

## THE MILLENNIUM

The millennium has always been associated with one thousand years of peace on earth with the cessation of war and strife. Many have been the writers who have contemplated such a human utopia. Humankind will have achieved such a level of co-existence that everyone's wants will be satisfied to the fullest and hence there will be no need for the have-nots taking from the haves. Some believe this will be achieved by technology, others think religion will bring it to pass. Still others think that politics and social experimentation will bring the desired bliss.

Christian's who think that Jesus' second coming will follow the millennium of peace believe that faith will be established worldwide (post-millennialism). Other Christians believe that they will be raptured away before the tribulation and millennium and the Jews will be left to accept Christ and establish the 1000 years of peace before He returns again manifest in glory for them. Still other Christians view the millennium as descriptive of the whole course of history since the time of Christ (amillennialism).

Will everyone be given a second chance for salvation after the millennium starts? Will Satan give up the fight and become converted? Do believers spend the 1000 years on this earth or in heaven? When does Jesus come the second time with respect to the millennium? Is the 1000 years prophetic time or real years? To answer these questions we turn to Bible prophecy.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." Revelation 20:1.

Who is this angel? It is not Christ. This angel has the "key" of authority over the abyss, or desolate wasteland of the earth, in the aftermath of the seven last plagues and the return of Christ.

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Revelation 20:2.

This is the cosmic scapegoat ceremony in which responsibility for sin is laid upon Satan and by the hand of a fit angel is led out into the wilderness of the earth and chained up for a thousand years.<sup>1</sup> He claims this earth as his dominion, the god of this world, let him do with it what he will. Let him improve his kingdom and demonstrate to

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<sup>1</sup> James White, "Thoughts on the Revelation. Chapter XX," *Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald* 21, 5 (December 30, 1862), p. 36.

the onlooking universe that it would be a desirable place to live. This old snake is powerless to create one good thing. The earth has become like Mars, unfit for human habitation.

The one thousand years are literal time and not prophetic years. The reason is that the Christ has already announced (Rev. 10:1) “that there should be time no longer” (Rev. 10:6). The longest time prophecy in the Bible is the 2,300 years which ended in 1844. So prophetic time, with its beginning and ending dates, according to Jesus, is no longer a factor in the finishing of the mystery of God. Following Jesus’ second coming the millennium is experienced in real time.

“And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” Revelation 20:3.

Here is the reason for the Devil’s confinement. He has no one to deceive. Up until the battle of Armageddon his surrogate religious conglomerate—Babylon—had performed miracles deceiving the kings of the earth, the nations and peoples into fighting as mercenaries for them against God and His host. Under the seventh plague they were slain by the word of God and the brightness of His coming and became the supper for the birds. So there’s not a human being alive on the face of the earth at the beginning of the 1000 years.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4.

Those who live and reign with Christ during the 1000 years are the translated and resurrected faithful through all ages. Among these honorable distinction is given to the martyrs who uplifted Jesus in their lives during the most trying hour of the Sunday law crisis and its enforcement by the State when all religious freedoms were lost. They upheld the word of God by keeping the seal of God’s covenant—the seventh day Sabbath according to the fourth commandment. The Sabbath is the great seal of their righteousness by faith in the Creator Redeemer. Their convictions of heart are seen by their actions. They will not so much as bow the knee in worship on the first day. These

are filled with love for Jesus that He may be honored and receive the crown of recognition that He deserves.

Those who overcome even as Christ overcame are given thrones to sit upon in Heaven as promised. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

In the aftermath of Katrina survivors were separated from family members. They had no way of contacting one another. They knew not whether they had escaped with their lives or not.

When Jesus comes to take us to His home to be with Him forever during the battle of Armageddon, loved ones will be separated and survivors will not know what happened to them. There will be many happy reunions in heaven during the 1000 years. For others, there will be folks missing. Why?

God's freedom of information act allows for a full disclosure regarding His investigative judgment. The acts of the lives of everyone is clearly recorded for all to see. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 6:2, 3. There will be happy accord on behalf of all regarding God's judgments for they are determined by the Word of God which stands fast forever. Those who are there in heaven redeemed from the earth love the gospel of Jesus. Those who despised the gospel are not there.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.

It stands to reason that those who are not with Jesus are "the rest of the dead" awaiting the end of the thousand years. There are two resurrections according to Jesus, in which all who have lived will come forth from their graves. He said, "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. Jesus revealed to John that these two resurrections are separated by a thousand years. The second resurrection of damnation comes at the end of the millennium.

"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Revelation 20:5, 6.

Here is the fifth beatitude of seven in the book of Revelation. To be called forth from the grave by Jesus' voice to immortal life is a blessing indeed. The second death is eternal. The first death that we witness at funerals is not. Jesus paid our wages of sin which is eternal death. For all who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ the second death cannot touch them.

Furthermore, they reign with Jesus as kings. They serve as priests at the call of God and Christ. Whenever a class must be taught regarding the law and the gospel, they are called upon to minister the Word for this is the work of a priest (Jer. 18:18).

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." Revelation 20:7.

Satan's parole from prison comes after serving 1000 years. Anyone serving such a long sentence would surely desire to live a changed life in order to demonstrate he has been reformed. Instead we find that he has become more hardened in his opposition.

"And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Revelation 20:8.

These folks who have come forth in the resurrection of damnation at the conclusion of the thousand years are subjects of Satan's deception. Their resurrection from the dead has not changed their character. They died believing that Satan was the true christ. They had witnessed his miracles based upon their spiritualistic beliefs in the immortality of the soul. They had heard his proclamation that he had changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week. Their characters are marked beyond repair by these intoxicating theories upon which Satan plays in order to get them to march according to his grand scheme.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20:9.

When Jesus had returned for His beloved at the beginning of the millennium, He received them up with Him into the clouds, never touching the face of the earth. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the

clouds, to *meet the Lord in the air*: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

When our Lord returns at the close of the thousand years with the beloved city, He will touch down upon the Mount of Olives. “Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof” (Zech 14:3, 4).

Satan seizes this opportunity to overwhelm the city, its inhabitants, and the Lord, as they are within his grasp and those of billions who follow him. The strategy is clear. Throw as many human bodies as possible against the walls and gates and engulf it.

When all seems hopeless as we peer over the parapets, there emerges on the horizon God’s throne.

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

This stops everyone in their tracks and commands the attention of all. His sovereign majesty fills the heavens and the mount cleaves asunder.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Revelation 20:12.

Again, God judges the wicked according to the freedom of information act. All His records are unsealed and open to all. Here we see books (plural) and the book of life. It is the books which contain the acts of the lives of the wicked. No one can dispute their accuracy, not even the wicked.

However, the real book that counts is whether their names are written in the book of life. “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:15. Everyone’s name was written in it from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; 17:8). “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate. . . . Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Romans 8:29, 30).

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.” Revelation 20:13.

How one acts shows one's attitude of heart toward the Lamb slain. If their names have been scratched off the book of life, it is because they have despised the Lamb. Everyone is there who has been buried either at sea or on land.

This judgment at the close of the thousand years is no arbitrary decree on God's part. It is in accordance with each individual's choice and actions. All will agree that it is righteous and true.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Revelation 20:10.

Babylon, that unholy religious alliance, will receive its fate first followed by the devil last. This lake of fire is described as the "course of the age" (αιωνας των αιωνων). The torment will last for day and night as long as the fire has combustible material to burn. Some, like the devil and his angels, will be tormented longer than others. The punishment fits the crime.

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Revelation 20:14.

Far from death being a friend to mankind, it is an enemy along with the grave here called "hell." Says Paul, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). The death penalty has never been vacated by the law of God. It is the punishment for sin. God had decreed that it be only for the devil. Jesus said, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

The Lord is deeply saddened that anyone else must be abandoned to this fate. The prophet Isaiah calls this His "strange act." "For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act" (Isa. 28:21). It is not in the nature of God's to destroy those whom He loves. He gives them up to their choice.

Jesus died the second death for every man. "But we see Jesus, . . . for the suffering of death, . . . that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). So when He has given this gift of life in Jesus to every man, it is indeed, a strange act that He should have to honor their wishes to die.

Malachi the prophet forecast: "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 4:3). What emerges from

the ashes left from the burnings is something completely unexpected. New life!

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” Revelation 21:1.

With all the warnings and evidence of imbalances in nature it is good to know that this earth as we know it will pass away. The vast oceans which have separated the continents and peoples of the world will be unknown in the new world. “New” is something that we can appreciate. It is within our nature to want that which is the newest and latest version. Future world will ever be new for us to experience.

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Revelation 21:2.

As the beautiful bridal city descends from heaven it is no barren woman. The saints will adorn her streets and dwellings with a bustle of life and culture that makes it as a bride on her wedding day. Her Husband will see her, as it were, walk down the isle for the first time, and be bonded to her in a forever union.

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Revelation 21:3.

The goal of God’s promise in the everlasting covenant is atonement—forever one with Him. The mystery of God is finished. The plan of salvation has been accomplished. God loves to be with His people.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4.

No, we shall not be changed into robots without emotions in that new world. Terminal illness, fatal accidents, old age, hospitals, funeral chapels, cemeteries will be a forgotten memory. And God will bring comfort to all wiping away all tears.

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” Revelation 21:5.

If things are always new, then we will be on perpetual upgrade. Nothing will wear out. We will be productively engaged in service to others with time for self-improvement and development of skills.

The millennium is the final judgment. The second coming of Christ comes before the thousand years when the first resurrection of believers and the translation of the living takes place. He takes us to be with Him where He is. The joys of the place that He has prepared for us will delight and inspire the senses. We will also take an active roll in the judgment process of the dead left behind along with the devil and his angels.

At the conclusion of the thousand years our space ship city will transport us back to this old earth where we will witness the unbeliever's resurrection. Inspired by their leader, Satan, they will take right up where they left off, in opposing the Lamb and his kingdom city. When they are arraigned before the throne of God, they will acknowledge the justice of God's ways and desire to be put out of their misery with the death penalty.

Are you ready for God's new world? He is ready for you. Your name has been written on a dwelling there. Your place is assured by the side of the Lamb.