

The Church of the Servant King

Thursday Night Bible Study

The Gospel of Matthew

(Thurs_Matt7)

INTRODUCTION

Matthew chapter 7 is the last of three chapters that cover Jesus' teaching to His disciples in what is known commonly as the Sermon on the Mount. We have seen in previous lessons that Jesus is teaching His disciples kingdom values and principles. We have also seen that in addition to the fact that certain similarities to Church Age values and principles exist, there are also differences that must be appreciated by the discerning student of God's Word.

While the resurrected Church Age believer will be a co-regent with Christ during the Messianic, millennial reign, thus a participant in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, there is no such kingdom present today.¹ The fact that we will participate in the Kingdom has led some to conclude that the Church is part of a mystery form of the kingdom to which these principles apply. However, I have problems with such a position because it creates more difficulties than it solves. The distinctions that exist between kingdom teaching and Church Age teaching can only lead to contradiction and confusion under such an approach. Others have acknowledged the same issues and we will see them in time.

Do Not Judge (7:1-6)

1 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. 6 "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:1-6)

We must remember that in these verses, Jesus is teaching His disciples. The verb "judge" is the Greek word *krino* (Gr. κρινω) and it has a wide range of meanings, e.g. judge in a judicial sense, condemn, or discern. (The context does not warrant an application to the law courts since Jesus is not teaching about judicial proceedings). Jesus is not forbidding them to practice of any kind of judgment at all. Such an interpretation would create a foolish naiveté to be practiced by the disciples.

The moral distinctions included in this Sermon require that decisive judgments be made by the disciples. For instance:

- Jesus teaches that they can remove a "speck" from their brother's eye, but only after they have removed the beam from their own eye.
- To remove the speck from one's own eye requires judgment (cf. 1 Cor 11:31 – "*But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.*")
- In verse 6, judgment or discernment is obviously required in order to distinguish between dogs and swine – not to mention in verse 15 the need to beware of false prophets.

¹ The understanding that resurrected believers of the present dispensation will be co-regents with Jesus Christ during His millennial kingdom reign is widely accepted among most dispensationalists. See the **Appendix** to these notes for a supporting argument from Scripture for this conclusion.

Instead of teaching that the disciples should never judge, Jesus was teaching that they should judge righteously (see **John 7:24** – “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”) Such a principle is certainly consistent with Paul’s teaching to the Church Age Body of Christ believer found in such passages as 1 Corinthians 5:3-5; 6:5; Galatians 1:8-9; and Philipians 3:2 as well as other passages such as 1 John 4:1 where the believer is exhorted to exercise discernment.

For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, **have already judged him** who has so committed this, as though I were present. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Cor 5:3-5)

I say this to your shame Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to **decide** between his brethren. (1 Cor 6:5)

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a **gospel contrary** to what we have preached to you, **he is to be accursed!** 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a **gospel contrary** to what you received, **he is to be accursed!** (Gal 1:8-9)

Beware of the **dogs**, beware of the **evil workers**, beware of the **false circumcision**. (Phil 3:2)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 Jn 4:1)

Furthermore, without such an understanding of the believer’s responsibility to judge righteously, contradictions between the passages just cited which encourage righteous discernment and Romans 14:10-13 and James 4:11-12 which warn against judgment inevitably arise.

10 But you, **why do you judge your brother?** Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

11 For it is written,

“AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME,
AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.”

12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

13 Therefore **let us not judge one another anymore**, but rather determine this-- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way. (Rom 14:10-13)

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but **who are you who judge your neighbor?** (Jas 4:11-12)

The principle: Be discerning without arrogance or presumptuousness. Be discerning with an attitude of humility recognizing your own position before the Lord.

Focus on Verse 6 – “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

Question: To what did Jesus refer when He said “do not give what is holy?” What was holy?

Answer: This could be several things. Phase 2 truth presented to the unbeliever. Phase 2 truth presented to the reversionistic believer.² Phase 1 truth presented to the hardened unbeliever who hates Jesus, Biblical truth and the believer.

In the figure used by the Lord in this passage, “holy” refers to the animal sacrifices of which no unclean person could partake (cf. Lev 22:6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 16). Dogs were unclean animals, a term that the Jews applied to Gentiles (Matt 15:26). If pearls are cast to the swine, they will quickly determine that they are not edible food like acorns or peas and trample them underfoot.

There is Phase 1 truth in Scripture that is intended for the unsaved – the gospel. There is Phase 2 truth in Scripture that is intended for the believer. To minister Phase 2 truth to the unbeliever is like casting pearls before swine. The unregenerate mind will not tolerate spiritual realities. Even the believer who is in reversionism and negative to spiritual matters will reject Phase 2 truth. When God gave manna from heaven to the wandering Israelites, they treated it with contempt and longed for the leeks and the garlic and fleshpots of Egypt (Num 11:4-6).

There is probably a sense in which this teaching in verse 6 can be applied to the hardened unbeliever. Verse 6 is not a directive against evangelizing the Gentiles or unbelievers. Rather, it is a reference to those who have given clear evidence of rejecting the gospel with vicious scorn and a hardened heart, i.e. those who are blatant enemies of the gospel. An example of this type of rejection from an enemy of the gospel was Herod Antipas, who heard John gladly, but then beheaded him. Another example will be the Anti-Christ and his followers during the Tribulation period.

Later, when Christ stood before Herod, he said nothing. Jesus later repeated similar teaching to the disciples in 10:14 and 15:14.

"Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. (Matt 10:14)

"Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." (Matt 15:14)

² *Reversionism* is simply a term used to describe the spiritual status of the believer or unbeliever who has rejected applicable Truth. By using the phrase “spiritual status,” I am referring to the fact that *reversionism* is not simply an aberration in thought or behavior that is induced by a single act of sin in one’s life. Rather, the believer or unbeliever in the spiritual status of *reversionism* has rejected Truth – either after being exposed to Truth or by making a conscious decision to avoid or not avail him/herself to Truth. In either case, when Truth is neglected or rejected, a vacuum is created in the soul into which the thought paradigm of the cosmos, influenced by the sin nature, fills the void that remains. I have chosen to adopt this term from a respected Bible teacher and theologian, R.B. Thieme, Jr. As is true in all cases where I have benefited from and adopted terms and concepts from other theologians, it does not necessarily imply that I endorse everything that they have taught or every position that they may promote. I reserve the right to alter the definition of terms and the development of concepts if and where necessary to more appropriately align with what I believe Scripture to teach. Nevertheless, in order to be spiritually and intellectually honest, I must acknowledge and give credit to those who inspired me with their efforts. R.B. Thieme, Jr.’s development of the term *reversionism* can be found in the book by the same name – *Reversionism*, (Houston, Texas: Berachah Tapes and Publications, 1978). I sometimes use the term “components” instead of “stages” because the latter seems to imply a greater degree of independent, chronological progression or sequence than the former. While there is a degree of chronological progression or sequence involved in the “components” or “stages,” there is also a sense in which all components can exist simultaneously. At the same time, it must also be acknowledged that there can be a progression through the stages or components in a logical sequence and that progression can occur rapidly or over a period of years, generally in a cyclical fashion with increased intensity with each repeat cycle. The components or stages of *reversionism* are: reaction, frantic search for happiness, operation boomerang, emotional revolt of the soul, negative volition toward doctrine, blackout of the soul, scar tissue of the soul and reverse process *reversionism*. This Biblical concept is developed more fully in a separate set of notes.

We find a similar principle in Proverbs 9:8 – “*Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.*”

The same principle holds true for the Church Age believer as found in such passages as Acts 13:44-51; 18:5-6; 28:17-28; Titus 3:10-11. The difference is that the truth that is rejected is not the gospel of the kingdom, it is the gospel of grace through Jesus Christ’s completed work – very similar in some ways, but distinct in others.

44 The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. 46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 "For so the Lord has commanded us,

'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES,
THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH."

When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. (Acts 13:44-51)

But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." (Acts 18:5-6)

10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, 11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11)

Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking (7:7-12)

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 "Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! 12 "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matt 7:7-12)

The Sermon on the Mount sets forth the righteousness, sincerity, humility, purity, and love which would characterize the lives and attitudes of those who were ready to enter the Kingdom. Jesus assures His disciples that such characteristics would be theirs if pursued with prayer. The sermon started with a blessing pronounced upon those who acknowledged that they did not have the means within themselves to enter the kingdom (5:3 – “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*”)

Then Jesus provided the model prayer in 6:9-13. Now Jesus uses the present tense for “ask,” “seek,” and “knock” to stress the persistence and sincerity that would characterize such a

person who would be spiritually aligned with kingdom spiritual realities. The emphasis is upon the continual action required.

In context, the disciples would have most likely understood this instruction as related to seeking the righteousness of the kingdom (6:33). Also, if the disciples were intently focused upon insuring that they were each measuring up to the standards required by God, several things would result. First, they would be poor in spirit (5:3) for they would realize how short they fell compared to God's standard. Second, they would be focused upon removing the plank from their own eye before looking at the speck in their brother's eye. Finally, they would treat others graciously (7:12).

The Narrow Way (7:13-14)

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matt 7:13-14)

The Sermon on the Mount ends with four warnings. Each offers a set of paired contrasts, i.e. two ways (vv. 13-14), two trees (vv. 15-20), two claims (vv. 21-23), and two builders (vv. 24-27). The focus is upon the judgment that will be meted out before entry into the Kingdom of Heaven (i.e. the Millennium) will occur.

In these two verses (vv. 13-14), Jesus is teaching His disciples that the way of discipleship is narrow or restricting because it is the way of persecution and opposition. This is a major theme in Matthew (e.g. 5:10-12, 44; 10:16-39; 11:11-12; 24:4-13). The narrow road leads to life in the kingdom (vv. 21-23) whereas the broad road leads to destruction (25:24, 46).

Similar principles are taught to the Church Age believer in relation to life after death as well as suffering in this life in Philippians 3:19, 1 Timothy 6:9-10, and Hebrews 10:39. The difference is that the immediate potential of the Kingdom is not present to the Church Age believer as it was when Jesus taught His disciples.

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. (Phil 3:19)

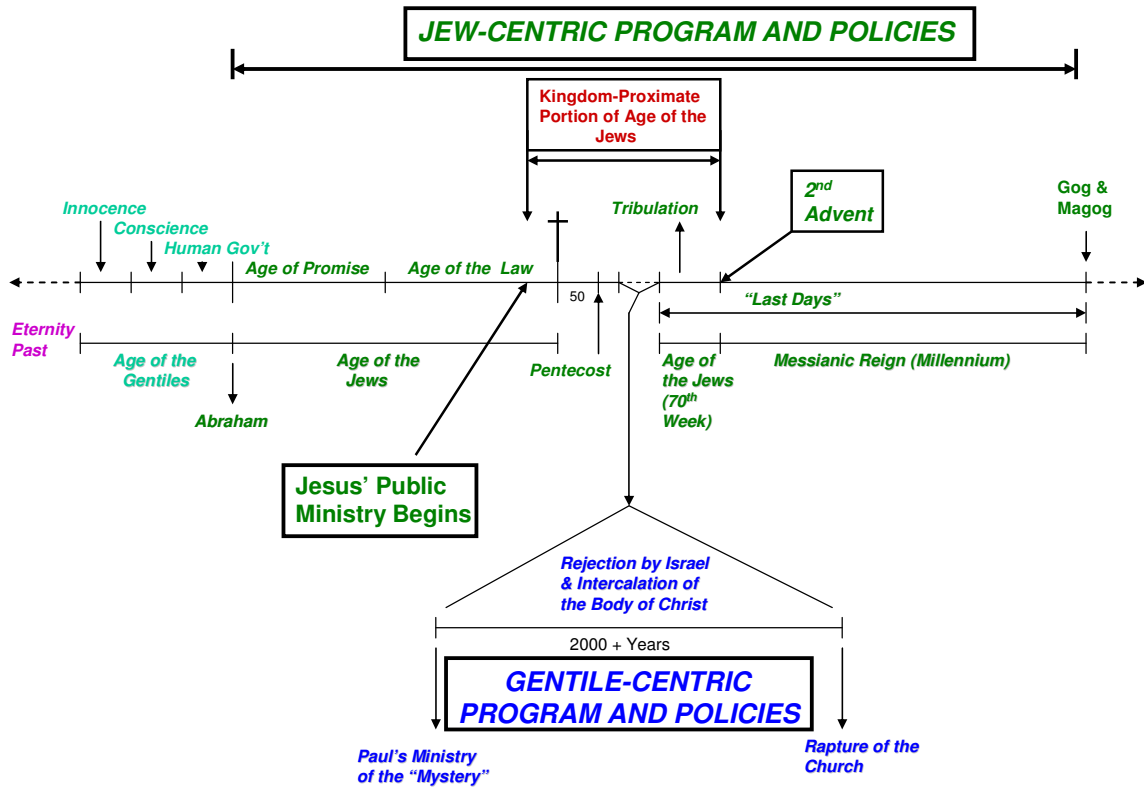
9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Tim 6:9-10)

39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. (Heb 10:39)

You Will Know Them By Their Fruits (7:15-20)

15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits. (Matt 7:15-20)

This teaching was directed to those who live during the **kingdom-proximate portion** of God's **Jewish-centric** period of human history (see diagram).



Believers who live during the future Tribulation will find particular relevance to this instruction (cf. 24:11). Note that those who will be known by their fruits are the false teachers. There is no statement as such in reference to believers, i.e. we can know believers by their fruits. Such a statement is as inaccurate as generalizing that an unbeliever can be known by his/her fruits. Certainly, false teachers exist during the Church Age and that fact is recognized in such passages as 1 Timothy 6:4-5 and 2 Timothy 2:14-19.

4 he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. (1 Tim 6:4-5)

14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His,"

and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."
(2 Tim 2:14-19)

Two Claims (7:21-23)

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

In this pericope, Jesus continues His teaching regarding false teachers and claimants to the right to enter the kingdom. "That day" in verse 22 is the day of judgment associated with the 2nd Advent of Christ. Jesus will have more to say about "that day" in 25:31-46. Such a day was the focus of some prophetic teaching in such passages as Malachi 4:1-3. The Church Age is not exempt from false teachers (see 2 Timothy 3:5).

5 Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. (2 Tim 3:5)

Two Builders (7:24-27)

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall."

The storm to which Jesus refers in His metaphor is eschatological and a reference to "that Day." (See Isaiah 28:16-17 and Ezekiel 13:10-13 for similar phraseology). The wise man is the disciple of humility who incorporates Jesus teaching into practice and thereby prepares himself for entry into the Kingdom. Unlike the religious leaders of Jesus' day, Jesus taught based upon His Own authority and not the authority of others. Jesus is the One Who grants admission into the Kingdom.

16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,
"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone,
A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed.
He who believes in it will not be disturbed.
17 "I will make justice the measuring line
And righteousness the level;
Then hail will sweep away the refuge of lies
And the waters will overflow the secret place. (Isa 28:16-17)

10 "It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace. And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash; 11 so tell those who plaster it over with whitewash, that it will fall. A flooding rain will come, and you, O hailstones, will fall; and a violent wind will break out. 12 "Behold, when the wall has fallen, will you not be asked, 'Where is the plaster with which you plastered it?'" 13 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "I will make a violent wind break out in My wrath. There will also be in My anger a flooding rain and hailstones to consume it in wrath. (Ezek 13:10-13)

APPENDIX

Who returns with Christ and constitutes His army? – There are several passages that, when combined, provide us with an answer to this question. Consider the following:

- **Resurrected saints from the Age of Israel –**
 - “Your dead will live, their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and **the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.**” (Isa 26:19)³
 - “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 “And **many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.** 3 “And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” (Dan 12:1-3)
 - “And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand...But as for you, go your way to the end; then **you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age.**” (Dan 12:9-10, 13)
- **Angels –** “...and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His **angels** with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of the sky to the other.” (Matt 24:30b-31)
- **Resurrected saints from the Tribulation –** The following passages allude to such a conclusion.
 - “And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, ‘Write, “**Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!**” ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors for their deeds follow with them.’” (Rev 14:13)⁴
 - “And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and **those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name**, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.” (Rev 15:2)
 - “These [the Beast and those aligned with him] will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and **those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.**” (Rev 17:14)
 - “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in the fine linen, bright and clean; for the **fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**” (Rev 19:7-8)
 - “And the **armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean**, were following Him on white horses.” (Rev 19:14)⁵

³ This passage is set within the context of the Age of Israel and Isaiah is addressing the children of Israel. There seems to be no passage that establishes with clarity the timing of the resurrection of believers who died prior to the Age of Israel. However, most dispensationalists associate the resurrection of the saints from that period of human history with the 2nd Advent.

⁴ See the notes from the previous session in which I discussed the close association between salvation faith and works in passages that deal with periods of human history that are proximate to the establishment of the kingdom.

- *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (Rev 20:4)*

Are believers of the present age, the Church Age Body of Christ, members of Christ's army at His 2nd Advent? – Paul alludes to us ruling and reigning with Christ and our appearance with Him; however, details are lacking. Traditionally, dispensationalists have provided the missing details from passages that are Jewish in context.

- We will appear with Him in glory; however, the exact nature of our role is unclear. In addition, the timing of passages that reference our coming with Christ is in reference to the Rapture.
 - *“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” (Col 3:4)*
 - *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.” (1 Thess 4:14)⁶*
 - *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thess 4:16-17)*
- Scripture references our heir-ship with Christ and our reign with Him; however, details regarding the relationship of our inheritance and reign to the Millennium are few. Again, most dispensationalists allude to passages that are Jewish and/or Age of Israel in context (e.g. Matt 16:24-27; 19:28-29; Lu 22:28-30 and probably Rev 2:26-27; 3:21 are examples).
 - *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of glory of the children of God.” (Rom 8:16-21 cf. Heb 1:1-2)*
 - *“Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Or do you not know that **the saints will judge the world?** And if **the world is judged by you**, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?” (1 Cor 6:1-3)*

⁵ While the riders of the horses in this verse could be angels since angels have been similarly described previously in Revelation as clothed in clean and bright linen (15:6), the immediate context of 19:14 seems to indicate that it is resurrected humans that are the subject of this passage (19:7-8).

⁶ On the surface, this verse seems to reference the 2nd Advent and if true, would lead us to the conclusion that Paul is saying that believers of the present age return with Christ at His 2nd Advent. However, in the verses immediately following, Paul indicates that believers who are alive at Jesus' coming (the Rapture) will meet Jesus and the believers who have already died in the air (1 Thess 4:17). The *Expositor's Commentary* clarifies with the following. “Though we might expect Paul to write ‘God will raise’ instead of ‘God will bring with Jesus,’ he used the latter because of an unexpressed connection in his mind between the two ideas. To be brought with Jesus presupposes rising from the dead as part of the process (v. 16). The words ‘God will bring’ point to a continuing movement heavenward after the meeting in the air (v. 17), until the arrival in the Father's presence A more detailed analysis of the process follows (*gar*, v. 15).” Frank E. Gaebelin, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989-1998), electronic version.

- *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” (Phil 3:20-21)*
- *“...therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so **that** you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.” (2 Thess 1:4-5) [There is some association between believers of the present age and the kingdom based upon passages such as this].*
- *“It is a trustworthy statement: ‘For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.’” (2 Tim 2:11-12)*
- *“In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Tim 4:8)*
- *“...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” (Titus 2:13)*
- *“For He did not subject to angels the world to come...” (Heb 2:5)*
- *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven** for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith **for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time**. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 1:3-7)*