

**Jesus'**  
**Victorious**  
**Kingdom**

By

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# Jesus' Victorious Kingdom

## Introduction

I have appropriately named this booklet, *Jesus' Victorious Kingdom* because the true and living God is a majestic, glorious, and sovereign God. He is all knowing, everywhere present, and all powerful. The God of the Bible is a victorious God whose purposes cannot be thwarted. Isaiah 46:9-10 states – “*Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'*” Who can resist such a God? Isaiah 14:27 even says – “For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched out hand, who can turn it back?”

The kingdom of God is fundamentally a spiritual kingdom whose origin is not of this world. Jesus and the Pharisees were normally at odds with one another, for most of them had darkened hearts combined with darkened minds, whose understanding of biblical truth was woefully lacking. One of their greatest errors was the belief that God's kingdom was exclusively a visible presence on the earth. This attitude was even prominent among many Jews. After Jesus performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand, the people were declaring Jesus to be the prophet (Messiah) to come, and they tried to take Him by force and make Him king (John 6:14-15). Jesus, understanding their motives, withdrew Himself to a solitary

place. Jesus had to correct several times this mistaken notion of His kingdom.

We read in Luke 17:20-21:

*Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."*

When Jesus was arrested and brought before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, it was Pilate who asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Jesus responded to Pilate's question recorded in John 18:36-37:

*Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm" Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king; For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."*

If we are not careful, we can misunderstand Jesus' reply. When Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world, He was saying that the origin or source of its authority is not derived from this world, and that the kingdom's primary thrust is an internal transformation of a man's being that happens when men

hear His voice. Jesus' comment definitely does not mean that His kingdom is irrelevant in human affairs. It is very relevant, and has tremendous cultural implications, affecting every human institution. When men are transformed by the power of God and given a new nature, it will most assuredly manifest itself in all facets of life. Psalm 2 is a magnificent chapter portraying that the Messiah, the Son of God, has been given the nations as His inheritance. Those kings of the earth failing to submit to His lordship will be crushed by the Son (Psalm 2:6-12).

Because God the Father promised God the Son to give Him the nations as His inheritance, this explains Jesus' comment in His Great Commission given in Matthew 28:18-20:

*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

If one has all authority in heaven and earth, it emphatically states that He has the right to rule all things, and it infers that He has all the power necessary to carry out whatever He desires. Possessing such omnipotent power guarantees that His commission will be successful, for He promised to be with His disciples always. Jesus' kingdom will be victorious in history simply because an omnipotent King cannot be defeated. Those who think God has ordained defeat are equally misguided and are guilty of dishonoring the Lord.

## The Commitment of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States (RPCUS)

The Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States is a denomination committed to proclaiming this wonderful truth that Jesus' kingdom is victorious. Our denomination espouses what is known as **biblical** Postmillennialism. Shortly, I will define this term. We do not see eschatology as a minor point of theology. The word "eschatology" is derived from two Greek words - *eschatos*, meaning "last things," and from *logy*, meaning "a study of." Hence, Eschatology is the study of the last things, although it is not restricted to a timeframe just prior to the end of the world. It encompasses concepts throughout history.

Some well meaning Christians have skewed views of Eschatology ranging from those who try to set dates for the Rapture and Christ's Second Coming to those who humorously say, "We are pan millennialists, that is, we could care less, for it will all pan out in the end." Both extremes are damaging to the health of the Church. Those preoccupied with forecasting the date of Christ's Second Coming, sponsoring Prophecy seminars to help us figure it out would do well to seriously adhere to Christ's comments in Matthew 24:36 - "*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.*" The most recent notable embarrassment was from a false prophet, Harold Camping,<sup>1</sup> who predicted the rapture of the church on May 21, 2011. Billboards and vans across the

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Camping started family radio in 1958. From 2005-2008, this ministry took in around \$ 72 million in donations. With such funds, money was readily available to fund billboards, vans, etc.



country were saying, “The Bible guarantees it.” Such fiascos provide ample fodder for the non-Christian world to scoff at Christians. The world lumps all Christians together with the false prophets. When such men audaciously say, “The Bible guarantees it!” and nothing happens, the world just mockingly laughs, dismissing all Christians as deluded fools.

Those who could care less what the Scripture says on the subject are equally dishonoring to the Lord, for there is much in Scripture pertaining to the subject, and no biblical doctrine deserves to be treated with such disregard. II Timothy 3:16-17 informs us that all Scripture is inspired and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. Paul told the Thessalonians to comfort one another with the doctrine of Christ’s Second Coming.

A person’s future view does impact his present activity and can affect his zeal for the cause of Christ. In the 1950s there was a well know radio Bible teacher, J. Vernon McGee. He made a famous statement, “Why polish brass on a sinking ship?” He espoused an eschatological view known as Dispensational Premillennialism that saw the Church in history as being culturally irrelevant. In this view, the “church age” is the period between Christ’s first advent and the rapture of the church. While this particular millennial view would not ignore certain Christian attempts to influence our society and to condemn various sins such as abortion and homosexuality, it does not believe that there will be any long lasting success, for things will

continue to get worse and worse eventually culminating in the rapture of the Church out of this evil world.

Perhaps, you have heard the words, “Premillennialism, Dispensational Premillennialism, Amillennialism, and Postmillennialism, but you don’t know their meanings. As with other biblical doctrines, varying views can often lead to emotionally charged discussions. The most popular eschatological view today is known as Dispensational Premillennialism. While those who espouse this system fervently believe it is the only correct biblical position, it is not historically the oldest view, but rather “the new kid on the block in the history of the Church.” It originated in England during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, being promoted vigorously by John Darby, the leader of the Plymouth Brethren movement. In America, this system was popularized by C.I. Scofield and his reference Bible during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Some of the advocates of this view were and are Clarence Larkin, Lewis Sperry Chafer (founder of Dallas Theological Seminary), Charles Ryrie, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson, to name a few. Probably the two most well known books promoting this view is Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth* and Tim LaHaye’s *The Left Behind Series*.

While certain eschatological views are immensely popular, it doesn’t mean they are theologically correct. After all, God doesn’t take “a show of hands” to determine spiritual truth. As I said, this view has not been the view of the Christian Church for nearly two millennia, and to think that God kept these supposed truths hidden for centuries until the last century is very doubtful.

It is unfortunate that theological orthodoxy is frequently equated with maintaining this view of eschatology. Sometimes people think that if one doesn't hold to the distinctive features of Dispensational Premillennialism, then they might be "heretical." Sometimes there is a little latitude given. Someone might ask you, "Are you a pre, mid, or post trib?" All of these are variations of Premillennial thought. If I were to answer the question by saying, "I am neither, but I believe we are presently in the millennial kingdom and that this kingdom is before and not after the Second Coming of Christ, I might get this stare of disbelief by the questioner, wondering what kind of weird books I have been reading, and why I dare to espouse something so unbiblical." I could easily retort by saying, "Why have you adopted a novel view of eschatology that was not taught in the church for centuries and why can't you accept what the Bible clearly teaches?" As in any theological controversy, the real issue is: who has done the best job of allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture.

### **Four Millennial Views**

There are four commonly held millennial views among evangelical Christians. By "evangelical," I am defining the word to mean those who adhere to the inerrancy and authority of Scripture, who do not challenge the doctrine of the Trinity, who believe we are justified by Christ alone through faith alone, who do not challenge the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, the resurrection of Christ, and the visible Second Coming of Christ in the future. This is by no means an exhaustive list of cardinal Christian doctrines.

Differences among the varying millennial views fundamentally revolve around two issues: **1) the timing of the Second Coming, and 2) the nature and character of the millennium.** The names given to various millennial views are determined mostly by what one believes about the timing of the Second Coming. When timing is discussed, there are essentially two millennial views – Premillennialism and Postmillennialism. The differences are determined by **when** the Second Coming occurs with reference to the millennium. If one believes that the Second Coming is **before** a millennium, then one is (pre) millennial. If one believes the Second Coming is **after** the millennium, then one is (post) millennial.

Concerning the nature or character of the millennium, there is a view known as “Amillennialism.” This technically means no millennium because the prefix (a) means “no.” However, this is misleading because those who espouse this view do believe in a millennium in keeping with Revelation 20. They simply do not believe in a millennium the way Premillennialists do.

Premillennialists have been classified into two groups: Historic Premillennialists and Dispensational Premillennialists. While both groups believe that Christ’s Second Coming is before the millennium and that the millennial kingdom is physically on earth, there are some considerable differences in the character of the millennium. Only Dispensationalists see a radical distinction between Israel and the Church. The Historic Premillennialist does not see Jesus’ earthly kingdom as some form of Judaism, and he does not view that it is essential for Jesus to be sitting on

a physical throne, in a physical temple, and in a physical Jerusalem.

Both forms of Premillennialism believe in two bodily resurrections separated by the millennium. Amillennialists and Postmillennialists believe in only one general resurrection and judgment at Jesus' Second Coming at the end of the world. Both Amillennialists and Postmillennialists believe Jesus is presently reigning in His kingdom, and while both believe the Coming is **after** the millennium, only the Postmillennialists believe in a progressive and widespread victory of the gospel during the millennial age.

We can summarize the various four views as:

- 1) Dispensational Premillennialism
- 2) Historic Premillennialism
- 3) Amillennialism
- 4) Postmillennialism

### **Position of the RPCUS**

We are Postmillennialists. While there may be slight differences of opinion on a few points, there would be general agreement on the fundamental features. In our denomination, we do not practice what some call "eschatological liberty," which means that one is free to hold any of the four views specified earlier. No, we think that our Constitutional documents, the Westminster Standards (Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter and Larger Catechisms) teach a Postmillennial perspective. Moreover, we do think it is important to believe that the gospel

of the Lord Jesus is powerful to save sinners and that the nature of Jesus' present reign at the Father's right hand in heaven demands that all His enemies must be subdued and will be subdued before Christ's Second Coming. Victory for Jesus is not optional! Defeat is impossible! Once the visible church recaptures this vision of God's promises, then we will see mighty things take place. In fairness to the other views, they would not dispute the power of God to save sinners, but the problem is that they don't think it will be that pervasive, filling the whole earth. Postmillennialists do believe that the nations of the earth will be discipled. This doesn't mean that every single person will be converted, but it does mean that it will be as Isaiah 11:9 says, "... *For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*"

This booklet is by no means an exhaustive presentation of biblical Postmillennialism. It is intended only to give the major tenets of some of the biblical texts supporting it. For a more detailed study of the issues relating to eschatology, I encourage the reader to visit my publishing website ([www.triumphantpublications.com](http://www.triumphantpublications.com)). On this site you can watch free of charge my video series consisting of 28 hours for Christ Theological Seminary titled "Kingdom, Church, and Eschatology." On this site, you can also order my large published volume titled *Preaching and the Victory of the Gospel*. One can also visit [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com) and listen free of charge to the audio of the 28 hours of lectures. Simply go to <http://www.crpcalamance.org/> and put into the search engine the title, "Kingdom, Church, and Eschatology" and all 28 messages will be available.

I have referred to the position of the RPCUS as “biblical” Postmillennialism. Some have mistakenly labeled Postmillennialism as the “social gospel” that denies the gospel revealed in Scripture that all men are sinners and in need of the saving grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Dispensationalist Hal Lindsey said, “There used to be a group called postmillennialists. They believed that the Christians would root out all the evil in the world, abolish godless rulers, and convert the world through ever-increasing evangelism until they brought about the Kingdom of God through their own efforts...These people rejected much of the Scripture as being literal and believed in the inherent goodness of man... No self-respecting scholar who looks at the world conditions and the accelerating decline of Christian influence today is a postmillennialist.”<sup>2</sup> This is the emotionally charged dialogue I was referring to earlier. I can assure the reader that there have been ample supplies of distinguished theologians who have held to biblical Postmillennialism, who **do not** believe that the gospel is advanced by self effort, and who **do not** believe in the inherent goodness of man. This only shows that Mr. Lindsey has not properly studied the other views.

Biblical Postmillennialists do not believe in man’s basic goodness. No, we are adherents to the doctrines of grace, of which one is that of “total depravity,” meaning that sin has thoroughly polluted the human race due to Adam’s sin and has affected every facet of man’s being – his mind, heart, and will. It is because Postmillennialism believes in total depravity that we

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<sup>2</sup> Hal Lindsey, *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, 1970, p. 176

champion prayer and preaching as the divinely appointed weapons for spiritual warfare. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Only the Holy Spirit by an act of God's grace and mercy can deliver a sinner out of spiritual darkness and transfer him to the kingdom of God's dear Son. Because we believe the gospel is the *dunamis* (power) of God, we believe that the gospel will prevail in history. God cannot be defeated, and he has not chosen defeat for His church. Because Jesus has all authority and all power, His church is invincible.

### **What is the Nature of the Millennium?**

The one place in Scripture that refers specifically to a thousand year (millennium) period where Christ is reigning is Revelation 20, although it is not the only passage referring to the concept of "Christ reigning." The problem arises as to how we are to understand this passage. Those who insist that this thousand year reign must be a physical kingdom on earth with physical thrones and a physical temple in a physical Jerusalem, and who restrict the reign it to a literal one thousand days (no more and no less) are making a huge assumption that is without merit. There's no question that there is a millennial reign because the text says so. The Bible is full of figurative language, and any interpretation of Scripture must take this into account. For example, the Psalms and Proverbs have vivid examples of poetic language. One must understand that figurative language does convey a literal truth, but it does so in poetic form. For example, when Psalm 98:7-8 says that the sea "roars," the rivers "clap their hands," and that the mountains "sing for joy," it conveys the great biblical truth that God's creation reveals God's glory. When the Psalmist in



Psalm 17:8 pleads with God, “Hide me in the shadow of Your wings,” it is obvious, or should be, that God is not a big bird. The poetic imagery conveys the providential protection of God for His people. Hence, in Psalm 50:20, when it says that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, does it mean that God’s ownership ends with the thousand and first hill? When Deuteronomy 7:9 says that God’s lovingkindness is to a thousandth generation to those who love Him and keep His commandments, does it mean His lovingkindness stops at the thousand and first? In II Peter 3:8, we find that a thousand years is as one day, and one day as a thousand years in terms of God’s patience with men. It is evident that the term “one thousand years” denotes **a long period of time.**

In interpreting Revelation 20:1-6, we see the following key elements: **1) Jesus binds the devil for a thousand years, 2) Saints are sitting on thrones and judging, 3) These saints are reigning with Jesus during the millennium, 4) The reigning saints have experienced a first resurrection, and 5) The reigning saints are priests of God and of Christ.**

First, all millennial views acknowledge that the great angel coming down from heaven is Jesus Christ who has a great chain that binds the dragon, who is the devil. Interestingly, all views understand immediately that there is figurative language being used. Jesus Christ binds Satan for a thousand years, and he will not be released for a short time until the end of this period. The purpose of the binding is to prevent the devil from deceiving the nations; hence, we need to understand from Scripture exactly when that binding took place. Once we allow Scripture to

interpret Scripture on this point, we can specify **when** the millennium takes place with reference to Christ's Second Coming.

## **The Binding of Satan**

When was the devil bound? First, the binding of Satan is so that he **can no longer deceive the nations**. The gospel narratives answer our question. Matthew 12:22-29 records the incident of Jesus' casting out demons. The Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting them out by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. Jesus says this is absurd for Satan to cast out Satan. Jesus then refers to His act as first going into a man's house and binding the strong man so his house can be plundered. Obviously, Jesus is referring to the strong man as Satan, whose house or domain is plundered. So, the binding of Satan began with Jesus' first advent!

In Luke 10:9-11, 17-19 we see Jesus sending out the seventy throughout the cities and villages in Israel. He gave them authority to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God and to cast out demons. They returned rejoicing that the demons were subject to them. Jesus told them that He saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Jesus used a figurative expression denoting that Satan's domain was being plundered. The deceiver of the nations was losing his stranglehold on the nations.

We are told in I John 3:8 that the Son of God appeared for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil. This Jesus did do particularly when He died on the cross and rendered the devil

powerless, who once had the power of death (Hebrews 2:14). Jesus' work on the cross combined with the authoritative preaching of His preachers shows that Satan is bound. Someone might object saying, "What about I Peter 5:8 where the devil prowls like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour?" The binding of Satan does not mean complete cessation of activity; it means that his activity is severely limited, being specifically his inability to deceive the nations the way he used to. When Jesus said he bound the strong man, Satan, to plunder his house, obviously Satan was still around. When Hebrews says Satan was rendered powerless at the cross, it didn't mean that Satan still wasn't around doing his evil. The binding of Satan means that his fate is sealed and his influence restricted. When did all of this take place? It was during Jesus' ministry and the eras to follow, meaning this present age. This means that we are in the millennium right now!

## **The Saints Reigning**

Another key element of the millennial age is that the saints are sitting on thrones, judging, and reigning with Jesus for a thousand years. When did this occur? Again, in this present age! Consider the following evidence. Sitting on thrones denotes exercising kingly authority. When the Bible says that Jesus ascended to God's right hand, it alludes to Jesus sitting on God's throne in heaven, which as we shall see later, is the actual sitting on David's throne. Jesus assumed that throne nearly two thousand years ago!

The Scripture readily teaches that saints (Christians) are presently reigning with Jesus in this present age. Ephesians 2:4-6 explicitly states that we are made alive together with Christ who raised us with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places. Colossians 3:1-3 affirms that we have been raised up with Christ and must continue to seek the things above where Christ is seated. In Matthew 19:28, Jesus told His disciples that when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, they too will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Sitting on a throne denotes regal authority, and Jesus gave authority to His disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom. During the apostolic era, the apostles, particularly Paul, preached to the Jews, but many rejected the message, and in rejecting the preaching of the apostles, the apostate Jews brought judgment upon themselves (Acts 13:44-47; I Thessalonians 2:14-16).

### **The First Resurrection- A Spiritual Resurrection**

Revelation 20:5-6 speaks of those saints who take part in a first resurrection over who the second death has no power. The second death is mentioned in Revelation 20:11-15 where Jesus judges all mankind from His Great White Throne. All those not found in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire, which is said to be the second death.

The first resurrection implies obviously that there is at least another resurrection because Scripture refers to a “first” resurrection. It is a spiritual resurrection whereby a deadened soul is said to be brought from death to life. In John 5:24-29, Jesus taught concerning these two resurrections. In verses 24-25,

Jesus says that the hour now is when those who hear His word and believe do not come unto judgment but pass out of death unto life. The dead are said to “hear the voice of the Son of God.” John 8:47 and 10:27 refer to those who hear Jesus and follow Him. Then we read in John 5:28-29 where Jesus said an hour is coming when those in their “tombs” will hear His voice and will come forth. This is a general resurrection of the physical dead where some will be raised to life but others will be raised to judgment. This corresponds well with Revelation 20:11-15. Those who are raised to life are those whose names are in the book of life, but those raised to judgment are those whose names are not in the book of life, and they will be judged and condemned to the lake of fire, which is the second death.

It is apparent that the second resurrection is a bodily resurrection for John 5:28 refers to those in their “tombs” who hear Jesus. We are told in I Thessalonians 4:16-18 about one aspect of the physical resurrection at the end of the world. Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and the dead in Christ will rise first and then those alive at the time will be raptured (caught up) with Jesus in the air. Even though nothing is said about the wicked being raised at this time, it doesn't mean that they are not raised at this time. The focus of Paul in I Thessalonians is to comfort the Thessalonian Christians about those who have died in the faith (verse 18). John 5:28-29 does refer to both the righteous and the wicked being raised. An Old Testament passage that teaches this general resurrection is Daniel 12:2 where Daniel speaks of a coming resurrection of some to everlasting life and others to everlasting contempt.

## **Priests of God and of Christ**

The other key element of Revelation 20 is that those experiencing the first resurrection are made priests of God and of Christ and reign with Jesus for a thousand years (20:6). All we need to do is determine from Scripture when the saints are made priests to God and Christ and we will discern when the millennium occurs. Revelation 1:5-6 and 5:9-10 clearly inform us that it is this present age! Revelation 1:5-6 states that we are made a kingdom of priests to God when Jesus shed His blood for us and redeemed us. Revelation 5:9-10 says the same thing in that the redeemed church of all ages is praising God that Christ has redeemed them from among every tribe, tongue, people, and nation on earth, making them a kingdom of priests who reign on earth.

We also see biblical evidence for the priesthood of believers in this present age from I Peter 2:4-10 and Hebrews 13:15. In the Peter passage, those believing in Jesus are said to be made into a holy and royal priesthood who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In Revelation 5:8, the redeemed church of all ages is said to have golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints. Hebrews 13:15 presents that beautiful picture of the saints offering up sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God through Jesus Christ.

All of these texts refer to the ministry of the Church in the present age, which means we are in the millennium right now reigning with Christ.

Having examined Revelation 20, which proves that we are presently in the millennial age and reigning with Christ, we now take a look at other New Testament passages referring to the reign of Christ that equally prove that Jesus is presently reigning and that we are in the millennial age.

## **The Fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant**

Understanding the Davidic covenant is crucial in understanding the true nature of the kingdom of God. Key questions are: What exactly was promised? When will it come? How long is it? What is its nature? At the outset, God identifies His throne with David's throne (I Chronicles 29:23). When Solomon became king, he sat on David's throne, and this throne is said to be "the throne of the Lord."

### **II Samuel 7:8-17**

*<sup>8</sup> "Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. <sup>9</sup> I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. <sup>10</sup> I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, <sup>11</sup> even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD*

*also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.<sup>12</sup> When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.<sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.<sup>14</sup> I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,<sup>15</sup> but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.<sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”””<sup>17</sup> In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.*

The institution of the Davidic covenant is in II Samuel 7:8-17. The promises of the covenant are: A place is established as an everlasting possession for God’s people (v.10). A house will be built for God to be glorified among His people (v.11). There is the promise of a seed who will establish David’s kingdom and build a house for God’s name (v.12). And, David’s throne and kingdom will be established forever (vs. 12, 13).

In II Samuel 7:8-9, Jehovah promises to make David’s name great. This is very familiar to God’s promise to Abram in Genesis 12 in making him a blessing to the nations. There is a unity or continuity to all of God’s covenants. The promise of the Abrahamic covenant is God’s promise to be a God to Abraham and his seed throughout their generations and the promise of a land as an everlasting possession (Genesis 17:7-8). This entailed



a promise of God's abiding presence with His people and a locale for them to flourish. The New Testament clearly states that Christians, those who have believed in Jesus by faith which includes the Gentiles, are specifically said to be "the seed of Abraham" and heirs to all the promises (Galatians 3:27-29). Moreover, Paul says that the whole world was promised to the seed of Abraham (Romans 4:13).

II Samuel 7:10 states that the "land" promise in Genesis was only meant to be a down payment on the ultimate promise – the whole world. This clearly means that the promises to Abraham were never intended to be restricted to the small geographical territory of Israel.

II Samuel 7:11-12 promises that a house will be built for God's name. We must understand that this has both a temporal and permanent meaning. Solomon, not David, built God's house (the temple) in the old covenant. The temple is where God manifested His presence with His people. Previously, God's presence was seen in the Tabernacle (the movable tent). The Shekhinah glory (pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night) rested over the Tabernacle, representing in visible form God's presence with His people (Exodus 40:35). In the building of the temple, more permanency was given to God's presence with His people. In I Kings 8:10-12, the Shekhinah cloud came and filled the temple with God's glory, representing His presence among His people.

One of the great mistakes that Israel made in its history was its propensity to trust in physical objects, thinking that nothing could ever happen to the temple or to Jerusalem. They were

greatly mistaken. God's presence with His people is contingent upon their faithfulness to His covenant. Israel's idolatry led to the temple and Jerusalem's destruction under the Babylonians in 586 B.C., and their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah led to the temple and Jerusalem's destruction under the Romans in 70 A.D.

It was Stephen who said in Acts 7:47-49 that the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands. He quotes Isaiah 66:1 that heaven is God's throne. This biblical truth does not negate what was said in the old covenant; it simply shows that the physical manifestations of the old covenant were never meant to convey God's abiding presence in its totality. The physical city of Jerusalem pointed to Zion as the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Solomon's temple pointed to a greater house, a spiritual temple to come.

The promise of the Davidic covenant is a **spiritual** promise brought to fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was a physical descendant of David, but who was also David's Lord (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:41-45). The seed promised to David who would build a permanent house, who would establish David's throne and kingdom forever is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Regarding the promises of the Davidic kingdom as they apply to Jesus Christ, we see the following: David's seed is the Messiah, the God/Man. The Messiah conquers His enemies from David's throne, and the Messiah is promised the nations as His inheritance.

The New Testament beautifully reveals that Jesus and His church is where God manifests His presence. In John 1:14, Jesus is the "logos," the eternal Word of God made flesh. The text says

that Jesus “tabernacled” or dwelt among us! One of the great themes of the Old Testament is the “Immanuel Principle.” Isaiah 7:13-14 prophesies about a child born of a virgin who shall be called “Immanuel.” In Matthew 1:18-23 we learn that an angel tells Joseph to call the child born to Mary, “Jesus” who will save His people from their sins, and Isaiah 7:14 is quoted affirming the meaning of the Messiah’s name – “Immanuel” (meaning God with us).

Jesus is the promised seed of David. Matthew 1:1 begins the genealogy of Jesus Christ by affirming that He is both the son of Abraham and the son of David. Isaiah 9:6-7 prophesies that a child would be born and government would rest on His shoulders. There will be no end to the increase of His government. He will be called the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:7 specifically states that Messiah will establish the throne of David, upholding it with justice and righteousness forever! Jesus Christ is the promised seed of David; He will build a house for God’s name; He will establish David’s throne forever.

Jesus Christ is the “temple of God” (John 2:19). Luke 1:26-29 demonstrates that the child born to Mary will be called great, for He will be the Savior of the world. This fits in exactly with II Samuel 7:9 where in the inauguration of the Davidic covenant, God promised to make David a great name. In Luke 1:32-33, the angel Gabriel reveals that the child Mary is carrying will be called the Son of the Most High, that God will give Him David’s throne, and that He will reign over the House of Jacob forever, and that His kingdom will have no end. Also, Luke 1:67-80 is

Zacharias' prophecy concerning how Mary's child will fulfill both Abraham and David's covenant.

The promise of the Davidic covenant is that the Messiah would build a "house," and His kingdom would endure forever. What house has Jesus built? His church of course! The church is specifically said to be God's household and a "holy temple in the Lord," a "dwelling of God in the Spirit" "where Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. The imagery of the church being the temple of God has a corporate and an individual reality (Ephesians 2:19-22; I Corinthians 6:19).

We must not miss this absolutely essential truth: **The church of the Lord Jesus with Jesus as its head is the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.**

One of the promises of the Davidic covenant (II Samuel 7:10-11) is that the Messiah, as the promised seed of David, would conquer His enemies from David's throne. The concept of victory over God's enemies is seen in the Abrahamic covenant.

In Genesis 49:8-10 we see these truths:

*Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up? "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*

The concept of victory over one's enemies is noted with "your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies." Judah is a lion's whelp, a lion of Judah. The scepter shall not depart from Judah. A scepter is a king's ruling symbol of his power. The scepter's location is most interesting – it is between the feet of the lion of Judah. The scepter belongs to "until Shiloh comes." Shiloh owns the scepter. We learn from Revelation 5:5 that the one who is worthy to open the book in Revelation is called the lion from the tribe of Judah, the root of David. This is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ (also see Revelation 21:16); He is the lion of Judah; He is Shiloh (the word means "to whom it belongs"). The scepter belongs to Jesus; hence, since the scepter is between His feet, it is conveying that the Lord Jesus exercises His kingly authority by defeating His enemies under His feet. This is exactly what Psalm 110 teaches. The text reads:

*The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies." Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, your youth are to You as the dew. The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

We can immediately see a continuity of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. Jesus directly applied this Psalm to Himself (Matthew 22:44), and Peter will apply it to Jesus as well in Acts 2:34-35. Jesus is David's Lord who is sitting at the Lord's right hand and will continue to sit there until His enemies are made a

footstool for His feet. This corresponds with Genesis 49:8 where Judah had his hand on the neck of his enemies, but then refers to the scepter between Shiloh's feet. Genesis 49:10 prophesied that Shiloh's scepter would bring about the "obedience of the peoples." Psalm 110:2-3 states that the Lord rules in the midst of His enemies as He stretches forth His scepter. The result is: His people volunteer freely in the day of His power. The Bible makes it very clear that we are "enemies" of God because of our sin (James 4:4). Romans 5:1-10 clearly indicates that our sins have created a state of hostility between us and a holy God. Jesus' atoning blood accomplishes reconciliation between us and God. Romans 5:10 states – *"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* This glorious truth is also taught in Colossians 1:22-23. When we are reconciled to God in Christ, we are transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13; Acts 26:18). The primary way that Jesus defeats His enemies under His feet is by **converting them!** Psalm 110:3 does say, *"Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power."*

Another of the promises of the Davidic covenant is that the nations are promised to Him as His inheritance. This is implied in II Samuel 7:12, 16 when it says that David's seed shall establish his throne forever. Psalm 2 is the definitive teaching on this truth. **Psalm 2:6-12** states:

*But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain." <sup>7</sup>"I will surely tell of the decree of the*

*LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. <sup>8</sup>Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. <sup>9</sup>You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'" <sup>10</sup>Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. <sup>11</sup>Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup>Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*

God the Father has installed His only begotten Son upon Zion, His holy hill. The Father has granted to the Son the nations as His inheritance. The Son shall break them with a rod of iron, which denotes the almighty power that the Son possesses to bring about submission of the nations. No one can defy the Son, and they who do shall utterly be destroyed. In Psalm 110:5, the Lord is at God's right hand shattering kings in the day of His wrath.

Having established that Jesus Christ is the promised seed to fulfill the Davidic covenant, the pertinent questions remaining are: **When does Jesus reign? When does He sit on David's throne? When does the millennium begin?** The definitive answer to these questions is unquestionably Acts 2:25-36. New Testament inspired writers cannot err. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 is the inspired confirmation.

## Acts 2:25-36

*For David says of Him, 'I saw the Lord always in my presence; for He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken. <sup>26</sup>Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh also will live in hope; <sup>27</sup> because you will not abandon My soul to Hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. <sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence..' <sup>29</sup>"Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup>"And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, <sup>31</sup>he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer. <sup>32</sup>"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. <sup>33</sup>"Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. <sup>34</sup>"For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ' The Lord said to my Lord, "sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for Your feet."<sup>36</sup>"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified."*

In verses 25-28, Peter alludes to David as a prophet and quotes Psalm 16:8-11. In verse 29, Peter clarifies that Psalm 16



promised that God would not abandon the Messiah's body to the grave. David died and saw corruption but not the Holy One. In verse 31, Peter emphatically states that David prophesied of the resurrection of the Christ. Neither David nor Peter can err when they prophesy. Peter confirms that he and others are witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. We must remember that part of the promise of the Davidic covenant was that one will come forth from David and sit on his throne, establishing it forever. Notice carefully how inspired Peter links the promise of the Davidic covenant and the establishment of David's throne as beginning with Jesus' resurrection. We have already established from Scripture earlier that David's throne is also God's throne, and it is Messiah's throne! Peter wants his Jewish audience to understand without a doubt that Jesus Christ is the promised seed of David and is the promised One to sit on David's throne; hence, He is the Messiah.

In verse 33, Peter links **the ascension of Christ to God's right hand** to the Messianic prophecy in Psalm 110:1 by directly referring to it. Luke 1:32-33 has the angel Gabriel affirming that Jesus indeed is the promised seed to sit on David's throne and would reign forever.

**When did Jesus sit on David's throne? It occurred when Jesus was resurrected and ascended to God the Father's right hand!** Here is definitive, inspired proof when it happened. Notice that it does not say that Jesus sat on some physical throne, nor does it say it happened after the Second Coming in some future period of time. This is biblical proof that all forms of Premillennialism are incorrect.

Peter confirms that Jesus is sitting presently on David's throne **in heaven** and subduing all His enemies from this position. What is Peter's proof? It is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that led to Spirit empowered preaching that brought about the conversion of 3000 souls. When the Messiah sat at God's right hand in Psalm 110, did this not promise that He would stretch out His scepter from Zion and rule in the midst of His people? Did it not promise that "Thy people would volunteer freely in the day of Thy power?" This explains how 3000 people volunteered freely by repenting and getting saved. Did not the Scripture promise in the Abrahamic covenant that the lion of the tribe of Judah is also Shiloh and that the scepter of Shiloh was between His feet bringing about the obedience of the people? Did not Peter quote Psalm 110 that emphasizes that Messiah would sit at the right hand of God **until** God the Father makes His enemies a footstool for His feet?

### **Acts 13:32-39**

*And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, <sup>33</sup>that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You." <sup>34</sup>"As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: "I will give You the Holy and **sure blessings of David.**" <sup>35</sup>"Therefore He also says in another Psalm, "You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay." <sup>36</sup>"For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and*

*underwent decay; <sup>37</sup>but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. <sup>38</sup>"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, <sup>39</sup>and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. (Emphasis mine)*

The apostle Paul says exactly the same thing as Peter concerning the promises of the Davidic covenant being fulfilled with the resurrection of Jesus. Paul's preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles is the fulfillment of the sure blessings of David. Paul's preaching is the effect of Jesus sitting on David's throne in heaven. As men believe in Jesus through preaching, they are freed from the bondage of sin, experiencing forgiveness of sins. Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost demonstrated the blessings of David, as well as Paul's preaching.

### **Acts 15:12-18**

*All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. <sup>14</sup>"Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.<sup>15</sup>"With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,<sup>16</sup>' After these things I will return, and I will **rebuild the tabernacle of David** which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the*

*Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord,  
who makes these things known from long ago.  
(Emphasis mine)*

This passage demonstrates as well that the preaching to the Gentiles whether it was by Peter or Paul, was an ongoing fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. The apostle James quotes from Amos 9:11-15 in order to show that what God was doing among the Gentiles was indeed a fulfillment of Amos' passage, that David's tabernacle was being rebuilt. The historic reality was that David's tabernacle was ruined and fallen down. There had not been for ages a king of the house of David; the scepter had departed from Judah. The royal family had been buried in obscurity. We noted earlier from Luke 1:32-33 that the angel Gabriel affirmed to Mary that her child would be given the throne of David and that He would reign over it forever. We have seen from Acts 2:25-36 and Acts 13:32-39 that the preaching of the Gospel particularly to the Gentiles is the rebuilding of David's tabernacle. Jesus is the promised seed who would sit on David's throne, establishing his kingdom forever. James says that the incorporating of the Jews and Gentiles into the church is the rebuilding of David's tabernacle.

**Where is God's throne? It is in heaven, not on some physical piece of furniture or in some physical city that cannot even begin to convey the regal authority of Christ.**

**When did the millennium begin? It began with the official coronation of Jesus' kingship when He sat down at God's right hand!**

Jesus was prophesied to be a king; He was born a king, but His official enthronement was not until His state of humiliation was complete (from his conception to His burial). His state of exaltation began with His resurrection which extended to His ascension and seating at God's right hand, and continues with His Second Coming at the end of the world.

### **Daniel 7:13-14**

One of the most important Old Testament prophecies of Christ's enthronement as King of kings and Lord of lords is Daniel 7:13-14:

*I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.*

Virtually all Dispensationalists believe that this passage speaks of Christ's Second Coming, but this interpretation is absolutely wrong and fails to follow the wording of the text. In Jesus' Second Coming, He will descend to earth. Nothing is said here of a descent. The text says that One like a Son of Man "came up to" the Ancient of Days. The only synonym that fits the text is "ascend." The term "Son of Man" refers to Jesus Christ, who used this term for Himself more than the phrase "Son of God." The whole passage pictures One coming to royalty, "the Ancient

of Days,” to receive a kingdom. Daniel 7:13-14, II Samuel 7:8-17, and Acts 2:25-36 all are speaking of Christ’s enthronement as King of the universe. The Father promised the Son all the nations as His inheritance, and the Son received them in principle at His ascension to God the Father’s right hand in heaven. From the right hand of God the Father, the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ is exercising His full authority. He has all the power. He is subduing all His enemies upon David’s throne in heaven. Any theological view that brings Jesus down to earth to sit on some physical throne, in a rebuilt temple, in one city on earth simply does not understand or appreciate the greatness of Christ’s present spiritual reign.

## **A Victorious Reign**

### **I Corinthians 15:20-28**

*But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. <sup>21</sup>For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup>For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup>But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, <sup>24</sup>then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup>For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. <sup>26</sup>The last enemy that will be abolished is death. <sup>27</sup>For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put*

*all things in subjection to Him. <sup>28</sup>When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.*

This is one of the most clear texts supporting the Postmillennial perspective in all of Scripture. This text clearly determines the timing issue in Eschatology. **When is the millennium with respect to the Second Coming? The millennium is before the Second Coming;** therefore, any view that places the millennium after the Second Coming is in direct opposition to this text. This rules out both forms of Premillennialism, both of which place the millennium after the Second Coming.

The I Corinthians 15 passage begins with an emphasis that Jesus Christ is the first fruits of those who rise from the dead. Jesus rose first and guarantees by His victory that all in union with Him will likewise be victorious over death. There is an order in the resurrection – first Christ and then all His believers. This passage also teaches that **there will be only one bodily resurrection which is at His Second Coming.** This passage confirms that there is nothing after the Second Coming of Christ because it says at His coming “**then comes the end.**” At the Second Coming, Christ hands over the kingdom to God the Father, **when He has abolished all rule and authority and power.** Notice the completed action. Jesus “has abolished” all His enemies. It says He must reign **until** all His enemies are under His feet. This is an obvious allusion to Psalm 110 which we know came to fruition at Jesus’ ascension/enthronement. This passage clearly places the “reign of Christ” before the Second Coming.

The last enemy that is abolished is death. This obviously takes place at the resurrection which we know is at the Second Coming. We are told in I Corinthians 15:54-55 that at the resurrection of the redeemed, death is swallowed up in victory, for death has lost its sting.

The imagery of I Corinthians 15:20-28 is that of a victorious king, who having won complete victory over all enemies, hands over this victorious kingdom to the ultimate sovereign. This alludes back to Psalm 2 where God the Father installs God the Son on His holy mountain, giving Him all the nations as His inheritance.

I Corinthians 15:27-28 states that God the Father has put all things in subjection to the Son. This is consistent with Psalm 2:7-8 where God the Father gives God the Son all the nations as His inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as His possession. It is consistent with Daniel 7:13-14 where the Son of Man comes up to the “Ancient of Days” who gives Him dominion, glory, and a kingdom so that all peoples might serve Him. The Son’s dominion is everlasting, and His kingdom cannot be destroyed.

I Corinthians 15:27-28 pictures the final act of the Son delivering over to His Father a conquered kingdom, as it were the spoils of holy and spiritual warfare. God the Son accomplished the task given to Him in subduing all His enemies, and now gives to His Father the spoils of war – all the nations have been won! The Great Commission has been fulfilled! The earth is full of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Now the truth of Revelation 11:15 can be seen in its ultimate sense – “*The*



*kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He will reign forever.”*

### **Hebrews 10:12-13**

Hebrews 10:12-13 is very instructive at this point, for it says, *“but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.”* This passage teaches exactly what is said in I Corinthians 15. Jesus is not coming back from heaven until victory has been secured over all His enemies.

This means that the millennium is before the Second Coming. This means that Jesus is presently reigning from heaven; it means that His reign is foremost a spiritual kingdom. It is a spiritual war that is being waged by the Lord Jesus, but what is amazing is that His church is the instrument by which He carries out this spiritual warfare.

### **The Church Is Jesus’ Instrument for Victory**

I noted earlier that Revelation 20 indicates that the saints who have experienced the first resurrection and who are priests to God will sit on thrones and reign with Christ for a thousand years. Exactly how do the saints do this? Jesus is presently reigning and presently defeating all His enemies. Though Jesus is not limited to His church, He has ordained His church to be the ordained agent for the spiritual conquest of the world.

## **Ephesians 1:18-23**

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might <sup>20</sup>which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup>And He put all things in subjection under His feet, **and gave Him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup>which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.** (Emphasis mine)*

The apostle Paul is addressing the church of Ephesus and speaking to those who have experienced the surpassing greatness of God's power to the true church (those elect who have come to saving faith). God's power is manifested in three special ways to His people. First, they have experienced the new birth; they have been transformed by the power of the living God, and have been transferred from spiritual darkness to light (I Thessalonians 1:2-5, 9; Colossians 1:13). It takes the power of God to raise the dead, and seeing that we are all dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1-6). Second, it is the power of God that works in us to continually sanctify us (Ephesians 3:16, 20; Colossians 1:11; II Peter 1:3). And, third, His church receives power to preach and bear witness of the gospel (Acts 1:8; Romans 15:18-19). The greatest

emphasis of God's power in this text is upon this third aspect – power granted to the church by the risen/enthroned Christ. The power of God was exercised in raising Jesus from the dead and seating Him at God's right hand in heaven. The Father bestowed power to the Son that is far above all other authority and power in the universe. The Father put all things under Jesus' feet. This is consistent with Psalm 110 and Daniel 7:13-14. What follows is absolutely amazing. The text explains how God the Father put all things under the Son's feet. He did so by making Jesus head over all things **to the church**. Moreover, the church is viewed as the "spiritual" body of Jesus, which is the fullness of Him who fills all in all. **The church is the fullness of Christ who fills all.** How is this possible? This passage demonstrates the greatness of Christ in His capacity as mediator. The great commentator Matthew Henry said:

And yet the church is said to be his fullness, because Christ as Mediator would not be complete if he had not a church. How could he be a king if he had not a kingdom? This therefore comes in to the honour of Christ, *as Mediator, that the church is his fulness.*  
(Matthew Henry's Commentary on Ephesians 1:23)

The beauty of this passage is: Christ is the Lord who reigns, defeating all His enemies through the agency of His church! This needs to sink in. We are the ordained tool of Christ in His spiritual conquest of the earth. This truth is also pictured in Hebrews 1 and 2.

### **Hebrews 1:5, 13, 2:1-4**

In Hebrews 1:5, the writer quotes portions of Psalm 2 and 110 to confirm that Jesus Christ is the Lord who is sitting on His throne at God's right hand. Having established Jesus' deity and present rule, the writer of Hebrews, in chapter 2, sets forth the primacy of the apostolic preaching that was confirmed by God's witness through both signs and wonders, various miracles, and other gifts of the Holy Spirit (2:1-4). Those neglecting that preached word that brings so great a salvation shall be doomed.

### **Hebrews 2:5-9**

*For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that you remember him? Or the son man, that you are concerned about Him? "You have made Him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned Him with glory and honor, and have appointed Him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things in subjection under His feet." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*

In this passage, it is most illuminating how the writer utilizes a reference from Psalm 8 about mankind's dominion as the image

bearer of God with the New Testament's clear reference to Psalm 8 as prefiguring the Lord Jesus Christ. Which is it? Is this referring to man or Christ? It is both! First, verse 5 begins with a transitional word, "for." This means that he is continuing the previous thoughts pertaining to the preached word performed by the apostles, testified to by signs, wonders, and miracles. Verse 5 emphasizes that the world was not made subject to angels but to man, even the Son of Man. While Psalm 8 beautifully brings out the dominion mandate of Genesis 1:28, the writer to Hebrews goes beyond this. He uses Psalm 8 to reveal the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is called the Son of Man, and who we know was the Messiah of Psalm 2 and 110. We know all things were put under the feet of the Messiah, so then how does this fit in with the use of Psalm 8? I believe the key is the last part of verse 8 – *"For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject, but now we do not yet see all things subject to him."* We need to appreciate the thrust of Psalm 8 as originally given in Scripture. The Psalm magnifies man as the image bearer of God, created as God's vice-regent (co-ruler) under Him, giving man dominion over the creation. The latter part of verse 8 stresses the fact that we don't see all things subjected to "him" (man). Verse 9 begins with *"But we do see Jesus who has been made for a little while lower the angels..."* A contrast is being made between verse 8 and verse 9 as to "him" and "HIM;" however, there is simultaneously a vital union. This interplay between man and Christ makes total sense once we understand that the "man" of verse 8 is **redeemed man in Christ**. All things are not **yet** subjected to him, but we do see Jesus. Since we know that all things have been put under Christ's feet (per Psalm 110; Ephesians 1:22), it is just a matter of time

before all things are subjected to redeemed man as the agent of Christ in world dominion. As Ephesians 1:23 says, Jesus is the head of the church, a church which is the fullness of Christ that fills all in all. Jesus is the kingly/priest as Hebrews 7 beautifully stresses, and His saints are “redeemed man” who we know are said to be a kingdom of priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; I Pt. 2:9).

The amazing truth that is emerging is that Christ, from His throne at God’s right hand has been given universal dominion; the nations have been given to Him as His inheritance. And Jesus, is using His church, “redeemed man” restored in the image of God (Eph.4:23-24) to subdue the nations. The church by its use of divinely powerful weapons is the divinely ordained instrument of Christ, the head, in subduing all His enemies. We must understand that this portion in Hebrews was given in the context of how important apostolic preaching was. This leads us to a vital understanding of Jesus and His preachers.

## **Jesus and His Preachers**

### **Romans 10:13-17**

*For “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.” <sup>14</sup>How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup>And how will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” <sup>16</sup>However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord , who has believed our report? <sup>17</sup>So*

*faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

The free offer of the gospel is seen in v.13 - “Whoever calls on Jesus will be saved.” But verse 14 asks a very important question – “How then shall they call upon Him (meaning Jesus) in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him (Jesus) whom they have not heard?”

In order to believe **one must hear Jesus**. Without hearing Jesus no one can believe. This is consistent with what Jesus said in John 10:26-27 – *“but you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”*

Unless one is Jesus’ sheep, they cannot hear Jesus, but all who are His sheep (the elect) do hear His voice and they do follow Jesus. In John 8:47, Jesus said, *“He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.”* So, you have got to hear Jesus. Romans 10:14 continues and says, *“How shall they hear without a preacher?”*

The text continues – *“And how shall they preach unless they are sent.”* Paul then quotes Isa.52:7 as applicable to preachers of the gospel. Men are not invested with power from on High unless they are sent by the sovereign. They are called “ambassadors.” Ambassadors are official representatives of a sovereign king or nation that sends them. Paul uses this term several times. He said that he and his apostolic team were “ambassadors for Christ” (II Cor. 5:20). In this context, their responsibility was that of entreating men to come to Christ in order to be reconciled. Paul

uses the term in Ephesians 6:20 where he says he was “an ambassador in chains” who must speak boldly. Ambassadors can and must speak boldly for they are announcing the word of the King! Malachi 2:7 demonstrates the role of an ambassador, though the word is not directly used. The text states – *“For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.”*

As Jesus commissions His preachers, they proceed with His divine authority, speaking His words. In the Romans 10 passage, Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 to demonstrate what Jesus is doing. Isaiah 52:6 is glorious when it says, *“Therefore, My people shall know My name; therefore in that day I am the one who is speaking, Here I am.”* Then Isaiah continues in 52:7 – *“How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”* How clearer can it be? God says that in the preaching of His preachers, God is speaking! God says, “Here I am!!” In human preachers, God comes speaking and revealing salvation through them. In speaking salvation through them, the preachers are saying to Zion – **Your God reigns!** Since inspired writers of the New Testament can never err, then Paul in using Isaiah 57 is saying that Jesus is presently reigning through the message of the preachers. This corresponds perfectly with Psalm 110, Ephesians 1:18-23, and Hebrews 1 and 2.

Not only is the term “ambassador” used with reference to preachers, but the term “herald” is used most often. A *keruyx* is



the Greek word for a “preacher”. A *keruyx* is a herald who proclaims the word of the king. The *keruyx*, the preacher, brings the good news. The *keruyx* can be considered an “ambassador” as II Cor.5:20 pictures in bringing the word of reconciliation.

Romans 10:17 simply reiterates the importance of verse 14 that faith comes from hearing **the word of Christ**. Jesus speaks through His preachers. To reject the message of one of Jesus’ preachers is very serious business. Luke 10:16 states, “*The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.*” Jesus had sent out His disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God to the cities and villages of Israel. Since the Church is said to be “the fullness of Him who fills all in all,” wherever the preachers go, even to the remotest parts of the earth, their feet are said to be beautiful, for they are bringing the good news of God – “I am here to save!”

### **Romans 16:25-26**

The incredible thing is that **Jesus preaches through His preachers!** Hence, the primacy of preaching is set forth. This same truth is set forth in Romans 16:25-26:

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and **the preaching of Jesus Christ**, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; (Emphasis mine)*

The church is the fullness of Christ who fills all in all. Wherever preachers go into the remotest parts of the earth, Jesus is going with them and empowering them. **Understanding these precious truths should be the compelling motive for world missions!**

### **Matthew 28:18-20**

*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

This passage is most commonly known as the Great Commission. Jesus specifically commands His apostles to disciple the nations. The command entails much more than the commonly understood notion of evangelism. Of course, it involves evangelism – God saving men out of darkness and bringing them to light, but discipling goes beyond evangelism. The discipling of the nations involves individual, family, and cultural transformation. A disciple is a person who is committed to the Lordship of Christ in all areas of his life. He walks consciously in holiness of life through the power of the Spirit. The family is the fundamental building block of any civilization, and for a culture to prosper, a godly family is a necessity. The command to baptize and to teach in the Commission points to God's emphasis upon the family. The Church must help families to educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord. Christian education is no option, be it in a Christian school or in Christian homeschooling. The cultural implications of the Great Commission are that the word of God permeates all facets of civilization. All national institutions must be transformed by the Christian worldview. The institutions of economics, education, industry, and law must all fly the banner of Christ.

Really and truly, the Great Commission is the New Testament expression of the Dominion Mandate of Genesis 1:28. Redeemed man is to have dominion over **all** of life.

The Great Commission is founded upon one central but absolutely essential truth – Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth. Verse 18 serves as the foundation for the success of the Commission. The risen Christ comes to His disciples just prior to His ascension with this glorious fact – I have all authority and power in the universe! The Greek word for authority is *exousia*, meaning the right of privilege and power to rule. Jesus said that He had it all! Who can defy the living God? This all embracing authority and power undergirds the Great Commission, guaranteeing its success. Jesus guarantees victory for the church’s mission by His promise – *“I am with you always even to the end of the age.”* In these glorious words of Jesus’ abiding presence with His church, He is showing forth the magnificent words of Deuteronomy 20: 1,3,4 – *“When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you... He shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be*

*fainthearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them,... for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”* Jesus Christ is Jehovah Sabaoth, “the Warrior of Israel.” He is the “Captain of the hosts of the Lord” who leads the heavenly hosts in war against His enemies.

The fact that Jesus is with His church in this capacity and “with them until the end of the age” assures the success of His Great Commission. Who can defeat God? This means His church is invincible in its capacity to be His agent in the spiritual conquest of the world.

The book of Revelation figuratively pictures Christ with His church waging war during the millennial age.

### **Revelation 19:11-19**

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. <sup>12</sup>His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. <sup>13</sup>He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup>And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup>From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. <sup>16</sup>And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name*

written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."  
<sup>17</sup>Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid heaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, <sup>18</sup>so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." <sup>19</sup>And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

The main points of this highly figurative picture are:

- 1) It is a vision of victory, where One is riding on a white horse. The one sitting on the horse is called "Faithful and True."
- 2) In righteousness He comes judging and waging war.
- 3) His robe is dipped in blood, demonstrating He is engaged in destroying His enemies.
- 4) The name written upon Him is: the Word of God.
- 5) Following Him are the armies of heaven who are clothed in white linen, also riding on white horses.
- 6) From His mouth comes a sharp sword that smites the nations; He rules them with a rod of iron; His wrath is poured out upon all His enemies.
- 7) On His robe and thigh, a name is written: King of kings, and Lord of lords.
- 8) An angel beckons birds to come and assemble for the great supper of God where the flesh of kings,

commanders, mighty men, of both free men and slaves, small and great.

- 9) The armies of the beast, and kings of the earth are assembled to war against Christ and His army.

A common misunderstanding of this passage is often seen in Dispensational Premillennial teaching. They describe this as the Second Coming, but this is totally wrong. They have missed the advents of Christ. This imagery does not pertain to the Second Coming but Christ's First Coming. The Second Coming according to Acts 1:11 has Jesus ascending into heaven in the clouds, which is in line with similar imagery found in I Thessalonians 4:17. In Acts 1:11, the angels are declaring, "*This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.*"

The Second Coming is not a time of making war on earth. As I Corinthians 15 teaches, when Jesus returns, "then comes the end." His enemies have already been defeated. The Second Coming is the final day of history; it is the "last day," referring to the day of resurrection and judgment.

However, the imagery of Revelation 19 conveys imagery of intense warfare. Some insist that this present age cannot be the millennium, for there is too much turmoil; it is supposed to be a time of great peace. The biblical answer to this is: The millennial age according to Psalm 110 is when Jesus sits on David's throne, stretching forth His scepter from Zion saying, "*Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.*" It is an age of spiritual warfare, for He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The millennial age is a time where His kingdom plunders Satan's

house. The millennial age is distinctly a time of great warfare where Jesus and those with Him are destroying their enemies. But the millennial age is indeed a time of great worldwide peace. When men are converted to Christ, they are at peace with God and with men. Jesus' destruction of His enemies brings peace in those who are defeated!

Jesus comes riding on a white horse, which was a common ancient symbol of a hero coming in triumph over his enemies. The One sitting on the white horse is called "Faithful and True." He comes judging and waging war in righteousness. His robe is dipped in blood, an imagery of intense warfare whereby His robe is stained with the blood of His defeated enemies. His name is interestingly called, "The Word of God." Those following him are an army riding on white horses clothed in white linen, a symbol of purity. This is not an imagery of angels with Jesus, but that of His purified Church who are waging war with Him. We must remember that the saints are reigning with Jesus and judging, and as I have just noted previously, the church is the agent of discipling the nations.

It is noteworthy that a sharp sword is coming out of His mouth by which He smites the nations, ruling them with a rod of iron. Remember, His name is "The Word of God." This sword coming out of his "mouth" slays His enemies. What could possibly be the meaning of this sharp sword protruding from His mouth? **It is the preaching of God's Word.** We remember that Jesus preaches through His preachers! This army in white linen is the church engaged as the agent of defeating Jesus' enemies with Him. It is no coincidence that Ephesians 6:12 says that the

divinely ordained part of the Christian's armor that is offensive is their sword, which is the sword of the Spirit, which is called the Word of God. Does not Hebrews 4:12 refer to the Word of God that is sharper than any ordinary two edged sword? It penetrates into the depths of men's souls accomplishing God's perfect will.

It was noted from Psalm 110 that the enemies of Christ are defeated by being converted. As Christ stretches forth His royal scepter, ruling in the midst of His enemies, His people volunteer freely in the day of His power. It was noted earlier that men must hear Jesus preaching to them in order to be converted, and it is the Holy Spirit taking God's word that is the very means of their conversion. Jesus does slay His enemies with the sword coming out of His mouth! He slays them through His church that preaches His word in the power of the Spirit.

### **Isaiah 11:4-5**

The imagery of a sword out of His mouth and smiting the nations is an Old Testament image of the role of the Messiah. Isaiah 11 is most illuminating. The Messiah is from the "branch of Jesse." Jesus is that branch according to His own testimony (Rev. 22:16). Isaiah 11:4-5 states:

*But with righteousness He will judge the poor... and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist.*



There is no coincidence either between this description of the coming Messiah and that of Jesus in Revelation 19. Isaiah says He judges the poor with righteousness. Revelation 19 says that in righteousness He comes judging and waging war. Isaiah says that Messiah strikes the earth with the “rod of His mouth,” and by the “breath of His lips” He slays the wicked. Revelation 19 says that He smites the nations with “the sharp sword coming out of His mouth,” and rules them with a rod of iron. Isaiah says that Messiah has the belt of “faithfulness.” Revelation 19 says that the One riding on the white horse is called, “faithful and true.”

Isaiah 11 pictures the coming Messiah whose reign will bring about peace. All millennial views believe that Isaiah 11 pictures the coming reign of Christ. Premillennialists believe that the kingdom of Christ is a time of unprecedented peace on earth, and so do Postmillennialists. Their differences are in the timing of the millennial age and the nature of that millennium. The fact that one can link the imagery of Isaiah 11 (the millennial age) with that of Revelation 19 demonstrates that Revelation 19 pertains to the first coming of Christ not His Second Coming; it pictures the subduing of the nations to Christ through the agency of His church, who preaches the gospel. Preaching is indeed “the sword out of His mouth” that smites the nations. Revelation 19 says that Jesus rules the nations with a rod of iron. Did not Psalm 2:8-9 inform us that the nations have been given to the Son as His inheritance and that He shall break them with a rod of iron?

There is a wonderful parallel between the imagery of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ with that imagery of the New Testament, although it is not exactly the same in wording,

but the meaning is the same. A “rod of His mouth” that strikes the earth means the same as “a sharp sword coming out of His mouth” that smites the nations.

### **Revelation 6:1-2**

Revelation 6:1-2 conveys a very similar thought as Revelation 19. It says:

*And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come!” And I looked and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering and to conquer.*

Jesus is reigning; He is going out conquering and to conquer. He is subduing the nations; He is smiting them with the rod of His mouth. His preaching is destroying His enemies; His gospel is the very power of God that transforms enemies of God into His friends. Jesus does all of this through His church! His church, as noted, is the fullness of Him that fills all in all in terms of His role as mediator. This agency of the church being used in holy warfare is seen in even other texts.

### **Matthew 16:16-18**

*Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I*

*will build My church; and the gates of Hell will not overpower it.*

Jesus had asked His disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of Man is?” While some of His disciples were saying that others thought him to be Elijah or John the Baptist or Jeremiah returned from the dead, it was Peter who said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus had elicited a response from Peter as to His true identity. With Peter’s accurate confession, Jesus stated that any such illumination as to who He is, is an act of God’s revealing grace because flesh and blood cannot understand it. It is upon such a confession that Jesus builds His church. No one is a genuine Christian who does not receive Him as Lord, who does not confess Him as the God/Man (I John 2:20-23). This is the glorious truth set forth in the gospel that the church preaches.

Notice as well, that Jesus said that the gates of Hell will not overpower the church. This is often terribly misunderstood. Many view this passage as stating that the church is a blessed stronghold that not even the devil and his entire demonic realm can defeat. This view pictures the devil on the attack while the church is on the defensive, but prevailing. This is not what Jesus meant, and it is not an accurate view of the church and its relationship to the devil and his forces. Yes, it is true that Ephesians 6 pictures the Christian with his full armor who is standing firm against the devil and his schemes (Eph. 6:12), whose shield of faith does quench all the fiery darts of the evil one (Eph. 6:16). We must always understand passages in their context, and how the Scripture uses various concepts. The

individual Christian is engaged in a holy war with the devil and his seed, but this doesn't mean the church is on the defense. No, this simply reflects how the Christian is protected. The church is not on the defense, but **it is on the offensive!** Our text in Matthew 16:18 says it is **not** "the gates of the church", but it is "the gates of hell" that will not prevail. Gates are not offensive structures; they are defensive. The citadel of the devil is under attack by the church! And, the "gates," which is the entrance to the fortress cannot overpower the church, that is, it cannot withstand the church's assault.

### **Genesis 22:17-18**

It is no coincidence that Jesus uses this imagery of His church in Matthew. It has Old Testament roots. Genesis 22:17-18 states:

*indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and **your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.** "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Emphasis mine).*

We know this to be a very important aspect and promise of the Abrahamic covenant. We have established already that the church of Jesus is the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). The promise is that Abraham's seed will possess the "gate" of their enemies, signifying the defeat of the enemies of God by the seed of Abraham. It is more than reasonable that Jesus, who is THE seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16) was referring to this when He spoke to

His church. Possessing the gates of one's enemies means the same as the gates of hell not prevailing against the church.

How does the church of Christ attack the gates of hell?

## **Divinely Ordained Weapons**

### **Preaching and Teaching**

#### **II Corinthians 10:3-5**

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup>for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup>We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,*

The possessing of the gates of our enemies is not a physical warfare, but a spiritual one. We are engaged in warfare, but our weapons are spiritual and divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. In speaking about the church, Paul says that we are attacking fortresses. Sounds a lot like Genesis 22:17 and Matthew 16:18 doesn't it?

The nature of the warfare is spiritual, for it says that with divinely powerful weapons we are destroying speculations raised up against the knowledge of God and taking captive every thought to the obedience of Christ. Is this not the scope of the Great Commission? Is this not the discipling of the nations

whereby we teach them to observe ALL things that Jesus commanded? And what was the promise of Jesus? As the “warrior of Israel,” as “the Captain of the Lord’s host” is He not with His church always, assuring them of victory? Jesus said He had all authority (power) in the universe; therefore, what is the likelihood of the divinely ordained weapons He has given to His church prevailing against the fortress of hell? Hell’s citadel stands no chance!

Oh yes, you bet our weapons are divinely powerful, so powerful that Hell’s gates, Hell’s citadel stands no chance! How do we as the church bring all thoughts captive to Christ’s obedience? It is **the faithful preaching and teaching of the Word of God and diligent prayer**. These are the divinely powerful weapons!

### **Romans 16:20, 25-26**

*<sup>20</sup>The God of peace will soon **crush Satan under your feet**. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. ... The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. <sup>25</sup>Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, <sup>26</sup>but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; (Emphasis mine)*

This passage confirms with the others we have seen that Jesus uses His church as the agent of subduing the nations to Him. Note that it says the God of peace will soon “crush Satan under your feet.” Psalm 110 promised that the Lord Jesus will sit at God’s right hand until God the Father makes His enemies a footstool for His feet. And, since the church is said to be the fullness of Him who fills all in all, it is figuratively “the feet of Jesus.” As Jesus preaches through His heralds, Satan is crushed under their feet. As soon as the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ, crushes Satan by delivering his captives out of darkness. The gospel faithfully preached by His preachers constitutes “the preaching of Jesus Christ” which brings about “the obedience of faith” to all the nations. Did not II Corinthians 10:3-5 teach us that the divinely powerful weapons bring captive all thoughts to the obedience of Christ of those who once occupied the fortress of hell?

Romans 1:16 affirms that the gospel is the “power of God.” Just how powerful is preaching? It smites the nations! With the Messiah’s breath the wicked are slain (Isa. 11:4). With the sword coming out of Jesus’ mouth, He smites the nations ruling them with a rod of iron. Wherever Jesus’ preachers go, the gospel is brought with its dynamic power to save those in darkness and bring them into the domain of His kingdom. With the church’s preaching, Jesus preaches, and men who were once enemies of Christ are now made His friends – “we are taking every thought captive to Christ’s obedience.” The church wields the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” to defeat Christ’s enemies.

## **Ezekiel 37:12-14**

The preaching of the Word of God, the gospel, is indeed powerful, so powerful that it raises the dead to life! Ezekiel 37:12-14 is a magnificent image of the regenerative power of the preached word. Israel is in captivity, having been decimated due to its spiritual unfaithfulness. The house of Israel is pictured as a valley of dry bones, whose hope has perished. God commands Ezekiel to prophesy (preach) to the dry bones:

*Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD'."*

This is not some physical promise of inheriting a physical piece of land, Canaan. It obviously is a spiritual promise of raising the spiritual dead, whose hope has perished. When the Spirit of God does His marvelous work of regeneration, it enables us to believe in Jesus, and give praise and thanksgiving to our Lord who has saved us (Titus 3:4-7). The promise of the new covenant in the Old covenant is precisely the promise of the Holy Spirit indwelling us and bringing us to the promised land (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 37:24-28). But we must remember that the New Testament pictures our union with Christ as “entering His



rest”(Heb. 4:1-3). Those in the wilderness whose hearts were hardened (unbelieving hearts) were forbidden by God to make it to the land of Canaan, the land of rest (Heb.3:12), but those who heard the word preached and believed made it, and those in the new covenant who have the word preached to them and who believe will also enter the land of rest, heavenly Canaan (Heb. 4:2-3).

## **II Corinthians 4:3-6**

*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup>in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

Sometimes Christians wonder why non-Christians don't receive the gospel message and often mock it. This text is one that explains why. A veil prevents one from seeing. Who has put the veil over the eyes of the unbelieving? The god of this world, the devil! The devil has “**blinded the minds**” of the unbelieving preventing them from seeing the light of the gospel. The condition of all non-Christians is absolutely devastating. They are enslaved to their sin and the devil (II Tim. 2:24-26). What hope is there for them? Only if by God's grace, God shines in their hearts giving them the knowledge of God's glory in the

face of Christ. No one dead in their sins is capable of trusting in Jesus unless the sovereign God intervenes and removes the veil and shines the glorious gospel into their hearts. What is important for us to note in the text is that this gracious and merciful revelation of the light comes via the preaching of Christ Jesus as Lord – “*for we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord...*” This passage corresponds very well with Romans 10:14-15 of Jesus preaching to men’s hearts through His preachers who bring glad tidings of good things in the gospel.

The preaching and teaching of God’s word is not the only divinely powerful weapon in the arsenal of the church in the spiritual conquest of the world.

## **Prayer**

### **Ephesians 6:17-20**

*<sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup>With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, <sup>19</sup>and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

This beautifully shows the correlation of wielding the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, with the ministry of intercessory

prayer. This intercessory prayer is to be persevered in, and for all the saints. As Christians, we all desperately need each other's prayers in our personal fight against the wiles of the devil, but we also need prayers in the mission of the church. Paul wanted prayer on his behalf for what purpose? It was for him **to boldly preach the gospel**, even if he is an ambassador in chains.

### **Romans 15:30**

*Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,<sup>31</sup> that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;<sup>32</sup> so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.<sup>33</sup> Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

Paul urges the church in Rome to “strive together” with him in their prayers to God for him. The Greek word for strive together is *sunagonizomai*. This is a combination of two words *agonizomai* and *sun*. The preposition *sun* conveys “together with.” The word *agonizomai* conveys the idea of contending for victory in the public games. It commonly came to mean to fight, to wrestle with great pains, straining to achieve victory in the contest. Bringing this to our text and understanding the spiritual meaning, we see that Paul urges intercessory prayer on his behalf in his preaching. In doing so, the faithful prayers of the saints are really a contending **with** Paul in his struggles to preach the gospel.

So often, Christians do not understand the dynamic of prayer. Paul says that our prayers on his behalf place us **spiritually with him in the struggle**. We can rightly refer to those who engage in these intercessory prayers as **prayer warriors**. We are fighting with all those for whom we are praying. This should totally affect our view of praying for missions.

The Scripture says in James 4:2 that we have not because we ask not. Jesus commanded us in Matthew 7:7-8 to keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking, and to such persistent ones, they would keep on receiving, finding, and having the door opened. Jesus encourages His church to **persevere in prayer**. Great things happen to those who persevere in prayer (Luke 18:1-8).

In the 19th Century Southern Presbyterian theologian, James Henley Thornwell said:

May they cause our hearts to pulse with love for Jesus Christ and his wondrous gospel of grace, and stimulate us to increased action. If the Church could be aroused to a deeper sense of the glory that awaits her, she would enter with a warmer spirit into the struggles that are before her. Hope would inspire ardour. She would even now arise from the dust, and like the eagle plume her pinions for loftier flights than she has yet taken. What she wants, and what every individual Christian wants, is faith - faith in her sublime vocation, in her Divine resources, in the presence and efficacy of the Spirit that dwells in her -faith in the truth, faith in Jesus, and faith in God. With such a faith there would

be no need to speculate about the future. That would speedily reveal itself. It is our unfaithfulness, our negligence and unbelief, our low and carnal aims that retard the chariot of the Redeemer. The Bridegroom cannot come until the Bride has made herself ready. Let the Church be in earnest after greater holiness in her own members, and in faith and love undertake the conquest of the world, and she will soon settle the question whether her resources are competent to change the face of the earth.<sup>3</sup>

## **The Magnitude of the Victory**

### **Jesus' Kingdom Parables**

Just how extensive is the Church's victory? It will fill the earth, which is the promise of Old Testament prophecy and New Testament revelation. Several of the Kingdom parables of Jesus address this promised growth. The parables of the mustard seed and leaven in Matthew 13:31-33 vividly teach the expansion of the Kingdom of God in this world. The mustard seed is the smallest of the seeds in the garden, but it then grows into a sizable tree where birds can nest. The leaven permeates the loaf until it fills all of it. Both parables explicitly state – “The kingdom of heaven is like...” I am fully aware of Dispensationalism's interpretations of both parables, and it is woefully deficient in applying principles of biblical

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<sup>3</sup> J.H. Thornwell, *Collected Writings* (1871), Vol. 11, p. 48.

interpretation to these parables. For example, “leaven” is not always viewed as evil everywhere it is used in Scripture. The Jews were told to eat “unleavened” bread not because leaven was evil, but because they were told to exit Egypt quickly before their bread could normally be fully leavened. Moreover, Jesus, after all, said that the Kingdom of heaven is like leaven. Why would Jesus refer to His glorious kingdom as evil? No, Jesus refers to His kingdom as leaven because His kingdom will prevail in history. It will fill the earth. He will prevail over all His enemies.

### **Daniel 2: 35, 44-45**

*<sup>35</sup>"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found **But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth...** <sup>44</sup>"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. <sup>45</sup>"Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy. (Emphasis mine)*

This pertains to Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. During the fourth kingdom that destroyed all other previous kingdoms (Rome), the God of heaven will set up His own kingdom that will never be destroyed and which will put an end to all of man's kingdoms. Jesus was born in Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus decreed a census of all citizens to go to their place of birth. Jesus' kingdom was established in the midst of the fourth kingdom when he was born a king, even though He wasn't crowned king until His ascension. The stone that strikes the world's kingdoms shall grow into a great mountain that fills the earth.

#### **Isaiah 2:1-4**

*The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. <sup>3</sup>And many peoples will 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 concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.*

In the “last days” the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains with all the nations streaming to it and learning the ways of the Lord. First, we must understand this Old Testament imagery as it pertains to the coming millennial kingdom of Jesus. Second, we must understand what the Scripture says is **when** “the last days” occur. Actually, the immediate context does specify when the “last days” occur; it occurs during the millennial age. More on this in a moment, but first, we must understand the imagery. The nations will come to the “mountain of the Lord,” and to “the house of Jacob.” As the nations come, they come to “Zion,” and “Jerusalem.” Our text states that the law will “go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from “Jerusalem.”

The term “mountain of the Lord” is a general reference to God’s people, to God’s kingdom. We have seen in Daniel 2 that God’s kingdom is referred to as a stone that grows into a great mountain filling the earth. In the Old Testament, Mount Zion was in Jerusalem where the temple stood. This was the dwelling place and sanctuary of Jehovah where the King of Israel resided. Hebrews 12:22-23 is most illuminating – *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,<sup>23</sup> to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.”*

The terms “Mount Zion,” “Jerusalem,” “The House of Jacob,” and “the mountain of the Lord” all correspond to the church of the New Testament in the Hebrews passage. In Hebrews 12:22,



the city of God is said to be the “heavenly Jerusalem.” The “House of Jacob” corresponds to the “household and temple of God” in Ephesians 2:19-22.

In Isaiah 2:3 the world’s nations will come up to the house of God so that they can be taught God’s law, for it says, “For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Is this not what the Great Commission pictures? The result of learning of the ways of the Lord is world peace.

All of this occurs during the “last days;” therefore, if we can discern when the last days are, then we have discerned the time of the millennium, and since we know the millennium is before the Second Coming, the last days is before Christ’s return. Even Premillennialists acknowledge that Isaiah 2:1-4 refers to Christ’s millennial kingdom, but they have an immense problem because all Premillennialists believe the millennial kingdom is after Christ’s Second Coming. How can this be, seeing that the “last days,” even in their scheme, always pertains to events prior to Jesus’ return. Premillennialists, in believing that the “last days” are during the “church age” before Jesus’ return, inadvertently have demonstrated their system to be wrong.

There are several references to “the last days” or “last times” “during the New Testament era. We have been in the “last days” since the first advent of Jesus Christ (Heb.1:2; I Pt.1:20). In Hebrews 9:26, Christ’s redemption is said to have been manifested “at the consummation of the ages.” Inspired Peter says that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit prophesied by Joel would take place in “these last days.”

Isaiah's prophecy anticipated the establishment of Mount Zion/Jerusalem as the chief of the mountains where the nations will be taught the ways of the Lord. The New Testament affirms this prophecy as coming to pass with the Church's preaching. As the gospel proliferates, souls will be brought out of darkness into light, and nations will be transformed as they are discipled.

### **Psalm 22:27-31**

*<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. <sup>28</sup>For the kingdom is the LORD'S and He rules over the nations. <sup>29</sup>All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive. <sup>30</sup>Posterity will serve Him; It will be told of the Lord to the coming generation. <sup>31</sup>They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it.*

This is a great promise of world dominion, of the success of gospel preaching. It all takes place during the kingdom of Christ where He rules over the nations. We have documented that the millennium (Christ's kingdom) is before His Second Coming. This means that the families of the earth will worship Christ and that Christ's enemies will bow before Christ during this millennial reign. Psalm 22 is one of the most wonderful Messianic Psalms, for the earlier portion (verses 1-21) is an incredible picture of Christ's crucifixion. Psalm 22 is a great example of the two states of Christ: His humiliation and

exaltation. The Father promised exaltation to His obedient Son (Phil. 2:8-11).

### **Summary of Jesus' Victorious Reign**

The church of Christ is the ordained agent in the spiritual conquest of the world. Jesus obviously is not limited to any means, but God ordinarily uses divine means to accomplish a divine end. We have seen that Jesus is presently reigning on David's throne as promised. David's throne is a spiritual throne in heaven, which is also God the Father's throne, and Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father exercising dominion over the earth. After all, the Father promised the Son the nations as His inheritance. The Father promised that all of Jesus' enemies would be subdued in the millennial reign. The Great Commission constitutes the marching orders for Jesus' church. Jesus, as the "warrior of Israel" is with His church to guarantee that the divinely powerful weapons will indeed be successful in subduing His enemies. The primary way for the defeat of His enemies is to convert them by the power of the Holy Spirit. The church of the Lord Jesus is invincible in its mission because Jesus is invincible. A persecuted church is **not** a defeated church; it is still a victorious church. As the Christian leader Tertullian said in the Third Century, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." A victorious church in history does not negate the reality of a persecuted church for a portion of its existence.

In time, the nations of the earth will stream to Mt. Zion, the church, to learn the ways of the Lord; the nations will beat their swords into plowshares and learn war no more. As Isaiah 11:10

promises, the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. The knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. There is coming a time when the great promise of the new covenant as seen in Hebrews 8:11 will come to pass – *“and they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them.’”* This is how pervasive and successful the church will be in its mission. What prevents us from believing this? Our lack of faith in God’s promises! The church must not look at present circumstances as the gauge for its promised victory. It must have an unswerving faith in its head, the Lord Jesus. If God has promised victory, it is settled!

One thing that has been clearly established is that the millennium is **before** the Second Coming. So, what exactly happens at Jesus’ Second Coming?

### **What Happens at the Second Coming?**

One thing that has been clearly established thus far is that the millennial kingdom is where Jesus presently reigns from the right hand of God in heaven utilizing His church as His agent in subduing all the nations to His most holy will. All of this occurs before the Second Coming. Contrary to all forms of Premillennialism, the Second Coming is THE cataclysmic event constituting the end of the world as we know it.

Concerning events at the end of human history, several events are seen as conterminous, meaning that they occur essentially at

the same time. When I say, coterminous, I mean that the individual events occur at the same time or shortly after one another. There is no gap of a thousand years between them.

These coterminous biblical events are:

- 1) The Second Coming
- 2) A general resurrection of both righteous and unrighteous
- 3) A general judgment of both righteous and unrighteous
- 4) The Second Coming is at the last Day or the end of the world

There is no question that there is a physical Second Coming at the end of the world. Acts 1:11 promised Jesus' return in a way similar to how He ascended.

#### **I Thessalonians 4:13-17**

*<sup>13</sup>But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup>For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*

Earlier, I established also from an exegesis of I Corinthians 15:20-24 that the resurrection of the dead occurs at the Second Coming.

In I Thessalonians 4:14, Paul states that those who have died in Jesus will be brought back with Jesus when He returns, that is, the souls of those who have died in Jesus will come with Him.

In verse 15 Paul affirms that those living at the time of Christ's Coming will not precede those who have died in Christ.

What is the mode of the Second Coming? Jesus descends from heaven, with a shout and a trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. This means that the resurrection of believers occurs at the Second Coming. Now, the Dispensationalist will say, "See, it does not say the wicked are raised at the same time; hence, there must be two bodily resurrections." The focus of this passage is on giving comfort to Christians who have lost loved ones to death. The doctrine of the resurrection of the righteous at the Second Coming of Christ is a blessed doctrine. Jesus reminded grieving Martha about her deceased brother Lazarus. Though Jesus will immediately raise Lazarus, his resurrection, was but a foretaste of that great event at the end of the world. Jesus told Martha – *"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"* Earlier, I established from Scripture that there is a general physical resurrection of the dead, not two, separated by a thousand years. It is beyond the scope of what Paul wants to convey to discuss the resurrection of the wicked at Jesus' Second Coming in I Thessalonians 4. Jesus alluded to this general

resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked in John 5:28-29.

The dead in Christ have their souls and bodies united at Christ's coming. The first to have this glorious reunion are those who have died. Those who are alive at His coming are "caught up" together with Christ when the others are raised, and we will all be together with the Lord.

Dispensationalists refer to this catching up as the "secret rapture." Enough books have been written about this "secret rapture," and films (Left Behind Series to name one) made of this supposed "secret rapture" of Christians before a great Tribulation.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, though sincere in their belief, the idea of a "secret" rapture is totally the fabrication of Dispensationalists whose faulty interpretations of biblical events demand this "secret" rapture.

## **What is the Rapture?**

The word "rapture" is not found in the Bible, but the concept is taught, though there are varying views of what it is. Those who correctly discredit the idea of a "secret rapture" before a Great Tribulation, must be careful not to convey a wrong notion that there is no rapture at all, because there is a biblical view of the rapture.

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<sup>4</sup> For those interested in delving into a biblical understanding of Matthew 24 that discusses the Tribulation mentioned by Jesus, I direct you to my lecture series titled *Kingdom, Church, and Eschatology* at [www.triumphantpublications.com](http://www.triumphantpublications.com).

In I Thessalonians 4:14, the phrase, “caught up,” is translated in Greek as *harpazo*. But, in Latin, it is translated as *rapturo*; hence, “rapture” is the English rendering of this Latin word. The “catching up” of all believers in Christ at Christ’s Second Coming is a biblical event at the end of the world. The “rapture” is the immediate changing of the living from mortal to immortal beings, from corruptible to incorruptible. It is the final redemption of the Christian (perfect soul united with perfect body). The “rapture” then is that biblical event at Christ’s Second Coming where those alive on earth at the time will be instantly translated from mortal to immortal and given their glorified bodies in the twinkling of an eye (I Cor. 15:50-56). I Corinthians 15:52 says that this changing will be “at the last trumpet.” This trumpet sounding corresponds with the trumpet of I Thessalonians 4.

The rapture is **not** a first phase of the Second Coming as Dispensationalists contend; their system demands an anti-biblical position. We must allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. The rapture is at the Second Coming.

I Corinthians 15:20-28 definitively states that the end comes immediately after the millennial age where Jesus has abolished all rule and authority, for He must reign until all His enemies are under His feet (vs. 24-25). The last enemy that is destroyed is death and then the kingdom is delivered by the Son to the Father. How can there possibly be a thousand years after the last enemy “death” is destroyed? All millennial views, even Premillennialists, acknowledge that death is a reality during the millennium, which is why their view simply cannot be true.



Verses 23-24 emphatically state, “*But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, then comes the end ...*” (Emphasis mine).

Both John 6:39, 44, 54 and John 12:48 clearly put the resurrection of the dead and Judgment Day at the “**last day.**” This may sound trite, but how many days can there be after the last day? This conclusively rules out all forms of Premillennialism.

### **John 6:39, 44, 54**

*This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but **raise it up on the last day**... No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and **I will raise him up on the last day**... He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and **I will raise him up on the last day.*** (Emphasis mine)

### **John 12:48**

*He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will **judge him at the last day.*** (Emphasis mine)

Thus, the general resurrection and the final Day of Judgment both occur at the “last day.” And, since we know that the resurrection is at the Second Coming, then obviously Jesus’ Second Coming is the last day!

We can safely conclude that there are three coterminous events – the Second Coming, the general resurrection, and the final Day of Judgment, all occurring at the last day.

## **II Thessalonians 1:5-10**

*This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. <sup>6</sup>For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup>and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when **the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, <sup>8</sup>dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup>These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, <sup>10</sup>when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed.** (Emphasis mine)*

This passage proves that the final Day of Judgment is at the Second Coming of Christ. Judgment Day is **not** separated from the Second Coming by a thousand years as all Premillennialists believe.

## **Revelation 20:11-15**

*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne,*

*and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. <sup>13</sup>And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. <sup>14</sup>Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup>And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Emphasis mine)*

This portion of Revelation 20 is in the same chapter where the millennium is discussed in verses 1-10. Verses 7-10 deal with the release of Satan at the end of the millennial period in order for him to deceive the nations again. In this deception, Satan will turn nations and kings against the church expressed as “the camp of the saints and the beloved city”(vs. 8-9). The evidence is that this “apostasy” will be of short duration because God will destroy the uprising from heaven, and the devil will be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented forever (v.10).

There is no indication of two bodily resurrections in Revelation 20. I have noted already that the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5-6) is clearly a spiritual resurrection because they are priests unto God and are reigning with Christ on earth. The second death has no power over those experiencing the first resurrection. Physically resurrected Christians would not be priests, and a resurrected being, who is obviously perfected in body and soul, would never have anything to fear anyway. In understanding the

first resurrection as a spiritual resurrection (being redeemed by faith), the second death (Judgment Day) has no threat for them.

Revelation 20:11-15 confirms that the bodily resurrection and Judgment occur at the same time. Everyone is raised and judged. Those not found in the book of life are condemned and thrown into the lake of fire.

## **II Peter 3:3-15**

*<sup>3</sup>Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup>and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." <sup>5</sup>For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, <sup>6</sup>through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. <sup>7</sup>But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. <sup>8</sup>But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. <sup>11</sup>Since all these*

*things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup>looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! <sup>13</sup>But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, <sup>15</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,*

II Peter 3:3-15 demonstrates the following events as simultaneous: The Coming of Christ, the Day of Judgment, the Day of the Lord, and the Day of God. This passage is devastating to all forms of Premillennialism. With Christ's coming, the Day of Judgment takes place and the destruction of the cosmos. How can there be an earthly millennium of a thousand days after Christ's coming, if the end of the world occurs with Christ's Second Coming?

Verses 3-4 indicate that in the "last days" mockers will come saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" In other words, He is not coming because He hasn't come yet. The inference in "His coming" is that Christ is coming in judgment to destroy unbelievers, and the mockers are hardly concerned. There is no fear of God; they think that there is no day of reckoning, that we are not accountable for our sins. It is no different from Paul's encounter with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens

who saw no life after death, and no Day of Judgment. Of course, this does not impede Paul from declaring to them in Acts 17:30-31 that God is now declaring to men everywhere that they should repent because God has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man who has been raised from the dead.

Just like the pagan philosophers of Athens, the mockers here in II Peter have their own argument that Jesus is not coming because the creation remains steadfast, constant since the beginning of creation. In verses 5-6, Peter mentions that these mockers have made a fatal flaw in their reasoning. They have failed to realize that God destroyed the earth once during Noah's flood. In v. 7, while the Bible has made the promise that God will not destroy the world again by a flood, the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men. In other words, a great day of Judgment is coming upon the world where fire is involved. When this day comes, the ungodly will be destroyed just like in the days of Noah, except this time by a different mode.

In v. 8, Peter refutes the argument of the mockers in verses 5-6. His argument is: don't allow yourself to think that delay means no return. With the eternal God, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Even a delay for a thousand or more years is nothing to God.

Verse 9 is an often misunderstood passage. God's patience is for the purpose of bringing all of His elect people to saving faith in history. The Noahic covenant promised that the world will never

again be destroyed by a cataclysmic event until the end of the world. God will achieve all of His covenantal promises through His Son in subjecting all of His enemies under Christ's feet. Who is God patient with? With us- His elect who have been loved before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3-11). All of His chosen people must repent and come to Christ. The world will not end until the very last elect person has been saved, and then the end will come.

In verse 10, Peter says BUT (a transition carrying the thought over) **the day of the Lord** will come as a thief where the heavens and earth will be consumed with intense heat.

Notice what we have seen thus far: His coming (Jesus' Second Coming) in verse 3 is simultaneous with the "Day of Judgment" in verse 7. Moreover, this Day of Judgment of ungodly men is called "the day of the Lord" in verse 10.

Verse 11 warns us to be vigilant, to seek after godliness, seeing that a terrible day of reckoning is coming for sinners. And, verse 12 encourages us to look forward to and hasten "**the day of God**" where the heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire. Hence, it is obvious that the "day of the Lord" and "the day of God" are the same.

In verses 13-15, we see that God promises a new heaven and a new earth that comes about as the result of the destruction of the present cosmos. In this new cosmos, righteousness will dwell. The Christian is to look forward to these events. The Christian has no fear of Judgment Day; he is secure in Christ.

As verse 15 states, the patience of God is for “salvation.” God deliberately delays so that all His people will come to Him.

It is difficult to have another thousand days after the universe has been burned up with fire.

A very important companion passage is Matthew 24:42-51. This passage’s context is Christ’s Second Coming, who comes like a thief in the night. The faithful slave ( a believer in Christ), who is doing the Master’s will is blessed; however, the evil slave says, *“My master is not coming for a long time and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards.”*

II Peter 3 and Matthew 24:42-51 both associate the Second Coming with the great Day of Judgment. This means that all forms of Premillennialism are proved mistaken. In their view, at the Second Coming, there is no resurrection of the wicked and no judgment of the wicked. They think the wicked will not be judged for another thousand years, at the completion of the millennial kingdom with the “Great White Throne Judgment” (Rev. 20:11-15). But, this is not the testimony of Scripture at all. I have proven from multiple texts that with Jesus’ Second Coming, there is the general resurrection of all the dead, and immediately the great Day of Judgment.

## **Conclusion**

Jesus’ millennial kingdom is not marked by failure but victory. His millennial kingdom is before the Second Coming, not after. Jesus’ kingdom is a spiritual kingdom that He reigns over from



David's throne in heaven, which is also God's throne. As Scripture prophetically promised, the ascended Christ sits at His Father's right hand until all of God's enemies are subdued. How does Jesus subdue His enemies? He does so mainly by converting them through the preaching of the gospel, which is called "the power of God." Jesus' church is the ordained agent in the spiritual conquest of the world. As the church wields the divinely ordained spiritual weapons of prayer and preaching, the gates of hell are overcome, and multitudes are brought to captivity under the banner of Christ.

We serve a majestic God, an all powerful Savior, who has promised to be with His church always, even to the end of the age. Let's be about the Lord's business in carrying out holy warfare by seeing the nations brought to the gospel.