

Sunday April 12th 2015
From Here To Eternity
Part Twenty Two

1). Mt 25:32 *"All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

a). We had seen last time the judgment of the final group of the eternally saved prior to the start of the Millennial Kingdom. Those referred to here as sheep and goats are eternally saved Gentiles coming physically alive out of the Tribulation and their judgment takes place following the Battle of Armageddon and immediately prior to the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.

b). We had also seen last time that the separation that takes place at this judgment is with a view to receiving an inheritance in Christ's Kingdom or failing to realize an inheritance, based upon faithfulness, and that separation after this fashion is the same for every eternally saved person prior to the Millennial Kingdom – it will be the same for Christians, Jews and finally Gentiles.

c). Then as Christ's Kingdom begins we see the only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, along with His co-heirs and other rulers comprising the tribulation martyrs and certain resurrected OT saints ruling the earth from the New Jerusalem in the heavenly realm that had previously been occupied by Satan and his angels.

d). And on the earth we see the only begotten Son along with redeemed and restored Israel, also including resurrected OT saints, ruling from the throne of David in the restored earthly Jerusalem and in conjunction with these we would add the eternally saved Gentiles from the sheep and goats judgment, although they would have to remain separate from Israel and the Land.

e). And with everything with respect to rulership in place this is how the earth will be governed throughout the Millennial Kingdom – governed in righteousness and administered with justice, bringing to fulfillment then God's purpose for the creation of Man with respect to the 7th Day.

2). The establishment of this new order of rulers, Christ and His companions, in order to fulfill the purpose for the Millennial Kingdom would be the very thing that Peter is drawing attention to in - Ac 3:21 *"whom heaven must receive until **the times of restoration of all things**, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

The word translated 'restoration' here is a word that has the idea of being 'restored again'.

a). As we will remember it is in the Book of Colossians that we can find a description of 'all things' - Col 1:16 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

Here in Colossians then we see that 'all things' have to do with rulership, with thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, both those which are visible, on the earth, and those which are invisible, in the heavens.

b). And so 'the times of the restoration of all things' would of necessity take us to the Millennial Kingdom and the setting in place of God's perfect system of rulership through His 3 firstborn sons as we have just been seeing. Let's remember though that when Satan was first given jurisdiction over the earth, before his rebellion, God's system of rulership, through Satan was also perfect - Eze 28:15 *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till.....*

c). However, since Satan's rebellion rulership has existed with respect to the earth in a completely unbalanced way. Rulership that was entrusted to a complete number of angels with a specific hierarchy has been replaced by an incomplete number of angels - 1/3rd of the original number, outside of the proper hierarchy. Stepping outside of God's fixed laws can only result in disaster, which is the very course that has been followed for the last 6000 years at least.

c). At the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom with God's 3 firstborn sons in place, with the perfect number of heavenly rulers established within the proper hierarchy, rulership of the earth will now be in a perfect state, but no longer with angels in the positions of rulership.

d). And the rulership that takes place during the Kingdom Age we have already seen described in - Re 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;*

And we can find additional commentary on this in - Ps 89:13 *You have a mighty arm; Strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand. 14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face. 15 ¶ Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance.*

e). And as we see here this righteous and just administration is described in Revelation 2:27 as ruling 'with a rod of iron' – a phrase that we can gain some insight into through that which we see recorded in – Zec 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.*

From these verses we can clearly see that there will be Gentile nations on the earth during the Kingdom age which will be in rebellion against Christ and His righteous rule, with the promise of judgment for those nations doing so; judgment that is pictured here through there being no rain and receiving the plague with which the Lord will strike those nations.

f). And all of this is in perfect keeping with the stated purpose for Christ's Kingdom rule as we see recorded in - 1Co 15:24 *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*

g). These verses from 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 take us to the end of the Millennial Reign when Christ delivers up the Kingdom to God the Father – and this final act with respect to the Kingdom Age is brought about by the Lord having put 'an end to all rule and all authority and power', which is also described as the Lord having put 'all enemies under His feet' – in other words then the Kingdom Age is the time when all things are brought into subjection to Christ; a subjugation that will ultimately allow for the 'last enemy', death to be destroyed.

h). This then is the focus and the purpose for the rule of Christ and His co-heirs during the Kingdom – but also keep in mind that which we have seen in previous weeks with the nations hearing, and a great multitude receiving, the gospel brought to them by the Jewish people and receiving the spiritual

blessings that God imparts to them through the Jews in fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham - Ge 22:18 *"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

i). The Kingdom Age then could be characterized as a time of unparalleled blessing accompanied by the use of the rod of righteousness and justice – and as always to be the recipient of either of these will be a matter of personal choice.

3). Now, as we look at the restoration of God's perfect system of rulership we will realize that we cannot really separate the system from that which is being ruled over. In the first instance that being ruled over would be those inhabiting the earth, and most particularly the Gentile nations, during the time of the Kingdom, but we would also have to extend this to the physical creation, the earth itself. And we would need to include the physical creation within this whole picture because of what we see in - Ro 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

a). V19-22 deal specifically with the physical creation which is presented in such a way as to make it seem like a person [this is called 'personification'] and these verses are set in a context to do with present suffering and a future hope connected to glory – all of which look to Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

b). In the present then we see creation groaning and laboring with birth pangs as it eagerly awaits 'the revealing of the sons of God' – now, contextually this would take us to the adoption and glorification of faithful Christians following Christ's Judgement Seat, those who will be the many sons brought to glory, but this event itself does not bring about the creation's deliverance from

the bondage of corruption, although it does make this deliverance certain. And so, by extension, we would also have to see the phrase dealing with the revealing of the sons of God as a reference to God's 3 firstborn sons, through whom rulership in the Millennial Kingdom will take place as it is only with rulership, in fulfillment of God's purpose in view, that a restoration of this kind can take place.

c). So then, we see that creation was subjected to futility, but in hope – it is in the bondage of corruption, but is looking for deliverance into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God' – creation's subjection to futility, when it entered into bondage can be traced directly to the introduction of sin into the world at the fall of Adam and the Woman - Ge 3:17 ¶ *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;*

d). And as we look at this we will realize that this is not the first time that the physical creation was subjected to futility because of sin – Eze 28:18 *"You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading;*

This verse from Ezekiel takes us to Satan's rebellion and what happened to the physical creation because of it, something which is described for us at the very beginning of Genesis - Ge 1:1 ¶ *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [God's perfect system of rulership in place before Satan's rebellion and the physical earth over which he ruled] 2 The earth was [became] without form, and void [as a result of Satan's rebellion]; and darkness was on the face of the deep. [the earth completely engulfed in raging waters – something to be repeated again in the flood of Noah].*

e). And so with a view to replacing Satan and his angels God restored the physical creation over 6 days, something we see in the verses that follow on from Genesis 1:2 – and we will also note that significant aspects of the restored physical creation continue until the flood of Noah. This being the case we would expect to see a restoration 'again', of a similar fashion as rulership, replacing Satan and his angels, within the Millennial Kingdom comes into view which will bring to fulfillment that seen in Romans 8:19-22.

f). As certain conditions existed on the newly restored earth in preparation for the rulership of Adam and the Woman, it must be that such conditions would need to be restored for the actual rulership of those to whom Adam and the Woman pointed.

4). So, what will all of this look like? Let's go back to the restoration in Genesis Chapter 1 and see if we can see - Ge 1:6 ¶ *Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." 7 Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.*

a). We will not go into a huge amount of detail in all this, but we can draw attention to an interesting detail seen on the second day of the restoration of the earth in Genesis Chapter 1.

b). As we have seen the earth was completely covered with water and on day 2 God took this water and divided it – one portion of the water He placed 'above the firmament' – a vast canopy of what would presumably be water vapor high in the earth's atmosphere, above that which we would call the sky – and one portion remained on the earth, some being subterranean and the rest in a great sea.

c). Ge 1:9 ¶ *Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.*

It is then on the 3rd day that God causes the land, previously beneath the sea to 'appear' – and this would be done by literally moving the land mass upwards.

d). Let's remember that at this time there was just one land mass as it was not until the days of Peleg that this land mass became divided into what we might best understand as continents today - Ge 10:25 *To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.*

e). Now it might be impossible to know in full detail the effect of the water vapor canopy in the atmosphere above the earth, but we could know that there would certainly be an effect on atmospheric pressure and an effect upon the distribution of the heat of the sun – and it is within these unique climate conditions that Adam and the Woman in bodies of flesh, bone and blood were to live forever.

f). Again, let's keep in mind that physical death was introduced into the world through sin, not because the physical body could not live forever.

g). Now, although, as we have seen, the ground became cursed and physical death was introduced because of sin, the climate conditions on the earth did not change until after the flood of Noah's day.

h). And as a result of these climatic conditions the average life span of man during the 10 generations from Adam to Noah was 912 years.

i). Following the flood this longevity was cut in half almost immediately – Shem 600 years, his son, Arphaxad, 438 years and Arphaxad’s son, Salah, 433 years. And if we then go to just 10 generations beyond Noah to Abraham, life expectancy was down to between 100 – 200 years. And today the average life expectancy of a man in the USA is 76 years and a woman 81 years.

j). So what caused this dramatic degeneration? The answer is an obvious one – that which took place at the time of the flood.

5). Ge 7:11 ¶ *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12 And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.*

a). Until this moment rain was unknown upon the earth – because of the climatic conditions precipitation was neither possible nor necessary – Ge 2:5 *before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; 6 but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.*

b). On this 17th day of the 2nd month in the 600th year of Noah’s life we see the subterranean waters beneath the firmament being caused to gush onto the surface of the earth and the waters above the firmament now pouring down onto the earth in the form of torrential rain.

c). Ge 7:17 ¶ *Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered.....24 And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.*

We see here that after 40 days of the gushing of the subterranean water from below and the torrential rain from above that the level of the water was 15 cubits [about 25 feet] above the highest mountain peaks [this is not the same topography that we see today].

d). But, then we also see that the subterranean waters continued upward and the torrential rain downward for what was a total of 150 days

raising the water level on the face of the planet to hundreds and possibly thousands of feet above the highest point.

e). It is after 150 days that the flood is complete - Ge 8:2 *The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained.*

f). As 1/3rd of the earth's water still remains subterranean today we may assume that this supply was not exhausted during the flood, but as there is no longer any water canopy in the atmosphere we can know that all that was contained there fell to the earth dramatically changing the climatic conditions to those which exist even today.

g). So what happened to all that water? It's still here, no less than the day when the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped.

h). So, how do we explain this seen in - Ge 8:5 *And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.*

i). Well scripture itself explains it for us - Ps 104:5 *You who laid the foundations of the earth, So that it should not be moved forever, 6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; The waters stood above the mountains. 7 At Your rebuke they fled; At the voice of Your thunder they hastened away. 8 They went up over the mountains; They went down into the valleys, To the place which You founded for them. 9 You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, That they may not return to cover the earth.*

j). By a sovereign act of restoration following Noah's flood we see God bringing about incredible changes in the earth's topography, causing huge mountain ranges to rise, and huge valleys [ocean basins] to fall resulting in the dramatic distribution of water into vast oceans and rivers as we would see today.

k). But we will notice the difference between this restoration following Noah's flood and the restoration in Genesis Chapter 1 – there is no body of water placed back into the atmosphere and the 8 coming from the ark do not have a covering of glory and are not therefore in a position to rule.

l). The climatic conditions in existence at the beginning of Genesis, with rulership in view, are not pertinent following Noah's flood, but they will be pertinent again when the glory and rulership are present in the earth during the days of the Millennial Kingdom, with human beings in those days living in bodies of flesh, bone and blood throughout the Kingdom Age and then into the endless ages to follow - Isa 65:20 *"No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die*

one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

6). The climatic conditions we experience on the earth today, the polar ice caps, hurricanes, tornadoes, snow storms, droughts etc. are all caused because of an uneven heating of the earth by the sun, something that did not exist when the water canopy was in the atmosphere and it is in these extreme weather conditions along with seismic activity that we can see creation in birth pangs waiting for the day when the sons of God will be revealed and it will be restored, in the restoration of all things, to its condition before the creation of Adam.

a). We should note that what we have been looking at is a restoration which should not be confused with the time following the Millennial Kingdom when God will make all things new - Re 21:5 *Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

b). Ro 8:23 *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

And just like the physical creation we eagerly wait with perseverance for our adoption, the redemption of our body, in the midst of ageing, sickness and a ravaging sin nature – but our hope is steadfast and our hope is sure and we might thank God for it - Heb 10:35 *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

7). We will continue with this next time, if the Lord is willing.