

THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES:
What Lies Before Us?
Scripture Reading:
Message 12

INTRO: In the last message I introduced us to the millennium. I gave you an illustration by A. W. Tozer, on how a certain rich man built a beautiful palace. It was the most beautiful place on earth. Then renegades with hobnailed boots defeated the prince and made a mess of the city. There is a picture of mankind and the earth at present. And what a mess it is! And then fortunes changed, the original owner returned, and the palace was put back in shape again. I believe that in the millennium, the original owner returns, and begins to put things back in shape again, and once more this earth begins to take on the splendor it once had. But, the millennium is not yet the final perfection. That comes only after dealing with the devil after this time period, as we shall see.

In the last message we considered two interesting time periods in Daniel 12. The first is a time period of 1290 days. These days begin in the middle of the tribulation, and so since it is 1260 days to the end of the tribulation, this is 30 days beyond the tribulation (Daniel 12:11). Then there is a second time period spoken of like this, "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and ninety days."

Now we are not given any more information than that, but I want to give my own view of those days, which might suggest a possibility of what these two time periods are like. And so, according to our outline we are making preparation for the millennium. And we will consider first the 30 day mark and then the 75 day.

2. Preparation for the millennium

a. The thirty day time period

So, we are in the days immediately after the tribulation time. The whole earth is a mess. Cities have been devastated. The fall of the twin towers is a tiny example of what things look like now. There are vultures all around, cleaning up the dead. The Lord Jesus has returned and the Church with Him. The original

owner is back and He is going to begin to put things back in order. And so welcome to the post tribulational era.

And so, how does the Lord Jesus begin His life back on earth? How does He begin to take over the kingdom? We go to Revelation 20, to find out. In chapter 19 we saw the Lord Jesus defeat the antichrist and his armies and we saw the antichrist and the false prophet cast alive into the lake of fire (19:20). Then we read that the rest are killed and the birds come and feed on them and begin to clean up the mess that the tribulation has left. Now let us read one of the very first events that will take place (20:1-3 read).

I wonder if you can picture the event we just read about? How angry; how venomous; how enraged, must the devil not be? And if he had the power, he would do away with this angel and the Lord Jesus and the Church and the saved of the tribulation. But he is no match for the Lord's angel, and he is cast into the bottomless pit.

Now think for a moment what it must be like for Satan right at this time. All the people he has used are either in hell or being gathered by the good angels for judgment. I think probably a picture from our own time pictures him the best. For years Sadam Hussein brutally butchered people. He knew not the meaning of the word 'mercy'. He was one of the men with hobnailed boots that Tozer spoke of. And then the world began to warn him, but Hussien in all his puffed up pride snubbed his nose at the warnings. He would start the mother of all battles, he would rebuild Babylon of old. He would be Nebuchadnezzar, with Hitler as his hero.

Then the war started and he lost, and at last, knowing he was defeated, he scooped up several hundred thousand dollars and fled to hide in a cellar till the storm passed by. And there

they found him cringing in a hole in the ground like a trapped animal.

We now live in an age in which Satan snubs his nose at all. He walks about with hobnailed boots and cares not one whit for any holy ground he might tread on. He spits on the floor and stirs up orgies and wallows in his arrogant pride. And now we come to the end of the tribulation and I suppose he is holed up somewhere with several hundred thousand useless dollars.

And now it is angel against angel. Good angel against bad angel. For 6000 years, this angel has been biding time, and now the moment is here. He is authorized by God Almighty, and now his crowning moment of glory has come. Oh no. It is not the Lord Jesus who binds Satan. It is this great angel sent from heaven. So let us read verse 2 (read).

Have you ever seen policemen handle a cruel criminal? I think that is what we have here. Listen to what it says about the angel from heaven, "He laid hold of the dragon..." He laid hold of him. Here is this vilest of all vile beasts. This cruel being that would kill God and Jesus Christ and all people who do not serve him in sin. Given one slim opportunity, he would destroy all good. And here he is, at last facing another angel authorized by God. And then he is caught, and the handcuffs and ankle cuffs are snapped in place, and there he is, powerless and defeated.

And I suppose, like Saddam Hussien said after he was captured, "I am the president of Iraq. How dare you handle me like this." Maybe the devil says, "I am the god of this world. How dare you treat a dignity like me like this?" But Saddam was no longer president nor is the devil any longer the god of this world. He is defeated and he is bound.

So we go to verse 3 (read). The devil is now cast into the bottomless pit. The word for

bottomless pit is abussos. It comes from the word 'buthos' bottom or the deep. The ocean would be called the deep. Now this word is made negative by the a. You see a millennialism is no millennium. Abuthos is no bottom.

Now just what place is this bottomless pit? The original word is abussos. We get the word 'abyss' from this word. I believe it is none other than hell. And I believe it is the bottomless pit because it is at the center of gravity. We speak of hell being down. That, I think is what it means. There at the center of the earth is the bottomless pit. It is a mass of molten lava. It is the place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25).

But I must add something. If you are not a Christian, that place is awaiting you. It longs to reach up and grab you and drag you down. It is a place which was made for the devil and his angels according to Matthew 25. I must remind us this morning, that today is the day of salvation.

Well, Satan is captured, bound and cast into this place. Then a seal is set upon him and it will be in place for 1000 years. And the reason he is bound is that so for this length of time, he will be able to deceive the nations no more.

And so all noise of war has ceased and now all the clamor of the devil has ceased, and peace reigns on earth. Oh, it is a mess, but now that peace has been restored, according to Tozer's allegory, the palace can be cleaned up once more and restored to its original state.

What a time this will be! We cannot imagine a world without Satan, but that is what this will be. No Satan and no demonic influences. There is no doubt that this will be one of the first events to take place.

Now here is a question that I have wondered about: If man lived in this world without the devil and demons to tempt and deceive, how much influence would the sinful nature still exert? It may be that one of the major purposes of the millennium will be to show man what the sinful nature of his heart is like without satanic influence.

There is another event that will almost, if not immediately begin, as soon as the tribulation is over. Turn with me to Matthew 24 (read 29-31). And so another event that will happen almost immediately is that the Lord will send his angels to gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. From all over the world, wherever they are; the people that are left will be gathered together to face judgment. How long will this take? We do not know how it will be accomplished, but I speculate that there will be enough time for this in the thirty day time period we are talking about and then some.

When all the people have been gathered together, then they will be separated one group from another and divided into groups of saved and lost. Then they will be judged (read Matthew 25:31-46).

Now let me raise a rather strange question: Who does the judging at this judgment? And we might immediately think that it is the Lord Jesus. But turn with me to another interesting passage (1 Cor. 6:1-3). Now the question simply begs to be asked, when will this Scripture be fulfilled? And I believe it is right here at this judgment. Turn back to Revelation 20 (read v. 4a). Now there is a pronoun of which the antecedent is hard to identify. Notice it says, "And I saw thrones, and *they* sat upon them..." Who does the pronoun 'they' stand for?

Well, in Revelation 2-3, seven churches are addressed and we believe they represent the Church age. And there are promises made to

each church which hold true for all believers during this age. Now I want you to turn to the last church addressed, the church of Laodicea, and notice the promise in verse 21 (read 3:21).

Now you might say, "I could never judge the lost, never mind angels." I want you to notice something in 20:4. It says, "...judgment was committed to them." All the judgments have been made by the Lord. They believer will simply be administering these judgments. Let me tell you something even more incredible. Each judgment will end with the one judged being sent to hell right then and there! We find this in Matthew 25:46.

There is another event that will happen right after the tribulation is over. This too, we find in Revelation 20:4 (read, stressing part b). Here are those who were killed during the tribulation, and they are resurrected. It says they lived. It is my view, according to Daniel 12:1-2 and other verses that the OT saints are resurrected here as well.

Turn with me to Matthew 8. A Roman centurion has called for Jesus to come and heal his servant who is paralyzed and dreadfully tormented. And Jesus sets out to go to his house but the centurion says, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come to my house. I understand authority, and I know You do not have to be at my house to heal my servant. You can do it right from where You are." Now let us read verses 9-10 (read). So I believe that these OT saints will be resurrected at the end of the tribulation and we, who come from the east and the west, will sit down with them in the kingdom.

So we considered the major events that will likely happen during those 30 days. The devil is caught and bound for a thousand years. All the living are gathered for judgment, and the Church judges the world. Then the lost are cast into hell, and the righteous are invited

to inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

b. The seventy five day period

Now we want to look at the next 45 days, which make it 75 days after the tribulation is over. You will remember that we got these days from Daniel 12:11-12.

So, before we begin with this time period, let us ask this question: Whom do we have left on earth now? Well, there is the Lord Jesus Christ. Then there is the Church, now the wife of Christ. Then there are the resurrected Old Testament and tribulation saints. And last, there are those living believers who came out of the tribulation alive. There is not one unsaved person on earth now. And Daniel 12:12 says, "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty five days." What is significant about the 1335th day? Well, it is the 75th day after the tribulation. And what is significant about that? I believe this 75th day is the inauguration of the millennium. It is the official opening day! The Lord Jesus is officially placed as King of kings and Lord of lords!

We may have an example of this type of thing in the US elections. Dr. Harold Willmington, quoting Dr. Franklin Logsdon writes, "We in the United States have a national analogy. The President is elected in the early part of November, but he is not inaugurated until January 20. There is an interim of 70 plus days. During this time, he concerns himself with the appointment of cabinet members, foreign envoys and others who will comprise his government. In the period of 75 days between the termination of the Great Tribulation and the Coronation, the King of Glory will likewise attend to certain matters (From 'Profiles in Prophecy', p. 81 and Basic Stages OT pg. 376).

Now let us ask this question: What happens between the 30th day and the 75th day? Well, no doubt the Lord Jesus will get everything in order for His kingdom. Turn with me to Acts 1. In Acts 1, we are 10 days before Pentecost, because it is the day Jesus ascended to heaven. And the disciples were full of hopes that He would now set up His kingdom (read Acts 1:4-6). Now look at what Jesus said to them in 4:7-8. Unbeknown to the Apostles at this time, an age would be ushered in on the Day of Pentecost that would become known as the Church Age. That is the time in which we now live. This age closes with the rapture. Then comes the tribulation, and then Jesus sets up His kingdom.

So, I believe during these 45 days, the Lord will be preparing for the official opening of the millennial age. Let us go to Matthew 19 and note what Jesus said to His disciples just before He was crucified (read 27-28). The word regeneration is *palingeneesia*, and is used only twice in the NT. It refers once to being born again in Titus 3:5. In this passage it refers to the rebirth of the earth, which is the millennium.

We notice first of all that Jesus will sit on a throne. He will be the governing head of this age. Turn with me to some very familiar verses in Isaiah 9 (read 6-7). So, what will happen during these 45 days? No doubt, a place for this throne will be prepared. If I am correct, 45 days is not a very long time to accomplish this.

In Matthew 19:28, Peter has asked Jesus what the apostles will have for forsaking everything and following Jesus. And Jesus says, "Your reward is coming in the regeneration. Then each one of you will sit on a throne, and you will each be the judge of one of the twelve tribes during this time." So, the government of the millennium will be set up during this 45 days, as I see it. There will be first of all the throne of the King of

Kings, and then the 12 thrones of the apostles.

It may be also, that Church age believers will be placed in various places of responsibility during these 45 days. In Luke 19:11-27, there is an indication that those who are faithful in this age, will rule over cities in the millennium (read 19:11-17 encourage them to read the rest). So it may well be that in these 45 days, all of this will set up. Last year I gave a message on laying up treasures in heaven. It may well be that right here are some of those treasures.

So let us consider one more matter that will be taken care of during these 45 days. During these days, I have no doubt, preparation will be made for the great Coronation day. Now I think that this coronation day will also be the beginning of the marriage supper of the Lamb (read Rev. 19:7-9). If this is correct, then the Church will be sitting at the head table with the Lord Jesus. And who are the invited guests? Well, they will be all the others who have entered the millennium; OT saints, resurrected tribulational saints and those who came alive through the tribulation.

Now I want you to turn with me to one last passage found in Matthew 26. Jesus is commemorating the Passover with the disciples. In the Jewish Passover service there were 4 cups of wine corresponding to the four "I wills" found in Exodus 6:6-7. They are:

- The cup of sanctification
- The cup of judgment
- The cup of redemption
- The cup of praise

In Matthew 26:27 we read, "Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." That cup was the third cup of the Passover, which is

the cup of redemption. It is this cup that we still commemorate at communion.

But Jesus did not drink of the fourth cup. Notice what He says in verse 29, "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." As I understand the Scriptures, when we come to the 1335th day, we have come to that day when He drinks it in His Father's kingdom, the millennium.

I expect this to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest day this present earth will ever experience! It will be a festival. The marriage supper of the Jewish wedding was a feast, and lasted for days. That may be the case here as well.

CONCL: So, in conclusion, what happens during the 30 days? The devil is caught and bound for a thousand years. All the living are gathered for judgment, and the Church judges the world. Then the lost are cast into hell, and the righteous are invited to inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

And what happens in the 45 days following this? Preparation is made for the millennium. The government is put in place. The throne of the Lord Jesus is set up. Twelve thrones are set up for the 12 apostles. Possibly, Church age believers are given responsibility over various areas. And preparation is made for the 75th day which I think will be the inauguration of the millennium; the crowning of the King; and the marriage supper of the Lamb! I think we get a little of a glimpse of what this day will be like when we read in the OT what it was like on the opening day of the temple Solomon built.

It is time to take stock of our own lives. I must ask myself: If I died today, am I ready? Will I go to heaven? And if I die today, and I am not ready, I will never experience what God has in store for the believer. If I am unsaved I must do several things: I must come to the place where I realize I am lost and on the way to hell. Then I must believe that Jesus died for me and paid for my sins. Then I must repent of my sins, and receive Christ as my

Savior. When I have done that, I must believe that He has saved me as He promised, and live by faith.