

# Worship in the Millennium

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December 2025

## Introduction

We have previously examined the Kingdom / Millennium topic, especially in my series on Dispensations. In this study, we will review some of that material and explore it in greater detail. We will start with a review to establish a foundation for the main topic, Worship in the Millennium.

The subject was prompted by our recent study of the Sabbath and how it was given to Israel as part of the Law of Moses, not to the Church, which observes a different day for worship—the Lord’s Day—as we saw in our Sabbath study series.

Key differences:

- The seventh day (Saturday) is fundamentally linked to the Law. The Lord’s Day (Sunday) is fundamentally connected to grace. And the Church is not under the Law but under grace.
- Observing the Lord’s Day is more than just moving the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. It honors the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, and the believer’s freedom from the slavery of sin.
- The Lord’s Day is a time of celebration, joy, and worship, usually marked by religious activities. This is quite different from Sabbath observance under the Law, which prohibited most activities.
- Grace is a covenant based on faith, while the Law is a covenant based on works. In the faith system, grace is initially a gift from God, followed by a life lived through the power of that new relationship with God.
- The Jewish Sabbath day of rest is based on a system of works.
- The seventh-day Sabbath is governed by a strict, unbreakable Law —death by stoning for Sabbath breakers! But the first day is characterized by the freedom and grace it provides.
- The seventh day was observed in hope of being accepted by God. The first day is celebrated with the confidence that one is already accepted by God.
- There is uncertainty under the Law, but assurance under grace.

- The observance of the seventh day was practiced through the physical and enabled by the flesh. The first day is produced by the Spirit and observed in the Spirit.
- Therefore, our Sunday observance should be properly called “The Lord’s Day” rather than “the Sabbath,” which it is not.

This raises the question of the role the Law of Moses, a works-based system, plays in light of the Church Age's grace-based system. Was the Law replaced by grace? Short answer: No.

Although Israel lacked a Temple, priesthood, and sacrifices during their diaspora in the Church Age, the Law still remained valid for them. Meanwhile, the Church operated under grace, relying on the spiritual assets of the Kingdom—the indwelling Holy Spirit. Dispersed, the Jews eventually reestablished their communities in foreign lands and observed the Law to the extent they could.

The rapture of the Church will mark the end of the Church Age. Afterward, the Age of Israel will then resume as Daniel’s Seventieth Week, also called the Tribulation. With the Church removed, the grace, blessings, and empowerment from the indwelling Holy Spirit will also be withdrawn (2 Thessalonians 2:5-8), and Israel, gathered back to the Land, will remain under the Law and rely solely on human effort to meet its strict standards. They will rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, restore the priesthood, and resume blood sacrifices (Ezekiel 40-44).

God has two programs: one for Israel and one for the Church. The Church has not replaced Israel, nor will it ever do so. We have two very different systems of worship. Israel was under a works-based system for managing their relationship with God. The Church follows a faith-based system for the same purpose. Our task in this study is to understand how Israelite believers and Gentile believers interact in worship during the Millennium. What exactly does worship in the Millennium look like? Is it focused on Law or grace—or both? Before we can answer that, we need to better understand what the conditions in the Kingdom / Millennium will be like.

## **Satan and the Kingdom**

Life for mankind in the Millennium will differ from any previous age since the Garden. The most notable difference is the physical presence of the glorified King of kings, living on Earth among people. It is hard to imagine

the profound impact on humans and their behavior resulting from the visible presence and reign of Jesus Christ as the King.

Of secondary importance, but equally significant, is the absence of Satan and his minions. Satan will be restrained and cast into the Abyss at Christ's return during the Second Advent.

**Revelation 20:1** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.  
**2** And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, **3** and 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.

The “bottomless pit,” also known as “abyss” in other translations, is located in the Underworld. It serves as a prison for those who have already been judged and are awaiting the final disposition of their sentence. Though bound and kept away from mankind during most of the Millennium, Satan will be released once more at the end of the 1,000 years, “for a little while,” and will be allowed to influence again.

Not only is Satan imprisoned, but so is his army of fallen angels.

**Isaiah 24:21** On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth. **22** They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.

On that day, the Second Advent, the “hosts of Heaven” (fallen angels) will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison.

The significance of Satan and his fallen angels' absence is that they won't be able to influence humans toward evil. With the addition of the iron rod rule, all external influences to sin will be eliminated.

## **Regarding Man**

At the Second Advent, Christ will separate the “sheep” from the “goats,” and only the “sheep” will enter the Kingdom.

**Matthew 25:31** When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.<sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.<sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.<sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world

That means the Kingdom will *initially* be populated only by believers. None of the lost (goats) will enter the Kingdom. Furthermore, they will enter the Kingdom in their mortal bodies with their sin natures fully operational. With Satan and the fallen angels bound and unable to influence mankind to sin, the only source of temptation and evil during the Millennium must come from within man himself and his own sinful nature.

These Millennial believers, survivors of the Tribulation who enter the Kingdom, will procreate, and their children will have more children, with subsequent generations continuing on until the end of the 1,000 years. There is no clear indication that there will be death during the Millennium, except possibly in cases of capital punishment. The Earth will be quickly repopulated, and these children, born with sinful natures and the imputation of Adam's sin, will need redemption, just like today. It would be unreasonable to assume that everyone born during the Kingdom will become believers and be redeemed. This becomes clear near the end of the Millennium when Satan is released to lead one final rebellion.

**Revelation 20:7** And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison<sup>8</sup> and 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.<sup>9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,<sup>10</sup> and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

One might wonder how anyone could reject the free gift of salvation while living in the perfect environment of the Kingdom, in the very presence of

Jesus reigning as King. Since temptation must come from within, I see only one possible explanation for that: man's arrogance.

## The Iron Scepter

**Revelation 12:5** She gave birth to a male child, one who is **to rule all the nations with a rod of iron** ...

**Revelation 19:11** Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. <sup>13</sup> He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and **he will rule them with a rod of iron**. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. (Emphasis added)

The word translated as "rule" means "to shepherd." The "rod" (some translations say "scepter") is the staff used by a shepherd not just to guide and protect his sheep. Implied here is that Christ's rule as King will be extremely strict. That must be the case to create a perfect environment, as we will see later. Sin will not be tolerated and will be dealt with quickly and firmly. As you can imagine, this might not sit well with those who have a more rebellious nature. While they will have *no choice but to obey* or face harsh discipline, it's easy to see how some might outwardly comply but secretly detest every moment of it. That hatred will surface when Satan is released from the Abyss, as these "righteousness fakers" join his call for rebellion.

**Revelation 20:7** And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and 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. <sup>9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, <sup>10</sup> and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake

of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The ultra-strict rule of the Kingdom is essential for maintaining its perfect environment. The Kingdom represents a return to the ideal conditions of the Garden of Eden, with one major difference: mankind now has a sin nature and the knowledge of sin, which he did not have in the Garden. Adam and the woman did not have this limitation until they disobeyed God's explicit instructions regarding the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Considering what the sin nature is capable of, life in the Kingdom would hardly be deemed "perfect" unless it is kept entirely under control.

What makes the Kingdom so perfect compared to other dispensations?

### **The Removal of the Curse**

**Genesis 3:17** And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

**Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

**Isaiah 11:6** The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fatted calf together; and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear

shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

As a result of the fall of man, a curse was placed on “creation” (Genesis 3:14-19). The Romans passage above speaks of creation groaning in anticipation of the removal of that curse. The Isaiah passage tells us something about what the conditions will be like after the curse is lifted. It also informs us about the conditions in the Garden before the fall of Adam.

## **Sickness Is Removed**

**Isaiah 33:24** And no inhabitant will say, “I am sick”; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.

Israel was promised national blessings, including health, under the Law if they kept it. They were also promised sickness and affliction if they failed to keep the Law (Deuteronomy 28). In the Gospels and Acts, especially, we see Israel full of blind, sick, leprous, and lame citizens. This is both symbolic of Israel's apostasy and their spiritual sickness, and it is evidence of God's discipline on them as promised in Deuteronomy 28. With the universal righteousness of the Millennium, God is free to bless Israel and the world with good health. There will be no sickness during the Millennium.

## **They Will Dwell in Safety**

**Isaiah 32:18** My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

**Isaiah 2:4** He (the LORD) shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and 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.

There will be no wars or crime because of the Messiah's iron rule.

## **Healing of the Deformed**

**Isaiah 29:18** In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. <sup>19</sup> The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

**Micah 4:6** In that day, declares the LORD, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; <sup>7</sup> and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore.

God will heal and remove deformities at the start of the Millennium.

## **Protection**

**Ezekiel 34:25** “I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. <sup>26</sup> And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. <sup>27</sup> And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. <sup>28</sup> They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. <sup>29</sup> And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations.

**Zechariah 9:8** Then I will encamp at my house as a guard, so that none shall march to and fro; no oppressor shall again march over them, for now I see with my own eyes.

There will be no more war, and God promises Israel His personal protection. Israel will dwell safely in the land, free of war, with perfect righteousness and justice prevailing, and no need to fear for one's safety. Even the ferocity of “the beasts” will be removed.

**Isaiah 11:6** The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fatted calf together; and a little child shall lead them. **7** The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. **8** The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. **9** They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

## **Freedom from Oppression**

**Isaiah 14:3** When the LORD has given you rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve, **4** you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: "How the oppressor has ceased, the insolent fury ceased! **5** The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers, **6** that struck the peoples in wrath with unceasing blows, that ruled the nations in anger with unrelenting persecution. **7** The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.

Oppression is eliminated, including social, political, or religious oppression. People are free to live as they choose, guided only by their conscience and the rule of the righteous King.

## **No Premature Death**

**Isaiah 65:20** No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

Long life will become common. A person who lives to 100 will still be considered young. Only the "accursed" will die young—those who are taken out through the death penalty. I believe there won't be any deaths during the Millennium except for executions. If there are no illnesses to weaken the human body, death will be delayed almost indefinitely.

## **Repopulation of the Earth**

**Zechariah 10:8** "I will whistle for them to gather them together, For I have redeemed them; And they will be as numerous as they were before

**Jeremiah 30:18** Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be. <sup>19</sup> Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who celebrate. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be small.

The earth will be repopulated. With no sickness and long life, people will reproduce well into their advanced ages, even beyond. The Millennium will begin with only a few redeemed survivors of the Tribulation and will end with the earth fully repopulated.

## **Economic Prosperity**

**Isaiah 30:23** And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and bread, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. In that day your livestock will graze in large pastures, <sup>24</sup> and the oxen and the donkeys that work the ground will eat seasoned fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork.

**Ezekiel 34:13** And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup> I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD.

There will be great economic prosperity during the Kingdom, and that prosperity will come from God and the righteous rule of our Lord.

## **Presence of God**

**Ezekiel 37:26** I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. <sup>27</sup> My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**Zechariah 2:10** Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD. **11** And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. **12** And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.” **13** Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

God will dwell with humanity through Christ as the reigning King. He will be visibly present and ruling. In this Church Age, God dwells within each believer.

**1 Corinthians 3:16** Do you not know that you are a temple of God?

In the Millennium, we will have a physical presence as well.

### **Fullness of the Spirit**

Under the Law, mankind only had the power of personal effort to control their sin natures and temptations. During the Church Age, mankind was given the indwelling Holy Spirit and His enablement to manage and conquer temptation. The Kingdom will also have the indwelling Holy Spirit to accomplish all that God calls mankind to do.

**Jeremiah 31:33** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**Ezekiel 36:26** And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **27** And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Divine presence and enablement will be felt by all who submit to God's authority. Just like in the Church Age, the obedient believer will be Spirit-filled and empowered to overcome sin.

## Righteousness Will Prevail

**Isaiah 32:15** until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. <sup>16</sup> Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. <sup>17</sup> And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

**Isaiah 33:5** The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, <sup>6</sup> and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure.

The King's rule will be characterized by righteousness that fills the entire world. Peace will flow from His righteousness.

## Unified Worship

**Isaiah 45:23** By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.'

**Zechariah 14:16** Then 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. <sup>17</sup> And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. <sup>18</sup> And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain; there shall be the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

<sup>19</sup> This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

All the world will come together in worship of the King of Kings. There will be no more idols, cults, false teachings, or apostasy.

After Jerusalem becomes secure and the Messiah's worldwide reign is established (vv. 9–11), the survivors from all nations will worship in Jerusalem annually. These righteous survivors come from those Gentile nations whose armies were destroyed by the LORD when they attacked Jerusalem (vv. 1–5; Revelation 19:19) and will enter the kingdom of Christ

as “sheep,” with the “goats” being barred from entry into the Kingdom (Matthew 25:31–46).

That Gentiles will travel to Jerusalem to worship does not mean they will become Jewish proselytes, as in Old Testament times. Millennial religious worship will not be a return to Judaism but a newly established, worldwide religious order that includes both Jews and Gentiles. It will be rooted in certain aspects of the Law of Moses and centered in Jerusalem. It will include features that are identical or similar to certain parts of Old Testament worship.

The need to go to Jerusalem is partly explained by the presence of the object of worship—the King, Jesus Christ, who will be ruling on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

Worshipping annually in Jerusalem will be essential for the people to enjoy fertile crops. Those nations that refuse this opportunity for worship (disobedience) will lose their water supply. For most nations, this simply means they will have no rain. But Egypt, whose irrigation relies more on the flooding of the Nile, will still face the plague of drought as punishment from the LORD, as will all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

## **Summary**

The Millennium will be unlike any other dispensation in history. It will include aspects and features of previous dispensations, such as human conscience, the Mosaic Covenant, the indwelling Spirit as in the Church Age, and many other details. What will set it apart is the prosperity, the iron rod rule, the removal of the curse, universal righteousness, and peace for those obedient to the King of kings, our LORD, who will be visibly present. Also present will be the New Jerusalem and the resurrected Saints residing there, carrying out Kingdom responsibilities on Earth under the King’s administration. (We will explore that later in this series.)

## **Worship in the Kingdom**

We have identified some basic traits of the Kingdom. These were selected to create a picture of what life will be like in the Millennium regarding worship.

As stated above, “Millennial religious worship will not be a restored Judaism but a newly instituted worldwide religious order embracing both Jews and Gentiles.” Notice there is no mention of the Church in this worship. That is because the Church was raptured before the Tribulation and now exists in glorified resurrection bodies. This issue of worship only applies to those who remain in their mortal bodies during the 1,000 years of the Kingdom.