

The
Age to Come

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Introduction

After this present age in the history of the saints of God, there will be another age during which the Lord Jesus will physically rule and reign upon this earth. This age to come is commonly called the Millennial Kingdom. It is a one thousand year period of time during which the Lord Jesus will be physically reigning over the world from atop Mount Zion. This period of time will be characterized by the nation of Israel being the center of world government. This period of time will also be characterized by all the nations of the world being subjugated to the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his people, comprised of Jewish and church-age saints.

It is important for the church-age saint to have a handle on just exactly what he will be doing in the age to come. The average person's concept of heaven is a non-specific place where he will be spending eternity doing non-specific things (sitting on a cloud playing a harp or casting crowns at the feet of Jesus for all eternity). The Scriptures however, document that God has an entirely different agenda for the church-age saint. It is an agenda in which he will be participating with the Lord in His subjugation of the inhabitants of the world. It is an exciting agenda which, quite frankly, makes the present chaos we are witnessing during the present evil age bearable. One day, church-age believers will help the Lord enforce righteousness on this earth, and no politically correct, spiritually disqualified politician will thwart the Lord's purpose. Truly God's will, 'will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

I hold to a literal method of interpretation of the Scriptures. As the reader will discover, the literal method of interpretation yields a great deal of rich information concerning the age to come. I also draw heavily upon a feature of the Scriptures I discovered about 10 years before deciding to finalize this book - the Millennial Psalms. I believe that approximately a third of the Psalms are written from the perspective of a citizen of the Millennial Kingdom. Truly, the Lord gave King

David discernment into the future, two dispensations ahead of his own.

A brief comment on the format of this book is in order. As I discovered Scripture contexts which shed light on the age to come, I simply added those verses to the several topics mentioned in this study.

I diverge from the traditional understanding of those surviving the time of God's wrath; namely, there will be unsaved gentiles who will survive the time of God's wrath who will enter the time period of the Millennial Kingdom and will, in fact, be subjugated by the Lord and His saints. These will be people who will live outside of the earthly kingdom of Israel, in other nations of the world. Most prophetic teachers believe that no unsaved people will survive on this earth after the time of God's wrath. I differ from that viewpoint and believe that there will still exist, outside of the borders of Israel, gentiles of this earth who will be subjugated by Christ Jesus the King over all the earth. This view is foundational to many conclusions I draw in this book.

Biblical Evidence that Some Unsaved Survive into the Kingdom Age

Typical boilerplate conservative eschatology teaches that the only people who will survive the great tribulation to populate the world will be people that were saved after the pre-seventieth week rapture of the church. This view comes primarily from the account of the judgment of the nations in Matthew chapter 25; the results of the judgment being that everyone on the face of the earth is consigned to either the lake of fire or the kingdom of Christ.

However, against this interpretation of the judgment of the nations, I would like to offer the following evidence: the Scriptures teach that the nations will be conquered, not annihilated by Christ.

Rev. 6:2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.”

Rev. 15:3 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!”

By the way, in the above verse, there is a very important textual discrepancy involved. In the Majority and the Alexandrian texts, instead of calling the Lord “King of the Saints”, He is referred to as “King of the Nations”. This term better fits the context. It is not fitting to call the Lord Jesus the “King” of the saints. A king has subjects, but saints in glorified bodies; bodies which have been redeemed from the presence of sin do not need to be subjugated by a king; rather, such saints find solace in the communion of a friend. As Jesus told His apostles in John chapter 15, “No longer do I call you servants...now I call you friends.” A glorified saint will not need to be subjugated by a king; he will be glorified with his friend.

This reading of Revelation 15:3 also fits the context more accurately. The context concerns the beginning of the wrath of God about to be poured out upon the earth. The purpose of this wrath is two-fold:

1. It is vengeance upon those who have violated the light.
2. It is in preparation for the nations to be subjugated to the rule of Christ.

It is this second aspect of the wrath which is clearly in view here. This context concerns God's judgment which is meant to fearfully bring the nations into submission to Christ. The tabernacle of testimony is opened in heaven and the wrath leading to destruction and subjugation begins.

A third point in favor of Revelation 15:3 being translated "King of the Nations" is that both the Alexandrian and Majority text are in agreement. It is my opinion that, when such an agreement is present in the extant manuscripts, the translation is quite certain.

Another passage demonstrating that the gentiles are not all annihilated but rather subjugated is found below:

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

There can be no mistake that the rider of this horse is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the same rider we have already documented in Revelation 6:2, the first rider of the seven seals, but in Revelation chapter 19, we are given more detail. This rider strikes the nations into submission, ruling over them with a rod of iron. If all the peoples on earth are annihilated at the conclusion of God's wrath, then who is left for the Lord to rule over with a rod of iron?

Consider also the following passage:

Revelation 2:26 "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—27'He shall rule them with a rod of iron: They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels—as I also have received from My Father."

What is the point of church age believers being given power over nations, if there are no gentiles left to be subjugated?

Another context demonstrating that some gentiles will survive the time of the wrath follows:

Revelation 11:15 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!"¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

The above passage marks the place in eschatological history where the Lord considers the tribulation to be over and the time of

wrath to begin. We can see that in verse 18, “The nations were angry (the chief characteristic of the tribulation) and your wrath has come” (the chief characteristic of the time of the wrath). The Scriptures present the Great Tribulation and the time of the wrath as two separate events. The Great Tribulation is the persecution of the saints by the people of the lawless one. The time of God’s wrath is the punishment and subjugation of the people of the world, the people who persecuted the saints of God during the Great Tribulation.

Notice once again in the above context that the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord and He shall reign forever and ever. Again the question must be asked: If all the unsaved are destroyed, then over whom is the Lord reigning during this time?

Finally the clincher:

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

After the great battle, which would be the battle of Armageddon, there remain people who will need to pay homage to the Lord by keeping the Feast of the Tabernacles. There will be survivors among the nations which came against Israel during the battle of Armageddon. These peoples will need to acknowledge Jesus as King of the World if their regions of the world are to receive rain. Once again, according to this context, there are survivors of the great battle who will need to be subjugated.

If the only citizens entering into the period of the Millennium are saved survivors of the Great Tribulation, people who, as we read elsewhere, were purified to obey the Lord, then why does the Lord need to go forth in Revelation 6:2 conquering and to conquer? It would be improper to speak of Spirit-filled believers as subjects of the King; that would be to disparage the beloved relationship which exists between God and His children.

So what about the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25? I believe in two possible alternative understandings of that context.

1. The judgment of the nations is primarily on the armies and leadership of those nations who came up against Jerusalem.

This view would agree with what we read in passages such as Joel chapter 3. If Joel 3 and Matthew 25 are the same event, then it is interesting to note that one of the results of the judgment is that, according to Joel 3:8, the people of Judah will sell their oppressors into the hand of the Sabeans (gentiles being sold into slavery as a judgment). From this fact, we must conclude that unregenerate gentiles pass into the Millennial Kingdom, in lands outside the land of promise.

2. The judgment of the nations occurs at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

One line of evidence supporting this second viewpoint is the destination of those condemned. It does not appear to be hell, but rather the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Since the contents of hell are emptied into the lake of fire at the conclusion of the Millennium, this might suggest that the timing of the judgment of the nations might be after the Lord had been seated on His kingdom throne for a thousand years.

If the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25 consigns all people on the face of the earth to heaven or hell on the basis of their treatment of Israel, then we have another way of being accounted eternally righteous before God in addition to the gospel of grace. So the plan of salvation now becomes “believe on Jesus as your sin-bearing substitute” or “treat a Jew with kindness.” Of course both cannot be true. Whatever conclusion we come to concerning the

judgment of the nations in Matthew 25, it must be in agreement with the testimony of Scripture in other contexts. I believe that for far to long, many Bible expositors have been allowing the account of the Judgment of the Nations in Matthew 25 to dictate their conclusions concerning a whole host of other passages of Scripture which seem to indicate that, after the time of the wrath, many gentiles will remain and be brought into subjugation to the government of Israel.

The Participants in the Age to Come

Six groups of people will be present during this period of time known as the Millennium:

1. Old Testament resurrected saints

These are people who believed in the salvific provisions of the coming Messiah before His first coming.

Ezekiel 37:11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' ¹² "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ "Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. ¹⁴ "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it," says the LORD.' "

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily."

2. Church-age believers, whose abode will be the New Jerusalem, the heavenly expanse surrounding the throne of Jesus atop Mount Zion.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,”

Revelation 21:9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”

Since, according to I Thessalonians 4:17 believers will always be with the Lord, and, as we shall see in this study, the Lord during the Millennium will be reigning atop Mount Zion, then the New Jerusalem must intersect the earthly kingdom atop Mount Zion; but, more on that later.

3. Earthly Jews, who will have physically passed through the Great Tribulation and have had the Law written on their hearts.

This infusion of the Law will enable them to walk in God's statutes.

Jeremiah 31:33-34 "But this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

I am persuaded that this “writing of the law into the heart” of the Jewish saint is a greater enablement to walk with the Lord than the church-age believer has today. Today, it takes constant watchfulness, assimilation of doctrine and the encouragement of other saints for the church-age saint to experience progress in grace. However, according to the above passage, during the Millennium there will no longer be a need for believers to exhort one another to “know the Lord.” During our present dispensation, assimilating God’s precepts in our hearts is a life-long process involving being positive toward and consistently exposed to Bible doctrine. Apparently, prior to the earthly Jewish saint’s entering the land of promise, God will rapidly, if not instantaneously, infuse His divine perspective into the hearts of His Jewish earthly saints.

Zephaniah 3:13 The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness And speak no lies, Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; For they shall feed their flocks and lie down, And no one shall make them afraid.”

This might explain why the Millennial civil code of conduct, as outlined in the Sermon on the Mount, is much more stringent than any legal code hitherto enacted upon the earth. It is stringent because the earthly, Jewish participants in that kingdom will have God’s divine perspective written into their hearts from the very beginning. For the earthly Jewish saint, this will constitute the greatest enablement to walk with God that a flesh and blood individual will have ever known.

4. Children who are born to these flesh-and-blood saints, who may choose not to believe in the Messiah on top of that big hill.

Zechariah 13:3 "It shall come to pass [that] if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies.”

The above verse demonstrates that children born to earthly Jewish saints do not automatically experience the writing of the law of God into their hearts. Like today, these children will have to make their own choices and bear the consequences of those choices.

5. Gentile nations whose blessedness or cursedness will be proportional to their submission to the theocracy of the Lord Jesus, King of the earth.

Zechariah 14:16-17 “And it shall come to pass [that] everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And it shall be [that] whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.”

Revelation 21:24-22:2 “And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it so that they might enter in. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. 22: 1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, [was] the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each [tree] yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations.”

6. Gentile believers

Isaiah 56:3 Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying, "The LORD has utterly separated me from His people"; Nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree." ⁴ For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My

covenant,⁵ Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.⁶ " Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants -- Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant --⁷ Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."⁸ The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him Others besides those who are gathered to him."

It is necessary to note that the above context is not an Old Testament plan of salvation, such as some might attempt to assert. It is rather the terms upon which a gentile may remain a citizen within the borders of Israel during the Millennial reign of Christ. This is obvious by the reference to the "holy mountain" in this context. The holy mountain is Mount Zion atop of which the Lord's temple will exist in the age to come.

The Body of the Participants in the Age to Come

Many people wonder what their body is going to be like in the age to come. Let's look at a few verses touching on this subject:

1 Corinthians 15:50-54 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed -- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Here we see that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (however flesh and bone can, as we shall see later).

Blood is the life fluid of a dying body, a body which is always in the process of dying; as cells die, they are carried off by the blood and filtered out of our bodies through the kidneys. Likewise, if our cells do not receive proper nutrition through blood, they will quickly die. We live in a corruptible body, a body subject to decay and entropy. According to this context our glorified bodies will not be subject to death.

Luke 24:39 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

Luke 24:41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

So what happened to the food that Jesus ate? It cannot pass through a digestive tract that is based upon blood, so Jesus would not have had a small intestine, a large intestine, kidneys, heart, and lungs like we have, because all of those organs interact in one way or another with blood in our mortal bodies.

Now this is total speculation on my part, but imagine our glorified bodies using a process similar to nuclear fusion to deal with the food of which we will partake. After all, glorified believers *will* be partaking of food in the age to come:

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

In the age to come, glorified believers will not be married.

Matthew 22:30 "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven."

Mark 12:25 "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."

There will be another class of believer in the age to come who will have a physical body and who will have survived the tribulation.

Zechariah 13:3 "It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies."

Isaiah 11:6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them."

The Lord's Location in the Age to Come

Where will the Lord be during the Millennium?

Joel 3:17 "So you shall know that I [am] the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My Holy Mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

Ezekiel 43:7-12 And He said to me, "Son of man, [this is] the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings, by their harlotry or with the carcasses of their kings on their high places. 8 "When they set their threshold by My threshold, and their doorpost by My doorpost, with a wall between them and Me, they

defiled My holy name by the abominations which they committed; therefore I have consumed them in My anger. 9 "Now let them put their harlotry and the carcasses of their kings far away from Me, and I will dwell in their midst forever. 10 Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. 11 "And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its ordinances, all its forms and all its laws. Write [it] down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them. 12 "This [is] the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop [is] most holy. Behold, this [is] the law of the temple."

Psalm 2:1-6 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, (saying,) 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision, 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set MY King on My holy hill of Zion."

From the three above contexts, we can very clearly see that the Lord's dwelling will be atop Mount Zion, which will have elevated beyond imagination during the Millennium. It shall be exalted so high that, as we see here in Psalms chapter two, it is said to be "in the heavens". Actually, it is in the heavens because, as we shall later see, the earthly kingdom of Christ intersects the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, at the summit of Mount Zion.

There are many who teach that the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, does not appear until after the thousand year reign of Christ. People arrive at that position because of an improper chapter and verse division in the book of Revelation. It must be remembered that even though God inspired John the Apostle who wrote the book of Revelation, He did not inspire those who divided

John's writing into chapters and verses.

Here is the context which causes the confusion:

Revelation 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. **21:1** Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Clearly, Revelation 21:1 belongs during the time of the eternal state, which begins with the original earth and sea being done away with because flesh and blood humanity will no longer exist on the earth. But Revelation 21:2 begins a new discussion concerning the characteristics of the New Jerusalem. Because this discussion of the New Jerusalem occurs after the discussion of the eternal state, inexperienced Bible expositors assume that the New Jerusalem must not appear until the time of the eternal state. However a close examination of the description of this city shows that gentile kings bring their tribute to this city. (Rev. 21:24-26) The city also contains the tree of life whose leaves are used for medicinal purposes. (Rev. 22:2) These two facts alone demonstrate that the timing of the appearance of the heavenly city cannot be the eternal state, because by that time there will be no flesh and blood humanity existing on the earth. In the eternal state, nobody will need to be doctored with medicine extracted from the leaves of the tree of life. Nor will there exist gentile kings outside of Jerusalem paying their taxes in Israel. So, certainly, the New Jerusalem is present during the millennial reign of Christ and will, in fact, be the abode of church-age saints. Since the Scriptures teach that believers will always be with the Lord, (I Thessalonians 4:17) we must conclude that the heavenly city hovers above the earth and, in fact, intersects the earthly city at the top of Mount Zion. In this way, Old Testament Jewish saints and glorified Jewish saints are both in the presence of the Lord atop Mount Zion.

The Born-Again Experience of the Jewish Believer Entering the Millennium in Contrast to the Born-Again Experience of the Church-age Believer

The Jewish saint entering the Millennium will experience a divine enablement to walk with God such as the saints have never known. Quite frankly, their enablement to know God will be greater than the church-age believer had received in this way: the church-age believer's transformation into the image of God is a life-long process which takes watchfulness, consistency and a proper prioritization of truth in His heart. However, the tribulational-age saint passing into the earthly kingdom will have an instantaneous infusion of the precepts of God into his heart, thus enabling him to walk with the Lord in a way that no people, in the history of God's world, have been able to walk with the Lord. Notice the following passage:

Hebrews 8:10-12 "For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

In the age to come, saints will not have to exhort other saints to continue to abide in fellowship with the Lord. This is not true for believers living during the church age. Believers are to exhort one another daily, unless we become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13). However, it appears that in the age to come, an additional degree of enablement to walk with the Lord will be provided. Consider the following verses which occur in contexts discussing the future kingdom age:

Deut 30:6 "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."

Jeremiah 32:40 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me."

Ezekiel 11:19 "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh,²⁰ "that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God."

Ezekiel 36:25-30 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do [them.] 28 "Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29 "I will deliver you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. 30 "And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations."

Zechariah 13:9 I will bring the [one-third] through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This [is] My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD [is] my God.'

A combination of being born again, a heart softening tribulation, and an instantaneous infusion of the precepts of God into the hearts of the initial saints of the millennium will result in the holy deportment which we are told will be the possession of the

millennial age saint; however, the church-age saint is not provided this degree of enablement as an immediate consequence of the new birth; his assimilation of Bible doctrine is an ongoing process. The more a believer assimilates Bible doctrine into his soul as his functional frame of reference, the greater capacity he has to glorify God and experience victory over sin. However, this process is not instantaneous or automatic with the new birth. For the church-age believer, the assimilation of life-changing truth involves a conscious decision to be consistently occupied in Bible truth. Without such an occupation, the believer's experience will be an untransformed life; however, such a life will not be tolerated among the people of God in the age to come.

Zephaniah 3:12 I will leave in your midst A meek and humble people, And they shall trust in the name of the LORD. ¹³ The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness And speak no lies, Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; For they shall feed *their* flocks and lie down, And no one shall make *them* afraid."

As I have before stated, this is why the civil code outlined in the Sermon on the Mount contains a much higher standard of conduct than any civil code imposed upon man. The immediate enablement experienced by the saint entering the Millennium will create an expectation of immediate obedience to the precepts of God; however, the supernatural divine enablement of the tribulational-age saint entering the Millennium in a flesh and blood body will apparently not automatically carry over to his children:

Zechariah 13:3-4 "It shall come to pass [that] if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies. 4 And it shall be in that day [that] every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive.

Children of kingdom-age saints, who choose not to follow in the footsteps of their parents will be expelled from the land of promise and, in fact, could be executed. Just like the children of Christian parents today, children in the age to come will have to make their own choices and live with (or die by) the consequences of those choices.

The Tribulational Experience of the Jew Entering the Millennium

One thing needs to be remembered when we study Old Testament prophecy concerning the age to come. These prophecies occur as if the Lord is going to immediately execute Plan A as revealed in the Old Testament. This plan assumed that the kingdom would have appeared sooner rather than later because Israel would be ready to receive their Messiah and King. We now know from history that Israel was not ready for their King and therefore He did not set up His kingdom; so instead of the Lord immediately ushering in His kingdom and utilizing born-again Israelites to evangelize the world (Plan A), the Lord set aside those plans in favor of an assembly of believing gentiles and Jews, the Church, as His evangelists to the world. Prophetic plan A is summarized for us in the following context:

Zechariah 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," Says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones. ⁸ And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "*That* two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and* die, But *one-* third shall be left in it: ⁹ I will bring the *one-third* through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This *is* My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my God.' "

Here we see the Great Tribulation occurring soon after the sacrifice of Christ. The sequence of events would have been as follows:

Christ would be crucified and rise from the dead, the gift of the Spirit would be given, the people of God would be scattered in a persecution for an unknown but eschatologically brief duration. Jewish saints would experience the New Birth and begin to grow in grace, the Great Tribulation would occur, Jews would pass through it, be purified, and enter into the Millennial Kingdom. This was the sequence of events revealed in the Old Testament scriptures and would have occurred if the Israelites had been prepared for their Messiah to appear as a suffering substitute. But, because the concept of the coming Messiah did not include the concept of a suffering substitute, they were not ready to be promoted to a priestly nation in the land of promise. Instead, they were subject to the curse as forewarned in the last verse of the Old Testament:

Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶ And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

The student of Scripture needs to remember that the bulk of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Great Tribulation does not take into account the parenthesis of the church age. Because God's offer of the kingdom to Israel was genuine, and because the Father and Christ were desirous to, sooner rather than later, establish the Israelites in their kingdom, the prophetic context of the four gospel narratives also, for the most part, does not anticipate the church age. Many expositors believe that Matthew 24:31 is an account of the rapture of the church. However this cannot be the case, because the rapture was a mystery until first revealed in I Corinthians 15:51.

Another important thing for the grace-oriented believer to understand is the Jewish concept of salvation as contrasted to the

church-age participant's concept of being saved. For the church-age believer to be saved means that he is placed in an everlasting relationship with God, through the merits of Christ, so that the believer is guaranteed a positive future in the presence of the Lord; however, salvation for the Jew meant to survive the Great Tribulation and enter the kingdom in a flesh and blood body. This is an important distinction to make because of those contexts enjoining watchfulness as a condition of being saved.

Matthew 24:13 "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

It is worth noting that every context which enjoins watchfulness as a condition of salvation in the gospel has in mind the concept of the believing Jew surviving the Great Tribulation and arriving in the kingdom in a flesh and blood body. This does not mean that Jews who die in the Great Tribulation will not enter the Kingdom. It just means that instead of entering the Kingdom in a flesh and blood body, they would enter the kingdom in a glorified body.

Incidentally, unlike this Jewish concept of salvation, watchfulness is not a condition for the gentile believer's ultimate salvation. As we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:10, "...who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." It is worthy to note that the word "sleep" here is not synonymous with death, but it is rather the word used for a lack of watchfulness. In other words, unwatchful believers will also be taken out of this world before the wrath of God falls.

Jewish Saints of God will be afforded varying degrees of protection during the time of the Great Tribulation, or as the Old Testament calls it, Jacobs's trouble. This time of Jacob's trouble is intended to soften the hearts of God's people in preparation for them to be infused with the knowledge of God. For the Jew living during the time of Christ, being saved meant passing bodily through the Great Tribulation and arriving in the earthly Kingdom, in a flesh and blood body, experiencing the blessings of the Lord in His Kingdom. Jewish saints who were to enter the earthly land of

promise were to enter by one of two ways: either by surviving the Great Tribulation, or by being resurrected into the kingdom. For the saint living during the time of Christ, passing bodily into the kingdom was for them salvation. Jewish saints will be afforded varying degrees of protection during the time of the world's persecution of the saints of God.

There will be some saints who will be counted worthy to altogether escape the harshness of the Great Tribulation.

Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard *them*; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. ¹⁷ "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him."

Revelation 12:6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days."

Luke 21:36 "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

There will be another group of saints who will have to exercise divine perspective in the midst of the great tribulation to survive bodily into the Kingdom.

Mark 13:13 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ " So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ "Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶ "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes."

Luke 21:19 "By your patience possess your souls."

Revelation 13:10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

There will be yet another group of saints who will die during the great tribulation but will be resurrected and gathered back into the Kingdom.

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

The significance of the phrase "their works follow them", is that in the resurrection the Lord will honor their works and assign them a status in the age to come commensurate with their degree of faithfulness here on earth.

Matthew 24:31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Mark 13:24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ "the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ "And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven."

Ezekiel 37:11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' ¹² "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people,

I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.”

Yet another group of unrighteous will survive the tribulation, but be extricated from the Kingdom at a latter time.

Matthew 13:41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,⁴² "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Under Plan A, the Jewish saint had the new birth available to him upon the resurrection of Christ and the subsequent release of the Holy Spirit to believers, thus making possible the new birth. To what degree the Jewish saint had advanced in grace between the resurrection of Christ and the start of the Great Tribulation would have determined, under Plan A, the degree of protection they would have been afforded through the Great Tribulation.

The Topographical Changes to the Land of Israel in the Age to Come

The age to come is going to begin with some major topographical changes surrounding the land of Israel, as Israel is exalted as the center of world government. A literal interpretation of several contexts will demonstrate that this is the case. Scripture shows us that Mount Zion is going to be so elevated that it is going to reach to the heavens, as we see in Psalm 2.

Psalm 2:4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision.⁵ Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:⁶ "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

In fact, Mount Zion will be so elevated, that its very height will be intimidating to those who might consider attempting to overthrow the reign of Christ:

Psalm 48:1-5 A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

“Great [is] the LORD, and greatly to be praised. In the city of our God, [In] His holy mountain. 2 Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, [Is] Mount Zion [on] the sides of the north, The city of the great King. 3 God [is] in her palaces; He is known as her refuge. 4 For behold, the kings assembled, They passed by together. 5 They saw [it, and] so they marveled; They were troubled, they hastened away.”

Notice in the above context that, during the Millennium, a group of kings will assemble for the purpose of overthrowing the Lord, but upon considering the immensity of the city, they will have second thoughts and abandon their intentions with fear.

The topography of Israel is going to be altered to accommodate Israel, more specifically Mount Zion, as the center of world government. These topographical changes will include building a highway system to accommodate Mount Zion as the center of world government.

Isaiah 40:3-4 The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth;

Isaiah 40:5 “The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see [it] together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Isaiah 49:11-12 I will make each of My mountains a road, And My highways shall be elevated. 12 Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, And these from the land of Sinim.”

Isaiah 35:8 A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, But it [shall be] for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray.”

The land of Israel will be restored to a pre-curse state, before the fall of man, in the Garden of Eden.

Ezekiel 36:34 "The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by.”

Ezekiel 36:35 "So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities [are now] fortified [and] inhabited.”

Isaiah 51:3 For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.”

Contrast the above verses with the condition of the earth immediately after the fall:

Genesis 3:17-19 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed [is] the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat [of] it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you [are,] And to dust you shall return."

God cursed the ground in order that man would have to struggle to survive. Hard work, to a certain degree, impedes the evil in men’s hearts. Unregenerate man, who has an abundance of idle time, will spend that idle time on devising evil. So God ordained work to impede the rate at which man could devise evil. When man is

operating from a state of depravity, God checks that depravity with hard work. When man is operating according to the power of Christ, that is, when the earthly inhabitants of God's kingdom have the Law written in their hearts, they no longer need to have their evil limited with a struggle to survive, so God removes the curse from their land.

By the way, contrast this to the modern environmentalist movement which teaches that if we will practically worship the land God will be pleased. The Scriptures teach that if we are properly attuned to the Lord, He will cause the land to sustain us. Environmentalists despair as if this earth is frail and on the brink of no longer being able to sustain mankind because of man's abuse. When man's relationship with the Lord is what it ought to be, God blesses man with a robustly inhabitable environment.

Isaiah 11:6-11 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. 10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." 11 It shall come to pass in that day [That] the LORD shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea."

Isaiah 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust [shall be] the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD."

However, this divine transformation will not be present in the rest of the earth.

Zechariah 14:17-18 And it shall be [that] whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they [shall have] no [rain;] they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

So we can see that during the Millennial Kingdom, the curse is removed from the land of Israel, but the rest of the earth's inhabitability will be contingent upon their submission to Israel.

Scripture teaches that the land of Israel will be irrigated from a water supply which has as its source the temple of the Lord.

Joel 3:18 And it will come to pass in that day *That* the mountains shall drip with new wine, The hills shall flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD And water the Valley of Acacias.

Revelation 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

Scripture teaches that the borders of Israel will be expanded, on every side to accommodate the additional people.

Isaiah 49:19 "For your waste and desolate places, And the land of your destruction, Will even now be too small for the inhabitants; And those who swallowed you up will be far away."

Zechariah 10:10-12 I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, And gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, Until no [more room] is found for them. 11 He shall pass through the sea with affliction, And strike the waves of the sea: All the depths of the River shall dry up. Then the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, And the scepter of Egypt shall depart. 12 "So I will strengthen them in the LORD, And they shall walk up and down in His name," Says the LORD.

Psalms 46:2-3 Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; 3 [Though] its waters roar [and] be troubled, [Though] the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

By the way, the above context is just one of the many Millennial Psalms, that is, it is a Psalm written from the perspective of someone living in Israel during the Millennial Kingdom.

Isaiah 26:15 You have increased the nation, O LORD, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land.

From the above passages, we can see that the geographical boundaries of Israel will be expanded in every direction. Yes, even the sea shall be filled in to produce more land area. This may be what the Lord had in mind in the following verse:

Matthew 17:20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." (See also Matthew 21:21).

Since the Lord in His teaching is anticipating the coming kingdom age, it is very likely that believing Israelites will participate with the Lord in bringing to pass the changes which will be needed to accommodate the influx of saints at the beginning of

the kingdom age. These changes might include faithful Jewish saints speaking into reality the prophecy of the mountain peaks of Israel being cast into the sea, both to expand the borders of Israel and to make the existing land of Israel more inhabitable by scaling back some of the harsh peaks, as we shall see in the Ezekiel passage below.

It is also interesting to note that this expansion of the geographical boundaries of Israel will apparently occur after the start of the Millennial Kingdom. God, dwelling in their midst, will expand the boundaries of Israel to accommodate all of the earthy saints, both those who have gone before and those who pass through the great tribulation.

Ezekiel 36:8-12 But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. 9 "For indeed I [am] for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. 10 "I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11 "I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better [for you] than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I [am] the LORD. 12 "Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance; no more shall you bereave them [of children.]"

The reason the mountains will no longer bereave Israelites of children is their harsh peaks will be transformed into tillable land and pasture conducive to raising livestock.

Notice also in this above context that this passage also anticipates a swelling of population in Israel. To accommodate this increase in population, not only will the Lord expand the geographical boundaries of Israel, but He will also make the mountains of Israel inhabitable and tillable. Once again, we see in this context a topographical transformation in Israel to accommodate the huge

influx of people, as these people are raised from the dead and re-gathered from the scattered nations.

Isaiah 49:9 That You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,' To those who *are* in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' "They shall feed along the roads, And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.

Another characteristic of the age to come will be the divine covering which will protect the nation of Israel from the heat of the sun.

Isaiah 4:4-6 When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, 5 then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there [will be] a covering. 6 And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.

Psalm 121:6 The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night.

Psalm 121:7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul.

Isaiah 49:10 They shall neither hunger nor thirst, Neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them will lead them, Even by the springs of water He will guide them.

Isaiah 60:19-20 " The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory. 20 Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, And the days of your mourning shall be ended."

From the above passages, we see that there will exist over Israel, during the time of the Millennium, some type of divine shade which protects them from the harshness of the sun. It is my belief that this covering will be none other than the heavenly Jerusalem, the abode of the church-age believer.

The Political Realities in the Age to Come

In the age to come, ascending Mount Zion will be a coveted privilege. The earthly Jewish saints will act as priests to accompany those who wish to gain access to the Lord.

Zechariah 8:23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard *that God is with you.*"

During the time of the earthly reign of Christ, not everyone will be allowed to ascend Mount Zion to the temple of Christ; access to the top of Mount Zion will be restricted to those truly set apart.

Isaiah 35:8 A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, But it *shall be* for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray.

Why might not the unclean pass over it? Because it is a highway which leads to the mountain of the Lord and the unclean will not be allowed to ascend up the mountain.

Psalms 24:3-4 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.

The above context is not the terms upon which God will grant eternal life; rather, it speaks of privilege which will be afforded certain faithful believers during the Millennium. Consider also the following passage:

Psalm 15:1-5 A Psalm of David.

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? 2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; 3 He [who] does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; 4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He [who] swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5 He [who] does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these [things] shall never be moved.

Once again, this is not the terms upon which God will grant eternal life during the Millennium, or in any other dispensation; rather, it is an articulation of the reward which will be afforded the faithful. The fruit-bearing saint will be afforded a higher privilege during the Millennium. This higher privilege will result in certain people actually being allowed to establish dwelling places on the holy hill of Zion. Consider the desire of King David in the context below:

Psalm 27:4-5 One [thing] I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple. 5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

Here, King David expresses a desire that his dwelling place might be such that he will be able to look at and freely inquire of the Lord in His temple.

Incidentally, in the age to come, it will also be possible for a gentile to experience favorable status in the land of promise. Consider the following passage:

Isaiah 56:1-8 Thus says the LORD: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, For My salvation [is] about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed. 2 Blessed [is] the man [who] does this, And the son of man [who] lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil." 3 Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying, "The LORD has utterly separated me from His people"; Nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree." 4 For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, 5 Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off. 6 " Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants -- Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant --7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices [Will be] accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." 8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him [Others] besides those who are gathered to him."

In verse 1, "my salvation is about to come and my righteousness is about to be revealed", is a reference to both the Lord Jesus Christ and the appearance of His kingdom. The above passage is not an articulation of the New Birth being granted upon the basis of Law keeping, rather it is an articulation of reward, security and status in the Millennial Kingdom based upon a keeping of what, in that day, will be the standard for civil obedience: the Law. The standard for civil obedience during the time of the Law and the Prophets and during the time of the Millennium is the Law, both judicial and ceremonial. While these principles are not imposed upon the

church-age saint, those who will be living in the land of promise will be expected to fully comply with the ordinances of that day. This passage describes the blessedness of a gentile who, during the Millennium, is adherent to the Mosaic Covenant.

Notice verse 8. He says “Yet, I will gather to Him others besides those who are gathered to Him”. Could this verse anticipate God blessing a group of people who are not associated with Israel? This passage teaches us that, during the Millennium, there will be others who are gathered who are not adhering to the Mosaic Covenant.

The Subjugation of the Gentile Nations in the Age to Come

It is generally taught by most pre-millennialists that all the unrighteous will be annihilated from the earth during the time of God’s wrath. This view is arrived at by considering only the Judgment of the Nations context of Matthew 25 which, on the surface, seems to teach that all people will be segregated into one of two groups. However, there are several other contexts of Scripture which teach that the gentiles will not be totally annihilated, but rather conquered and subjugated by the Lord Jesus Christ during the time of God’s wrath upon the earth.

Psalm 46:8-10 Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. 10 Be still, and know that I [am] God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

What is the purpose of destroying the implements of war if there is no one around to use them?

Consider also the following passage:

Psalm 47:1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice

of triumph! ² For the LORD Most High *is* awesome; *He is* a great King over all the earth. ³ He will subdue the peoples under us, And the nations under our feet. ⁴ He will choose our inheritance for us, The excellence of Jacob whom He loves. Selah

The above Millennial Psalm begins with the voice of triumph, most likely of the Lord's victory over the nations during the time of His wrath. This passage also speaks of the Lord bringing the nations of the earth into subjugation to the government of the Lord, the great King over all the earth. What would be the point of subjugation if, as most pre-millennialists teach, only born again people are present after the wrath to repopulate the earth?

Zechariah 14:16-19 And it shall come to pass [that] everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And it shall be [that] whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they [shall have] no [rain;] they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Notice this speaks of people who remain, and are not annihilated after the battle of Armageddon. These people are subjugated and must annually keep the Feast of the Tabernacles if their homelands are to receive rain.

Psalm 2:6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." ⁷ "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You *are* My Son, Today I have begotten You.' ⁸ Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "10 Now therefore, be

wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish *in* the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

The above context contains the Lord's initial exaltation into His Millennial Kingdom and accompanying subjugations of the nations with a rod of iron. Notice verse 9 states how the remaining nations will be subjugated. They will be broken with a rod of iron, in other words, subjugated by force. Such subjugation would not be necessary if all the unregenerate were destroyed during the time of God's wrath. Neither would such subjugation be necessary if the initial subjects of the King were all regenerate people.

Consider also the following verse:

Revelation 6:2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Many commentators teach that the opening of the seals occurs upon the earth during the time of the Great Tribulation. Actually, the characters which appear upon the opening of the first four seals are in anticipation of the events contained in the Scroll. Now if the rider of the white horse is the Lord Jesus, and according to Revelation 19:11 there is every reason to believe that that is the case, then we must conclude that His efforts upon the earth are not to destroy all the unregenerate inhabitants of the earth, but rather to conquer them. This is made even more apparent as we consider the context which begins in Revelation 19:11.

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

If we are to assume that the white horse of Revelation chapter 19 is the rider released upon the loosing of the first seal, then, following the Great Tribulation, this rider conquers and subjects the nations of the earth with a rod of iron. Once again we see subjugation, not annihilation.

Micah 4:1-4 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days [That] the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. 4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make [them] afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

Where Will the Church be in the Age to come?

At the rapture of the church and forever thereafter, according to the verse below, the church will never be parted from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

If we are going to forever be with the Lord and the Lord is going to be atop of Mount Zion, then where are we going to be? Obviously, we will be with the Lord atop of Mount Zion while He is ruling and reigning over the world.

We have to be careful that we do not confuse the heavenly church-age saints with the earthly kingdom-age saints who will populate Israel during the Millennium. We are not Israel nor is Israel the church, although I believe that during the Millennium, we will share the same Lord. We will live in the New Jerusalem which will be a heavenly city surrounding the throne of Christ on top of Mount Zion.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,

I think it is interesting to contrast the proximity of the church to the Lord during this time with the proximity of Israel. As we have seen thus far, from the perspective of those on the earth, the Lord will be far above on top of Mount Zion. From the perspective of the earthly participants in the Millennial Kingdom, to get to the Lord it is “up the mountain we go”, ascending the Holy Hill.

However from the perspective of the church:

Revelation 7:15 "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

Revelation 15:2 And I saw [something] like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark [and] over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,

Revelation 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

From the perspective of the earthly saint living during the Millennium, getting to the Lord involves traveling up the mountain. The church age saint, however, dwells on a parallel plain with the throne of God.

What will church age Believers be doing in the age to come?

Contrary to common belief, not everyone in heaven will have the same privileges. Some people in heaven receive more rewards than others and those same faithful will have greater access to special places than others. Truly, the degree to which you glorified the Lord in this life is the degree to which He will glorify you in the next. While it is true that every born again believer will dwell in the kingdom of heaven, not every born again believer will have the same privileges and responsibilities. Let's look at some Scriptures which very clearly demonstrate this to be the case.

2 Timothy 2:10-12 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. [This is] a faithful saying: For if we died with [Him,] We shall also live with [Him.] 12 If we endure, We shall also reign with [Him.]

Notice that the apostle Paul said that he endured all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ with eternal glory. Clearly, the Scriptures teach that it is one thing to live with Christ in heaven, but it is another thing entirely to be appointed a higher rank of glory along side of Christ. Listen again carefully to the next two verses of our passage in II Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:11-12 [This is] a faithful saying: For if we died with [Him,] We shall also live with [Him.] 12 If we endure, We shall also reign with [Him.]

Clearly, this verse presents a contrast between merely living with Christ in Heaven and reigning with Him there. All who are saved will live there, but not all will experience an identical degree of glorification.

Another passage that demonstrates this truth is 2 Corinthians 4:17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight (or measure) of glory,

From this passage, we see that those believers who choose to suffer affliction for the cause of Christ in this life shall experience a greater glorification in the next; and by the way, believers will not be envying one another in heaven. The rewards and corresponding status which some receive and others don't will cause joy for all, because above all else, these super glorified saints will make the Lord happy. After all, when God saved us, it was with this super glorification in mind. Those believers, who because of apathy in this life, do not press on to maturity and fruitfulness are actually shortchanging God out of their co-regency with Christ. Now granted, those saints who are counted worthy of such a status, will not have the same status as Christ, for Jesus alone is worthy of such honor; but faithful believers will have greater interaction with Christ, since their governmental responsibilities will require it.

Let's look at some truths from the Scriptures which demonstrate that faithful believers will have greater access to the inner workings of the heavenly administration. Probably some of the best passages which demonstrate this are those promises to those who overcome, which we find at the closings to the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. By the way, an overcomer is usually someone who has been saved by the blood of the Lamb and in addition, in this life, has pressed on to maturity and fruitfulness;

thereby, overcoming the luring and attractions of this present evil age. Truly, we can say from the book of Revelation that there are degrees to which an individual will overcome this present evil age. All believers overcome by the blood of the Lamb, but not all overcome in every aspect of their walk. Let's look now at several of these promises to overcomers in the book of Revelation. The first one we shall look at is the Lord's words at the closing of the letter to the church of Ephesus.

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Now as we look at these promises to the overcomers, they all have one thing in common, and that is greater access to the center of the heavenly city. Picture, if you will, the Heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. In the center of the city will be the throne of God the Father and the Lord Jesus. Also in the center of this New Jerusalem will be the inner workings of the heavenly administration along with those items which would embellish such a heavenly throne. One of those items close to the throne is the tree of life. Those who overcome will be granted access to that tree.

Or, how about this verse;

Revelation 2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives [it.]"'

Now, what is the purpose of this white stone containing a name which only the person who receives it is privy to? What could possibly be the purpose of such a stone? One can only speculate because the information we have about this stone is limited, but could this possibly be some sort of pass which gave the person who possessed the stone greater access to the inner workings of the

heavenly administration? Think about items such as these that people carry on their person today. Without exception, such tokens give us access to our treasures and special privileges. Such thoughts I know are speculation on my part, but as you consider the promises to the overcomers, the cumulative weight of these passages suggest greater access to the inner workings of the heavenly administration to those who overcome.

A similar promise to overcomers is found in the closing to the letter to the church of Philadelphia in Revelation 3:12 which reads, "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more."

Notice it says he will be a pillar in the temple. Now we all know what it means to be a pillar of the community. It means to be an influential person in your community. Well, since several Scriptures in the New Testament tell us that the temple of the living God is not made of brick or mortar, but believers; it is not hard to see what a special privilege it will one day be for an overcoming believer to be considered a pillar in the temple of the New Jerusalem. This verse goes onto to say, "and he shall go out no more." Could this mean that these pillars of the temple will be making laws, and others of less rank will go out of the city and execute those laws upon the nations, outside the heavenly city?

Another promise to the overcomers is made at the conclusion of the letter to the church at Sardis in the book of Revelation. It is as follows:

Revelation 3:4-5 "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

This is a promise to those who do not, as this passage says, defile their garments. The garment, of which this passage speaks, is a

cloak which is worn over the shoulders as an outer garment. According to this passage, believers whose walk with the Lord is consistently not what it ought to be, are "defiling their garment". Apparently, those believers who have not walked with the Lord as they ought to will probably, at the judgment seat of Christ, be given a garment which will be something they will not want to wear. Indeed, they won't wear it because those garments will be cast into the fire at the judgment seat of Christ. I believe Jude may make reference to this in verse 23, which reads:

Jude 23 but others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

In other words, as valuable as cloaks are, leave it in the fire, let it burn up, save the believer from the fire and save the believer by means of the fire.

The Scriptures teach us in I Corinthians 3 that at the judgment seat of Christ, the works which were done in the flesh of many believers will be burnt up. In this way, these believers will be saved, yet so as by fire. In other words, at the judgment seat of Christ, all some believers will have to rejoice in is the fact that their cloak, which is representative of their works on earth, was burnt up at the judgment. They themselves will be spared from the fire, but their works won't. Their cloak, which is representative of their works, will be burnt up so that they, throughout eternity, do not visibly bear its shame.

Believers whose cloaks are defiled by worldliness, and consequently burnt up at the judgment seat of Christ, apparently will not be given another cloak. Several Scriptures seem to indicate that these believers will experience a degree of nakedness.

Consider Rev. 16:15 which reads:

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed [is] he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

According to this passage, the person who is not watchful about his walk with the Lord is not keeping his garment. Such a person will experience a degree of shame over his lack of proper attire. The Bible refers to this as nakedness. By the way, nakedness in this passage is not nudity like one would think of nudity today; nakedness in this context means clad only with the inner garment; the outer garments having been laid aside. It would be like a man who having spilled spaghetti on his suit coat while attending a formal dinner, set it aside rather than wearing spaghetti on his coat the rest of the evening. Thus, those believers who defile their garments with worldliness in this life, will choose not to wear them in eternity, but will have them incinerated and thus forgotten at the judgment seat of Christ.

Another passage which warns believers to prepare their garments for eternity is found in the Lord's warning the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:17-18, which reads as follows:

"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked -- 18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, [that] the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

Notice that the Lord here exhorts his hearers to buy white garments, that they may be clothed, in order that the shame of their nakedness may not be revealed. Once again, this white garment is the outer cloak which the Lord here exhorts believers to buy. Wait a minute. How do you now, in this life, buy an outer garment? By investing your time, talent and treasure on that which is of eternal importance. Instead of setting your affections on things of this life, invest your heart in that which matters to the Lord. In this way, you buy a white garment and in this way, you will not be ashamed of your attire at the judgment seat of Christ.

By the way, notice that in this passage the Lord is exhorting believers to **buy** gold refined in the fire and white garments. This is the language of rewards, not of gifts. As we study this subject matter, we need to be very sure that we are distinguishing between the freeness of eternal life and the costliness of rewards. A home in heaven is a gift which we receive freely with no strings attached, by believing on Christ as our Savior. Rewards in heaven, on the other hand, are costly; they are purchased by a careful investment of our lives in that which is near and dear to the heart of God.

Okay, so what will the person who has not been careful to keep his garment be wearing in heaven? He will be wearing the robe of righteousness, which is the universal covering of every blood-washed believer in the New Jerusalem. This robe is a long, flowing garment which will fully cover every believer and is indicative of the imputed righteousness of Christ upon every born again believer.

Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, **clothed with white robes**, with palm branches in their hands,

Later on in this same passage, verse 14, one of the elders around the throne of God explained to John where, suddenly, these believers came from. Revelation 7:14 reads,

He said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 7:15 "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

This universal assembly can be none other than the church. Notice they are wearing robes which they have made white in the blood of the Lamb. Every believer will be happy in the heavenly city because of the undiminished love of Christ which we will all

experience because we are His. We will all be clothed in a robe of righteousness which represents Christ's imputed righteousness. In addition, believers who, in this life, made those things which are important to God, important to them, will enjoy a special garment with special privileges in that heavenly city of God.

Revelation 3:4-5 "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

This passage speaks of people being worthy of these garments, and of walking with Christ clothed in these garments, having their name confessed to the Father and His angels. Once again, these are special privileges granted according to our faithfulness, and are not to be confused with the gift of eternal life guaranteed to all who believe in Christ.

Let's now address what, to many, is a troubling concept in Revelation 3:5: having your name blotted out of the Book of Life.

Revelation 3:5 has caused many a great deal of anxiety, specifically the phrase, "I will not blot his name out of the book of life". Now what I am going to talk about, I could not possibly be dogmatic about; but, nevertheless, it may help in this discussion of this verse and just what it might mean. I have heard other explanations of this passage and have not found them satisfactory; (you may not find my theory on this verse satisfactory). I have heard, for example, many in my sphere of influence state that the Lord was using a little-known figure of speech called litotes. Litotes is a positive affirmation which is made by a strong denial of the negative. For example, it would be like me telling my wife, "Cindy, if you make me dinner tonight, I won't divorce you." Well, we might from time to time talk to each other using such humorous twists of language; but to me, the litotes does not fit such a sobering

context as in the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation.

The tension created by this verse is as follows: If the Book of Life is a book which contains a list of all the saved, then how could a saved person's name be blotted out of the book? That would negate the doctrine of security and would teach that the ultimate reason that someone is saved is because he held out until the end, which is basically a message of works. The Scriptures teach that the believer was qualified for a home in heaven when that believer first believed the Gospel. The Scriptures also teach that once God imparts to the believer the gift of righteousness, that a fundamental change in relationship between God and the believer takes place; a change which can never be undone. The Scriptures also teach that it is possible that a believer, in this life, will not press on to the victory of the overcomers. So why does the Lord in Rev 3:5 seem to imply that a believer, who was not an overcomer, might have his name blotted out of the Book of Life?

Let's look at some other passages of Scripture which talk about God's record keepings. For example, in Exodus 32:32-33, Moses is interceding for the people of Israel. He says:

"Yet now, if You will forgive their sin -- but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."

33 And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book."

In this context, to be blotted out of the book was to be destined for judgment of death. Those whose names remained in the book up to that point still possessed their citizenship in the land of Israel.

Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands [watch] over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, [Even] to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

According to this passage those who are written in the book shall be delivered. Could this be a reference to the deliverance unto safety, of the remnant, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation? This word "delivered" would certainly lend itself to that understanding. Actually, in the Hebrew, this word carries with it the idea of slipping away to safety. Scripture teaches us that a remnant of God's elect will be divinely protected through this period of time known as the Great Tribulation. We see this in Revelation 12:6, which reads: Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Once again, in Daniel 12:1, those whose names were not found written in the book were destined for judgment. Those whose names are in the book need no judgment because they responded to God's truth without judgment. Apparently, those Jews whose names are not written in the Book of Life will experience the persecution of the Great Tribulation.

Or, how about this passage in Malachi 3:16-18? Read carefully; it says:

Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard [them;] So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. 17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." 18 Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.

Look at the promises in this passage to those who fear and meditate on the Lord. We see here four promises to these Old Testament overcomers which are exactly what God promises his church age saints.

1. God writes for them a book of remembrance. God writes our name in the Book of Life.

2. They shall be God's jewels for eternity. We shall experience a greater degree of glorification in eternity.

3. God will spare them, probably from the persecution of the Great Tribulation. God spares the overcomers of the church from the trial which will come upon the earth.

4. God promises that they will discern between the righteous and the wicked. Overcomers in the church age will do similarly when they rule along side Christ.

Or, how about this verse in Philippians 4:3: And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names [are] in the Book of Life.

Why does the apostle Paul, upon contemplating the labors of these faithful companions, reflect upon the fact that their names are written in the Book of Life? Is it because they are saved, or is it because Paul expects that a great reward awaits them for their faithfulness and those rewards are enumerated along with the names of the people who will receive them in the Book of Life?

Could the Book of Life be, a book enumerating the privileges each person will receive in the life to come? For your name to not be found in the Book of Life may mean that there are no entries at all under any categories, not even the category of having once believed. To have your name blotted out of the Book of Life may mean that you have disqualified yourself under certain categories of rewards and thus having your name blotted out from that category while still having your names under the "having believed" column. Now granted, this is only speculation on my part, for Scripture does not describe all the contents of the Book of Life. I only offer this as a possible explanation for the difficulty created in Revelation 3:5, which reads as follows:

Revelation 3:4-5 "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

Let's now approach this passage from another truth mentioned in this context: the concept of being worthy of walking with the Lord in white and having your name confessed before the Father and His angels.

To walk with the Lord in white, I believe, is to be able to stroll and confer with the Lord in His temple. It is interesting to note that the majority of time in the New Testament when this word "white" is used, it is used in the context of the radiance of a supernatural being. In other words, the white of which this context speaks is probably the glow of the abode of Christ in the midst of His Millennial temple. We see a similar promise made to Old Testament saints who maintained a consistency in their walk:

Zechariah 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. ² And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! *Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?*" ³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. ⁴ Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." ⁵ And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by. ⁶ Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, ⁷ "Thus says the LORD of hosts: **'If you will walk in My ways, And if you will keep My command, Then you shall also judge My house, and likewise**

have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk Among these who stand here;

If we are to safely assume that the events occurring immediately prior to this exhortation are a foreshadowing of the imputation of the gift of righteousness, then it is after the imputation of righteousness that the Lord makes this exhortation. In other words, “Now, Joshua, that you are saved, if you will do something with My Salvation, I will reward you in the age to come with access to My throne room”.

Notice also the context in Revelation chapter 3:5 includes the concept of worthiness, **“for they are worthy”**. Once again, this is not the language of the freeness of imputed righteousness, but rather speaks of an earned privilege; a privilege earned by a self denying Christ honoring deportment enabled by His grace.

Let’s continue to examine our passage in Revelation 3:5:

“Shall be clothed in white garments”

It is interesting here in that the term “clothed,” is not the normal word for “clothed” in the New Testament; rather, in this context it is the word περιβαλειται, which literally means “cast around”. What type of garment would be cast around a person? A kingly robe. This verb is also used in Revelation 3:18 and Luke 23:11.

Luke 23:11 Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him*, **arrayed** Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.

Let us continue now in our consideration of Revelation 3:5-6.

But I will confess his name before the Father and His Angels:

Notice the passage in question, Revelation 3:5-6, sets up a contrast between having your name blotted out of the Book of Life and having your name confessed before the angels. So whatever having your name blotted out of the Book of Life is about, it must be the opposite of having your name confessed before the Father and His angels.

Let's examine further what could be the significance of having your name confessed to before the angels.

Psalm 91:11-12 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. 12 In [their] hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

From the two above verses we can see that one of the ministries of angels is to minister in behalf of those who will inherit salvation. So how is it determined who is to be a recipient of angelic attention and who is not? Consider the following verses:

Matthew 10:32 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

This passage occurs in a context of the Lord's promise to divinely protect those who speak in His name. In Matthew chapter 10, the Lord is instructing His twelve apostles before sending them out into Israel proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom.

This passage concludes a context which begins in verse 28 in which the Lord is instructing the disciples not to fear the retribution of the Jews because he is going to divinely protect them as he sends them out.

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul

and body in hell.²⁹ "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.³⁰ "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.³¹ "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.³² "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

He concludes His assurance of protection in verse 32:

Whoever confesses me before men, Him I will confess before my Father who is in heaven.

A mistaken assumption which is also made concerning this verse is that Jesus is confessing these witnesses to the Father. That is not what this context says. The word in the Greek is the word "before", *enprosthēn* which is an adverb of place.

This confession is not for the ears of the Father; but, rather, for the ears of those who are present around His throne, i.e. the angels.

A similar passage to this is found in Luke chapter 12 verse 8. In this passage, however, we see the Lord trying to instruct His disciples in the midst of a chaotic assembly. His words in this context are not only being heard by the twelve, but also by a mixed assembly who were at different stages of attentiveness to the things of God, whom He is warning against the doctrine of the Pharisees. Nevertheless, we once again see His instruction to His apostles concerning the divine protection which God will afford those speaking in His name at the hand of the angels.

Luke 12:4-9 " And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! 6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value

than many sparrows. 8 " Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 "But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God."

Notice in this context it is the Angels who are the intended recipient of this information.

Why is it important that the angels receive this information? It is because they are the divine protectors of those who speak for the Lord. Angels are commissioned to provide physical protection to those whom the Lord decrees will be protected, and it is before the throne of God where they receive their marching orders.

Angels are the ministering spirits, that is, they render favorable service, according to the will of God, to those who are the heirs of the kingdom.

Angels are also the protectors of the sanctuary of God; they are the Lord's divine bouncers, so to speak. I mean, I don't think those four living creatures flying around the throne of God are just for aesthetics.

So, the benefit of having your name proclaimed to the angels of God is twofold:

1. An extra degree of protection for those now speaking in behalf of God and,
2. Permission to enter the center of the heavenly administration of Christ in the age to come.

So, if having your name blotted out of Book of Life is the opposite of having your name confessed to the Father and to his angels, then having your name blotted out of the Book of Life not only would impact your access to the center of the heavenly administration in the age to come, but it could also impact the degree of angelic protection you will be afforded at this time.

Those who are fulfilling the purpose of God in their lives are aware of this angelic protection. I can't tell you how many times, while ministering in behalf of the Lord, I have experienced some sort of deliverance from a harmful event; deliverances in which God made it clear that the deliverance I had just experienced was truly due to a supernatural intervention.

We can see from what we have considered in this section of our book that believers will be doing much more in the age to come than sitting on clouds and playing harps. Faithful believers will be helping the Lord govern over this world. Many in this world will not enjoy being subjugated to the rule of Christ and His saints; but, unlike the political landscape of today, those on the side of God will prevail in every challenge to Godly government.

Conclusion

Understanding the age to come and what we, as believers, will be doing at that time, removes a great deal of apprehension concerning passing from this life into eternity. The age to come will be an exciting time for the believer, in that he will be helping the Lord call the shots over governments of the world. Unlike the discouragement that we experience today, when unrighteousness prevails in the area of politics, in the age to come the will of God will be done on earth, as He wills from heaven. It will be an exciting time to be alive in Christ and on the winning team!

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