

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Thousand Years

Revelation 20:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

My message for this morning and next week will be more topical than normal, Lord willing. This is because there are a couple of events mentioned in chapter 20 that is often interpreted incorrectly by the "prophecy experts". That is the "**thousand years**" (often referred to as the millennium) and the "**judgment seat**" that are mentioned in Revelation 20. I believe it is critical that we have a biblical understanding of both of these events.

Revelation 20:1-6 (NASB)

Satan Bound

20 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.

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

BODY:

I. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Jesus is going to come at the end of the thousand years after Satan has had a short time on earth to bring persecution upon the entire church.

ILLUSTRATION:

Several years ago there was a TV evangelist who was preaching about his view of the 2nd Coming of Christ. Toward the close of the program he apparently actually made this pitch of one of his videos:

"Jesus is coming soon -- perhaps tomorrow! Send \$10 for a video that will explain the Second Coming of Jesus Christ! **Please allow six weeks for delivery.**"

What's wrong with this picture??? Did this guy REALLY believe Jesus could come at any moment?

Of Course Not!!!

But anyone who seriously reads Scripture comes away with the very real impression: Well, everyone except most of the prophecy evangelists on TV, radio and the internet. According to them, we are going to need way more than just **6 weeks** for Jesus to return.

Jesus could come tomorrow! He is going to come as a thief in the night. Man does not know the day or the hour. SO BE READY!

According to the theology of most of these teachers, there's a bunch of things that need to take place first.

Here is an example of their timeline:

- First there is church age – this may last for a few more years.
- THEN Jesus returns “secretly” to rapture the Gentile Christians.
- There's the rebuilding of Temple.
- THEN there's a 7 year period of tribulation.
- Which is followed by a millennial Kingdom – Christ reigning on earth for 1000 years.
- THEN Jesus will judge mankind.

Based upon this timeline, Jesus cannot come tomorrow!! There's WAY too much stuff that needs to be done first. All of this adds up to way past a 1000 years.

In fact, just to get the permits to rebuild the Temple will take longer than 6 weeks.

I used to believe this stuff, but there are several reasons why I don't buy into it anymore:

First – this kind of teaching requires at least 2, 3, or even 4 Second Comings of Christ (All depending on who you listen to and how you count them).

You have the **“SECRET” coming of Christ** to rapture the Church.

Then you have the **“PUBLIC” coming of Christ** to set up a 1000 year kingdom on earth.

And then (maybe) you have **Jesus slipping away and coming back** for judgment (depending on who does the teaching). It just doesn't make any sense!!!

But the scriptures teach us of only one 2nd Coming!!!

Secondly – this kind of teaching focuses on the fact that Jesus must come to earth to receive His kingdom. Until that time comes – Jesus is not King and He does not reign... at least yet.

According to them, for Jesus to become King, He has to wait for the Millennial Kingdom (several years yet in the future). And in order to receive His kingdom, Jesus has to come

to earth. But that is not what the scriptures clearly teach us.

II. WHAT IS THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM ALL ABOUT?

First I would like to look at a prophecy from the book of Daniel.

Daniel 7:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came **UP to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.** ¹⁴ "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. **His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away;** And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

Notice what this prophecy in Daniel is saying: Where did Jesus have to go receive His Kingdom?

Not to earth... instead, He was led into the heavenly throne room of God.

AND how long would His kingdom last?

Forever! "**His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away.**" It will NEVER pass away (in other words, it's not limited to a literal 1000 years).

In addition, Colossians 1:13-14 tells us Jesus' kingdom exists right now—and you and I are part of it.

Colossians 1:10-14 (NASB) (Have youth pay special attention to verses 9-12.

¹⁰ **so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work **and increasing in the knowledge of God;** ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

¹³ **For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,** ¹⁴ **in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

The **3rd problem** with their Millennial teaching is this: This 1000 year thing only shows up in Revelation 20. It is NEVER mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

If you were to listen to most of the prophetic teachers on TV, radio, and the internet you would believe that this Millennial Kingdom lay at the very heart of God's plan for the End Times. And yet it is only mentioned in Revelation 20 – NO WHERE ELSE!

In addition, this false teaching directly contradicts other Scriptures, such as...

2 Peter 3:9-12 (NASB)

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

A New Heaven and Earth

¹⁰ 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!

What is this “Day of the Lord”? It is the 2nd Coming of Christ.

When Jesus comes back... everything is going to burn up.

- You don't have to wait for tribulation.
- You don't have to wait for some 1000 year kingdom.
- You don't have to wait for the permits for a new Temple.
- You don't have to pass “GO” and collect \$200.

When Jesus returns... it's all over!!!

When Jesus came the first time He came to bring salvation.

When He returns the 2nd time, He will come to bring judgment.

Despite what you may have heard from others: THAT'S the main focus of Revelation 20.

When Jesus returns, He comes to bring judgment.

(PAUSE)

Then there is one more thing we need to clarify:

III. WHAT DOES THE KINGDOM MEAN FOR US?

What is this about someone reigning with Christ for 1000 years?

Revelation 20:6 (NASB)

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.**

You know who this is that reigns with Christ? **That's us!**

You see, Revelation is filled with symbolic language. A great majority of the book is figurative, not literal. There is no literal 1000 years meant here. Just like most of the other numbers used in Revelation it has a SYMBOLIC meaning.

Ten is a number for completion. One thousand is 10 x 10 x 10. So in symbolic language it is like us taking the word "completion" and putting it in capital letters, making it bold, underlining it, and highlighting it. It is a full, complete period of time.

You see we're living in an ERA described in Revelation 20 – an era symbolized by the “1000 years”. Now how can we know that?

1. We can know that because we have shared in the first resurrection. Do you know **when** that happened? **(Walking over to the baptistery)** It happened when you were baptized into Christ. When I baptize someone I put them all the way under the water. They go under the water to die for their sins and they come up out of the water to walk in newness of life. They share in Christ's resurrection. It is their "First Resurrection" from the dead.

2. And, we can know that we are in the era symbolized by the 1000 years because once we rise from that watery grave, the **2nd death** has no power over us. The blood of Jesus covers us.

The **second death** is mentioned on multiple occasions in the book of Revelation and is synonymous with the lake of fire. It is a "death" in that it is a separation from God, the Giver of life. It is called the "**second**" **death** because it follows physical death (the first death).

Revelation 21:8 explains the second death in the most detail:

Revelation 21:8 Bible (NASB)

⁸But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH."

He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death. The second death is exclusively for those who have rejected Christ. It is not a place believers in Christ should fear.

3. AND we can know that we're in the symbolic 1000 years because we are priests God right now and we reign with Jesus **right now**.

Revelation 1:4-6 (NASB)

Message to the Seven Churches

⁴John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—⁶and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

That's us... that's now!!!

In Revelation 5 the four living creatures that surrounds the throne of God were heard singing the following song.

Revelation 5:9-10 (NASB)

⁹And they *sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood **men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**

¹⁰"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

Right now, we are reigning with Christ.

That's why...

Ephesians 2:4-6 (NASB)

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions (our sins), made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

You think that you are **physically seated** in a sanctuary with about 20 people right now – **RIGHT? Yes, you are!** But do you also realize that you are spiritually seated with Jesus. Right now? And being seated with Christ means you are ruling with Christ right now!

CONCLUSION:

I want to close with this true story.

ILLUSTRATION:

After church, where she had been taught about the Second Coming, a little girl was quizzing her mother "Mommy, do you believe Jesus will come back?"

"Yes, honey."

"Could he come this week?"

"Yes sweetheart."

"Today?"

"Oh yes."

"Could he come in the next hour?"

"Of course."

"In a few minutes?"

"Yes, dear."

"Mommy, would you comb my hair?"

Even a child understands the impact of Jesus' 2nd Coming.

Even a child realizes that – when Jesus comes back – you must to be ready.

INVITATION:

This is the Day!