

THE END OF THE DELAY

David Baker, prepared for the Presbytery Fellowship word ministry, 19 September 2021
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Introduction

Hello, everyone, and welcome to Session 21 in our series on 'The Seventy Weeks Prophecy'.

We have been considering the period of delay in the seventieth week now for quite some weeks and have particularly focused on the final period of this delay, which the Scripture calls 'the time of the end'.

We have made the point that this is the time when Jew and Gentile will be united in the kingdom of God. It is the time when Jesus Christ and His messengers gather 'a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and tongue'.

The end of the period of delay

Our key point in this session is that at the conclusion of this great harvest, or ingathering of sons of God into the kingdom, the period of delay will come to an end. The second half of the seventieth week will then begin.

By way of orientation today, we finished our last session by considering that at the opening of the sixth seal Jesus Christ will sovereignly intervene in the affairs of men to cut short the period of warfare and conflict in the world that will begin with the opening of the second seal.

Specifically, He will cut short this period of warfare and conflict, and He will do so that for 'the sake of the elect'. He will cut it short by sovereignly judging the armies of Gog and Magog on the mountains of Israel as they surround Jerusalem. This sovereign judgement will most likely happen in the middle of nuclear warfare. It will also be a miraculous deliverance for the remnant of the Jewish nation who have turned to the Lord to come into the kingdom of God.

This will be an unprecedented world event, as you can imagine. The book of Ezekiel recounts that it will take the survivors in the land of Israel seven months to bury the dead bodies, and the fragments thereof; and then seven years to burn all the weapons.

The outcome of this event will be that *all men*, everywhere, will recognise that this is the beginning of the judgement of God in the world and the revelation of 'the wrath of the Lamb'. We

read at the conclusion of the narrative in the book of Revelation concerning the sixth seal that the kings of the earth, the mighty men, the great men, the rich men – everyone – will retreat to the 'caves,' – to their bomb shelters or wherever that happens to be. And they will say, 'Hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne [that is the Father] and from the wrath of the Lamb.'

Many harden their hearts but many receive the gospel

This revelation to the world will cause many to *harden their heart* and to refuse to repent.

But it will also cause many to *turn to the Lord*, to begin to fear Him, and to come into the kingdom of God. We read in the book of Zechariah that in the immediate aftermath of the opening of the sixth seal, 'It shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year [this will run concurrently with the time of burning all of the weapons]; to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.' Zec 14:16.

As we have considered, Zechariah identified that one-third of the Jewish nation will come into the kingdom of God during the period of the opening of the seals. From the first seal through to the opening of the sixth seal, this great ingathering will come to a climax at the opening of the sixth seal

Gog and Magog

But it is also clear from the book of Zechariah that there will be many people from the nations that had aligned themselves with Gog and Magog, who will also come into the kingdom of God and be part of the great multitude that no man can number from every nation, tribe, people and tongue.

The apostle John described this 'great multitude' which will come out of the great tribulation by declaring, 'After these things [after the opening of the sixth seal and the Lord's sovereign intervention in the affairs of men; and then the sealing of the 144 000 with the seal of the living God in their foreheads] I looked, and behold, a

great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands.' Rev 7:9.

The true Feast of Tabernacles continues to be kept

We know that this multitude will be clothed in *white robes*, which are their priestly garments, because they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

They also have *palm branches* in their hands because they are *celebrating*, and are ready to *continue* to celebrate, the *true* Feast of Tabernacles.

As we have said many times in this series, we are not waiting for a future fulfilment of the Day of Atonement. The true Day of Atonement was *fulfilled* by the seven-times sprinkling of Christ's blood through the seven wounding events that He experienced from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross.

Following the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement by the one offering of Christ, the church *has kept the true Feast of Tabernacles for the whole church age*.

For the nation of Israel, we recall that the Feast of Tabernacles was when the people dwelt in booths, and it was a celebration of the miraculous *provision and protection* of the Lord while they were still on the journey from Egypt to the promised land.

We celebrate the true Feast of Tabernacles now as we eat and drink the *agape* meal, which is our participation in the finished work of Christ while we are still on the journey.

Provision and protection in the agape meal

We rejoice that we find miraculous provision and protection in the fellowship of the *agape* meal, which is in heavenly places, while we are still in our mortality during our earthly pilgrimage in this world. We know that this protection does not mean that we are immune to the events that happen in the world. Rather, we are *protected* because we receive *the resurrection life* of God in our mortality, because it is fellowship in Christ's sufferings.

In relation to the opening of the seals, we have considered that those who belong to the kingdom of God, to the body of Christ, will experience the

same acute pressure that is in the world. However, this pressure will not multiply fear and anxiety. This pressure will *multiply life and fellowship in the offering of Christ*.

The oil, which is the fruit of the olive tree, is representative of the *multiplication of the fellowship of the word*.

And the wine, which is the fruit of the grape belonging to the true Vine, represents the *multiplication of life* in a genuine, practical fellowship of offering among the members of the body of Christ

Palm branches in their hands

Following the opening of the sixth seal, a further dimension will be to this miraculous provision and protection for the church in the fellowship of the *agape* meal as part of the true Feast of Tabernacles. This is what the palm branches in the hands of the great multitude signifies.

The care and love of God for the great multitude before the throne

One of the elders explained to John concerning the great multitude, 'Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night [they are son-priests clothed in white garments] in His temple. And He who sits on the throne [the Father] will dwell among them [which literally means that He will spread His tabernacle over them]. "They shall neither hunger any more, nor thirst any more, the sun shall not strike them nor any heat; for the Lamb [Christ] who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Rev 7:15-17.

The care and love of the great multitude for God

The great multitude is the *fruit*, or the harvest, of the evangelistic ministry of the church in the time of the end.

Having been saved out of the world, this great multitude will be preoccupied with their priestly service in the Father's temple in the heavenly places. They will serve Him day and night. And when the Father spreads His tabernacle over them, they will be protected from the futility of the world and God's judgement upon it.

Furthermore, even though they are still mortal, they will receive the fulness of the resurrection life of God that flows from the finished offering of

Christ as the fountain of living waters. This is important, because the 144 000 are sons of God who receive the seal of the living God on their foreheads and the great multitude.

The 144 000 are the *firstfruits* of that great multitude.

An open door for men to flee to God

The great multitude will be protected from the judgement of God upon the administration of Babylon during the blowing of the trumpets.

The administration of Babylon has ruled over all the kingdoms of the world since the tower of Babel. Judgement is proclaimed upon this administration, which is a great harlot, with the blowing of the trumpets.

Even after the beginning of the judgement of God upon the administration of Babylon with the blowing of the trumpets, the door will remain open into the sanctuary in the heavenly places for men to 'flee for refuge' from the judgement of God upon the world.

So, there will be a continuing harvest, year after year, for this period, where a great harvest will come into the kingdom of God. They will be born as sons of God, and then baptised into Christ, raised with Him into the heavenly places, and protected in the temple of God.

The time when that door is closed forever

We read in the book of Revelation, however, that following the blowing of the sixth trumpet this door into the heavenly sanctuary will be *closed*.

Looking at this from the perspective of the Seventy Weeks prophecy, when the door to the heavenly sanctuary is closed, this will mark the *end of the period of delay*.

John recorded that he 'saw still another mighty angel [or strong angel] coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.' Rev 10:1.

We suggest that this mighty, or strong, angel is Michael. It is the same description that is used for the angel that stands up, whom we know is Michael, when he will ask who is worthy to open the seven-sealed book.

Michael is one of the chief angels in the angelic administration. It is helpful to remember that the

angels are great in might and power. So, when we read in the book of Revelation about the activity of the strong, or mighty angels, then it speaks of the angelic administration.

The angels of the seven churches and the angelic administration

We know that the *angels of the seven churches* are not part of the angelic administration. They refer to the *presbyteries* in the right hand of Christ. In contrast to the angelic administration which is great in might and power, the *aggelos*, or presbyteries in the right hand of Christ, minister in weakness. There is a big distinction there.

Michael is one of the chief angels in the angelic administration. He carries the authority of the Lord's name within the scope of the mandate that he has received from the Lord. Hence, we read that Michael's face was like the sun and his feet like pillars of fire. These two attributes belong to Jesus Christ, so Michael reveals these attributes.

The end of the period of delay

'He [Michael] had a little book open in his hand [we will consider 'the little book' further in our next session, because it contains all the detail concerning the second half of the seventieth week].

'And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer.' Rev 10:2,5-6.

This refers to the end of the period of delay in the Seventy Weeks prophecy. There should be delay no longer.

The Father who lives for ever and ever

In the book that we released at Easter, we connected the description of 'Him who lives forever and ever' with Jesus Christ who is our great High Priest. It is true that He forever lives to minister to us a participation in His finished offering.

However, since the time of writing for Easter, we have come to see and understand the significance of the Father taking His seat

Now we understand from Revelation Chapters 4 and 5, that the One who is seated on the throne is the Father. So, the description of 'Him who lives forever and ever', firstly belongs to the Father.

'Whenever the living creatures [the apostolic administration] give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne [the Father, as the Ancient of Days, after He has taken His seat to initiate all of the events that belong to the time of the end] and worship Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne [that is the Father] and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.' Rev 4:9-10.

It is significant that Michael, as the strong, or the mighty, angel will lift his hand and swear by God the Father. Michael will swear by Him who lives forever and ever because the duration of the period of delay has been *prescribed by the Father*. It is under His authority.

Before Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Him, 'Is it at this time that You will restore the kingdom to Israel?' Jesus replied by saying, 'It's not for you to know the times and the seasons which *the Father has put in His own authority*.' So, the length of the period of delay is in the Father's authority.

Michael will proclaim that 'there should be *delay no longer*, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets'. Rev10:6-7.

The mystery of God in the Scriptures

Michael was not just declaring it to John, because the verse reads, 'as He declared to His servants the prophets'.

The mystery of God is a major prophetic theme in the Scriptures. Michael explained to John that this mystery had been declared to His servants the prophets, and if it has been declared to His servants the prophets, then it will be clearly recorded and explained in the prophetic Scriptures. So we are not talking about a new mystery that no-one knows anything about until the time of the end of the age. This has been clearly expounded in the Scriptures.

The apostle Paul was one of the greatest exponents, or revelators, of this mystery, and identified that there are two major elements to

the mystery of God that are apprehended by both Jews and Gentiles in the fellowship of Christ's offering.

The mystery of the Father and the mystery of the Son

It is important for us to understand the mystery of God in relation to both *the Father and the Son*. Paul testified about this in his letter to the Colossians.

He wrote, 'That their hearts may be encouraged [this was his desire], being knit together in love, and attaining to all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God [so we are not talking here about something that is mysterious], both of the Father and of Christ.' Col 2:2.

The mystery of the Father

Paul identified two elements here. In relation to the Father, the mystery of God is the full revelation of the Father's glory in a multitude of sons of God who then serve as priests in His temple. Earlier in his letter to the Colossians, Paul proclaimed this first element of the mystery as being 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'. Col 1:27.

He continued to describe the travelling nature of his ministry, saying, 'We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ Jesus.' Col 1:28.

It is the predestination of every son of God to serve the Father as a *priest* in His temple, which is *the body of Christ*. So, in relation to the Father, we see sons who serve as priests.

The mystery of the Son

In relation to the Son, we understand that the mystery declares that we are members of His body and part of His bride. So, in relation to the Son, the mystery of God is the marriage of Christ and the church.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul used the marriage of Christ and the church as the example to discuss the culture of every Christian marriage. He concluded his admonition by saying, 'This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.' Eph 5:32.

The marriage of Christ and the church has taken place

Again, in the book that we released at Easter, we discussed the marriage of Christ and the church as though it was an event that will happen in the future. This was consistent with our teaching for many years.

However, we rejoice in the way that the Lord has continued to reveal His word to us through the course of the year. We have come to understand that *the Day of Atonement was fulfilled by the one offering of Christ*, which has become one of the fundamental tenets that has undergirded our consideration of the Seventy Weeks prophecy.

In the same way that we have come to understand that the Day of Atonement was fulfilled by the one offering of Christ, we have also come to understand that *the marriage of Christ and the church has already taken place*. But when did that take place?

Christ and the church married at Calvary

In the same way that Adam and the woman were married on the day that she was formed to be a comparable helper for him, the marriage of Christ and the church happened *on the same day that the church was taken from His side and made to be a comparable helper for Him*.

That is, the marriage of Christ and the church happened on Calvary.

When Christ's offering was completed on the cross, His physical body fell asleep in death. We can compare this to the Lord God putting Adam into a deep sleep to take the rib from his side.

The bride of Christ was formed from the elements of the water, blood and the Spirit that flowed from the throne of the Father, through Christ's physical body on the cross, when the soldier thrust the spear into His side.

The water, blood and the Spirit that gushed from the finished offering of Christ were the *sanctifying elements* that open the new and living way for a believer to participate in the fellowship of the *body of Christ*, and to become part of the *bride of Christ*.

The bride city has now come down

Significantly, the first visible manifestation of the bride of Christ was seen on the Day of Pentecost, when the church in Jerusalem was founded, or

established, on the foundation of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The book of Revelation clearly explains that the twelve apostles are the foundation of the New Jerusalem, which is the bride city. That is not prophetic of a future city with the twelve apostles as its foundation.

It declares that *this bride city has already come* down out of heaven from God on the Day of Pentecost and the twelve apostles were its foundation on that day.

We are planning to consider the marriage of Christ and the church in far more detail in the months ahead. It will be part of a broader consideration of the motherhood of the church and the significance of the manchild.

Our white garments are part of the two mysteries

Our key point in this session is simply that when a son of God is baptised into Christ, they are raised with Him into the heavenly places to begin their *priestly service in the temple of God*.

They also become *part of the bride of Christ* that is being sanctified by the washing of the water of His word.

The symbol that clearly ties the two elements of the mystery of God together - that is, our sonship and priestly service to the Father, and our inclusion in the bride of Christ - are our *white garments*.

The white, priestly garments are also the white wedding garments. The great multitude that are clothed in white garments as sons and priests to God the Father are also dressed in white wedding garments as part of the bride of Christ.

The apostle John heard the voice of the same great multitude that had washed their priestly robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, saying, 'Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for *the marriage of the Lamb has come*.'

This verse does not indicate that the marriage of the Lamb has finally come. It literally means that the marriage of the Lamb came, all the way back at Calvary.

'And His wife has made herself ready.' This means that, from that time, there has been a *sanctifying*

process with the water, blood, and Spirit from the side of Christ, since the Day of Pentecost.

The church is made ready for the wedding feast, or the marriage supper. 'And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.' Rev 19:8. These white garments are the priestly garments, and they are also the wedding garments.

'Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" The focus here is the marriage supper, or the marriage feast. 'And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God.'"

Gathered and prepared for the wedding feast

During His earthly ministry, Jesus illustrated, in the parable of the wedding feast and the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, this point that we must be *ready* - we are being prepared for the marriage supper.

The parable of the wedding feast was recorded in Matthew where Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. Mat 22:1-14.

The first part of this parable is relevant for the entire church age. The Father has been sending messengers to invite all believers to join the church as the bride of Christ, since the Day of Pentecost. As we consider almost two thousand years of the church age, we know that this invitation has been received by some, but it has been rejected by the majority.

Jesus described the response of the majority in this parable by saying, 'But they made light of it.'

Paul also described this when he said that the word of the cross is 'foolishness to those who are perishing'. An invitation has been extended to all, but the majority have 'made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, and another to his business'. They are preoccupied with what is happening in the world.

Jesus continued the parable, 'And the rest seized his servants and treated them spitefully and killed them.'

The second part of the parable, then, is relevant for the time of the end. This is the time when Christ and His messengers will be sent into all

nations to gather a great multitude which no man can number. Jesus described this time by saying that the servants went into the highways and gathered all they found, both the bad and the good, so that the wedding hall was filled with guests. This is *the great multitude* which no man can number.

Those who are not dressed in white garments

Jesus identified that this great ingathering would include 'the bad and the good', because a person is not qualified or disqualified for participation in the wedding feast based on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rather, to be included in the wedding feast, we must *respond to the invitation* of God's messengers.

And we must also *have a wedding garment* that has been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb through our participation in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

Remember that this parable concludes with the king coming in and seeing a man that had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here with no wedding garment?' And it says that he was speechless! There was no participation in the overcoming, which is by the blood of the Lamb, there was no testimony in his mouth, so he was cast out into outer darkness.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is also recorded in the book of Matthew. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven could be likened to five wise and five foolish virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Again, the focus of this parable is *readiness* for the wedding feast, or the marriage supper. Mat 25:1-13.

Recalling that the apostle Paul likened the Corinthian church to a chaste virgin, we could liken the virgins in this parable to local congregations. The foolish virgins 'took no oil with them'.

This means that they do not maintain *relational connection with the administration of Christ*, which proclaims the word of present truth in every generation, as fresh oil.

This is a remarkable indictment upon these congregations, particularly when we consider

that, during the opening of the seals there will be a *multiplication of oil*, which is *the fellowship of the word* which is available to every household and every local congregation to freely receive.

However, every congregation needs to be *connected* to the apostolic administration of Christ; it needs to be connected to the headship of Christ through His administration.

Connected to the apostolic administration

The parable highlighted the need for every congregation, and every household within a congregation, to receive the word directly from the apostolic administration of Christ.

The foolish virgins could not borrow oil from the wise virgins; they needed a direct relationship with those who supplied the oil. So, the administration of Christ is not a collection of independent local congregations who share resources.

The administration of Christ is every congregation connected to the headship of Christ through His apostolic administration!

The parable concludes, 'And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with Him to the wedding; and the door was shut.'

This is our key statement here. 'The door was shut!' This signifies that the end of the period of delay had come and the beginning of the wedding feast, for the final half of the seventieth week, had arrived.

'Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But He answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you".'

Using these parables, Jesus emphasised the need to *respond* to God's invitation when He speaks to us.

He also emphasised our need to remain *connected* to the apostolic administration of Christ.

And He also emphasised the need for us to be *walking blamelessly* in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings so that we are clothed in white garments.

These are our priestly garments; but they are also our wedding garments. This means that we will be ready for the wedding feast.

Jesus warned of the shut door

Jesus warned us that there will come a time when the door to the feast will be shut. This is true in terms of an eschatology but, of course, this principle is true for us *in every season of life*.

We need to respond to the Lord *when* He speaks to us, because that is when there is a spirit of grace and supplication which enables us to turn and meet Him. We cannot respond once He stops speaking to us. This is true on every matter.

So, the Holy Spirit bears witness, 'Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.'

The book of Revelation also declares that there will be a time when the door is shut. This is immediately after the apostle John heard Michael proclaim that there would be delay no longer.

John measures the altar and those who worship there

John was given a reed. He said, 'Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there".' Rev 11:1-2.

This refers to all believers in the church who are *part of the bride of Christ*. They are watching and praying with Christ as those who are fully engaged in the ministry of the true altar of incense in the heavenly places.

Then, significantly, at this time, John was instructed to 'measure' those who worship in the altar in the heavenly places. And then he was told, 'But leave out the court which outside the temple.'

Right here, the door is shut!

'Leave out the court which is *outside the temple* [there is now no access into the heavenly sanctuary], and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.'

This signifies that the door to the temple in the heavenly places will be shut. This coincides with the end of the period of delay. After the door to the wedding feast is shut in this manner, the bride of Christ will be protected and nourished by Christ, in the wilderness, for a period of three and a half years.

The protection of the bride

This is a further dimension of our participation in the Feast of Tabernacles and its miraculous provision and protection. The bride of Christ will be protected and nourished by Christ in the wilderness for a period of three and a half years. During this same period, the world will be ruled by the final Antichrist

We will consider this final three-and-a-half-year period in our next session. Thanks, everyone.