

Key:
 Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread
 Blue – Explanation/Exposition
 Red – Application
 Green – Illustration
 Brown – Quotation
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Final Things Lesson 2: “The Millennium”

Revelation 20:1–10

To begin, I’m going to read for you Revelation 20:1–10 on the millennium. Church of God, this is the Word of God.

^{20:1} Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, ¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Let’s turn together to Revelation 20 in our Bibles.

The millennium. The millennium. The millennium. That’s the subject we want to cover today. **Not Millennials. That’s a different topic.** Today we discuss Jesus’s 1000-year reign on earth in “The Millennium.” If you look at the graphic below, you can see not the sequence of topics in our series, “Final Things.” Last time, we dealt with The Second Coming. Today we cover, the second topic—“The Millennium.”



And as you can see in your Bibles, we are just following the sequence of the last four chapters of the Bible. **Revelation 19** sequentially spills into **Revelation 20**; in other words, the millennium follows Christ’s second coming.

And after this, we’re going to follow this all the way to the end of the Bible with the eternal state and the New Jerusalem. Then, we will transition back to the church age and the intermediate state, the time in which we live right now. Then we will work up to the rapture, the tribulation, and the church and Israel.

And just by way of full disclosure. We don’t get a ton of detail here about what life in the millennium will look like. We just get a taste.

How many of you out there have ever been to a movie? How many of you have ever seen a movie trailer? Well Revelation 20:1–10 is more like a movie trailer than a movie. The Apostle John squeezes a

description of Jesus's 1000-year reign of glory and perfection on our earth into ten verses. And it's not a lot of detail. **But it's enough to get your mouth watering with anticipation.**

And I guarantee you when we finally see Christ set up this kingdom, it won't be a let-down... **like some movies are after you see the trailer.** It won't be an anticlimax. It's going to be awesome for us and for those who are part of Christ's entourage.

Now for the devil... it's *not* going to be awesome. And for those who ally themselves with the devil, it's going to be *awful* not *awesome*. In fact it's going to be horrifying. Actually there is something of an anticlimax in this passage. It's when Satan gathers a new army of millennial insurrectionists in **verses 8–9**. And they gather to oppose Christ. And they march up to Jerusalem for battle and then... all of a sudden... whoosh! ... they are consumed by fire from heaven. There's no fighting. There's no combat. There's just obliteration. We'll get to that in a second.

But for the rest of us, those who get to enjoy the rule and reign of Christ for 1000 years, our minds can't even conceive of how great this will be. And I'm so glad that God has given us this sneak peek of that future reality, even though it's just a little glimpse. By the way, there's some content on Jesus's millennial kingdom in the OT that we'll look at today, that gives a little more detail for us. And all of this will encourage us in this day when the things in our world are *less than* awesome.

Now here's how I would structure the presentation of this millennial kingdom in **Revelation 20**. First John tells us what happens at the beginning of the millennium (**20:1–3**). Then John tells us what happens during the millennium (**20:4–6**). Then John tells us what happens at the end of the millennium (**20:7–10**). That's how this passage is structured. Very simple. Very informative. And you can see I've followed this outline in your notes.

So if you would, go ahead and take your notes and write this in as the first point for this message.

The Three Main Events of the Millennium:

1) At the start of the millennium, Satan will be **bound** (20:1–3)

Now if you remember last time, we saw Christ's dramatic return to earth. Heaven opened up. Christ descended on a white horse with **1) eyes like flames of fire, with 2) diadems on his head, with 3) a blood-soaked robe on his back, with 4) a sword proceeding from his mouth, and with 5) King of Kings and Lord of Lords tattooed on his quadriceps.** It's an *electrifying* and *terrifying* image, as Christ comes to make war on his enemies.

And the Bible says that there is an army behind Jesus riding their own white horses. And like I said last time, that's the church and possibly also Jesus's angel army. So we won't just *see* the second coming of Christ. We will *be* part of the second coming of Christ. We will have a front row seat as Christ destroys his enemies.

Well at the end of that battle, it says that Christ subdued the antichrist and the false prophet and threw them in to the lake of fire that burns with sulfur (**19:19–20**). **They are the down payment, you might say, of all of Christ's enemies that will eventually be thrown into the lake of fire. They are the firstfruits of the coming judgment.** The rest of the enemies that Christ destroyed at Armageddon, their bodies were consumed by birds that gorged on their flesh. And their souls will be cast into Hades to await the final judgment with all the other dead unbelievers throughout the centuries.

So that's the context of what follows in **Chapter 20**. And the question that didn't get answered in **Chapter 19** is the following: what happened to Satan? The antichrist gets punished at Christ's coming: thrown into the lake of fire. The false prophet gets punished likewise. But those two individuals were empowered by the great fallen angel, Satan. They were two members of what we called the unholy trinity. What about the third member? What about Satan?

Well Satan's reckoning comes in **Chapter 20**, and as I just read for you Satan has one more part to play on planet earth before he reaches his final destination.

Look at **chapter 20, verse 1**.

^{20:1} Then I saw an angel [possibly Michael, God's angel of war] coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit [this is the Greek word ἄβυσσος, which we get our English word "abyss" from] and a great chain. ² And he [that's the angel... again possibly the archangel Michael or an angel like him] seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years

Satan has a lot of names, doesn't he? And as John describes him here, he mentions four of them. And coincidentally these are the four ways that the devil is described in the book of **Revelation**. **1) He's "the dragon"**

from **Revelation 12** who swept a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. Many scholars believe this describes Satan's fall from heaven where he led one-third of the angelic hosts to revolt against God. Satan and these fallen angels or demons have been warring against God and against humanity ever since.

2) Satan is also the "ancient serpent," who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan embodied one of God's creatures, a serpent, and beguiled Eve. And because of that sin an avalanche of sinfulness and fallenness and wickedness collapsed down on our world. We know that from **Genesis 3**. **And we still feel that in our day.**

3) Satan is the devil, which is the Greek word δίαβολος, meaning "slanderer" or "accuser." Christ is our advocate; Satan is our accuser. 4) And the last term used for his is "Satan" which is a Hebrew word שָׂטָן that means "adversary." Satan is God's adversary. And Satan is our adversary. He hates everyone and everything. He hates those who hate him. He hates those who love him. He is filled with an insatiable desire to thwart God and his goodness and all those who are affiliate with him.

Now here's an interesting exegetical point. There are four names that are given for Satan in **Revelation 20:2**. If you remember from last week, there were four names given for Jesus as well. Jesus is "the Word of God" (**19:13**). Jesus is called "Faithful and True (**19:11**)." Jesus is called King of kings and Lord of lords (**19:16**). But also, there was another name for Jesus emblazoned on his diadems or emblazoned on his horse... John never specifies. It was a name that John did not know. In fact John says, "no one knows [that name] but [Jesus] himself (**19:12**).

Why is that significant? Because we know Satan's names... all of them. And Jesus knows Satan's names... all of them. But we don't know all of Jesus's names. And Satan doesn't know all of Jesus's names. There is a name that is written of Jesus in the book of **Revelation**, that no one knows but himself, meaning Christ is infinitely powerful and Satan is not. Do you feel me? Christ is inscrutable and omnipotent. Satan is not.

And that has applicational significance, folks. The devil is not Christ's equal. In fact, Christ is not even in the same league with Satan. Satan is not Christ's brother, as the Mormons teach. Satan is Christ's lackey. So who are you going to side with? The lackey or the Lord?

You might say, "I don't want to take a side, Pastor Tony." You don't have that choice. The default position is siding with the devil. If you haven't settled where your allegiance lies, you better settle that today.

Now back to Satan, the devil, the ancient serpent, the dragon. Look at **verse 3**.

³ and [he] [the angel] threw him [the devil] into the pit [the abyss], and shut it and sealed it over him,

I don't know what this looks like with metaphysical creatures in a metaphysical world, but I assume that some kind of metaphysical chain and pit and binding were utilized here.

³ [he] threw him into the pit... so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

What's insinuated in this passage is that Satan is a deceiver of not just people, but the nations. And anyone who has read their Bible from cover to cover isn't surprised by that. As **Psalm 2** states, "**Why do the nations rage? Why do they plot and scheme? Against the Messiah, the Anointed One!**" The nations have been deceived for centuries into raging and fighting against God and his holy people. That's clear from the OT and the nation of Israel that was constantly attacked by outside powers. That's true of the church in our day where Satan has been successful in deceiving nations and rulers.

That's true in the tribulation where Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet worked in concert to build an antisemitic empire that destroyed believing Jews including the two witnesses (see **Rev 11:7; 13:7**). They would have destroyed the 144,000 if they could have, but God preserved them (see **Rev 7:3-4; 14:1-5**).

Now we need to talk about this reference to "the thousand years" here, because this is a subject that is hotly debated among Christians. **Revelation 20** is the first and only mention of a 1000-year reign of Christ on earth before the new heavens and new earth and the New Jerusalem.

And this mention comes as something of a surprise. Instead of Christ just throwing Satan into the lake of fire, judging the dead, and setting up the eternal state, there is a 1000-year period when Christ reigns on earth. And that 1000-year reign is mentioned six times in **Revelation 20**.

Just look at this with me:

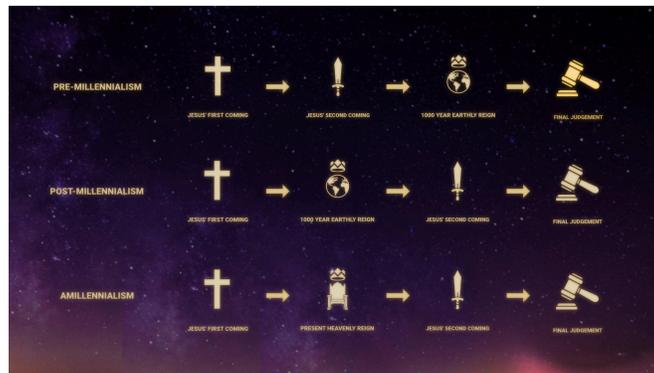
1. **20:2** – "he bound Satan for a *thousand* years"

2. **20:3** – “until the *thousand* years were ended”
3. **20:4** – “They came to life and reigned with Christ for a *thousand* years”
4. **20:5** – “The rest of the dead did not come to life until the *thousand* years were ended”
5. **20:6** – “they will reign with him for a *thousand* years”
6. **20:7** – “And when the *thousand* years are ended”

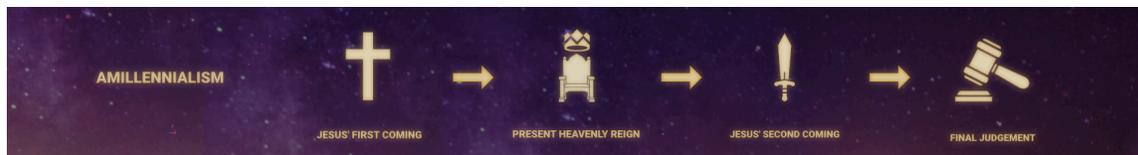
In almost every verse in this chapter, a “thousand years” is mentioned. John obviously wanted to emphasize this. And not only is there emphasis, there is sequence. There’s before the thousand years and during the thousand years and then after the thousand years.

And before we talk about why God is allowing this 1000-year reign instead of just bringing the end of the end, let’s talk first about some of the different views of this millennium. There are three main views that good Christians debate and disagree on.

I’ve put a handy-dandy little chart of these positions in your notes, so that you can distinguish between the different views.



I’m going to start at the bottom of that chart and work up.



1) There are some godly, Christian interpreters who view this 1000-year reign as non-literal. And their view is called amillennialism. The “a” in front of “millennialism” is what’s called an “a privative.” For example, “a-theism” is a belief that objects to theism. They don’t believe God exists. If something is “a-typical” it means that it is not typical. That’s how the “a privative” works. Amillennialists believe that Christ’s 1000-year reign is symbolic of the end of the end, and therefore a literal 1000-year reign doesn’t exist.

In fact, amillennialists believe that **Revelation 20** is a recapitulation of Christ’s coming in **Revelation 19**. Therefore this passage is not describing a literal 1000-year reign, but a second symbolic portrayal of Christ’s Second Coming. That’s a short summary of that position, but I hope that gives you the gist of it. Some great Christian interpreters throughout the ages have been amillennialists including Calvin, Luther, Augustine, many of the Puritans, and many today who are part of the Reformed tradition. I love Calvin, Luther, and Augustine. But this is not my view.

2) A less popular view, but I would say growing in popularity is what’s referred to as postmillennialism.



This is a newer position that was popularized by Jonathan Edwards and other great thinkers in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. George Whitefield and Charles Finney were both postmillennial. Many Americans

during the first and second great awakening were postmillennial. Many abolitionists in America and abroad were postmillennial. So I don't denounce that view as heretical or heterodox. That would be a mistake. But again, this is not my view.

The idea behind postmillennialism is that Christians will systematically set up Christ's kingdom on earth and they would slowly bring the kingdom into our world, until everyone in our world was Christianized. And Christians should influence the government, the educational system, the economic system, etc., etc. And then Christ would come back and reign.

And this period of restoration by the church would be roughly equivalent to the "millennium" described in **Revelation 20**, and so Christ would return "postmillennially," that is after we have set up the millennial kingdom as the church.

Honestly postmillennialism has flourished in the United States where many have sought to create something of a "Kingdom of heaven on earth." **Pat Robertson, who ran for president many years ago, is an example of this. Robertson believed that "God had called him to usher in the second coming of Jesus Christ."**¹ **His mentality was something like this: "If I'm elected President, we'll be well on way to offering the Kingdom to Christ."**

Jonathan Edwards, likewise, the great American theologian wanted to bring the kingdom as part of the American experiment and experience in "The New World." Many puritans like Edwards called New England the Promised Land and called the Indians Canaanites. So they viewed the building of the New World as a kind of New Jerusalem created on earth.²

Now here's the problem with postmillennialism. The problem is that it assumes that the world will grow increasingly better and better and become Christianized. And then Christ will return to a Christianized earth and reign. The reason that's a problem is that the world *isn't* getting better and better. Christianity is growing around the world, but so is opposition to Christianity. And, as I see it, that's going to lead to a worldwide cataclysmic conflict that is described in the book of **Revelation** and alluded to elsewhere in the Scriptures.

In my opinion, our world isn't getting better. In fact if you look historically, postmillennialism has been popular in periods of peace in our country and around the world. It was really popular at the turn of the twentieth century. Everyone thought the world was improving and we were headed for worldwide peace. The industrial revolution was amazing.

But what blew up that optimism? After that, we had two cataclysmic world wars where the worst of humanity was demonstrated in our world. And some of the worst human atrocities ever were committed... much of it against Jews which is not surprising if you understand the mindset of God's enemies in the Bible.

And then we had a Cold War. And then we had nuclear proliferation and mutually assured destruction. And then more recently we've seen the increase of Islamic radicalization. We had Covid-19 in 2020. We had a worldwide pandemic. We had governments overact to all of that. We've seen a dramatic increase in stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and suicide, especially among young people. We've seen more and more technology that makes our world different... but doesn't necessarily make it better? I don't think so. And because of all that, postmillennialism is a hard-sell today. I don't see our world improving and growing more peaceable as time goes on. Although some of our beloved brothers and sisters have made that case. God bless them! Not my view!

3) Now the third position... I'm just going to call it the biblical position. This is what's called premillennialism.



¹ See the article by John Dart, "He Predicted Early Second Coming : Past Robertson Remarks Deter Secular Believers," 03-04-88: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-03-04-mn-378-story.html?utm>

² For a readable treatment on Jonathon Edwards, see George M. Marsden, *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards* (Eerdmans, 2008). See also the longer *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (Yale University Press, 2003).

And that means that Christ will return “premillennially” and set up his 1000-year kingdom on earth before the new heavens and new earth are created. In this view, the world will grow increasingly hostile to Christianity. The antichrist will come and set up a seven-year period of tribulation on earth. Then Christ will return, like we saw last time. He will set up his kingdom for 1000 years. And then, Satan will be released, he will revolt, and he will be destroyed.

After that, the new heavens and new earth and new Jerusalem will be created. That’s how premillennialists see the end of the world unfolding. And as I hope to show you, that the most natural way to read the last four chapters of the Bible. Just follow the sequence.

Coincidentally this was the predominant position of the early church including church fathers like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others. Charles Spurgeon was premillennial. Francis Schaeffer was premillennial. Modern church leaders like John MacArthur, John Piper, Wayne Grudem, Tim LeHaye, Al Mohler, and many others are premillennial. And although I want to be gracious to others who have disagreed with this position throughout the centuries (including some of my heroes like Calvin, Luther, and Augustine), I really have to say, I don’t know how to read **Revelation** in any other way.

In other words, the sequence of **Revelation 19–22** is best taken with a premillennial scheme. First there’s the tribulation, then Christ’s second coming, then Christ’s millennial kingdom, then Satan’s rebellion, the final judgment, and the new heavens and the new earth. That’s the sequence. And it makes sense. If you just read the last four chapters of **Revelation**, it is most naturally understood that way.

And I think the best evidence of this is in **verses 2 and 3**.

² And [the angel] seized the dragon... and **bound** him for a thousand years

An amillennialist or a postmillennialist would read that and say, “**that describes the church age right now. Satan is right now bound in some way.**” I’m sorry, but I just don’t see that. Satan is quite active in our world. And he’s described as active throughout the NT. Peter describes him as prowling around like “a roaring lion seeking someone to devour” (**1 Pet 5:8**).

And here’s the thing. When Christ returns and sets up his kingdom, Satan will be bound. And he won’t just be diminished as an influencer in our world; he will be totally incapacitated. He will be thrown into the pit, and the pit will be shut and sealed over him. And he won’t be able to do diddly-squat in our world. Okay? That’s the millennium.

So #1. At the start of the millennium, Satan will be bound. Write this down as #2.

2) During the millennium, Christ and his cohort will **reign** (20:4–6)

Look at **verse 4**.

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.

Now who are these people seated on the thrones given the authority to judge? John doesn’t tell us explicitly, but I think the best answer to that is that these are those who rode with Jesus into Armageddon. In other words, these are the resurrected saints and the raptured church who will return with Christ. And then they will sit on thrones and rule with Christ.

That might seem a bit speculative to you, but I think you have to ask the question—what did we come back to earth with Christ to do, if it wasn’t for this? Why would we return with Christ and then just go back to heaven while he reigns for a thousand years? That doesn’t make sense.

So we have this scenario. Let me try to be clear here. When Christ returns, he will destroy the antichrist and his followers, all of those who came to power during the tribulation. And all the Christ-followers on the earth who *weren’t* martyred and who stayed faithful to Christ will enter into the millennium and will be ruled by Christ. And we will be there as well with our resurrection bodies and will rule with Christ. And those who enter the millennium under Christ’s rule will continue to live and populate the planet and serve Christ without the influence of Satan as deceiver.

The OT makes reference to these days when Christ will rule the earth from Jerusalem. There will be peace in our land as Christ rules with an iron fist. Isaiah says, “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his

hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:6-9).

And speaking of Christ's reign Isaiah writes, "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord... He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked (Isa 11:2-5).

In other words, it'll be a time of peace and tranquility. It will be a time of perfectly executed justice. It'll be that time on earth that we have longed for... for centuries... ever since our mother Eve first ate the forbidden fruit. **And if we could vote for Jesus and make it happen today, we would. But that's not going to happen. Not till Christ comes back.**

Look at **verse 4**. Here's some more about the millennial kingdom.

Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

These are the martyred saints during the tribulation. These are those who rejected antichrist and rejected the 666 mark on their foreheads, and they paid for their faithfulness to God with their lives. But God is no man's debtor. He knows how to reward faithfulness to him. And after Christ returns and sets up his reign these martyrs will receive special commendation as they are raised to reign with us during this 1000-year period.

What's interesting to me is how maybe 50 year ago you might have said "beheaded?" "That must be symbolic for any kind of martyrdom. Who cuts off people's heads anymore? That's so primitive." But then we saw a resurgence of primitive people about a decade ago (groups like ISIS and other Jihadists out there) who are using this grisly form of execution for Christians in the Middle East. They weren't using lethal injection. They weren't using a firing squad. They weren't using cyanide or gas chambers. They were using one of the most primitive and one of the most humiliating forms of execution that can be used. And they did it to draw attention to themselves. They did it to sensationalize their killing of innocent people.

Now 50 years ago, I might have said that this reference in **verse 4** to, "the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God" was metaphorical for all who are martyred in the tribulation. Now I'm not so sure. Now I think that the preferred method of execution by antichrist and his armies will be the humiliating act of decapitation.

And it's possible too that the tribulational period will involve an economic and technological collapse, and people will revert back to primitive means and primitive ways. I think that's quite likely. And part of that involves a more primitive means of execution.

But God, who sees the humiliation and suffering of his faithful saints, will be generous in rewarding them in his kingdom to come.

Let's continue. **Verse 5** says,

⁵*The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.*

This is a reference to unbelievers here. In other words, all unbelievers are kept in Hades until the final judgment at the end of Christ's 1000-year reign. The dead in Christ will rise first.

This is the first resurrection.

The first resurrection, as I understand it, involves both the raptured church and the resurrected saints that return with Christ as his second coming. The first resurrection also involves OT saints who probably will be resurrected at that time or shortly thereafter. But it also involves this resurrection of beheaded saints during the millennium. So there will be phases of resurrections all under the umbrella of "the first resurrection."

The second resurrection, on the other hand, you don't want to be part of. That will take place at the end of **Revelation 20** at what's called "The Great White Throne Judgment." We'll deal more with that next time.

The second resurrection is the resurrection of unbelievers when they will receive eternal bodies just before they are thrown into the lake of fire forever and ever. **Daniel 12:2** says that "some shall awake to

everlasting life and some to shame in everlasting contempt.” Paul said to Felix when he was on trial for his life in Acts 24 that there will be “a resurrection of both the just and the unjust” (24:15).

Everyone is going to live somewhere forever. Every human being and every angel will live somewhere forever. The question is where will you spend your forever? The antichrist and the false prophet are “resurrected” before the millennium and placed into the lake of fire. They were the downpayment of these future resurrected *unbelievers* who are damned in the lake of fire forever. If you are not with Jesus, you will join them.

Again, the question is as follows: will you be part of the first resurrection, those who reign with Christ during the millennium and then enters into eternity with him? Or will you be part of the second resurrection and the second death? Those who are damned and thrown into the lake of fire forever!

Verse 6 says,

⁶ *Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second [resurrection... the second] death has no power,*

There’s an old aphorism that is often attributed to Charles Spurgeon and it goes like this, **“Born once; die twice! Born twice; die once!”** Anyone ever heard that before? **If you’ve been born again as Jesus told us, “ye must be born again” (John 3:7, KJV), then the second death has no power over you! Hallelujah!**

And if that wasn’t enough... that should be enough for all of us to unite ourselves with Christ... But if that’s not enough, the end of verse 6 says,

[and] they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

That’s the raptured church. Also that includes the martyred saints of the Tribulation; those who were beheaded. That’s OT believers and NT believers. That’s everyone who has, by faith, embraced God’s plan of redemption. We’ll reign with him for a thousand years. We’ll be priests of God and of Christ in the millennium.

Do I know what that’s going to look like? Not really. **Like I said this is just a trailer. This is just a sneak peek. But I know enough to know that I want to be there ruling with Christ when he comes back. I know enough to know that I don’t want to be one of Christ’s enemies when he comes back.**

Now I could spend a lot of time speculating with you more on what the millennium is going to look like. In fact, there’s occasional glimpses of it in the OT. There are descriptions of Christ’s reign in the OT that weren’t fully realized in his first coming that obviously await his second coming. I think the balance of those promises will be fulfilled in the millennium.

For example, **Isaiah 2:1–4** says, “The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and 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.”

Similarly **Zechariah 14:5** says, “Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.” I think that’s a clear reference to the second coming, and the saints coming with the Messiah. And then **Zechariah writes in 14:8–11**, “On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one. The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses. And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security.”

Similarly **Daniel 7:13–14** says, “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

We could spend a lot of time right now going through passages like this. **I made a list of passages in the OT that I think reference some aspect of the millennial kingdom. Those are in the sermon application questions in your notes. You can work through those on your own.**

And we could spend some time speculating what our role as judges will look like. And what our role as priests will look like. And how will we with resurrection bodies will interact with people on earth who have non-resurrected bodies? But the reality is there's a lot of mystery about this future millennium. All we have is a quick glimpse in **Revelation 20**. And we have a smattering of passages in the OT that hazily prefigure it.

We could also speculate on how much sin will still be present in the millennium. We won't sin, those of us who have resurrected bodies, because our consciences will be sealed. And sin will be impossible for us in our resurrected state. But it'll still be possible for humans on earth, who haven't experienced resurrection yet. They are still born with a sin nature. And even with Satan removed from the equation, people will still sin and rebel against God. We'll see evidence of that in just a second.

But unlike in today's world, Christ will rule with an iron rod. All sin will be immediately punished. All evil will be squelched. All rebellion will be stymied. Depravity will be held in check until the end of the millennium, when God sees fit to loose Satan upon the earth one final time.

Write this down as a third point from our message.

3) At the end of the millennium, Satan will be **loosed**, **defeated**, and eternally punished (20:7-10)

Look at **verse 7**.

⁷And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle;

Gog and Magog are mentioned in **Ezekiel 38-40**. These are general terms that are used in the Bible to refer to the enemies of Israel. My understanding of this is that Satan will rally people from all over the world, from the four corners of the earth, to fight against Christ in Jerusalem at the end of the millennium.

The precise details of what is prophesied in **Ezekiel 38-40** will not take place here. That'll happen earlier during the tribulation. But there will be a *revivification* of Gog and Magog, so to speak. There will be another rebellion like what happened at the end of the tribulation, this time not involving the antichrist, because he's already in the lake of fire. But it will involve Satan. And it will involve Satan's demonic forces. And it will involve an incalculable number of human beings from the four corners of the earth.

Because it says at the end of **verse 8**.

their number is like the sand of the sea.

Can you imagine that? Millions and millions of people who have lived for centuries in peace under the righteous rule of Christ will revolt. Why are they revolting? What could they possibly be upset with Christ about? There's no food shortage. There's no instability or injustice in the government! Nobody is treated with unfairness or inequity. It's a perfect kingdom. Christ is a perfect ruler.

The situation is not unlike what we saw in the Garden of Eden (**Gen 1-3**). That's not a perfect parallel, but it's close. And Satan was able to deceive Eve in that perfect place. Likewise Satan deceives this army of people who have lived in peace and security in Christ's millennial reign.

And according to **verse 9**,

⁹And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city [that's **Jerusalem**], but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

The end! Some people have facetiously called this "Satan's second coming." Christ's second coming was pretty impressive. Satan's second coming... *not so* impressive. He gathered lots of people. That was impressive. But his battle with Jesus was an absolute annihilation. He marches towards Jerusalem and fire comes down from heaven, and they're toast.

And here's the end result. **Verse 10**.

¹⁰and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were,

The unholy trinity is reunited in the lake of fire. They're all in there together. And we will not shed a tear for them.

and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

You might say, **"Well good. That's what Satan deserves. But what about unbelievers? What about OT unbelievers? What about NT unbelievers? What about the souls of the people who revolted against**

Christ at his coming? What about the souls of the people who revolted against Christ at the end of the millennium? Their bodies were scorched by fire that came down from heaven, but what about their souls?”

“What about my uncle Carl who keeps rejecting Christ? What about my Buddhist neighbor? What about my coworkers? What about my son or daughter or parents who refuse to give their lives to the Lord?” Well John mentions all of them at the end of **Revelation 20** in what’s called the Great White Throne Judgment. And sadly the Bible says their destiny is not any different than Satan or antichrist or the false prophet forever and ever and ever. But we’ll have to wait till next time to cover that passage. But that’s what the Bible teaches.

Let me close with this. I’ll be quick, but I won’t be hurried. I want to give you two applicational takeaways in response to this message.

Two Applicational Takeaways from Revelation 20:1–10:

1) Don’t underestimate the extent of **human depravity**

Don’t underestimate human depravity. And at the same time don’t overestimate the human capacity for goodness. We are made in God’s image. I get that. We are capable of incredible acts of mercy and kindness as humans, mercy that animals in the animal kingdom would never demonstrate. But don’t underestimate how much evil human beings are capable of, and how easily we can be swayed to rebel against God.

The reality is that humanity has been marred by sin, and as a result sinfulness and rebellion is our default mode. We naturally gravitate towards that.

And you might think, “O yeah at the tribulation, people will rebel against God because the antichrist rewards the people with 666 on their foreheads.” But you know what, what incentive do humans in the millennium have for rebelling against God? They will have everything. They will be living in a utopian society with Jesus on his throne and no semblance of injustice left in this world. And they will still rebel.

What possible reason will they have for attacking Jesus? Because Jesus is cramping their style? Because Jesus was a little more totalitarian in his rule and reign than they’re comfortable with? I don’t know how Satan will deceive them, but he will. And his rebel army, **which is squashed like a bug by God**, will number in the millions and will be like the sand of the sea.

The reality is, folks, that human beings outside of faith in Christ are irreversibly depraved. That’s why I don’t think postmillennialism works. How can our world be getting better when we have evidence that, not once, but twice, Satan will mount a counteroffensive against Christ at the end of days?

So don’t underestimate human depravity. May God have mercy on us, and *maranatha...* may Christ come back soon.

Secondly,

2) Don’t sit on the fence in your **allegiance** to **Christ**

Historically in our country, it has been somewhat culturally mandated that we were a Christian nation. We were expected to go to church. We were expected to do “biblical” things, even though we may or may not have believed the Bible.

That’s not the case as much anymore, but there are still examples of people in our country who are just culturally conditioned as followers of Christ. There’s no real faith in their hearts. And there’s no real following of Christ. They’ve got one foot in the world and one foot in the church. They’re fence-sitters. They compartmentalize their lives so that some part of them is “Christian-like,” but the rest of them is doing their own thing.

Just so you know, the Bible doesn’t have a category for fence-sitters. The Bible doesn’t have a category for cultural Christians. The Bible calls fence-sitters goats and weeds and lukewarm. The Bible calls fence-sitters unbelievers. **So get off the fence in your allegiance to Christ.**

Have you, by faith, embraced Jesus and made him the Lord of your life? If you have, then your future is looking good. Resurrected with a new body. Coming back with Jesus. Riding in with him on a white horse. Ruling with him during the millennium. No second death. No eternal judgment. Is that you?

Are you part of Christ's cohort? If you're not, then make that decision today to embrace him as your Lord and Savior. Let's pray together.

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