

Chapter 26

The Thousand Year Right

And so it begins—the prolonged period of peace and enlightenment that people the world over have been dreaming about for centuries. It seems to be universally recognized that the best this world ever gets is still not the way it's supposed to be—there's got to be something better. This is it.

That's not to say everyone pictures their ideal world as the Bible describes the Millennium. The Muslims dream of a day when *dar al-Islam* spreads over the entire earth, creating what they alternately call *dar al-salam*, the house of peace. (Don't get me started again—there's nothing peaceful about Islam.) A century ago, hopeful but misinformed Christians looked forward to a day when the banner of *their* religion would be marched triumphantly across the face of the entire globe—putting them in charge of the morals and customs of mankind (which is, if you think about it, a position not all that far removed from the Muslims'). Secular humanists, meanwhile, longed for “utopia,” a concept I would define as a wish that our sinful human behaviors could somehow cease precipitating their natural disastrous consequences.

Jewish scholars came closer to the truth, extrapolating from scripture a 7,000-year divine plan: 2,000 years of chaos, 2,000 years under the Torah, 2,000 under the Messiah, and a final one-thousand-year period of peace and renewal. 'Course, since we're coming up on the *end* of that third 2,000-year period, they're scrambling for alternate explanations. The logical solution, of course, is that Yahshua of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah, making the ancient rabbis' observations 100% accurate. But the Jews (having rejected Him and being unwilling to reconsider their position) choke on that idea.

Jewish apologist Tracey R. Rich, speaking of the Jews' Messianic expectations, explains: “Another Jew born about a century later came far closer to fulfilling the messianic ideal than Jesus did. His name was Shimeon ben Kosiba, known as Bar Kochba (son of a star), and he was a charismatic, brilliant, but brutal warlord. Rabbi Akiba, one of the greatest scholars in Jewish history, believed that Bar Kochba was the moshiach [messiah]. Bar Kochba fought a war against the Roman Empire, catching the Tenth Legion by surprise and retaking Jerusalem. He resumed sacrifices at the site of the Temple and made plans to rebuild the Temple. He established a provisional government and began to issue coins in its name. This is what the Jewish people were looking for in a moshiach; Jesus clearly does not fit into this mold. Ultimately, however, the Roman Empire crushed his revolt and killed Bar Kochba. After his death, all acknowledged that he was not the moshiach.”

What a sad commentary, even aside from the fact that Rich is blissfully unaware of the stunning accuracy of the prophetic fulfillments of Yahshua's life, if only you're willing to countenance multiple adverts. Yahshua didn't fit the Jews' "messianic ideal" because they refused to consider *all* of their scriptures; they only allowed the passages they liked, the ones that looked like bad news for their oppressive Roman overlords. Bar Kochba, having proved by his arrogance and brutality that he was not the Messiah, brought upon his nation precisely the converse of the glorious destiny Yahweh has planned for Israel. In response to his revolt—fueled by the error of Akiba—Emperor Hadrian, in 135, turned Israel into what Ezekiel had called a "valley of dry bones," driving out every Jew from the Land and sowing it with salt to render it worthless and barren (cf. Deuteronomy 29:23). And yet, incredibly, many Jews still see Bar Kochba as their Messianic ideal. (Required reading: *Rabbi Akiba's Messiah*, by Daniel Gruber, 1999, Elijah Publishing.)

One detail of Bar Kochba's rebellion, however, looms large in the plan of God from a prophetic standpoint. You see, his revolt, beginning in 133 A.D., coincided (according to some sources) with the last recorded celebration of Jubilee. (After Hadrian was through with them, there wasn't enough Israel left to celebrate anything—the Jews were scattered to the four winds.) Jubilee was a special year-long event that was supposed to take place every fifty years in the life of Israel—twice per century. Funny thing, though. Once the ground rules are laid down in the Torah, we never hear of it being discussed again in scripture (though it is mentioned a couple of times in passing). Yet since it seems like such a big deal in Leviticus, it begs the question: could there be prophetic implications to this?

Here's what Yahweh had to say about Jubilee in the Torah. **"And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you."** (Leviticus 25:8-11) He goes on to describe in detail what's supposed to take place during Jubilee. Here is a simplified rundown: (1) they weren't to sow or reap that year, but rather live off what had been provided by Yahweh already; (2) land that had been "sold" would revert to its original owner; and (3) indentured slaves were to be released from their servitude. Thus Jubilee basically meant a fresh start, a second chance—based solely on the provision of Yahweh. It's therefore obvious (to me, anyway) that it is a picture, a dress rehearsal for the Millennium.

Since Jubilee was supposed to be celebrated every fifty years, it could be expected to occur only once during the life of any given Israelite adult. Many commentators presume that the cycle of sabbatical years was not interrupted by Jubilee (that is, the year of Jubilee was coterminous with the first year of the following sabbatical cycle), but the text doesn't support that view. Rather it implies that the sabbatical cycle starts over again *after* Jubilee, in precisely the same way an intercalary month is added occasionally to a 354-day lunar year to realign it with the sun's cycle. (And even if historians could reach consensus on how the Jews of antiquity timed the cycles—which they can't—it would be a pointless exercise. The only thing that counts is what Yahweh actually ordained.)

The cycle of Jubilee, then, was supposed to occur precisely twice per century, beginning on the Day of Atonement (cf. Leviticus 25:9). This makes the math simplicity itself. The last recorded Jubilee apparently began during Bar Kochba's revolt, on the 10th of Tishri, 133—Saturday (the Sabbath), September 26. If so, then the year of Yahshua's death and resurrection (in 33) was a Jubilee year as well. (Surprise, surprise.) And the next one (from our perspective) will fall on the Day of Atonement in 2033—the very day, if I'm not mistaken, that Yahshua the King is expected to plant His big toe on the Mount of Olives.

Thus precisely forty Jubilees—two thousand years—would separate Yahshua's first-century advent from His final return in glory. Forty is an oft-recurring number in scripture, invariably associated with testing, trial, and preparation, a perfect description of the posture of the nation of Israel for the last two millennia. If we do the math, however, we discover that this is not the only 40-Jubilee cycle delineated in scripture. Exactly the same amount of time elapsed between the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden and Abraham's almost-sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah, prefiguring the actual death, burial, and resurrection of Yahshua, the Lamb of God, precisely forty Jubilees later. Recognition of this pattern, of course, is how the second-temple-era rabbis were able to prognosticate their theory that I mentioned a moment ago: 2,000 years of chaos, 2,000 of Law, 2,000 of Messiah, and a final glorious Millennium—7,000 years total to accomplish Yahweh's plan of redemption.

Call it all a big coincidence if you want. I don't believe in 'em. I think God's trying to tell us something here. The ultimate fresh start will be given to the human race—and especially to Israel—the moment King Yahshua returns to earth on the Day of Atonement. It's a golden opportunity to begin again with a clean slate; but make no mistake, it's the last chance we'll get—there's only one Jubilee per lifetime. Will mankind blow it again—will they sell themselves into slavery and hock the family farm? I'll tell you later.

American Presidents are elected for four-year terms, and they get eight if they're lucky or sufficiently treacherous. The term of office for kings and dictators is a bit more nebulous—they rule for as long as they're able to hold onto power. But Yahweh promised David that through his heir the Messiah, his dynasty would *never* end. **"I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever."** (I Chronicles 22:10) This truth is the heart of the Millennium: the final King's rule shall be total, perfect, and unending. **"Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me; It shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky."** (Psalm 89: 35-37)

David himself said of the Messiah, **"Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations. Yahweh preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of Yahweh, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever."** (Psalm 145:13, 20-21) Thus we who are praising Him, referred to here as "all who love Him," will live forever as well—it's a promise of eternal life. This is not just a Jewish kingdom, either. These truths are applied worldwide. **"Praise Yahweh, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of Yahweh endures forever. Praise Yahweh!"** (Psalm 117) "Forever," "everlasting," "throughout all generations"—Yahweh is describing the permanence of His kingdom. We're not used to longevity in government: Hitler's vaunted "thousand-year Reich" only lasted thirteen years. Messiah's reign, on the other hand, will be the "thousand-year *Right*," and even that is merely the gateway to an eternity under His rule—or put another way, it's merely the honeymoon preceding the years of married life.

In another messianic psalm, David again uses his own reign as a launch pad for revealing Yahweh's truth concerning the coming King. **"The king shall have joy in Your strength, O Yahweh; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! You have given him his heart's desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah. For You meet him with the blessings of goodness; You set a crown of pure gold upon his head. He asked life from You, and You gave it to him—Length of days forever and ever. His glory is great in Your salvation; honor and majesty You have placed upon him. For You have made him most blessed forever; You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence. For the king trusts in Yahweh, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.** (Psalm 21:1-7)

Daniel provides more information. **"Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."** (Daniel 7:27) Apparently, the Jeffersonian formula we Americans tend to take as the ideal—a government "of the people, by the people, and for the

people”—is off the mark just a tad. The millennial government will be “of Yahweh, by Yahshua, and for His saints.” Yahshua told His disciples, **“You are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”** (Luke 22:28-30) The saints won’t be passive bystanders in the Kingdom, but active participants.

The prophet Micah speaks of these days as well. **“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of Yahweh’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills....”** Yahshua’s physical throne will be situated in Jerusalem, located in the hills of Judea. Here we see that the elevation is not only geographical, it’s metaphorical as well: His house shall be “exalted.” **“And peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, 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 Yahweh from Jerusalem.”** (Micah 3:1-2) Remember, most of the Millennial mortals will have little or no “religious training.” Like Abraham, their faith, not their knowledge or righteousness, has brought them to the place of blessing.

Yahweh must like the neighborhood. He arranged to make His entrance in His first-century advent only a few miles away: **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting....”** Why Bethlehem? The town was so close to Jerusalem, it was (according to Edersheim) used as the exclusive source of sacrificial lambs for the temple worship—despite a generalized rabbinical ban on sheep herding in the surrounding countryside. It seems Yahweh was willing to play along with the first-century priestly prejudice that there was really only one place to get a proper lamb for the atonement sacrifice—Bethlehem, the town where David had been born. Micah goes on to predict, **“And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of Yahweh, in the majesty of the name of Yahweh His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.”** (Micah 5:2, 4) As we have seen, Messiah operates in the strength and majesty of Yahweh because He *is* Yahweh—Emmanuel, God with us.

As Yahshua assumes the throne in Zion, it will become apparent to all that, **“The earth is Yahweh’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters....”** The Messiah owns the earth because He is its Creator. We owe Him our love because He made us. Man’s harebrained theories about the complexities of life evolving spontaneously, without plan or direction, will be exposed for the foolishness they are when Yahshua explains to us precisely how He founded the world—and why.

“Who may ascend into the hill of Yahweh? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn

deceitfully.” Oops. *None of us* have clean hands or a pure heart. We have *all* lifted up our souls to idols one way or another. Fortunately, God provides what we lack. **“He shall receive blessing from Yahweh, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. Selah...”** There’s the key: the requisite clean hands and pure hearts are the righteousness that God provides for us. These are the “blessings from Yahweh” that bring us into His presence. And getting us back into His presence has been the whole point of everything God has done since the third chapter of Genesis.

“Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? Yahweh strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? Yahweh of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah (Psalm 24:7-10) We are used to taking these verses personally (as we should)—inviting the King of glory to come in and abide within us. But we should not forget that they are also a literal description of the literal King assuming His literal throne. This will actually happen.

And lest we lapse into provincial modes of thinking, Paul informs us that the reign of the Messiah is universal—not just over earth, but over all of Creation. **“In the dispensation of the fullness of the times God [purposed to gather] together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.”** (Ephesians 1:10) Paul then told the believers at Ephesus that he prayed that God would give them enlightenment so they could understand **“what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”** (Ephesians 1:19-21) Yahshua’s reign, in other words, exists over not only people on this earth, but over the spiritual realm as well, not just in time as we know it, but in boundless eternity.

Strangely, I don’t have too much trouble comprehending the “mighty power” required to raise the crucified Christ from the dead and seat Him at His rightful place on the throne of God—in heaven and on earth. What I have a tough time getting a handle on is the idea that the saints will participate in His glory. But Paul swears it’s true. **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”** (Romans 8:16-18) I’m supposed to come up with a thoughtful, scholarly response at this point. But all I can say is, “Wow!”

A recurring dream for the human race is a world without war. Will and Ariel Durant once calculated that in almost 3,500 years of recorded history, there have been only 268 years without war. (And I figure that during most of that time there *were* wars going on—being fought between groups that didn't write down what they were doing.)

Wars invariably start because party A wants something that party B is not willing to give them. It could be land or material wealth, but just as often it's freedom from tyranny or the simple right to live in peace. There is always at least one guilty party, sometimes many. Some utopian idealists have hypothesized that if there were no weapons, wars would cease. But human nature begs to differ: Cain (presumably) slew Abel either with his bare hands or with a weapon of opportunity—a rock or a stick. He didn't need a gun, a knife, or a bomb—only a bad attitude. As long as unregenerate man walks the earth, he will attack his brother. Weapons are optional.

That being said, part of Yahweh's "peace process" is ridding the world of weapons, starting with Israel herself, for whom they are the height of superfluity with Yahshua in the neighborhood. **"I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.'"** (Zechariah 9:10) Disarmament follows peace, not the other way around.

The psalmist writes, **"Come, behold the works of Yahweh, Who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!'"** (Psalm 46:8-10) During the Millennium, nations won't have to arm themselves for defense—the King will be their shield. And nobody will be able to get away with aggressive national behavior. Thus weapons are pointless. Isaiah elaborates: **"He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people. 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 anymore."** (Isaiah 2:4) The industrial potential that was formerly squandered on armament will be put to more productive use under Yahshua's reign. Factories will turn out tractors, not tanks.

Micah uses the same illustration. **"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 Yahweh of hosts has spoken."** (Micah 4:3-4)

Not only will nations not fight anymore, they'll feel so secure, they'll forget how. Waging war will become a lost art, like thatching roofs or making buggy whips.

The reason, of course, is that Yahshua has taken the world's government upon His shoulders. **"I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. The nations also will know that I, Yahweh, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."** (Ezekiel 37:26-28) Again we see that Messiah will rule from Jerusalem, but His reign will extend beyond Israel—to the gentile nations. **"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse [i.e., Yahshua], Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious."** (Isaiah 11:10)

Like Munchkins celebrating the demise of the Wicked Witch of the West, the inhabitants of earth will rejoice at their tormentors' downfall—and they'll know Who deserves credit for their rescue: **"Yahweh, You will establish peace for us, for You have also done all our works in us. O Yahweh our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; but by You only we make mention of Your name. They are dead, they will not live; they are deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish."** (Isaiah 26:12-14)

In this word from Isaiah, the king of Babylon stands in for Satan as God's people celebrate at his expense: **"How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased! Yahweh has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers; He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he who ruled the nations in anger is persecuted and no one hinders. The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.** (Isaiah 14:4-7) Remember the news footage of Saddam Hussein's statues being torn down in Baghdad, or Lenin's being torn down in Moscow? The jubilation the freed masses displayed will be replayed a million times over when Satan's influence is destroyed at Yahshua's coming. And the celebration will continue far longer, because unlike in Iraq or Russia, folks in the Millennium aren't merely exchanging one form of tyranny for another.

No one will be more relieved to witness Satan's fall than the repentant Jews. But like Joseph's brothers in Egypt, they may be worried about repercussions from the things they and their ancestors did in their ignorance—like crucifying the Messiah, for instance. Yahweh reassures those who have turned from their unbelief: **"In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgressed against Me; for then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of Yahweh. The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, 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.” (Zephaniah 3:11-13) The proud and haughty don’t seek the blessings of God—the meek and humble do. Thus when Yahshua returns, it is these meek folks who will inherit the earth—their proud cousins won’t make the cut.

Covering the same topic, Jeremiah reassures them that they won’t be held accountable for the sins of their fathers. **“In those days they shall say no more: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.”** (Jeremiah 31:29-30) The American sense of fair play tends to balk at anything that suggests punishment of one person for the sins of another. But if we were honest with ourselves and willing to look at the big picture, we would realize that it happens all the time. For the Jews, it was spelled out in the Law: **“I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.”** (Deuteronomy 5:9) A comparison of these two seemingly contradictory passages reveals something startling and wonderful about life in the Millennium. Whereas in this present world those who hate Yahweh are allowed to live out their lives—passing their poisonous animosity on to the succeeding generations—under Christ’s reign, rebellion against God will be dealt with as soon as it surfaces. It won’t be allowed to fester and grow like a cancer until it threatens to kill the body—the human race, in this case. Our attitudes and prejudices aren’t “hereditary,” but we do tend to pass them on to our children. If we hate God, that same hate is likely to show up in our children and grandchildren. But this will no longer be the case during the Millennium.

That’s not to say that no one will rebel against Yahshua in these years, just that no one will “get away with it.” The result: perfect peace. **“Thus says Yahweh of hosts: ‘Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.’** (Zechariah 8:4-5) I foresee a population boom, both because children will be seen as a blessing (not a burden) in this world, and because no one will die before their time. Note, however, that their mortal bodies will still show their age, albeit not quite as quickly as they do today. Old folks will still need their walking canes, but seventy won’t be considered old anymore.

Isaiah elaborates. **“I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.”** And why is that? **“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed....”** Infant mortality will no longer torpedo the actuarial tables. And people living under God’s blessing will live to be many hundreds of years old. In fact, if someone dies as “young” as a hundred, it will be because he has rebelled against the King—he will be mourned as we would mourn a teenager

who's been shot trying to rob a convenience store—he was too young to die. Notice that some of these Millennial prophecies speak specifically of Jerusalem or Israel, and others are more general in geographical scope.

The all-too-common frustration of seeing our labors come to nothing will be a thing of the past: **“They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat. For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of Yahweh, and their offspring with them.”** If you remember the blessings and cursings of Deuteronomy 28, you'll recognize these things as the fulfillment of a promise: when the children of Israel returned to their God, He would once again bless them. Beyond repentant Israel, the children of the first-generation gentile “sheep” who enter the Millennium will reap the benefits of living in Yahshua's perfect society—and they will respond in love to their Messiah. And because fellowship with Yahshua is the norm rather than the exception, even prayer will be expedited: **“It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear....”**

In short, this is nothing like the world we're used to. It is, I imagine, more like the Garden of Eden, only without the sneaky serpent or the temptation tree. But is the world safe and secure only because Yahshua is ruling with “a rod of iron?” Are people behaving themselves merely because His government is repressive and restrictive? No. All of the earth's creatures are participants in this peaceful paradigm shift. Even in the animal kingdom, there are no more predators, no more prey. **“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” says Yahweh.** (Isaiah 65:19-25) Now *that's* what I call evolution! Again, the phrase “My holy mountain” seems to be indicating that this state of affairs will exist in Jerusalem. It remains to be seen how much of the rest of the world will enjoy the same pervasive peace.

An instant replay of this imagery gives us reason for worldwide optimism. **“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.”** (Isaiah 11:6-9) Like Will Rogers once said, “Things ain't what they used to be—and they never were.”

Another myth the utopian dreamers have always preached is that if we can just eliminate poverty, peace will naturally follow. Actually, they've got it backwards. Prosperity is the natural result of peace, not the other way around. That's why Yahshua is called the "Prince of Peace," not the "Prince of Prosperity."

The psalmist puts it in perspective. **"I will hear what Yahweh will speak, for He will speak peace to His people and to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly."** Peace and folly are incompatible. **"Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yes, Yahweh will give what is good; and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway."** (Psalm 85:8-13) This all seems pretty obvious until you consider the converse: what is mercy *without* truth? If we condone sin, we create the impression that justice doesn't matter. But Yahweh is a just God who requires holiness, and like I said, His patience won't last forever. Mercy without truth is therefore a bomb with a delayed fuse. Tolerance of false teaching is a knife in the back. And what about peace without righteousness? That is the unstated goal of every totalitarian regime—they don't care if you're good as long as you're obedient. Neither of these errors is descriptive of the reign of Yahshua. **"Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed."** And the result is prosperity: **"Our land will yield its increase."**

Another psalm continues the thought. **"God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. Selah. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah...."** Tempering the emphasis of some passages, it's clear here that the Millennial blessings won't be confined to Israel, but will be spread throughout the whole earth. **"Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."** (Psalm 67) The prosperity the nations enjoy is directly tied to their praise of Yahweh—the grateful acknowledgment that He is the rightful King.

What does this prosperity look like? **"Behold, the days are coming,"** says Yahweh, **"When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed. The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it...."** Ever been pleasantly surprised to find yourself with money left over at the end of the month? Felt good, didn't it? With Yahshua at the helm, the productivity of earth will be multiplied.

Once again we are reminded of the blessings and curses Moses predicted for Israel back in Deuteronomy 28. The curses came to pass exactly as advertised in response to their disobedience. But the Millennium will see the blessings restored: **“I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,’ says Yahweh your God.”** (Amos 9:14-15) After Israel’s brief but terrifying three and a half year exile during the Tribulation, this promise will be sweet indeed.

Zechariah expands upon the thought. **“For before these days there were no wages for man nor any hire for beast. There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in; for I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor....”** The curses of Deuteronomy had promised poverty and strife. **“But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,’ says Yahweh of hosts....”** No, the blessings will be restored in response to Israel’s repentance. **“For the seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give its fruit, the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew— I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these. And it shall come to pass that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear. Let your hands be strong.”** (Zechariah 8:10-13)

God is not unaware of the neglect the Land has suffered, and still does in the areas where Islam is predominant. But He promises a building boom during the Millennium. **“And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.”** (Isaiah 61:4)

Not surprisingly, Ezekiel concurs with Isaiah: **“But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt.”** Not only will there be a building boom, but a baby boom as well. **“I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better for you than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh.”** Zeke describes the grim conditions Israel had to look forward to in his day: **“Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance.”** But then he predicts that Yahweh will turn the situation upside down: **“No more shall you bereave them of children.... Because they say to you, ‘You devour men and bereave your nation of children,’ therefore you shall devour men no more, nor bereave your nation anymore.... Nor will I let you hear the taunts of the nations anymore, nor bear the reproach of the peoples anymore, nor shall you cause your nation to stumble anymore, says**

Yahweh.” (Ezekiel 36:8-15) Notice that Yahweh places the blame for Israel’s woes squarely on Israel’s shoulders: *they* have been causing *their nation* to stumble.

The psalmist expands Ezekiel’s thought. **“Blessed is every one who fears Yahweh, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears Yahweh. Yahweh bless you out of Zion, and may you see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life. Yes, may you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel!”** (Psalm 128) Twice the psalmist declares that prosperity is contingent upon reverence for Yahweh—the awe, the godly deference, that comes naturally from a comprehension of His greatness.

The word translated “fear,” by the way, (Hebrew: *yare*) *can* mean fright or dread as well as reverence, but passages like this next one from Joel make it clear that when Yahweh says we must “fear” him, He doesn’t mean He wants us to be *afraid* of Him—but rather to show the proper respect that’s due Him. **“Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for Yahweh has done marvelous things! Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in Yahweh your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month....”** A God who wants to bless His children like this isn’t looking for a cringing whipped-dog sort of dread or the obsequious obeisance of mind-numbing religious rituals, but rather the same kind of “fear” a four-year-old shows her loving father: she knows (from experience) that willful disobedience could easily earn her a well-deserved spanking, but she also knows that her daddy would much rather take his good girl out for an ice cream cone.

To put it in Old Testament agricultural parlance, **“The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of Yahweh your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame.”** Never, that is, *after* they return to the reverence of Yahweh. Until then, shame and locusts (these days, it’s the Muslim variety) shall be their lot. **“Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am Yahweh your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.”** (Joel 2:21-27)

Joel continues describing the Millennial bounty to be poured out on Israel: **“It will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; a fountain shall flow from the house of Yahweh and water the Valley of Acacias....”** Israel is relatively

prosperous today (in comparison with nearby nations) but this prosperity is due to Herculean effort on the part of the Jews, not the direct bounty of Yahweh. The land today is naturally dry and inhospitable—it does not “drip” with new wine, nor are the brooks “flooded with water” except immediately after an all-too-rare rainstorm. The Jews, in other words, ain’t seen nothin’ yet. The reference to a “fountain flowing from the house of Yahweh,” by the way, is not a metaphor. As we will later discover, it (actually *they*: there are two of them, one flowing east and the other west) are prophesied in the most specific and detailed of terms.

And lest we misunderstand God’s role, Joel compares the future Israel with its neighbors: **“Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of violence against the people of Judah, for they have shed innocent blood in their land....”** We have already seen how the Nile, and possibly the Gulf of Suez, will dry up, and we have examined half a dozen passages describing the utter desolation of Edom (Southern Jordan). **“But Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted; for Yahweh dwells in Zion.”** (Joel 3:18-21) It’s a prophetic *fait accompli*: He *will* dwell in Zion, once Yahshua returns and sets up shop.

Just because the scriptures emphasize the Millennial blessings Israel will enjoy, we should not be unaware that these blessings will “trickle down” (like Niagara Falls) to the rest of the world. Isaiah explains. **“In this mountain [Zion] Yahweh of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.”** The English is hopeless here. Let’s try the New Living Translation: **“In Jerusalem, Yahweh Almighty will spread out a wonderful feast for everyone around the world. It will be a delicious feast of good food, with clear well-aged wine and choice beef. In that day He will remove the cloud of gloom, the shadow of death that hangs over the earth....”** Ahh, that’s better—or at least clearer.

“He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for Yahweh has spoken. And it will be said in that day: ‘Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is Yahweh; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.’” (Isaiah 25:6-9) That we will.

Who will wipe away our tears? It reads: “the Lord GOD” in the KJV, NKJV, and NASB (and “Sovereign LORD” in the NIV). The translators just can’t seem to get this right. This time it’s GOD that’s in small caps, not “Lord,” which is their usual mistake. If you check any standard reference work, you’ll see that the Hebrew is *’Adonay Yahweh*. *’Adon* (or *’Adonay*, an emphatic form of the same word), means Lord—master, owner, or ruler. *Yahweh* means “I Am,” but proper names should never be translated in usage, just spoken. The translators just choke

on rendering Yahweh's name as it's written in the original text, almost always (and in almost every English translation) *substituting* it with a title, "the LORD." That's a systematic treachery I've harped on before. But with 'Adonay and Yahweh together here, they'd have to render it Lord LORD, revealing their purposeful deception for what it is. So they bend their own fraudulent convention and replace Yahweh with GOD this time. But *El* or *Elohim* (the Hebrew words invariably used for god or God, respectively) are nowhere to be found in the text. This is all so dishonest, so purposely misleading, it makes me want to puke.

But wait, it gets worse. There are two facts you should recall. First, the name of the counterfeit Canaanite deity Ba'al literally meant "lord." Satan has a vested interest in promoting a caricature of god in place of the real One, so if he can get us to think of Yahweh—the eternal, self-existent Creator of all things—as only a pathetic tyrant who is fixated on ruling, controlling, and owning us (as Satan would love to do), then he's made real progress toward ensuring our demise. Second, remember that Babylonian Hebrew manuscripts were written with consonants only: the vowel points were supplied fifteen hundred years after the fact by a group of Jewish scholars (the Masoretes) who, like Satan, had a vested interest in obscuring the identification of Yahweh with Yahshua. The bottom line is that 'Adon (Lord) is not necessarily the word in the text. All that's there are the consonants, anglicized: 'dn. And wouldn't you know it, there's another intriguing possibility for what the word means. 'Eden (from a root meaning "to be strong") is the Hebrew word for pedestal, foundation, or base. For example, the foundation "sockets" for the wilderness Tabernacle were called 'eden: they, like Yahweh Himself, were what held the whole thing up. So 'dn Yhwh may actually mean "Yahweh the Foundation" or "Yahweh our Basis."

To my mind, one of the most obvious problems faced by "replacement theologians," those who insist that the Church has taken over Israel's role and its place in the heart of God, is the immense body of prophecy predicting that repentant Israel will return to the promised land. Their theory forces them to conclude that the entire Church will be crammed into this tiny strip of land about the size of New Jersey, leaving the rest of the world vacant. The whole idea is just plain silly.

Yahweh never drove the Church anywhere in His anger, and yet we read, **"Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely...."** Tell you what; I'll promise to stop harping on the idiocy of replacement

theology if you'll promise to remember that Yahweh knows exactly what He's doing—the promises He's made to Israel will be fulfilled in Israel, and those to the Ekklesia, in the Ekklesia. Deal? **“They [that's Israel] shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’ For thus says Yahweh: ‘Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them.”** (Jeremiah 32:37-42)

Since it's my intention to look at *all* the pieces in this ten-thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle, it shouldn't come as a surprise that many of them look quite similar. The return of Israel is—to stretch my metaphor—that big patch of sky in our picture that's all pretty much the same color. We've already put scores of puzzle pieces into place in this area, but we aren't done yet—not by a long shot.

All of the Old Testament prophets have something to say about Israel's return, so perhaps it would make sense to organize our discussion by who's delivering the message. Let's continue with Jeremiah, then. **“Thus says Yahweh: ‘Behold, I will bring back the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places. The city shall be built upon its own mound, and the palace shall remain according to its own plan.”** Jerusalem will be restored to its former glory, and then some. **“Then out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who make merry. I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as before, and their congregation shall be established before Me; and I will punish all who oppress them.”** Israel will once again, as in the days of David and Solomon (and rarely since then), be a great people, respected among nations and blessed by Yahweh. **“Their nobles shall be from among them, and their governor shall come from their midst. Then I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach Me; For who is this who pledged his heart to approach Me?’ says Yahweh. ‘You shall be My people, and I will be your God.”** (Jeremiah 30:18-22) The civil rulers of the new state of Israel will be Jews (which might seem like an obvious thing to say unless you remember their history for the last two thousand years—up until 1948). Mortals assigned to positions of responsibility will have a proven heart for God. Beyond that, we should remember Yahshua's promise to His disciples: because of their service and devotion, they (as immortals) were to “judge the twelve tribes of Israel.” And “Church-age” immortals will “judge the world.” (I Corinthians 6:2) Everyone, of course, will ultimately answer to Yahshua Himself.

What does Micah have to say? **“In that day,’ says Yahweh, ‘I will assemble the lame; I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation. So Yahweh will reign over them in Mount Zion**

from now on, even forever....” We’re reminded here that the Jews are not going to do anything in their own strength; they’re the lame and the outcast, with no power to effect change over their ostensibly pitiful destiny—outside of their decision to trust in Yahweh. **“And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.”** (Micah 4:6-8) He’s saying that the kingdom will be based in Jerusalem, not Washington D.C., Moscow, London, or even Tel Aviv. But the sins of Israel will keep them separated from their God until the nation is spiritually reborn: **“Therefore He shall give them up, until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel.”** (Micah 5:3)

He continues: **“I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make a loud noise because of so many people. The one who breaks open will come up before them; they will break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it. Their king will pass before them, With Yahweh at their head.”** (Micah 2:12-13) In other words, Yahshua will personally gather Israel and lead them out of their exile, and not one or two at a time, but a vast crowd.

The eloquent Isaiah was given information concerning Israel’s return as well. **“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....”** Only those who have been cleansed by accepting the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah may enter into Yahshua’s kingdom. This will prove to be more and more significant a distinction as the Millennium wears on and people are born who choose not to avail themselves of God’s grace—they will be barred from both Jerusalem and the highway that leads to it, whether metaphorical or literal. **“Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; it shall not be found there....”** You don’t have to be brilliant or brave to come into the kingdom, only willing. **“But the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of Yahweh 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.”** (Isaiah 34:8-10) Israel as a people have known their share of sorrow during the last four thousand years. But all of that is about to change.

Isaiah continues: **“Thus says the Lord Yahweh: ‘Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples. They shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders. Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; they shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am Yahweh, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.’”** (Isaiah 49:22-23) The gentile nations, especially their leaders, will expedite the return of the Jews to their land, not with

conniving malice this time, but with respect and reverence. For the first time since Solomon reigned, it will be obvious to the nations that Yahweh is on Israel's side and that they are the apple of His eye. So the gentiles will do everything they can to make the Jews' homecoming a pleasant experience, for they too now worship Yahshua the King.

Now let's hear from Zechariah. **"Thus says Yahweh of hosts: 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.'" (Zechariah 8:7-8)** Does any of that sound familiar? It should.

"I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph...." The implication is that not only those who are aware of their Jewish roots but also those who have no idea who they really are—descendants of Joseph—a.k.a. Ephraim, a.k.a. the Samaritans, a.k.a. the "ten lost tribes" of Israel's Northern Kingdom—will be included in the great regathering. **"I will bring them back, because I have mercy on them. They shall be as though I had not cast them aside; for I am Yahweh their God, and I will hear them. Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as if with wine. Yes, their children shall see it and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in Yahweh...."** Remember that Zechariah wrote during the second temple period—circa 520-470 B.C. The Northern Kingdom (whose dominant tribe was Ephraim) had been toast for over two hundred years, presumably absorbed irretrievably into the Assyrian melting pot. Zechariah says it doesn't matter: God knows who are His. **"I will whistle for them and gather them, for I will redeem them; and they shall increase as they once increased. I will sow them among the peoples, and they shall remember Me in far countries. They shall live, together with their children, and they shall return...."** The Babylonian exile had already ended when Zechariah wrote this. He was thus predicting the coming dispersion under the Romans and Israel's subsequent regathering under the Messiah a couple thousand years later. Note that logically, these redeemed ones of Israel must still be mortals—not raptured saints—for they are still bearing children and populating the earth *after* the regathering; Yahshua taught that "in the resurrection there is no marriage," hence no more procreation.

"I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, until no more room is found for them. He shall pass through the sea with affliction, and strike the waves of the sea: all the depths of the River shall dry up. Then the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart. So I will strengthen them in Yahweh, and they shall walk up and down in His name,' says Yahweh." (Zechariah 10:6-12) Lebanon, as we saw back in chapter 6, is part of Israel as far as Yahweh's definition is concerned (see Numbers 34). Gilead is today's northwestern Jordan—formerly Ammonite territory and at one

time settled by the Israelite tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. Egypt and Assyria are Israel's perennial antagonists—geographical bookends that, along with Jordan, surround the promised land. We've reviewed the fate of Jordan (i.e., Ammon, Moab, and Edom) and it isn't pretty. Here we're being told that in the Millennium, Egypt and Assyria will pose no threat—indeed, many of the returning sons of Israel will actually come from these two lands. This leads me to conclude that both these nations are home to significant Israelite populations who have lost track of their heritage—swallowed up first by the conquests of ancient Egypt and Assyria and later by the aggressive imperialism of Muhammad's followers. They have no idea that they might be descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But God knows who they are, and He has promised to redeem a remnant from among them.

That is a remarkable thing to say. Yahweh is saying that even though these areas are all in Muslim hands today, a remnant will (1) survive the Tribulation (and more to the point, live through the devastating Battle of Magog), (2) turn to Yahweh in faith, (3) somehow learn of their Israelite lineage, and (4) return to the Land of Promise. It seems likely that this Israelite remnant is the primary constituent of the amazing Millennial prophecy we reviewed a few chapters back: **"In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom Yahweh almighty shall bless, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.'** (Isaiah 19:23-25) How ironic it is that some nations who follow a religion dedicated to driving the Jews out of the Land are themselves populated with children of Israel who will one day live there under God's blessing. Who says Yahweh doesn't have a sense of humor?

Hosea seems to be hinting at the same thing. **"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'** Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel [i.e., Jews from both the Southern and Northern Kingdoms—from all twelve tribes] **shall be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head; and they shall come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel!"** (Hosea 1:10-11) Jezreel is a euphemism for Israel. It literally means "God will sow," as we saw in the Zechariah 10 passage above. Hosea seems to be saying that multitudes of people who presumed they were gentiles will discover their Jewish roots—and with them their Jewish Savior. The irony is delicious.

But after all these years—after generations of cultural obscurity—how will these people come to know of their Jewishness? Will Yahshua simply inform the lucky winners? *Surprise! You're Jewish!* It could be as simple as that, but I rather

imagine that the circumstances will be somewhat more ominous. With the advent of DNA technology, it became possible to trace family trees through similarities in genetic profiles. Back in chapter 10, I explained how the science works. Now think back to our discussion of the Mark of the Beast. It isn't much of a stretch to imagine starting a worldwide DNA database as part of the Antichrist's "world without crime" program. When you sign up for the Mark, a blood sample would be taken—something by which every human on the planet (according to the brochure) could be positively identified, sort of like a universal fingerprint database on steroids. But because of his *real* agenda, the Antichrist would then have each DNA profile screened for Jewish characteristics—something that would show up in the mitochondrial DNA, passed along intact from mother to daughter.

Wait a minute! you say. *Everybody who took the Mark of the Beast is dead by this time. The stealth Jews still wouldn't know who they were.* Boy, you're sharp today. But consider this. Suppose your mother took the Mark, and came back later and announced to the family, "Guess what? I'm Jewish! It showed up in my DNA sample, and I didn't even know it. All this time I thought we were Catholics." I wouldn't be surprised to learn that the rules determining Jewish bloodlines were well known by this time—that (at least according to rabbinical tradition) if your mother is Jewish, so are you. Bottom line, both you and your brothers and sisters would know you were Jewish whether you took the Mark or not. Granted, this line of reasoning is all highly speculative. I'm not trying to establish doctrine here; only point out that the "Israel" that Yahshua gathers back into the Land may include people who don't know they're Jews when the Tribulation begins.

Okay; let's check in with the prophet Zephaniah. **"Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! Yahweh has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, Yahweh, is in your midst; you shall see disaster no more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: 'Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. Yahweh your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing....'"** Note once again that the "Yahweh" who assumes the throne of Israel is Yahshua: they are the same entity. Nobody is happier about the return of Israel than Yahweh/Yahshua Himself. Isaiah described the Messiah in His first advent as a "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." But here we see Him so happy, He breaks out in song. That's quite a picture.

"I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, who are among you, to whom its reproach is a burden. Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the lame, and gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame in every land where they were put to shame...." We are reminded of the mark of life being put on the foreheads of those who wept over the sins of Israel (cf.

Ezekiel 9:4-7). It was their contrite, broken attitude that singled them out for God's protection, in contrast to the arrogance of those who indulged in idolatry. **"At that time I will bring you back, even at the time I gather you; for I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I return your captives before your eyes,' says Yahweh."** (Zephaniah 3:8-20) Fame and praise? As Peter wrote, **"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."** (I Peter 5:6) What's true for individuals is also true for nations.

We didn't hear from Ezekiel in that last segment, but that's not because he didn't have anything to say. Zeke's emphasis in the following passage, however, isn't so much on Israel's return as on their repentance. We begin by observing that Israel's cleansing takes place after their regathering begins. (That may seem pretty obvious now that they—some of them—have officially been back in the Land since 1948. But how would Ezekiel have known that? He wrote this stuff down in the sixth century B.C.) **"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them...."** Then, as if to reverse the order of events we just saw, Yahweh says, **"Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses...."** What gives? Is God confused? No. Commencing the gathering process and seeing Israel dwell in the Land under God's blessing are two separate things. Israel will never be secure in the Land until they turn to Yahshua in repentance. At the moment, there any number of ways they could lose their national sovereignty, not to mention their lives. But the scene will be played out just as Great Playwright wrote it.

First the gathering begins (it began in earnest after World War II), then the cleansing and deliverance (which will take place during the Tribulation). Then Israel's ingathering will be completed, culminating in the blessings of Yahshua's kingdom, and accompanied by their heartfelt remorse for their past national evils. **"I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations."** The spirit of the Day of Atonement will linger on long after October 3, 2033. Israel will not soon forget their national guilt. **"Not for**

your sake do I do this,' says the Lord Yahweh, 'let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!...'”

Israel will also experience a baby boom as Yahweh's restoration proceeds. At the moment, the population of Israel (both within the Land and without) is relatively flat—a little over two births per woman on average (compared to seven or eight in the neighboring Muslim nations). But that is going to change during the Millennium. **“Thus says the Lord Yahweh: ‘I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am Yahweh.’”** (Ezekiel 36:24-32, 37-38)

Time and time again Yahweh revisits this theme: He will restore a repentant Israel to greatness, and the gentiles will glorify God because of this. Yahweh put it this way through His prophet Isaiah: **“For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of Yahweh will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of Yahweh, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no longer be termed Forsaken; nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate. But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah. For Yahweh delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you....”** Remember back in Psalm 102, when Yahweh predicted that the very name of Israel's people would be used against them as a curse? Indeed, the Nazis were only the tip of the iceberg. The name “Jew” has far more negative connotations than positive ones in today's world. Knee-jerk anti-Semitism is, contrary to all reason, still rampant in many nations. One might presume that as Yahshua blesses Israel during the Millennium, a jealous world might continue this trend of blind hatred, but here we see that the converse is true—Israel and her King will be honored. *Hephzibah* means “My delight is in her,” and *Beulah* means, “to have dominion over” (in the sense of a husband having dominion over his wife in that culture); the thought seems to be that the world will look to Israel as a submissive wife would look to her husband—as the authority in the home, the one who is responsible before God for providing guidance and sustenance. I realize that *Beulah* is not a very politically correct word these days. Deal with it.

Isaiah continues. **“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of Yahweh, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth....”** I thought the Hebrew word for “watchmen” here might be our old friend *natsar* (one who guards), translated “watchmen” in Jeremiah 31:6—the same word used for “Christians” in modern Hebrew. But it wasn't. The word used here is *shamar*,

from a primitive root meaning to hedge about as with thorns, thus to guard, protect, or attend to. Though there is no linguistic tie to Christians here, I can't help but see echoes of the Ekklesia in this passage, the ones who hedge Israel about with their prayers and will continue to do so until Yahshua calls us home. Isaiah implores us not to give Yahweh a moment's peace—peppering heaven with a constant barrage of prayer beseeching Him to “make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” But this is a Millennial passage. In the long run, and in context, the “watchmen” are children of Israel who have learned through the bleak days of the Tribulation to “make mention of Yahweh.” God is encouraging them not to give up, not to stop praying for their deliverance and restoration—no matter how dark it gets before the dawn.

“Yahweh has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength: ‘Surely I will no longer give your grain as food for your enemies; and the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine for which you have labored. But those who have gathered it shall eat it, and praise Yahweh; those who have brought it together shall drink it in My holy courts....’” Again we see a reversal of the cursings of Deuteronomy 28, something that can only happen with the reconciliation of Israel to Yahweh.

“Go through, go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Take out the stones, lift up a banner for the peoples! Indeed Yahweh has proclaimed to the end of the world: ‘Say to the daughter of Zion, “Surely your salvation is coming. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.”’ And they shall call them The Holy People, the Redeemed of Yahweh; and you shall be called Sought Out, a City Not Forsaken.” (Isaiah 62) The return and repentance of Israel are pivotal to the plan of Yahshua. His people shall be redeemed and made holy (i.e., they will be set apart for His honor), and they will dwell in the very presence of God.

Leave it to David to teach us something of the mindset of repentant Israel. This is a prayer fit for the ultimate Day of Atonement. **“For Your name's sake, O Yahweh, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Who is the man that fears Yahweh? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit the earth....”** After the agony and terror of the Tribulation, the Jews who turn to Yahshua will see their hope restored, but their pride and self-sufficiency will have vanished. **“The secret of Yahweh is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant. My eyes are ever toward Yahweh, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have enlarged; bring me out of my distresses! Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. Consider my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. Keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all their troubles!”** (Psalm 25:11-22) Yahweh intends to do precisely that.

Having returned from exile among the nations of the world, and having repented of her idolatry by recognizing and accepting Yahshua as Messiah, Israel will at last be ready to fulfill her destined role in the Millennial Kingdom. Yahweh, for His part, has been encouraging Israel to accept this glorious role ever since they first became a nation: **“I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am Yahweh their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am Yahweh their God.”** (Exodus 29:45-46)

In fact, just before Moses informed the Israelites of the blessings and cursings that awaited them based upon what they did with Yahweh’s instructions, he told them of God’s intentions—*without* any strings attached. **“Also today Yahweh has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to Yahweh your God, just as He has spoken.”** (Deuteronomy 26:18-19) Moses was saying they should keep Yahweh’s commandments *because* they were His “special people,” not in order to gain that status. Their God promised to honor them above all other nations—but He didn’t say when. As we have now learned, it won’t happen until they’ve repented and turned to their Messiah, and *that* won’t happen completely until the very end of the Tribulation.

But why would Yahweh want to exalt Israel over the other nations in the first place? It think it has more to do with demonstrating who He is than with giving perks to His chosen family. **“He has declared to His people the power of His works in giving them the heritage of the nations.”** (Psalm 111:6) Let’s face it, making Israel the world’s leading nation would appear to be about as close to impossible as it gets. Granting them “the heritage of the nations” would certainly prove the power of Yahweh, for no earthly power—including Israel itself—could accomplish that, even if they wanted to.

No one had quite as much to say about Israel’s role in the Millennium as Isaiah did. But the picture he paints contrasts glaringly with the history of his nation since he wrote these words. **“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.”** He begins by recounting for the umpteenth time the regathering of Israel back into the Land. **“Then you shall see and become radiant, and your 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....”** Hebrew poetry depends on thought parallels, the restatement of a concept in different words. Here we see how the sea

became a metaphor for the gentiles (as the Land is for the Jews). Gentile wealth will flow to Israel, and it will come by sea.

And it will come by land. **“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 Yahweh. 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.”** (Isaiah 60:4-7) On the three sides of Israel not bordered by the sea, Muslim nations stand poised to push her into the Mediterranean—an endeavor they have tried and failed to achieve several times during the last half-century. So it is with some surprise that Isaiah tells us that the *Arabs* will come bearing gifts to Israel, eager to “proclaim the praises of Yahweh.” As we have seen, the War of Magog will destroy *dar al-Islam*, leaving at best a sixth of the Middle-Eastern Muslims alive. But one of the Islamic nations that will likely sustain the least amount of damage during this conflict is Saudi Arabia (though Jeremiah 25 lists Dedan, Tema, Buz, Zimri, and **“all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed multitude who dwell in the desert”** among the nations who will feel the lash of God’s wrath). Here we see that the inhabitants of the birthplace of Muhammad (those few who are left) have come full circle, worshipping Yahweh and honoring Israel. Moreover, since we see them playing their part in the Millennial worship of Yahshua, it means that this Arab remnant must have discovered (and embraced) the truth sometime between the rapture and the end of the Tribulation!

Isaiah continues: **“Who are these who fly like a cloud, and like doves to their roosts? Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me; and the ships of Tarshish will come first, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, to the name of Yahweh your God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He has glorified you....”** The gentiles, and especially their commercial interests—now stripped of their “Babylonian” component—will assist in the repatriation of Israel. And this time the Jews will not come empty handed, as they did after World War II, but will bring “their silver and gold with them.” Note also that they “fly like a cloud...like doves.” Yes: doves with *El Al* emblazoned on their tails, I imagine. The idea of flying to Israel is just one more of those prophecies that could not have been literally fulfilled before a few decades ago.

“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....” In stark contrast to Israel’s traditional attitude of self-sufficiency, Yahshua will require all nations (not just the Americans, goaded on by their Christian constituency) to contribute

to their glory. It will be like it was in the days of Solomon, only more so. This is a confirmation of the Zechariah 14 prophecy we saw in the previous chapter predicting that all the families of the earth will pay homage to Yahshua every year during the Feast of Tabernacles. **“The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the pine, and the box tree together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious....”** The object (at least one of them) of all this gentile treasure flowing into Jerusalem is their contribution to the building of Yahshua’s new temple, something we’ll explore in detail in the next chapter.

I am willing to suspend my natural pre-rapture cynicism here and conclude (SF4) that this is not a tax or obligation imposed upon the nations, but rather a voluntary contribution indicative of a heartfelt desire to worship Yahshua and honor His chosen people. The reason is that at the beginning of the Millennium (after the “goats” have been set aside), every person on earth is a true believer in Yahshua—Jews and gentiles alike—and they’re all too aware of the reality of their salvation. The descendants of Israel’s enemies will see the error of their fathers’ ways: **“Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you The City of Yahweh, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through you, I will make you an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations. You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles, and milk the breast of kings; you shall know that I, Yahweh, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob....”** There it is again, the reason for all of this change of fortune for Israel: so that they will at last *know* their Savior.

Passages like this make it clear why certain factions within the Church insist that *they* have inherited the promises of Israel—who wouldn’t want to be honored like this? But in order to be this national entity “drinking the milk of the gentiles,” you’d have to (1) be currently in a state of rebellion and disbelief, (2) become at some point willing to repent—turn around and think differently—from your current opinion, (3) have a history of being afflicted and persecuted, “forsaken and hated” by the world, (4) be physically residing within the land of Israel, specifically occupying Jerusalem, and perhaps trickiest, (5) be in a position to explain who the devout “gentiles” who are going to bring you all this good stuff are. Adherents of Replacement Theology (a.k.a. Covenant Theology, a.k.a. Supersessionism) today can’t or won’t admit to any of these conditions. In refusing to countenance what Yahweh plainly says about the restoration of His chosen people Israel, they must ignore, allegorize, brush off, reinterpret, or flat-out deny huge portions of divine writ, ultimately forcing them into a position where they have to deny the existence of the Millennium altogether (a theory called Amillenarianism). Fortunately, Yahweh knows precisely what He’s doing. The Jews, of course, are just as clueless as the Replacement Theologians at the moment, but they’re about to get their eyes opened.

But I digress. We were back in the Millennium. In short, this is going to be an incredible time to be a Jew in Jerusalem. **“Instead of bronze I will bring gold, instead of iron I will bring silver, instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron. I will also make your officers peace, and your magistrates righteousness. Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.”** (Isaiah 60:8-18) During the Millennium, peace, righteousness, salvation, and praise won't have to be enforced on the populace by “officers and magistrates,” with “walls and gates.” They will be the natural order of things. Israelis who read this passage today must moan, *When? This is nothing like the Israel I know. Violence, waste, and destruction lurk around every corner. We struggle for every shekel, and the land is watered with our tears.* Yes, and it's going to get far worse before it gets better.

The contrast between Biblical prophecy and present reality continues in Isaiah's next chapter. **“Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the foreigner shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.”** Arab Israelis form the backbone of the “servant class” in Israel today, but that's not what the prophet is talking about, for he continues, **“But you shall be named the priests of Yahweh. They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory you shall boast. Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double. Everlasting joy shall be theirs. “For I, Yahweh, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, and will make with them an everlasting covenant.”** The gentiles won't respect Israel until Israel respects Yahweh; they won't honor the God of Israel until Israel herself honors Him. Yet when the Jews finally return to Yahweh, they will be blessed by man and God alike. **“Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the posterity whom Yahweh has blessed....”**

So great will be the chasm between the curses to which Israel has subjected herself for the past two-thousand-plus years and the blessings her repentant remnant will enjoy in the Millennium, her children will surely shake their heads and wonder, How could our fathers have missed this? **“I will greatly rejoice in Yahweh; my soul shall be joyful in my God. For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord Yahweh will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”** (Isaiah 61:5-11) No honest Jew today can claim that these verses are a reality in the life of his people. But they will be.

A few chapters later, Isaiah continues the theme. **“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her. Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; that**

you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom, that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory....” Those of us who love Jerusalem and mourn for her plight will have ample reason to rejoice when the King graces her with His glory. **“For thus says Yahweh: ‘Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; on her sides shall you be carried, and be dandled on her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.’ When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass”** (Isaiah 66:10-14) Here is a tender picture of comfort and restoration: Yahweh’s beloved Israel has fallen down and scraped her knee, but the gentile neighbors have picked up the crying child, brought her home—to Israel, and specifically, to Jerusalem—to the comforting arms of her mother, her *Ruach Qodesh*, the Holy Spirit. And these concerned good neighbors (the “sheep” in Yahshua’s metaphor) have dried her tears, provided medicine, a bandage, and a big chocolate chip cookie to make her feel better. Or something like that.

Isaiah spoke of “peace like a river” flowing to Jerusalem, and “the glory of the gentiles” gushing like a stream to Israel. Apparently, Zion will return the favor. It’s hinted at by the psalmist: **“There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.”** (Psalm 46:4) *It’s only a metaphor*, you might be thinking, *a picture of Yahweh’s blessings being poured out on the Millennial world from his holy temple.* It is that, no doubt, but I believe it also refers to a literal river that will flow from the future temple. As a matter of fact, Zechariah describes it: **“In that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea. In both summer and winter it shall occur. And Yahweh shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—‘Yahweh is one,’ and His name one.”** (Zechariah 14:8-9)

Needless to say, there is no such river at the present time. It is obvious that for this to be true, there will have to be major geological changes in the substructure of the Land or Yahweh will have to provide an ongoing miracle. It may be a little of both. We have already seen that immediately before the end of the Tribulation, the greatest earthquake in history occurred—beginning near Jerusalem and working its way throughout the tectonic regions of the earth, leveling mountains and submerging islands. So it’s a reasonably safe assumption that the structure of the earth’s crust is no longer precisely what it used to be. Zechariah’s prophecy speaks of a river flowing in two directions from Jerusalem—west toward the Mediterranean, and east toward the Dead Sea. This is not some seasonal flash-flood sort of affair, either; he specifically states that these will be year-round

rivers. And it's fascinating that he connects the formation of these new rivers with the ascension of Yahweh/Yahshua (who is pointedly described as "One") to the throne of earth.

To find out why (as if we couldn't guess), we need to flip back to Ezekiel. He was shown a detailed vision describing the worship and geography of the Millennial kingdom—a lengthy passage we'll study in our next chapter. We pick up the narrative as an angel shows Zeke around the new temple. **"Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side"** (Ezekiel 47:1-2) This is no metaphor; the description is specific and detailed. Ezekiel is being shown the source of the river that runs east, toward the Dead Sea. The water flows from beneath the temple, originating from the south side, then turning to flow eastward.

If the Millennial temple is within half a mile of where Solomon placed T1, then water flowing from that area would naturally drain into the Kidron Valley on the east side of the Temple Mount, emptying into the Hinnom Valley on the south. From there it would flow eastward toward the Jordan River Valley, then south to the Dead Sea. The defeat of death itself is being pictured. The Hinnom Valley, you see, was the prototype for the Jewish conception of hell. In the bad old days, the inhabitants of the area sacrificed children to the Canaanite god Molech in this place, and in later times, the valley (also known as *ge-hinnom*, or Gehenna) became Jerusalem's city dump. Trash fires burned here perpetually, making it an apt and ready metaphor for the fires of hell. As we shall see presently, the water that will flow from beneath the temple will heal whatever it touches, bringing life and bounty with it wherever it runs, including its ultimate destination, the Dead Sea. (I think they're going to have to rename it.) The river is thus a potent portrait of the salvation provided by Yahshua, who once said, **"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."** (John 4:14)

On the other hand, if you'll recall, the Mount of Olives was split in two when Yahshua returned, creating a big east-west valley through the middle of it. Depending on the elevation of the valley floor, this could easily form the channel of the new eastward river, bypassing the Valley of Hinnom altogether. (The Mount of Olives is in the right location—east of the temple mount on the far side of the Brook of Kidron.) But this only makes the picture more stunning: Christ's salvation doesn't flow through hell; those who choose to go there won't benefit from the living water that courses everywhere else.

Ezekiel wasn't nearly done. **"And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits [about 500 yards], and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed...."** The stream started as a rivulet but before it had gone a mile and a quarter it had grown into a rushing river. It's not clear whether this is due to new springs feeding the stream as it makes its way downhill, or due to a creative miracle on the part of Yahweh. Either way, I'm impressed: in that part of the world a river big enough to swim in is miraculous any way you slice it. The farther the living water flowed downstream, the more volume it carried. Salvation is like that. Each soul redeemed by Yahshua touches others, adding to the torrent of holiness flowing through the earth.

"He said to me, 'Son of man, have you seen this?' [In other words, *This is important, Zeke. Pay attention.*] Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. Then he said to me: 'This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the [Dead] sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi [near the middle of the western shoreline] to En Eglaim [farther north, near Qumran]; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea [i.e., the Mediterranean], exceedingly many. But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.'" (Ezekiel 47:3-12) Trees? Fish? Been to Israel lately? The neighborhood he's talking about isn't exactly the land of milk and honey—it's more like the land of silt and Humvees. It's as barren as the moon.

Maybe we're talking about geological upheaval as well. The Dead Sea is the lowest spot on the face of the earth—its surface averages about 1,280 feet *below* sea level. The reason it's "dead" is that at that elevation, it can have no outlet. If the great Day-of-Atonement earthquake were to split the Arabah, allowing the waters of the Gulf of Aqaba to flow into the Dead Sea, the entire Jordan Valley would become a salt-water marsh. (To put things in perspective, even the Sea of Galilee, at its northern end, is 690 feet below sea level.) As long as we're

speaking in blue-sky hypothetical terms though, what would happen if the Big One caused a general uplifting of the elevation of the entire Jordan River Valley area, from Lake Huleh southward, by maybe eight or nine hundred feet? After all, Isaiah reported, **“Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of Yahweh shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.”** (Isaiah 40:4-5) The Dead Sea could then—once its surface reached a few feet above sea level—empty *into* the Gulf of Aqaba,—eventually healing the oceans. The Sea would then be perhaps twice as long and half again as wide as it is now—Jericho would be prime beachfront property—but once the salt levels equalized, it would be capable of supporting all kinds of marine life. The idea that the Dead Sea will indeed empty into the Gulf of Aqaba is implied by Ezekiel, who reported, **“Everything will live wherever the river goes.”**

This admittedly wild theory (one I would blush to even assign a speculation factor to) is supported by a subtle hint dropped into Ezekiel’s narrative. The new Dead Sea fishing industry will be concentrated in the northern half of the sea. Why is that? Not coincidentally, the same thing is true of the Sea of Galilee: all the major fishing towns (like Capernaum) were clustered along its northern shore. The answer, it turns out, is quite simple. The waters are more oxygen rich where the streams feeding the lake enter than where they exit, which is something the fish prefer. And fishermen congregate where the fish are most plentiful. The implication is that in the newly healed Dead Sea, the flow will remain from north to south, strongly suggesting an exit into the Gulf of Aqaba.

That, however, reminds us of an unresolved problem: sometime during the Tribulation, in the second bowl judgment, **“Every living creature in the sea died.”** (Revelation 16:3) So where did the breeding stock come from? I see three possible explanations. (1) “Every” is a conversational exaggeration, simply meaning “the vast majority.” (2) Some marine life was sheltered from the plague in bodies of water not included in what John described as “the sea.” Or (3) Yahshua recreated or resurrected the flora and fauna of the oceans as he healed the waters from their blood-like state. I don’t have a problem with any of these theories. Take your pick or come up with a scripturally sound alternative of your own.

The bottom line is that the oceans and seas (though only the Dead Sea is specifically mentioned) will be restored to their former bountiful condition (or even *better*, since nothing at all lives in the Dead Sea today). Bear in mind that Ezekiel was discussing only the eastward river. Zechariah also mentions a second, westward-flowing river that empties into the Med. One way or another, metaphorically and physically, healing flows from Yahshua’s temple in Jerusalem, and it will eventually reach every corner of the earth.

God's restoration of the Millennial world will be spectacular. Not only will the earth—especially Israel—be healed from the ravages of the Tribulation, it will once again be transformed into the kind of paradise that man hasn't known since the days of the patriarchs. **"The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, 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 Yahweh, the excellency of our God."** The best part of the beautiful new surroundings will be the glory of God dwelling here among men. Therefore, Isaiah encourages those living through the bad times, promising Yahweh's timely intervention. **"Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.' 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."** The healing miracles of Yahshua's first-century advent will be seen once again in the earth—probably on a much larger scale. Note the order of things: first vengeance against God's enemies, then salvation for His friends, then the physical healing of their bodies and their land. **"For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. 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."** (Isaiah 34:1-7)

Deserts are apparently going out of style in Israel. Isaiah continues: **"For Yahweh will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Yahweh. Joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."** (Isaiah 51:3) It's tempting to imagine that this kind of restoration will happen all over the earth. I believe that it could, but won't—not everywhere. On one hand, the rivers flowing east and west from the temple will heal every place their waters touch. On the other hand, places whose people refuse to honor Yahshua are promised drought (cf. Zechariah 14:16-19). Egypt and Edom are singled out in scripture as nations who will suffer this fate. Though everyone who enters the Millennium will be a believer, their children will have to make up their own minds, and their choices will determine whether they will receive God's blessings or not.

Some who are familiar with the final chapters of Revelation are saying, *Boy those river prophecies from Zeke and Zack sure sound familiar*. Yes, they should. Here's what John saw: **"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."** (Revelation 22:1-2) The puzzle here is the timing. John's statement comes near the end of a discussion of a "new heaven and new earth," which is very different from the

restored Millennial world. (We'll cover the subject in a later chapter.) John speaks of one river; Zechariah describes two. Ezekiel says the river flowed from beneath the temple, but John's description specifically says that there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, and that the water flows instead from God's throne. We must conclude, then, that John's river is not the same as the ones described by Ezekiel and Zechariah, however similar they look. The Millennium is a dress rehearsal for the eternity that follows. In the same way, I get the feeling that the Millennial rivers are like an Artist's sketch, but the one that flows from the New Jerusalem is the actual painting—God's masterpiece.

These rivers aren't the only place where we run into a bit of confusion between the Millennial kingdom and the eternity that follows. Consider the issue of light. Again, we're dealing with an area with strong metaphorical overtones: to shed light upon something is to reveal truth, and that's what Yahweh is all about.

But the scriptural record presents some apparent contradictions on the subject (just as it did with the rivers). The solution is to be found in separating the Millennial kingdom facts from those dealing with the new heaven and new earth that will follow. The key to the time period we're seeing in any given passage is the *source* of the light. It's often tricky—we need to keep our eyes open: *both* times are spoken of in this example, **"The Mighty One, Yahweh our God, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth."** (Psalm 50:1-2) In the first statement, the sun is still in view; in the second, however, God is seen as the source of light. We have crossed over from Millennium to eternity in mid-paragraph.

Keeping this distinction in mind, let's look at a few informative passages. Isaiah writes, **"The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Yahweh binds up the bruise of His people and heals the stroke of their wound."** (Isaiah 30:26) We're definitely talking about the Millennium here, since the sun is the earth's light source. But the sun's light will be increased by a factor of seven. This is characterized as a good thing, so we must presume that there is no accompanying increase in heat as we saw in the Tribulation's fourth bowl judgment—it's not a plague; it's a blessing. We aren't really given enough information to be dogmatic about it, but we might logically presume that this gift of extra sunlight will shorten growing seasons, nourish oceanic phytoplankton (the free floating photosynthetic flora that convert inorganic compounds into complex organic compounds—the very foundation of the marine food chain), and accelerate the regrowth of the forests

lost during World War III, when one third of the world's trees were burned up. How Yahweh intends to do this without turning the earth into a charcoal briquette is beyond my meager scientific understanding. Maybe (SF8) He intends to restore the water-vapor canopy that (I surmise) surrounded our planet before the flood of Noah—the protective barrier so dense that it took forty days and nights to precipitate onto the earth. The Millennium is all about restoration, so it's a distinct possibility.

When the thousand years are gone, however, Yahweh has a whole new thing planned. The centerpiece of the new heaven and the new earth is called the New Jerusalem, of which John wrote, **"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light."** (Revelation 21:23)

I freely admit that I've got no earthly idea how this is going to work. But we can be reasonably certain that as a source of light and energy Yahweh Himself will prove to be infinitely superior to the flaming ball of hydrogen and helium that's been serving us so faithfully for the past who-knows-how-long—a sun that He Himself created with the snap of His fingers, so to speak. All I can really do is wonder in awe at the greatness of God and point out the Old Testament confirmation: **"Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of Yahweh is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people...."** This will be literally fulfilled during the Tribulation, if you recall. **"But Yahweh will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising...."** This is, in admittedly poetic language, what we've seen as a way of life during the Millennium: the gentiles will honor Israel as they come to worship at the feet of Yahshua.

A few verses later, we've shifted our paradigm into high gear: the energy source for the New Jerusalem, the eternal city (something we'll cover in depth later), is described. **"The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but Yahweh will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for Yahweh will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended."** (Isaiah 60:1-3, 19-20) It's no accident that the prophet associated the eternal light of Yahweh with the end of mourning. Ever since the first sin in the Garden of Eden, man has shown a propensity to be in awe of big, bright, shiny things in the sky. In our fallen state, it was only a matter of time before we deified the sun and moon, and Satan was ready and waiting with a plethora of variations on the theme—anything to get us to take our eyes off the one true God. Don't assume that the worship of the sun or the moon is a relic of a bygone age, either. Today, 1.3 billion Muslims worship their moon god, Allah, and the subtle inroads of Mithra-style sun god worship are still plaguing many of the rest of us—even within the Church—whether we know it or not. So we shouldn't be surprised to see that, once we've

all made our choices, Yahweh would eliminate the sun and moon altogether. **“Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for Yahweh of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously.”** (Isaiah 24:23) When we finally realize the difference between Creator and creation, then **“Yahweh will be [our] everlasting light, and the days of [our] mourning shall be ended.”**