

The Millennium Sabbath

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The plan of God for mankind, as we understand it, is a plan of seven thousand years and at the end of six thousand years, God is going to intervene and He is going to begin that thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ and the saints. Now, the seventh day—which is a thousand years—is what I am going to show you is a type of millennial Sabbath. So when Christ returns He will put an end to sin, rebellion, wars, and all corruption on this earth. And He is going to put an end to the immorality of it. Then He is going to, beginning with the nation of Israel, usher in everlasting righteousness. This world will be at peace and rest.

But before there can be peace and rest, something has to occur first. And before I begin to get into that, I just want to show you some things that early church writers wrote about this 7,000-year plan. They too believed in this and I am going to be quoting from Feast of Tabernacles' articles researched and written by Lester Grabbe, in the 1970s and 80s. I am sure many of you who were in the church back in the Worldwide Church of God days will probably remember Lester Grabbe, or at least some of his articles. David Grabbe knows him pretty well; he is related to him. Lester wrote a lot of articles in the Good News magazine.

Toward the end of the second century ^{AD}, Irenaeus, who was the Bishop of Lyon, France, also wrote about the subject of the 7,000-year plan. As a young man, he was a disciple of Polycarp. Many of you might know of Polycarp, who was an ordained Bishop of a monastery and had actually been a disciple of the apostle John. So this is the connection here.

Irenaeus wrote the book, *Against All Heresies*, as many have probably heard about. But therein he refers to the Millennium in a number of passages; and in one he writes, “For in as many days as this world was made—in so many thousand years, shall it be concluded.” And then he cited various things about the prophecies of God’s Kingdom on earth.

Now Hippolytus, who was actually a disciple of Irenaeus, also wrote about these things because he learned about them from Irenaeus.

In the early third century he wrote a commentary on the book of Daniel. And like so many others, he believed that God would intervene after six thousand years of human history. He wrote, “As six thousand years must needs be accomplished in order that the Sabbath may come; for the Sabbath is the type an emblem of the future kingdom for the saints when they should reign with Christ when He comes from heaven,” as John said in the Apocalypse.

We can see that they, too, believed in this. In the late third century, there was another one named Victorinus. I am not familiar with him at all, but he was of Polonia. He wrote a commentary on Revelation, in which he shows his acceptance of the Millennium. And he writes; “Wherefore, as I have narrated, that the true Sabbath will be in the seventh millennium of years when Christ and His elect shall reign.”

So we are looking at this as a Sabbath. We are entering into peace and rest when He comes, but something has to be done first. Turn with me now, if you would to:

Revelation 19:11-13 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.

So now we know that this is Jesus Christ, The Word of God—that is His name. If you look in many of the prophecies, when they talk about, ‘and the Word of God came to me,’ I have often wondered, did He actually appear to them as He did to Abraham? Maybe.

Revelation 19:14-16 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 [Here is another name of His]: KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses, and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

I want you to note this. There is going to be a supper there and these beasts are going to be eating on this flesh. It is going to be important.

Revelation 19:19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

We know that these ten kings are going to be given power and authority and they are going to be giving all their power and authority to the beast to fight against Jesus Christ. And that is exactly what it says in Revelation 17. I just wanted to make mention of that to you.

Revelation 19:20-21 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

We understand that Revelation is full of symbols. And whether Jesus Christ is going to come on a horse, I doubt it. Remember Charles Whitaker's sermon? He talked about Christ coming in the clouds. *Just as He went up in the clouds He will come back.* But this is symbolic. It is a white horse, because He is coming in righteousness and righteousness and is going to rule. And He is riding on a horse because horses back in those days, in biblical days, were used for war. He is coming to fight.

I want you to turn with me to Ezekiel 39, and we are going to begin in verse one. I really did not intend, when I was putting this thing together, to go this way but I saw this and I thought, “I’ve got to bring it out. We have got to look at it.” I think you will find it interesting.

Ezekiel 39:1 “And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshsech, and Tubal.”’

If you would, let us just flip right back to chapter 38 just for a minute, and get a glimpse of this over here because thirty-eight and thirty-nine talk about Gog.

Ezekiel 38:1-3 Now the word of the LORD came to me [There it is, see? Did He come to him in person? I do not know.], saying, “Son of man, set your face against Gog, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.”’

Now we have heard a lot about Gog and Magog over the years. I did not really know what it was about. But notice that Gog is not a land, or a group of people. He is a prince. Now, flip back with me to chapter 39. We are going to look at this a little closer as we go through. We will pick it up in verse two:

Ezekiel 39:2-4 “And I will turn you around, and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel. Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to the birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.”

Now, drop down to verse seventeen.

Ezekiel 39:17-18 And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God, “Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: “Assemble yourselves and come; gather yourselves from all sides to My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you, a great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams and lambs, of goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan.”

I guess even animals are going to be killed during this time.

Ezekiel 39:19-22 “You shall eat fat till you are full, and drink blood till you are drunk, at My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you. You shall be filled at My table with horses and riders, with mighty men and with all men of war, says the Lord God . I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward.”

What does it sound like? It is tempting to say that this is the same event and, indeed it may be, that occurred back in Revelation 19 that we read, the coming of Jesus Christ. I do not know of any other place in prophecy where this particular set of images is set forward; of this huge army coming down and God Himself killing them off, leaving their bodies out there to be eaten by ravenous birds and beasts. If this is the same event, then Gog is identified this chief prince with the beast, because it is ‘the beast’ in Revelation 19 whose armies are going to suffer this fate.

Okay, we have got a problem. Turn now back to Revelation 20. Let us pick this up in verse one:

Revelation 20:1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

That key represents authority. The chain represents power that God will have given to this angel, whoever it may be.

Revelation 20:2-3 He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while,

Have you ever wondered why God did that? Well, we will see. This is the time that we refer to as the Millennium. The Bible really does not use the word millennium; it uses Kingdom of God or 1000-year reign of Christ. Millennium is just a word we use because it means a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4 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 in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

The first resurrection, as it says in verse five.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Referring to those saints that will be ruling with Jesus Christ.

Revelation 20:6 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.

That is our goal! This is that period of time that we are celebrating at this Feast and it is going to be a great time of peace and prosperity. We will have to get to that in just a little while. What gets interesting is what comes next.

Revelation 20:7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. [They were not killed by the sword this time, were they? They were destroyed in the Lake of Fire.] The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

This is where people get confused. I did before. Is Gog and all his tribe coming down before the Millennium, or is Gog coming down after the Millennium? When is it? Revelation 19 and Ezekiel 39 talk about Gog, the prince of the land of Magog going up against Christ at His return.

You can search through history and you will never find Gog and Magog. There is no history about them. So here are my thoughts about them:

This Gog, the prince of Magog, is most likely a demon, one of Satan's high ranking princes. There is only one other reference in the Bible to a chief prince that I know of and do you know who that is? I am sure many of you already know and that is, Michael, the archangel. Michael is not only an archangel. The Scripture says he is *the* archangel. He is the only angel that has ever been called an archangel although these other angels are certainly high ranking angels.

It is my opinion, but I think that Michael is the highest-ranking angel under Jesus Christ. Remember in the book of Daniel when Daniel began to pray and fast, God sent Gabriel to him right away with a message for him. Well, Gabriel was held up twenty-one days by who? One of Satan's princes, right? The prince of Persia. He had to call on Michael to come and help him because Michael has more power and authority. Then when Gabriel was finished he had to go back because he said the prince of Greece was coming. These are not humans, these are spirits that we are talking about. And he said, only Michael, one of the chief princes, stands with me.

So we can see, that these princes over the nations, and the chief prince Gog, are most likely spirits under Satan.

I brought this to your attention because when I was looking into this I saw that God used Gog, the chief prince to gather the armies together to fight against Christ at His coming. And I always thought Gog was used after the thousand years to bring these armies against Jerusalem when God would enact His final judgment and bring the Lake of Fire on them. And I thought you may have been thinking the same way I was thinking. So now we know, if you agree with me.

I was going to just bring out the first war to show that there can be absolutely no peace on this earth until the wicked were put away.

There was a time when there was a threat of Communism. If you could killed all the Communists in the world, would the evil go away? No. How about Hitler and his band of Nazis? When they were destroyed, did the evil go away? No. What did it do? It just took on the form of a different type of mask. Now we have jihad and terrorists. It is the same spirit, the same evil because Satan has not died.

Please turn to Isaiah 14. This is after Satan and all his demons and all the wicked people, Satan's seed, are put into the abyss, and they are all dead.

Isaiah 14:1 For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob.

Isaiah 14:3-6 It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve [This is that millennial rest, this is that Millennium Sabbath], that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon [Who is the king of Babylon? This is a reference to Satan himself], and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased! [Remember the statue with the golden head? That was the first great Gentile ruling nation.] The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers

[spiritual rulers of darkness. He has broken them up now. They are put away.] He [Satan, that is the way I see it.] who struck the people [anytime you see “the people” in prophecy, it is generally speaking of Israel] in wrath with a continual stroke . . .

That means that he was just relentless. And, I think God got mad at him because of this, God was angered that he almost destroyed the whole nation of Israel. God turned this over for him to do that. He lifted his protection over Israel for their punishment.

Isaiah 14:6 He who ruled the nations [that is the Gentiles] in anger, is persecuted and no one hinders.

You see, God is going to persecute Satan and there is no one who can stop Him.

Isaiah 14:7 The whole earth is at rest and is quiet; they break forth into singing.

What you have to see here is that this is written in a poetic style. This is like poetry; you know the earth does not sing.

Isaiah 14:8 Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, “Since you were cut down, no woodsman has come up against us.”

Well, these trees cannot talk, but they can in poetry, right?

Isaiah 14:9 Hell from beneath [the bottom, the abyss] is excited [quivers] about you to meet you at your coming . . .

I did a lot of research on this several years back, it has been a good while back, and that is why I am bringing out this a little bit here, because I believe this to be a reference to Satan in the abyss with his demons, his rulers. He says, because

Isaiah 14:9-10 . . . it stirs up the dead [opens their eyes. Dead refers to the dead and fallen angels.] for you, even all the chief ones of the earth [the dark rules down in the abyss]; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. They all shall speak and say to you: ‘Have you also become weak as we? Have you become like us?’

You know, they thought Satan was like God’ that is why they followed him. A third of these angels followed Satan, they looked at him as their king and their god. Or they thought he was like God.

Isaiah 14:12 How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, . . .

Well, that word, Lucifer, is not a correct translation, by the way. The word Lucifer is a Latin word that means light bearer or light bringer. I do not think any of you have ever seen the letter written by, I believe it was, Frank Nelte. He brought this out about the word Lucifer. It did not come into being until the early AD 400s by the Catholic scholar, Jerome.

Actually, the Pope wanted him to translate the Hebrew and Greek scriptures into the Latin, and he did. He is the one that translated them to what we call the Latin Vulgate. And in there, he changed the name Helel, which is the only name which is ever mentioned about Satan, other than Satan himself. That is the only time his Hebrew name was ever mentioned. But Helel, he changed to Lucifer because Lucifer is, you know, pretty deceiving, conniving. But he also translated Lucifer in another place; in the Latin Vulgate, you can see that.

In II Peter 1:19, I did not write it down. I was just going by my own thoughts on this where he wrote about the ‘morning star rises in your hearts.’ It is a reference to Jesus Christ. That word for morning star, is *fasha*; it is a Greek word. It is exactly the same thing as for Lucifer, light-bearer or light-bringer. He translated it ‘lucifer’ with a small letter, *l*. The real light-bearer and light-bringer is our Lord Jesus Christ, not Satan. He says:

Isaiah 14:12 How are you cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!

Now we know who this is, Satan.

The Feast that we are keeping pictures this time of quiet. It is a time of rest and peace. It is a time when Jesus Christ will begin to usher in that everlasting righteousness. But we, brethren, have not been called to live this coming time in the flesh.

We have been called to be changed into that which is incorruptible, an immortal spirit being; just like Jesus Christ, ruling with him during this millennium Sabbath.

Jesus warned us, though, that there would be only the few who would choose that narrow gate. Remember that. That difficult road leads to life. And He also warned several times, and He repeated that many were called, but only a few were chosen. You know why you are here? Because we are amongst the chosen. But, we have to make our calling and election sure.

So I want to show you at the end of this, I was not planning on doing this, but for some reason, I was just boom, boom. You have got to do it! I *had* to do it. So I want to show you a way that we can do this. That it is just one way of making this calling and election sure. We are going to look at a parable again. Only this time I want to stress a point of it in Matthew 25. I might just quote a couple of things here for you. You do not have to go here; you can just go on to Matthew.

Galatians 4:19 [Paul says] My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Brethren, Christ is in us, He lives in us. Think about that as we go through this. We are going to read the parable; starting in:

Matthew 25:31-33 “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.”

And we could think about that in our nation.

Matthew 25:34-40 “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: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

I will stress this in just a minute. Look at the other side.

Matthew 25:41-44 “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’”

You know, if Christ was right here, you would minister to Him, right? “Lord, You know we would minister to You.”

Matthew 25:45 “Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

Why, because Christ is in them. Christ is in us. When you look around at each other, how we treat each other, is how we treat Jesus Christ! He did not say it was “like” doing it to Me. He said, “You did not do it to Me.”

If we have relationship issues, we have relationship issues with Christ. If we accuse another brother, we are accusing Jesus Christ. You know if we could just look at each other, as if we were looking at Jesus Christ Himself, because Christ is in us—and we are in Him.

We should treat each other the way that we would treat Christ, if He was here. We would then begin to see a huge difference in our relationships with each other. We would truly begin to see our love for one another grow tremendously in this family, in this small family, the body of Christ.

And if we do that, we will fulfill the words of Jesus and what He said about His disciples. Remember, He said that they would be known for the great love that they have for each other. Are we known for that yet? We should be, and we will be, if we look at each other as if we are looking at Christ. Treat each other as if you were treating Jesus Christ Himself. And remember: love covers a multitude of sins.