

# THE MESSIANIC REIGN

## *The Messiah's reign is from Jerusalem*

The world will be ruled by a divine, human descendant of David from Jerusalem after the kingdoms of this world have been brought to a sudden and catastrophic end. The survivors of Israel and the nations will be the subjects of his kingdom during the millennium on this present Earth that he will renew. The saints who have been resurrected will inherit the kingdom and rule the world for the Messiah.

The Davidic monarchy is inextricably bound to Jerusalem and particularly to the hill called Mount Zion. Solomon built his palace with a throne hall and a hall of justice, but there is no mention of such structures during the millennium; all emphasis is on the temple. The Messiah will rule over Israel and the nations from the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from God (Rev 21:2). The New Jerusalem is the Holy City in the heavenly realm which comes down from heaven to be near the Earth. Its inhabitants include the Church who will rule with Christ. At the resurrection, they meet the Lord in the air and from that moment they are forever with him.

Peace will reign among the nations, and justice will be done everywhere. There will be universal knowledge of the Lord, with teaching coming from Jerusalem. All the subjects of the kingdom will learn to behave correctly and they will make pilgrimage to worship the Lord at his temple in Jerusalem. There will be a gradual restoration of the original conditions in the world, called a rebirth or the renewal of all things (Matt 19:28), resulting in improved climate, productive land, taming of wild animals, less sickness, and longer lifespans. There will be an end of secularism, no false religions, idolatry, or worship of spirits. By the end of the millennium, all ungodly practices will have been eliminated.

The throne of God and his regent, Jesus, will be glorious, whether in the New Jerusalem (Rev 22:2) above or in the old Jerusalem on Earth (Ezek 43:7). The following Scriptures should be understood literally. Don't distort the meaning by spiritualizing them or giving them a figurative or symbolic meaning that they were not meant to have. These prophecies were given by Hebrew prophets and concern the nation of Israel and God's chosen city, Jerusalem. There is no indication in the OT or the NT that they refer to the Church.

**Ps 2:6, 8** God the Father installs his king *on Zion, his holy mountain*. He offers him the nations as his inheritance, the ends of the Earth as his possession.

**Ps 110:2** The Father extends the Messiah's mighty scepter *from Zion*, where he rules in the midst of his enemies, the wicked survivors of the Great Tribulation.

**Ps 132:13-14** The Lord has chosen Zion, desiring it as his dwelling place. It will be his resting place forever, as long as the Earth exists. He will live there because that is his desire.

**Isa. 2:2-4** In the last days *the mountain of the Lord's temple* will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "*Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob*. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out *from Zion*, the word of the Lord *from Jerusalem*.

**Isa 4:5-6** The Lord will create over all of *Mount Zion* and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

**Isa 9:6-7** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and *the government will be on his shoulder ....* Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. *He will reign on David's throne* and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

**Isa 24:23** The moon will be dismayed, the sun ashamed, for the *Lord Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem*, and before its elders - with great glory.

**Isa 52:7-10** How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to *Zion*, “Your God reigns.” Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the Lord returns to *Zion*, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of *Jerusalem*, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed *Jerusalem*. The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the Earth will see the salvation of our God.

**Isa 60:2** See, darkness covers the Earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you (*Jerusalem*) and his glory appears over you.

**Isa 60:19** The sun will no longer be *Jerusalem’s light* by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will be *her everlasting light*, and her God will be *her glory*.

**Isa 62** is an impassioned plea for the vindication of *Jerusalem*. God has worked with the rebellious descendants of Abraham for 4,000 years and for the last 2,000 years Jerusalem has been in the hands of the Gentiles. It is inconceivable that the world could come to an end without God finally revealing to everyone that Israel is his chosen race, Jerusalem his chosen city.

**Isa 62:1-7** For *Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah (my delight is in her), and your land Beulah (married); for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a young woman, so you’re your Builder will marry you. As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. I have posted*

watchmen on your walls, *Jerusalem*; they will never be silent day or night. *You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the Earth.*

**Ezek 37:27-28** My dwelling place will be with them. I'll be their God and they'll be my people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy when *my sanctuary is among them forever.*

**Mic 4:6-8** The Lord will assemble the lame, and he'll gather those whom he scattered and those whom he afflicted. He'll transform the lame into survivors and the scattered into a strong nation. *The Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever.* And you, watchtower of the flock and stronghold of the daughter of Zion, it will happen even to you: *The former dominion will be restored, kingship will return to Jerusalem.*

**Zech 2:4-5, 10-12** Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. And the Lord will be *a wall of fire around it and its glory within. The Messiah will come and live among them. Many nations will be joined to the Lord in that day and will become his people. The Messiah will live among Israel, and they'll know that God has sent him to them.*

**Zech 8:2-8** The Lord says he is *very jealous for Zion and burning with jealousy for her. He will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called, the Faithful City, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain.* Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of *Jerusalem*, each of them with cane in hand because of their age! The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there. ... "It may seem marvellous to the remnant of this people at that time, but will seem marvellous to me? Declares the Lord Almighty. "I will save my people from the East and the West. I will bring them back to live in *Jerusalem*, they will be my people and I will be their faithful and righteous to them as their God."

This prophecy was partly fulfilled after the Babylonian captivity, but Keil comments, "Jerusalem becomes a faithful city for the first time through the Messiah, and it is through him that the temple mountain first really becomes the holy mountain" (p.312).

**Zech 14:16-17** Then *the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the Earth do not go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain.*

**Amos** finished his prophecies by saying, “The days are coming when God will bring his people Israel back from exile. “They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them, says the Lord your God.”

**Hosea** speaks of Israel’s conversion “in that day” when he will allure her into the wilderness, reminiscent of the time when Israel was saved from Egypt and the Lord made a covenant with them at Mt Sinai (Hos 2:14-19). He will make a marriage covenant with her, he’ll betroth her to himself forever in a relationship characterized by righteousness, justice, love, mercy, and faithfulness. He will make a new covenant with the people of whom he had said, you are not my people, and they will now be called children of the living God. God will also make a covenant with the animal kingdom; the wild animals, birds, fish, and creeping things for Israel’s benefit during the millennium. Nothing will harm them anymore. He will abolish war in the world and there will be security. All these blessings are characteristics of the millennium when the Messiah reigns: Israel’s conversion and restoration as God’s people, the restoration of the Earth and nature, and world peace.

**Isaiah** gives us information about the other inhabitants of the Earth during the long centuries of the Messiah’s reign. He says that many peoples (ethnic groups) will come and worship at the temple in Jerusalem and learn God’s ways (Isa 2:3-4). The Messiah will administer justice with truth and authority. Everyone will be obliged to worship the Lord and his Messiah and recognize that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that the nation of Israel is his chosen people. People will be eager to learn God’s ways and to walk in his paths. Everyone in Jerusalem will be called holy (Isa 4:3) because they are God’s people.

As of old in the wilderness after Israel's exodus from Egypt, God's glorious presence will be shown by a cloud by day and a flaming fire by night, over all of Mount Zion (Isa 4:5) and the multitudes of people who gather there to worship. The nations are not God's people; they are the survivors of unbelievers who overtly rebelled against God in the last days. The knowledge of God will fill the world and there will even be harmony in the animal world as the wolf dwells with the lamb (Isa 11:4-10) and the child plays over the hole of a cobra. The Messiah will be the center of worship at Jerusalem, and the nations will come to pray at his temple which will be a magnificent, glorious structure. The ransomed of the Lord will return via a way of holiness and see the glory and majesty of the Lord. They will experience everlasting joy with sorrow and sighing a thing of the past. This highway will lead the remnant of Israel back through the desert and wilderness that will be physically transformed to Zion (Isa 35:1-10). The Church likes to spiritualize passages like these and sing about them, but it should not be forgotten that the redeemed who are returning to Zion are the newly converted Israel. The passage does not have much relevance for the NT Church; Zion is not New Jerusalem. Israel will have a highway to lead them back through the wilderness to Zion. They will live on Earth and their blessings are very earthly; water gushing in the desert, healing for the blind, the deaf and the lame. They now sing for joy because their time of suffering is over. Their blessings are often spiritualised but there is nothing in the chapter to connect the redeemed with the Church. It is better to recognize that God has two peoples, Israel and the Church. The blessings of the former are earthly, in the physical realm, those of the latter are for resurrected beings living in the heavenly realm.

There is an emphasis on agricultural life during the millennium (Isa 30:23-26). The fruit of the land will be Israel's pride. There will be abundant rain and streams, and large pastures with healthy livestock. There is no indication whether modern technology and transport will be used during the millennium. The prophets didn't know about these things, so the picture they paint is a relaxed rural setting. We can be confident that the modern lifestyle based on greed, pride, luxury, and entertainment will be absent. People will build houses and work on farms and not fear any enemies.

The Messiah will be king of the whole Earth, and he will be righteous in all his ways. His princes, resurrected OT and NT saints, will provide justice, security, shade and refreshment (Isa 32:1-5). The fool will no longer be called noble. No longer will people call evil good and good evil. There will be no more war.

God will create Renewed heavens and a Renewed Earth, a restoration of the world after its almost total destruction. People won't remember the old world. Jerusalem will be a joy devoid of crying and distress. Infants won't die anymore and people will live to a good old age. People who die at a hundred years will be considered youths, not old people. This is not in a heavenly, eternal realm. Death will still occur during the millennium, but its power is diminished. The disabled will be healed and the poor will be satisfied, while the wicked and ruthless will be justly punished. All mankind will come to worship the Lord at Jerusalem (Isa 65:17-25, 66:19-24).

As well as saving the remnant of Israel, the Messiah will be a light to the nations (Isa 42:6, 49:6, 51:4). The coastlands will put their hope in him. Paul quoted this as his command to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Jesus is the light of the world, whether we consider the present nations or the nations who will be alive during the Messiah's future reign. There is no definite teaching that individuals will be saved during the millennium. It is more a time of God's vindication than man's salvation. "The islands will look to me and in wait in hope for my arm" (Isa 51:5) is millennial, but seems to have more to do with justice than personal salvation.

Isaiah's final word concerns the corpses of the world's rebels who dared to go to war against the Lord and his Anointed. Their dead bodies are somehow preserved and open for view on the outskirts of Jerusalem so that the pilgrims can see the terrible punishment that awaits the rebellious, a graphic representation of hell (Isa 66:24). And yet, when Satan is released from his prison, he succeeds in deceiving the nations to rebel against God once more (Rev 20:7-8).

**Micah 4:1-3** repeats the Messianic reign passage of Isaiah 2:1-4 and then adds in verse 7 that the Lord will reign over Israel in Mount Zion from that day forth. The former dominion will be restored to Zion, kingship to Jerusalem (Mic 4:8). The wealth of the nations will be brought to the Lord of the whole Earth (Mic 4:13). Micah also

prophesies that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and that he would become great to the ends of the Earth (Mic 5:4).

**Jeremiah** speaks briefly of the Messianic reign (Jer 3:15-18). The Messiah will be a Good Shepherd, leading his people sincerely with their welfare in mind. Israel will not need the ark of the covenant, because the Messiah will be with them and Jerusalem will be called the Lord's throne. Israel will return there as a united people, and all nations will come to worship there.

**Daniel** Even though the book of Revelation depends to a large extent on the book of Daniel, there are only three places where the Messiah is referred to, and he is never in focus. When relating to Nebuchadnezzar the contents of his dream, Daniel told him that a *rock* was quarried – but not with human hands – and it struck the statue and crushed it (Dan 2:34). Then the *rock* became a mountain that filled the Earth. In his interpretation, Daniel does not explain that the *rock* represents the Messiah (he is talking to Nebuchadnezzar); he only says that the *rock* that was quarried from a mountain would crush the previous kingdoms and that God would set up a kingdom that would last forever (Dan 2.44). The *rock* represents the Messiah who comes from Mount Zion and who, at his return, will kill the Antichrist and crush the armies of the world's nations (representing past kingdoms) who have laid siege to Jerusalem. Even in Daniel 7:13-28, where the Son of Man is introduced, it is the saints who are in focus, being mentioned six times. It is they who will possess the kingship in all the kingdoms under heaven.

**Ezekiel** speaks of harmony in the animal kingdom after God has installed his servant David as shepherd and prince over Israel. There will be no savage animals during the millennium. There will be abundant rain, productive land, and security. Israel and Jerusalem will be a blessing to the world, and Israel will no longer suffer reproach. The Messiah will be with them, and they will know that he is the Lord and that they are his special people (Ezek 34:23-30).

**Joel** prophesies about the glorious future of Judah which will be inhabited forever: The Lord will dwell in Zion, his holy mountain, Jerusalem will be holy, and no foreigners will invade her again. There will be abundant rain and streams and no shortage of milk and wine. A fountain will spring from the temple and water the land, but



Egypt and Edom will remain a wilderness (Joel 3:17-21). Prophecies like this have never been fulfilled historically; they can only be fulfilled during an earthly Messianic reign.

**Zechariah** says that the Messiah will be king over all the Earth (Zech 14:9). His rule will be from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the Earth (Zech 9:10). “The Lord will be one and his name one.” There will be one God and one religion; no more idolatry (Zech 8:2). He will be the supreme authority worldwide and the only God. There will be no sects of Buddha or Allah or Brahma; all will follow the same faith and practice under one Lord and King, the Messiah, Jesus. The survivors of all the nations that come against Jerusalem at Armageddon will go up year by year during the millennium to worship the King. Any of the families of the Earth who do not worship the Lord will be denied rain, and afflicted with a plague (Zech 14:16-17).

**Ezekiel, Joel, and Zechariah** all speak of a river of water flowing from Jerusalem to the Dead and Mediterranean seas all year round. It will issue from the temple and flow East and West to the seas. Zechariah speaks of ‘living waters,’ which normally means fresh, running water; the purest form. Jesus told the woman at the well that he could give her ‘living water’ and later declared that if a person believed in him, rivers of living water would flow from his heart. He was talking about the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39). In a vision, John saw ‘the River of the Water of Life’ flowing from the throne of God through the middle of the street of the New Jerusalem. Prophecy of a river flowing from Jerusalem all year round sounds literal. As in the Garden of Eden, there are rivers to ensure agricultural prosperity.

When it comes to Jesus, the living water symbolizes the Holy Spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive. Similarly, in the New Jerusalem, it is the Holy Spirit who indwells the redeemed, filling them with love, joy, peace, and immortality in union with God.

Note the role of the saints in the Messianic kingdom. They receive the kingdom and possess it forever. Receiving a kingdom means inheriting the kingship, the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven. All authorities on Earth will serve and obey them (Dan 7:18, 21-22, 27). Daniel 12:27b is better translated

as: “Their kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey them.” The singular pronoun relates to ‘people.’ The Messiah was referred to thirteen verses back, too remote for this pronoun.

Once resurrected, the saints will meet the Lord in the air, and from then on, they will be with the Lord. Their home will be with the Father and the Son in the New Jerusalem, which descends from heaven simultaneously. The Holy City is the bride, the wife of the Lamb. From there they will reign over the Earth as a kingdom of priests. They are not a kingdom because the Messiah reigns over them, but because they have received royal authority. They will reign over the Earth and serve their king as mediators between God and man. Israel will also be priests of the Lord, organizing worship at the temple in Jerusalem (Isa 61:6). The Church, as the Messiah’s monarchy, will be in charge of justice and other portfolios.

The Messiah’s glory will be seen in the temple, maybe not more. How visible then will the saints be? There will be hundreds of millions of saints. If resurrected Christians are like the resurrected Jesus, as we are told, they will not be restricted by time and space. They will travel instantaneously, as Jesus did after his resurrection, and as angels do. They will possess the kingship, and they will reign *on* Earth (Rev 5:10), although the preposition is more naturally translated as reigning *over* the Earth. Possessing kingship implies positions of authority in all forms of world government. The resurrected saints will rule all the nations of the world, including Israel (Matt 19:28). The Messianic government will major on peace, welfare, justice, righteousness, and teaching the knowledge of the Lord, which is in contrast to human governments which have always been characterized by corruption, immorality, war, and greed. As Jesus said, blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the Earth. The nations will need local and national governments, a justice system, and the usual portfolios of health, trade, water, agriculture, transport, environment, education, religion, foreign affairs, and social services. The saints will advise them in all these areas and rule with an iron rod (Rev 2:26).

## **The Messianic reign in the New Testament**

The word 'millennium' is not found in the Bible; it refers to the thousand-year Messianic reign taught in Revelation 20. In addition to the many OT Messianic prophecies we have studied, the millennial era is spoken about frequently in the NT, often referred to as the Kingdom of God, which I interpret as an ablative expression. The emphasis is not on a kingdom that belongs to God (although that is also true); it is a kingdom that God will establish on Earth for his Son, the Messiah (Dan 2:44, Col 1:13). The following 34 NT verses imply that there will be an era of Messianic reign on Earth after his physical return to Earth.

### **Gospels**

- Mt 4:23            The good news of a coming kingdom was Jesus' major theme.
- Mt 5:3, 5, 10    The humble and persecuted will possess the kingdom and inherit the Earth.
- Mt 6:10            Jesus tells us to pray for the kingdom's arrival.
- Mt 9:35            Jesus proclaimed the kingdom in all the Judean towns.
- Mt 19:28          When the Messiah reigns in the new world, his disciples will reign with him.
- Mt 24:14          The good news of the Messiah's coming kingdom will be preached in all the world, then the end will come.
- Mt 25:34          The kingdom has been prepared for the righteous since the world's creation.
- Lk 1:33            The Messiah will reign over Israel forever.
- Lk 13:29          Believing Gentiles will enjoy the Messianic banquet together with the Jewish patriarchs and prophets.
- Lk 19:17          Some of the righteous will rule cities during the millennium.
- Lk 21:31          The kingdom will be established at the end of the age.

- Lk 22:16, 18 The Passover, commemorating Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, will find its fulfillment in a future Messianic banquet, as the King and his community rule over a redeemed world from the New Jerusalem.
- Lk 22:29-30 Jesus confers kingship on his disciples to rule with him in his coming kingdom.
- Lk 23:42-43 Jesus assured the thief on the cross who believed in his coming kingdom that he would be in paradise with him that very day. Compare: the heavenly city of God (Heb 12:22-24).
- Jn 18:36 Jesus' kingdom is not from (ἐκ) this world, it is from God.
- Acts 1:6 Having heard all of Jesus' teaching, the disciples ask him at his departure when he would restore the kingdom to Israel.
- Rom 14:17 The future Messianic kingdom is about weighty matters: righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; not about quibbling about food.
- Rom 15:12 The Messiah will rise to rule the nations and they Gentiles will hope in him.
- 1 Cor 4:20 The future Messianic kingdom is about power and authority; not mere talk.
- 1 Cor 6:2 The Lord's people will judge the world.
- 1 Cor 6:9 Wrongdoers will not inherit the Messianic kingdom.
- 1 Cor 15:24-25 The Messiah will reign until he subdues all enemies, and then surrender his kingship to the Father.
- 2 Tim 2:12 Christians who endure will reign with the Messiah.
- Heb 1:8 The Messiah will reign forever with justice.
- Heb 12:28 The Messianic kingdom that the saints will inherit is unshakeable.

- 2 Pet 1:11 The godly will receive a rich welcome into the Messiah's eternal kingdom.
- 2 Pet 3:13 We are looking forward to a renewed Earth and sky where righteousness dwells.
- Rev 2:26-27 The overcomers will have authority over the nations and rule them with an iron scepter. The overcomers are those who conquer Satan and the Antichrist by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony even unto death (Rev 12:10).
- Rev 5:10 The saints from every tribe and nation will reign over the Earth as the government in the kingdom.
- Rev 11:15 When the seventh trumpet is blown the kingdom of the world will become the Messiah's kingdom
- Rev 19:11-16 After the fall of Babylon, the Messiah will arrive with the armies of heaven to strike down the nations and rule them as King of kings and Lord of lords.
- Rev 20 Satan will be incarcerated so that he cannot deceive the nations during the millennium. Christians are given authority to judge, including those who were martyred under the Antichrist. They are resurrected at the Messiah's coming and they reign with him for a thousand years. At the end of the millennium, Satan is released, and he deceives the nations again to rebel against God. The armies are destroyed by fire and Satan is thrown into hell where the Antichrist and false prophet had been thrown a thousand years earlier. At the second resurrection, all the wicked are judged and cast into hell along with Death and Hades. Only those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life are saved. Earth and sky disappear on judgment day. The New Jerusalem and its inhabitants survive in the heavenly realm.
- Rev 21:24 During the millennium the nations will walk by the light of the New Jerusalem and their leaders will bring their glory to it.

## **The Messianic reign is an age or eon**

The Bible talks about eons, long periods associated with this world. The disciples asked Jesus what would be the sign of his coming and the end of the age (Matt 24:3). The King James version translated the 'end of the age' as the 'end of the world,' a bad mistake, because the disciples weren't expecting the Messiah to usher in the end of the world, but a new age, the kingdom age. Christians brought up with that KJV teaching tend to believe that when Jesus comes, it is the end of the world.

Jesus said that whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come (Matt 12:32). When he explained the parable of the weeds, he said the weeds (sons of the evil one) will be gathered and burned at the end of the age, then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt 13:38-43). At the ascension, Jesus commissioned his disciples to make disciples of all nations promising to be with them always to the end of the age (Matt 28:20).

When asked by the Sadducees about the resurrection, Jesus said "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children since they are children of the resurrection (Luke 20:34-36). The age to come is the resurrection age. It is an age belonging to this world that follows this present age, after Jesus' return.

## **The purpose of the Messianic reign**

The purpose of the Messianic reign can be seen in the following verses.

That God himself in the person of the resurrected Messiah, Jesus, might reign on Earth in justice and righteousness resulting in peace and prosperity (Jer 23:5, Mic 4:2-3, Mat 6:10).

That Christ might become King and Lord of the world (Ps 2:8, 72:8-11, 89:27, San 7:14)

That Christ might be glorified in his saints and marveled by them (2 Thess 1:10).

To reveal that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world (Zech 14:9, 16).

That the Earth might be set free from its bondage to corruption and return to its paradisaical glory (Rom 8:18-22).

That Jerusalem, God's chosen city, might be glorified and become the praise of all the Earth (Isa 60:19-20, 62:1-7).

To reveal the knowledge of the Lord to all (Isa 11:9).

To vindicate Israel as God's people (Deut 32:36, Ps 135:14)

To reward the saints, for whom the kingdom was prepared since the creation of the world (Mt 25:34).

To fulfill God's promise of a new Earth and sky where righteousness dwells (2 Pet 3:13).

To reveal to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm God's mysterious plan that he has executed through the Church (Eph 3:10).

We are ignorant of the complexity of the heavenly realm in terms of angels, rule, authority, cosmic powers, spiritual forces of evil, and the inhabitants of hell, but we are told that they exist and should not belittle their significance.

The *geographical and agricultural* details given in these prophecies are evidence that we are expected to interpret the prophecies literally. Accordingly, at the end of the age, Israel will be restored to their land and they will enjoy idyllic conditions during the Messianic reign. A glorious temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem as testified to on numerous occasions, and the Levitical priesthood will be reestablished. The ministry of the priests will enable the nations to worship the Lord at the temple. The significance of the offerings will be symbolic, looking back at the great sacrifice that Christ made for the world, rather than types pointing forward to the antitype. There is much emphasis that Israel will continue as the people of God during the millennium, but their role will be different from that of the

resurrected Church. The NT does not teach that the Church has replaced Israel as the people of God. Paul makes it very clear that a partial hardening has come upon Israel, but only until the full number of the Gentiles comes to faith. When the Messiah returns, all Israel will be saved, as it is written; the Messiah will remove ungodliness from Jacob. When Paul says those who have faith are “Abraham’s offspring” (Gal 3:29), he is stressing the fact that God’s people are saved by faith and not works. Those who are a new creation in Christ are the “Israel of God” (Gal 6:16), but he never suggests that the Church has replaced Israel. Those who follow replacement theology see no future at all for ethnic Israel, a position that contradicts a multitude of OT prophecies and God’s whole purpose for them.

Confusion arises when the various communities of people during the Messianic reign are not differentiated. Jesus is the coming Messiah and he will rule the world for *one thousand years* as clearly stated six times in Revelation 20. A thousand years is as one day with the Lord, and a day is like a thousand years. His perspective on time is different, but for us humans, a day is a day and a thousand years is a thousand years.

Those who are born again will rule with him. They have entered the kingdom (monarchy), inherited the kingship, and constitute the sons of the kingdom, the Messianic government. They have gained the privilege that Israel lost through unbelief, but they have not replaced Israel as God’s chosen nation. At the Messiah’s return, Israel will be converted and grafted back into the olive tree that symbolizes God’s people.

On the Day of the Lord, God will defeat kings in his wrath, saying, “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy mountain.” He will extend the Messiah’s mighty scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of your enemies!” Both the Messiah and the saints will live in the New Jerusalem in their immortal bodies, and from there they will rule the world. As the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, it is heavenly. It exists in a different time/space dimension to planet Earth, but its descent to Earth indicates that it will be intimately connected with the earthly Jerusalem. The throne of God and the Lamb will be in the New Jerusalem (Rev 22:3). However, on Earth, the Messiah will suddenly come to his temple (Mal 3:1) and his



house will subsequently be called a house of prayer for all nations (Isa 56:7, Mark 11:17).

Israel will live on Earth in their promised land, centered around Jerusalem with a new temple built on the summit of Mount Zion. The whole area around Jerusalem will be holy, and the Levites will administer the worship of Jesus, whom God has made both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36). Israel will finally accomplish the purpose of their calling, a blessing in the midst of the Earth to all nations. In modern times, Levites are integrated into Jewish communities, but they have always kept a distinct status. There are an estimated 300,000 Levites among Ashkenazi Jewish communities and a similar number among Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews combined. The total percentage of Levites among the wider Jewish population is about 4% (Wikipedia).

Isaiah 11 describes the Messianic rule. There will come forth a shoot (descendant) from the stump of Jesse (David's family) and this Branch from his roots will bear fruit. He will be a successful king in every way, bringing righteousness, peace, and prosperity. This powerful Messiah will strike the Earth with the rod of his mouth and kill the wicked with the breath of his lips. He will subdue the rebellious, secular, nations with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces like pottery (Ps 2). He will crush kings on the day of his wrath, judging nations, heaping up the dead, and crushing the rulers of the Earth (Ps 110:5-6). This will happen soon, when Jesus, the descendant of David, arrives as the conquering Messiah, judging and waging war (Rev 19:11-15).

After the judgment associated with his coming, there will be a long era of peace, the Messianic reign, when God will rule the world through his Son, the Messiah. The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the Earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. There will be harmony in the animal world as the creation is set free from its bondage to corruption, and there will be no more war, as the nations go up to Jerusalem to learn the ways of the Lord. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. This prophecy will never be accomplished by human desire or effort, not even by the wonderful power of the gospel in changing individual human lives, because whole countries

have never become fully Christian. Until the return of Jesus, Satan will continue to deceive the nations and false prophets will always be around to disseminate their false ideas.

The knowledge of the Lord will determine the philosophy of all who live on Earth. The isms will be gone: communism, secularism, paganism, etc. In that day the root of Jesse will stand as a signal for the people – the nations will come to pay homage to him and to receive counsel. The Messiah will dwell in the temple at Jerusalem which will be surrounded by light, the glory of the Lord (Isa 60:1-3). Jerusalem and its temple will be the most glorious place on Earth. The nations will walk by Jerusalem's light and the kings of the Earth will bring their splendor to it (Rev 21:24). Romans 15:12 quotes from the Septuagint version of Isaiah 11:10, which says: "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises *to rule the Gentiles*; in him will the Gentiles hope." Paul uses this passage among others to emphasize the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God along with the Jews, but it is only during the millennium that the Messiah will rule the nations. The original context of the Isaiah passage is earthly; the Messiah will recover the remnant that remains of his people from the four corners of the Earth.

The nations will be there when Christ rules the world. His reign is what Jesus called "the Kingdom of God." He does not talk about a Kingdom of God on Earth in this present time, or in heaven, as some interpret it. The Kingdom of God is a future reign when Jesus returns to Earth. The resurrected Church will be co-heirs with him in his kingdom (Luk 22:30). The nations will be the subjects of his kingdom. Initially, they constitute the survivors from among the unbelievers of all nations, and subsequently, their descendants. They must make yearly pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship the King. If they don't, there will be no rain for them. The question then naturally arises, whether these unbelievers are getting a second chance to be saved.

## Salvation during the Messianic reign

Zechariah's prophecies focus on the Messiah's millennial reign, not on his incarnation and past ministry (Zech 2:4-5, 10-12, 6:12-13, 8:4-8, 20-23, 9:9-10, 13:1, 14:8-9). It seems clear that many subjects of the Messianic reign will put their faith in the Messiah, both Jews and Gentiles. All the surviving Jews will be converted as we have already discussed. So these people are getting a second chance. They were alive before Christ returned, and they did not respond to the gospel. After Christ comes, he will pour out his Spirit upon them and they will be saved. However, they are not part of the Church and it is not revealed whether they will one day be resurrected and glorified.

We also saw that the land of Israel will be extended from Egypt to Iraq, and the whole population of the extended nation will be the Messiah's nation, not only the Jews. People from many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that era.

“Shout and be glad, Daughter of Jerusalem! For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the Lord. “Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. The Lord will inherit Judah as his property in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling” (Zech 2:10-13).

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, one ‘Let us go at once to entreat the Lord seek the Lord Almighty. I myself am going.’ And many people and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him’ (Zech 8:20-22).

This is not the Church age, where salvation is on an individual basis. Here it is the nations who swear allegiance to the Lord who is dwelling in Jerusalem.

Many nations will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we will walk in his paths. The law

will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Mic 4:2, Isa 2:4).

In that day, the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious (Isa 11:10). Compare Isaiah 60:1-3, 11-12, 19-20).

In that day, there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt, and the Egyptians to Assyria, The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day, Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the Earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance (Isa 19:23-24).

When the Lord returns and conquers Israel’s enemies and brings about the conversion of the whole nation, the borders of Israel will be extended as promised to Abraham and his descendants as an everlasting possession, from the river of Egypt to the great Euphrates River. This will include the ancient kingdoms of Egypt and Assyria, which extend from Egypt up through Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. When Israel is enlarged in this way, Arab nations to the North and South of Israel, for millennia their enemies, will be reconciled to them as these descendants of Abraham now recognize the lordship and deity of the Messiah. This glorious ransomed nation of Israel will be a blessing in midst of the Earth comprising the peoples of Egypt, ancient Assyria, and Palestine: God’s people, the work of his hands, his inheritance.

Is there salvation during the millennium? The door to the Church is closed, not even Israel will enter the Messianic kingdom as rulers. That is the special privilege given to those who believe in the Messiah before he returns. God will act, not for Israel’s sake, but to vindicate the holiness of his reputation. It is inconceivable that the history of the world would finish without God making clear to mankind that the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem belong to him and his people Israel, and not to their enemies. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords, and it will only be during the Messianic reign that this will be evidenced. Jesus is now seated at the right hand

of the Father in heaven; that is a matter of faith for believers, but one day:

Jesus will reign where'er the sun  
doth his successive journeys run;  
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore  
till moons will wax and wane no more.

(Isaac Watts 1674-1748)

The millennium will vindicate the holiness of God's great name before the eyes of the nations. They will understand the veracity of the Bible, the divine origin of Judaism and Christianity, and the vindication of faith. God has kept himself invisible during the ages, but he is not disinterested in his creation. He loves the world he created, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. Many are called but few are chosen. Unfortunately, many have chosen the way to destruction. In the final age of planet Earth, Jesus will reign for a thousand years and the nations will acknowledge him as Lord and worship him as God (Dan 7:14, Ps 102:15-16, 21-22).