

The Bible is clear that in the future inheritance, there will be several classes of people. There will be God in heaven, Jesus as His Son reigning as King of Kings, the immortal saints who will be the King priests of the Age to come reigning with him over various cities, the Immortal angels ministering to the faithful, the mortal nation of Israel placed over other nations as God's covenanted people, then there will be the rest of the mortal population.

The purpose of the millennial reign of 1000 years is one of transition and preparation. Just as God has been preparing the earth for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ as prophecy requires, so he will be preparing the earth for the actual presence of the Almighty who has promised to come down from heaven to be amongst His children. During this period the restored temple at Jerusalem will be the House of prayer for all nations. As God dwells in unapproachable light, which would destroy any mortal who approached Him, Jesus has been able to sit with Him in heaven because his body has been transformed into a celestial one with a different nature than the fallen condemned state all sons and daughters of Adam possess now. Physically he will look the same although he is at the maximum vitality of the fulness of youth, not at the age when he died when he looked closer to fifty! Accordingly, the mortal population will all move on at the end of the thousand years to either partake of the second death at the last judgment or will join the ranks of the immortal saints having been judged faithful by the Father Himself who presides over this final exercise of discernment. Perhaps the Eternal will use that unapproachable light to affect His judgment as the souls will either be destroyed or survive depending on whether He has immortalised them as a reward for their faith and trust in Him.

The very set up of the temple is geared towards the continuing presence of a mortal population who need to manifest their faith in the divine arrangement of sacrifice, *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins"*. When looking at the priesthood it was noted that some of the new order will be based around the Levitical in contrast to those of Melchizedek who are the immortal saints. The Levitical priests marry and sweat as they are mortals, 44v18,22. They will be males only and as such they will neither be allowed to be bald nor to have long hair as a woman, but *"they shall poll their heads"*. They will interact with the mortal population who bring their offerings to the temple to be killed at the slaying blocks inside the outer range of buildings so that their dead carcasses can be more easily transported across the Utter Court between the outer and inner temples to be passed over to the immortal priesthood based there, for them to convey to the central altar high above the whole edifice.

It will be a House of prayer for all people, and these people will not be forced to come but will be encouraged to do so. Zechariah 14 sets out the scene of the residual population who survive the initial wars of rejection against the rule of Christ to celebrate the restoration of the Jewish festivals, including Passover and Tabernacles. The mention of YHWH Sabaoth, the LORD of hosts as the King does seem strange as the Father will not be present amongst mortals, how can He be? However, as this is an expression of God manifestation – I will be armies – rather than the very person of God Himself then we can understand it in that way. This does mean that Jesus as King is worshipped.

*“And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King the LORD of hosts and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”*

Why does Christ use the big stick approach here in the Kingdom rather than appeal to the spirituality of the person seeking repentance? The issue seems to be that the crowd control is for the national scene whereby the separate nations come under the jurisdiction of the reign of Christ and need to be disciplined and organised in keeping with the goal of worldwide peace after spiritual education. The conversion of individuals through faith can follow thereafter.

The same basic way that people are called to embrace the One Truth must be similar if not identical in every age, if there is an even-handed opportunity for everyone. Some argue that the mortal population under the millennial reign of Christ have a distinct advantage, but that is not so as the increased state of blessedness translates into an increased level of trial. The sheer abundance of material advantage under the benign reign of Jesus will be a distraction for these people, they will enjoy the return of a longer lifetime and a reduction in the disabling effects of old age, Isaiah 65v20, Zech 8v4.

The constant requirement for mortal participants to be in this temple have caused some to argue that this representation cannot be the future place of worship in the age to come but is rather a possible future which was used to motivate Israel to repent from their sinful state before the advent of Messiah which was unrealised. This is not in keeping with the wider theme of the whole book of Ezekiel which traces the departure of the glory of God in sadness and the presentation of future hope that the tables will be reversed, despite not because of Israel's disobedience. Thus, 43v2,3 has the record of the return of the glory which was said to have departed in 11v24. *“And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east and his voice was like a noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city.”* Reading the whole section of elaborate details about the temple establishes the reality of what God promises not the absurdity of what might happen but never did, something nowhere else found in scripture.

44v25 *“They shall come at no dead body to defile themselves but for father or for mother or for son or for daughter or for brother or for sister that hath no husband they may defile themselves”*. This verse makes it clear that this is a setting of a mortal population. There is no death without mortality and if defilement is still possible than the curse of death has not been finally stopped. This therefore speaks of a separate circumstance than the future promised to the believers in passages such as Luke 20v34-36, where the faithful are promised that *“neither can they die any more for they are equal unto the angels”*.

In Ezekiel 43v7 the reader is shown a time when there will be no more death, but that time has not yet been reached. *“And he said unto me Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my Holy Name shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they nor their kings, neither they nor their Kings, by their whoredoms, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places”*. Only the ending of mortality will prevent the accumulation of more carcasses. Mortality can only end when sin is stopped, as death is the wages paid over because of sin, and which always follows as a consequence of sin. The promise then that their (spiritual) whoredoms will cease, will also be followed by the end of death which will be swallowed up in victory. The carcasses of their kings will be put far away, far from God, buried with no more to follow because death will end t such a time, thus allowing God to *“dwell in the midst of them for ever”*.

Until then the temple is required to allow the final tranche of mankind to learn of God and His ways in a climate of spiritual peace and clarity which will permeate everywhere even as the people flow into it from every corner of the globe.

A Voice from the Altar

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