

28. The Millennium

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It is obvious that God wins and the devil will be bound for 1000 years. But many people those who study the Book of Revelation wonder what all these “The Great White Throne Judgement” and another revolt by satan and his followers against God are about? We have a lot to cover in 35 to 40 minutes this morning, so let’s jump right in.

A. BOOK’EM, DANNO, MURDER ONE

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Satan is bound not by the Lord, not by a host of angels, not even by Michael the archangel – but by a single, unnamed angel. Holding a chain in his other hand, it only takes one hand of a single angel to detain satan.

When we see satan from a heavenly perspective, we would be surprised how insignificant the devil is.

Isaiah 14:16 Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: “Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,”

Satan tried to imprison Jesus in a tomb, but couldn’t. Here, God has no problem restraining satan. Some take this as satan’s binding on a personal level, believing that it refers to how satan’s work can be restrained in the life of an individual. There is no base in that theology. The charismatic denomination people took it out of context.

The ‘bottomless pit’ spoken of in Revelation 20:1 is not the same as hell. It is the ‘abyss’ that we have met before in our studies. Satan is not cast into hell immediately, because God still has one more task for him to perform.

B. THE MILLENNIUM

Revelation 20:4-6 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The phrase “thousand years” occurs six times in Revelation 20:1–7. This period in history is known as “the Millennium,” that comes from two Latin words, mille ‘thousand’ and annum ‘year’ – the 1,000 year kingdom of Christ on earth. Finally, Christ and His church will reign over the nations of the earth, and Israel will enjoy the blessings promised by the prophets.

Who will be on the earth in the Millennium? Even after the rapture and the vast judgments of the Great Tribulation, there will be many people who have not received the mark of the beast left on earth.

- During the Millennium, Israel will be the 'superpower' of the world. It will be the leading nation in all the earth. All nations shall flow to the "capital" of the government of Jesus.
- During the Millennium, the citizens of earth will acknowledge and submit to the Lordship of Jesus. It will be a time of perfectly administrated enforced righteousness on this earth. They will have families and multiply on the earth.
- During the Millennium, there will be no more war. There will still be conflicts between nations and individuals, but they will be justly and decisively resolved by the Messiah and those who reign with Him.
- During the Millennium, the way animals relate to each other and to humans will be transformed. According to the Book of Isaiah, a little child will be safe and able to lead a wolf or a leopard or a young lion or a bear. Even the danger of predators like cobras and vipers will be gone. For this reason, many think that in the reign of the Messiah, the Millennium, humans will return to being vegetarians, as it seems they were before Genesis 9:2-3.

You might wonder what the 'first resurrection' means. You might say what about those who died before the rapture and when the rapture happens their bodies will be resurrected? Should it that be the first resurrection? I am glad that you asked.

The first resurrection is not a single point in time. Rather, the first resurrection begins with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as the firstfruits according to 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23. It continues on to include those who believe in Jesus but died before the Rapture, believers who are alive at the time of the Rapture, those who are martyred in the Tribulation for their refusal to take the mark of the beast, and the Old Testament saints who believed in Yahweh but did not have opportunity to be a part of the church because they died before Jesus came. So, the first resurrection speaks of all those who are included in the grand plan of salvation.

The first death is physical. But the second death is eternal. Yes, we will die physically unless the Lord raptures us first. But the second death is for those who are damned eternally. Glory be to God, this second death has no power over those who are born again.

C. THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE MILLENNIUM

Through church history, there has been many different wrong ways of understanding the Millennium.

Tragically, the Church through history has often ignored or denied the promise of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. The early church until Augustine almost universally believed in an earthly, historical reign of Jesus, initiated by His return. Tyconius, in the late 300's A.D., was the first to influentially champion a spiritualized interpretation, saying that this Millennium is now, as known as 'aMillennialism' and must be understood as a spiritual reign of Jesus, not a literal reign. His view was adopted by

Augustine, the Roman Catholic Church and most Reformation theologians who follow Calvinism.

Growing out of aMillennialism is the doctrine of Postmillennialism, saying the millennium will happen in this age, before Jesus' return – but that the church will bring it to pass. But the clear teaching of the Bible isn't aMillennialism nor Postmillennialism, but what is called Premillennialism – the teaching that Jesus Christ will return to this earth before the millennial earth, and He establishes and governs it directly.

Riding on this old but still on-going theology, there is another thing we must notice. It is 'Preterist'. The word "Preterist" comes from a Latin form of past tense. Theologically, it refers to the belief that the Book of Revelation has already been fulfilled. Typically the Preterists believe it was fulfilled in 70 A.D. after the death of the Roman Emperor Nero.

The Preterists and the followers of the aMillennialism believe that the Book of Revelation should be interpreted allegorically instead of literally. This view is completely incorrect and brings much confusions to many people.

To many people's surprise including myself, a well-known Bible student Hank Hanegraaff decided to jump on this old band wagon lately. He publically criticized the people who follow the literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation and the end time prophecies. Hanegraaff has been calling himself as "Bible Answer Man" and appointed himself as "Watch dog against false doctrines in Christianity", but he himself is now falling into the area of false doctrine.

D. THE SECOND AND FINAL REVOLT OF SATAN

Revelation 20:7-10 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Who will satan try to deceive? Those who are born in the Millennium – those who are living in enforced righteousness and peace because there's no other choice, those who never had an opportunity to decide whether or not they would follow the Lord. You and I have made such a choice. We have "chosen to choose Jesus." We have "selected to select God's way." Now, they are given a chance to choose.

For all of human history, man has wanted to blame his sinful condition on his environment. "The reason why I am like this is because of my past. Did you see the family I came from? Did you see the neighborhood I grew up in?" With the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus, God will give mankind a thousand years of a perfect environment – with no satan, no crime, no violence, no evil, no diseases, no famine, or any other social pathology. But at the end of the 1,000 years, man will still rebel against God at his first opportunity. This will powerfully demonstrate that the problem is in us, not in our environment.

I am blown away by the fact that somehow satan will be able to persuade a great number of people to rebel against the Lord who will have done nothing but good for

them and who will have given them a perfect environment wherein prosperity, peace, and perfection. But I am only blown away until I stop to realize how good the Lord has been to me. How He gave His life for me, how He provides for me, walks with me, blesses me – and how often I turn my back on Him, fail to learn of Him, refuse to talk to Him.

Why will the Lord allow this to happen? Because God is love, and love requires a choice.

If my wife, Karen, agreed to marry me simply because I was the only man on earth or only because I held a gun to her head, our relationship wouldn't be based on love, but on the absence of any other choice or sheer fear.

So, too, God lets satan loose for a short season in order to give people a choice.

Who are Gog and Magog? They are a common rabbinical title for the nations in rebellion against the Lord. These are prophetic enemies of Israel in Ezekiel 38-39, but the battle described in those chapters of Ezekiel seems to be different than this final battle.

God will deal with this revolt very quickly and efficiently, and satan will be cast into hell. Note that "the beast and false prophet" will still be suffering in the lake of fire after 1,000 years!

E. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT

Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

Christians will never appear before this great white throne. It isn't because we can hide from it – no one can. The idea is that we are spared from this awesome throne of judgment because our sins are already judged in Jesus at the cross. We don't escape God's judgment, but we satisfy it in Jesus.

However, Christians will have to stand before another throne – the judgment seat of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

At the judgment seat of Christ, what we have done and our motives will be judged. We won't be punished for what was not done rightly unto the Lord, it will simply be burned up, and it will be as if we never did those things. We will simply be rewarded for what remains. Sadly, some will get to heaven thinking they have done great things for God, and will find out at the judgment seat of Christ that they really did nothing.

That is why I recommend you to get involve with the ministries of Calvary Chapel of Sahuarita. While you serve in the ministries, such as the Children's Ministries, the Greeters' Ministries, the Missions, the Worship Teams and the Youth to name a few, you'll add rewards unto yourself. You don't want to answer to the Lord why you have not served Him and His church later.

Revelation 20:12-13 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the

Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

There shall be a second resurrection, and the unsaved will be raised and will stand before God's judgment. Here is the sentencing of someone already condemned. At this judgment, there will be only unbelievers and there will be no rewards. Heaven and earth will flee away and no place will be left for sinners to hide! All must face the ultimate Judge!

The Judge is Jesus Christ, because the Father has committed all judgment to Him. These lost sinners rejected Christ in their lives. Now they must be judged by Him and face eternal death.

The White Throne Judgment will be nothing like our modern court cases. At the White Throne, there will be a Judge but no jury, a prosecution but no defense, a sentence but no appeal. No one will be able to defend himself or accuse God of unrighteousness. What an awesome scene it will be!

Revelation 20:14-15 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Hell is a witness to the righteous character of God. He must judge sin. Hell is also a witness to man's responsibility, the fact that he is not a robot or a helpless victim, but a creature able to make choices. God does not "send people to hell", they send themselves by rejecting the Savior.

John 3:18-19 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Jesus conquered the death through His own resurrection. The last echoes of sin are now eliminated. Death is the result of sin, and it is gone. Hades is the result of death, and it is gone.

F. APPLICATIONS

God gives us complete freedom to follow Him or reject Him. Whichever choice we make, we are responsible.

No one in human history has an excuse that God didn't give him or her a chance.