

Your Kingdom Come! - 10

Last time we saw that all those who are to be included in God's "harvest" of mankind to immortality will have demonstrated their obedience of faith, just as Jesus their forerunner did - "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" - Hebrews 5:7. This same letter to the Hebrews in chapter 11 reviews the faith of Old Testament men and women who showed the reality of their belief in God's promises by their actions, concluded in verse 13 "These all died in faith, not having received the promises."

The same has been occurring to those believers in Jesus Christ - "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death" - Revelation 2:11 - They do not keep on living until Jesus returns. They, other men, come to the end of their natural life (their first death), after which the obedient will be made immortal at Christ's return, while those found unworthy will die again in what Jesus has appropriately called "the second death."

"Only those who are of faith are ... blessed with believing Abraham" - Galatians 3:7-9. This means that God has arranged this method to select the people that will be the permanent population of His earth. Their worthiness will be measured according to the faith which they have demonstrated during their mortal life.

This applies to all these future "sons of God" - Luke 20:36, whether those who looked forward to the promise of salvation in Old Testament times or those who afterwards have believed that this salvation came through Jesus Christ. And this must also apply to those who are privileged to live under the thousand years reign of Christ with his brethren.

And so what is true of believers now is also true of those living during Christ's millennial reign. It is necessary for these also to live out their mortal lives in which they will see those around them still subject to death. Though men will live longer than they do now, people will continue to die - Isaiah 65:20, until after the final judgement, all mankind on earth will be immortal - Revelation 20:11 -

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" - Revelation 21:4.

Old Testament prophecy shows that during Messiah's reign the people will still be living out their mortal lives and dying throughout the thousand years. Zechariah 14:17, speaks of that time when "the families of the earth ...come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts." He says in verse 21 "Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them."

Ezekiel speaks also of this time, when "The nations ... will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore" - Ezekiel 37:28. He also shows in 44:10-11 that there will be mortal priests, who serve at that time in the sanctuary, or temple. Some of the rules they must observe show that people will still be dying during that time -

- 44:22 "They shall not take as wife a widow or a divorced woman, but take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests."
- 44:25 "They shall not defile themselves by coming near a dead person"