

How Will the World Be Different When Christ Returns? (Part 1)

Rod Reynolds

For approximately the past 6000 years, since mankind rebelled in the Garden of Eden, the earth has been under the curse of Satan's rule. Satan has not ruled without restraint. God has remained supreme over the universe, including the earth, but to a large extent he has allowed Satan to influence mankind. And Satan, within certain parameters, has remained, as referred to in 2 Corinthians 4:4, and other Scriptures, as the "god of this age," or of this world.

The result of Satan's influence has been a history of oppression, warfare, famines, widespread poverty, deception, ignorance, disease, crime, and other evils that have plagued mankind. What the world needs is a new kind of government, a government not of Satan, nor of men, but of God, the benevolent Creator, and author of every blessing, including life itself (James 1:17-25; Acts 17:24-25). The time when that new government appears may not be far off, although no one on earth knows for certain the exact time when it will happen (Matthew 24:30-36).

How that future world will be different is the exciting and greatly encouraging subject of a planned series of articles, of which this is the first.

Few understand how the festivals of God commanded in the Scriptures have profound prophetic meaning, revealing in a step-by-step sequence God's plan of salvation for mankind. One of those festivals kept annually, the Feast of Tabernacles, points to a time in the future when the kingdom of God will supersede the kingdoms of this world, and Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the second person of the Godhead, will rule on the earth personally, under the authority of the Father in heaven.

The weekly Sabbath also points to the future kingdom of God on earth. And all the other annual Sabbaths and feasts commanded in the Bible lead up to or are directly connected with the establishing of the kingdom of God on earth in what they represent (Revelation 11:15; Daniel 7:13-14; Hebrews 4:4-11). "Let no one judge you ...regarding... **sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come...**" (Colossians 2:16-17; "shadow" from Greek *skia*: shadow, sketch, outline; cf. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*).

The resurrected saints shall rule with Jesus Christ, under his authority, as servant leaders in the Kingdom of God on earth. "Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Daniel 7: 27; cf. Revelation 20:6).

There are many prophecies in the Bible that give us insight into what the world will be like under the rule of Jesus Christ, as opposed to what it is like now, and has been historically up to the present.

First in the list of differences, is an:

(1) End to Oppression.

Throughout history, most human beings have been oppressed. An article, "Proclaim Liberty," posted on our website (cogmessenger.org), documents the pervasive physical slavery that has afflicted mankind. The oppression of involuntary servitude in one form or another, in other words, slavery, has been the lot of vast numbers historically, virtually the world over, including the vast majority of Europeans during the Middle Ages. But in addition to physical oppression, mankind has been subject to the oppression of spiritual blindness. Throughout human history, all but a handful of humans have been oppressed by one or the other or both of these forms of slavery.

Added to that, consider other forms of oppression, including deprivation, disease, and other evils. But when Jesus Christ returns to establish his kingdom, the oppression of human beings will come to an end.

Satan, the great oppressor, and his system of deception and oppression, will be overthrown.

"It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon [a metaphor for Satan in this passage], and say: "**How the oppressor has ceased**, The golden city ceased! The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of the rulers; He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, Is persecuted and no one hinders. The whole earth is at rest and quiet; They break forth into singing" (Isaiah 14:3-7).

Speaking of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, ruling on earth: "He will **break in pieces the oppressor**" (Psalm 72:4). And further: "He will spare the poor and needy, And will save the souls of the needy. He will **redeem their life from oppression and violence**; And precious shall be their blood in His sight" (Psalm 72:13-14).

Concerning Israel: "I [Yahweh] will camp around My house Because of the army, Because of him who passes by and him who returns. **No more shall an oppressor pass through them**, For now I have seen with My eyes. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, **your King is coming to you**; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse

from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be `from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.' As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant, **I will set your prisoners free** from the waterless pit" (Zechariah 9:8-11).

From a prophesy concerning Egypt which applies to the millennial period: "...they will cry to the Lord because of the **oppressors**, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and **He will deliver them**" (Isaiah 19:20).

The psalmist foresees near the end of Psalm ten how oppression will cease under Christ's government: "The Lord is King forever and ever; The nations have perished out of His land. Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear, To do **justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, That the man of the earth may oppress no more**" (Psalm 10:16-18).

So not only Israel, but all peoples of the world under Christ's rulership will be delivered from oppression.

(2) Just Government.

The governments of this world under Satan's rule have been anything but just.

"I have seen everything in my days of vanity: There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, And there is a wicked man who prolongs life in his wickedness" (Ecclesiastes 7:15).

In a description of the injustice of the present age: "The **wicked** in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts. **His ways are always prospering**; Your judgments are far above, out of his sight; As for all his enemies, he sneers at them. He has said in his heart, 'I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity.' His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity. He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the secret places **he murders the innocent**; His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless. He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; He lies in wait to catch the poor; He catches the poor when he draws him into his net. So he crouches, he lies low, **That the helpless may fall by his strength**. He has said in his heart, 'God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see.' Arise, O Lord! O God, lift up Your hand! Do not forget the humble. **Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, 'You will not require an account'**" (Psalm 10:4-13).

These words characterize how the world has been all too commonly, and how it is by and large today: "**No one calls for justice**, Nor does any plead for truth. **They trust in empty words and speak lies**; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web; He who eats of their

eggs dies, And from that which is crushed a viper breaks out. Their webs will not become garments, Nor will they cover themselves with their works; Their works are works of iniquity, And the act of violence is in their hands. **Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity;** Wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, And **there is no justice in their ways;** They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace. Therefore **justice is far from us,** Nor does righteousness overtake us; We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness!" (Isaiah 59:4-9).

And further: "In transgressing and lying against the Lord, And departing from our God, Speaking oppression and revolt, Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. **Justice is turned back,** And righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, And **equity cannot enter.** So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then **the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him That there was no justice.**" (Isaiah 59:13-15).

While injustice is permitted now, the day is coming when the wicked will be held accountable for their wickedness: "Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, **And your justice as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;** Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; **Do not fret -- it only causes harm.** For **evildoers shall be cut off;** But those who wait on the Lord, They shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. **The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming.** The wicked have drawn the sword And have bent their bow, To cast down the poor and needy, To slay those who are of upright conduct. Their sword shall enter their own heart, And their bows shall be broken." (Psalm 37:5-15).

God's judgments are just. "**God is a just judge,** And God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). Those who are wicked will eventually be punished. Those who seek to live righteously before God will be granted salvation, and dwell with God.

"I know that the Lord will maintain The cause of the afflicted, And **justice for the poor.** Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; The upright shall dwell in Your presence" (Psalm 140:12-13).

The promise of God's word is that, in due time, Jesus Christ will establish justice in the earth: "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul

delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will **bring forth justice to the Gentiles....** He will **bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law"** (Isaiah 42:1-4).

(3) End to war.

Throughout history, from the time of Cain and Abel, men have been in conflict with one another, killing one another. The history of the world is largely a history of strife, conflict and warfare. Untold millions, perhaps billions, of human beings have been slaughtered in warfare, besides the countless numbers who have been deprived of loved ones, impoverished, and victimized in many other ways by the wars of mankind.

Behind these wars is the malevolent spirit of Satan the devil, who organized a revolt against God, and sought to overthrow him. The first war as far as we know was a war between Satan and God, that resulted from violence within the heart of Satan:

"You were the **anointed cherub who covers**; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; **Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God**; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones" (Ezekiel 28:14-16).

Satan, which means adversary, had previously been called Lucifer (or Hebrew *Haylel*), meaning morning star, or light bringer. He had been one of three archangels who were "covering cherubs," associated with God's throne (cf. Exodus 25:18-22; Luke 1:19; Jude 1:9). As a result of his rebellion Satan was cast out of his place in the third heaven, where God's throne is, and confined, for the most part, to the earth. Jesus, the second person of the Godhead, said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

Satan is the father of murder and of lies. "He [the devil, Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Under his influence the world before the flood was filled with violence. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and **the earth was filled with violence**. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth" (Genesis 6:11).

God can make war on his enemies when it's necessary. But God loves peace, not

war. One of the titles of Jesus Christ is “Prince of Peace.” When he establishes his throne over the nations he will put down rebellion, and establish peace on the earth. It will be a just peace, and a peace that will result in security, joy and happiness for all of mankind.

“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And **the government will be upon His shoulder**. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**. Of the increase of His government and **peace** There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

No longer will nations be calling up armies to fight each other, nor will they be spending vast sums of money for weapons of war. “Now 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. Many 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. He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; **They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore**” (Isaiah 2: 2-4).

Speaking of Israel restored under Christ's rule in the kingdom of God: “They **shall be safe in their land**; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and **no one shall make them afraid**” (Ezekiel 34:27-28).

As a result of Christ's rule, wars will cease from the earth: “**He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.** Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:9-10).

“In that day... **Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,** To make them [his people] lie down safely” (Hosea 2:18).

(4) Harmony among races and nations.

God is the author of diversity among peoples. He made mankind in such a way that out of the first parents would spring descendants of a variety of families, each with its own distinctive characteristics.

God separated the nations early in the history of the earth, to give to each family

or “ethnic” group its own inheritance on the earth. In Genesis we read of the various family groups, and the lands each of them were given. “These were the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, **in their lands**, according to their nations. These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, **in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood**” (Genesis 10:31-32).

Then in Genesis 11 we are told how the nations came to be separated into their various languages and locations. The nations were at first all of one language, and were located in a narrow geographical area, in what came to be called Babylonia.

In a spirit of rebellion against God they had sought to build a city and a tower in Babylon, which was an affront to God, to avoid being scattered to their habitations, as God intended.

“Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, **lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.**' But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:1-9).

But the nations have not been able to live at peace with one another. Between the various ethnic and national groups there has been an unending pattern of hatred, conflict and warfare. Jesus said, "And you will hear of **wars and rumors of wars**. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. **For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom**. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:6-8).

Despite the differences in the various racial, national and ethnic groups, they all have in common the fact that they are God's children, and all have the same potential to share life eternally with God as sons and citizens of his eternal kingdom (Isaiah 9:7; Ephesians 2:19; Revelation 21:7).

It's been God's intent from the first that the nations should live in peace, and that they should all seek to have a relationship with the true God, as his children. "And

He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, **so that they should seek the Lord**, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own [Greek] poets have said, **‘For we are also His offspring.’** (Acts 17:28).

When Christ's kingdom is established on the earth, all nations will come to know God, and learn to serve him in peace and harmony.

“The kings of Tarshish and of the isles Will bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba Will offer gifts. **Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him**” (Psalm 72:10-11).

“All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name” (Psalm 86:9).

Old enemies, such as Egypt, Assyria, and Israel, will together serve God. “Then the Lord will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the Lord and perform it. And the Lord will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the Lord, and He will be entreated by them and heal them. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria -- a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, **‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance’**” (Isaiah 19: 21-25).

“All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the Lord, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's, And He rules over the nations” (Psalm 22:27-28).

When all nations recognize and learn to serve the true God, all men will be brothers, children of God not only in a physical sense, but in a spiritual sense as well. All will learn to love and respect one another. “Beloved, **let us love one another**, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that **the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.**” (1 John 4:7-14).

Hatred of other people, made in the image of God, as all human beings are, has no place in the hearts of those who love God. "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that **he who loves God must love his brother also**" (1 John 4:20-21).

In this article we've discussed four ways in which the world will be different when Christ returns. There will be an end to oppression, a just government, an end to war, and harmony among races and nations.

The impact of just these differences alone are incalculable. But there are many more very profound differences yet to discuss in future installments in this series.

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Messenger Church of God
PO Box 542
Peculiar, MO 64078
USA