

Rev 26-07-01b

We resume our study now and we're having such a wonderful window into the future and the complementary roles that God's Old Testament people and His New Testament people play. Old Testament, God's original covenant people, heirs of the promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. The New Testament people, a unique called-out group, grafted into the olive branch carrying tree of salvation and of opportunity that Paul talks about in Romans.

The wild olive branch is being grafted in and being sustained by faith. This is living faith, this is obedience and diligence faith and yet here is the fulfillment in literal terms of every one of God's covenant promises to His Old Testament people as we look on from a greatly elevated point of view. So one of the questions that we can attempt to solve here is Jesus answer, and this is kind of a fun thing to look at, turn to Luke chapter 20 and you remember this very famous question that is asked by the Sadducees in a very mocking tone where the chapter begins where, by what authority are you doing these things? And Jesus answers their question with a question.

I will ask you one thing, answer me. The baptism of John, was it from heaven or was it from men? And they can't answer yes or no because either way it embarrasses them. So he says in verse 8, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

And so this whole chapter is so fascinating. We've done the gospel of Luke and what a wonderful study it was. But you skip down to verse 27.

Some of the Sadducees who deny that there is a resurrection as we are studying in Revelation 20. Ask him saying, Teacher Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies having a wife, he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. There were seven brothers.

First took a wife and died without children. The second took her as wife, he died childless. The third took her also in like manner, the seven also.

Notice the seven also doesn't mean there were more than seven. This is a very Hebrew way of thinking and speaking. So in other words, all seven were married to her without offspring.

Last of all, the woman died also. Verse 33, therefore in the resurrection at which we are now looking, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife. Jesus answered and said to them, the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.

But those who are counted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die anymore. For they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised when he called the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him. Some of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, you've spoken well, and after that they dare not question him anymore. If, as almost everyone believes, the Lord Jesus is talking about the resurrection that we're looking at, or in English major terms, at which we are looking, it says they don't die and they don't marry and are not given in marriage.

All of the passages that we have looked at pertaining to the Millennial Kingdom seem to indicate that these things characterize that age. What is Jesus talking about? Pay attention to how he introduces his answer. In the resurrection, whose wife will she become, they ask.

For all seven had her as wife. Jesus answered and said to them, the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age.

The resurrection, think about this now, we saw the first coming of the Lord Jesus, two phases, his birth and then the inception of his public ministry and the accomplishment of his public ministry. His second coming begins in the air at the rapture and culminates in his return to earth as we saw in Zechariah 14. The resurrection begins with us at the rapture and culminates with the resuscitation at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.

The resurrection age to which Jesus refers here is of that same pattern. He is here in the Old Testament age talking to Old Testament believers, these individuals, Sadducees may not believe in the resurrection but they believe in God and he is describing the future age. That age has two phases.

The first phase is the Millennial Kingdom. The second phase is the kingdom of the Father. That age eventuates and culminates and goes into eternity in a new heavens and a new earth and in the kingdom of the Father mentioned as we saw looking at Matthew chapter 25 when he talks to the sheep and he says when I was naked you clothed me when I was hungry you fed me etc.

Enter into the kingdom prepared for you by my Father. It's not the Lord Jesus kingdom it is the kingdom of the Father that is in view. It is a compression.

It is a condensation. It is a generalization without getting into the specifics of the phases or the duration. Our ultimate destination is the kingdom of the Father and the beauty of that is that when you look as we will see soon at the New Jerusalem it's got 24 gates 12 of which are a reminder of Israel 12 of which are a reminder of the church the inception of Israel the 12 tribes the inception of the church the 12 Apostles and the New Jerusalem is characterized by these 24 gates where there is a convergence and in the kingdom of the Father these previous distinctions are forever eliminated and now you simply have those who have believed and claimed the salvation that God has in Christ by faith and these initially separate paths unite at that point.

Jesus rather than saying well that's an interesting question for the Millennium where there is a resuscitation and where all seven brothers may come back and you see the Lord Jesus do this

more than once in his answers where he will answer with something that can't be refuted. He doesn't say anything about the priests of Ezekiel and who they marry or their children or whatever else. He uses the kingdom of the Father because ultimately that is the question and in the kingdom of the Father there is no marriage or giving in marriage there is only the Lamb and his wife the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband as we will see but the short answer is Luke chapter 20 does not change our understanding it simply points to the ultimate fulfillment the ultimate resurrection because at the end of the Millennium these individuals that have been raised to a mortal state although greatly enhanced will be by analogy and by comparison similarly transformed and will join us in the permanent eternal body that is like that of the Lord Jesus but they get the chance to experience life as we currently experience it we are the younger brother and the elder brother sold his inheritance for a mess of pottage we have entered an age where we have the power and filling of the Holy Spirit we have the leading into truth and understanding of the Word of God Israel should have gotten it when the Lord Jesus came the first time they didn't they were set aside God is making them jealous by people who are not a people in a nation who is not a nation and the Gentiles enter into this first as a rebuke and to make the people of God jealous as scripture states we've seen these passages they will catch up they will receive the Spirit poured out on their flesh their sons and daughters will see visions and dream dreams and so on for a thousand years after that phase is complete and every different permutation perfect people in perfect environment still have free will Adam and Eve who fell in the perfected environment of the garden fallen people in the fallen environment without the Holy Spirit's aid in large measure the Old Testament age our age fallen people in the fallen environment but with the presence and power of God in the person of the Holy Spirit and the opportunity to have the presence of the Father and the Son if we are obedient and love his word and keep it Israel will have what we have but in a greatly perfected world so even as they enter into the fulfillment of the new covenant Israel and to Judah with the Spirit and the rule of the Lord Jesus it is another test of volition now you don't even have to have faith you simply look at the ruling Son of God in Jerusalem superintending David and his sons ruling the world from Israel perfect justice perfect righteousness a nearly perfected environment in Jerusalem and in the Israel that surrounds it and you no longer can blame the government you can't blame satanic incursions Satan is bound Satan is not bound in this age he roams the earth seeking whom he may devour so God is proving a point about the nature and the function of free will in every different phase of human history perfect people perfect environment fallen people fallen environment fallen people fallen environment but with the Spirit in the Millennial Kingdom a nearly perfect environment with the Spirit and a visible and risen Savior faith is not the issue this is why the sheep and goats judgment and the great white throne judgment say nothing about faith the books are opened and individuals are judged according to their works as we will shortly see at the great white throne why faith is no longer an issue do your works measure up the unbelieving dead from every age from the first unbelievers in the earliest ages after the fall and after the expulsion from the garden all the way down to those who may be born and grow up in the Millennial Kingdom and reject the whole scenario they will be judged at the great white throne

unbelieving dead of every age all believers of the Old Testament age up to the time of Christ are raised at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom all church age believers are raised at the rapture Israel is resuscitated so that God can fulfill every material land throne kingdom peace from enemies promise that he ever made in the Old Testament every one of those individuals will experience the literal fulfillment of those promises God will keep his word during that time there will be a growing number of those who hate God is not so much unbelievers they're like the demons who believe and tremble but when Satan is released as we will soon see that is going to change and these individuals that do not want a future with God will be at the great white throne judgment they will be judged they and the death and hell that have segregated them from the rest of the human population will also be thrown into the lake of fire will see that upcoming but hopefully that gives at least an anticipation of where we're going here so the suggestion I would make is unlike any commentary you read about Matthew 25 in the sheep and goats judgment that does not happen at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom it happens at the end that's why the destination for those it isn't that they're excluded it isn't that they are set aside for a thousand years they are sent directly to the lake of fire you have to believe that there are two lake of fire judgments one at the beginning of the Millennium and another at its end after God may God to make that work sheep and goats Matthew 25 has to be in my view when the Lord is sitting on the throne of his kingdom he's not about to sit he hasn't just gotten there he's been there for a thousand years and they are judged on that basis so our age is one of faith 2nd Corinthians 5:7 Hebrews 11:1 1st Peter 1:8 but when the Lord Jesus is visible it's not a matter of faith assenting to something on the basis of the witness of Scripture the witness of eternity that has been placed in our hearts and the witness of what is visible in nature and we not having seen believe remember what Jesus said when Thomas put his finger in the nail holes after his resurrection you have seen and you believe blessed are those who not having seen believe and remember Jesus said that during the age of Israel church age doesn't start till some weeks later at Pentecost blessed are those upcoming who have not seen and yet believe the Old Testament age was characterized by miracles and manifestations of divine power this will be used to authenticate messengers for the church age but very soon these miraculous manifestations will cease and for centuries those who come to faith in Christ had done so not having seen yet believe but in the Millennium everybody is going to see and they have no excuse for not accepting the Lord Jesus Christ for who he is and his atoning work on their behalf so not only do we have Zechariah 14:16 talking about tribulational survivors those who are left and enter in and will be mortal like the resuscitated believers of Israel but you have Isaiah 66:19 that says that there are some who are left who will proclaim God's glory among the nations and in Matthew 24 in that day two will be grinding at the mill two will be sleeping in a bed one shall be taken and the other left the taken are those who are taken on those who are left seems to suggest that there are those who survive and enter into the millennial age so contrast that with our resurrection turn to first Corinthians chapter 15 I am so glad we're in this age Israel is a wonderful thing for the Israelites I would much rather be in the age of the Lord Jesus Christ and have the opportunity to be a unique people that are given as a gift by God to him as a reward for his faithfulness first Corinthians

chapter 15 verse 20 now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep for since by man came death by man also came resurrection of the dead as in Adam all die even so in Christ all shall be made alive but each one in his own order Christ the firstfruits afterward those who are Christ's at his coming at his parousia at his appearing and that is the rapture because then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father notice he delivers the kingdom we have just traversed a thousand years this is such a compression and a generalization and an overview and it includes our resurrection at the rapture it includes the resuscitation of the Old Testament Saints at the second coming it includes the transformation and glorification of all of the Saints of the Old Testament age and the Millennium at the end post Gog Magog then comes the end when after the great white throne judgment after the sheep and goats judgment the Lord Jesus will turn the kingdom over to his father it changes it morphs it moves into and becomes the kingdom of the Father then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power this is all earthly rule and a power there will be no more these earthly nations who are sending tribute to Jerusalem and so on all of this is handed back to the Father who gave it to the Lord Jesus for he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet when are the final enemies put under his feet Gog Magog Satan is released he is defeated those who join him are judged and the last enemy that will be destroyed is death remember there is still death during the millennial kingdom but once you move into the kingdom of the Father there is no more death he has put all things under his feet when he says all things it is evident that he who put all things under him is excoriated God doesn't put himself under the Lord Jesus he has put all things under the feet of the Lord Jesus the Lord Jesus will return those things to his father after the thousand years of the millennial kingdom when all things are made subject to him God the Father then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him that God God the Father may be all in all so that is the this corruptible must put on incorruption this mortal must put on immortality earlier in that same chapter and over these the second death has no power revelation 20 verse 6 so we possess a status that cannot be undone by death because we have already been liberated from death by the Lord Jesus Oh death where's your sting Oh grave where is your victory thanks be to God who gives us the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ and we are unique in that status Old Testament Saints are never said to be in Christ only us so let's summarize here are some points and I don't know where else you will be able to find this but this is me giving you my best understanding church-age believers write it down here are the characteristics we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and his fivefold ministry takes place at our salvation he regenerates us he indwells us he is able to fill us he gifts us and he seals us fivefold ministry the Spirit we've covered it many times we are uniquely Christ's body and Christ's bride book of Ephesians we are raptured before the tribulation not until that which restrains is taken out of the way which is the Holy Spirit indwelling and characterizing the body of Christ our presence is removed in the same way that the Lord Jesus was ascended and left the area we as his body will leave the area then the man of sin will be revealed then the tribulation takes place so we are raptured before the tribulation we do not become subject to wrath and we are raised or

transformed if we're alive at that time with fully glorified fully immortal bodies and we are privileged if we are overcomers if we qualify to reign with Christ throughout the millennium overcomer promises are available to church-age believers exclusively to the church at Ephesus Smyrna Pergamos and so on Old Testament Saints new heading saved by grace through faith but at the point of expressing that faith the Spirit does not appear to indwell to seal to gift to fill to guide to baptize to regenerate saved by grace through faith without faith impossible to please him Hebrews 11 6 they are raised at Christ's return to the earth seven years after the rapture inception of the millennial kingdom they receive the promised new covenant blessings of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 and 37 I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh etc Joel 2 they live throughout the millennium in renewed but still mortal and earthly bodies they do not go to the place prepared if you want to put an additional note up there under the church age we dwell in the place prepared in the heavenly realms by Christ John 14 2 and 3 I go to prepare place I will come again and receive you to myself and then I will take you back to that place it's not on the earth so the church's dwelling place after the rapture is in heaven or the heavenly realms I would say not a reservation on the earth of the millennial kingdom unlike that Old Testament Saints live throughout the millennium renewed but yet earthly mortal bodies they demonstrate faithful obedience under ideal kingdom conditions we hope we want them to be the sheep and they are finally evaluated according to their works the sheep and goats judgment of Matthew 25 is a judgment of works this is what you did and what you did not do you either go to a fiery destination or enter into the kingdom prepared for you by my father and the lake of fire versus kingdom of the father is after the millennial kingdom makes sense I hope so so this view number one I'm going to give you a few points here in summary this view number one takes seriously the unfolding of God's revelation across time so the indwelling of the Spirit wasn't initially permanent or available to every believer in the earliest days and in the age of Israel but it comes to pass in the church age to be united with Christ didn't take place until Christ himself came and we are in him Ephesians chapter 1 the sevenfold in him we have in him we are in him we can do these things completely different than what is promised to the Old Testament believer we are members of his body unique language for the church we have direct access to the heavenly sanctuary Hebrews chapter 10 let us come boldly through the new and living way inaugurated by Christ who is represented by the torn veil none of this language is given to the Old Testament believer let us come boldly for grace to help in time of need our hearts having been sprinkled our bodies having been washed these spiritual metaphors and this is a mystery that was hidden from previous ages according to the Apostle Paul go back and review the mystery study and all of the manifold things that Paul reveals that were hidden and unavailable and unrevealed in the Old Testament day that's number one number two now we can fully understand the New Covenant promises to Israel Jeremiah and Ezekiel repeatedly tell Israel the Word of God that says I will put my spirit within you I will write my law on your hearts you shall all know me take out your heart of stone give you a heart of flesh meaning the nation in Israel and in Jerusalem and at Mount Zion surrounding the Millennial Temple will be those people who have been faithful and obedient and the nation will be pure because the nation of Israel will be comprised of these people who by faith have attained

unto that age so number three it explains why Ezekiel's temple looks so earthly Ezekiel's description has puzzled interpreters for generations because priests are subject to sweat they got to wear special clothes so they don't sweat in God's presence there is inheritance that characterizes them there they need purification meaning they can still come in contact with that which defiles they offer sacrifices there is no sacrifice pictured in the kingdom of the Father as we will soon see but in the Millennial Kingdom there are because it is still a time of challenge to obedience and to response to God's grace there will be failures there will be sins and there will be sacrifices that reflect that truth they will be retrospective looking back at the work of Christ rather than prospective looking forward to his work as it did in the days of Moses and following actually the earliest days there was about sacrifice going back to the days of Abel and priests needing to avoid corpses how can there be corpses unless there is mortality and an earthly environment so these Israelites represented by the priests Levites who minister at the temple it is obviously a an earthly and a mortality characterized time the kingdom of the Son versus the kingdom of the Father is a very helpful distinction many people don't understand that after resurrection God's future plan still involves these two sequential kingdoms Paul compresses this in 1st Corinthians 15 when he says then comes the end and the kingdom is turned over he has no description of the millennial reign he just simply says then comes the end and he's skipping forward much as Jesus does when he says whose wife will she become in the resurrection in that final phase now we are in such a glorified state that these earthly relationships no longer pertain and we don't know what that will be like but Christ's mediatorial reign his mediation of God's reign as the king of Israel and David as subordinate rulers is fulfilled in the millennial kingdom not necessary in the kingdom of the Father where Christ himself is king and he sits on a throne with his father in the New Jerusalem that mediatorial reign the the millennial reign is completed and that kingdom is then essentially handed over to the Father during the Millennium Jesus Christ the Son of God completes and fulfills every covenantal promise made throughout the Old Testament age and in fact all of the promises made to us as well that we will dwell with him in glory that we can walk with him in white and partake of hidden manna all of the overcomer blessings every single promise made Old Testament and new will find its fulfillment during this millennial reign number three think about the wedding feast parables and metaphorical comparisons the church is explicitly referred to as the bride of Christ at least by strong implication in Ephesians chapter 5 the lamb's wife in Revelation 19 and again in 21 as we will see but Jesus also repeatedly speaks of this wedding where there are wedding guests and there are invited guests and there are friends of the bridegroom friends of the bridegroom remember that reference they're not going to weep while the groom is with them but when he leaves and they'll be sorrowful so it is confusing to say that believers are all represented by the bride of the groom the Lord Jesus and also the friends and the guests at the feast John 3:29 is an example John the Baptist says the friend of the bridegroom rejoices greatly and he seems to include himself or refer to himself in that term he is a friend of the groom John says I'm not a part of the bride he doesn't say the bride celebrates when the groom arrives I'm a friend of the bridegroom and I rejoice greatly because here's the groom John is the last great prophet of the Old Testament John the

Baptist is not alive at Pentecost he dies during the ministry of Jesus Christ and he represents in a sense all of these who died in faith as Old Testament Saints he is a friend of the bridegroom he will be an invited guest at the wedding feast he does not describe himself as the bride so the bride has made herself ready Revelation 19 immediately after comes the statement blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper because we are anticipating the resuscitation the resurrection of Old Testament Saints their opportunity is if they were faithful and obedient they will be invited to the wedding supper blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper two groups are in view here the bride that's us and those who are invited that is the Old Testament Saints who are resuscitated and there's a sense in which the Millennial Kingdom is that celebration of the presence of the groom and we don't live down with the invited guests we dwell in that place prepared as grooms traditionally did in Israel for their betrothed when the marriage is taken place and consummated the bride and groom live elsewhere invited guests are separate so there's a lot of commentary that just kind of fuzzes this over or ignores it but this is an important distinction and helps us understand what's coming up in the remainder of the book of Revelation who are the guests if the bride is the church the guests are redeemed Israel and other redeemed people who come to acceptance I won't say faith because there's nothing that is not open and visible but come to accept the Lord Jesus as Redeemer and as the Son of God and desire a future with God and with His Son the Lord Jesus and accept him the Millennial Kingdom it isn't faith it is acceptance or rejection there is a clear choice and it will be evidenced by how people act if you accept the Lord Jesus you are going to model your behavior on him and you are going to treat his brethren as if you were treating him if you've done it to the least of these my brethren you have done it unto me also the confluence the merging together of these two peoples of God in the kingdom of the Father you have 12 gates in the New Jerusalem that are named after the tribes of Israel and 12 foundation stones named after the Apostles I think sometimes I said there were 24 gates but I'm referring to the fact that there are 24 names at the wall 12 gates and 12 foundation stones and remember as those who are united with Christ he is the foundation Paul says let everyone be careful how he builds so the gates this originated with Israel and so they are named for the twelve tribes the foundation stones are named for the Apostles because we share that identity with Christ we enter into him and share that identity the Eternal City is not the church replacing Israel and it's not Israel replacing the church both of them are permanently memorialized in the walls of the New Jerusalem we remember our past we remember our heritage just as we do for this nation in this week in the 250th anniversary of the founding of our country and its Declaration of Independence and so on it is it is embedded it is a permanent memorial in the walls of the New Jerusalem so there is a distinction during history between Israel and the church there is also a distinction during the millennium but that disappears and there is no distinction when you reach the kingdom of the Father that mirrors Paul's thoughts such as in Ephesians 1:10 where it is God's to unite all things in Christ and you see the fulfillment of this when the Lamb is the light in the kingdom of the Father and all things have been brought together 1st Corinthians 15 after the end comes and he returns the kingdom that God may be all in all the distinction is not abolished but every purpose that God has expressed is fulfilled in Christ and

then the kingdom is delivered to the Father Christ has completed his work so so many things you can think about here the two phases of Christ's coming the two phases of the first resurrection the New Covenant application to Israel and our New Covenant founded on new and better promises as a reflection and a spiritual fulfillment that Israel will still experience literally when the Millennial Kingdom comes Ezekiel's temple and priesthood to realize that this is not a metaphor it is literal there will be a literal Millennial Kingdom with literal priests ministering in a literal fashion according to those chapters 40 through 48 in Ezekiel Isaiah 65 picturing continued mortality the bride as distinguished from the invited guests at the wedding feast repeated several times by the Lord Jesus in parable form the relationship of Israel and the church the olive tree that Paul talks about in Romans 9 and 10 and 11 the transition from the son's kingdom to the kingdom's into the kingdom of the Father which is eternal what a privilege to live in this age what an opportunity to lay hold of promises by faith and be qualified to enter into those overcomer promises and after the thousand years to be accorded a place and a residence in the New Jerusalem to walk the shores of the river of life to pick the fruit of the tree of life that grows along its banks we are determining our future in our daily decisions what are our attitudes how do we treat one another it is graphically demonstrated in the difference between the behavior of the sheep and behavior of the goats because the ultimate expression of acceptance of and love for the Lord Jesus is love faith is the means hope is the motivation love is the measure Old Testament New Testament Millennium love is the measure read again in Matthew 25 how do we treat one another if you've done it to the least of these my brethren you've done it to me this is how we can see where we are and where we need to go can we improve can we lay hold of righteousness by faith and do a better job of being the body of Christ are we going to be the wife of the Lamb who has made herself ready what an opportunity and such a wonderful set of things to reflect on as we see the unfolding and the eventual convergence of God's plan and purpose throughout history ultimately expressed in the kingdom that we will see described in the two chapters following this will close here for tonight in a word of prayer we're gonna move forward now in Revelation chapter 20 and look at the great white throne judgment in detail we have this as a background we know who's there and who's not we'll move to it and through it this coming Sunday we'll close here in a word of prayer father thank you so much for giving us the privilege of entering into your councils and your plans and purposes I am reminded personally of when you talked with Abraham and told him that you would not hide from him what you were about to do and what a privilege to be in Christ and to share some of what he knows and what he anticipates in the future accomplishment of your purposes we pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our hearts help us to appreciate their reality and what it means to us in the present so that our hope will motivate us and our faith will enable us to lay hold of righteousness to be and do as you would have us be and do and to express that love that is the full measure of how fully we have appreciated the work of Christ on our behalf and your love expressed to us through him we pray it in Jesus name Amen