

5. The Millennium

Insights into Eternity

Eternity is Written on the DNA of our Soul.

We are now into the fifth study of Insights into Eternity, and I hope that, by now, you have gained some insight into the topic of eternity and are fully assured of your destiny bought for you at the cross of Christ. Somehow, in our inner soul for many of us, it just did not ring true that this life that we experience in our short time on earth is all that there is. First, when we look at the complexities of life, the closer we get to the structure of atoms, one who examines the evidence finds it completely illogical to buy into any theory that denies our Creator. There are questions that science cannot answer. There is something in our hearts that tells us that there is more to life than what we experience in the here and now. King Solomon, known as one of the wisest men who has ever lived, said: □

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Solomon spoke of God's creative design by saying that our inner nature is divinely imprinted with impressions of eternity. The French Bible translates the original Hebrew saying that God has “set the thoughts of eternity in our hearts.” Prince Charles once talked about the inner emptiness of the human soul; he said, “For all the advantages of science, there remains deep in the soul a persistent and unconscious anxiety that something is missing.” Princess Diana, speaking at a charity event, spoke of “an overwhelming sense of loss and isolation that undermines many people's efforts to survive and cope with the complexities of modern life. They know,” she said, “something is missing.” Deep in our heart of hearts, until we come to Christ, there is an awareness of a void, an emptiness of soul. We try to satisfy it with drugs, alcohol, sex, possessions, power, money, and prestige, but nothing satisfies because we are created with that emptiness. As Blaise Pascal, the French philosopher and mathematician, wrote, “Within each human being there is a God-shaped void.”

C.S. Lewis, in his book, *Mere Christianity*, wrote:

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing.

The fifth-century philosopher Augustine wrote, “Our hearts are unquieted until they find their rest in Thee.”¹ This missing piece is God Himself. He is the Living Water, the Bread of Life. He alone is the only One that can satisfy us. Haggai the prophet writes: “**I will shake all nations, and**

¹ <http://www.newlife.org/know-god-personally>

what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty" (Haggai 2:7). The One desired of all nations, the Holy One of Israel, Jesus the Messiah, will come and stand upon the Earth, and in our resurrection bodies, we shall see God. Job told us: ²⁵"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. ²⁶"Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; ²⁷Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another" (Job 19:25-27). His second coming and presence on Earth will precede a glorious time of peace. In this study, we will examine what the Bible says about the thousand years of righteousness, joy, and peace under the reign of the King of Kings, Christ Jesus.

Question 1) What evidence do you see of spiritual hunger in today's society? Can you think of ways that this hunger is expressed in our culture?

The Thousand Year Peace.

In the third study on the resurrection body, we talked about the resurrection of the saints at the return of Christ. Those who are born again and walking with Christ will receive an imperishable body, a body of power that is immortal. This body will be like Christ's resurrection body, a body sown in dishonor, but raised in glory (1 Corinthians 15:43). The saints, are given authority to reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:2) and Satan will be bound and thrown into the Abyss (Revelation 20:1-3).

¹And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ²He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a **thousand years**. ³He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the **thousand years** were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. ⁴I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a **thousand years**. ⁵(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the **thousand years** were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a **thousand years** (Revelation 20:1-6 Emphasis mine).

Theologians and scholars call this thousand-year reign of Christ, the Millennium. The word millennium means a thousand. There are three beliefs about the Millennium. The first is called *Amillennialism*. An Amillennialist believes that the thousand years mentioned five times in the passage above is not a literal number but a symbolic number and represents the time we are in now, the church age. Secondly, there is *postmillennialism*. Postmillennialists also believe that the 1000-year period mentioned in the passage above is not literally 1,000 years. In their view, the church will bring in a golden age of Christian ethics and that Jesus' Second Coming will come after that period. Thirdly, there is *premillennialism*, to which I hold. A premillennialist believes that Jesus' coming will be after a time of tribulation, that He will raise the saints, those

who have been born-again of the Spirit, and that the saints will rule and reign with Him in a literal thousand-year reign on the earth.□

The dragon that ancient serpent that appeared in the Garden of Eden, also called the devil and Satan will be bound, verse three tells us, in the *Abyss* (Greek word is *Abussos*, a word that means bottomless, unfathomed; enormous; unbounded; immeasurable depth). There will be no more war until the 1000 years are up, and then Satan must be released for a time.

Question 2) Imagine what our world will be like when Satan is bound. What changes do you think will come about for those living on earth in total freedom from Satanic influence?

For the saints, the body of Christ, in their new resurrection bodies, there will be no temptation towards evil and sin. The Scriptures tell us that, with Satan bound in the Abyss, there will be no more deception at work on the earth (Verse 3). Our resurrection bodies will take away all fear of harm. There will be no fear of death. From the point when Jesus returns, the saints are immortal. Our sin nature, also, will be taken away, and there will be no desire to sin at all. Because we will be operating in a free capacity, our creativity will be unleashed. We will see our bodies, souls, and minds operating at a different level, free from constraint. We will experience life as God intended us to know it. The whole creation has been waiting for the time when those of us who are in Christ will put on our incorruptible bodies (1 Corinthians 15:54). At that time, something will change the nature of the animal kingdom:

¹⁹The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time (Romans 8:19-22).

When Paul the apostle wrote to the church in Rome about the *creation*, I wonder what was in his mind. I think he was referring to the animal kingdom that is so fearful of humankind. Since the Fall, the relationship between humanity and the animal kingdom has suffered. Today, we see the devastating effects of modern agriculture and livestock farming methods that bring great suffering to the creation. This is not what God intended, and the animal kingdom is suffering, along with humanity. The inner longing and groaning of all the animal kingdom are for the changing of their nature of fear toward humanity and one another when Jesus comes and the Millennium begins. Isaiah the prophet also has something to say about that time:

¹A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD - ³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips, he will slay the wicked. ⁵Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. ⁶The wolf will

live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. ⁹They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious (Isaiah 11:1-10).

Isaiah starts out by talking about the One who will bring this time of change. It is not the Church's overcoming all the power of evil, but the shoot from the stump of Jesse, speaking of King David's father. Out of one of the descendants of David will come forth a King who will judge the earth. This One, the Lord Jesus, will not judge things with what He sees or hears. He will judge difficult situations because He knows all and has perfect judgment about all things. He will rule in righteousness. He has come to earth and suffered the worst of humanity and injustice and has overcome all. He is the One who has the power to speak and create with His words. With the breath of His lips, He will slay the wicked (v. 4). **“But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap”** (Malachi 3:2).

Question 3) Isaiah 11:9 tells us that “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Discuss what you think this verse means. How do you think the knowledge of the Lord will permeate the earth? How is the creation affected?

Notice the changes that take place when Christ is on the throne. Animals that are opposites to one another will feed alongside one another (vs. 6-7). The wolf and the sheep lying down with one another at night—living with one another. The lion, one of the most carnivorous animals on the planet, will eat straw in the same way an ox does (v. 7). Then, there will be children reaching into the dens of adders and playing with the venomous snakes (v. 8). When this prophecy was given 600 years before Christ, ferocious animals were abundant in Israel, but Isaiah prophesies of a time when children will play with the animals, and the earth will be at peace. In fact, Isaiah says that the *goyim*, the gentile nations, because knowledge of God will cover the earth, will place their trust in Him, and His rest will be glorious (v. 10). It will be the Sabbath 1000-year rest. The prayer for peace on earth and good will towards men will finally be answered. God's presence and reign will accomplish this. All of His creation will eventually live in peace. □

A New Earth and New Heavens

In a later passage the prophet Isaiah (65:17-25), talks again about this same time when there will be significant changes on the Earth:

¹⁷“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. ²⁰“Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days,

or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. ²¹They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them. ²⁴Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. ²⁵The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the Lord (Isaiah 65:17-25).

The Lord says that there will be a new earth and new heavens, too. What is meant by these words? At first glance, we could interpret the passage as saying that we will all be moved to a new planet, but that is not the meaning. Randy Alcorn in his book, *Heaven*, says that the expression "Heaven and Earth" is a biblical designation for the entire universe. He says:

When Revelation 21:1 speaks of "a new heaven and a new earth," it indicates a transformation of the entire universe. The Greek word *kainos*, translated "new," indicates that the earth God creates won't merely be new as opposed to old, but new in quality and superior in character. According to Walter Bauer's lexicon, *kainos* means new "in the sense that what is old has become obsolete, and should be replaced by what is new. In such a case the new is, as a rule, superior to the old. It means, therefore, "not the emergence of a cosmos totally other than the present one, but the creation of a universe which, though it has been gloriously renewed, stands in continuity with the present one." Paul uses the same word, *kainos* when he speaks of a believer becoming "a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The New Earth will be the same as the old Earth, just as a new Christian is still the same person he was before. Different? Yes, But also the same.²

The way the Earth has been for centuries will be changed and hardly remembered (v.17). It will be a time of complete renewal and restoration. The new heavens, perhaps, refer to the destruction of the enemy's habitation in the invisible realm where he has waged his campaign against humanity. Up to that point, Satan is called the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). Luke in writing the Book of Acts, says that Jesus "**must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets**" (Acts 3:21). The earth will be restored to its pristine beauty and fertility. Those who are alive during the Millennium will long enjoy the fruit of their work; what they plant they will harvest. What they build will be theirs in which to live.

When Jesus comes at the rapture and resurrection of the saints, not all of earth's population, as far as I see it, will be killed. After the rapture and resurrection of the saints and the wrath of God are poured out, the angels will weed out of Christ's kingdom all evil. "**The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil**" (Matthew 13:41). In my opinion, there will still be unredeemed people on earth during the

² Randy C. Alcorn, *Heaven*, published by Tyndale Publishers, Inc. Copyright 2004, Page 149.

Millennium. While we wait for the coming of Christ, we have three adversaries, the world, our sinful nature, and the Devil.

No longer will those mortals that are unredeemed have to deal with temptation and deception from the evil one. This time will be a period of restoration before the final judgment. It will be a blessed time with people living, in most cases, many hundreds of years as they did in the book of Genesis. Adam lived for 930 years (Genesis 5:5), Seth lived for 912 years (Genesis 5:8), and Methuselah lived for 969 years (Genesis 5:27). Those that are unredeemed will still have to face the Great White Throne judgment, which does not take place until the end of the Millennium. The saints, those born again by the Spirit of God, will never die. They are imperishable (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Let me be clear regarding the difference between heaven and the millennium. Although the Millennium will be a time when we experience God's kingdom on earth, there is more to come! At the end of the Millennium the New Jerusalem will come down from God, and there will be no more death:□

¹Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:1-4).

The theme of the whole of Scripture is of a picture of redemption. When Jesus died for sin, He did not just cancel the penalty of sin. He paid for it in full. Since Divine justice was satisfied, Christ has every right to restore things to their intended purpose, their intended glory. When He comes to reign, He will set things in their place, and we will see the full deliverance of the earth. He has ransomed the earth, and the earth will finally experience the knowledge of the Lord.

Many nations will come to Jerusalem, the capital city of all the earth, to seek the Lord and worship Him. No more will there be different religions. All men will finally realize that one of the strategies that Satan used to divide and conquer them was religion. All the people will understand that there is only one God, and His knowledge will be universal. Jerusalem, the city itself, will be changed. The Lord Himself will be there:

²In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. ³Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Imagine living on planet Earth where the Lord Jesus Christ is reigning on His throne in Jerusalem. There will be no economic need for tanks, guns, and weapons of war; it will be a time of great economic prosperity because man will not train for war anymore (Isaiah 2:4). Christ Jesus will set up His government on Earth composed of the saints. Every nation will be at peace with one another with King Jesus sitting on His throne. Those who are reigning over countries, territories, states, cities, and towns are those who have been counted worthy because of their faithfulness in resisting evil and caring for God's people.

Jerusalem itself will be raised higher than the mountains around it (v. 2). At the moment, one can look down on Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives on the east side. It is possible that Jerusalem will be raised through some geological happening. The King, the Lord Jesus Christ, will teach us of His ways and settle any remaining disputes between nations. The Scriptures tell us that the New Jerusalem does not come down to Earth from above until the 1000 years are over (Revelation 21:1-2). Until that point, the throne of King Jesus is in Jerusalem, where many peoples will come to praise and worship King Jesus (Isaiah 2:2-3). Isaiah the prophet says, **"Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar" (Isaiah 33:17).** Can you imagine sitting at the feet of Jesus while He teaches us His ways? **He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths" (Isaiah 2:3).**

Finally, the Israel vs. Palestinian issue will be settled. There will be peace between the sons of Isaac; the brothers named Jacob and Esau, Jew and Arab:□

²³In that day there will be **a highway from Egypt to Assyria.** The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together.
²⁴**In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth.** ²⁵The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance" (Isaiah 19:23-25).

We will finally see peace in every troubled part of our world. Greed, selfishness, and hostility will give way to peace, as the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, in the same way as the waters cover the seas.□

Prayer: Father, we thank you for your plan of redemption. We pray that we will be able to see our true riches in life here and now. We desire your mercy, compassion, and peace that you want us to experience in this life and also to share with others. Together we pray,

"May your kingdom come, and may your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Keith Thomas,

Email: keiththomas@groupbiblestudy.com

Website: www.groupbiblestudy.com