

Life in the Nations During the Millennium

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Scripture predicts a time of peace and harmony when the Messiah is ruling over the nations. This time period is referred to as the "Millennium" because it lasts 1,000 years (Revelation 20:3) and descriptions of the Millennium include all the normal aspects of life we are accustomed to including childbirth, death, and labor. However this all occurs in a context that has been redeemed and transformed from the way we currently experience life.
- B. What makes this perplexing is that the Bible tells us believers will be resurrected at Jesus' return and given glorious bodies (1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonian 4:15-17; 1 John 3:2). Furthermore, Jesus taught that resurrected saints would no longer marry and reproduce (Matthew 22:30). Therefore the saints cannot be the ones referred to in these prophetic passages describing life in the Millennium. At this time Jesus also judges the nations and all those who aligned themselves with the Antichrist (Isaiah 34; 63:1-6; Joel 3; Zechariah 14; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 19:11-21).
- C. These passages describing life in the Millennium cannot be referring to followers of Jesus, nor can they refer to those in the nations who are judged and who follow the Antichrist (Revelation 13:8), so who are these people?
- D. When we look at several passages it becomes clear there will be people who resist the Antichrist for various reasons and yet are not born again at Jesus' return. These individuals will respond and submit to Jesus after His return as He begins to judge the nations, but they will miss the rapture of the saints. Some call these individuals "resistors" because they resist the government of the Antichrist.
- E. These people seem to come from two main groups:
 - 1. Israel - While there will be a great harvest in Israel before the return of the Lord, Israel's national salvation - the moment when the entire nation turns to Jesus - occurs after the return of Jesus. This is the moment described in passages like Zechariah 12:10-12, Matthew 23:39, Matthew 24:30, and Revelation 1:7. When Israel sees the returning Lord in His glory the nation will embrace Him. Those who are saved in Israel after the return of the Lord will be in natural bodies during the Millennium experiencing life under the rule of Jesus as described by the prophets.

2. The Nations - While many people assume that everyone alive at Jesus' return will either be a member of the church, or have taken on the mark of the Antichrist this is not true. It is true that the Bible predicts a massive following for the Antichrist. Revelation 13:8 describes this following by recording that all whose names are not recorded in the book of life will follow the Antichrist. However, when we look at a number of passages we see there is also a prediction of a group of people who survive the Great Tribulation among the nations. This group of people is the second group who experience life in the Millennium in natural bodies and fulfill many of the predictions made by the prophets.
- F. When all the prophetic passages are taken together, we do see descriptions of a remnant of individuals both in Israel and the nations who survive the Great Tribulation and enter the Millennium in natural bodies and populate both Israel and the nations during this time.
- G. The major emphasis for the church now is to bring people to Jesus so that they experience the rapture and the resurrection. The emphasis of the Scripture as the earth enters the Millennium is the salvation of Israel and the fulfillment of all of Israel's Millennial promises. Because of this, it makes sense that the individuals entering the Millennium in natural bodies would be a minor theme in the Scripture.

II. INDIVIDUALS ENTERING THE MILLENNIUM IN NATURAL BODIES

- A. The idea that there are individuals who enter the Millennium in natural bodies is something that can appear odd or unusual, but when we look at verses that describe the Millennium, we can see that the Scripture assumes it.
- B. There are numerous references to Jews that survive to the end of the tribulation who did not respond to Jesus before His return, and live to populate the earth in the Millennium in natural bodies. These are the ones who respond in repentance after the return of Jesus (Isaiah 4:3; 10:20; 11:11; 49:6; 65:8; 66:19; Jeremiah 31:2; Ezekiel 20:38-42; Amos 9:9-10; Joel 2:32; Zechariah 12:14; 13:8; Revelation 20:7-10).
- C. The dramatic moment when Israel responds to Jesus after He returns is one of the Bible's great promises. This national salvation occurs after Jesus has returned which means it is after the rapture of the saints and therefore these individuals in Israel will enter the Millennium in natural bodies.

¹⁰"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have

pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. (Zechariah 12:10 ESV)

- D. While most passages that describe life in the Millennium focus on saved Israel, if there are Jews in natural bodies, it implies that there can be other individuals in natural bodies who are not Jewish. There are also specific references to individuals in the nations who will survive the tribulation and begin to populate the nations after the return of the Lord. The language used to describe these people seems to indicate it will be a small number of people:

¹⁹and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. (Isaiah 66:19 ESV)

³⁶Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it. (Ezekiel 36:36 ESV)

²¹The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.' ²²Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. ²³Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' " (Zechariah 8:21-23 ESV)

¹⁶Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. (Zechariah 14:16 ESV)

- E. Revelation 20 does not explicitly state that individuals enter the Millennium in natural bodies, but it seems to assume they do. In Revelation 20, Satan is bound so that he will not deceive the nations, which implies there are individuals in the nations to be deceived. Revelation 20 also predicts that there will be a remnant at the end of the age that are deceived by Satan and seek to oppose God's purposes. The presence of these individuals in the nations to be deceived indicates that there are humans in natural bodies in the nations. These who are deceived would be the descendants of those who entered the Millennium in natural bodies and had children.

³and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. (Revelation 20:3 ESV)

⁷And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. (Revelation 20:7-8 ESV)

III. OTHER INDICATORS OF HUMANS IN NATURAL BODIES IN THE MILLENNIUM

A. The Scripture describes the birth of children in the Millennium. This indicates the presence of people in natural bodies.

¹Again the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, ²"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.' ³"Thus says the Lord: 'I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the Lord of hosts, The Holy Mountain.' ⁴"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit In the streets of Jerusalem, Each one with his staff in his hand Because of great age. ⁵The streets of the city Shall be full of boys and girls Playing in its streets.' (Zechariah 8:1-5 NKJV)

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. ²¹They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, And their offspring with them. (Isaiah 65:20-23 NKJV)

²²It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. (Ezekiel 47:22 NKJV)

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the

sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (Revelation 20:7-9 NKJV)

- B. The Scripture also describes the nations making pilgrimage and coming up to Jerusalem to worship. This also indicates the presence of individuals in natural bodies in the nations. The verses describe a physical pilgrimage that has never occurred in history.

²Now 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 all nations shall flow to it. (Isaiah 2:2 NKJV)

³Many people 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 shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3 NKJV)

⁶The multitude of camels shall cover your land, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; They shall bring gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the Lord. ⁷All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, And I will glorify the house of My glory. ⁸"Who are these who fly like a cloud, And like doves to their roosts? ⁹Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me; And the ships of Tarshish will come first, To bring your sons from afar, Their silver and their gold with them, To the name of the Lord your God, And to the Holy One of Israel, Because He has glorified you. (Isaiah 60:6-9 NKJV)

¹⁸"For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. ¹⁹I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. ²⁰Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the Lord, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. ²¹And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites," says the Lord. (Isaiah 66:18-21 NKJV)

¹Now 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. (Micah 4:1 NKJV)

²Many 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. (Micah 4:2 NKJV)

¹⁶And 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. (Zechariah 14:16 NKJV)

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Many of the descriptions of the Millennium certainly are unusual and we must examine many passages and put them together to get an overall picture of what life in the Millennium looks like.
- B. While the idea of people entering the Millennium in natural bodies seems odd to many people, there are a number of passages that describe these kinds of people. Examining these passages provides an intriguing glimpse into the Millennium.