



My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

Lesson #7: "The Millennium"

SCRIPTURE READING: REVELATION 16:12-16; 20:1-9

Memory Verse: "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 20:6.

There are a whole cluster of breathtaking, world-shaking, and awe-inspiring happenings—all associated with the thousand year period of Revelation 20:1-9, called the millennium.

The word, "millennium," does not occur in the Bible. It comes from two Latin Words: mille, meaning "a thousand," and *annus*, meaning "a year": thus we have millennium, or one thousand years.

Some people think of the millennium as a thousand years of peace and prosperity here upon earth. This is quite different from the true Biblical idea.

Never forget that Satan's business is deception. He tries to get a man to believe that what is wrong is right. He does not tell a man to believe falsehood. He poses as an "angel of light," and he has ministers who help him (2 *Corinthians* 11:14-15).

There are five current teachings about the millennium. In substance, these teachings declare:

1. That Christ will not come the second time until the end of the millennium. This is post-millennialism. Those who believe this put Christ's coming at least one thousand years in the future. Satan is pleased thus to remove the thought of this event far, far away.
2. That the millennium will be preceded by a secret coming of Christ known as the 'Secret Rapture' where God's people will be suddenly spirited away to heaven while the rest of the world goes on as usual. This is one of the cleverest deceptions Satan has ever spread among honest people. The enemy has certainly stolen a march upon men. Think of it! Although Jesus did everything, that words could do, to tell us that His coming would be open and public, before saints and sinners, we find a widespread inter-denominational teaching directly to the contrary.
3. That the millennium is to be preceded by a seven-year reign of Antichrist. This also is a deception. A great host of people today, with all the glorious light of prophecy shining upon world history, do not see the real Antichrist and are looking for one to appear after Christ has come. The truth of the matter is that this false idea came as a part of the Counter-Reformation, and was introduced to offset the mighty work of such men as Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, and all the other great Reformers.
4. That the gospel will still be preached during the millennium, after the second coming of Christ. This lesson will clear up such a misconception.
5. That Christ has already come; and the dead will be raised from time to time during the millennium and given a second chance to accept the gospel while the devil is chained up.

If men can be led to believe any of the above five deceptions, Satan has a better chance to lead them to procrastinate. He says that Christ will not be here for at least one thousand years; so you can get ready after the secret coming of Christ. You can take a firm and glorious stand against Antichrist when he comes or, if you die unprepared, you will have a second chance. And the pity of it all is none of these statements is true.

Dear friend, let the love of God and His holy truth be in your soul as you study this lesson. You will see the simple, clear, and beautiful Bible truth on the coming millennium.

1: WHAT FIVE EVENTS MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM?

1. Second coming of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-16: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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."

Jesus' advent is preceded by the seven last plagues: most fearful scourges to strike mankind in the long history of our race.

2. Righteous dead resurrected (the first resurrection).

Revelation 20:6. "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."

1 Thessalonians 4:16. "The dead in Christ shall rise first,"

This is the "resurrection of life" to which Jesus referred (*John 5:29*). Only the "blessed and holy" come forth to life eternal in this, the first resurrection.

3. Wicked living slain.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven With His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Jeremiah 25:31-33),

2 Peter 3:10: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

4. All the righteous taken to heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "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" (John 14:1-3).

Please remember that the hour is coming when mercy's voice will be hushed (*Revelation 22:11*). Then the seven last plagues will be poured out upon an unrepentant world. This follows after man's probation

has closed. Those who wait for that time to get ready for heaven will be disappointed; it will be too late then. The plan is doomed to disappointment. Today is the day of salvation.

When Jesus returns, the resurrected saints and the living righteous are taken out of this world to heaven.

5. Satan is bound.

Revelation 20:2-3: "And He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 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."

Since the blessed and holy come up in the first resurrection, at the beginning of the millennium, at Christ's second coming, we see that Christ's second coming is at the beginning of the millennium. This is what is known as the pre-millennial teaching of Christ's second coming, as opposed to the post-millennial, or after-millennial teaching.

Jesus said that He would return and take all the righteous to heaven. The wicked living will perish. The wicked dead who are already in their graves will remain there. Satan will be left alone in the ruined earth, his work of deception ended for 1,000 years. Satan is sentenced to a one-thousand-year term of imprisonment in this world—the very pit of destruction. He is truly bound, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled."

When the wicked are raised at the end of the 1,000 years, he will have a chance to deceive again. He will be loosed. Remember, the righteous dead will be raised at the beginning of the 1,000 years, the wicked at the close.

2: WHAT FOUR FACTS MARK THE 1,000 YEAR PERIOD?

1. The earth is desolate; a bottomless pit.

Jeremiah 4:23: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void."

The desolation of the earth is brought on by a series of tragic events: (1) the Seven last plagues; (2) the advent of Christ in glory, at which time the wicked are destroyed by fire and the earth is broken up by a great earthquake (*Revelation 16: 17-21*).

Jeremiah 4:23-27: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end."

The expression, "bottomless pit," means a place of chaos, darkness, or desolation, and is translated from the Greek word from which we get "abyss." The same Greek word is used in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament in Jeremiah 4:23-25, where the earth is pictured as "without form and void." The cities are broken down by an earthquake: everything is in a state of chaos. The birds have fled, and darkness covers the ugly scene of ruin.

2. The wicked are all dead.

Said Jeremiah, "I beheld, and, lo, there was no man." The righteous people are in heaven; the wicked people are in the graves. The whole earth is as desolate as a ghost city.

3. Satan is thus "bound" on a desolate earth.

On this earth, Satan is "bound," for there is no living person on earth to deceive. He will have a thousand years' vacation from deception, a millennium to meditate on his long career of rebellion and the pitiful condition to which it has brought him. He will have plenty of time to lay plans to make a final assault against God at the end of the long, long darkness when the wicked dead shall come forth to their final brief season of life.

4. The righteous are engaged in a work of judgment in heaven.

Revelation 20:4: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement 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" (1 Corinthians 6:1-3).

The Bible teaches that the saved will have a part in the judgment. But why have a judgment after all cases have been decided?

When Christ comes, He brings His reward with Him and takes His people to heaven. But the wicked are to be raised from the dead at the end of the 1,000 years, to receive the punishment of the second death. Just how will God deal with these cases? Who will be beaten with many stripes and who with few?

Suppose you had a very dear friend on earth, but in heaven he was not to be found. Well, during the millennium you will find out just how God has dealt with his case and the cases of all others. God takes a thousand years for this work. He will run no risk of having one single doubt in any mind about His work for fallen man. When the wicked finally have sentence pronounced upon them, it will be clear to all that they deserve the punishment.

During this period God allows the saved to sit, as it were, beside Him and learn how hard He tried to save every person. I think we shall understand Him better and love Him even more after we have learned from the Saviour, Himself, His story of salvation. Don't you? When it is all over we shall say. "True and righteous are Thy judgments." There will be no soil in our hearts for the growth of seeds of doubt. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

3: WHAT SIX EVENTS MARK THE CLOSE OF THE MILLENNIUM?

1. The wicked are raised.

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

Since the righteous dead were raised one thousand years earlier, the expression, "the rest of the dead," must refer to the wicked.

2. Satan is thus loosed to deceive.

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

Now that the wicked have come forth to life again, the devil is free to pursue his evil work of deception.

3. The Holy City descends from heaven.

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

4. Satan gathers the wicked about the city.

Revelation 20:8-9: "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. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city."

5. The wicked are destroyed.

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

This fire purifies the earth and burns up sinners and the last traces of sin.

6. A new earth is created.

2 Peter 3:13-14: "We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (Revelation 21:1-5).

Here is the sequence of events: The Holy City descends to earth with the saints: The wicked dead are raised: Satan mobilizes the vast multitude of the wicked against the Holy City and the saints; God destroys sin, sinners, death, and hell in that last, final destruction. This is the second death. Then He creates a new earth with all the marks and tracings of sin erased, and He will dwell with His people forever. O what a wonderful future will be ours.

4: WHO WILL INHERIT A PLACE IN THE NEW EARTH?

Galatians 3:29: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

If we are Christ's, we are heirs and shall inherit a place in the new earth. This means complete surrender to Him. It means not merely to profess Christ, but to possess Christ, to believe in Him, to build on His words, and to walk in His steps. Then, at last, we shall inherit and come into possession of the realities of eternity. We shall actually be there in person.

Revelation 21:7: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

Whether we are to be among God's people in the Holy City depends upon whether we are overcomers now. Whether we have our names on the roll of that city depends upon whether we get them in the

Book of Life now, and keep them there. Whether we serve God over there depends upon whether we obey Him now.

THE BIBLICAL MILLENNIUM: A REVIEW

We live in the last days of history. The end of life as men now know it is nearly ended. Soon Jesus will return. We only have one period of probation and that is during our present life. The millennium will not be a thousand years of glory and peace here on earth. And it will not be an age of technological progress or a "second chance" for the wicked. All mankind will not be converted before it, during it, or after it. And neither Christ nor His redeemed ones will be on the earth during the thousand years. Here is the truth about the millennium and the events that mark its beginning and end:

1: Jesus is going to return for His people: He promised us that He would (John 14:1-3), and so we can know that He will.

2: There are four identifying marks of His second advent that cannot be counterfeited by false christs:

(1) He will come so that all alive on the earth at that time can see Him return (Revelation 1:7; Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:30, 23-27).

(2) He will come so all can hear Him as He returns (Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

(3) He will come in immense glory—that of His own and the millions of angels that will come with Him (Luke 9:26; Matthew 28:2-4; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 6:14-17).

(4) He will come unexpectedly (Matthew 24:44, 36).

3: His second coming will mark the beginning of the millennium. Six events will take place:

(1) He will raise the righteous dead (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

(2) He will catch up the righteous living together with the resurrected, righteous dead, to meet Him in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

(3) He will change their vile bodies to be like unto His glorious body (Phil 3:20-21) and translate them (1 Corinthians 15:51-55; Isa 25:9).

(4) Having gathered all the righteous (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18; Matthew 25:34-40; 24:30-31), He will take His redeemed ones to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

(5) He will destroy the living wicked with the brightness of His coming (Luke 17:26-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

(6) He will bind Satan to this earth (Revelation 20:23).

4: During the millennium, the earth will be desolate (Revelation 20:3; Jeremiah 4:23-26; Isaiah 24:1,3). The wicked are dead (2 Thessalonians 2:8), and there is no man left (Isaiah 24:20-22; Jeremiah 4:25-26; 25:31-33). Satan is bound on a desolate earth (Revelation 20:1-3), and the righteous are in heaven (Revelation 20:4, 6; Daniel 7:22), engaged in a work of judgment (Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:1-3; Acts 24:25; Jude 6).

5: At the close of the millennium, the Holy City descends from heaven (Revelation 20:9; 21:1-5; Zechariah 14:4, 9), the wicked are raised: the "second resurrection" (Revelation 20:5, first part), and Satan is thus loosed to deceive them again (Revelation 20:7-8). Satan and the wicked surround the City to take it (Revelation 20:8-9). All of the wicked are destroyed (Revelation 20:9), and this earth is made new (Revelation 21:1-5; 2 Peter 3:10-14). How we long for the second coming of Christ!

THE MILLENNIUM: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

"For six thousand years, Satan's work of rebellion has 'made the earth to tremble.' He had 'made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof.' And he 'opened not the house of his prisoners.' For six thousand years his prison house has received God's people, and he would have held them captive forever; but Christ had broken his bonds and set the prisoners free.

"Even the wicked are now placed beyond the power of Satan, and alone with his evil angels he remains to realize the effect of the curse which sin has brought. 'The kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, everyone in his own house [the grave]. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch. . Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people' " (Isaiah 14: 18-20).

"For a thousand years, Satan will wander to and fro in the desolate earth to behold the results of his rebellion against the law of God. During this time his sufferings are intense. Since his fall his life of unceasing activity has banished reflection; but he is now deprived of his power and left to contemplate the part which he has acted since first he rebelled against the government of heaven, and to look forward with trembling and terror to the dreadful future when he must suffer for all the evil that he has done and be punished for the sins that he has caused to be committed.

"During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the second advent. 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts' (1 Corinthians 4:5) . . . At the close of the thousand years the second resurrection will take place. Then the wicked will be raised from the dead and appear before God for the execution of "the judgment written." Thus the revelator, after describing the resurrection of the righteous, says: 'The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished (Revelation 20:5)." -*Great Controversy*, 659-661