

Text: Rev. 20:4-6

Title: "What the millennium will be like"

Time: 11/11/2018 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Today is our nation's Veteran's Day. Many have served our country sacrificially so that our freedoms have been defended from our nation's enemies. As Americans, we have much to be thankful for in this regard. An important way our nation says thankyou to those who serve in our armed forces is the watch that is kept at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Arlington National Cemetery. An instructive part of that memorial is the text of The Sentinel's Creed one can read there:

"My dedication to this sacred duty is total and whole-hearted. In the responsibility bestowed on me never will I falter. And with dignity and perseverance my standard will remain perfection. Through the years of diligence and praise and the discomfort of the elements, I will walk my tour in humble reverence to the best of my ability. It is he who commands the respect I protect, his bravery that made us so proud. Surrounded by well-meaning crowds by day, alone in the thoughtful peace of night, this soldier will in honored glory rest under my eternal vigilance."

One of the reasons we honor soldiers as Christians is that the Bible tells us we are soldiers of the cross. We are to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). When the Scriptures speak of the "honored glory rest" of soldiers of the cross, it tells us about a future period in the plan of God for the earth we call *the millennium*. This future millennium will be the "honored glory rest" of good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

We have come in our study of Revelation to this prophecy's description of this period. We looked at that in some detail

last week. Revelation tells us that it is 1000 years, the first phase of God's reestablished eternal reign, that it is a time when Satan is bound and God's authority is imposed, that it is a time of reward for faithful believers, and that it is a time that will be missed by many.

Many other Scriptures tell us much more about this time (ex. Luke 1:30-33), and so before we move on in our study of Revelation, I want us to pause this morning and understand some things the Bible teaches about what the millennium will be like.

The Scriptures teach that the Lord wants us to understand better our "honored glory rest" as we endure the hardness of our calling today. We will focus on three things this morning: (1) the millennium will be life lived with Jesus; (2) the millennium will be life lived totally sinless; and (3) the millennium will be life lived in a wonderful garden.

I. The millennium will be life lived with Jesus (John 14:1-3, "that where I am there ye may be also").

Illustration: Have you ever as a believer in Jesus Christ, whom you have never seen, wondered what it would have been like to live during the days that He walked the shores of the Sea of Galilee? Have you ever wondered what He sounded like when He taught in the temple or on the remote hillside or from the deck of the ship on the water?

Last week we celebrated the Lord's Table in remembrance of Him. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have been in that upper room celebrating it in his presence for the very first time? Trips to Israel are special in this way.

Application: Well, for those of us who have wondered such things, even longed for them, there is good news waiting for us in the millennium. The millennium will be a time when life is lived with Jesus Christ on the earth.

Do you remember what He told His disciples on the occasion of the first Lord's Table celebration? "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come" (Luke 22:14-18). Jesus looks forward to our being with Him.

We will not have to wait, of course, until the millennium to be with Jesus. A number of Scriptures tell us plainly that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6). Anticipating the possibility of not surviving his trial before Nero, Paul wrote of his desire "to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). Jesus is with us through the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit. He promised in the Great Commission to be with us always, even unto the end of the age. But Paul understood that an upgrade was coming in this regard.

That is our future - to be with Christ.

Illustration: Saints have found great comfort as Paul did about this better future with their Savior throughout church history. We have songs about this comfort. When the blind hymnist, Fanny Crosby, wrote about what heaven will be like, she did not merely rejoice that she would some day be able to see, but rather she rejoiced that she would some day see her Savior's face.

"Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing;
But, O the joy when I shall wake
Within the presence of the King!

“Some day my earthly house will fall,
I cannot tell how soon ’twill be,
But this I know – my All in all
Has now a place **with Him** for me.

“Or some day when my Lord will come,
And **called to meet Him** I’ll be blest,
He then will say to me, “Well done,”
And I shall enter into rest.

“Some day, till then I’ll watch and wait,
My lamp all trimmed and burning bright,
That when my Savior I will greet,
My faith will then be changed to sight.”

Our hymn of response this morning speaks of how the Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel’s land (“The Sands of Time are Sinking”). It is a song written by a pastor’s wife about the last words of one of her heroes in the faith, Samuel Rutherford, a Scotch Presbyterian. He said: “I shall live and adore Christ; glory to my Redeemer forever. Glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel’s land.”

Can we honestly say with these dear saints, “I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better?” If not, something serious is missing from our Christian experience, and it is a spiritual problem that Paul warns us about in Col. 3:1-2, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” You see, we cannot set our affection on both. We can love Christ or the things of the earth, but not both. If we are loving the things of the earth, it is not going to seem far better to depart and be with Christ. Which do you and I love more this morning? The millennium will be life lived with Jesus Christ. Does that bring comfort to you?

II. The millennium will be life lived totally sinless (Isa. 32:1-5, 15-18).

Illustration: In 1980 Carl Sagan wrote a book about the universe that he titled, *Cosmos*. The Library of Congress lists that book as one of the 88 books most responsible for shaping American society and life. Sagan uses the word *cosmos* as a synonym for the word *universe*. It comes from the Greek word translated *world* in our English Bibles, but it is a word that primarily meant to the Greeks *an arranged order*. This arranged order was the essence of beauty, so the ornaments, embellishments, and dress a lady would use to adorn herself were called *kosmoi*, the plural of *kosmos*. And in English we have the word *cosmetics* that comes from this Greek word.

As creationists, we find all this very appropriate. We would call the universe a created cosmos. And we would account for its beautifully arranged order in terms of the skill of its mighty Creator, Jesus Christ.

Application: It turns out that the Bible has another word for what we call the universe, the creation, the cosmos, nature, or the world. It is a word that we do not think much about in this context. It is the word *kingdom*. According to the Bible, the universe is God's kingdom, and man made in the image of God was to serve Him by ruling over this kingdom (Gen. 1:26-31).

When man fell into sin, this kingdom was lost to God's enemy, Satan. Ever since Genesis 3, Satan and sin have maintained a ruling dominion over the world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 2 Cor. 4:4, 1 John 5:19).

Throughout the history of the world, God's purpose has been to reestablish His Son, Jesus Christ, as the rightful ruler of this kingdom (Ps. 2:6-12). The covenants of the Old Testament all make this promise (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New).

It is the New Covenant that especially describes what life will be like for sinless people in the millennium in its description of a saved and glorified Israel (Jer. 31:31-33; Ezek. 36:24-27). Are you tired of struggling with your sin? Are you discouraged by the sins of others? Life in the millennium will no longer cause us that weariness and discouragement. God's kingdom will be sinless living.

Application2: Now we must not leave this point until we remember that at the end of the millennium, Satan is released from prison and a horrific sinful rebellion ensues. What we must conclude from this truth is that there will be two kinds of sinless existence in the millennium. One kind will be the fulfilment of the New Covenant promise, the sinlessness of glorified saints. Their sinlessness will be an inward reality brought about by the regenerating, sanctifying, and glorifying work of the Holy Spirit on the heart and the resurrection of the body.

But another kind of false sinlessness will be the experience of many – a sinlessness that is forced upon them from the outside as King Jesus shepherds the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15, 20:7-9, Zech. 14:16-19).

So what we must also conclude about these lost people is that it will do them no good ultimately to have the blessings of sinlessness enforced upon them from the outside during the millennium. Ultimately, they will meet their doom in unbelief at the end of the 1000 years. A lost sinner is what he is, not because of his environment or circumstances, but because of his sinful human heart.

Perhaps there are some here this morning who are living a life of sinlessness enforced upon you from the outside, but there is no real love for Christ in your heart – no personal faith and trust in Him as your own Savior. "Now is the acceptable time. Today is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

III. The millennium will be life lived in a wonderful garden (Rom. 8:19-23).

Application: We do not have time to read the many passages that speak of the reversal of the curse of sin the world will experience during the millennium. Crops will produce abundantly without thorns or thistles (Isa. 32:13-15), animals will pose no danger to each other or to humans (Isa. 11:6-9), world peace will be a reality (Mic. 4:3), sickness and disability will be things of the past (Isa. 35:5-6), and lifespans will lengthen considerably (Isa. 65:20). The millennium will be Eden replanted on the earth. God is good.

Conclusion: This is our future, soldiers of the cross. This is what the Lord has prepared for our "honored glory rest." We need to hear of this coming time, because our calling now is to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Now we must run with patience the race set before us, looking by faith unto Jesus, but then we will be with Him in a greater way. Now we must confess our sins and forgive those who sin against us, but then we will live a sinless existence, no longer distressed and discouraged by our own sin or the sin of others. Now it is given to us not only to believe on our Lord, but also to suffer for His sake, but then all suffering will be ended and nature's curse will be reversed.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." "Be not wearing in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching