

Session 5 Reigning on Earth in the Age to Come

I. REIGNING WITH CHRIST IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

- A. The eternal reward that is most emphasized in the Scriptures is reigning with Jesus in the age to come. Jesus will rule in partnership with resurrected saints (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; cf. Mt. 19:28-30; 25:21-23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12). Being involved in leadership in the nations with Jesus gives us a profound sense of relevance for our life.

¹⁰“*[You] made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.*” (Rev. 5:10)

- B. The Lord desires that we be enthroned at the highest level of authority in the created order (Rev. 3:21). He has planned an indescribable exaltation of His people as a part of His eternal government. We are destined to live forever as the wealthy ruling class, or aristocracy, of the New Jerusalem.

²¹“*To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne.*” (Rev. 3:21)

²⁴“*Father, I desire that they...may be with Me...may behold [experience] My glory.*” (Jn. 17:24)

- C. The positions of authority and work assignments that many saints will receive in the age to come in reigning with Christ will bring them *great joy* in partnering with the One they love.

²¹“*I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.*” (Mt. 25:21)

- D. We will all have different work assignments with varying measures of authority—some will be least and some greatest in the millennial kingdom (Mt. 5:19; 18:4; 20:25-27; 23:11-12; Mk. 10:42-44; Lk. 9:48; 14:11; 19:17-19). Some will have leadership over a nation as a king (Rev. 1:6; 5:10), some will have authority over ten cities, some over five, etc. (Lk. 19:17-19).

¹⁹“*Whoever...breaks...the least of these commandments...shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom.*” (Mt. 5:19)

¹⁷“*Because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.*” ¹⁸“*And the second came...¹⁹likewise he said to him, “You also be over five cities.”*” (Lk. 19:17-19)

- E. The angelic ranks also have varying levels of authority. The Russian Orthodox Church ranks angelic beings in nine levels of authority. The highest ranks are *seraphim* (Isa. 6:2), *cherubim* (Gen. 3:24), and *thrones*. The middle ranks are *dominions* (Col. 1:16), *powers* (1 Pet. 3:22), and *authorities*. The lowest ranks are *principalities*, *archangels* (1 Thes. 4:16), and *angels*.

II. THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM: THE 1,000-YEAR REIGN OF JESUS

- A. The Millennium is a 1,000-year period in which Jesus will rule the whole world in righteousness. Millennium comes from the Latin “*mille*”—*a thousand*. At that time, the kingdom of God will be openly manifested worldwide, affecting every sphere of life (political, agricultural, economic, spiritual, educational, law enforcement, social institutions, media, families, arts, etc.).

6...they shall be priests of God...and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Rev. 20:6)

- B. The result will be a 1,000-year period of unprecedented blessing for the whole earth as Jesus establishes righteousness and prosperity. He will restore the agriculture, atmosphere, and animal life to the conditions seen in the garden of Eden (Rev. 20:1-6; cf. Deut. 8; 28; Ps. 2:6-12; 110; Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-16; 51:1-8; 60-62; 65:17-25; Mt. 6:10; 17:11; 19:28; 28:19; Acts 1:6; 3:21).
- C. In the Millennium, all the kings of the earth will be saved, worship Jesus, and base their national governments on God's Word (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isa. 62:2; Rev. 21:24).

¹¹All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. (Ps. 72:11)

III. CENTERPIECE OF GOD'S PURPOSE: BRINGING HEAVEN AND EARTH TOGETHER

- A. The centerpiece of God's eternal purpose is for Jesus to establish His kingdom over all the earth as He joins the heavenly and earthly realms together. God created the universe in two realms—**heaven** speaks of the spiritual realm where God's presence is openly manifested, and **earth** speaks of the physical realm where human process and physical sensation reach their fullest expression.

⁹Having made known to us the mystery of His will...¹⁰that He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. (Eph. 1:9-10)

- B. God's purpose has always been for His people to live together with Him in this way. This is the interpretive key to understanding many end-time passages. In the Millennium, the natural human processes will not be suspended, but will be significantly enhanced by the supernatural dimension of the Spirit. We see aspects of the natural and the supernatural dimensions operating together when Jesus appeared with His resurrected body to teach the apostles for 40 days (Jn. 20-21; Acts 1:3).
- C. There will be three types of people on earth when Jesus appears in the sky. The **redeemed** will be raptured at the time of Jesus' return. The **reprobate**, who took the mark of the Beast, will be judged. The **resisters**, the unsaved survivors of the tribulation who resisted the Antichrist, will need to be saved and will populate the millennial earth (Isa. 4:3; 10:20; 11:11; 49:6; 65:8; 66:19; Jer. 31:2; Ezek. 20:38-42; 36:36; Amos 9:9-10; Joel 2:32; Zech. 12:14; 13:8; 14:16).
- D. The New Jerusalem will come down to the earth (Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10).

¹²“...the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.” (Rev. 3:12)

IV. THE NATURAL PROCESSES OF LIFE WILL CONTINUE ON EARTH FOR 1,000 YEARS

- A. The millennial earth will have both natural and supernatural dimensions operating together.
- B. The natural processes of life will continue. There will be a need to establish infrastructure for every sphere of life in every city and village throughout the earth.

- C. This infrastructure will include *life support systems* (food, water, electricity), *building projects* (buildings, highways, bridges, etc.), *economic systems* (currencies, banking, investments, etc.), *spiritual life* (worship centers, Bible schools, etc.), *education* (from elementary to university levels), *law enforcement*, *agriculture*, *media and arts*, *technology*, *environment*, *social institutions*, etc.

V. PHYSICAL PROXIMITY TO JESUS

- A. Jesus' physical body in the age to come will be *in only one place at a time*. By the Spirit, we will all have communication with Him, feel His presence, and know His heart. Jesus has two natures—He is fully human and fully divine; this is known as the *hypostatic union*. He is omnipresent in His deity—always with us. But as a man, Jesus can only be in one place at a time in His physical body.
- B. I believe that our work assignment will affect the closeness of our physical proximity to Jesus. Some work assignments in the age to come will bring some of God's people into closer physical proximity to Jesus as they work more closely with Him as part of His "global leadership team."
40 "...but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not Mine to grant." (Mk. 10:40)
- C. We see this principle employed in the way He interacted with people in different ways during His earthly ministry. For example, He related differently to the 3, the 12, the 70, the 120, and the multitudes. He only took Peter, James, and John with Him to pray in the garden (Mt. 26:36-38).
36 Jesus came with them to...Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee... 38 He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." (Mt. 26:36-38)
- D. Some eternal rewards highlight what I refer to as the "with Me" promises given to overcomers.
4 "You have a few... in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy..." 20 If anyone...opens the door, I will...dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne." (Rev. 3:4, 20-21)

VI. THE FUNCTION OF THE RESURRECTED SAINTS

- A. The two functions most emphasized for the saints are priests and kings (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Both functions relate to reigning, which involves many different activities.
10 ...and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. (Rev. 5:10)
- B. **Priests:** Resurrected saints will *worship, intercede, teach, and communicate* the knowledge of God to others—to non-resurrected people on the millennial earth, and to saints and angels who will live in the New Jerusalem. OT priests taught God's word (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 24:8; 33:10; Mal. 2:7).
11 ...that you may teach...all the statutes which the LORD has spoken... (Lev. 10:11)

1. The government of the millennial earth will be associated with intercession and worship (Ps. 2:8-9; 72:15; 96:1, 9; 98:1-9; 102:15-22; 149:6-9; Isa. 19:22; 30:18-20; 35:10; 51:11; 52:8; 56:6-8; 62:6-7; Ezek. 36:37; Zech. 8:20-23; 10:1; 12:10; 14:16-18; Mal. 1:11).

2. God’s wisdom is made known to angels by the church (1 Cor. 6:3; Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12).

¹⁰...the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. (Eph. 3:10)

³Do you not know that we shall judge [evaluate]angels? (1 Cor. 6:2-3)

C. **Kings:** Resurrected saints will reign with judicial responsibility and authority to establish a godly social order that includes *evaluating* the past (judging), determining *action plans*, along with *selecting, training, and managing* people in the infrastructure under their authority.

D. We will make real decisions that will impact the quality of life for others and express unique aspects of our personality. Reigning will be relational, not automated like robots that simply implement decisions sent from headquarters. Jesus has the ability to rule without us, because He has infinite power, wisdom, and time. But He involves us because He delights in relating to His people.

⁴I saw thrones, and they [the saints] sat on them, and judgment [decision-making] was committed to them...and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4)

²Do you not know that the saints will judge [evaluate] the world? (1 Cor. 6:2)

VII. TWO LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT: NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL

A. Jesus will rule a kingdom that includes two types of kings—*the kings of the earth* (those with non-resurrected bodies) and *resurrected kings* (saints with resurrected bodies). Together they will establish a godly social order that will transform every sphere of society in the Millennium. Jesus reigns now at God’s right hand over the kings of the earth, but His leadership over the kings of the earth in this age is not fully manifested in the way it will be in the Millennium.

B. In the Millennium, resurrected saints will reign with authority over the leaders with non-resurrected bodies living on earth. This is parallel to angels being over leaders who live on earth in this age.

C. Currently, angels have charge over cities “in the spirit” (Ezek. 9:1-2).

¹Let those [angels] who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon. (Ezek. 9:1)

D. Human leaders are influenced by angels and demons. The prince of Persia (demonic power over Persia) influenced the human king of Persia. Michael the prince is an archangel (Dan. 10:20-21).

²⁰“Now I [a mighty angel] must return to fight with the [demonic] prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the [demonic] prince of Greece will come. ²¹...No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince [the archangel assigned to Israel].” (Dan. 10:20-21)

- E. Michael the archangel stands guard over the nation of Israel (Dan. 12:1). An angel protected Israel in her exodus from Egypt (Ex. 14:18-19), killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers besieging Jerusalem (2 Kgs. 19:35), and killed King Herod Agrippa who was persecuting the church (Acts 12:23).
- F. In the Millennium, the nations will not be subject to angels, but to resurrected leaders (Heb. 2:5). The saints will even judge, or evaluate, angels in the age to come (1 Cor. 6:3).

⁵For He has not put the world to come...in subjection to angels. (Heb. 2:5)

VIII. THE PROGRESSIVE INCREASE OF THE KINGDOM INTO EVERY AREA OF LIFE

- A. Jesus’ government will progressively increase (Isa. 9:7). Social improvements, or the healing of the nations, will be progressive, not instantaneous. The infrastructure to govern each sphere of society will gradually increase in capacity, quality, and impact as leaders grow in wisdom and skill. It may take 1,000 years for righteousness to spread and mature in every sphere of society of every nation.

⁷Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it...from that time forward, even forever. (Isa. 9:7)

- B. The dominion mandate given to Adam and the human race is an eternal mandate (Gen. 1:26-28).

²⁶God said, “Let Us make man in Our image...let them have dominion over...all the earth...

²⁸God said..., “Be fruitful...have dominion over...every living thing...” (Gen. 1:26-28)

- C. Jesus will establish “training institutions” so that the nations may systematically learn of His ways (political, economic, social, spiritual, educational, agricultural, family, media, technology, etc.).

³Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He [Jesus] will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” Out of Zion shall go forth the law [teaching]...the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Isa. 2:3)

- D. The saints will live in the New Jerusalem but will rule with responsibilities *on earth*. I compare this to a senator who lives in their home state but rules in part from a senatorial seat in Washington DC.
- E. Jesus, as the ultimate “nation-builder,” will establish infrastructure in the nations in partnership with resurrected saints, who will have a dynamic role in overseeing leaders on earth (non-resurrected natural bodies). Resurrected saints will relate to, but probably not fully intermingle with, those in natural bodies. Jesus spoke with His disciples for 40 days in His resurrected body (Acts 1:3). In this age, for example, angels sometimes appear to people to instruct or aid them.

- F. Resurrected saints, in partnership with the leaders of the millennial earth, will work together to fully restore cities (Isa. 61:4; Ezek. 36:36), justice in society (Isa. 9:7; 11:3-5; 28:17; 32:16; 42:1-4), the agriculture, the atmosphere, and animal life (Deut. 8; 28; Isa. 51:1-8; 60:1-62:12; 65:17-25).

They shall rebuild the old ruins...repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.
(Isa. 61:4)

- G. The kings of the earth will enter the New Jerusalem to bring the glory of their nation to the Lord and to bring home the leaves of the tree of life, which will be involved in the process of healing the millennial nations. It may take 1,000 years for the land to be fully healed in every nation.

24The kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it [New Jerusalem]...22:2The tree of life...bore twelve fruits...the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 21:24-22:2)

8This water flows [from Jesus' throne in the millennial temple] toward...the sea [the Dead Sea], its waters are healed...9There will be a very great multitude of fish...and everything will live wherever the river goes...12Along the bank of the river...will grow all kinds of trees...because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.
(Ezek. 47:1-12)

IX. THERE WILL BE MANY DIFFERENT WORK ASSIGNMENTS

- A. There may be several billion saints—not all will be kings over a nation. There are about 200 nations in the world today. I assume there may be a similar number of nations in the age to come.
- B. I also assume that most saints will reign in some regard, even if over only a small area of society. We will all have different work assignments with varying measures of authority and responsibility. Some resurrected saints will be kings over nations. Others will be over ten cities or five cities, and some will be over various parts of the infrastructure in a city. Every job will have a measure of authority and reign, whether it be over a nation or working on a small neighbourhood council.
- C. In the US today, there are about 100 cities with a population of 4 million or more, 5,000 cities with a population of 100,000 or more, and 50,000 cities with a population of 2,500 or more. The US Census Bureau designates a city as having 2,500+ people. There are about 2,000,000 cities, towns, and villages in the earth. Not every saint will reign over a nation, city, town, or village. There are many different roles in the infrastructure of a nation. For example, in 2016 there were over 22 million people in the USA employed in the infrastructure of the country—federal, state, and local.

X. OVERCOMERS ARE PROMISED POWER OVER THE NATIONS

- A. The reward for overcoming *immorality, idolatry, and the state of being lukewarm* is to reign with Jesus in the Millennium (Rev. 2:20-27; 3:16-21). The essence of idolatry is covetousness (Col. 3:5).

²⁰“You allow...Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols...²⁶And he who overcomes...to him I will give power over the nations. ²⁷He shall rule them...” (Rev. 2:20-26)

¹⁶“You are lukewarm...²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne.” (Rev. 3:16-21)

- B. Jesus connected the obedience of the apostles to His promise that they sit on thrones (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:29-30). Eternal rewards are not based on ability, but on our responses. Jesus prophesied to the apostles about their role in the Millennium to motivate them to walk in humility and diligence.

²⁷“We [the apostles] have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” ²⁸Jesus said to them, “...in the regeneration [the Millennium]...you who have followed Me will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Mt. 19:27-28)

²⁸“But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. ²⁹I bestow upon you a kingdom...³⁰that you may...sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Lk. 22:28-30)

- C. Those who are faithful in a few things now will have authority over many things then (Mt. 25:21).

²¹...you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. (Mt. 25:21)

- D. Our life on earth in this age can be likened to a 70-year internship (Ps. 90:10) that prepares us for our life on earth in the age to come. Our *preparatory* assignment is a **70-year assignment** on earth (our internship). Our *primary* assignment is a **1,000-year assignment** on earth after Jesus returns.

- E. Some of our personal prophecies will have their greatest fulfillment in the Millennium. Many of the prophecies in Scripture for Jesus, the nation of Israel, and Abraham (Gen. 12-17) have their greatest fulfillment in the Millennium. David had more personal prophecies recorded in Scripture about his 1,000-year assignment in the Millennium than his 40-year kingship (2 Sam. 7:16; 2 Chr. 6:6; 13:5; Isa. 55:3-4; Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos. 3:4-5; Amos 9:11-12). Others with biblical prophecies related to the Millennium include the *apostles* (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:29-30; Rev. 21:14), *Daniel* (Dan. 12:13), *Elijah* (Mal. 4:5-6; Mt. 17:10-11), *Zerubbabel* (Hag. 2:21-23), *Ezekiel* (Ezek. 43:18-19); *Aaron* (1 Chr. 23:13), the *tribe of Levi* (1 Chr. 15:2), *Phinehas* (Num. 25:10-13), *Zadok* (Ezek. 44:15-16), *Mary of Bethany* (Lk. 10:42), *Cornelius* (Acts 10:4), and *Paul* (2 Tim. 4:8).