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The Coming Kingdom of God

- ❖ When Jesus began to preach the gospel of salvation, having waited until he was thirty before beginning his ministry, his message concerned the Kingdom of God. He said: *“The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God** is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15).*
- ❖ When the Lord was instructing his followers how best to serve God, he summed up the first part of his talk in these words: *“But seek first **the kingdom of God** and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).*
- ❖ Later Jesus told Nicodemus that *“unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter **the kingdom of God**” (John 3:5).*
- ❖ When the apostle Philip was preaching in Samaria, where he baptized many new believers, the record says: *“When they believed Philip as he preached good news about **the kingdom of God** and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).*

Clearly the Kingdom of God is one of the most important teachings of the New Testament and we need to give it some detailed attention, not least because the Bible gives us lots of different ideas about what God’s kingdom is going to be like.

❖ Paradise Restored

The Garden of Eden, for example, is a description of what the world was like when God had a “king” ruling over His creation. He had asked Adam and Eve to *“have **dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Genesis 1:26).* If they had achieved that – had controlled themselves and

had dominion or ruled over all that God had made – we would not be going through all the difficulties that confront us today. But, as we have seen, Adam lost control. It was not until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that control could be regained. Jesus was successful where Adam had failed – that’s the teaching of Romans chapter 5.¹

They lived in Paradise until Adam and Eve were banished and that was a glimpse into the sort of world that God had prepared for man and woman – a foretaste of what things will be like when Paradise is restored. You will recall that when the Lord Jesus indicated to the dying thief that he would indeed remember him when he came into his kingdom, he used these words: “*You will be with me in Paradise*”² (Luke 23:43). This was a clear indication that the coming kingdom will indeed be as fertile and fruitful as the Garden of Eden. So it should come as no surprise that when the Lord Jesus gave a pictorial review of coming events he described the time when he will reign on earth in the following terms:

*“The angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the **tree of life** with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him ... Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the **tree of life** and that they may enter the city by the gates”* (Revelation 22:1-3, 14).

This is the new state of affairs that will come from heaven to earth, just as Revelation chapter 21 describes it, and it is depicted as the Garden of Eden restored.³ Just as there were rivers in Eden which flowed out to water the earth, and a tree of life, so those elements are included in this

¹ Chapter 12 examined the contrast between Adam and Jesus Christ – the coming King.

² “Paradise” is a word that just means garden or park.

³ “Depicted” means that Revelation uses picture language to describe what is coming, so it does not follow that everything will be exactly like this. But the symbols used are powerful ways of showing the coming transformation.

description of a restored relationship with God. This time the arrangement will benefit the nations of the earth, who are now much in need of healing from generations of bondage to sin and death. Where it had been the case that the tree of life is unavailable, eternal life will become accessible to all whose sins are forgiven, because of their relationship with the Lord Jesus.

❖ **Abundant Fruitfulness**

God cursed the earth because of Adam’s sin so that, to this day, it has not realised its original fruitfulness and fertility.⁴ Paul depicted the earth, using picture language, as though it were groaning with frustration and in expectation, wanting to be free of its present limitations.⁵ It would produce thorns and thistles, and mankind would have to work hard to earn a living from the soil. But in the coming age all that will change and there are many Scriptures that describe the abundant fruitfulness that will result from the coming of the king and the glories of his reign. If you bear in mind that Israel was largely an agricultural economy, you will realise why these descriptions would have meant so much to them. Here is a selection:⁶

*“May there be **abundance of grain** in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its **fruit be like Lebanon**; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field!”* (Psalm 72:16);

*“The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; **the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly** and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God”* (Isaiah 35:1, 2);

*“For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and **makes her wilderness like Eden**, her*

⁴ Genesis 3:17-19.

⁵ “The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (Romans 8:21, 22).

⁶ See also Isaiah 29:17; 32:15; 41:18; 45:8; 55:13; 65:21; Hosea 14:5-7; Joel 3:18-20 and Zechariah 8:12.

desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song” (Isaiah 51:3);

“Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off” (55:13);

“But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people Israel, for they will soon come home ... **I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant**, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations ... And they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become **like the garden of Eden**, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited” (Ezekiel 36:8,30,35);

“Behold, the days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when **the ploughman shall overtake the reaper**⁷ and **the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it**. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant **vineyards** and drink their **wine**, and they shall make **gardens** and eat their **fruit**” (Amos 9:13,14).

❖ Settled Regime

One consequence of such fruitfulness will be that there will be abundant food. Famine will become a thing of the past. Whereas now there is no-one with real influence to care for the most deprived in society, in the coming age there will be a king who cares about them and who will ensure their interests are protected and their needs met. King David anticipated what his successor would achieve – someone who would be greater than Solomon his son – when he said this:

⁷ This means that the harvest will be so abundant that the ploughman will be waiting to get into the field to prepare for the next crop, but will be delayed by the harvesting which is still going on.

“May he **defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!** ... **For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.** From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight” (Psalm 72:4,12-14).

Another consequence of a king who cares about people will be that they will be able to live securely and happily. They will not be displaced by warring factions, herded into refugee camps, or terrorised by a militia. Instead people will be able to live at peace and enjoy the fruits of their labour.

“They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for **like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands**. They shall not labour in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. **The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food.**⁸ **‘They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain’,** says the LORD” (Isaiah 65:21-25);

“They shall sit **every man under his vine and under his fig tree**, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken” (Micah 4:4);

“In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbour to come **under his vine and under his fig tree**” (Zechariah 3:10).

Sitting under a vine or a fig tree might not be our immediate idea of a quiet and relaxing evening, but when those words were first spoken or written they would have conveyed exactly that idea: of a people living together in peace

⁸ Again there are links with the Garden of Eden, both with regard to the animals living together peacefully and the descendants of the serpent suffering the punishment God had meted out.

and plenty. For it was often the case that in time of war these commodities were the first to go, so they became proverbial to describe a long and happy period of continuous prosperity.⁹

❖ Jerusalem Restored

Isaiah tells us more than we might at first realise, for his reference to “*all my holy mountain*” (65:25) means only one place – Jerusalem. This city, built on a mountainous site is the centrepiece of God’s purpose; it is the place that God chose out of all available places in the land of Israel as the site of His temple and the centre of divine government. It was there that kings once reigned for God. It is to this place that God’s appointed king – the Lord Jesus Christ – will return to rule. Jerusalem is destined to be the centre of world government: the capital city of the Kingdom of God when it is restored in the earth.

The previous verses to that passage from Isaiah chapter 65 start with these words:

*“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for **behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people;** no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days ...”* (65:17-20).

It is just one of very many passages that describe the glorious future of Jerusalem when her fortunes are restored and her present problems cease. Here are just a few of those word-pictures:

*“Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised **in the city of our God! His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion,**¹⁰ in the far north, **the city of the great King**”* (Psalm 48:1);

⁹ See Jeremiah 5:17; Hosea 2:12; Joel 1:7,12 and Habakkuk 3:17.

¹⁰ Mount Zion is another of the names for Jerusalem. It is one of the mountains upon which the city is built. (See Isaiah 24:23, in the list of passages on the next page, where Jerusalem and Mount Zion are clearly different names for the same place.)

*“Why do you look with hatred, O many-peaked mountain, at **the mount that God desired for his abode, yes, where the LORD will dwell forever?**”* (Psalm 68:16);

*“On the **holy mount** stands the city he founded; the LORD loves **the gates of Zion** more than all the dwelling places of Jacob. Glorious things of you are spoken, O **city of God**”* (Psalm 87:1-3);

*“**The LORD has chosen Zion;** he has desired it for **his dwelling place:** ‘This is my resting place forever; **here I will dwell,** for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread’”* (Psalm 132:13-15);

*“Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for **the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,** and his glory will be before his elders”* (Isaiah 24:23);

*“Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken. But **there the LORD in majesty** will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor majestic ship can pass. For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us”* (33:20-22);

*“Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O **Jerusalem, the holy city;** for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean ... Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; **he has redeemed Jerusalem**”* (52:1,9);

*“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until **her righteousness** goes forth as brightness, and **her salvation** as a burning torch ... You shall be **a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,** and **a royal diadem in the hand of your God** ... On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set*

*watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest **until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth*** (62:1,3,6-7).

❖ The Kingdom of God Restored

A glance at those passages will explain why the immediate followers of the Lord Jesus expected him to establish God's kingdom on earth there and then. So many Old Testament passages speak of Jerusalem's glorious future, when a king reigns on David's throne in the city he established as Israel's capital. When Jesus appeared, and was declared to be the long-awaited Messiah, it seemed obvious to many that the time had now come when God would fulfil His ancient promises.

- The **prophets of God** foretold the restoration of the kingdom. They said things like: "And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, the former dominion shall come, kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem" (Micah 4:8);¹¹
- **Jesus** endorsed that when – quoting Psalm 48 – he said: "I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King" (Matthew 5:34,35);
- The **crowds** lining the streets, as Jesus entered on an ass, certainly hoped this was the time, for they cried: "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" (Mark 11:10) and "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:38);
- The **disciples** who had been close to Jesus for over three years expected the restoration to take place soon. Just before Jesus ascended to heaven they asked him: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6);

¹¹ When Micah made this prediction the kingdom of Israel was still in existence, for he prophesied at the time of some of its later kings. He predicted the fall of that kingdom (3:12), the return of the scattered people (4:6-7), and the re-establishment of the kingdom in Jerusalem (4:1-5,8).

- **Jesus** did not rebuke them for their misunderstanding but merely replied that their timing was adrift: he said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority" (Acts 1:7);
- The **apostles**, who were sent to preach the gospel, taught that the time would come when the kingdom would be restored: "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago" (Acts 3:19-21);
- The **apostle Paul** writing to the Romans explained, in chapters 9-11, that God's purpose was far from finished with the Jewish people and that, when the time was right, "all Israel will be saved, as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob'; 'and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.' As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers" (Romans 11:26-28).

❖ The Kingdom of God on Earth

Adam lost control and was banished from Paradise and it was many generations later that God offered mankind another chance to exercise dominion and rule on His behalf. That offer was made to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – to the nation of Israel that God redeemed out of slavery in Egypt. It may come as something of a surprise, if this is a new idea to you, but the Bible teaches that God's Kingdom once existed on earth.

To form a kingdom you need people, land, laws and a king. It was when the law of God was being spelled out to the new nation of Israel, in anticipation of their entering the promised land, that God declared them to be a very special people – a kingdom of priests:

*"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a **kingdom of priests and a holy***

nation" (Exodus 19:5,6).

God was their king at the time and He remained in sole control for many years. At first there was Moses and then Joshua to lead the nation; afterwards there were occasional saviours, called judges. It was not until the days when Samuel was in charge that the people demanded a king, like the other nations around them, whereupon God said they were in fact rejecting His absolute rulership:

"The LORD said to Samuel, 'Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them'" (1 Samuel 8:7).

Even so, God instructed Samuel to appoint someone as king and that began a period of monarchy in Israel which lasted altogether about 450 years, though not without its problems. The first king, Saul, led the nation in a way that created unrest and internal difficulty and allowed enemies to take effective control of many parts of the land. His successor was King David; he turned things around and established a nation that was pleasing to God in most respects. He ruled as God's king, understanding that he must himself live subject to God's laws and encouraging the nation in the worship of God and in faithfulness. He was very much a religious leader, but his political accomplishments were also considerable. David conquered the Philistines and subdued them, and then enlarged Israel's territory to establish secure borders. He created a stable economy and put good administrative systems in place.

David ruled over God's kingdom, not his own, and he knew that. The law that he tried to keep was God's law, and he was as obedient to it as were his subjects. It specifically required him to do certain things and forbade other things; see, for example, Deuteronomy chapter 17, verses 14-20. If he, and his successors, remained faithful and obedient they could continue as kings. If they abandoned God's law their throne would be forfeit. Those were the terms on which God permitted kings to reign over His Kingdom as His representatives on earth.

❖ Covenant Conditions

When God made a covenant with David, swearing to him that he and his successors would continue to occupy the

throne, the conditions were that they should continue to be faithful to God and to obey God's law. They did not have the right to continue indefinitely regardless of their behaviour. It was as if a landlord had given the right of occupation subject to certain conditions which, if breached, meant that the tenancy would come to an end.

This was the basis upon which Israel occupied the land,¹² and it was the same for the kings, as David understood perfectly. He knew that his throne was really God's throne; for when it was time to appoint his successor, it was God's appointment not his and God chose one of his youngest sons, Solomon. This is how that appointment is recorded:

"Of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) he has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. He said to me, 'It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues strong in keeping my commandments and my rules, as he is today.' Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever. And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever" (1 Chronicles 28:5-9).

It was "the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel" that Solomon and all his successors occupied and, in case we missed that detail first time around, it is repeated for emphasis a few verses later:

"Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of David his father. And he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him" (29:23).

¹² See Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28, where the terms of their occupation of the land are given in detail.

The king's primary responsibility was to keep the faith; he must be faithful himself and lead the people in the ways of righteousness. King David was an outstanding example of what God demanded. They might have been astute politicians, excellent administrators, clever and gifted individuals; but the assessment of individual kings follows the same pattern throughout the historical record. They either did right in the sight of God, by keeping His commandments, or they did not. That was the crucial thing, and mostly they did not. When King Solomon died, he was succeeded by a foolish son, Rehoboam, who mishandled matters and ignored wise counsel, which resulted in a divided kingdom.

The larger kingdom of Israel in the north of the land had a succession of very wicked kings and eventually the kingdom was overthrown, the last king was killed and the people deported to Assyria. That was the end of that kingdom for ever. The smaller kingdom of Judah, with a king reigning in Jerusalem, fared somewhat better as there were several faithful kings who followed David's example. But there were more bad kings than good ones and eventually God's covenant conditions caught up with them.

The nineteenth and last king was a man named Zedekiah, who reigned in challenging times. He was encouraged to be faithful and God provided him with spiritual help and guidance from one of His great prophets – Jeremiah. But Zedekiah took little notice of what God instructed him to do. In far-away Babylon, another prophet declared God's final judgement upon the king who had breached the covenant conditions whereby he and his descendants occupied the throne:

*“And you, O profane wicked one, prince of Israel, whose day has come, the time of your final punishment, thus says the Lord GOD: Remove the turban and take off the crown. Things shall not remain as they are. Exalt that which is low, and bring low that which is exalted. A ruin, ruin I will make it. This also shall not be, **until he comes, the one to whom judgement belongs, and I will give it to him**” (Ezekiel 21:25-27).*

❖ God's Anointed Successor

It was the end of the kingdom of God that had existed on earth ever since God rescued Israel out of Egypt. He had

ruled over them as king, first directly and then indirectly. There would be no more kings “*until he comes*”. One day God would anoint a successor to sit on King David's throne in Jerusalem and he would rule for God over the restored Kingdom of God on earth. He would be the Messiah, the anointed one – which is what the Greek word “*Christ*” actually means. So it was that when God's Son was to be born to Mary these ancient promises were referred to as things that were on the verge of fulfilment.

Long ago the prophet Isaiah had foretold the virgin birth and the role of the Son who would be born:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14, referred to in Matthew 1:23);

*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, **on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore.** The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this” (Isaiah 9:6, 7).*

It was the angel Gabriel who told Mary that her Son would be the one to fulfil all these promises. He told her:

*“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And **the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.**’ And Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’ And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God!’” (Luke 1:30-35).*

❖ Prince of Peace

The coming king will rule for God in Jerusalem, as did David's other successors, and will far exceed them in what

he is able to accomplish. King Jesus is to rule the world from Jerusalem. What was once the capital city of a tiny little country is to become the capital city of the world, as the prophets of God foretold long ago:

*“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning **Judah and Jerusalem**. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ **For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore**” (Isaiah 2:1-4);*

*“**The LORD will be king over all the earth**. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one. The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses. And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. **Jerusalem shall dwell in security**” (Zechariah 14:9-11);*

*“In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! **May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!** May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust! May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! **May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!**” (Psalm 72:7-11);*

*“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and **in righteousness he judges and makes war** ... He is*

*clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is **The Word of God**. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and **he will rule them with a rod of iron**. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **King of kings and Lord of lords**” (Revelation 19:11-16).*

This will be the world government of God. It will be exercised in righteousness, not to the glory of man, nor to the furtherance of his greatness and magnificence. A king will reign in righteousness and the world will be greatly blessed as a result. For one thousand years the reign of the Lord Jesus will continue until the mortal population of the world has had every opportunity to see the blessings that come from following God’s law.

*“Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. **They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years**. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended” (Revelation 20:4,5).¹³*

This thousand year reign of the Lord Jesus is known as the Millennium and it will be the best thousand years in the world’s history to date. Those who are privileged to experience that time will have the opportunity to see the coming Prince of Peace take control of the world, gradually subdue its warring tendencies and establish true peace. Over time the nations of the world will learn peace and will come to understand the principles of true worship and the true joy of living. And the Jewish nation will have an important part to play in that Kingdom, for God’s purpose with

¹³ As far as we can tell this reference is to a literal period of 1000 years and it is sometimes linked to the period of 6000 years of Bible history, making this the final period which aligns with the seventh day of creation in which God rested from all His work.

them is not yet complete, as the apostle Paul goes on to explain in his Letter to the Romans.

Things to Read

- 📖 Psalm 72 was written by King David just before he died and it looked forward to a king who would one day sit on his throne in Jerusalem. David was succeeded by king Solomon, but this Psalm is about the time when king Jesus will reign from Jerusalem.
- 📖 Isaiah chapter 35 describes the time when the people of God will be gathered together to Jerusalem. It speaks of “everlasting joy”, which is a good two-word description of what God’s coming kingdom will be like for those who are privileged to experience it.

Questions to Think About

- 20.1 When Jesus was about to ascend to heaven from the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, his disciples asked him something. They were then told two important things, one by Jesus and one by an angel. What were they told and why were all those things important? (Acts 1:1-11; Zechariah 14:1-4)
- 20.2 The prophets tell us a great deal about the coming king and His kingdom. Read Micah chapter 4 and then list the things the prophet Micah says about the future of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of God when it is established again on earth.



“The LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one” (Zechariah 14:9).