

**8/28/22 “The Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ”
Revelation 20:1-10**

Welcome...

Ever since Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden, the human race has yearned to get back to a place where there is a perfect world, including a perfect government with a perfect economy with perfect human relationships, no war, perfect prosperity and peace, harmony with nature, perfect beauty.

People have been dreaming and writing about this for a long time. In 380 B.C., Plato wrote a book entitled *The Republic* in which city states were ruled by philosopher kings bringing in a perfect society. In the 19th century and following, as America expanded westward, more and more attempts toward creating idealized societies popped up all over the landscape, especially after the Second Great Awakening (religious revivalism from 1795 to 1835). In 1905, H.G Wells wrote a book called *A Modern Utopia*. He created the ideal setting on another planet, but with a portal, a doorway in a valley in the Swiss Alps through which one could enter the perfect world. In 1913 Edward Gardner Lewis, a successful magazine publisher from the East, founded the community of Atascadero, California as a utopian, planned colony. And for those of us who live here in Atascadero, as much as we love our city, we know that Lewis’ utopian fantasy has never become reality.

But in Acts chapter 1, just before Jesus ascended, He was asked by His disciples in verse 6, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom?” The kingdom about which they were asking, the kingdom in which Jesus Christ will be universally acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords, is that kingdom which is discussed in Revelation 20. It is the millennial kingdom, the perfect environment in the 1000-year reign of Christ on the earth.

Let’s read about it in Revelation 20:1-10...

Main point: This passage reveals four essential truths about the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The Removal of Satan, 20:1-3
The Reign of the Saints, 20:4-6
The Return of Satan, 20:7
The Revolt of Society, 20:8-10

I. Introduction

By way of introduction, look at the chart that is in bulletin and up here on the screen. Moving left to right on this

Timeline of Future Events...

Notice at the bottom in the capital bold letters it says Church Age. Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 marks the birth of the church when the promised Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem. From that day until the rapture of the church, the mission of the church age is to preach the gospel to the nations.

The rapture is that glorious event in which the dead in Christ will be resurrected, living Christians will be instantly translated into their resurrection bodies, and both groups will be caught up to meet Christ in the air and taken back to heaven (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

The Bible offers several clues that the rapture will take place prior to the tribulation period. This means the church will not go through the judgments prophesied in Revelation 4–19.

In Revelation 3:10, for example, Jesus promises the church in Philadelphia, “I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.” Notice the definite article (the) before the word hour in this verse. This indicates that a specific and distinctive time period is in view, not just any “hour of trial” in church history. The context clearly points to the future seven-year tribulation, which is described in detail in Revelation 4–19. The church is never mentioned during the seven-year tribulation and I believe it is because the church has been raptured to be with the Lord.

Scripture reveals that the single event that starts the tribulation period is the antichrist’s signing of a covenant with Israel. Daniel 9:27 indicates that this Satan-inspired individual will rise to prominence in the tribulation period, initially making a peace treaty with Israel. In his desire to dominate the world, Revelation 13 tells us he will double-cross and then seek to destroy the Jews, persecute believers, and set up his own kingdom. In Revelation 13:11-12 we saw that the antichrist’s assistant, the false prophet, will seek to make the world worship the antichrist. The false prophet will control the global economy by forcing people around the world to receive the mark of the antichrist in order to buy or sell (Revelation 13:16-17). However, to receive this mark ensures one of being the recipient of God’s wrath.

The antichrist starts out as Israel’s protector but becomes Israel’s persecutor. In the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation period the antichrist will tolerate the worship of no one and nothing but himself. He will set himself up on God’s throne in the inner sanctuary of God’s rebuilt temple in Jerusalem proclaiming himself to be God. This is called the Abomination of Desolation. The antichrist truly is anti-Christ, putting himself in Christ’s place.

In the next chart we can see the divine judgments of seven seals, seven trumpets and seven bowls.

The seventh seal judgment marks the beginning of the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet introduces the seven bowls. At the end of the seven-year tribulation, we saw last week that Revelation 19:11-21 describes Christ and the armies of heaven descending toward the earth, the King of kings and Lord of lords and decimating the wicked armies of the world at the battle of Armageddon and consigning the Beast (the antichrist) and the False Prophet to the lake of fire. So, when we get to chapter 20, last end-time figure remaining on the scene is Satan—the great dragon. And this leads us to our text, Revelation 20:1-10 and the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The word “millennium” comes from the Latin word that means “one thousand years,” and—in biblical and theological contexts—it refers to the thousand-year period spoken of in Revelation 20. One of the most significant theological questions concerning the millennium is when it will occur in relation to the Second Coming of Christ. Three primary theological positions have arisen to answer this question—amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism.

Notice on the back of your sheet the three images that represent the three prominent views of the millennium.

Amillennialism (sometimes called “realized” millennialism) The prefix “a” means “no,” and thus amillennialism holds that there will be no literal reign of Christ on earth for 1,000 years.

The basic tenets of amillennialism are:

1. The millennium or kingdom reign of Christ and His saints is in existence for the period of time between Christ’s 1st and 2nd coming. In other words, the amillennial view says we are in the millennium right now.
2. There will be no future reign of Christ on the earth prior to the New Heaven and New Earth of Revelation 21-22, and the word “thousand” in Revelation 20 is a symbolic number indicating a long period of time.
3. God’s promises to Israel were conditional and have been transferred to the church because Israel did not meet the condition of obedience.

4. Christ is ruling now in heaven where He is seated on the throne of David, and Satan is presently bound between Christ's two advents. This binding relates primarily to Satan's inability to stop the preaching and spread of the gospel to the nations.

Some Scriptures that are cited to support this view include:

Matthew 12:29, Jesus said, "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house."

Luke 10:17-19, "The seventy returned with joy, saying to Jesus, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you."

Colossians 2:15, "When God had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Christ."

Who has held this view? Amillennialism has been held by Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Zwingli, and several in the more modern era including B.B. Warfield, Louis Berkhof, R.C. Sproul, Greg Beale and Mark Dever.

Another view is Postmillennialism. The prefix "post" means "after" and thus postmillennialism means that Christ's second coming will occur after the millennium. The tenets of this view are these:

1. The church is not the kingdom but it will bring in the kingdom (a Christianized world) to the earth by preaching the gospel.
2. Christ will not be on the earth during the kingdom. He will rule in the hearts of His people, and He will return to the earth after the millennium.
3. The millennium will not last necessarily for a literal 1,000 years. The 1,000 is symbolic of a long period of time. This is similar to amillennialism.
4. The church, not Israel, will receive the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and David in a spiritual sense.

Some Scriptures that are cited to support this view include:

Matthew 13:31-33, Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES. He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."

In the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus calls his small flock to "disciple the nations" so that they might be baptized and learn to observe all things He teaches us. Only after the world has been reached for Christ will then He return. When Christ comes, he will not find His kingdom perfected, but he will find it ready.

Who has held this view? Postmillennialism was first taught by Daniel Whitby (1638-1725), and has been held by Jonathan Edwards, Charles Wesley, Augustus H. Strong, George Truett, Greg Bahnsen and Doug Wilson.

Premillennialism

The word "pre" before the word "millennialism" refers to the time of Christ's second coming as it relates to the millennium, and thus the term "premillennialism" refers to the millennium (1,000-year period) being preceded by Christ's return to the earth.

Premillennialism holds to the following points:

1. Christ will return at the end of this age, at the end of the Great Tribulation, with His saints to the earth to reign for 1,000 years as King.

2. In the millennium Israel will experience the blessings God promised to Abraham and David pertaining to Israel's (a) land, (b) nationality (seed), and (c) king (throne). New Testament believers will likewise share in these covenant blessings having been engrafted into the one people of God (Romans 11).
3. The church today is not completely fulfilling these promises made to Israel.
4. The millennial kingdom is the 1,000-year period in which Jesus Christ rules over the earth as the promised Messiah, the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:14 and following). The millennium is an intermediate kingdom of 1,000 years between the end of the tribulation and the establishment of the eternal that we will see in chapters 21-22.

Who has held this view? Premillennialism was the dominant view in the early church held by Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, later Tyndale, John Wesley, Cotton Mather, and current exegetes like John MacArthur, Chuck Swindoll, David Jeremiah, Al Mohler, Wayne Grudem, and John Piper.

Now, before I defend my view let me again say I do not think this is a doctrine we should divide over. Discuss it? Yes. Debate it? Yes. Divide over it? No! Good, godly men and women who believe the Bible differ on this issue. I have close friends who are amillennialists and postmillennialists. I greatly love and respect them. Still, having said that, I do think premillennialism is the best position. Let's see why in our text:

II. The Removal of Satan

Verses 1-3...

One of the key interpretive issues in Revelation 20 is the timing of Satan's binding in verses 1–3. Is Satan currently bound as recorded in this passage, or does the fulfillment of that vision await a future time? If Satan is presently bound, the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 is a present reality, but if Satan's binding is yet future, so is the millennial kingdom. Amillennialists and many postmillennialists believe it is present, and premillennialists believe it is future.

Notice verse 1 begins with an unnamed angel coming down from heaven with the key to the abyss and a great chain. In verses 2-3 After laying hold of Satan, the angel binds him with the chain and throws him into the abyss, shutting and sealing the abyss over him.

The fact that Satan is incarcerated and sealed in the abyss (verse 7 calls it a prison) is what most clearly indicates the complete cessation of his activity and influence on earth during the thousand years. In Luke 8:31, the demons possessing a man entreat Jesus not to command them to depart into the abyss, because they know that if He does, they will no longer be free to wreak havoc on the earth.

In Revelation 9, John sees a swarm of locusts (which are demons) coming up out of the bottomless pit. The harm caused by these pit locusts occurs only after they are released. The necessary implication is that their influence is not experienced by anyone as long as they are locked up in the pit.

In Revelation 11:7 the beast must first depart from the abyss before he is able to make war with the two witnesses on earth, and when Satan is released from the abyss in 20:7–8, the text says that "he will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth."

Notice in verse two Satan is first called the dragon, a title given him twelve times in Revelation (cf. 12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:1, 2, 4; 16:13). It emphasizes his ferociousness, and oppressive cruelty. The title serpent of old hearkens back to the Garden of Eden and Satan's temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1–6; 2 Cor. 11:3).

Diabolos (devil) means “slanderer,” or “malicious gossip” (1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Titus 2:3)—an appropriate title for him as Revelation 12:10 calls him the “accuser of our brethren.” The title Satan is used fifty-three times in Scripture. Both words mean “adversary,” since Satan opposes God, Christ, and all believers.

Verse 2 says the length of the period for which Satan will be bound is defined as a thousand years, the first of six references to the duration of the Millennium (verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). This is the only chapter in Revelation where a period of a thousand years is mentioned, and the fact that it is mentioned six times and is clearly described as a period of time before which and after which events take place leads to the conclusion that it means a literal thousand-year period.

Notice the four steps taken to bind and confine Satan for 1000 years: 1) verse 2 “the angel bound him for a thousand years,” 2) verse 3 he “threw him into the abyss” 3) “shut it” and 4) “sealed it over him.” Satan’s activity, even his presence on earth, is completely curtailed and brought to a halt for the entire millennium. His deceptive work among the nations is stopped for a thousand years! Only after the millennium is finished is he released, and then for only “a short time” (end of verse 3). This short-lived release from captivity is discussed in verses 7-10.

Hundreds of years before the first coming of Christ, Job 1:7 tells us Satan was found to be “roaming about on the earth and walking around on it” and today—two thousand years after the first coming of Christ—Satan still “prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” 1 Peter 5:8. Simply stated, Satan is not currently bound and imprisoned in the abyss, and so the millennium of Revelation 20 has not yet begun.

III. The Reign of the Saints, 20:4-6

Verse 4...

John sees thrones, and “seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.” Matthew 19:28 teaches that the 12 apostles will sit as judges over the 12 tribes of Israel. Revelation 2:26 says the saints will have authority over the nations.

And Revelation 5:10 teaches that the followers of the Lamb “shall reign on the earth.” Here we are told in verse 4 that John then sees a second group, martyred saints. These are described as those who 1) “had been beheaded (“executed”) for the testimony (“witness”) of Jesus and 2) for the word of God.” Further, they had not 1) “worshiped the beast or his image and 2) had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.”

These tribulation saints had remained faithful and true to the Lamb. Revelation 12:11 says, “They loved not their lives even unto death.”

These faithful believers were previously seen in chapters 6 and 13. They are now rewarded for their faithfulness as they are gloriously resurrected! They came to life in bodily resurrection and are also granted the privilege to reign with Christ as co-heirs “for a thousand years” (cf. Rom. 8:17). John calls this “the first resurrection.”

Verse 5... “the rest of the dead,” unbelieving humanity, are not resurrected until after the millennium when they will stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15).

Three additional blessings are bestowed on the redeemed: 1) over these “the second death (eternal and spiritual death) has not power,” 2) “they will be priests of God and of Christ” serving their great God during the millennium and for all eternity and a final blessing for the participants in the first resurrection is that they will reign with the Lord Jesus Christ for a thousand years, along with believers who survived the Tribulation. Politically and socially, the rule of Christ and His saints will be universal (Ps. 2:6-8; Dan. 2:35), absolute (Ps. 2:9; Isa. 11:4), and righteous (Isa. 11:3-5).

Spiritually, their rule will be a time when the believing remnant of Israel is converted (Jer. 30:5-8; Rom. 11:26) and the nation is restored to the land God promised to Abraham (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18). It will be a time when the Gentile nations also will worship the King (Isa. 11:9; Mic. 4:2; Zech. 14:16).

The millennial rule of Christ and the saints will also be marked by the presence of righteousness and peace (Isa. 32:17) and joy (Isa. 12:3-4; 61:3, 7). Physically, it will be a time when the curse is lifted (Isa. 11:7-9; 30:23-24; 35:1-2, 7), when food will be plentiful (Joel 2:21-27), and when there will be physical health and well-being (Isa. 33:24, 35:5-6), leading to long life (Isa. 65:20).

Then we read in verse 7...

IV. The Return of Satan, 20:7

At the close of the Millennium, Satan will be released from the pit and permitted to lead one last revolt against the Lord. Satan is not released until “the thousand years were over,” as we read in verse 3. This is evidence for the premillennial position, for it is clear Satan was not allowed to deceive the nations at all during that period. He is “released from his prison” on parole, and it is clear from 20:3 (“must be set free”) that this is part of the divine plan, allowing a final period of deception to prove the extent of human depravity.

There is no surprise of Satan’s intention, and that leads to point four:

V. The Revolt of Society, 20:8-10

Verse 8...

Who are these who will follow Satan? Those who survive the Tribulation will enter the Millennium in their natural bodies, and they will bear children and repopulate the earth (Isa. 65:18–25).

During the thousand-year reign the mortal survivors of the tribulation—Jews and Gentiles—will populate the earth by marrying and having children. By the end of the thousand years the world will be filled with numerous generations of their descendants, who will still have bodies of mortal flesh and, more importantly, will still struggle with sin and temptation as we now do. Those subjects of the kingdom will not be like the resurrected rulers, who will be immortal, glorified, and neither marrying nor giving in marriage (Matthew 22:30)

Under ideal circumstances in which all know about Jesus Christ, many will outwardly profess faith in Christ without actually placing faith in Him for salvation. The shallowness of their professions will become apparent when Satan is released. The multitudes who follow Satan are evidently those who have never been born again in the millennial kingdom.

The question has been raised as to whether this war is the same one discussed in Ezekiel 38–39, where Gog and Magog are also mentioned. These are two different battles, for in the war of Ezekiel 38–39 the armies come primarily from the north and involve only a few nations of the earth. But the battle in Revelation 20:7–9 will involve all nations, so armies will come from all directions.

Furthermore, nothing in the context of Ezekiel 38–39 is similar to the battle in Revelation, as there is no mention of Satan or of millennial conditions. Why then is the expression “Gog and Magog” used by John? The Scriptures do not explain the expression. Maybe because in Ezekiel 38 Gog was the ruler and Magog was the people, and both were in rebellion against God and were enemies of Israel.

The end of verse 8 says those who follow Satan are like the sand on the seashore. It is tragic. They come across the breadth of the earth to the camp of the people that Jerusalem, to attack the people of God one more time. There is very little description about this, but it is obvious who wins.

Verse 9 says fire comes from heaven to devour them, and that is that.

Verse 10...

There Satan will join the other two members of the unholy trinity, the beast and the false prophet, who by that time will have been in that place of torment for a thousand years (19:20). That those two humans are still there after that time refutes the false doctrine of annihilationism.

Hell is a place of both mental (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28) and physical torment (14:10–11; Matt. 25:41; Mark 9:43–44; Luke 16:23–24). Those sentenced to that terrible place will be tormented day and night. There will not be a moment's relief forever and ever.

In closing, when we sin and disobey God, it's easy to blame the world and the devil, letting our own fallen, depraved nature off the hook. The reality of Revelation 20:7–8, however, makes this “easy out” nothing but a copout. Even with Satan bound for a thousand years and the external world's temptations removed, a host of secret rebels will be ripe for the picking when Satan is released from the abyss. In fact, the devil will find so many hard hearts at the end of the millennium that John says in verse 8 their number is “like the sand of the seashore.” How could this be? Because those countless men and women born and raised during the thousand-year reign of Christ will still have a sinful nature just like you and me today, and a person's depravity is enough to bring them down. As Jeremiah 17:9 tell us, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick.” A perfect environment cannot produce a perfect heart. So, turn to Jesus today in repentance and faith and may your heart be regenerated by Holy Spirit. And be a faithful witness to tell others how they too may be saved by faith alone in Christ alone for the glory of God.

Let's pray...