

The Future's So Bright I Gotta Wear Shades by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

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What We Have to Look Forward To

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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Some of you may remember the popular song from the 1980s called, *The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades*. It was performed by a group called Timbuk Three. I think that was the only song they ever had that did well. It may have even been used in a "Back to the Future" movie or some other teen flick.

But, I feel that the title, *The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades*, is true from that standpoint. We, indeed, have a bright and glorious future ahead of us! As resurrected children of God, the Bible says, we will shine like the sun! And, boy will we need shades then—just to see God's reflected glory in all of us.

Among all the bad news and difficult times that the Church of God has experienced over the past dozen years, we may have let this truth slip from our consciousness. Embroiled in the bad times, sometimes we forget the promises of the good times that are ahead.

But, some of our children having grown up, quite literally, and quite a bit over these last dozen years, may be practically unaware of the conditions in the wonderful world tomorrow, because we have not talked about it! We have been busy talking about the problem—us, basically. We have been busy talking about how we can get back on track. And that is very necessary.

But look! Good times are coming!

We still have some bad times to get over—and very bad times (I am not going to sneeze at the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord, whatsoever). But in the not too distant future we will be in the Millennium and the world tomorrow. What a great time that is going to be!

Herbert Armstrong emphasized the Millennium during his years of preaching. He wrote about it very frequently. He always pointed us toward the good times that are ahead, even if he was dwelling on the beast, or the false prophet, or the coming United States of Europe, or the Great Tribulation, or the Day of the Lord, or world conditions of one sort or another. But, he always said that there is a bright future out ahead of us, beyond all this other stuff. He had a good reason for doing that. It gives us something good to look forward to beyond the horror of destruction. For beyond the terror is real peace, real security, real prosperity, real health (and boy am I ready for that!). We will have real

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happiness, which we only now have a pale glimpse of from the pages of the Bible. And thank God that He put it there!

So, today I want to use my sermon time to take another peek into the Millennium, to go back and do that typical Feast of Tabernacles sermon where we look into the pages of the Bible, and we just gaze upon the Millennium as best we can. And just to be encouraged that there are good times coming. That the "Future *is* so Bright, We Gotta Wear Shades!"

Never forget that!

But, like I said, bad times are coming first, and we have to see how the Millennium comes about, because that sets the stage. The tribulation and the Day of the Lord set the stage for the Millennium itself. So, we need to see the need for the Millennium and the way that God will bring it about.

Sometime in the near future (and we hope sooner than later), world events will accelerate to the point of no return. Who knows, we may be seeing the beginnings of that now. The stock market went down 58 points yesterday after it rallied from being down over 200 points last week.

But the world's condition, as far as economics go, is very poor. Who knows how much this Asian crisis will take in the rest of the world. It is not the Asian crisis any more. That is just a phrase they use. It has affected South America to a degree. Obviously, it has pulled in Russia, and who knows how many more dominoes will fall before somebody steps in to take some control of the situation.

But, economics are only one part of it.

Politics can be closely allied with economics. We have got a weasel in Washington who is there for two more years. The Germans just elected a centrist Chancellor who is cozying up to the Greens in a so-called Red/Green Alliance. Who knows what that will bring about? The Greens are leftists. Remember, a small party like the Nazis took over while being a minority party. It could happen again. Who knows? I do not know what is going to happen. But, I know that things are right on the verge. They could happen any time. One slip in the shower or on a banana peel, and who knows what might come tumbling down.

But, in the midst of all that, a great leader will arise, who is assisted by a charismatic miracle-working religious figure whom we call the Beast and the False Prophet. They

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will arise, and together from what the Bible reveals in Revelation 13 and 17, they will convince a large part of the world to follow them, to give them their strength. And they will use this strength to try to take over the world and establish their own new world order.

But at the same time, God will begin to punish the nations of Israel for their idolatry, for their law-breaking, their Sabbath breaking, and raping of the land, their breaking of the covenant. Great natural disasters, famines, and disease epidemics will kill millions of Israelites and billions on the face of the earth, who get caught in that terrible punishment. War will erupt, causing massive destruction and loss of life.

Finally, the Beast, with all the power that he has, will conquer those Israelite nations and take the remainder of the people into captivity and slavery. And "Bye, Bye, Miss American Pie." Bye, bye John Bull (too). Bye, bye to the Australian figures, and South African figures, and the French figures, and the Western European figures—whatever they call themselves. They will become history. They will be swallowed up by the Beast, who is given 'an hour' in which to terrorize the planet. And a lot of that terror is upon Israel as the wrath of God's anger.

We typically call this time The Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble—Israel's trouble. But, when Israel is troubled the whole world is troubled, because everything revolves around Israel in God's plan.

The church, of course, is just a small and spiritual part of Israel. But, God is still working with that physical part of the nation of Israel, because He wants Israel to be the leader when He opens up the Millennium. He still wants them to be the model nation. And He will begin with Israel and take in the rest of the world.

But, before then, He has to give them a terrible spanking, because they have not lived up to their oath.

God will punish them. And when that is complete, the Day of the Lord will begin. That is when He begins to take out His wrath upon the entire world. He will let Satan go, allowing him to do a great many things, and He will open the seven seals, the seven trumpet plagues, the seven vials or bowls of God's wrath. There is a lot of stuff. That is, a lot of people dead, a lot of misery and heartaches, and a great deal of destruction. It is not a pretty picture.

All of these will whittle the population of the earth down to maybe about 10 percent remaining. He will tithe the earth. Some think it might be less than that. But even so,

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starting with 5.5 billion people, there will be many survivors to work with when the Millennium begins.

Great areas of the earth will be devastated by the time Christ is ready to return, and many areas will be unable to support life because of the destruction. People will begin streaming back toward Jerusalem, especially the sons of Israel.

In a last ditch effort at their world supremacy, two great armies will converge on Jerusalem—the Beast, of course, will have his headquarters there; and to meet them, will be a great army of 200,000,000 men marching out of Asia. It is a great confederation we used to call the communist hordes, but who knows if they are going to remain communist.

Whatever they are, they will be coming with a sting in their tail, and they will want to take over from the Beast. And in one great last ditch effort called the Battle of Armageddon, they will meet. But, that battle is really called, "That Battle of that Great Day of God Almighty." It is not their battle, it is His battle. One final splat. We can read about it in Zechariah, where the flesh is just melted off their bodies in a great miracle of destruction. It is when God says, "I rule here, and I have had it up to here with your rebellion! Now I am going to show you how I live and how My people live, and you are going to like it."

Turn to Joel 3 and see some of these things of this last titanic battle. I just want you to see what the Bible says about this great battle of God Almighty.

Joel 3:9-10 Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords. . .

That is just the opposite of what He says is going to happen in the Millennium.

Joel 3:10-16 . . .and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.'" Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. [The mighty ones are His angels—His army.] "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness *is* great." Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the Day of the Lord is

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near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Now turn to Zechariah 14, and let the scriptures do the talking.

Zechariah 14:1-4 Behold, the Day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.

Zechariah 14:12 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True. . .

Understand this! His return comes because He *is* Faithful and True! It is God's faithfulness that brings the Millennium, and also brings this destruction, because He does what He says He will do. And He punishes for sin. He is faithful to His own law. This is something that has to happen. And He will do it.

Revelation 19:11 . . .and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

If there ever was a righteous war, this will be it, because man has taken advantage of God's mercy far too long, and they deserve every drop of dissolved flesh and every other curse and plague that God metes out. Luckily, this is not a final end because they

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have been deceived. But, this is righteousness, justice, and faithfulness, which He shows to all who are witness to it!

Revelation 19:12 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.

Now is that not interesting? We will get a new name when we get that white stone, and the hidden manna, and Jesus will return back to this earth with His own new name. It shows you where we fit in, does it not?

Revelation 19:13-15 He was clothed with a robe dipped in [His own] blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

I see an answer there to Joel 3, where the winepress was full. He is the one who treads within it and crushes them.

Revelation 19:16-17 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LOORD OF LOORDS. 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. . .

What a name for a battle! It is not only the battle of the Great God Almighty, but the "Supper of the Great God," that is for all the carrion birds. God will let His creatures feast. Gruesome is it not? But true!

Revelation 19:18-21 . . .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." And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 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

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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.

Very gruesome! But, a necessary, righteous, faithful, and just punishment!

I know it does not sound good for those of you who have queasy stomachs, but it is part of our history in advance, as Mr. Armstrong used to call prophecy.

One more little vignette of this:

Revelation 14:17-20 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. [This is going back to Joel 3 again.] And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, 'Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.' So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

My margin says, 184 miles!

That is what leaks out of the winepress of God's wrath. Do you think that this was long in coming, according to God? Do you think that He would do something this savage, gruesome, if it was not justly deserved. I do not think so. But, we have to start here, unfortunately, because He has to clear out the scum. He has to clear out the rebellion. He has to start as fresh as He can. And, this is the way that He chooses to do it. So, a complete victory will have been won. He will have cut down all rebellion.

Of course, we know this is to fulfill the Feast of Trumpets in God's plan. As great a fall, as the fall of Jericho was, will be the fall of mankind. God gave Israel a complete victory at Jericho. And they shouted with a great shout, like the sounding of a trumpet, and God delivered Israel. And they were able to enter the promised land through the gate of Jericho.

This victory of God at the great battle of the great supper for the birds will be the gate to

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the Millennium for Israel.

The other great thing that He has to do before the Millennium begins is found in chapter 20, verses 1 through 3. I will not spend a lot of time on this because I spent my whole sermon on the Day of Atonement on this subject.

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, 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,...

This always made me laugh a little bit. He Shut him up! "Shut up, Satan!" So he could not influence anyone anymore.

Revelation 20:3 . . .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.

And he will get one small chance, after God has had His 1000 years to show His way.

This day, as we saw last week, fulfills the Day of Atonement because now God and men will have a real chance to be united and be at-one, to learn and to grow.

Now, we did consider the implications of this last Wednesday when we thought a bit about what the world would be like without the influence of Satan. It is almost unimaginable. It is such a tremendous thing to even *think* of him not being around. For him not to be around is even greater.

To think that all the bad habits that we have learned will still have to be overcome, but we will not have that devil over one shoulder always dragging us by the ear into the slop. Men will finally begin to see things from an entirely different perspective. And that perspective, of course, is God's perspective.

Then, they will begin to have access to the Spirit and see things from God's point of view. And all those attitudes of vanity, and jealousy, and lust, and greed, and deceit, and hatred will begin to diminish and be replaced by the Godly virtues: humility, goodness, meekness, gentleness, peace, and love, and whatever other Godly virtues

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that there are.

This will truly be the beginnings of utopia here on earth. When God begins to re-wind the tape to the way it was in Eden before sin darkened the door there.

Turn back to Zephaniah 3, and we will begin to see some things that will begin to change.

Zephaniah 3:8 "Therefore wait for Me," says the LOORD, "Until the day I rise up for plunder]That is where we are now. We are waiting for God to rise up for plunder.] My determination is to gather the nations To My assembly of kingdoms. . .

Here He calls it a different name. Not only is it "The Great Battle of God Almighty," or "The Great Supper," but now it is "The Assembly of Kingdoms" where He can pour on them His great indignation.

Zephaniah 3:8-9 To pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LOORD, to serve Him with one accord.

This is what He has been working for!

Of course, we see here in the progression between verse 8 and 9, He had to do the punishing so He could call them; so He could bring them all together, so that they could worship Him properly.

Zephaniah 3:10-11 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering. In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgress against Me; for then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride. . .

Remember what I said about clearing out the scum. He is going to remove those.

Zephaniah 3:11-12 . . . And you shall no longer be haughty [humbled] In My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and

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they shall trust in the name of the LOORD.

What did it say about Israel when they came out of Egypt? They did not enter into the Promised Land because of unbelief—they did not trust God. At the end of Hebrews 3, and the beginning of chapter 4, God says that they could not enter His rest because they did not mix with faith the Gospel that they heard.

But, when these humbled Israelites come out of the Great Tribulation, and the Day of the Lord, they will be humble—finally! And, they will trust in the name of the Lord.

Zephaniah 3:13 The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness. . .

Wow! That is a new one!

They may be the most sinful people on the face of the earth flaunting it in God's face; and God says that they will turn it around to such a degree that they will do no unrighteousness. Wow! God speed the day!

Zephaniah 3:13-14 . . . And speak no lies, [I wish that would happen.] nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed their flocks and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid." Sing, O daughter of Zion!

They have something to sing for! We do, too! We are the daughter of Zion!

Zephaniah 3:14-15 Shout, O Israel! [There are two groups here—the church of God and Israel reclaimed.] Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LOORD has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy [human and spiritual]. The King of Israel, the LOORD, is in your midst; you shall see disaster no more.

Oh what comfort! Just look at what Satan's removal does for the people of Israel. Their rebellions and their lawlessness, and their deceit ceases. They are no longer afraid. Their future is so bright that they gotta wear shades! No more disasters.

God will be there. That is one of His names, "God is there." And He will be in their midst,

The Future's So Bright I Gotta Wear Shades by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>) and they will trust in God, and serve Him in unity. It says, "To serve Him with one accord" (verse 9).

Paul puts it a different way in the book of Corinthians, "the veil will be lifted from their faces," and they will finally understand. Things will begin to change.

Turn to Jeremiah 31 and see another area here.

Jeremiah 31:31-32 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LOORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke [Now, this has to be a somewhat different covenant. God is a husband to them.] though I was a husband to them, says the LOORD.

He was fine in the covenant. But, this new covenant has to be somewhat different because it has a much better purpose, and a much better promise.

Jeremiah 31:33-34 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LOORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LOORD'. . .

Why should anyone have to tell somebody else when they already know? That is the gist of that statement.

Jeremiah 31:34 . . .for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LOORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

This is the second series of verses where this has come up. For He had said something to the effect that He will forgive and redeem them.

So, they will make the new covenant with God, or more correctly, God will make it with them. He is the One who initiates it. And this time, it will work from both sides, not just

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God. Everyone from banker to baker, young and old, will have the knowledge of God. And, His way of life will begin to be ingrained upon their minds and hearts. And maybe, more importantly, they will be living it. That is how the ingrainings happen.

Is that not how you figure it works? Why has God given us so many years in the church if not to give us time to start having it ingrained upon our hearts and minds by actually living it, experiencing it, failing in it, and succeeding in it?

He wants it inside us, not just in the pages of a book we refer to on occasion. He wants it up here—in our head, and down here in our heart, so that we do not need the book because we are the Book.

So, God will forgive Israel, and they will begin to be converted.

The New King James has a title on this section of scripture, "God will be gracious." This is a good title.

Isaiah 30:18-22 Therefore the LORD will wait [remember?], that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left. You will also defile the covering of your graven images of silver, and the ornament of your molded images of gold. You will throw them away as an unclean thing; you will say to them, "Get away!"

God will make teachers available to Israel. And I see many of them sitting in front of me today. That is what the firstfruits are going to be doing in the Millennium. They will be teaching Israel who is coming out of the Great Tribulation, coming out of sin, coming out of terrible adversity. They will be a humble people who are quite willing to listen by this point because they know the power of God, and they finally got the fear of God, at least in one respect. They know that He packs a powerful wallop.

At least, at that point, they are willing to listen.

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Now I want to also show you here that the people will be doing things to show their repentance. They will be showing God from their deeds that they have put these things away. They defiled them. "Destroy" is a very strong word. It shows revulsion and hatred.

It is very interesting also that God chose to use idols for this illustration, because it has always been a problem with Israel. Idolatry is dealt with in the first two commandments. And when God used Ezekiel to tell Israel their sins, he mentioned idolatry and Sabbath breaking.

It is interesting that through Isaiah, God uses the example of idolatry to show that they have put them away. They revolt at their idols, and they finally have repented.

For an Israelite to put away his idols is about the greatest thing for a righteous people—to see them do this. It shows that they really have turned and changed.

Like it says in the other verse, that is why the daughter of Zion is so happy. Not only happy for God's graciousness, but they are happy and joyful to see that Israel has finally done it! We are involved in a 4000-year struggle to see Israel change.

As Sons of God, we are going to be thrilled to see God's people come around. And will God not be happy? Our longsuffering God! He waited so that He could be gracious! Is God not wonderful?

Now, turn to Micah chapter 4. We often go to Isaiah 2, but I chose Micah today.

Micah 4:1-5 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the LOORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LOORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LOORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make *them* afraid; for the mouth of the LOORD of hosts has spoken. For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the LOORD our God forever and ever.

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There is a certain finality about that, is there not?

I wanted you to see here, that it is Israel who begins to lead the way in returning to God. And other nations hear of this and see it, and they ask to be able to go up to Jerusalem to hear this word so that they too can understand and be redeemed, and have the life that Israel is then leading.

This Law, this way of life, will go forth. It will flow forth out of Zion, out to Israel and then to the surrounding peoples.

And people will be attracted to it. There is a scripture that talks about the beauty of holiness. It is not like the attractiveness that Satan puts on things that dazzles the eye or titillates the senses.

This will be a beauty that hits down deep, that will strike people in their inner being, and they will say, "I want to live like them! I want to be happy. I want to have the things that God promises, not because we covet them, but because they are good for me and my family, and because with them, I can then serve and help other people to be happy."

This is what begins to make the Millennium possible. With Satan removed and God's Spirit abundantly available, and no hindrances or stumbling blocks to the truth; it will flow from person to person, probably by families and clans, until it covers the whole world like the sea covers the ocean beds.

That beauty of holiness will attract and bring people in. You see, the word flows out, and the people then come up, and in, and are gathered into the family.

Now, back to the book of Joel. Peter quoted this in his sermon on Pentecost 31 AD, but I think he was aware of this, as well as we, that it was not the final fulfillment of this:

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,...

That means that they will preach and make a witness. They will be living a way of life that others will see, and want to partake of.

Joel 2:28-32 Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on *My* menservants and on *My* maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the

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earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome Day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass *that* whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved...

That is a positive statement.

Joel 2:32 ... For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

I really wanted to pick up the idea, here, that God's Spirit will be readily available, and salvation will be open. God promises to redeem, deliver, and save anyone who seeks it. Of course, first of all He says, the remnant of Israel. That is where it will begin. And if it begins with Israel, then it will flow out.

The young men and women will be so much different than the young people of today's world. Today's young people are full of rap, rock and roll, and attitudes of being cool. They want nothing else but to be away from their parents and organized religion, thinking that God is a hypocrite and their parents just want to be spiritual.

But in the Millennium, the cool ones will prophesy. The cool ones will be religious. The cool ones will be singing praises to God, not singing into a karaoke machine at the local bar or beer joint.

"Your young men and women shall prophesy," because they, too, will be full of the Spirit. They will be thinking on God's wavelength. And they will not want to do anything to upset Him, and to diminish His glory in any way.

And it will go from young men and young women all way to the old men and old women, as the waters cover the sea.

I just hope that this happens soon before my kids start wanting to go to karaoke bars. I thought that we would be in the Millennium by now. I never thought I would reach the age of 32 in this world. I still hope I do not reach 33! Of course, I will. Things are at least three and a half years ahead of us, and we always have that hope that God will cut it short, and allow our children to grow up in this millennial time when they can be cool doing God's work.

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We will go to all these little "minor" prophets where we go very rarely.

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LOORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 56:6 Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LOORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LOORD, to be His servants—Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath ...

Here is the other one of those great laws that has been broken time and again.

Isaiah 56:6-8 ... And holds fast My covenant—even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *will be* accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." The Lord GOOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him *others* besides those who are gathered to him."

As we have mentioned before, this will expand over the whole earth. All the world will begin to know God.

Just like Satan's spirit now fills the whole earth, God's Spirit will take over, and do the same. God's Spirit will be pervasive, encouraging all of us to do what is right and good.

People will still have to make right decisions and choices. That is something that God never takes away. He always gives us the opportunity to choose.

But, these people who live in the Millennium will not have the disadvantage of having to fight Satan. What a great blessing that will be.

They will still have their nature to fight, because human beings are made of flesh, and flesh is weak, and flesh does not want to do spiritual things, because they are difficult, but they will have God's Spirit readily available to help them fight that.

And this spiritual about-face that happens is the key to all the physical blessings that we identify with the Millennium. It is not just going to bring spiritual blessings, but once the mind and attitude are changed, the physical blessings will come. Once we are doing what is right—read the blessings and cursings chapter—we will do what is right, and the

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blessings automatically follow.

The Spirit is the key to the Millennium, from both a spiritual and physical standpoint.

The land will get its Sabbaths. When the land gets its Sabbaths, it is productive. Trees will be cultivated (harvested) in their fifth year. They will be circumcised (KJV) (prepared in those other years, leading up to) and they will bear bountiful crops of fruit; and they will be good and full of nutrition, because we (they) will have lived the way of God in how we (they) take care of the creation.

That is what Adam was set here to do—tend and keep the garden. The garden stands for God's creation.

And once mankind begins to live the wisdom of God, not only his physical life, but in the ways he tends and keeps the land, the blessings are bound to flow from the land. That is the way that God made things to be.—to produce! God is a producer. Everything He makes produces. It is the way that God is.

Famines and food shortages will become a very distant memory, because there will be so much. Disease will disappear because we will be treating the land properly. It will not need to do the natural things to purge out disease because it will not have to.

My upset stomach is my body's natural reaction to something bad. I am not upset with my body because God created it this way. It is a natural healing process.

But, if the bad things are not there to begin with, then we will not have to worry about that. It will be gone. No more disease. Things will be in balance. Things will work together as they are supposed to work.

Little children will be born healthy and strong. They will not be born hooked on crack or alcohol. They will be born fighting, and screaming, and kicking, and ready to face the world, unaware of all the blessings that they have coming to them in their lives.

Oh, to be a baby in the Millennium!

The life that we have, full of worry and fear, hopelessness, anger, distrust, and anxiety, will be gone. What will we have to worry about?

Fruit will be hanging on the trees, and everybody will be healthy, everybody will be working together as good friends and fine neighbors. Leave your houses open, with

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unlocked homes and cars. All the bad stuff will eventually disappear. As the people begin to live God's way, crying will cease.

We will not worry about being cheated, robbed, or murdered. Little old ladies and children will be able to walk down the street at night to go to their friend's house and have a night-cap or cup of tea.

There are other earth-changes that will take place. Isaiah 40:1-5 talks about the hills being made low, and the valleys being exalted. Some people think that this is a metaphor that the lowly will be raised, and the exalted will be humbled, but I think it has a physical application as well because God will make more of the earth arable so that there is less severity in elevation over greater parts of the earth. I am sure that He will keep a mountain or two around for those who like to hike and ski. He will make land available so that all will get their "back 40."

Isaiah 35 may be the chapter we go to most often when we talk about the glories of the Millennium.

Isaiah 35:1 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,

This is a continuation from chapter 34 which talks about God's judgment on the nations, and then this comes after:

Isaiah 35:1-2 ... And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God.

See? This is what God is. And these things will show God's glory in the earth. And all these nations and peoples will look at this, and the creation, itself, will see what God had intended all along.

Isaiah 35:3 Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

This is quoted in Hebrews 12.

Isaiah 35:4 Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear!"

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Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *With* the recompense of God; He will come and save you."

Just notice how often he talks about God coming, and doing this very destructive work, but he groups these with the glories that come after—showing that it is needful to do both.

Isaiah 35:5-6 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

Talk about making some badlands usable when God opens up the desert cisterns and makes the land able to be used.

Isaiah 35:7 The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; In the habitation of jackals, where each lay, *there shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.

Talk about a change! It will go from desert to swamp land! Well, not quite swamp land, but it will be wet enough for reeds and rushes. They will farm it.

Isaiah 35:8 A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it *shall be* for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.

God will point the way along that highway of holiness. As long as one stays on the road, he will not go astray, because the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

Isaiah 35:9-10 No lion shall be there, nor shall *any* ravenous beast go up on it; It shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk *there*, And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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We keep getting a bigger and bigger picture of the glories of that time.

You might want to jot down Amos 9:13-15, where the plowman shall overtake the reaper. They will barely get in one crop and we will see the guy on a tractor behind him ready to till it up and plant another one. You know, do you not, what they will be doing under their vine and fig tree? They will be getting fat! There will be so much food that somebody has got to eat it!

Now, in the Bible, being fat is a symbol of prosperity! Weak nations have skinny people.

There will be such a super abundance of things to eat that those who are alive then will be robust (a better word than fat!) with health, and plenty. They will be so happy to be full and experiencing God's Kingdom, without a worry.

Please jot down Joel 2:18-27, and 3:18, where this also talks about the plenty of the Millennium. There are just tons and tons of figs, and grapes, and wheat, and olives, and, well you name it, is going to come out of the ground. There just will not be enough room to store it all. The hills will flow with milk, it says. Honey will be bursting out of the hives. Sheep, goats, and cattle will be very numerous. They will not be having miscarriages. They will all have their calves, kids, and little lambs.

You can see that they will not be budging from under their vines and fig trees.

And you can see why God tells us to really have a nice time at the Feast. That is what the Millennium pictures—the plenty of the earth—being at one with God and producing.

In Isaiah 30:23-24, it says that even our beasts of burden will not just have regular grain and fodder, but they will have salted grain, meaning that it is prepared for them! There will be such plenty that we will give our animals prepared meals!

They got to get rid of it, somehow! And so we put it back into the earth. There is going to be so much that they will not give the chaff to their animals, but they will give them their very best grain and fodder. And will not they produce with that! They will have the whole germ of the wheat, barley, and corn.

And then, there is wealth.

Isaiah 60:4-7 Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side. Then you shall see and become radiant, And your

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heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; They shall bring gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the LOORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory.

And it goes on and on, talking about the sons coming from afar, and they bring silver and gold with them to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 60:10-12 The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, And their kings shall minister to you; For in My wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you. Therefore your gates shall be open continually; They shall not be shut day or night, That *men* may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession. For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, And *those* nations shall be utterly ruined.

This is just another facet of the Millennium. The wealth of the world will flow into Jerusalem. And if it flows into Jerusalem, then it flows into Israel.

And like God, every system has a circular process that goes on. Nothing is wasted. Nothing is hoarded. It is all used, and re-used, and circulated. God does not want the accumulation of wealth. He wants the use of wealth in the proper ways. And that is what is going to happen in the Millennium. They will all be able to partake of the wealth of this earth to better their lives and to have things. God does not mind that we have things. He wants to give us things. And so He allows this to happen—the Gentiles bring their wealth into Jerusalem. It is not going to be like our governments, now, who takes all the money and spends it on itself. No, it will circulate back among the people so that everyone is enriched, not just one elite group of people.

Jeremiah 33:7-11 says that the people of the earth will actually fear and tremble because of the great wealth of God's Kingdom. And, the reason for that is that when you have a wealthy nation, it can very easily stomp a poor nation. They will fear that Israel is going to come and take over. This also shows you that they do not know God very well at all. He is not going to do a conquest of that nature.

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I think spiritually they will also fear because at this time the nations will be convicted of their sins, and want to have this wealth go back to them, by doing what is right. It will be very evident at the time, that God is the One who provides the prosperity and the goodness. It always goes back to Him.

Please also jot down Ezekiel 34:22-31. This is a good synopsis. I was going to use this, but because of time, you can read this later yourself.

This will be the perfect time to live with endless prosperity, endless peace and security, endless opportunities, and endless joy, health, and vigor! I could go on and on with these endless things that God says that He will bring to the people that He redeems upon His return.

I want to mention again. It is God, Himself, who makes this all come about. You will see that in that section. He is the One who says, "I will do this..." All the glory goes to Him.

I have only skimmed the surface of what is in the book on this matter. I recommend that you go over Mr. Armstrong's book, "The Wonderful World Tomorrow," and see his vision of the world tomorrow. It is good to be refreshed in that way.

All of what I know and have given to you, today, is really only the barest facts of the matter. We see through a glass darkly. But, what we can see is just absolutely glorious!

I Corinthians 2:9-10 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Yes, God has revealed unto us a little glimpse into that glorious time of the first 1000 years of His Kingdom.

But, I know that it has got to be simply better, greater, and more glorious than any human of today could ever imagine! We do not have words to describe the future which is before us.

We can thank God that He has even revealed this much to us because He gives us great hope and a high expectation of the world tomorrow.

The future's so bright, I gotta wear shades!