

WORSHIP SERVICE - 4.3.2022

THE MILLENNIUM—SAINTS REIGN

I. INTRODUCTION

MAIN POINT: The millennium represents the period of time of the triumph of the church in her missionary enterprise on earth, and the triumph of departed saints who are already reigning with Christ in heaven.

Revelation 20:1-6

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.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM

- Three questions to help us understand the millennial period.
 1. When does the millennium occur?
 2. What is meant by Satan being bound for 1000 years?
 3. What does it mean for the saints to come to life and reign with Christ for 1000 years?
- **When does the millennium occur?**
 - We are in it right now. It is the present church age that was inaugurated by the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ that continues until his Second Coming.
 - The millennium, 1,000 years, is a symbolic representation of this time period.
 - 1,000 years symbolizes three glorious truths expressed in the millennial period.

SATAN BOUND

- **First glorious truth-- The millennium is the period of time during which the ultimate defeat of Satan is expressed in a preliminary manner, which anticipates his full and final defeat.**
- This ancient enemy of God's people is ultimately destroyed.
- The millennium attests to this destruction in a two-fold manner:
- V1-3 Preliminary: Satan is bound
- V7-10 Consummated: Satan is thrown into the lake of fire to be tormented forever.
- **Why is Satan bound for 1,000 years?**
- V3 tells us specifically the purpose for which Satan is bound for the millennium. He is bound so that he cannot deceive the nations any longer.
- What does that mean?
- It means that Satan's ability to deceive the nations, by persuading them to come together in a unified assault against the church of Jesus Christ to destroy her, is severely curtailed.

CHURCH PREVAILS

- **Second glorious truth-- The millennium is the period of time during which the Church on earth will not fail in her missionary enterprise.**
- Because Satan has been curtailed in his ability to deceive the nations the church is able to fulfill her mission.
- This constraining of Satan's influence was inaugurated during Christ's earthly ministry and was secured with his ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- Satan cannot destroy the church as she takes the gospel to the ends of the earth.
- He cannot deceive the nations to come together to destroy the church.
- Satan still has some influence, he can still do evil, he can still devastate churches, but what he cannot do is mount a comprehensive offensive to prevent the spread of the gospel to the nations by destroying the church's missionary endeavors.
- The gospel will not fail. The great commission will be accomplished.

SAINTS REIGN

- **Third glorious truth--The millennium is the period of time in which the church in heaven will experience in an intermediate fashion, her ultimate victory of reigning with Christ.**
- There is another 1,000 year period mentioned in v4-6.
- These are two distinct visions that reveal things that characterize the millennium.
- They both share the same time period and both have to do with the church.
- The first vision had to do with the church on earth and her ability to fulfill the great commission represented by Satan's imprisonment.
- The second vision has to do with the church in heaven and all of the saints who are killed for their faith or die having been faithful witnesses.
- The third main question we are seeking to answer is, what does it mean for the saints to come to life and reign with Christ for 1000 years?
- We'll have to answer a few other questions in order to arrive at a satisfactory answer to that.
- 1. Where does this expression of the millennium take place?
- 2. Who participates in reigning with Christ during the millennium?
- 3. What characterizes this millennial reign?

1. Where does this expression of the millennium take place?

- V4 Then I saw **thrones**...
- **First clue** of the location of this millennium period. Of the 47 mentions of a throne in Revelation, with the exception of 2, all are depicted as being in heaven.
- **Second clue** of the location of this millennium period is also in v4, Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God. Where have we seen this before? Rev 6:9, the souls of the martyrs under the altar which is in heaven.
- **Third clue** of the location of this millennium period is that it is said that they "reign with Christ." Where is the place from which the Lamb is said to be presently exercising his reign? In heaven (5:6,7; 7:9; 12:5)
- This millennial reign takes place in heaven.

2. Who participates in reigning with Christ during the millennium?

- Two categories of Christians participate in the millennial reign:
- The first category is martyrs.
- The second category is overcomers.
- Both martyred Christians and those who have died in the Lord experience the millennial reign.
- The manner of death is not what is important, faithfulness to Christ unto death is what counts.

3. What characterizes this millennial reign?

- **a. Coming to life**
- "They came to life." This is not the physical resurrection from the dead.
- What John is addressing with this vision is that question that many believers have, What happens to our loved ones who die in Christ?
- The phrase "this is the first resurrection," at the end of v5, alludes to this being a spiritual resurrection, that is called the intermediate state.
- The only physical resurrection will be at the coming of our Lord.
- **1 Corinthians 15:51-55** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"
- **1 Thess. 4:13-18** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.
- Parenthetically we're told who doesn't come to life.
- V5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1000 years were ended.
- Who are these? These are unbelievers, those who worshiped the beast and took his mark. They don't come to life during this intermediate

state to reign with Christ like departed saints.

- They are already experiencing in a preliminary and intermediate fashion, the unending torment called the second death.

- **b. Reigning with Christ**

- Recall what Jesus promised to those who conquer, who overcome to the end.

- **Rev. 2:10c** Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

- **Rev. 3:21** The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

- These departed saints in heaven right now are receiving those promises in an intermediate fashion.

- Death means reigning with Christ.

- What does it mean they sit on a throne? This is symbolic, but it means that departed saints in this intermediate state, have already begun to exercise some measure of reigning.

- “v4 Then I saw thrones and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.”

- In view here is Daniel’s vision in Daniel 7:22, where the saints are vindicated as judgment was given for them.

- God passes judgment on behalf of the saints so that they might reign with Christ.

- John is not saying that these saints presently reigning with Christ are executing judgment—the Lamb does that. But in some sense, saints are involved in judgment.

- **Rev. 2:26-27** The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, 27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

- **1 Cor. 6:1-3** When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? 2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

- Somehow all of us who are in Christ, will be incorporated in the final judgment, and will rule during the renewed heavens and earth.

- **c. Eternal Security**

- It’s expressed as a **benediction**. V6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power...”

- What is the second death?

- **Rev. 20:14** Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

- The second death is the spiritual death of unbelievers where they will experience unending torment in the lake of fire.

- For those who are reigning with Christ in heaven during the millennium, nothing will change.

- They have been made to live with Christ and reign with Christ during this age and they will not ever die later in the lake of fire.

- Jesus promises that “The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.” (Rev. 2:11)

- **d. Unending intimacy with Christ.**

- “But they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.”

- Who could draw closer to God than a normal person could in the temple? The priest of God.

- Ch 1 says that Christ has “made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father” (Rev. 1:6).

- When you die and are in the glories of heaven, the greatest thing is that you will be face to face with God, having uninterrupted access and intimacy of relationship with Christ without any fear of ever having to be driven away.
 - “The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it. (Rev. 3:12)
 - Do you see how all of those promises made to the seven churches and those who conquer and persevere to the end are coming to pass in the last days?
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- We don’t need to fear death by any means because death means coming to life and reigning with Christ.
 - And once you’ve come fully alive, you will never die again!
 - The faith that sustains us to endure to the end is one whose hope is unwaveringly in Christ, and one whose hope is anchored in the truth that death is triumph for the believer.
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- What if we began to live our lives now as if the things we’ve just spoken of are true?
 - The three glorious truths expressed in the millennial period are to be an engine of hope and perseverance.