel is really for Israel, so we can just cancel all of those things. You can do that.

Secondly, make present what is clearly future. In other words, take prophecies that are clearly future and back them all the way up into the present so that they're already fulfilled and you don't need a Kingdom.

Thirdly, spiritualize Old Testament prophecies. In other words, instead of a place meaning a place it means some spiritual thing. Instead of an actual event meaning an actual event, it means some spiritual thing. It's some vague foggy idea about something or other that you have to determine.

But unless you confuse Israel and the church, unless you make present what is future, and unless you spiritualize prophecy, you are stuck with an actual literal physical earthly millennial Kingdom of Christ. He's actually going to come back to this earth, just as He did the first time. Only not for 33 years, but for...what?...a thousand years.

Now, let me take you into a little bit of theology, all right? Now we'll separate the sheep from the goats, so to speak, in terms of thinking through this thought. Now listen carefully and I'm in debt to Eric Sauer and his keen insights for much of my own thought in this particular point.

There are five things that you want to kind of register somewhere in your mind and let them leave an impression. If you want them in detail you can get the tape, don't try to follow every detail. The earthly visible millennial Kingdom of Christ, first of all, is the only adequate confirmation of the truthfulness and faithfulness of the promises of God. I'll say that again. The earthly visible actual millennial Kingdom of Christ is the only adequate confirmation of the faithfulness and the truthfulness of the promises of God. In other words, God said He was going to give a Kingdom. If He didn't, we've got a question about His faithfulness, right? We've got a question about His truthfulness. In Romans 11:29, Paul says the gifts and callings of God are without repentance and that is in direct reference to Israel. In the Old Testament, Genesis 12, God gave an unconditional promise to Abraham, it was not based on law, it was based on promise, Romans 4:13 to 15 says. It cannot be annulled by Israel's unbelief. The promise was to bless him, to give him a Kingdom, to give him a nation and so forth. And God says He will keep that promise for the honor and glory of Himself for the sake of His truthfulness. And even in Genesis 26:25, for the sake of Abraham, His friend.

So, when Scripture talks about the promise of God for a future Kingdom, it says it is as firm as the mountains, Isaiah 54:10, it is as secure as the order of nature, Isaiah 54:9, it is as true as the course of day and night, Jeremiah 33:20, 21, 25 and 26. It is as stable as the laws of sun, moon and stars, Jeremiah 31:35 to 37. And it is as permanent as the new heaven and the new earth, Isaiah 66. In

other words, God bound Himself, using those kinds of figure of speech to affirm His promise.

Listen to Jeremiah 31:35 and 36, "Thus says Jehovah who gives the sun for a light by day and the ordinance of the moon and the stars for a light by night, if these ordinances depart from before Me, says Jehovah, then the seed of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever."

Listen to what it says in Isaiah 66:22, "For as the new heaven and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, says Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain." In other words, God says I will not change My promise to Israel. And spiritualizing these things, wishing them away, it can only be done if you make the church Israel, if you make the future the present, and if you spiritualize the prophecies. And then you have disallowed God's single greatest way to prove His faithfulness and His promises.

A second thought. The earthly visible millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ is the only explanation of the history of the end which correlates with the teaching of Jesus. Jesus in Matthew 23, you can look back at if you want, verse 37 said to Jerusalem that your house will be desolate, verse 38, you have killed the prophets, stoned the people sent to you, and so forth. And He says, "Your house is left desolate, but not forever desolate, not permanently desolate, just until you will say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord." Until you see Me, He says. So He says to them you're desolate but later you'll see Me and you'll believe in Me and you'll say He's the Messiah which is indicated by "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord" which was a way to describe the Messiah.

In Matthew chapter 19, do you remember it when we were back there and looked at verse 28? Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, that you have followed Me in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of His glory, you will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." That's very literal. That's literal Israel, literal twelve tribes, twelve thrones, twelve disciples judging them and Christ having come and established His Kingdom. So Jesus taught a Kingdom on earth, a Kingdom over Israel, that Israel would believe, desolation would be turned to glory. And if you deny the teaching of Jesus regarding His Kingdom, you have no other explanation for how it will be in the end which agrees with anything He taught. He said history would culminate in Israel seeing their Messiah, crying out on His behalf, believing in Him as Zechariah had said, too, in chapter 13, believing in Him, Jesus saw that as the finish, the culmination, the end of history. And that's exactly what the Scripture says.

Another thought. The earthly visible millennial Kingdom of Christ, and I want you to listen carefully, is the only logical interpretation of Messianic prophecy. If you do not have a literal earthly Kingdom, then there's no way to logically interpret Old Testament prophecy. We are absolutely at sea. Let me illustrate it. When we look at prophecy in the Old Testament, we see prophecy about the Messiah. There's over 300 different prophecies. We look at those prophecies and we start out with a basic principle that we're going to interpret them literally.

For example, Christ came out of Bethlehem. What does that mean? Give me the secret meaning of that. He came out of Bethlehem. Micah 5:2, we know that, that's literal. He rode on a donkey into Jerusalem, Zechariah 9:9. What does that mean? What is the deep meaning of that? It means He rode a donkey. That's right. And He did. He was literally betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, Zechariah 11:12. What do those 30 pieces mean? They don't mean anything other than 30 pieces of silver. His hands and feet were literally pierced on a cross, Psalm 22:16. His bones were literally not broken, Psalm 34:20. His side was literally pierced by a spear, Zechariah 12:10. He died literally, buried literally, Isaiah 53:8, 9 and 12. He rose again the third day, Psalm 16:10, literally. We don't argue any of that. Nobody comes along and says, "Oh, let me tell you about the mystical wound in His side. Let me tell you what those 30 pieces really are talking about." No, no, no. We all say that's just exactly what happened. That is history. We don't say, "Jesus only died metaphorically. He was only drunk on spiritual vinegar. He only, rather, drunk spiritual vinegar on the cross. Lots were only thrown for His spiritual garment, as Psalm 22 predicted." No, no...we don't believe that. We interpret it all literally.

Now who has the right to come back to all the prophecies regarding Christ's Second Coming and spiritualize them all? And when it says He's going to come down and touch the Mount of Olives? No, no, no, not the real Mount of Olives. And He's going to make a valley there and He's going to reign a thousand years on the earth. No, no, no, not a real valley. No, no, no, not the earth, not a real Kingdom, not a thousand years.

You see what we've just done, we've created a monster because who's going to tell us if these don't mean what they say what in the world do they do mean? And why is it that all the prophecies we've learned to bank on as being literal are no use to us in understanding how we're supposed to bank on future prophecies? The whole idea is ludicrous. Who gave us the right to turn Christians into Jews? To turn Jerusalem into the church? And to make cain in heaven? Who gave us the right to spiritualize all of this? Who gave us the right to put the throne of David in heaven? It's always been on earth...always. Who told us that the land which Israel will inherit is up there not down here? The only land they ever knew about was down here. And when it says He'll reestablish and replant His people, who told us that the land in which He's going to replant His people is a heavenly land when it tells us it's here? It's literal. We are literally at sea if we spiritualize Scripture. There's just no way to know what we're talking about except in vagueries.

Another thought. This is so important. I think you'll understand this one if you've missed any of the others. The earthly visible Kingdom of Christ is the best possible way for Jesus Christ to demonstrate that He is the supreme ruler over His creation. Did you get that? It's the best possible way for Him to demonstrate that He's a supreme ruler over His creation. Now how can Jesus prove that He can supremely rule this world? How can He prove that He can supremely rule man? How can He prove that He can control the earth if He's not given the opportunity to do that? If history just ends, He comes, wipes out the earth, and everything is a glorious eternity from then, but there's no restored

earth, there's no Kingdom of Christ on the earth, when does He prove that He truly was the ruler of this world? When does He show what could have been done with creation? When does He demonstrate how happy men could have been under His rule? When does He demonstrate that the world could have been a place of peace and a place of joy and a place where righteousness reigned...reigned and ruled, a place where evil was instantly punished? When is that going to be proven? When does Christ get His moment in the sun? Does the whole thing end with the devil having run the whole thing right out of gas and it stops and we go into eternity and we never have a display in the universe of what it would have been if Jesus Christ had been in control of it?

I think not. I think not. He the supreme law giver, judge, King and ruler, the one who perfectly understands how to control all the diverse elements of the world whether they're redeemed or unredeemed, He who will control everything by the majesty of His own mind and His own power is going to have that opportunity to do just that. And to deprive Him of that opportunity with some mystical reinvention of figures doesn't get it done in my mind. Not so. Are we to believe that this earth is going to come to an end and all it will ever experience is its seduction of Satan, is that it? Will this earth not know what it's...what its existence could be? I mean, are we saying then in Romans chapter 8 that when the creation longs for the great and glorious manifestation of the sons of God that the creation won't ever experience that? That that's mystical? Or are we really believing that God is going to put Christ on this earth to show the universe and the holy angels and all the redeemed and all the unredeemed what a world should be like if Jesus Christ had ruled it? For He will.

And you know, in that Kingdom there are even going to be unbelievers. We know because there's a rebellion at the end of the thousand years from those that are born of the saints that go in in physical bodies. And it tells us that Christ can rule this Kingdom even as a sinful Kingdom. How long has man resisted the rule of Christ? How does man fight against that? How do the nations fight against the rule of God? Oh, they do it all the time, don't they? And they need to see what a world is like when Christ is ruling it and how stupid and silly and small and inept man is at trying to bring together the diverse elements of his own world. So this will be a testimony to all eternity and to all beings in heaven and earth that Jesus Christ is the supreme King, the supreme ruler, the supreme authority who alone can bring the diversity of this created world into harmony even when sin does exist.

Finally, and I love this thought, the earthly visible millennial Kingdom of Christ, just listen to this, is the only and necessary bridge for human history into eternal glory. This is just a marvelous thought. Listen now. The Kingdom of Christ on earth is the bridge into eternity. Now you might not know what I'm saying so let's look at 1 Corinthians 15 for just a moment and I'm going to wrap this up right at this point. First Corinthians 15, marvelous, marvelous text, verse 25. It says here, or verse 24 rather, backing up one, "Then comes the tellos, the end," looking at the end, okay, Christ the firstfruits, then they that are Christ's at His coming, all right, now we know where we are, we're at the coming of Christ, we're at His coming. "Then comes the end at His coming when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God." What Kingdom? What Kingdom is Jesus going to deliver to God?

Well, it tells us. "When He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." First thing He's going to do is it's going to be a Kingdom where nobody else is in control...nobody else is in power. So it can't be any earthly Kingdom that this world's ever known. It's one where all power is put down, verse 25, "And He must reign, He hath put all enemies under His feet."

Now listen, He is going to deliver a Kingdom to God. Now listen to me, when this earth fell, God set out to redeem this earth. And God desired to redeem this earth and then have it presented back to Him. It is that millennial Kingdom in which Christ regathers the earth, reconstitutes it and offers it to the Father, that's that which Paul speaks of. Marvelous thought. He puts down all other rulers, all other authority, all other power. He reigns, subjects all His enemies, finally the enemy of death is destroyed. He puts all things under Christ's feet and when it's all done, what happens? Verse 28, "The Son then becomes subject to Him that put all things under Him that God may be all and all." The Kingdom is the necessary bridge from the kingdom of Satan into the eternal Kingdom of God. It is the time when the Lord takes back, restores, rejuvenates, regenerates the earth, collects it back as a Kingdom fit to offer up to God.

The last act in the thousandyear millennium, you know what it is? The last thing that happens....Satan is loosed for a little while, right? He runs all over the earth, deceives people. A final rebellion, Christ destroys all of the ungodly at the end of the thousand years and all that's left in the Kingdom are the righteous. And He offers it up to God. That earthly Kingdom is the necessary bridge to fulfill the anticipated purpose of Jesus Christ who came into the world as Romans pictures Him, holding in His hand the title deed to the earth, unfolding it seal by seal to take back the earth, to cleanse it, to purify it, to take control of it, to bring all of its discordant members into harmony, to pull the whole thing together, to rule and reign as supreme monarch. And when it's all put together and finally all enemies are destroyed and all rebels are wiped out, and everything is God's, He will then take the Kingdom and present it to God. And God then becomes all in all. Great, great truth.

And then says Matthew 13:43, the righteous will shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. All things will resolve in the Father.

Well, you can see I believe in an earthly literal millennial Kingdom. And that's what I believe Scripture teaches. Now when Jesus comes, and we close with this, listen carefully, when Jesus comes, He's got to decide whose allowed to go into the Kingdom. That is the judgment of the sheep and the goats. Next week we're going to see who the sheep are and who the goats are and finish this sermon. Don't miss it. Let's pray.

Father, as we come to the climax of the sermon of our Lord on His Second Coming, we are in awe of the truth You've given us. And we sense Your great love for love always warns, it always warns. It is not unloving to warn, it is loving. A God of indifference wouldn't have bothered to tell us, but You're a

God of compassion. A God who didn't desire our companionship wouldn't bother to let us know how to spend eternity with Thee, but You love us and so You've told us. A God who didn't care whether we perished wouldn't have bothered to warn us so strongly, but You did because You're not willing that we should perish. Father, we pray that everyone of us would be ready to meet You. And oh how we look forward to being in that Kingdom, that restored Kingdom, that glorious earth ruled by Christ and how we are reminded of what Paul wrote to the Corinthians that we will reign there, too. We will reign. We will judge the world. What a great thought. We thank You, Father, for the hope of Your Second Coming that Jesus will come back. But we pray, Lord, as we look forward to that anticipation that no one would foolishly postpone a right relationship with You, that no one would think to escape the sudden and shocking moment of death, the unexpected coming of Christ which seals forever eternal destiny, but that all of us would be right with You so that should we die at any moment, should You come at any time, we would be ready.

There may be some who figure they'll just wait till the Rapture and then they'll come. But, O Lord, they...they could die so suddenly during the Tribulation, so unexpectedly, so frightfully. We pray that no one will postpone what must be done now, but enter into the blessedness of knowing You. We think even of a dear friend who shared that one in their family had a headon collision three weeks ago and is in a coma and may never, may never live through it, so sudden. So, Lord, help us to be ready for the moment of meeting You.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).