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REVELATION 20: 1-6 THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

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in a lesson for Community Bible Study, Georgetown, Texas

(Edited by Scott Barkley)

Our lesson starts out today, with a description in vs. 1-3 of Satan being bound and sealed in the Abyss for 1000 years. Last weeks lesson ended with the false prophet and the antichrist being thrown in to Lake of Fire – but we will see in this chapter that Satan does not receive his final punishment until the end of the 1000 yr. Reign of Christ.

Vs. 3 says “ **he is bound and locked in the Abyss for this time period so that he cannot deceive the nations anymore until the 1000 years were ended. After, that, he must be set free or a short time.**”

We will discuss this in more detail later, but basically, during this 1000 year time period, believers (who survived the Tribulation in their human bodies), will continue to populate the earth, and their offspring will need to accept Christ, not only outwardly as their King, but inwardly as their Lord.

Loosing Satan at the end of this time period will allow those born during the 1000 years to make their choice – for God or for Satan – then Satan’s final judgment will come, as well as judgment for those follow him.

For thousands of years Satan has been able to deceive the nations and people into thinking that they can build a world of peace and love without Christ.

But with Satan set aside for 1000 years, unable to deceive people, the world will be able to experience what TRUE peace and TRUE love are all about, under the reign of Christ.

The rest of our verses we studied today –vs. 4-6, talk about this 1000-year time period when Christ, having taken care of His enemies, will be free to establish His kingdom of righteousness on the earth.

This is what we will focus most of our attention today – I really enjoyed learning this week what scripture had to say about life during the millennium, and what we as believers have to look forward to.

Did you know that this millennial kingdom is actually a REWARD for the people of God?

Isaiah 40:10 says:

See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and His arm rules for Him. See His reward is with Him, and His recompense accompanies Him.

Recompense in this verse means – to repay or reward.

We are going to learn that one of the characteristics of this kingdom is JOY – we as believers will experience a great fullness of JOY during this period – it is something for us to look forward to with great anticipation.

This time period is known as the Millennium from two Latin words:

- • Mille – for 1000
- • Annum – for year

...[The] Millennium is a literal 1000 year time period which begins at the 2nd coming of Christ and ends with the final removal and judgment of Satan.

We don't need to get caught up unnecessarily in debate over the different views [of when this starts], because the truth of God that is most critical - is acknowledged in each view – and that is –

*CHRIST WILL RETURN – SATAN WILL BE DEFEATED – AND
CHRIST WILL REIGN FOREVER.*

The term – 1000 years – occurs specifically 6 times in vs. 1-7 of this chapter, so a literal interpretation of this time period seems evident here.

John says in vs. 4:

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

John does not specifically tell us here who is seated on the thrones, but from scriptures in both the O.T. and the N.T., it appears that it must be believers, the redeemed people of God.

In Rev. 5:10, during the song of the 4 living creatures and 24 elders, they sing of Jesus:

With your blood, you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.

In our scriptures today, vs. 6 tells us that those who take part in the first resurrection will be: ***holy and blessed and will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.***

(Only believers will take part in the first resurrection.)

Rev. 2:26 says:

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.

Rev. 3:21:

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne.

I Cor. 6:2, Paul is writing to the Corinthians and says:

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

In Matt. 19:28 Jesus says to His followers:

I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

In Daniel 7:18:

But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever – yes forever and ever.

And in vs. 27:

Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey Him.

After John tells us about seeing the thrones, and those seated on the thrones, he goes on to tell us that he ALSO saw the souls of those who had been beheaded during the Tribulation because of their testimony for Jesus. They were resurrected at that time and also reigned with Christ a thousand years. They seem to get special recognition here because of the tremendous suffering they endured during the Tribulation, and yet remained faithful to God and did not take the mark of the beast or worship him.

Lets look closely at the end of vs. 4, and beginning of vs. 5:

They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.

Notice the sentence that is in parentheses – that sentence is referring to the 2nd resurrection – which we will study next week. It has nothing to do with the first resurrection. We can read the verse without the sentence in parentheses and understand it better.

The Bible teaches two resurrections:

The first is of the SAVED and leads to blessing, the second is of the LOST and leads to judgment.

- 1) 1) The first resurrection is the physical resurrection of believers who will then reign with Christ on earth for a literal 1000 years.

This resurrection includes ALL believers – those who are resurrected at the time of the Rapture – when Christ comes for His church – and also the martyred saints of the Tribulation and the O.T. saints. (Who will be resurrected at the end of the Tribulation).

Scripture tells us that **all** saints will reign with Christ, so **all** must be resurrected before His kingdom on earth begins.

This first resurrection is sometimes referred to as the “resurrection into life.”

I Cor. 15 will give you more details about the resurrection body. The soul of the believer is actually reunited with his body and then it is changed in an instant into a glorified body like Christ’s.

Phil 3:20-21 says:

But our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.

2. 2. The second resurrection occurs at the end of the Millennium. This is when all those who have died in sin (without Christ) will be raised to stand before God in judgment.

The important thing we need to know is that Christians will not be judged in the 2nd resurrection, because Christ was already judged for our sins. (II Cor. 5:21)

John tells us that:

“blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

Those who take part in the first resurrection are blessed, not for anything they have done, but because these blessings are part of the believers

inheritance in Jesus Christ. They will be able to share Christ's glorious reign with Him and they will not have to experience the second death.

The second death is spiritual death – eternal separation from God – believers will not experience this second death, because they belong to God – their names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

NOW-

We have covered the verses in our lesson today, but there are many more scriptures in the Bible that give us insight into what the Millennial Kingdom will be like. What I want to do now is look at the purpose of the millennial kingdom and some of the characteristics of it.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM?

We have already talked about the fact that it is a reward for the people of God. But probably the most important purpose for Christ's kingdom on earth is to fulfill God's promises to Israel:

God established the Abrahamic covenant with Israel, which promised her that she would be in possession of her land forever, that she would be a blessing to all the nations, and that she would be a great nation.

These promises found in this covenant are fulfilled in the millennial kingdom –

The nation of Israel will be the ruling nation – Jerusalem will be the capital of the kingdom. She will be in possession of her promised land forever.

And as the ruling nation, with her Messiah Jesus as King, Israel will definitely be a blessing to all the nations of the world.

Read Micah 4: 1-3

“In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say,

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in His paths. The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.

God had also established the Davidic covenant with Israel. This covenant promised Israel a King from the line of David whose Kingdom would be established forever.

This King was of course Jesus, and His reign during these 1000 years on earth and eternally from that point on - fulfills this covenant. (Luke 1:30-33)

Another purpose for the millennial kingdom will be for a worldwide display of Christ's glory.

Isaiah 40:5 “And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.

This kingdom will be characterized by righteousness, obedience, holiness, truth, and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. There will no more heresy or false religion – Zech 13:2. Everyone will unite in one passion to know God. Remember the vs. we just read in Micah 4? – Nations will come Jesus and ask Him to teach them His ways so they may walk in His ways.

Another purpose of the Millennium is to redeem creation. Imagine the devastation left behind from the Tribulation period. The curse placed on creation in Genesis 3, will be removed so that there will be abundant productivity, and animal creation will return to the way it was in the Garden of Eden. (Isaiah 30: 23-26 and Isaiah 11: 6-9)

The Millennial Kingdom will also be the answer to the prayers of Saints throughout history who have prayed, “thy kingdom come”. Finally, God will be able to demonstrate once and for all, the wickedness of the human heart – apart from God's grace.

During the thousand-year reign, believers will continue to populate the earth. As I stated earlier – their offspring will have to choose whether to

follow the Lord in their hearts. (These are believers who were not killed, but survived the Tribulation.)

They are human and will be born with a sin nature – they will need to receive salvation.

These offspring, who will live in an ideal environment, with King Jesus as a loving, fair, just ruler – can still choose to rebel against God and some of them do!!!!

We know this, because in next week's lesson, we will see that when Satan is loosed from the Abyss, he is able to put together a huge army to march against Christ.

Jer 17:9 says: "the heart is deceitful above all things, and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

The rebelliousness of man's heart is not caused by environment – the real root cause of rebellion against God is a bitter heart of SIN – and the only cure for that is to be healed by a new birth – through accepting Jesus as Savior and letting Him give us a new heart.

We have talked about the purpose of the Millennium; Let's look at some of the characteristics of the kingdom:

Some of them we have already covered:

- • We know that the kingdom is characterized by great GLORY,
- • It is unified in WORSHIP of the one true God.
- • We know that creation will be REDEEMED during this time.
- • And we talked about the Kingdom being characterized by great personal JOY.
- • We know that it will be a HOLY Kingdom, characterized by the fullness of the Spirit.

Let's talk about a few more:

- • Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Micah all talk about the Millennial Kingdom being characterized by PEACE –there will be no more war – there will be national and individual peace.
- • There will be perfect JUSTICE – for every individual – Isaiah 9:7, Jer 23:5
- • There will be instruction and teaching from the King (Isa.2: 2-3) (Micah 4:2), and the ministry of the King will bring the subjects of His kingdom into FULL KNOWLEDGE. (Isa. 11:1-2, and Hab.2: 14)
- • There will be NO SICKNESS in the Millennial Kingdom –(Isa. 33:24)
- • The Kingdom will be characterized by LONGEVITY OF LIFE – (Isa. 65:20)
- • The period will not be characterized by idleness – but rather by fruitful LABOR under the guidance of the King. (Isa. 65: 21-23) and the kingdom will enjoy economic prosperity. (Isa. 30:23-25, Ez. 34:26)
- • And the most wonderful truth about the Millennial Kingdom is that all these characteristics are not viewed as temporary, but eternal.

After the literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth is completed, Chapt 21 tells us that there will be a new heaven and a new earth, but God's sovereign reign continues throughout all eternity. These wonderful things we will experience during the millennial kingdom, will continue for eternity.

So – now we have had a good look at what the Millennial Kingdom is all about. When you really think about it, how does it make you feel, as a

believer to know that you will be a part of that kingdom, reigning and judging with Jesus as one of His ruling servants?

I loved the Personal evaluation at the end of our lesson today.

It said: *“The thought of reigning and judging with Jesus in His kingdom boggles the imagination, but this is the declared future of all true believers in Christ. How can we possibly prepare for such a glorious task? Very simply: by serving now.”*

Then it referred to a praise song with the words, *“If you want to be great in God’s kingdom, learn to be the servant of all.”*

We need to ask ourselves if serving God is a priority in our lives?

Ephesians 2: 8-10 says:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

The good works that we do in this life to serve God DO NOT SAVE US – salvation is a gift from God – we cannot earn it. But this scripture tells us that God has prepared good works in advance for us to do. The parable we studied in our lesson today showed us that God gives us work and opportunities according to our ability. He is not going to lead us to a place of service without then equipping us with the ability to do that service.

Our responsibility is to make sure we are walking close enough to God that we will be able to recognize it when He sends an opportunity of service our way. And then we need to be obedient to follow through on that opportunity. Our service to God will vary from person to person, and according to the season we are in life.

[An example of that service for mothers and wives is] that one of the ways we are called to serve God comes in the form of nurturing and caring for our families. And there may be times in our lives, when our children are young, or we are caring for elderly parents, when that is the only service we are

called to do. Sometimes we forget that serving our husbands, children, grandchildren, parents, and other family members is serving God.

Other times, God may call us to serve Him in our churches, our communities, our children's schools, our work place, the gym, the grocery store, the doctor's office, etc. – the list goes on and on. Wherever our sphere of influence is in this world, God can use us to serve Him. It may be something as simple as taking a meal to a sick neighbor. We just need to be available – and if we are available – with a willing heart – GOD WILL USE US.

We had another question in our lesson today – What motivates you to serve Christ today?

When we serve, we need to make sure we are not serving God to please man, or gain praise and recognition for ourselves. Our motivation for serving God should be our desire to please and honor Him.

Col 3:23 tells us:

“ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart – as working for the Lord, not for men.”

- • We should look forward with excitement to the coming of our King and His Kingdom. AND -
- • We need to be preparing ourselves to reign with Christ in the coming Kingdom, by faithfully serving Him right now.
- • We should be watching, witnessing, and working for our Lord.