

The Sure Word Bible Studies

Lesson 9

The Millennium

Millennium is the Latin word for "one thousand." It is not found in the Bible even though it is commonly used for the one thousand year period spoken of in Revelation chapter twenty. While there are many different views of the Millennium, there have been three major ones held by Christians.

1. Amillennialism. In this view, the one thousand years is a figurative time period that represents the "Church Age." It is the span of time between Christ's first and second coming. The "*binding of Satan*" is only a symbol of Satan's defeat at the cross which causes his activity to be so limited that he cannot prevent the spread of the gospel during that time period. Few Christians hold this view today.

2. Post-millennialism. This view teaches that the world will get better and better and eventually usher in a thousand years of peace at the end of which Jesus comes and sets up His kingdom on earth. This view, which was very popular in the church during the 17th and 18th centuries, has since been abandoned.

3. Pre-millennialism. This is the most popular view today. In this view the one thousand year period begins with Christ's return to earth to gather his people and take them back to heaven. However there are several different versions among Christians as to what takes place after that.

With the Millennium, as any other biblical topic, it is important that we set aside any pre-conceived ideas and search the Bible to find the truth for ourselves. We will begin with the only chapter in the Bible that specifically details the one thousand year period, Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:1 - 5 " *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 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. 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. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*"

The words *"they lived"* in verse 4 is translated from the Greek word "zao" which means "came to life." In other words, this group of people were raised from the dead and now are in heaven with Christ. In contrast, in verse 5 another group, *"the rest of the dead lived not again,"* or were not raised to life again until a thousand years later. This implies there will be two resurrections separated by a thousand years. The idea of two resurrections is implied in other places as well.

Daniel 12:2 *"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."*

John 5:28,29 *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."*

According to Jesus all those who are in the grave, good and bad, will be raised. Some will be raised in one resurrection and others in another. But according to the next text the righteous will be raised first.

I Thessalonians 4:16 *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."*

It is only logical that this is the first resurrection. And, since we learned in lesson three that the Son of God, Christ, is God and Savior in the Old and New Testaments, the *"only mediator between God and man,"* therefore this resurrection will not be only New Testament Christians, but all those who from the beginning of the world have trusted God for their salvation.

Now looking back to Revelation 20:5 that said, *"the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished"* we know that the lost will remain dead until the close of the one thousand years at which time they will be raised. We will take a closer look at this later in the study.

To review - The events that mark the beginning of the millennium are: Putting all this together with what we saw in the last lesson, we can conclude that the millennium will begin with the second coming of Christ when the righteous are resurrected and taken to heaven while all the wicked are slain by the *"brightness of His coming"* then at the close of the one thousand years the wicked will be resurrected.

Now let's take a look at what will occur during the millennium, first on earth and then in heaven. The first thing we see is that Satan will be *"bound"* during this time.

Revelation 20:1,2 *"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that*

serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 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."

"The bottomless pit" is translated from the Greek word "abyss" which means, a dark, desolate place. The abyss is a symbol of the desolated earth after Christ's second coming as described in the book of Jeremiah we saw in the previous lesson -

Jeremiah 4:23 - 28 *"I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down At the presence of the LORD, By His fierce anger. For thus says the LORD: "The whole land shall be desolate; Yet I will not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, And the heavens above be black, Because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, Nor will I turn back from it."*

There is no literal, earthly chain that will bind Satan. The "great chain" that binds Satan during the thousand years is a "chain of circumstances." For example, if we hear someone say, "I can't go shopping with you today, I'm all tied up," we know that is not to be taken literally but rather as a figure of speech that means that circumstances will not allow them to go. The binding of Satan is to be understood this way as well.

The binding of Satan means that he is no longer allowed to freely travel the universe, but that he is "bound" or confined to this planet by a chain of circumstances that came about at the second coming of the Lord. The following text's help us understand what those circumstances will be that causes him to be bound, unable to do what he would otherwise do.

Revelation 12:9 *"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world."*

Satan's main goal is, and always has been, to deceive men and angels about God and win them over to his side in the conflict. But as result of the second coming Satan's work is interrupted.

Revelation 20:3 *"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."*

Now, due to the circumstances, the earth being desolated, the righteous taken to heaven and the all the wicked dead, Satan is unable to deceive anyone. This is the

"chain" that binds him to the "abyss," the desolated earth. But Satan will later be released for a while.

Revelation 20:7,8 *"Now when the thousand years have finished, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to gather 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."*

We saw that according to verse 5 at the close of the one thousand years, the wicked be resurrected. As a result, Satan is "released," meaning the circumstances have changed and he will now be able to resume his work of deception. He will "go out to deceive the nations," the wicked who have been raised back to life, as he always has.

But during the one thousand years while all the wicked are dead, day after dreary day Satan and his demons will be languishing in misery on the dark and desolate earth. While in heaven, the redeemed will be taking part in a process of judgment.

Revelation 20:4 *"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them."*

The word "judgment" is translated from the Greek word "krima" which means "sentence pronounced, ratified, or confirmed." With the righteous now in heaven and the wicked slain, it will be obvious who is saved and who is lost, so what is this judgment about? The Bible talks about this in Corinthians -

I Corinthians 4:5 *"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveals the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God."*

I Corinthians 6:2,3 *"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels?"*

Since God is all-knowing, this session of judgment is not for His benefit, but for the benefit of the redeemed. There will be friends and loved ones missing and many will have questions as to why they were not saved. Our loving Father wants them to understand, so they will examine the records and "confirm" the decision made by each lost individual, including the fallen angels who sided with Satan and were cast out of their heavenly home.

As "the books are opened," (Rev. 20:12) they will see the details of the lives of the lost and how God had done all He could to save them, but was rejected. They will understand that God had no choice but to give them up. By the evidence recorded in the records, the redeemed will understand the lost were truly unsafe to save.

Another important activity during the millennium will be educating the redeemed. All believers redeemed from the earth will be at different levels of knowledge and spiritual maturity. But during the millennium everyone will sit at the feet of the Jesus and understand things that they had no opportunity to learn, things that while on this earth were great mysteries.

Malachi 4:2 *"But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves."*

The KJV says, *"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, **and grow up** as calves of the stall."*

Everyone will be "brought up to speed," so to speak, both intellectually and spiritually. During this process they also will be prepared to witness the Great White Throne Judgment and the demise of those who are lost outside the holy city.

To review - The events that take place during the 1000 years are: On earth, with the righteous in heaven and the all wicked dead, Satan and his demons are bound to this dark and desolate earth and their work of deception is interrupted. In heaven, the redeemed take part in a judgment process and experience growth both intellectually and spiritually with Christ as their teacher.

Now we come to the close of the one thousand years. As we have already seen, when the 1000 years are finished the wicked are resurrected. But they come back to life subject to Satan's clever deceptions just as before they always have been, and he gathers them to battle God's people in the *"beloved city."*

Revelation 20:7 - 9 *"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 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. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city."*

The *"four corners of the earth"* are the four extremities of the earth, north, south, east and west. The *"camp of the saints and the beloved city"* is the New Jerusalem that comes down from heaven to earth at the close of the millennium.

Revelation 21:2 *"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

Reading verse one of chapter 21 makes it sound like the city comes down after the new heavens and earth were created. But that makes no sense because the city is obviously already on earth before that according to chapter 20:7 - 9. The problem is that when the New Testament was divided into chapters, the chapter break was mistakenly put in the wrong place. When John begins with *"And I saw"* as in verse 2, it means he is looking at an entirely new scene or vision as in this case. Chapter 21

should have begun with verse 2 instead of verse one which really belongs to chapter 20.

The references to "Gog" and "Magog" in chapter 20:7 - 9 simply symbolize the enemies of God's people from ancient times as seen in Ezekiel 38:

Ezekiel 38:2 *"Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal."*

"Gog" means the "chief prince" or leader of the enemies of God's people. "Magog" is the "land" that contains the people who follow Gog. In Revelation, Satan is "Gog" and his nation of wicked followers are "Magog," who under the leadership of Satan come up to fight against the "beloved city," the "New Jerusalem" (Revelation 21) which is made up of all God's redeemed people. To read anymore than this into this prophetic text would be no more than speculation and should be avoided.

Now the stage is set for the final judgment, the "Great White Throne Judgment."

Revelation 20:11,12 *"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. 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."*

Satan deceives all the wicked nations convincing them that they can take the "beloved city" by force. As they come and surround the holy city, everything comes into place for the final judgment. This is the only time in all the history of humankind that everyone that has ever lived on earth is alive at the same time in the same place.

Inside the walls of the "beloved city" will be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the loyal angels. With them will be all the righteous who have been redeemed from the earth.

Outside the walls of the city will be Satan and with him the fallen angels and all the lost whose number is as the "sand of the sea."

The Prophet Isaiah prophesied long ago that:

Isaiah 40:5 *"The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

They will be fulfilled at the close of the millennium at the great white throne. The "glory of the Lord" that will be revealed to them there is more than God's beauty and majesty. Note what Moses saw when he asked to see the Lord's glory -

Exodus 33:18,19 *"And he (Moses) said, "Please, show me Your glory." Then He (the Lord) said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you,*

Exodus 34:6,7 *"And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin."*

When the Lord passed by, Moses didn't see any form or the literal presence of the Lord, rather he heard the Lord proclaim His "name," that is, His gracious character. The word "name" in the original languages of the Bible mean more than a person's title, it means their character as well. God's infinitely merciful, good, righteous and gracious nature or "name" is the "glory" of the Lord He wishes all of us to see.

The entire universe will see this together as God's glory is vividly and accurately portrayed before the Great White Throne. There the truth about God's character, His righteousness, goodness, and love will clearly be seen by all. God's great name will be vindicated. No one will any longer doubt or question God's character or purposes then. All will bow in agreement, even Satan! The Scripture will be fulfilled that says:

Romans 14:10,11 *"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."*

Everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, the difference is, some will be inside with Jesus and everyone else will be outside looking in!

Philippians 2:10,11 *"At the name (gracious character) of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

As those outside the city look at Jesus seated on the Great White Throne they will clearly see the contrast between God's unconditional love for all and the self-centered love of the sinner. As they look at Jesus they will remember every sin they have committed, they will see just where their feet diverged from the path of right, just how far pride and rebellion have carried them in violation of God's law of love. The blessings perverted, the messengers of God despised, the warnings rejected, the waves of mercy beaten back by their stubborn, hardened heart. Then with an overwhelming sense of remorse and condemnation they realize there is no hope, that the "wages of sin is death." God does not condemn them - they condemn themselves. (The final end of the wicked will be studied in the next two lessons.)

Psalms 9:16 *"The Lord is known by the judgment He executes; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands."*

This final phase of judgment is for the benefit of the entire universe. God wants all men and angels to know and understand that life, light and every good and perfect gift come from our gracious God. But the day by day decisions of those outside the Holy City have led to the hardening of their hearts until there is no remedy.

The purpose of the second resurrection is that the universe may see that if the wicked are given a second chance and are clearly shown all the evidence first hand so there can be no doubt or questions about God and His love, they still will not repent! And there's nothing else God can do for them. He will still love and forgive them, but at this point love and forgiveness will not heal the damage done – the hardened heart is seen to be incurable! And they are simply not safe to save!

And then, when its all over -

Revelation 20:9 *"And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them."*

The wicked suffer the horrible second death! (next three lessons). After the Great White Throne Judgment and the earth is cleansed by fire, God will create a new heaven and new earth.

II Peter 3:10 - 13 *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be destroyed, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heaven and a new earth in which righteous dwells."*

To review - At the close the Millennium: There will be a second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked. Satan deceives the wicked who surround the "*beloved city*" intending to take possession of it. Then the "*Great White Throne*" judgment will take place concluding with the fire which comes down from heaven devouring the earth and everything in it. And then God will create a new heavens and new earth.

The question is: Where will you be in that final judgment day? Will you be safe inside the city with Jesus, or outside looking in? The same choice Moses gave God's people long ago is still available to God's people today:

Deuteronomy 30:19,20 *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;"*

It is your choice! Today is the day of salvation - but the "*day of the Lord*" will come – are you ready?

