

Daniel 7:12-13

*The Glories of His Kingdom*

Over 100 years ago, Victor Hugo, the French novelist and author of *Les Misérables*, wrote these words:

In the twentieth century war will be dead. The scaffold will be dead. Hatred will be dead. Frontier boundaries will be dead. Dogmas will be dead. But man will live. He will possess something higher than all these: a great country, the whole earth, a great hope, the whole heaven.

Well here we are into the twenty-first century. We have to say: "How mistaken Hugo was!" Those words reflect a humanistic version of the hope that has been burning in men's hearts for centuries -- the dream that there would come some day, somehow, a golden age upon the earth, a time when peace would spread throughout the whole world, a utopia, where humanity would live in unbroken peace and abounding prosperity. This has been the promise of every politician since governments began, but they have never been able to bring it to pass.

The fact is that there is an age of peace coming under the rule and authority of Jesus Christ. We call this time the Kingdom or the millennium. The word "millennium" comes from the Latin *mille annum*, which means "a thousand years." Revelation 20 clearly gives us the duration of the kingdom: 1000 years.

The truth is, there is more scripture devoted to the subject of the millennium than there is to any other subject in the Bible.

John MacArthur writes: The Bible tells us that everything in history is moving toward the cataclysmic event of the Kingdom of Christ. I'm convinced as I study the Bible, that the Kingdom of Christ is not something that sneaks up on us gradually. It is not hidden in the quiet flow of history, arriving almost imperceptibly. I believe that the Kingdom of Christ will come in a cataclysmic, violent, and furious instant to establish Christ's reign and God's eternal rule. The Bible tells us that when the Kingdom is granted to the Son, the Son will appear in blazing glory in the sky in fiery and bloody judgment. This most certainly will be a cataclysmic event.

Today we want to try to get a biblical overview of the kingdom and some practical principles for living that we can draw from the Bible's teaching.

## Let's begin today in Daniel chapter 7. (pg 865)

Last week we began our look at the prophetic section of Daniel which begins in chapter 7. In the first half of this chapter Daniel gave us a frightening picture of the kingdom of the anti-christ. This world-dominating power which arises in the last days is described in verse 7 (**Read vs 7**)

Verse 23 gives us the extent of this kingdom. (**Read vs 23**)

When does all this take place? We don't know the date but we do know the biblical timeline. The next major event on God's prophetic program is what we call the rapture of the Church, described in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4. It will result in the sudden removal of all believers from this world "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," without any warning.

Following the translation of the Church will be what's called the tribulation period, that time of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 24. The Bible contains many descriptions of that terrible day, but they are summarized in Revelation 6, where John depicts the opening of the six seals.

The first four seals produce the "four horsemen of the apocalypse." The rider on the white horse symbolizes Antichrist, the man who will achieve absolute and worldwide authority. The horrors of revolution, famine, and pestilence, signified by the riders on the red, black, and pale horses, will stalk in devastation through the earth. The opening of the fifth seal brings to view the souls of martyred saints, indicating that those who turn to Christ in the midst of these terrible conditions on earth will be oppressively persecuted.

And finally, at the opening of the sixth seal, a great earthquake takes place, the sun becomes black, the moon turns blood-red, and stars fall from the heavens. These great geological and cosmic disturbances will be so terrifying that men will cry out in fear to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of the Lord Jesus.

So this great tribulation is a brief period of time marked by the rise of Antichrist while the devastating effects of revolution, warfare, famine, and pestilence sweep over the earth. That dictator (called the Beast in Daniel) will persecute everyone who turns to God.

Frightening disturbances will take place in nature. But then, suddenly and unexpectedly, the Lord Jesus will return to earth.

Jesus explained it this way in Matthew 24; immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

That brings us to **Daniel 7:13 (Read vs 13 + 14)**

Christ returns from heaven with His church in great power and glory. Jesus came the first time as a servant, a sacrifice for our sins. He was beaten and rejected by those He came to save. Jesus is coming back, but this time He will not come as a sacrifice or servant, but He will come in all of His glory to rule and reign as the exalted King of all creation. John wrote in Revelation: The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

Have you ever looked at our world and longed for justice? Have you ever said something just isn't right with the planet?

The NT puts it this way: ROM 8:20-22 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Something is wrong with our planet. Our world's under the bondage of

corruption. The kingdom age is the time when the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

So we ask, where did this bondage of corruption come from? **Turn Genesis 3 (Page 3)**

The man and woman ate from the fruit which God had forbidden. This was an outright act of disobedience, and God pronounced judgement.

#### **Read 14**

The first element of God's wrath was directed towards the serpent. The serpent was cursed as a perpetual reminder to us of the fall of man.

#### **Read 15**

The second element was directed toward Satan. He had deceived the woman and hoped to lay claim to her and her descendants. God said I will put enmity (or animosity) between you and the woman and her seed.

In fact you might bruise His heel but He's going to bruise your head. That's a veiled reference to the cross. The ultimate seed of the woman, Christ would be bruised but Satan's head would delt the death blow. Jesus Christ appeared to be mortally wounded at the cross but He paid the price for our sins, rose again from the dead, and one day will return to cast Satan in the Lake of Fire.

The third element of God's wrath was directed towards the woman. **Read 16**

Eve had demonstrated her control over Adam but no more. Now he would rule over her. Conception and childbirth would not be easy but painful.

The fourth element was directed toward the man. **Read vs 17-19**

Now notice something important here: the judgment on the man was actually a curse on the world. The earth which had previously cooperated readily as the man "tilled" and "dressed it", now became resistant to yielding food. Instead it began to yield thorns and weeds, requiring toil and sweat and tears before man could "eat of it." And finally, in spite of all his struggle, death would triumph and man's body would return to the dust from which it was taken.

Henry Morris explains: It seems unlikely that God actually either created or "made" thorns and thistles at this time. He did not "create" death in the direct sense, but rather withdrew that extension of His power which had maintained a "steady state" of life and order, thus allowing all things gradually to disintegrate toward disorder and death.

It may be assumed (as characteristic of most "decay" processes observed today) that deterioration at first was rapid, later gradually tapering off into a much more gradual process. In terms of modern genetic knowledge, such changes probably were in the form of mutations, or random changes in the molecular structure of the genetic systems of the different kinds of organisms.

If deteriorative mutational changes occurred in plants, it seems reasonable and even probable that they also would occur in animals. Similarly, bacteria and other microorganisms, designed originally to serve essential functions in soil maintenance, purification processes, and so forth, underwent mutational changes which, in many cases, proved harmful and even lethal to other organisms into which they were ingested.

The writer of Hebrews says: And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail."

Science formalized this over 100 years ago into a fundamental scientific law known as the Second Law of Thermodynamics. This law states that all systems left to themselves, tend to become degraded or disordered.

Our world isn't evolving, it'd deevolving. The earth is slowing on it's axis, the sun is slowly burning up and animals and plants become more random when left to themselves, not more specialized. Our earth is under a divine curse.

Now we might wonder why? Why would God do this? listen to Morris again: God placed the curse on man and on his whole environment, thus forcing him to recognize the seriousness of his sin, as well as his helplessness to save himself

and his dominion from eventual destruction. The necessity of laboring merely to keep alive would go far toward inhibiting still further rebellion and would force him to recognize that Satan's tempting promises had been nothing but lies. Such a condition would encourage him to a state of repentance toward God, and a desire for God to provide deliverance from the evil state upon which he had fallen.

The curse of God has some positive benefits as well as negative consequences. The consequences of pain, toil, subjection, and death counteract the subtle pride which Satan's put in our hearts that keeps us buying into his allusions- that we're the captain of our fate, the master of our soul, that we can solve all the basic problems of existence.

The fall reminds us that we're but dust, limited and dependent. How many professed atheists have had a change of heart when they faced a deadly disease.

How many of us have had someone we care about suddenly die and in the presence of death we sensed we were facing a stark reality which couldn't be explained away or covered up.

We think we're hot stuff because we have a two story house, a new car, and our 401k plans. God's curse is facing us every time we turn around.

But the curse on this earth won't last forever. The curse on this earth is coming to an end.

The natural world, which today is a mixture of beauty and ugliness, of tenderness and cruelty, of growth and destruction, will be completely transformed when the Lord Jesus comes back as King. According to the Bible, this planet will become like the garden of Eden was before Adam and Eve sinned. When Christ returns in glory as earth's rightful King, He will restore its original beauty.

Changes in climate will occur, and even the deserts will become fruitful gardens. The physical deformities and diseases which torment humans and animals will disappear. No one knows for sure but it could be that the changes in climate will be the results of spectacular cosmic and geological disruptions occurring at the time of Jesus' second coming. In Isaiah 2:19 we read that God will "shake the

earth mightily," and we are told in Isaiah 24:20 that it will "reel to and fro like a drunkard." In chapter 30 Isaiah wrote about amazing changes that will occur in the heavens, . . the light of the moon shall be like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, like the light of seven days .

Earth's terrain will be altered. The sun to shine in all of its brilliance without scorching plants, animals, or people. The prophets write us of the phenomenal benefits of this new age: . . . in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water (Isaiah 35:6,7).

The arid places of earth will become habitable and fruitful: The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom like the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God (Isaiah 35:1,2).

The animal world will be radically different than it is today. **Turn to Isaiah 11 Pg 664 Read vs 6-8**

Hosea 2:18 In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, to make them lie down safely.

The omnipotent God who created the universe and sustains it by His power will bring it to pass. The Almighty Creator who made all things in the first place--the worlds, the sun, the moon, the stars, human beings, and the animal world--will lift the curse.

Many aspects of life as we know it today will continue right on during the coming golden age. Marriages will take place, and children will be born and grow up.

Jeremiah 33:11 speaks of the voice of the bride and bridegroom, and Zechariah 8:5 tells us that children will play in the streets of the cities. All those with infirmities will experience immediate healing.

### **Turn to Isaiah 35 Read vs 5-6**

Actually, the only people to die during the millennial age will be those who rebel against the laws of the kingdom. But God will be longsuffering and patient, even with them, granting 100 years probation before judging them with death.

### **Turn to Isaiah 65 Read vs 20**

Lifespans will be lengthened. In fact, Isaiah compares it to the age of a tree. He writes, "...like the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65:22).

A renewed earth under the rule of Jesus Christ will sustain multiplied billions of people without diminishing the quality of human existence. As man's history began on this planet in a beautiful garden with Adam and Eve enjoying freedom from all want & fear, so it will close with people living in harmony with nature and one another, and in fellowship with God.

Another blessing of the kingdom age will be universal peace and justice administered by King Jesus from the city of Jerusalem.

### **Turn Back to Isaiah 2 Read vs 3+4**

Jerusalem will become a city of unimaginable glory. It will be the world capital from which Christ rules. Isaiah rejoiced in these prophetic words:

Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Today the name of Jesus Christ is mocked, taken in vain, used as a universal swear word. In the millennium people everywhere will worship Him gratefully and gladly. ... from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts.



Worshippers from all over the world will come up to the new temple to present offerings and praise to God.

The purpose for which God created this earth will one day be realized.

The Bible commands: Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD.

For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth. The LORD reigns; Let the earth rejoice; Let the multitude of isles be glad!

Clouds and darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. A fire goes before Him, And burns up His enemies round about. His lightning light the world; The earth sees and trembles.

The Bible is clear on this, the Kingdom is coming because the king is coming! Even the Lord's prayer points us to it. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What practical principles for living can we draw from the Bible's teaching on the Kingdom?

1. *We can understand God's sovereignty in the promise of the kingdom*

God hasn't lost control of our world. God is sovereign and working all things together for good. God's purposes weren't frustrated by Satan in the garden. The kingdom stands as a statement of God's control as he restores the earth. If God can do that for the whole world, just think of what He can and will do with our lives. No wonder we read in Romans 8 says, *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Things can seem totally out of God's control at times. Out of the pain of war, crime, suffering, disease, accidents people question, "Where is God?" They reason either God doesn't exist or He's powerless. Either way our lives would be hopeless.

But God does exist. That's why we exist. We're not just chance products of random naturalistic mechanisms. Naturalism couldn't so much as explain one strand of DNA. We're the product of a designer.

And that designer is all powerful. If He wasn't He couldn't have designed us in the first place. The kingdom age shows God's sovereign power.

2. *We can receive comfort in the promise of the kingdom.* The Apostle Paul explained: For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

When we face trials, discouragements, and life's hardships a believer can take comfort in the truth that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

All of this life's sufferings are a result of the fall. They're either the results of our sin, someone else's sin, or the effects of the curse. Not only is all of that going to be lifted but what's coming is so incomprehensible that our present sufferings pale in comparison. The suffering is temporary. The glory is eternal. The suffering affects the body. The glory effects the body, soul, and spirit. The suffering comes from Satan. The glory comes from Jesus Christ himself.

3. *We can understand God's care in the promise of the kingdom*

God is genuinely interested in this world, its needs, and its inhabitants – now as well as in the future. Sometimes we lose sight of that truth. God cares and has a plan for the future of this planet.

4. *In the promise of the kingdom we can understand that God communicates.*

The God we serve isn't a God of silence. He doesn't leave us in the dark wondering. He lets us know our origin as well as our destiny. We need the kingdom because of the fall! This world's in a mess because we chose to rebel against our creator.

We deserve absolutely nothing from God. God is the Judge of all the earth and we're the guilty. It's amazing how that truth is known by cultures all around the world. It's inherent within us to realize something is wrong. We're estranged from God. Something must be done.

The difference between Biblical Christianity and every other religion around the world is this: Rather than designing our own way back to God we put our hope in the way He has communicated to us. And that way is Jesus.

Through God's communication of Scripture we know we're made by God. We know we've sinned before God. We know our only hope of forgiveness is the Son of God.

God communicates; it's up to us to listen and respond. The biblical truth is simply this: To spend eternity with God, to experience His future blessing we must receive His past provision.

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ...He was buried, and ... He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

God's command to us now, is believe on My Son. The Lord Jesus Himself put it this way Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.