

CONCERNING THE WAY

September 8, 2009

LESSON 73: THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST



Chapter 20 - The 1000 Year Reign of Christ

In this chapter we have a subject that confuses many Christians, the Millennial Kingdom. It is a pivotal doctrine which is a point of contention among many. Is the thousand year reign described in this chapter a literal kingdom on earth? And is it a future reign, or is it already in progress? Are the two resurrections at the beginning and end of the 1,000 years to be understood as literal, physical raisings of the dead? Or are they spiritual resurrections, related to faith? Or maybe a combination of the two? When Satan is bound for this 1,000 years, how completely is he bound? How is he bound, and is he bound now? These are just some of the questions we will ask in this chapter.

From what happened in chapter 19 we would expect that the kingdom would be the subject of this chapter. In 19:15 Jesus Christ returned to earth and struck down the nations at the battle of Armageddon and the verse says he will rule them with a rod of iron. If He literally comes back to earth in the last chapter you would naturally assume He is literally going to take up the long foretold and promised earthly reign at this time, which is what this chapter describes. It seems pretty clear to me from a straightforward reading of the text and knowing the many prophecies of the Old Testament that refers to a coming Kingdom. But there is great confusion over what should be obvious. If we're all reading the same text, why do we come to such different views? Mainly because of different systems of interpretation, which we discussed at the beginning of the book.

The view that I hold and will defend is premillennialism, because (1) that's what you must come to with a straightforward, plain reading of the Bible, and (2) that was the view of the earliest Church Fathers. This is the belief that Christ returns before His kingdom begins on earth for one thousand years.

In a nutshell, In case you don't remember from earlier lessons, postmillennialism teaches that the Kingdom of God started with the cross or Pentecost, we are living in the Kingdom now, Satan is bound, and Christianity will gradually convert the world to Christ, making the world a utopian paradise, and at some point in the future Christ will return to establish the eternal state. Amillennialism teaches that there is no literal earthly reign of Christ, we're in the millennium right now, satan is bound, and when Christ does come back He will basically destroy this old world, new heavens and new earth will be created, and we will be ushered right into the eternal state. Both groups do not believe there is a future for the nation of Israel in God's plan, they believe that the Church has replaced Israel.

"We now come to Rev. 20:1-6 which was so universally held by the early Church to teach a literal resurrection, and to be so thoroughly consonant with Jewish views, that the Apocalypse narrowly escaped proscription by the enemies of Chiliasm . . . If we reject the early Church belief in this particular, the veracity of Apostolic Fathers, who assert that they received their interpretation of it from the Apostles and their associates . . . is impeached, and the teaching of the Apostles themselves which directly led to such a faith in all the churches established by them is open to grave suspicion. . . . Popery . . . almost crushed the early interpretation of the passage; but others held fast to it, as e.g. Paulikians, Waldenses, and Albigenses. Various writers, some men of acknowledged ability and talent, have continued from the Reformation . . . down to the present, to entertain the same, and today some of the most able men in nearly all, if not all, denominations, accept of this ancient faith."
George Peters

“The heart of the Old Testament prophetic message is the coming of the Messiah to set up an earthly kingdom over which He would rule from the throne of David. The only important detail which Revelation adds concerning this promised messianic kingdom is its duration – one thousand years.”
 Hal Lindsey

Key Interpretative Issues in [Revelation 20:1-6](#)

Issue	Premillennial View	Postmillennial View	Amillennial View
Satan’s Binding	Future	Present/Future	Present
First Resurrection	Physical	Spiritual	Spiritual
Thousand Years	Literal	Literal/Symbolic	Symbolic
Location of Reign	Earth	Earth/Heaven	Heaven
Chronology of chapters 19-20	Sequential	Sequential/Reiteration	Reiteration

I submit that the premillennial interpretation is the only one that does justice to the text of the Bible. We recognize the use of symbols that are consistent to describe literal events.

In the last chapter we saw that Jesus returned to the earth with his armies of saints and angels and destroyed all of His enemies, including the Beast and the False Prophet. The next item on the agenda is to take care of the one behind all the rebellion and wickedness:

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. (2) And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; (3) and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

Obviously God could bind Satan any time He wished, but He has stated here that it will not happen until this time when Christ returns at the end of the 70th week of Daniel. Everything is ordered in advance, and God will not violate His Word. We saw an angel with the key to this same place come down from heaven and open the abyss to allow demons to come out in Revelation 9:1. Here an angel is going to throw Satan in it and lock it back up again. The chain is obviously figurative, and describes the angel's authority and ability to restrain Satan. There is no mention of a struggle between the angel with the chain and Satan. He is empowered by God to easily bind him. This is not the first time an angel will have been chained (2 Peter 2:4, and Jude 1:6). Just like the angels these verses speak of, Satan will be locked away and unable to roam around as he pleases.

Amillennialists, who try to take everything as an allegory of the church, will say that the chain is the gospel. They say that today Satan is bound, Christ has given the Church the chain and we do not have enough faith to pull it even more tightly. They think we just don't realize we have the chain. This is typical of this kind of interpretation that doesn't do justice to the text. They see this binding as being loose, that Satan was bound at the cross, but it is the lack of faith of the church that gives him a certain limited amount of freedom. They believe there is no external spiritual roadblock keeping Christians from reigning and ruling now. But if this is true, what hope do we have that Satan will ever be completely bound? Even a super apostle like Paul apparently didn't have enough faith to get the job done (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). No, Paul couldn't bind Satan because he is not bound in this age, and this should be obvious to anyone.

1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Here are some passages written *after the cross and the resurrection* that indicate that Satan is not currently bound:

- Satan filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit resulting in the death of he and his wife (Acts 5:3).
- Paul said that Satan is blinding the eyes of nonbelievers in this current age so that they should not receive the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).
- Paul told the Corinthians that Satan transforms himself (deceptively) into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, “a messenger of Satan” to keep him humble (2 Corinthians 12:7).
- Paul told the Ephesians that the prince of the power of the air “now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).
- Paul told the Ephesians not to give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27) and that they wrestled against “spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*” (Ephesians 6:12).
- Paul was hindered by Satan from visiting the Thessalonian church (1Thessalonians 2:18).
- The coming of the lawless one, the *Antichrist*, will be “according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
- Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme (1 Timothy 1:20).
- James warns believers to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7).
- Peter warns believers to be sober and vigilant because “your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).
- John tells us that “the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one*” (1 John 5:19).
- Satan is a source of deception throughout the events of the book of Revelation (Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:8, 10).

This is a major problem with amillennialism: in their desperation to prove their “kingdom now” theology, they *deny reality*.

The problem with people who think that we are in the kingdom now is that they either can't see or refuse to see the delay between spiritual accomplishments and their outworking in the physical realm. The parable Jesus taught in Luke 19:11 tells us that the kingdom is not received until the time of His return. Jesus told this parable explicitly to do away with kingdom now thinking!

Christ accomplished everything needed for the establishment of the kingdom at the cross, but the time was not right for it to begin, there was to be an intervening age. We individually are said to be seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:4-7), and that is true right now spiritually and positionally, but it will not become true physically until He returns for us.

This strange theory, the origin of which is traced to the Romish notion that the church is the kingdom, contends that whatever millennium there may be is being experienced in the present age. Its advocates interpret the book of Revelation as a description, or varied, descriptions, of this church age. . . . In their unenviable attempt to fit all the events anticipated in the Revelation into the history of this age, the amillennialists indulge in a form of speculation almost unsurpassed. Their abandonment of reason and sound interpretation has but one objective in mind, namely, to place χίλιοι [chilioi] (“thousand”) years —six times repeated in Revelation, chapter 20—back into the past and therefore something no longer to be anticipated in the future. The violence which this interpretation imposes upon the whole prophetic revelation is such that none would propose it except those who, for lack of attention, seem not to realize what they do. . . . In sheer fantastical imagination this method surpasses Russellism, Eddyism, and Seventh Day Adventism, since the plain, grammatical meaning of language is abandoned, and simple terms are diverted in their course and end in anything the interpreter wishes. Lewis Sperry Chafer

Isn't it better to take both Scripture and our real experience at face value—especially when they speak so clearly that Satan is not bound at the present time? How can anyone believe this?

1,000 Years

“The Targum (Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament), Talmud (a vast compendium of Jewish law and lore), and Midrash (an interpretive method to penetrate the deepest meaning of a Hebrew passage) all have concluded there will be a literal thousand year period when the Messiah will reign on earth.” Jack Van Impe

There is actually not much information about the Kingdom in Revelation, except that the time period is given as 1,000 years and Satan will be bound. But God doesn't need to repeat Himself, there are plenty of Kingdom passages in the rest of the Bible, some of which we will read in this lesson. Most do not want to take this 1,000 years at face value, which is puzzling to me, since it's mentioned six times in this chapter. How many times does He have to mention it before we get it? If you don't take it literally, there is really no end to the speculation about what period it might represent. And we must always remember the rule of normal grammatical interpretation – if the plain sense of the text makes sense, seek no other sense. If you interpret all of these events as real literal events, there is no reason whatsoever to not take this as 1,000 years. If, however, you hold to an amillennial or preterist position, you must take it as non-literal to defend your position.

This can reach ridiculous extremes. Preterist Gentry actually believes we are in some way already in the new heavens and new earth. If this is true, we must be living in the ghetto section of the New Jerusalem! This demonstrates the dangers of spiritualizing or allegorizing the text of the Bible – it DEVALUES the promises of God. For example, if we're living in the Kingdom of God, if this is IT, then what is there to get excited about? If most people living on earth in the kingdom don't even realize they're in the Kingdom, much less know and acknowledge the King, how is it the Kingdom of God in any real sense? This kind of thinking is bizarre and is closer to a cult than it is to Christian belief. Some cults specialize in “spiritual realities” and brainwash their followers to ignore objective reality. This is unhealthy and unscriptural. Our God is a God of reality who does not ask us to deny the obvious.

Satan's imprisonment recalls Isaiah's prediction that disobedient angels would be punished and imprisoned in Isaiah 24:19-22. The “many days” could correspond to the Millennial Kingdom after which he will receive his final punishment.

During Satan's imprisonment, he and his minions will not be able to deceive the nations. This is one of the reasons why the Millennial Kingdom will be such a utopia. As soon as he is let out, he immediately goes

out to deceive the nations again. The wording here proves that his binding is complete for the thousand years, he is not loosely bound. He cannot deceive anyone at all, because you know that if he could, he would.

Why is Satan bound for a thousand years and then released again? The Bible does not specifically tell us, but I believe it is to demonstrate the true nature of the heart of man. People in the Kingdom in their natural earthly bodies, who will actually be able to visit Jerusalem in Israel with Christ reigning on the throne, without the influence of Satan, will still reject Christ. This will reveal the true heart of natural man - rebellion against God. Some will not accept Him. Men will never be able to use the excuse that it was Satan who is at fault for their sins. God will lock Satan away for a time to prove that man by himself is completely incapable of obedience to God, even under the most ideal conditions.

Revelation 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Who are those who sit on the thrones? It could be the overcomers Jesus talked about in Revelation 2 & 3:

Revelation 2:26-27 'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; (27) AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received *authority* from My Father;

Revelation 3:21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

We who have trusted Christ are overcomers, so this passage could be speaking of us! Those seated on thrones could include both O.T. saints (Daniel 12:2, Isaiah 26:19) that have been resurrected after the Tribulation, and Church saints who were resurrected at the Rapture.

"Here we begin to see what God has gained out of the whole trail of earth history. Man, made a little lower than the angels, is raised through the redemptive death of the Lord who also was willing to be made lower than the angels (Heb. 2:7, 9), to a higher position. In salvation we are not lifted back to the level from which Adam fell, but higher. We are not lifted to the level of the angels, but higher. We are lifted above all the principalities and powers to the very throne of Heaven." Donald Barnhouse

And then John sees the martyrs from the Tribulation being resurrected, and it says clearly they will reign with Christ for a thousand years. It is revealed here how these martyrs were killed by the Beast during the Tribulation; there were beheaded. There may not be a connection here, but it's interesting to note that Muslim terrorists use this method of execution today.

Some scholars think that these martyrs are the ones who are sitting on the thrones and judgment was given to them. Who are they judging? That would be the nations, the living survivors that come out of the Tribulation. This would be the "Sheep and the Goats" judgment from Matthew 25:31-46. This judgment takes place shortly after the return of Christ and seems to be based on how these people treated the Jews during the Tribulation. The sheep would be the people who showed their faith by how they treated a group of people He called "these brothers of mine". They are invited into His Kingdom as mortal beings. The "goats" are all those who opposed Christ and persecuted His brothers. They are killed and sent into eternal

punishment. It would be appropriate for the martyrs, then, to sit on thrones with Christ as He judges the nations.

These are those believers who were killed during the Tribulation, and here they are resurrected and given their eternal bodies. Why does God give us a new body? Well, the obvious answer is because our earthly ones get old and wear out. But the other reason is that God, at the start of the Kingdom here, has to wipe everything clean, with glorified people and a glorified earth. He has to renovate the earth, not just because of the devastation during the Tribulation, but because of the extreme spiritual pollution that exists even now. Our earthly bodies are condemned property, so He has to get us out of them. And we try to hang on to that condemned body as long as we can!

Revelation 20:5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed). This is the first resurrection.

Since all of the righteous are raised in the first resurrection, this must be the unbelievers. This is the lost from all of history, who will be resurrected to face judgment at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. Did you know even the lost will be resurrected and given new bodies? The first resurrection is speaking of the resurrection of the Tribulation saints in verse 4. That's the first resurrection of the Kingdom. We in the Church will have already been resurrected by this time. These two resurrections that bookend the 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom are described by Daniel:

Daniel 12:2-3 "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. (3) "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

The Hebrew in this passage for "the others to disgrace" actually has the meaning of "those who do not awake at that time will awake to disgrace...", which reinforces the time between the two resurrections. The two resurrections are also spoken of in John 5:28-29 and Acts 24:14-15.

The expression "first resurrection" has constituted an exegetical problem for all interpreters. Posttribulationists cite this reference as evidence that the rapture could not occur until after the tribulation. Pretribulationists have rightly held that the first resurrection is not an event, but an order of resurrection. It is evident that our Lord rose from the dead as the first one to receive a resurrection body—others previously raised from the dead had merely been restored to their former natural bodies. His resurrection, though widely separated from resurrections which follow, is included in the first resurrection, otherwise the event described in Revelation would not be "first."

According to 1 Corinthians 15:20, Christ is "the firstfruits of them that are asleep," i.e., the first part of the resurrection of all saints. Likewise, the evidence that the translation of the church takes place before the tribulation would point to a large segment of the righteous dead being raised before the tribulation. These also would qualify as taking part in the first resurrection. In contrast to the first resurrection of Revelation 20 is the resurrection of the wicked dead portrayed in the latter part of the chapter. The first resurrection therefore becomes the resurrection of all the righteous in contrast to the final resurrection which is the resurrection of the wicked. John Walvoord

1 Corinthians 15:20-26 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. (21) For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made

alive. (23) But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, (24) then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. (25) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. (26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

Paul described two, possibly three resurrections here (Christ, the Rapture, and resurrection of the Tribulation saints), all of which can be described as the “first resurrection”, as opposed to the second resurrection, that of the lost for judgment.

The Resurrections

Order	Which	Timing	Who	Description	Scriptures
1	First	The Third Day	Jesus Christ	The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”.	Mtt. 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18; 1Cor. 15:20
2	First	After Christ’s resurrection	A Few O.T. saints	Graves opened and saints were raised at the earthquake after the resurrection of Christ.	Mtt. 27:50-53
3	First	Before the Tribulation	Church	The resurrection of Church-age believers at the Rapture	John 14:3; 1Th. 4:13-18; 1Cor. 15:50-53
4	First	Middle of the Tribulation	Two Witnesses	God’s two witnesses will be raised after being killed by the Beast	Rev. 11:11-12
5	First	After the Tribulation	O.T. Saints	O. T. saints will be resurrected to enter the Millennial Kingdom	Dan. 12:1-2; Isa. 26:19; Eze. 37:13-14
6	First	Beginning of the Millennial Kingdom	Tribulation Martyrs	The Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected so that they can rule and reign with Christ.	Rev. 20:4-6
7	Second	End of Millennial Kingdom	Unbelieving Dead	At the end of the millennial rule of Christ, the final resurrection will consist of all the unbelieving dead. They will be found guilty at the Great White Throne Judgment and cast into the Lake of Fire.	Rev. 20:11-15

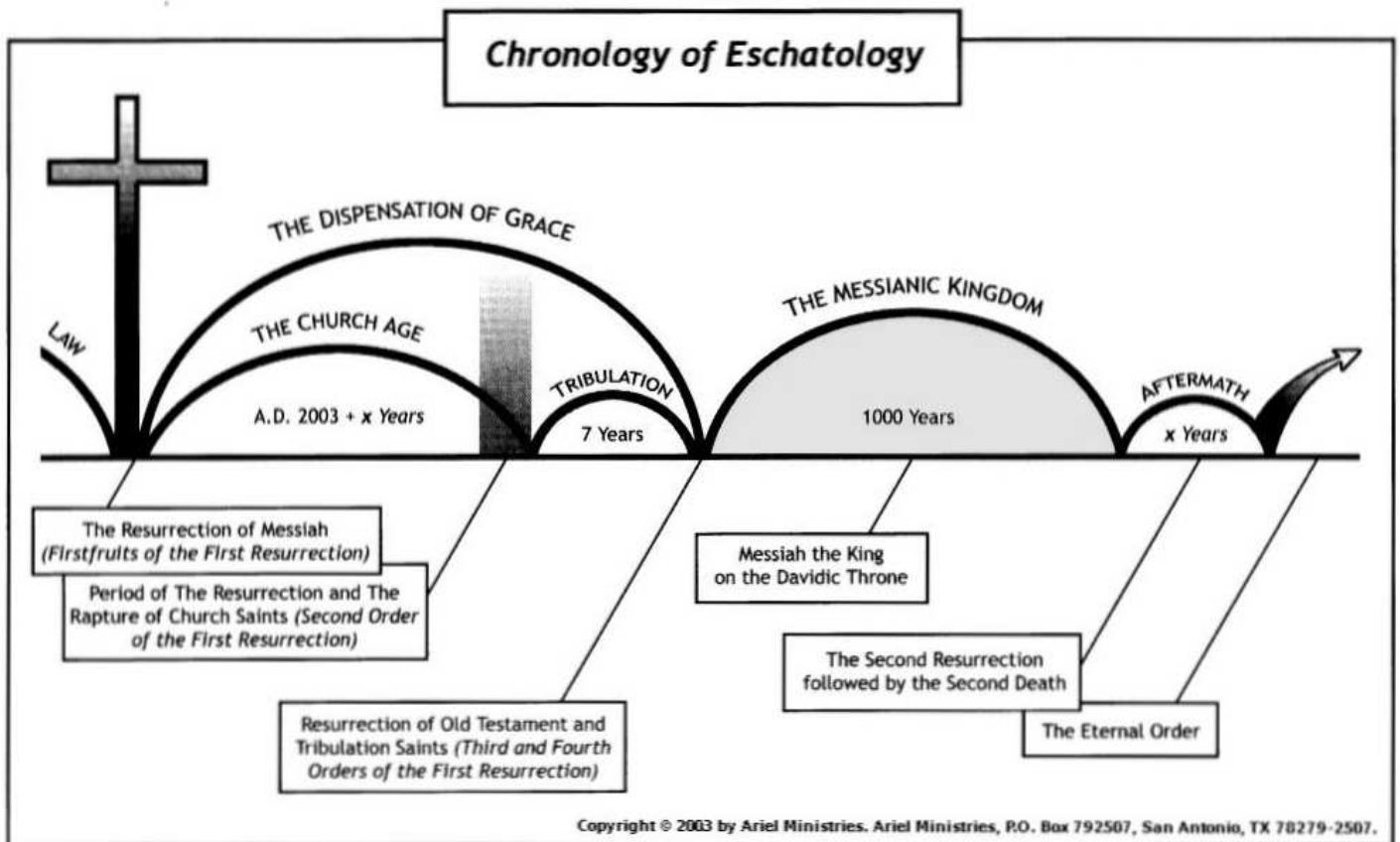
Also, though the Bible doesn’t mention it, there may be a resurrection of saints during the Millennium; those who entered the Kingdom in their natural bodies and their children.

“The question has been raised concerning the judgment of those who die in the millennium. It is clear that the unsaved who die in the millennium are included in [the Great White Throne] judgment. The Scriptures are silent, however, concerning any rapture or translation of saints who survive the millennium and concerning the resurrection of saints who may die in the millennium. Both events may be safely assumed, but are not the subject of divine revelation, probably on the principle that this truth is of no practical application to saints now living. Further light may be cast upon this in the millennium itself as the truth of God is made known.” Walvoord

Others think that only unbelievers will die during the Millennial Kingdom. For example, Fructenbaum is convinced that in the Millennium believers will never die, but sinners will die at age 100 (Isaiah 65:20).

This may be why it is not mentioned in the Bible as a resurrection, that the resurrection of the Tribulation saints is said to complete the first resurrection.

What will our resurrected bodies be like? Here are some verses for you to study that gives us some insight: Psalms 17:15, 1 Corinthians 15:49, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:2. All of these verses seem to be saying that we will have the same glorified body as Jesus did after His resurrection. And remember that He could appear and disappear at will, ate, drank, was recognized, etc.



Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

The second death is the Lake of Fire. It is the destiny of those whose names are not written in the Book of Life (verse 14, also 21:8).

We as believers will be priests of God and will reign with Him. That sounds wonderful! What does that really mean? What will our duties be in the Kingdom? We can't be sure, but there are many positions that will need filling in this Kingdom, so I'm sure there will be plenty to do. And being a priest doesn't mean we will be sacrificing animals. There are all sorts of duties we might perform as priests. There will be administrative and supervisory positions. There will be worship leaders needed, musicians, etc. Priests also serve in teaching functions. There will be a need for many teachers as the "non-glorified" people marry and have babies. What other functions do you think we might fill in the Kingdom?

The Bible speaks of two births, two deaths, and two resurrections. As I've said before, those who are not born twice will have to die twice.

Revelation 20:7-8 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, (8) and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.

Note that this period has an ending. It is not some indeterminate number of years; that option is not left to us. It has a beginning and it has an ending, and there is no reason not to take this as a literal 1,000 years.

Satan will immediately come out and deceive the nations of the world again. And there will be huge numbers of people who will be ripe to follow him in rebellion against the King.

At the beginning of the Kingdom, there will be believing survivors of the Tribulation. Those people will marry and have children who live long lives, and those children will have children, and so on, for 1,000 years. That's a long enough time to populate the earth with multiple billions of people again; especially if there will be no sickness or disease. Not all of those children will accept Christ as their King and Savior. By the end of the 1,000 years and the release of Satan, there will be masses of people that will be deceived and rebel against Christ.

The Gog and Magog event here is not the same as the event described in Ezekiel 38-39.

“This prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog and Magog cannot be identified with the prophecy in Rev. 20:7-10 for three reasons. The former takes place before the Kingdom is established on earth; the latter after this Kingdom. Also, in Ezekiel the invasion comes only from the north, but in Revelation it comes from the ‘four quarters of the earth.’ Furthermore, the rebellion of Gog and Magog and their destruction in Rev. 20:7-10 marks the ushering in of the eternal state (Rev. 20:11-15); but in Ezekiel it is preliminary to the Millennial Kingdom on earth.” McClain

We don't know whether Gog and Magog are a general reference to the enemies of the people of God or if they are specific people groups in that time.

Revelation 20:9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

That's it, the final big rebellion lasted all of two verses. They gather on a broad plain (necessary because there are so many of them), surround Jerusalem, and they are wiped out by the direct hand of God.

These two verses are one proof that children will be born during the Millennium. Only believers will enter the Kingdom. One thousand years later, after multiple generations, there is a multitude of faithless people who come against God. These have to be descendants of the faithful people who entered the Millennial Kingdom at the beginning.

It is a frightful commentary upon the nature of mankind that this showy rebellion is able to muster millions and millions of followers who gladly join in a last desperate effort to strike at God. Truly the carnal mind is enmity against God. The number is as the sands of the sea. Barnhouse

This section shows something of the deep, complex nature of evil. The source of rebellion against God does not lie in man's environment or fundamentally with the devil but springs up from deep within man's own heart. The return of Satan will demonstrate this in the most dramatic manner once for all. Alan Johnson

Men claim that they are seeking, evermore, a “perfect form of government”; but that they are not at all seeking such a government, but that they actually hate it, will be evidenced by their instant revolt to Satan’s banner when he is loosed for a “little season” after the Millennium. For we shall find the hordes of mankind rushing up to overthrow the righteous and benevolent reign of Christ at Jerusalem! William Newell

God released Satan from his prison for this last test. It will remove the last of unfaithful humanity in preparation for the Great White Throne judgment and the coming eternal state in the new heavens and new earth.

Each age in history has ended with failure, because of the failure of men's hearts. The Church Age will end in failure, and so will the Millennial Kingdom, not because of God’s failure, but man’s.

From this we see that the “Millennial Dispensation,” like all the six Dispensations before it, will end in failure. God will have tested man in “Innocence,” under “Conscience,” under “Self-Government,” under the “Headship of the Family,” under “Law,” under “Grace,” and finally under the influence of the “Holy Spirit,” free from Satanic influences, and under them all he will prove himself to be hopelessly, incurably and incorrigibly bad. Clarence Larkin

Revelation 20:10 **And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

Now the devil joins the beast and the false prophet in the lake of fire. He has been cast, over a long period of different stages, from the highest point in creation to the lowest. We can assume that all of the other fallen angels are probably thrown into the lake of fire at this point as well.

The career of Satan will then come to an end. With this final revolt, the Millennial Kingdom will come to an end, and there will be a transfer of authority as described in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 . . . Ultimately, the power and authority of the Kingdom must be turned over to God the Father. But this can only occur after every enemy of man is abolished and there is no longer any challenge to God’s rule, authority, and power (1Cor. 15:24). . . . It should be remembered that death will still exist in the Kingdom. It is only after Satan’s final revolt and his confinement in the Lake of Fire that death can be abolished. Fructenbaum

Notice the lake of fire does not annihilate its prisoners, the beast and false prophet are still there 1,000 years after they were cast in there. They will all be tormented and suffer eternally.

Revelation 20:11 **Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.**

Some believe this is the Father here, but most likely it is the Son, the One to whom judgment has been given:

John 5:22-23 **"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, (23) so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.**

Acts 17:30-31 **"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, (31) because He has fixed a**

day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

"Earth and heaven fled away" - it seems that the old earth and heavens give up their dead and retreat in preparation for the creation of a new heavens and earth. Jesus said that God's Word would outlast the first heaven and earth, and here it is. The old earth and heavens go away, and God's Word still stands. This must be what Peter was speaking of:

2 Peter 3:10-12 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (11) Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, (12) looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

I can only assume that all of us believers will somehow be protected supernaturally while this destruction and new creation is going on. Anything we might say about these unimaginable events would be coming from total ignorance.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

This is the judgment that everyone thinks of when they think of judgment day; it seems to be stamped on all people. I believe everyone knows in their heart they will have to stand before God. It is when the prophecy of Philippians 2:9-11 will come true:

Philippians 2:9-11 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

All who have never known Christ will be given a fair hearing. Every category of human being will now stand individually before God. Power, fame, and wealth will mean nothing. There is nowhere to hide, no illusions to deceive themselves with, and no excuses. For the saints, seeing His face and being in His presence will be the ultimate blessing, but for these people it will be unimaginable terror. They spent their lives trying to be independent from God and now they are about to get their wish forever - eternity without God.

The "books" apparently record all of the deeds of each person's life, good and bad. There is another book that is mentioned that is singled out because it is a far more important book; it is the Book of Life. This book basically records their faith, or lack of it. This is proof that salvation is by faith alone, because if it were by works, there would be no need for this other book.

So very many people today and throughout history think that these books that record their works are their ticket to heaven. Most think that these books will be like ledgers, with good deeds on one side, and bad deeds on the other. As long as their list of good deeds is longer than the list of bad ones, they figure they have a good chance of getting to heaven. Those people are sadly deceived. They will be horribly disappointed to realize that the only thing that mattered was whether their name was written in the other book, the Book of Life.

And I would assume that none of them would be found in the Book of Life at this point, because anyone that has trusted in the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, would have already been resurrected before this time. So God will judge them on the basis of their works (Psalms 28:4, 62:12, Proverbs 24:12, Ecclesiastes 12:14, Jeremiah 17:10, Matthew 16:27, Revelation 2:23, 22:12), written in the books, and no matter how many good deeds they have, it won't be enough to get to the New Jerusalem! No earthly activity will help them get to heaven. And no matter how good a person they are, it still doesn't matter because their motive isn't right:

“The unregenerate man can, through common grace, love his family and he may be a good citizen. He may give a million dollars to build a hospital. . . If a drunkard, he may abstain from drink for utilitarian purposes, but he cannot do it out of love for God. All of his common virtues or good works have a fatal defect in that his motives which prompt them are not to glorify God,— a defect so vital that it throws any element of goodness as to man wholly into the shade.” Loraine Boettner

No matter how much good you do, it is worthless if it is not done for God's glory. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). All human righteousness is like nothing more than filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). No amount of good deeds can save you (Titus 3:5). However, it is possible that good deeds may lessen the severity of the punishment, and it will make a difference how much knowledge they had:

There is a principle in Scripture that does teach degrees of punishment based upon degrees of sinfulness and upon greater or lesser light or knowledge and the response or lack of it to that light [Mtt. 11:20-24; Luke 12:47-48; John 19:11]. Fructenbaum

This may be the purpose for this judgment. As resurrected believers will stand before Christ to receive their degree of reward, so resurrected unbelievers will stand before Him to determine their degree of punishment.

Those who knew more and failed to respond to God will be more guilty than those who knew less (Matthew 11:23-24). And no one will be able to say, “I didn't know.” Everyone who has ever lived knows enough about God through general revelation (creation) to make him responsible to Him.

Romans 1:20-22 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (21) For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (22) Professing to be wise, they became fools,

So you can see that no one will have an excuse. Another form of general revelation is the law that God has written on everyone's hearts (Romans 2:12-16). Those people who have never come to faith have consistently rejected God. It was not a passive rejection, but active rebellion (Romans 1:18, 28-32).

The bottom line is they have no covering for sin, and so will not be able to be in God's presence. They will go to the Lake of Fire.

Revelation 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

This probably happens when the old heavens and earth “flee away”. The dead are those in verse 12 that stand before God. They are all resurrected to face judgment. It is a resurrection of condemnation (John

5:29).

Revelation 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

With the passing of the old order, Death and Hades also cease to be. There is no place for them in the new heavens and new earth. No one ever ceases to exist. All people who have ever lived will be in one of two places – either the heavenly city, or hell. This is the fulfillment of the promises of God to destroy death and the grave (Isaiah 25:8, 1 Corinthians 15:24-26, 54-55; Revelation 21:4).

Revelation 20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Typical of the loving Savior, in His mercy He checks the Book of Life one more time to see if their names are written there. Everyone who has rejected the Lamb of God stand without atonement for their sin and are condemned (John 3:18, Mark 16:16, John 3:36, 1 John 5:11-12). They have no relationship with Jesus – He never knew them (Matthew 7:22-23).

I must stress that those of us who have put our faith in Christ alone will not face this Great White Throne judgment. It is only for those who refuse to accept Jesus in this life. All you have to do to avoid this judgment is to sincerely turn to Christ in faith, repent of your sins, believe who He is and what He has done for you, and invite Him to become your Lord and Savior. If you have not done this, do not delay!

“Yes, O man! O woman! whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a scene of wrong in all your history, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold hand, by its true name, and set down to your account, to be then brought forth for final settlement, if not clean blotted out through faith in Christ's blood before this present life of yours is ended.” Joseph Seiss

Next week we will spend an entire lesson on the Millennial Kingdom reign of Christ, because this is a very important doctrine that we all need to be clear on. I will show why there must be an earthly reign of Christ before the eternal state. We will discuss why it will be different in some ways than the eternal state, and read some important passages about that time to help us envision what it will be like to live then.