

WHAT WILL THE PRELUDE TO THE MILLENNIUM BE LIKE?

Many people know from the Scriptures that Christ will come back to this earth at the close of the tribulation period and that He will set up His Kingdom on this earth (Matt. 24:30; 25:31). But just how will this come about? And what all will this involve?

A study of the things associated with the Second Coming of Christ reveals that a series of spectacular events will occur when the Lord Jesus returns at the Second Coming. While it is not known exactly which event will precede another event chronologically, each of these events will lead to the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on this earth.

When Christ comes back to this earth He will first of all destroy the Gentile world powers (Dan. 2:44; 7:9-12; Zech. 14:12,13; Rev. 19:15). According to Daniel's prophecy there would be four world kingdoms and the fourth, which is identified as Rome, will be revived in the tribulation period (Dan. 2:31-45). When Christ returns He will destroy the revived Roman empire of the Antichrist as well as the other Gentile powers.

After Christ has destroyed the Gentile world powers He will then resurrect the Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2,3; Isa. 26:19,20) and the tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4-6). It should be kept in mind that the O.T. saints are not a part of the church and therefore will not be resurrected at the time of the rapture of the church. The resurrection at the rapture includes only the dead "in Christ".

Following the resurrection of the O.T. saints and the tribulation saints Christ will then regather and restore Israel in her land (Dt. 30:3; Ezek. 37:1-28). Notice while many of the Jews have returned to Palestine they will not be regathered completely until the Lord returns and brings them back.

Next Christ will judge the Jews who are alive at His Second Coming along with the resurrected O.T. saints (Ezek. 20:33-38; Matt. 25:1-30). This judgment will determine those who are genuine believers and who will enter the millennium from among the living Jews (Ezek. 20:38; Rom. 9:6).

This judgment will also examine the works of O.T. saints and tribulation saints to determine their rewards (Mal. 3:16-18; Dan. 12:13; Matt. 16:27).

Then after the Jews are judged, Christ will judge the Gentiles who are alive at His coming (Matt. 25:31-46). The word "nations" refers to ethnic groups of people. This judgment will be based upon their treatment of the Jews during the tribulation period (Matt. 25:40, 45). This judgment will determine personal salvation or damnation (Matt. 25:34,41) and will separate saved Gentiles from those unsaved (Matt. 25:32,33).

At sometime surrounding these events Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss (Rev.20:1-3). This will prevent him from interfering with Christ's righteous rule upon the earth.

At this time Christ will rebuild Jerusalem and establish His Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 11; Ezek. 40-48; Zech. 6:13; Rev. 20:4,6). Under this Kingdom Israel will be established as head of the Nations

(Dt. 28:13; Isa. 14:12; 49:22,23; 60:14-17; 61:6,7).

Under this Kingdom the twelve apostles will be seated on thrones as administrators over Israel (Isa. 32:1; Matt. 19:27-30; Lk 22:28-30).

Under this Kingdom the church saints will be given various positions of rulership under Christ (Rom. 8:17,18; Jn. 17:24; I Cor. 6:2,3). Christ Himself will reign personally in Jerusalem and the whole world will be called upon to worship and serve Him (Isa. 2:3; 11:2,3; 40:4,5; Zech. 14:9, 16-19; Psa.2:11,12).

This then will be the course of events at the Second Coming of Christ and will serve as a prelude to the Millennium. With Christ reigning from Jerusalem, and the church saints occupying certain positions, Israel established as head of the nations, and the devil bound in the abyss the Millennial Kingdom will truly be a kind of heaven on earth.