

Di223 We Believe

Lesson Di223-28 The Millennium, Final Judgment, New Heavens and New Earth

Jesus taught the parable of the tenant farmers toward the end of his ministry on earth. “There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.

“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘this is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” (Matt 21:33-44).

The parable was a prophecy concerning Israel’s rejection of the prophets and the Messiah. As a result, the kingdom of God and its power were given to others. It was given to those who respond to the gospel, whether they are Jew or Gentile. This principle is still in operation. The kingdom and its power will be taken away from those who fail to remain faithful to Christ, rejecting his righteous ways. Those who do not accept Jesus will be broken to pieces, and those who fall under his judgment will be completely destroyed (Luke 20:18). The prophet Daniel pictures the Messiah as a rock that crushes the kingdoms of the world. This is exactly what we studied in our last lesson on the Battle of Armageddon. Christ will defeat Satan and all the armies and kingdoms of the world.

Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit. The Antichrist and his followers will be thrown in the lake of fire forever. Then Christ will set up his 1,000-year reign on earth. This is called the Millennium. When the God of love is ruler of this earth, we will see a perfect government. With Satan’s influence removed and Christ’s reign of righteousness unopposed, the Millennium will be a time of perfect relationships. The Old Testament prophets told of a coming day when Israel would again fill a special place of leadership and blessing. Christians, tired of the pain and suffering of sin’s curse, also look forward to this time of peace. War will be unheard of and military equipment will be made into farm tools (Isa 2:4).

Here are some of the wonderful things we will experience during the Millennium:

- 1) Christ Reigns. Christ will rule over the entire earth with absolute authority and power and with righteousness and justice.
- 2) Israel Blessed. Israel will have special privileges and Gentile saints will be blessed too.
- 3) Curse Lifted. Sin’s curse on earth will be removed during the Millennium.
- 4) Animals Changed. Wild beasts will become tame.
- 5) Sickness Abolished. Health and long, long life will be normal.
- 6) Jerusalem Capital. Jerusalem will be the capital city of the entire world.
- 7) Spiritual Benefits. Righteousness, obedience, holiness, peace, joy and happiness will fill all hearts.

The Millennium will last 1,000 years. Many children will be born to families during this period. Many of these children will accept Christ's rule and leadership, but not all will. They will have to make that decision even as we do today. Some will decide not to let Christ rule them.

At the end of the Millennium, Christ will allow Satan to be freed from the bottomless pit for a short time. His evil influence will again come into the world. Many will fall under Satan's evil temptation. He will gather his followers together to war against God. Satan's army will be large and very powerful. Yet Satan is no match for God. The battle will be very short. John describes the battle: "Fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever" (Rev 20:9-10).

Following the last battle, is the *Great White Throne Judgment*—the saddest scene in the entire Bible. After God's judgment fire destroys those deceived by Satan at the end of the Millennium, all the wicked dead will be judged. These people will stand before the Judge of all ages. The books will be opened and they will be judged according to their works—all the evil things they did while they were alive. This group will include all who refused to accept Jesus as their Savior. Those whose names are not found "written in the book of life" will be thrown into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever with the devil and his angels (Rev 20:11-15). Hell is a terrible place of endless, unquenchable pain, darkness, and torment throughout eternity.

Revelation 21 begins with John's view of a new heaven and a new earth; the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of the new heaven to rest on the new earth. *What happens to bring about the new heaven and new earth?* "The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare" (2Peter 3:10).

Revelation 21 and 22 give a glorious description of this majestic city—the New Jerusalem. The city streets are pure gold, the walls are made of precious gems, and each gate is made of one pearl. We cannot imagine the beauty and glory of that city. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1Cor 2:9). Tears, death, sorrow, pain, evil persons, night, and the curse brought by sin will all be gone. The apostle John records, "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp" (Rev 21:22-23).

Going to hell or heaven is a matter of choice—our choice. Christ will not force anyone to accept him, but he is constantly reaching out through his Holy Spirit to try to draw people to himself. Those who accept and stay true to Christ have the promise of eternal life with him. If we want to escape the punishment of hell, we ought to "live holy and godly lives" and "make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him" (2Peter 3:11, 14).

This lesson is **important** because you have learned about the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth and the final events of the end times.

The **main truth** of this lesson is the establishment of the Kingdom of God and the final battle. The wicked will be judged and the end of evil will be put away. The heaven and the earth will be made new, and the Holy City will come down. We will have eternal life with God.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What name is given to Christ's 1,000-year reign on earth? [Pause.]
 - A. If you answered, "The Millennium," you are right.
2. What is Satan's final end? [Pause.]
 - A. If you said, "Satan's final end is that he will be thrown into the lake of burning sulfur forever," you are correct.
3. Describe what the New Jerusalem will look like. [Pause.]
 - A. If you answered, "The New Jerusalem will have streets of gold, walls of precious gems and gates each made of one pearl, no need of a temple or sun or moon," you are right.

Your **assignment** is to memorize our thirteenth *Statement of Faith*: "We believe Christ will return with his saints to reign 1,000 years. After this will come the final judgment, and a new heaven and a new earth." Also learn the **Memory Verse**: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev 22:13). Share with at least two other persons about the Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment and the New Heaven and New Earth. Make sure they know how to be ready to live with Christ for eternity.

Review all thirteen *Statements of Faith* until you can say them from memory:

Statement #1: We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God. They are the revelation of God to man, the unchanging rule of faith and conduct.

Statement #2: We believe the one true God has revealed himself as the eternal Creator of heaven and earth and the Savior of mankind. He has further revealed himself as one being in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Statement #3: We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, as revealed in the Scriptures by his virgin birth, his sinless life, his miracles, his death on the Cross, his bodily resurrection from the dead, and his position at the right hand of God.

Statement #4: We believe that human beings were created in the image of God for a loving relationship with him. They chose to disobey God, however, and thus experienced physical death and separation from God.

Statement #5: We believe mankind's only hope of salvation is through the shed blood of Jesus, the Son of God. The gift of eternal life is received when we repent of our sins and confess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Statement #6: We believe water baptism by immersion is commanded of all who repent and believe on Christ as Savior. Water baptism is a witness to the world that we have died to sin and been raised to new life in Christ.

Statement #7: We believe the Lord's Supper is a remembrance of Christ's suffering and death, and a prophecy of his Second Coming. Christ commanded all believers to take Communion until he comes.

Statement #8: We believe the baptism in the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to empower a believer to witness and to live an overcoming Christian life.

Statement #9: We believe sanctification is working with the Holy Spirit to separate ourselves from sin and to dedicate ourselves to God.

Statement #10: We believe the Church is the body of Christ with a divinely called ministry. Its purpose is to evangelize the world, worship God, encourage believers to grow in the likeness of Christ, and show God's love and compassion to the world.

Statement #11: We believe healing is provided for in the atonement of Christ and is the privilege of all who ask and believe.

Statement #12: We believe the blessed hope of the Church is Christ's return from heaven to 'catch up' the Christians who have died, together with those who are alive, to be with him forever.

Statement #13: We believe Christ will return with his saints to reign 1,000 years. After this will come the final judgment, and a new heaven and a new earth.