

Salvation: God’s Love Forever

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, July 28, 2013

‘They Shall Inherit The Earth’

The title of this lesson is taken from what our Lord said in the Sermon on The Mount. In the Beatitudes, He said, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). And the proposition that we are making in this morning’s study is that that’s a promise we can take literally!

In our last lesson, we introduced the question, “Where is the final outcome of our salvation experienced?” And the first answer to that question that we proposed is “in the grave”--that is to say, our salvation in Christ conquers death at the Lord’s return. And now, we’re considering what happens after the Lord’s return to this earth. Our second answer to that question is that the final outcome of our salvation is experienced “upon the earth”--that is, our salvation involves an actual, literal, bodily reign with Christ for 1,000 years upon this earth after His second coming.

I. JESUS BRINGS CO-REGENTS WITH HIM AT THE TIME OF HIS RETURN TO THIS EARTH.

A. A great passage to go to for a glimpse of the future, glorious return of our Lord is Revelation 19-20. In Revelation 19:11-16, the apostle John wrote; “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.”

Among the things to note in this passage, two particularly stand out. First, Jesus Christ is described as returning to this earth to reign over it. He is called “King of kings and Lord of lords.” He is said to wear “many crowns”. It is said that He will “rule” the nations “with a rod of iron”--suggesting that He will smash their old forms of government like clay pots, and remold them according to His will. And second, we note that He does not come alone: “the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses” (v. 14).

B. Who is it that constitutes these “armies”?

1. If we were to look back to verses 1-10, you’d find the marriage supper of the Lamb being described. And in verses 6-8, we’re told that the angelic hosts proclaim, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” This would be the church, the Bride of Christ--already raptured, already glorified, already always with the Lord. As 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 says; “For the Lord Himself will

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descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” And there is this promise, “And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” Our Lord does not take His Bride to Himself and then leave her at home alone. She is with Him, in His presence, forever more! Wherever He goes, she goes with Him.

2. And if we were to look ahead to Revelation 20:4, we read what is done with those who come with Him at His return. “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” John goes on to say, “But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished” (v. 5a). But the comment about “the rest of the dead” is not speaking of the saints. This is speaking of those who would be raised at the end of the 1,000 years for the great judgment before the White Throne (see 20:11-15). In verses 5-6, John explains what he meant in verse 4; “This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (v. 5b-6). In other words, those of us who die before the Lord’s return are raised up to meet Him; and we will join those who live and are transformed at the Lord’s return in the rapture of the saints. Even those who are slain in the great tribulation will be raised and live together with us; and together we will reign with Him! At the end of that 1,000 years, this present earth and heaven will be destroyed and a new heavens and a new earth will be made--our new eternal home! But it will be this present earth that will be the place of our dwelling and of our reign--together with Him--during that 1,000 years! What a staggering thought!

II. WE ARE PROMISED ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE THAT WE WILL REIGN WITH HIM.

- A. There are hints of this given to us in various passages.
 1. For example, when our Lord taught His disciples about the kingdom in Matthew 19 after His encounter with the rich young ruler, He said in verses 28-29; “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”
 2. Our Lord’s words in the above passage were spoken to the twelve. But consider that after our Lord taught about His return in Matthew 24; in verses 45-47, He said, “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.
 3. Or consider that, in our Lord’s promise of His future reign, He said, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a

shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . .’” (Matthew 25:31-34).

4. Or consider how the apostle John described Jesus at the beginning of the Book of Revelation; “the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:5-6).
- B. This, then, is our destiny! Jesus didn’t simply save us from our sins. He saved us *unto* co-regency with Him! We come to Him meekly today--in order to receive salvation. But having come, He saves us to reign over this present world with Him at His return! Truly--“Blessed are the meek, for they *shall* inherit the earth.”

¹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version; copyright 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc.