

The Kingdom of God - The First Few Years

It can sometimes be hard to imagine the detail of the events that lie ahead of us in the Kingdom of God but one thing is for sure and that is that even after 3 ½ years of Christ's instruction on the sea of glass in Heaven, those Saints who return with Him will still experience the steepest learning curve ever, during the 20 years just after Jesus Christ's return.

None of us know if we will live through to that momentous day, but whether as a resurrected being, or as one changed in the twinkling of an eye, the Saints will descend from the clouds with Jesus Christ, to stand upon the Mount of Olives, just East of Jerusalem, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, *'Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.'* And on His return, Zechariah 14:4-5, *'And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.'*

Even as we hopefully descend with Christ and the Heavenly army of angels, what we will see through the dust and smoke below, will be far more dramatic than anything we may have marvelled at from a jumbo jet. From one end of the land of Israel to the other, from the Galilee to the Negev, we will see the surface moving, shaking as it is geo-physically restructured, sometimes hundreds of feet vertically, to produce an undulating fertile land all of which will be habitable by men.

Before our eyes the barren and mountainous Judean wilderness will be remodelled as it gently slopes from Jerusalem towards the Dead Sea, which will be greatly enlarged by the river which will flow out from the new temple in Jerusalem, providing refreshing water to a sea which is now lifeless, Ezekiel 47:10-11, *'And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.'* From there this water will overflow down the Arabah into the Red Sea, eventually refreshing the oceans of the world, even as it allowed marine life to reach into the Dead Sea, from the Sea of Galilee.

Though Jerusalem will remain the highest point in Israel, fertile valleys will lead away from it to both East and West, verses 8,9,12, *'Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.'* *And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.'*

This process of Divine reconstruction of the earth's surface will also be occurring worldwide at the same time, as God prepares the earth for the events of the next 1100 years.

When the dust settles and the last pebbles roll into place there is going to be a huge task ahead for the map makers, Revelation 16:18-20, *'And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.* Most of the vast mountain ranges like the Himalayas will have become mere hills – the largest continents with their desert dry interiors now restructured with deep indentations in their coastlines, some leading to inland seas like the Black Sea and the Caspian. Few places will be far from water then, either sea or river, as only in that way can an equable climate be spread worldwide, for eventually all who have ever lived to be accommodated and fed during the second resurrection, 1000 years into the future.

Isaiah 35:1,7, *'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons (jackals), where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.'*

God's resurrected family, Christ's Bride, will lead the re-gathered Israelites in the greening of this reconstructed land of Israel. Isaiah 41:15,18,19, *'Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together.'*

At the same time, whole areas beyond man's ability to reclaim because of pollution or degradation, along with sink cities beyond redemption, most of which are on the coast, will at this time be swallowed up by these earth movements, Isaiah 24:1, *'Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down.'* Although by this time, at the end of the Tribulation, a large proportion of the earth's population will have perished, we must remember that every last one of them will be raised to life again, this time in a world where God's way of life if chosen, will result in prosperity, happiness and joy.

At that time however, as Christ descends upon the Mount of Olives, even the great national armies gathered for the Battle of Armageddon will be totally immobilised, battered and disoriented in the aftermath of that great earthquake and gigantic hailstorm, covered in dust and surrounded by gloom as the angelic army arrives, Joel 2:2, *'A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.'*

In fear and confusion, as Christ smites them, the national armies will turn upon each other, Zechariah 14:12-13, *'And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they*

shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.'

After their defeat, as peace finally arrives, the Bride of Christ (the 144,000 who took part in the 1st resurrection) will be given the appropriate task for which they have qualified. King David for example, will rule over all Israel, Ezekiel 37:24-25, *'And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.'* The twelve Apostles will serve below Him, each ruling one of the twelve tribes, Matthew 19:28, *'And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'*

Those of us who have learned how to truly serve God's people, will be given the task of rescuing a given number of individuals from the scattered nations of Israel (Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Canada, America and some countries from North Western Europe) who had been taken away in captivity and slavery, Isaiah 11:11, *'In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.'*

Those in God's Church who did not qualify to become part of the Bride of Christ and who survived the Great Tribulation, will be rewarded according to their faithfulness, Revelation 22:12, *'And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.'*

The Bride of Christ however, will then possess the same abilities that our Saviour displayed as the Messiah, 1 John 3:2, *'Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.'* New Living Translation. Several scriptures in the Book of Revelation indicate that Christ's Bride will have the same glowing appearance as her husband, as a glorious shining member of God's family. Daniel 12:2-3. *'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise **shall shine as the brightness of the firmament**; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.'*

They will be able to travel instantly to those parts of the earth from where the scattered remnants of Israel will be re-gathered to Jerusalem, just as Jesus Christ travelled to His Father in Heaven after His resurrection. The Bride of Christ is often referred to as Christ's 'arm', Isaiah 40:10-11, *'Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and **his arm shall rule for him** (Revelation 20:4): behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: **he shall gather the lambs with his arm**, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.'*

With God-given powers of healing, protection and provision, the gathering of Israel by God's 'arm' will not be difficult, but their travel through the nations will be a different matter altogether. Just like ancient Israel in the first exodus, they themselves will need to provide the effort required to travel the distances involved. Few if any transportation services will have survived. Isaiah 66:20, *'And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD.'*

Just as in the first exodus this will involve miraculous events such as the parting of the sea and rivers to allow the remnant of Israel to cross, on their way to Jerusalem, Isaiah 11:15, *'And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.'*

For those traumatised Israelite refugees, who have seen so much horror, their exodus will be a cathartic experience. They will learn to bury their fear and pain in the triumph of an inspirational, confidence raising relationship with a member of the family of God as they are led, comforted, taught, healed and their daily needs provided for, just as did God through Moses, during the first exodus. Even their passage through the chaotic nations on their way to Jerusalem will provide a powerful witness to the struggling members of humanity they encounter on the way.

Then, imagine the joy of arriving in Jerusalem, re-uniting scattered families, husbands to wives, mothers to surviving children, brothers to sisters, Isaiah 51:11, *'Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.'*

By then, restored to bodily health and with their mental scars beginning to heal, these close knit groups will be ready to become communities in the villages or towns allocated to them within their tribal area, Ezekiel 36:8-11, *'But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.'*

This goal, of guiding, teaching and ruling over Israel, is the goal of God's people today, as Christ indicated in the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:12-17, *'He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.'*

This is the future role of the Bride of Christ, Revelation 5:10, *'And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.'* It will however, only be given to those who, like King David, who started off as a shepherd and then went on to care for God's sheep as King of the nation Israel, prove in this life their genuine love and service for their fellow men. That example of service will now become the pattern, in towns and villages across Israel, as God's family begin to build the still returning scattered individuals into a harmonious, balanced, productive and God-fearing society, and educate them in every aspect of God's Law.

Ezekiel 36:24-30, *'For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.'*

Is it hard to imagine that you could play such a role, and be responsible for the governance and education of a village, town or city, with all that that involves? Some may think that maybe their lack of a university education would make that impossible, but in God's eyes it is far more important that we develop the fruits of the Spirit, listed in Galatians 5:22-23, to effectively rule and serve such communities as a shepherd, priest and King.

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.' NIV

Only in the land of Israel will such a pattern and example of prosperity and order be found in those early years of the Kingdom of God, but as representatives of the other nations which still lie in ruin, begin to attend the annual Feast of Tabernacles, they will see the difference that God's family presence has made, Zechariah 14:16, *'And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.'*

Staggered at the difference God's family presence has made, requests to be absorbed into God's Kingdom will come tumbling in, Isaiah 2:3-4, *'And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.'*

How many years will it take to rebuild Israel? Amos 9: 14, *'And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.'*

How many years before the population swells and the nations of Australia, US, Canada and Britain will need to be recolonised? Isaiah 49, 19-20, *'For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.'*

How many years before all nations of the earth bow before their creator? We don't know all the answers, but it will come, Zechariah 14:9, *'And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.'*

Eventually, the whole world will come under God's rule, carefully nurtured to the point where at the end of the 1000 years of the millennium, it will be capable of sustaining the second resurrection, of all who have ever lived, Revelation 20:11-12, *'And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'*

The question for Christians is – will we remain faithful to our calling so that we can participate in this great goal, for when Christ returns to Armageddon, will we be with Him, and have qualified to share in the inspiring verses we have read today? Revelation 17:14, *'These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.'*

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