

Thy Kingdom Come

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Many Have Prayed for God's Kingdom to Come

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, the first petition mentioned in what has become known as the “Lord’s Prayer” is the petition that God’s kingdom come:

Luke 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

When you pray, Jesus said, pray that God’s kingdom come. This prayer has been uttered by the people of God for almost two thousand years. In addition, many others who are not God’s people have also recited and prayed this prayer an innumerable number of times over the centuries of the New Testament era. An example regarding how this prayer has been used in modern secular society would be Twelve step groups, like Alcoholics Anonymous, which routinely join hands and say the Lord’s Prayer as part of their sobriety meetings. It must be acknowledged that the prayer for God’s kingdom to come, made by both those in the churches and by those outside of the churches, has often been made without proper understanding of what they were truly asking God to do.

What exactly does it mean for God’s kingdom to come? We will try to answer that question from the Bible itself.

The Kingdom of God is Within You

To begin with, in order to properly understand the coming of God’s kingdom, we must weave our way through the many references to the kingdom of God in the Bible. They are numerous. Additionally, it will be necessary for us to keep in mind that the Bible is a spiritual book. Of course, the truth that the Bible is a spiritual book should not surprise

us at all considering that its Author, eternal God, is Himself a Spirit Being:

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship *him* must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Since God is a Spirit, the very first requirement for worshippers is that they must worship Him in spirit. But the problem with men worshipping God in spirit (as well as in truth) is the fact that they are spiritually dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1). And a spiritually dead soul cannot properly worship God. He cannot even see God or know God. God's solution to this problem was to create new spirits (Ezekiel 36:26) within the hearts of certain individuals, all of whom were chosen by Him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5). The number of these chosen people would only be few in comparison to the overall population of people in the world. God laid the sins of these chosen ones upon the Lord Jesus Christ at the foundation of the world, and at that point in eternity past, Christ died for them and paid the full penalty of death on their behalf that the law demanded. Once more it must be emphasized that the Bible tells us this work of Christ paying for the sins of His chosen people was finished at the world's foundation (Hebrews 4:3). But the fact that the sins of these people were already paid for before the world began obligated God, once the world was created, to send forth His Word into their lives to apply the shed blood of Christ to each one of these precious souls sometime during their lifetime in their respective generations.

We can understand God's salvation program if we look at it this way: Jesus died in eternity past (foundation of the world), and, in His death, He shed His blood (gave His life) for a few out of the whole of mankind. Now think of the shed blood of Christ in a similar way as the shed blood of the Passover lamb. The blood of the lamb was placed in a basin and then applied to the doorposts by the Israelites with hyssop.

Exodus 12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that *is* in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

The hyssop was an applicator of the lamb's blood. Spiritually, this is precisely the same purpose that the Bible served. The sending forth of the Word of God into the life of the elect individual was a sort of applicator (hyssop) used by the Spirit to apply Christ's blood to him, thereby washing away all iniquity and giving new life to his spirit. The Bible uses this illustration of hyssop applying the Word to a sinner's soul as the Lord moved king David to exclaim:

Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Purge me with hyssop! That is, may Thy Word apply Christ's shed blood to my soul thereby washing away all iniquity from me. The salvation that Christ wrought for His people at the foundation of the world was not complete until the application of the blood was made through the hearing of the Word of God. This is why the Bible tells us that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Following the application of the Word, the elect child of God's soul was restored (Psalm 23:3) to life. The new soul of man could thus begin to worship God in spirit and in truth. In this way the Word of God ministered an entrance into the glorious spiritual kingdom of heaven.

2 Peter 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the gospel of John, the Lord Jesus joins together the idea of entering into the kingdom of God along with the new birth of the soul through the sinner's experience of salvation:

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Sinners must be born again in their spirits for them to enter into the kingdom of God. The correlation between the two things is unmistakable. And, conversely, if a man is not born again in his soul existence, this means that he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Only the Spirit of God (John 4:24) can impart spiritual life to the dead spirit of man. And we are told that that which is "born of the Spirit is spirit." The saved individual, now in possession of a brand-new living spirit, is granted immediate access into God's spiritual kingdom:

Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

To be "translated" means a dramatic change has occurred in the life of the sinner. In fact, it is an enormous change that has taken place within the heart of the once spiritually dead individual; previously he was a child of wrath even as others, but now he has been brought out of the sinful darkness of Satan's evil kingdom and translated into the glorious kingdom of light of God's dear Son. At this point, the man with the newly born-again soul has his servitude to sin and to Satan come to an end.

Although big changes have certainly taken place in the soul existence of the one God has saved and translated into His kingdom, yet, to any outside observer, it would have to be said that there is no outward visible change evident in any way. The man looks the same after experiencing salvation as he did prior to experiencing salvation. However, the reality is that an enormous and dramatic change has indeed taken place. The newly born-again man now possesses a living soul. In fact, his new soul is perfect and completely without sin of any kind (1 John 3:9). He has also become a citizen of the kingdom of God. Moreover, he has been granted the Spirit of God to indwell him (Romans 8:9). All of these things convey that the kingdom of God, according to the Scripture, is now within him:

Luke 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

The Bible verses we have been discussing permit us to see what Jesus' statement concerning, "the kingdom of God is within you," truly means. It means that the soul of the one who has been made alive now possesses spiritual life and is an active living citizen of the spiritual kingdom of heaven—although the person physically has not changed, nor has his physical location changed, as he continues to remain on the earth after experiencing salvation.

The Kingdom of God Cometh Not with Observation

In response to the question from the Pharisees, "when the kingdom of God should come," it should be noted that Christ's answer was: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." The Greek word translated as "observation" (Strong's #3907) comes from another word (#3906) that is most often translated as "watch." This word means to keep or maintain a physical watch. The word is used 6 times in the New Testament, and in each case it is referring to the natural minded

(unsaved) people who are keeping watch on outward behavior and circumstances typically for ungodly reasons:

Mark 3:2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

Luke 14:1 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

And we will give one more example:

Acts 9:24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

By telling us that the kingdom of God does not come with observation, the Lord Jesus is letting us know that the coming of the kingdom will not be something that is visible to the physical eye. After all, the natural minded person has no spiritual life within him. And because of this, keeping watch on outward physical things is all that he is capable of doing. Which is why, when we bring up the Scriptures that point to Christ coming spiritually to judge the church, or to judge the world, the teaching is quickly rejected as a ridiculous idea by the natural minded professed Christian. Often, their response to spiritual judgments is mockery.

But why do spiritual judgments seem ridiculous to them? After all, the Bible is a spiritual book, and God Himself a Spirit, etc. The reason is because spiritual judgments are invisible judgments. Spiritual judgments cannot be seen with the physical eye. They can only be seen with eyes of faith (Hebrews 11:1). Therefore, the Bible declares to us that such things must be spiritually discerned. Once again, however, spiritual discernment is not a trait or characteristic that can be learned in seminary. Nor is it something that students can obtain by being taught at a Bible college. Spiritual discernment is another of the many spiritual gifts God bestows upon His elect people in salvation. In order for someone to properly exercise spiritual discernment of the Scriptures, when reading and studying the Bible, there is, first of all, a prerequisite for the individual to have a restored born-again soul, as well as the

indwelling Spirit of God. These things that accompany salvation are not preferable for doing Bible study, they are essential.

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

The Nobleman Returned - Having Received the Kingdom

We have learned how the kingdom of God is within us. And that we became an integral part of that kingdom once God has granted us a new born again soul. But we still need to know much more about the coming of God's kingdom. A careful consideration of the parable of the nobleman given in Luke's gospel should help us to understand the coming of God's kingdom a little better.

Let us turn to Luke chapter 19, where we will find this parable that Jesus spoke in response to those who thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear:

Luke 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

First of all, we can understand that the certain nobleman is a figure of Jesus Himself. The Greek word translated as "nobleman" is a compound word that literally means, "good born" or "well born." Of course, this is what is said concerning those who are born into a nation's royal

family. But as far as the Bible is concerned, there are no men who are “good” born. The Bible tells us that all of us are conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5) and born speaking lies (Psalm 58:3). Further, the Bible is dogmatic that no human being is righteous or good in any way:

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

At times, a person saved in the womb (like John the Baptist) might be considered to be “good born,” but not entirely, since the child is also born with a sinful physical body capable of sin.

The exception, we would have to say, was the Lord Jesus Christ. He was born (of the virgin Mary) without sin of any kind. Indeed, He was good born. In fact, He is the only individual of whom it can be said that He was born completely good. Adam was without sin at the first. But Adam was not born, he was created by God from the dust of the ground. Only Jesus qualifies to be this good born man called a nobleman in Luke 19.

One reason the translators translated this compound word (good born) as “nobleman” is because of the man’s departure into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom. Obviously, if he is going to receive a kingdom, he must be of royal blood. He must be a king.

A few verses further into this parable, we read some additional information about this certain nobleman and his kingdom:

Luke 19:15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

We find that the nobleman (Jesus) returns from the far country and has received the kingdom he went away to obtain. Upon his return, the nobleman begins to reckon with his servants. Clearly, this language identifies with other Biblical passages wherein God reckons with mankind at the time of Christ's second coming and the world's final judgment. Understanding that the nobleman's return, after having received his kingdom, ties in with the second coming of Christ and Judgment Day, helps us to recognize a couple of important truths revealed to us in this parable.

The first important truth is – (and it is a little surprising to us) – that Christ (the nobleman) went away into heaven (typified by the far country) in order to receive His kingdom. This is surprising because we know that salvation takes place on the earth. We would expect that the kingdom would be received on the earth and not in heaven. But the parable makes it clear that the far country is referring to heaven.

We know that the nobleman's trip into the far country is referring to heaven because of his return. The language of the nobleman's return is unmistakably referring to Jesus Christ's return. And, as we know, after going to the cross, Jesus was resurrected and showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs for forty days, and then was taken up into heaven (the far country). This statement was made at that time:

Acts 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

The Lord Jesus, who went up into heaven, will come back in like manner to the earth. This is precisely what is in view with the nobleman's return, after he received the kingdom. We may conclude that the kingdom of God was received in heaven itself. And once it was received, then Christ would return to the earth just as the nobleman had returned.

And at His return, Christ would then reckon with all of His servants (mankind created in the image of God and made to serve God) in the final judgment.

Christ to Judge the Quick and the Dead at His Appearing and His Kingdom

The second important truth we learn from this parable in Luke 19 is the implication that the nobleman's return is with his kingdom. Remember, Jesus gave this parable in response to those who thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear. The parable, then, is answering the question when the kingdom of God will appear. And the answer is revealing that the coming of the kingdom will occur simultaneously with the second coming of Christ at the end of the world.

In other words, when Jesus comes back to judge the inhabitants of the earth, He will come back with His kingdom. This idea is confirmed when we read a pertinent Scripture found in the second epistle of Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:1 I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Notice in the verse above that we are told Jesus will judge the quick and the dead — at His appearing and His kingdom. This verse ties Christ's appearing to judge the world together with His kingdom.

We need to clarify some things regarding the phrase, “the quick and the dead.” It should be pointed out that the word “quick” is an old English word that means to be alive or to live. Therefore, judging the quick and the dead means to judge the living and the dead. Numbers of theologians of the past have taught that Christ's judging of the quick and the dead involves His judging of those who are physically alive (the quick) at the time of His coming; and also, the judging of those who would be in the physical graves (the dead) at that same time. However, this is not what the Bible is teaching at all. By using this language of the quick

and the dead, the Bible is teaching us that both the saved (quick or spiritually alive in their born again soul) and the unsaved (spiritually dead in their soul) will be present on the earth at Christ's appearing in order to experience the time of the world's final judgment. To say it another way, those who possess life in their souls are the quick. And those who have no life in their souls are the dead who will be judged at the return of Christ with His kingdom.

But if the quick is speaking of those who were made spiritually alive, would that not mean that they had been saved? And if they had been saved, why would Christ come to judge them?

This is a fair question, and we will look at a few Scriptures in response. However, before we do, I would also recommend contacting us to obtain E Bible Fellowship's booklet called, *The Elect's Appearance Before the Judgment Seat of Christ*.¹ This booklet discusses quite a lot of Biblical information which reveals God's end time plan to bring His elect people before the judgment seat of Christ in order to demonstrate the fact that they were already judged in Him at the foundation of the world.

God Shall Judge the Righteous and the Wicked

Let us turn to a couple of Scriptures in the book of Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 3:16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, *that* wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, *that* iniquity *was* there.

17 I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work.

In Ecclesiastes 3:17 we read that God will "judge the righteous and the wicked." Both the righteous and the wicked will come before God to

¹ Anyone who would like a free copy may write to E Bible Fellowship and request a copy and we will be glad to send it to you without charge. It can also be viewed/downloaded at www.ebiblefellowship.org.

be judged. This is saying the same thing as Christ coming to judge “the quick and the dead.”

We find another pertinent statement regarding the righteous and the wicked in Ecclesiastes chapter 9:

Ecclesiastes 9:2 All *things* come alike to all: *there is* one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as *is* the good, so *is* the sinner; and he that sweareth, as *he* that feareth an oath.

3 This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: ...

We are told that there is one event to all. One event to the righteous. And one event to the wicked. This Scripture highlights the glorious truth that God is a righteous Judge. His standard of justice is a perfect standard of righteousness. If, as many theologians have said, it were true that God will rapture His people out of the world prior to the judgment, so that they will not have to go through the judgment themselves, this might present the wrong kind of appearance. And God is very careful to not give any inkling of an appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). It is much better for God to allow both the righteous and the wicked to come before His judgment throne which has been set up upon the earth. And then to carry out His judgment concerning both (the righteous and the wicked) over the course of the prolonged Judgment Day period. We often forget that judges may find a defendant innocent as well as guilty. So, too, with God’s final judgment program. It is a certainty that the elect children of God will go through the judgment process and come out at the conclusion of it fully vindicated.

Our expectation in going through the judgment of God is that, at its conclusion, God will say of us as Pilate said of the Lord Jesus Christ, “I find in Him no fault at all” (John 18:38). The elect children of God expect this final verdict because all of their sins were already paid for by Christ at the foundation of the world. The elect’s Judgment Day trial on earth is simply an appearance (manifestation) before the Just Judge who at the last will pronounce the verdict of not guilty! This comprehensive and final judgment of God will demonstrate and prove to all

that the sins of God's elect are not upon them. If they did have the least bit of sin upon them, they certainly would have been destroyed along with all the unsaved sinners of the world. But as the judgment concludes, there they still stand before the throne of Christ. Having endured to the end:

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

And,

Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The elect's endurance through the flames of the wrath of God could only mean that no sin was found in them. Thus, by God's grace, they will have managed to abide the fiery flames of the judgment process as gold and silver (1 Corinthians 3:13,14), and thereby make manifest the glorious truth that Christ did indeed fully pay the penalty for their sins. And by His experience of the fires of God's wrath, remove those sins from off them. By remaining alive on the earth on that last day of the prolonged judgment, the elect's demonstration before the judgment seat of Christ will have successfully come to its glorious completion. Exaltation immediately follows:

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

By May 21, 2011, the Last Elect Child of God Brought into the Kingdom

The date of May 21, 2011 is an extremely important date in regard to understanding God's end time judgment program. Any who lack understanding regarding the things that took place on that date will certainly not be able to understand the things we are discussing in this booklet concerning Christ's second coming with His kingdom. Therefore, we are going to spend a little time going over the significance of the date May 21, 2011.

The Bible has revealed that May 21, 2011, was the beginning day of the world's final judgment. At that time God brought (or saved) into His kingdom the last one of those whose names had been recorded in the Lamb's book of life. At that point in time, the spiritual kingdom of God was completed. The bride had made herself ready (Revelation 19:7) and the spiritual house of God had been built (Hebrews 3:6).

To say it another way, on the date of May 21, 2011, God completed His salvation program. All predestinated to be saved, were now saved. And since God completed His salvation program, He was then able to shut the door of heaven and commence the final judgment process by pouring out His wrath upon the wicked of the world.

Are we saying that God was not able to bring judgment on the wicked of the world prior to the saving of all those whom He intended to save? Yes. As far as the official and final judgment of God upon sinful mankind, we are definitely saying that very thing.

In the epistle of James, the Lord addresses the idea of waiting to judge the world until He has brought in His fruit (and fruit is a Biblical figure pointing to those whom God saved out of this world):

James 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receives the early and latter rain.

God the Father is the Husbandman (John 15:1). And the precious fruit are those chosen (the elect) by God to become saved (John 15:1-8). The early and latter rain represent the two outpourings of the Holy Spirit during the New Testament era wherein the Word of God was sent forth to save sinners (Deuteronomy 32:2, Isaiah 55:10-11, Joel 2:22-24). Once we understand these things, we realize that James 5:7 is letting us know of God's plan to patiently wait before coming to punish the sinners of the world. According to this verse, the Lord would not come in judgment until He first received the two periods of rain (early rain identifies with the 1,955 years of the Church Age; and latter rain identifies with the about 17-year period that the Gospel went forth outside the congregations during the second part of the Great Tribulation period), through which the precious fruit (the elect) would be brought into His kingdom.

A Scripture found in 2 Peter chapter 3 confirms our understanding that God patiently endured – or put up with the sins of the world – over the course of thousands of years of history, for the sole reason of waiting until His salvation program was accomplished.

2 Peter 3:15 And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

We should “account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.” Compare that to what we read in James 5:7:

James 5:7 ... the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth ...

To be longsuffering means to exhibit patience. The Greek word translated as “longsuffering” (Strong's #3115) is also translated as “patience.” The same word is found in the context of the Husbandman waiting for the precious fruit of the earth in James chapter 5:

James 5:10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

The word “patience” in verse 10 is a word translated as “longsuffering” every other time it is used in the Bible. God showed tremendous patience (longsuffering) as He put up with the horrendous wickedness of mankind over the course of human history. Why was the Lord so patient towards man’s gross iniquities? According to 2 Peter 3:15, we may reckon (account) that the Lord was longsuffering solely for the express purpose of salvation. That is, in His schedule of times and seasons, the rain still needed to fall (the Word of God coming down from above), and accomplish the thing it was sent forth to accomplish, which was to bring forth the precious fruit (salvation of sinners) from the earth.

Isaiah 55:10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

The awesome truth concerning the date of May 21, 2011, is that the wrath of God held back for millennium against the world’s sinners could now be fully let loose because the salvation of everyone God planned on saving before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4,5) was accomplished. The early rain had fallen. And the latter rain had fallen. Since there were no more scheduled periods of rain in God’s timetable for this world, there would be no further seasons of fruit either. Therefore, the Husbandman (God the Father) could finally take action against the rebels who had long transgressed His laws.

Jesus the King of Saints

As we study the Bible, we discover a very interesting relationship between the kingdom of God and the saints of God. For one thing, both are spoken of as coming in judgment. Earlier we saw that it is at Christ’s appearing along with His kingdom that He judges the world (2

Timothy 4:1). The Bible also tells us in a few places that the Lord Jesus comes in judgment with His saints.

Before we get into discussing the role of the saints in God's end time judgment plan, we must first confront a common misconception that significant numbers of people in the churches and in the world have concerning saints. It is supposed, especially due to the erroneous teaching by the Catholic church, that a saint is someone who has lived a life of great devotion and sacrifice and has performed a certain number of miracles, and who, finally, must be recognized and canonized as a saint by the church itself. In other words, people only become saints if the church says they are saints. Everything about this idea of the church making a saint is totally unbiblical and false.

The way we learn the truth about saints is by reading the things the Bible says about them. We must always remember that the Bible is the supreme authority in all that it addresses, and not the churches. The Bible is the book of truth. Churches are full of men, and men are prone to lie. But God's Word is always true and trustworthy (John 17:17):

Romans 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; ...

These Scriptures below show us that saints were members of congregations. Which means, they were just ordinary people, called and chosen by God to become saved and thereby become a saint:

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

In these opening greetings found in the epistles to the churches at Ephesus and Philippi, the apostle Paul salutes all the saints at both locations. He is not referring only to the super holy ones found at these churches, but rather, he is simply addressing those who were truly saved by the

Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated as “saints” (Strong’s #40, *hagios*) is the identical word translated as “holy.” To be a saint means to be one made holy. The Catholic church understands this much, but they err in their understanding by failing to realize that the instant God saved a sinner he was made holy as Christ’s shed blood washed away all of his sins.

The Bible teaches us that each and every elect child of God has experienced this washing away of their sins:

1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Once all sin is washed away by the blood of Christ shed on his behalf, and through the application of the washing power of the Word of God, the sinner then becomes holy in God’s sight. A true saint.

Our understanding of saints is confirmed in chapter 19 of the book of Revelation:

Revelation 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Here, we read of the marriage between the Lamb (Jesus) and His bride (all the elect children of God) who has made herself ready. The figure of God as the Bridegroom and those whom He saved as the bride (Isaiah 61:10, Isaiah 62:5) is a fairly common figure used by God in the Scriptures to teach another beautiful aspect of His salvation program. This spiritual picture of marriage between God and His chosen people, for example, forms the spiritual basis for the entire marriage institution (Ephesians 5:22-26).

As we continue to read in Revelation 19, we find the following statement that verifies to us that the saints are indeed all those that God has saved:

Revelation 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

If you have ever wondered why is it that brides traditionally dressed in lovely white gowns, you now know the reason. It is because that imagery was taken right out of the Bible. The bride is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, because the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. Or, to say it another way, the clean and white dress the bride of Christ is pictured to wear at the wedding is a vivid illustration of the washing away of the filth of sin from off each and every soul that came together through salvation and that collectively formed the bride. The cleansing of sin is what makes her garment so fine and clean and white. And that attire proceeds directly from her Bridegroom's own righteousness. It is the garment of the righteousness of Christ (Romans 5:19) imputed to the elect sinners which provides the necessary righteousness and holiness for those who were once spiritually filthy to become true saints of God.

Once we properly understand that the saints are simply God's elect people, and that they are those blessed souls chosen by God from the foundation of the world to obtain His mercy and grace, then we realize that the saints are one and the same as spiritual Israel. And as Jesus is King of the Jews, King of the Israel of God, He is also King over the saints. And the Bible does declare Jesus as King of saints in Revelation chapter 15:

Revelation 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

The Lord God Almighty is King of the saints. And we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and King, comes with ten thousands of

His saints. Therefore, Christ's return with His saints is declaring the same thing as Christ the King of Israel returning with His kingdom of spiritual Jews. And it is also declaring the same thing as the Nobleman gone away to receive a kingdom and to return.

Christ Returns with Ten Thousands of His Saints

Returning to the idea of Christ appearing along with His kingdom, since we know that His kingdom is made up of all those who have experienced the new birth of salvation, we realize then that the Bible has been telling us about Jesus' coming with His kingdom all along when it told us of the Lord's coming with ten thousands of His saints:

Deuteronomy 33:2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: ...

This Scripture agrees with what Enoch prophesied as recorded in the New Testament epistle of Jude:

**Jude 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,
15 To execute judgment upon all, ...**

And from the book of Zechariah, we know that the reference to "ten thousands of His saints" means all the saints:

Zechariah 14:5 ... and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

A New Testament reference further confirms the truth that when we read of Christ coming with ten thousands of His saints, this is telling us He is coming with all of His saints:

1 Thessalonians 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Again, the Biblical language proclaiming that the Lord Jesus Christ comes with ten thousands of His saints is telling us the exact same thing as those Scriptures which say He is appearing with His kingdom. All the saints are all the elect children of God. And all the elect children of God are those who became saved and entered the spiritual kingdom of God.

Since we have been proclaiming that Judgment Day took place on the date of May 21, 2011, it must also mean that the Lord Jesus has already come with all of His saints. If these things are so – and we are definitely saying they are so – then the question needs to be asked, what about the elect children of God (saints) who are in the graves? Did they come on May 21 as well? And if not, then how can it be said that Christ has come with all the saints?

We do not avoid questions in our search for Biblical truth. In fact, we look forward to solving difficult questions because if we are able to find answers that harmonize with the whole of Scripture, we can know that we have found truth in the thing we are looking at, and harmonizing a difficult question will often set us on a path to finding even more truth.

The question is: did all the elect come with Christ to judge the world on May 21, 2011? The answer is yes. We will look at three ways that all of the saints come with Christ to carry out the world's judgment. Two of the ways will apply directly to May 21, 2011, while the third way points to the literal last day of earth's existence but is still part of the overall "Judgment Day" period of time.

First, all of the saints have come and participate in the final judgment in the sense that the completion of the salvation of all the elect permitted the Lord Jesus to finally commence the judgment process for this world. Each saint is like a living stone part of the overall spiritual house of God, whose completion prompted Christ's coming. Therefore, every

elect child of God, simply by being an elect child of God, is an integral part of the Lord's coming.

Secondly, the Bible uses the illustration of all who became saved as being a part of the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

The many members of the body point to every person chosen by God to become saved before the world's foundation (Ephesians 1:4,5). The salvation program of God is typified by various ways in the Bible. As we have already seen, it is pictured by the building of a kingdom, and a house, and even by the formation of a bride. Another picture used by God is that of a body. The body of Christ, spiritually, is comprised of each and every one that became saved. It should be noted that we have learned from the Bible that the overwhelming vast majority of God's elect, who would come together to form the spiritual body of Christ, were saved during the Great Tribulation period (Revelation 7:9-14). We do not know the exact percentages, but perhaps as high as 90 percent, or 95 percent – certainly some very high percentage of the totality of all who would be saved out of this world – were saved during the little season of the latter rain that fell for about 17 years from September 7, 1994 until May 21, 2011. And most of that great multitude were physically alive on the earth at the time the Great Tribulation period ended, and the transition was made from judging the corporate church to judging the nations of the world. Which means that the greatest portion of the body of Christ was present on the earth at the time the Lord Jesus came with His saints.

Regarding the body of Christ, we are told that if one member suffers, all members suffer with it, and if one member is honored, all members are honored with it:

1 Corinthians 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Based on the information found in these verses, we can say that since many more than one member (a great multitude) were present on the earth at the time of the Lord's coming, we can understand them to represent the body of Christ as a whole. The great multitude is honored to come with Christ the Judge of the earth, and so, all saints are honored in a similar way.

Thirdly, the coming of Christ with all the saints can be understood to be in progress and taking place within the timeframe for a prolonged Day of Judgment. As we have stressed, God's righteous judgment plan has been revealed to include a prolonged time period wherein the world's judgment is carried out. Based on all the Biblical evidence we have gathered, we can understand that the world's judgment began on May 21, 2011, and will continue until an as yet unspecified date within the year 2033 AD. This works out to be a tribulation (judgment) on the world of 22 actual years or 23 inclusive years – although the entire duration of the Judgment Day period is still viewed and spoken of by God as being a single day (Judgment Day). Therefore, it can be said that Christ comes with all of the saints – those who are alive and remaining on the earth at the very beginning of the prolonged Judgment Day period. And then, on the very last day, which, again, according to Biblical evidence, will occur in the year 2033, He can raise and transform the rest of the bodies of the elect from the graves, so that they also at that time participate through their resurrection in the concluding phase of the overall judgment plan of God. Nevertheless, since they join Him within the same "Day of Judgment" time period, it can be rightly said that the Lord Jesus did indeed come with all of His saints. And that the saints judge the world with Him. This is how we are to understand the role of the Ninevites and the queen of the south as they rise up in the judgment:

Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they

repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: ...

By rising up in the resurrection on the last day (John 11:24), they also participate in the process of the world's judgment. Their rising from the dead while receiving new resurrected spiritual bodies will be a crushing blow to all the unsaved inhabitants of the earth who are left behind for the final destruction of the second death.

Know Ye Not That The Saints Will Judge The World

One other thing we should look at before moving on in our study is the Bible's teaching that the saints will judge the world.

1 Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

To emphasize the point once more, the saints in view in this passage, as well as other Scriptures, are not a group of super holy individuals selected by a church. But they are simply all those blessed souls chosen by God to be recipients of His grace. The ones made holy through the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Christ shed on their behalf are the saints we are told will judge the world. This is not too surprising because we already know that Christ comes with ten thousands of His saints to judge the world. And if you read carefully, you will find something interesting concerning the saints in Jude's epistle:

Jude 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

The interesting thing is found in the next verse:

Jude 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Notice that it says that the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints “to execute judgment upon all.” The way the sentence is worded, it may be that the Lord is the One who will execute judgment on all. The same words are used in this verse:

John 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Jesus has been given authority to execute judgment. This seems to fit what was said in Jude verse 15. But it may also be true that just as the Father has given Christ the Son authority to execute judgment, so, too, has Christ utilized the chain of command and has given the authority to execute judgment upon the world to His people. Further study shows us that it is both the Lord Jesus and His saints who are the ones who will be performing (executing) the judgment upon all the inhabitants of the world.

In Psalm 149, we find related information to the things we read in Jude. God not only tells us that the saints will judge the world in this psalm, but He also tells us the weapon they will use as they perform the execution of that judgment:

Psalm 149:5 Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;

7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

8 To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

9 To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

To begin with, notice the saints are mentioned (verse 5). And very significantly, we are told that they have a two-edged sword in their hand. In the Bible, a two-edged sword is a clear picture of the Word of God:

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, ...

It is with this two-edged sword that the saints will “execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people” (verse 7); and they will also use it, “to execute upon them the judgment written” (verse 9). Finally, it says, “this honour have all His saints.” The connection between these statements found in Psalm 149 and in 1 Corinthians 6:1-3, as well as in Jude 14-15, is unmistakable. Surely, the saints will carry out the judgment on the world. Additionally, according to Psalm 149, they will perform this judgment with the two-edged sword (Word of God) and execute it in accordance with the things that have been written in God’s holy Word, the Bible.

The Saints Follow the Bible in the Battle of Judgment Day

A little earlier in our study, we looked at Revelation chapter 19 and saw that the bride of Christ identified with the saints of God. Here are the verses we looked at that proved this:

Revelation 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

The bride, similar to the body of Christ, is a figure God has used to spiritually represent all that became saved. Which is why we are not surprised to see that the bride’s attire of fine linen, clean and white, is

the righteousness of the saints. This reveals to us the truth that the bride of Christ and the saints of God are one and the same.

Revelation chapter 19 quickly moves on from the glorious imagery of the bride's gown to present us with very startling pictures of the battle of Judgment Day as King Jesus and His army do battle against Satan and his forces. Please take note of the name that God has selected for the Lord Jesus as He enters into this last great battle:

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

The above description can only match the Lord Jesus Christ. And, of course, Jesus Christ is the Word that was with God, was God, and was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1,14). It is certainly fitting that this particular name of Christ be used at the time of His ultimate triumph over the kingdom of Satan and the nations of the world.

And yet, of all the possible names of Christ that could have been selected and applied to the Lord at this crucial point in time, we wonder why it is that God chose to highlight Christ's name as "the Word"? Does the lifting up of this particular name have some special significance that we should consider? After all, back in Psalm 149, we read that the saints were carrying a two-edged sword with which they were executing vengeance and punishing the nations, all in order to execute the judgment written (Psalm 149:9). The two-edged sword, as well as reference to the "judgment written," focuses our attention on the Word of God.

We also remember that the Lord Jesus had said that the Word He had spoken would judge the world:

John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

And here, in Revelation 19, the Word was indeed going forth to judge the world. And, as we continue to read that chapter, we find the saints, once more, come into view:

Revelation 19:14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

It was proclaimed that His name was called “the Word of God” (Revelation 19:13). And then we are told that the armies which were in heaven followed Him on white horses. Who, exactly, were these armies in heaven following into the final battle of Judgment Day? The answer is – they were following the Word of God.

And who are these armies in heaven? Can we identify them? Yes, we can identify them because they are said to be, “clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” Where have we heard that description before? Why that is the same thing that was said of the bride of Christ just a few verses earlier in verses 7 and 8:

Revelation 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: ...

The armies in heaven are attired exactly as the bride of Christ. And concerning this attire, it was also said:

Revelation 19:8 ... for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

By now, we should have known. The armies in heaven are none other than the saints of God. And the description of these armies following the Word of God into the final battle of Judgment Day is a description of Christ (the Word) coming with all His saints. Or Christ the King coming with His kingdom.

The Sainly Messengers Pour Out the Vials of God's Wrath on the Earth

The book of Revelation's imagery is often spectacular to the mind's eye of the one reading its glorious pages. And certainly the description of the armies in heaven (the saints) clothed in pure and fine white linen, and following the Word of God on His white horse into the final battle against Satan and his evil forces, causes our minds to fill with fascinating thoughts of the most dramatic battle scenes imaginable. And yet, the truth is that the spiritual fulfillment of this grand battle we find splendidly laid out before us in Revelation 19 is much more practical and quite unexciting.

The concluding battle between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness is really a quiet battle that takes place on the earth and in its many cities, villages, and towns as humble saints turn the pages of their Bibles to compare Scripture with Scripture. And it is through this careful and meticulous process of faithfully comparing Scriptures that the Holy Spirit teaches (1 Corinthians 2:12,13), and the long-hidden truths of God's Word concerning His righteous judgment program begin to come forth, and are then properly understood as understanding is granted to His elect people. The Bible also describes the process of comparing Scripture with Scripture as, here a little, and there a little, and through this process, the teaching, or doctrine of God, is revealed.

Isaiah 28:9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little:

In other words, the Bible, which is the Word of God, reveals the doctrinal information concerning the world's final judgment to the saints (God's elect), and as the saints learn the things the Bible is revealing, they proceed to proclaim those same things to the world. Through this simple and yet ancient process, God moves within His people to accomplish His purposes. And now at the end, the last purpose God

desires to accomplish through His saints is their carrying of the message that Judgment Day has come upon the world.

Of course, God's elect people have always performed the duty of being His messengers on the earth. During the time when God was saving sinners, while it was still the Day of Salvation, the Lord sent His people forth into the world carrying the gospel message of salvation (Romans 10:15). Although it was the people of God who carried the message of salvation to the world, nonetheless, it was accomplished through Christ's Spirit moving within them to perform the doing of it. Therefore, that beautiful work of bringing the Gospel message of salvation was also credited as being Christ's work:

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Likewise, in this present time of the world's judgment, the Lord is once again utilizing His people to carry a message from the Bible. Only this time the message is not one of mercy and salvation, but it is a message of judgment and wrath. In the Bible, in both the Old Testament Hebrew, as well as the New Testament Greek, the word for "messenger" is a word which is also translated as "angel." Most often, when we read the English word "angel" in the King James Bible, it would have been better translated as "messenger." This is the case when it comes to the translation of the word in Revelation chapter 15:

Revelation 15:5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Based on the picture God has drawn for us in these verses, it would appear that the seven angels are angelic beings coming out of the heavenly temple in order to do what God is sending them forth to do.

However, we have to keep a few things in mind: first, the temple mentioned is said to be “of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven.” Which means that the temple that the seven angels come out of is not necessarily itself in heaven. For example, some congregations call themselves, “The Church of Christ.” Where is Christ? He is in heaven. Where is the church that is purported to be of Christ? It is located on the earth.

We will not go into a lengthy discussion about this, but it is significant that in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, God addressed seven churches. And when addressing each of these churches, He wrote to the angel of that particular church:

Revelation 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; ...

Revelation 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; ...

Revelation 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; ...

And so on for all seven churches. Which means that God addressed His messages in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 to seven angels. The seven angels were stationed, as it were, within the churches of the world during the 1,955 years of the Church Age. But then the Church Age ended, and God called His messengers (angels) to come out of the corporate church. In this way, the seven angels were called out of the church or temple.

Now it must be understood that spiritual pictures do not always necessarily present every single facet of a truth. We know that at the end of the Church Age, the elect were called out of the churches and then sent into the world with the Gospel for the short season of the latter rain. For that brief time of about 17 years, the elect of God carried the message of the Gospel of salvation to the world for one last glorious proclamation. This information is taught elsewhere in the Bible (such as in Revelation 11, when the two witnesses stand on their feet) but is not in view in chapter 15. In Revelation 15, God is referring to the seven

angels in order to help us understand that they do represent His people, the same people of God who were previously situated within the congregations during the Church Age. Only now, these elect people of God were given a different duty to perform. A task specific to Judgment Day itself.

The second thing we need to consider regarding the seven angels mentioned in Revelation 15 is their clothing. Let us read the verse again:

Revelation 15:6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

The seven angels were clothed in pure and white linen. This description of clothing ought to be sounding very familiar to us by now. It is, once again, the clothing of the bride of Christ:

Revelation 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: ...

Remember, it was the same clothing for the armies in heaven that followed the Word (Christ) into the battle of Judgment Day:

Revelation 19:14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And it was also the bride's beautiful wedding gown in:

Revelation 19:8 ... for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

The clothing for the seven angels is the same as the clothing for the bride of Christ, the armies of Christ, and the saints of God. And all of them are types and figures used by God to represent those He has saved out of the world, His elect people. Which means, of course, that the seven angels clothed in pure and white linen are not angelic beings at all, but are themselves saved individuals, the elect of God.

The truth is, due to the Bible's description of their clothing, it is impossible for the seven angels to be the creatures called angels (angelic beings). This is because the good angels who did not fall with Satan, but remained in heaven, never sinned. And since they never sinned, they never had any need for the righteousness of Christ to cover them as a garment. Only those fallen creatures like man whose sins God has forgiven need the garment of Christ's righteousness to cover them. This is why the fine linen is said to be the righteousness of saints (Revelation 19:8). Due to this description of their pure and white clothing, there cannot be any question that the seven angels mentioned in Revelation 15 are none other than God's elect people.

A third and final evidence that the seven angels are God's elect people and not angelic beings can be seen by the reference to having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Revelation 15:6 ... having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Girdles are garments worn by priests. They are priestly attire:

Exodus 28:4 And these *are* the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a bordered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Exodus 29:9 And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

Also,

Leviticus 8:13 And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Aaron and his sons, the priests, were girded with girdles. Aaron the high priest was a type and figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, are often used by God to be a type and figure of those that Christ saved. We know that Jesus Himself performed the duties of a priest by offering up Himself as the Lamb of God. Significantly, we also find Jesus is pictured in a golden girdle:

Revelation 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Christ is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20). And the elect people of God are also said to be priests as we carry out certain spiritual tasks that have been given to us by God:

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

...

9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

God speaks of His people as prophets, priests, and kings. All those who became saved are a holy and royal priesthood. Remember the Greek word (Strong's #40) translated as "saint" is the same Greek word translated as "holy." In fact, the word "holy" used in 1 Peter 2:5 ("holy priesthood") is the same word translated as "saint." This allows us to understand that the holy priesthood is indeed a priesthood of saints.

Therefore, the clothing of the seven angels (the fine white linen which is the righteousness of the saints) indicates that their sins have been forgiven. And they are also said to be clothed with a golden girdle upon their breasts to indicate that they are holy (saintly) priests of God qualified to carry out whatever priestly duties have been assigned for them to do.

What exactly are the priestly duties God has given the seven angels to perform? We know that in the Old Testament, God gave the sons of Aaron the duties of offering sacrifices. Old Testament sacrifices, as laid out in Scripture, were designed by God to illustrate the necessity of punishment (death) for transgressions of the law of God. The animal sacrifice was always a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and the sacrifice He made for the sins of His chosen people at the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). The slaying of various animals, and their subsequent burning on the altar, typified the wrath of God's law exacting justice for transgressions against it.

The atonement of Christ accomplished at the foundation of the world was done on behalf of those certain people chosen by God's grace to receive it (Ephesians 1:4,5). For the rest of mankind, however, Christ's atonement was of no effect. It was not applicable to them because He did not die for their sins. Yet, God's law demands satisfaction for their sins as well. Judgment Day, our present time period, is the time wherein the law of God receives the satisfaction for sin that it demands. In the time of the world's final judgment, the people of the world themselves become the offering for their own sins. They become their own sacrifice for sin. That is, the death of the wicked is payment for their sins just as Christ's death paid for the sins of His people.

Sorrowfully, however, the great tragedy is that when the individual sinner dies for his own sins, he cannot come back (resurrect) once the payment of death has been made – because he is a finite creature incapable of overcoming the enormous destruction of his being that death brings. Jesus was able to overcome death and rise from the dead only because He was Almighty and infinite God. Thus, possessing all the power of God, He was able to be victorious over death. But man is not God. He is a mere finite creature. Weak and feeble, he will pay the penalty of death and die for his sin, and then remain dead eternally.

Ecclesiastes 8:8 *There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death:*

So, we see that the final judgment of mankind is similar to a sacrificial offering for sin. Which helps to explain these Scriptures which relate Judgment Day to sacrifices:

Isaiah 34:6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

And,

Ezekiel 39:17 And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, *even* a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.

Within the Vial is Found the Wrath of God

Since the wrath of God poured out upon sinners over the course of the prolonged Judgment Day period is akin to a sacrifice, we can see why it is that the Lord highlights the fact that seven angels are attired in golden girdles as they are called to go forth to perform their priestly duties. Again, what are the duties they are given to perform? Let us continue reading in Revelation 15 to find out more information:

Revelation 15:7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

One of the four beasts (referring to God Himself) gave seven golden vials full of the wrath of God to the seven angels. The image is striking. The wrath of God was confined to these vials. What did the vials which contained the wrath of God represent? Perhaps the best way to understand what the vials signified is by considering where the wrath of God can truly be found in this world. Is the wrath of God discovered due to

the various writings of men? Is God's wrath known and properly understood from the writings of various religions of the world? Or is it properly known in the world because it is found in man's philosophical writings? Though philosophers and religions may mention it, God's wrath does not originate there, nor is it truly understood by any of the world's literature. The fact is, that the wrath of God is only properly known and understood because it is extensively written about in the Holy Bible. From the beginning of the Bible (in the day you eat thereof you will surely die) to the end of the Bible (the first heaven and earth were passed away), the wrath of God upon sin and sinners is detailed on its pages. The Bible itself, therefore, is the container, or the vial, wherein is found the wrath of God.

And the seven (the number 7 points to perfection or its completion) last vials of the wrath of God are given to the saintly messengers (angels) of God to pour out on the earth:

Revelation 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

The task given to the seven angels of pouring out the seven last vials of the wrath of God on the earth is the same task given to the ten thousands of saints that Christ brings with Him to judge the world. Indeed, the pouring out of the vials is the way in which the saints fulfill their judgment of the world (1 Corinthians 6:1,2). Again, the vials contain God's wrath just as the Bible contains all the information having to do with God's wrath. And as God opens up the Scriptures at the time of the end, and grants His people understanding of the information He is revealing (Romans 2:5b), they, in turn, share those things with the world around them. And it is through the sharing of the Bible's teachings that the revelation of God's righteous judgment program is spread all over the world, or, as it is described in Revelation 16, poured out upon the nations of the world:

Revelation 16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

The seven plagues of God's wrath contained within those vials are poured out on the earth. This is God's doing. But it is the saints as God's messengers who are executing the judgment which has long been written in the Holy Bible:

Psalm 149:9 To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

Summary

In summary, we have learned that the petition, "Thy kingdom come," found in the Lord's Prayer, was actually a petition for God to save all of His chosen people, thus building His kingdom. The completion of the kingdom occurred once all to be saved, were saved. And once the kingdom of God was completed, the King (the Lord Jesus) would appear with His kingdom to execute judgment on the world.

We also learned that when the Bible speaks of Jesus returning with ten thousands of His saints, this is saying the same thing as Christ returning with His kingdom.

At this present time, which is the time of the world's final judgment, we can say that Jesus has come with all of His saints, and that the saints are actively engaged in their assigned task of pouring out God's wrath on the world by following the Bible's teachings and proclaiming them to all. The nobleman has returned. God's kingdom has come. The Judge of all the earth is here.

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E Bible Fellowship's New Open Forum

Dear Friend,

If you have a Bible question, you can call us to ask your question during E Bible Fellowship's New Open Forum program. For the latest schedule and how to call in, please visit www.ebiblefellowship.org.

You are also invited to listen to E Bible Fellowship's web radio station which broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The radio player link can be found on our website's main page (www.ebiblefellowship.org). E Bible Fellowship plays glorious and faithful songs and hymns of the kingdom of God. We also have many hours of Bible reading (from the King James Bible only) as well as many Bible study teachings, and various short feature programs such as "Types and Figures," "Scripture & Song," "Bible Quiz," "Where's That Bible Verse?", and others.

We're very glad that you have found this booklet, and it is our hope and prayer that the Lord may have saved you (prior to May 21, 2011) and is perhaps now drawing you ever closer to Himself (by drawing you to His Word, the Bible), and that the information you read here might be of help in that process.

Thank you! And may the Lord's perfect will be done.

About E Bible Fellowship

E Bible Fellowship was named for the following reasons:

Electronic: We believe that the Lord has used the electronic medium (radio, internet, etc.) in a tremendous way to save a great multitude of people outside of the churches and congregations of the world. Now the task at hand is to “feed His sheep” so that all those God has saved will be edified with the Gospel.

Bible: The Bible is our authority. No man-made confession, or creed, or doctrinal statement of any kind, has any authority above the Bible. We are living at a time when the Bible is being highly exalted by God. The Word of God is supreme in all it declares.

Fellowship: We are a fellowship of believers whose desire is to have fellowship with God through His Word. The Bible teaches us that the Church Age has come to an end; therefore, we have no affiliation or identification with any church or denomination of any kind.

1 John 1:3: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

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