



THE KINGDOM OF GOD – PEACE ON EARTH

Reading: Isaiah 35

Peace on earth – when?

The United Nations building in New York displays this Bible quotation from Isaiah 2:4:

**They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.**

This verse is one of several in Scripture that describe a time of lasting peace. Yet there has never been any real and lasting peace on earth. Indeed, there never will be true peace until people obey God. While they continue to go their own way there will always be trouble. Real and lasting peace will only come on earth when the Lord Jesus returns and restores the Kingdom of God.

Isaiah 9:6 is a prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ and describes him as 'The Prince of Peace'. The following verse says,

*"Of the increase of his government and of peace **there will be no end**".*

Zechariah 9:10 tells us that God will destroy weapons of war and Christ will bring peace to the whole world:

*"I (God) will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he (Christ) shall speak **peace to the nations**; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."*

The extent of God's kingdom

This verse from Zechariah shows that the Lord Jesus Christ will reign over the whole earth. In Lesson 10 we learned that a small stone smashed to powder the image in Daniel 2 and grew into a large mountain that filled the whole earth. This represents Christ returning to the earth, ending the rule of human governments and restoring God's kingdom, which will fill the whole earth. In Psalm 2:8 God speaks of Jesus: *"Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and **the ends of the earth your possession**."*

Psalm 122:6,7 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they be secure who love you! Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!

The Lord Jesus will rule the whole world from Jerusalem. At present it is a troubled city. We are encouraged to pray for its peace – the time when Jesus Christ will reign as king in *"the city of the great King"* (Matthew 5:35).

God's plan for His kingdom

Life will be very different for men and women who are accepted into God's kingdom. They will be given a nature like God's – they will be incorruptible (unable to sin) and immortal (unable to die).

However, we learned in Lesson 7 that some mortal people will live in God's kingdom when Jesus Christ is king. These will be people living at the time of Christ's return who do not know the Gospel. In His mercy God has set aside this time so that they can learn about salvation through the Lord Jesus. If they repent, accept the Lord Jesus as their saviour and live faithful lives during this time, they too will eventually be given immortal life.





This period of time when Christ Jesus reigns as king will last for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4,6). We call this period the Millennium (the word ‘millennium’ means 1,000 years, just as ‘century’ can mean 100 years). The Millennium will be a wonderful time, particularly for those who are immortal, but it will not be perfect. The mortal people will still have human nature and be able to sin, and they will still grow old and die.

After the Millennium

From the beginning of time God’s purpose has been to fill His beautiful earth with faithful people who have chosen to serve Him and are free from sin. This purpose will be accomplished at the end of the Millennium. The world will then be perfect – no human nature will remain, and sin and death will have been removed. Only immortal believers will be privileged to live after the 1,000 years (those who were given immortal life at Christ’s return, as well as those who accepted God’s salvation during the Millennium). Christ will deliver the kingdom to God. This will be the time when God will live among sinless people for ever. The Bible describes this as a time when God will be “*all in all*” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

So there will be two very different phases (or ages) after the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth:

- the 1,000 year reign of Christ – the Millennium
- the time after this, when all sin and death will be removed – God will live for ever with immortal believers in a perfect world.

The people living during the Millennium

1. True believers given immortal life at Christ’s return – They will rule the world with Christ as members of his government. They will also teach the mortal people God’s ways. Revelation 5:9-11 describes these immortal believers praising Christ:

“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth’.”

2. Jews living at Christ’s return who accept him as their king when they see him – These Jews will be allowed to live in God’s kingdom as mortal people. They will live in the land of Israel and become the chief of the nations (Deuteronomy 28:13). They will be greatly blessed and will be taught God’s ways. The twelve apostles will govern them for Christ (Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:28-30).

3. People from other nations (Gentiles) who are alive at Christ’s return and who accept Christ as king – They will be allowed to live as mortal people at this time and learn about God. Isaiah 2:2,3 says:

“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.”

Jerusalem – the world capital

The Lord Jesus will reign as king from the city of Jerusalem, which will become the capital of the world. The passage above shows that the Word of God will go out from Jerusalem throughout the whole earth. It will bring love, joy and peace for all who listen and obey the king.

Christ’s government will be perfect, ruling the nations with righteousness, wisdom and authority. Our world’s problems, like poverty, oppression and starvation, will be solved. Wickedness amongst the mortal population will be brought under control:

“For when your judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9).





The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah confirms that Jerusalem will become the capital city of the whole world and shows that sin will be restrained:

*“At that time **Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD**, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and **they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart**” (Jeremiah 3:17).*

Life during the Millennium

1. Plenty of food for everyone – The curse on the ground, which God gave because of Adam’s sin (Genesis 3:17-19), will be removed and the earth will become wonderfully fruitful. Psalm 72:16 says:

“May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon ...”

Mountain-tops are usually bare. If there are crops on the top of the mountains, there will be great abundance in the valleys! Even the deserts will be fertile in those days:

“... the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing” (Isaiah 35:1,2).

2. Healing of mind and body – Far better health will accompany this blessing. When Jesus lived on the earth 2,000 years ago, he used God’s power to heal many who were sick. In God’s kingdom this power will be seen again. Isaiah 35:5,6 provides this picture:

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.”

3. Mortal people will live longer – Isaiah 65:19,20 show that mortal people will live longer than they do now, so that someone who dies at 100 years old will be considered young:

“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, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.”

God keeps His promises

These promises come from God and can be trusted. Read Isaiah 55:6-11 – notice particularly what God says in verse 11:

“... so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

So we may look forward with joy to that time when *“the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away”* (Isaiah 35:10).

The end of the Millennium and a time of perfection

So the Millennium will be a time when the world is gradually restored to the condition it was in when God first created it. It needs to become ‘very good’ once more to prepare it for God Himself to live with people. Towards the end of the 1,000 years some of the mortal people will rebel against the rule of the Lord Jesus in one final act of human wickedness. Christ will, of course, completely overcome this rebellion. He will reign until all God’s enemies have been destroyed, finally removing sin and death from the earth. He will then deliver the kingdom to his Father:

“Then comes the end, when he (Christ) delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

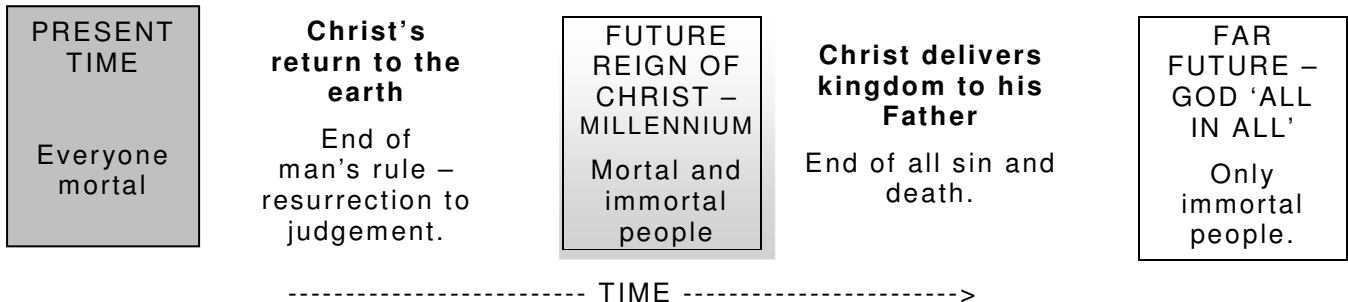
“He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken” (Isaiah 25:8).





Only then will this earth enjoy peace that will never end. The world will finally be a place where God, who is totally holy and sinless, can live with men and women. The whole earth will be filled with the glory of God. He – the great Creator – will fill the earth with His spirit.

Revelation 21:3,4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away'.



Summary

1. When Jesus Christ returns he will become king of the world.
2. His capital city will be Jerusalem.
3. In the Millennium there will be:
 - immortal believers who will rule the world with Christ and will teach the mortal people about God;
 - mortal people living at Christ's return who do not know the Gospel and who accept Christ as king – they will be taught God's ways.
4. At the end of the Millennium, Christ will deliver the kingdom to God. The world will then be perfect and God will live among immortal men and women.

Verses to learn: Psalm 22:27,28

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

Verses to read:

Isaiah 11:3-9 – These verses show what a wonderful place God's kingdom will be.

He (Christ Jesus) shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Also read Psalm 72:12-19 – these verses give another picture of the kingdom.

