

Appendix 5: The Millennial Kingdom

In Revelation 20 we're told that in the future the Lord Jesus Christ is going to rule over the nations for a thousand years:

Revelation 20:4: "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."

This period is usually referred to as the Millennial Kingdom.

The Literal Reality of the Kingdom

There are some people who reject the idea of a literal Millennial Kingdom. They teach that it's a purely spiritual kingdom, and say that Jesus Christ isn't *really* going to physically return to this world and rule over the nations as a king. I believe that those people are wrong. The Bible claims in numerous places that the coming Kingdom isn't symbolic or spiritual but is *literal*.

One place where this can be seen is the book of Daniel. In chapter 2 of that book we're told that when King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that disturbed him, he demanded that his magicians tell him what he had dreamed and how to

interpret it. Daniel did exactly that:

Daniel 2:31-35: "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Daniel told the king what he had dreamed and then provided the interpretation. The statue represented four kingdoms that would control the world from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the end of days. The fourth kingdom, however, wouldn't last forever. Instead it would be broken into pieces by God Himself and replaced with an eternal kingdom that would never be destroyed:

Daniel 2:44-45: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain

without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

The eternal kingdom which God Himself establishes will *replace* all of the kingdoms that came before it! It's not going to coexist alongside them as some sort of spiritual kingdom. This final kingdom is going to rule over the Earth just as the previous four kingdoms did. That means the Kingdom of God *cannot* be a purely spiritual kingdom. After all, it *violently destroys and replaces all the kingdoms of the world!* The book of Daniel describes it as a physical kingdom, not a spiritual one.

The Binding of Satan

Revelation 20 tells us that at the beginning of the millennium an angel will bind the devil with a great chain. The angel will then cast the devil into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, where he will be unable to deceive the nations any more:

Revelation 20:1-3: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 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."

People who are amillennial don't believe in a literal millennium, so they interpret these verses symbolically. They claim that this passage refers to the death of Christ on the cross, which is when Satan was bound. They teach that the millennium is simply the age that we're living in right now, and the phrase "thousand years" is just symbolic for a long span of time.

I think their explanation is wrong. First of all, the passage says that an *unnamed angel* bound Satan, not the Lamb that was slain! If Jesus is the one who bound Satan then why doesn't Revelation 20:1 say that? Why does Revelation give the glory for this incredibly important act to someone else?

Second, I find it *impossible* to believe that Satan is currently bound and unable to deceive or harm anyone. That's the opposite of what the New Testament teaches! Look at what the apostle Peter wrote:

I Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

Did Peter say that the devil had been bound by Christ's death and was unable to deceive anyone? Did he teach that we don't need to worry about Satan because his days of deceiving people are over? Absolutely not! Peter warned us to be sober and vigilant, for the devil was "seeking whom he may devour". Peter was certainly not under the impression that the devil had been bound and rendered harmless. James echoed Peter's

concern:

James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

You don't see James saying "Don't worry about the devil – he's incapable of doing any harm". Revelation 20:2 specifically says that Satan is *bound*, and yet 1 Peter 5:8 says that he "walketh about". If Satan "walketh about" then he's *not* currently bound, which means Revelation 20:1-3 hasn't happened yet.

There are also chronological reasons for believing that the binding of Satan is still in the future. In Revelation 4 the apostle John is told this:

Revelation 4:1: "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."

John was told that he was about to see things "which must be hereafter". That means the angel was showing him *things that hadn't happened yet in his day*. Part of his vision included the binding of Satan. That means the binding of Satan couldn't have happened at the cross because when John was given this vision (which was more than 50 years after the crucifixion and resurrection), Satan had not yet been bound.

It's worth noting that a great many things happen between Revelation 4 and Revelation 20. Those events take place in chronological order. For example, in Revelation 6 the first seal is opened, and then the second seal is opened, and so forth. Revelation 7 starts with the phrase "and after these things". One event follows after another. There's a progression as the two

witnesses preach and are killed, only to rise again (see Revelation 11); as the beast rises to power and prevails against the saints (see Revelation 13); and as Babylon falls (see Revelation 18). Revelation 20 takes place *after* all of those things. If Satan was bound at the cross then that would mean Revelation 4 through 19 all happened *before* the crucifixion, which is silly. At that point John wouldn't have been seeing things "which must be hereafter"; instead he would have been seeing things that happened more than 50 earlier. It makes much more sense to put the binding of Satan in the future instead of the past.

I've heard people say that this passage must be symbolic because it's impossible to bind Satan with a chain, but I don't find that argument convincing. This isn't the first time the Bible refers to binding fallen angels with chains. There's this passage as well:

Jude 1:6: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

In this verse Jude tells us that certain fallen angels have been put in prison and are held captive *in chains* until Judgment Day. (Not all fallen angels are free to wander this world as demons; some have been imprisoned. Why some are imprisoned and others aren't is beyond the scope of this discussion.) In Revelation 20 we're told that Satan will receive the same treatment as the fallen angels in Jude 1:6: he will be bound in chains. It seems appear that it *is* possible to bind angels with chains after all.

Is Satan currently bound, unable to cause any harm? Of course not! Even the apostles didn't believe that. It doesn't fit with the chronology of Revelation or the world that we see around us. The claim that Satan is bound and unable to cause

any more trouble is simply wrong. The binding of Satan is a future event, not a past one.

The Marriage of the Lamb

There's another reason to believe that the Millennium is a literal event which will take place in the future. Revelation 19 says that the "marriage of the Lamb" has finally come:

Revelation 19:7-8: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

All throughout the New Testament the church is called the Bride of Christ and Jesus is called the bridegroom. In Revelation 19 we're told that the long-awaited marriage will take place in Heaven at the end of the seven-year tribulation period. After the marriage takes place the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this world with the armies of Heaven:

Revelation 19:11-20: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white

horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ... And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

This passage says that the Lord will return to judge the world *after* the "marriage of the Lamb" has taken place. Chapter 19 is immediately followed by chapter 20, which tells us that Satan is bound in the aftermath of Christ's victory over His enemies on Earth. That means Satan is bound *after* the Bride of Christ becomes the Wife of Christ. It's important to remember that the New Testament calls the church a *bride*, not a *wife*. The church can only be called the bride if the marriage hasn't happened yet! That means all of these events *must* still be in the future.

If Revelation 20:1-3 is talking about the crucifixion of Christ then that would mean the "marriage of the Lamb" must have occurred *before* the church even existed! How is that possible? How could the bride be dressed in the righteous acts of the saints *before the saints even existed and performed any righteous acts*? It doesn't make any sense. If that was true then the New Testament should have referred to the church as the wife of Christ (just like the Old Testament referred to Israel as the wife of Jehovah), but that never happened.

I believe Revelation 20 should be interpreted literally. After the Marriage of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this world and defeat the army of the antichrist. Satan will then be bound for a thousand years, and during that time he will

be unable to deceive the nations or do any harm. The devil will be completely removed from the scene for the duration of the Millennium.

A Thousand Years

Some people have argued that the thousand years should be interpreted symbolically. They base that on this verse:

2 Peter 3:8: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

The problem is that this passage uses symbolic language, while Revelation 20 doesn't. 2 Peter 3:8 clearly says that one day with the Lord is *as* a thousand years. Revelation 20 contains no such symbolic language! The book of Revelation repeatedly says that this period will last *a thousand years*. It doesn't say that it will *seem like* a thousand years, or that it will be *as* a thousand years. Instead it repeatedly says that it will last *one thousand years*:

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."

In both verses it clearly says "a thousand years". There's no hint that this time period is symbolic. But there's more:

Revelation 20:4-7: "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 worshiped 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. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. 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. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,"

In the span of six verses the phrase "thousand years" occurs *six times*. I don't see how Revelation 20 could have made it any plainer that this is a literal period of time! If the duration of the Millennium was meant to be taken symbolically then it would have been easy to say "as a thousand years" or "was like a thousand years", *but it doesn't say that*. However, if the thousand-year period is meant to be taken literally then how could the chapter have been any more clear?

I believe that the thousand year period should be interpreted as a literal thousand year period. The reason it's said to last for a thousand years is *because it lasts for one thousand years*. I see no reason to interpret it any differently.

Thy Kingdom Come

Revelation 20 tells us that after Satan is bound, the martyrs of the tribulation period will be resurrected to reign with Christ over the world:

Revelation 20:4-6: "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, which had not worshiped 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. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. 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."

Not only does Christ reign for a thousand years ("they lived and *reigned with Christ* a thousand years"), but the martyrs do as well. Verse 5 specifically states that these people were *raised from the dead* so they could reign with Jesus. If the millennium is symbolic of the church age then this makes no sense. Have the martyrs been resurrected so they can reign with Christ during this age? Definitely not! Since the resurrection of the martyrs is still in the future, the fulfillment of this passage must be in the future as well.

The martyrs aren't the only ones who are reigning with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom. Earlier in Revelation there's a

promise that the 24 elders will reign with Christ as well:

Revelation 5:8-10: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

I believe that the 24 elders are symbolic of the entire church. These elders identify themselves in verse 9: they're those who were *redeemed by the blood of the Lamb*. Their members come from *every nation*. What term does the Bible use to describe the leaders of the church? "Elders". How do we know that they represent the whole church? Well, in 1 Chronicles 24 the priests are divided into 24 different divisions that represent the whole priesthood. That's why scholars believe that when the number 24 is used symbolically it represents an entire group. (As an aside, some translations say "redeemed them" instead of "redeemed us" in verse 9. I believe the manuscript evidence supports the use of "us" over "them". These elders are claiming that *they* were redeemed, not someone else.)

Notice what these elders (who are symbolic of the entire church) are saying: God has made them kings and priests and they will reign *on the Earth*. Not "reign on the New Earth that will be created after Judgment Day", but reign on the Earth itself! God will one day turn His church into a nation of kings, and during the millennium we will reign with Jesus over the nations.

When the Lord returns He will put this world under *His* management. Our assignment will be to reign with Him.

Many people believe that the idea that Christ will reign as an earthly king is shocking and unbiblical. To them the idea seems too strange to be true. Some people teach that Revelation 20 *must* be symbolic because the very idea of Christ reigning on the Earth as a king is just too bizarre – and yet this idea can be found throughout the Bible! For example, the Lord's prayer hints at it:

Matthew 6:9-10: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The Lord specifically commanded His disciples to pray that His kingdom would come *to Earth* so that His will would be done *on Earth*. That sounds a lot like a plea for Jesus to return and reign as King! After all, the Lord did make this promise:

Matthew 5:5: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

That verse echoes a passage from Psalms:

Psalm 37:10-11: "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

Ask yourself: when is this going to happen? When will the meek inherit the Earth as Jesus promised? After all, this world is ultimately going to be destroyed:

2 Peter 3:12: "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

Revelation 20:11: "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 21:1: "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."

I don't believe that the promise that Jesus gave to the meek in the book of Matthew is talking about the New Earth which He will create after the Great White Throne judgment. Psalms 37:11 doesn't say "the meek will inherit a different earth" or "God will one day make a new planet for the meek to live on". Both Psalm 37 and Matthew 5 are talking about *this* world – so when are the meek going to inherit it? They certainly haven't inherited it yet!

The Millennial Kingdom is the perfect time for this promise to finally be fulfilled. When will the meek inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace? Right after Satan is bound and Jesus reigns as King of Kings over the nations. That's when His promise will be fulfilled.

The Restoration of Israel

There are many other verses that talk about this millennial kingdom. For example, look at what Christ told His disciples:

Luke 22:28-30: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus promised His disciples that they would reign with Him. Specifically, they would sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. This goes right along with Revelation 5:10 and Revelation 20:6. Jesus promised to give His disciples "a kingdom". If this kingdom was purely spiritual then this would have been a great place for Jesus to explain that to His disciples, but He didn't. It's true that Jesus told Pontius Pilate "my kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), but I believe there's a great deal of Scripture that teaches that one day His kingdom will reign *over* this world. All things will be put under the dominion of Christ.

How do we know this? Well, right before the Lord ascended into Heaven He was asked a question:

Acts 1:6: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

When the Lord was asked this question He didn't say "No, no, you misunderstand. My kingdom isn't physical – it's purely

spiritual. You've got it all wrong." Instead He said this:

Acts 1:7: "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

Jesus actually confirmed that He would one day "restore again the kingdom", but He told His disciples that it wasn't for them to know when that would happen. The reason the disciples asked Jesus about this is because the coming kingdom was talked about frequently in the Old Testament. For example:

Isaiah 60:9-12: "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually: they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

Has this happened yet? Do all the nations of the world serve Israel, as it says in verse 12? Has God destroyed the nations that wouldn't serve her? Absolutely not! Israel is currently *oppressed* of all nations. She's despised and surrounded by nations that wish to see her completely and utterly destroyed. The fulfillment of this passage must be still in the future, and the Millennial Kingdom is an excellent candidate for its fulfillment.

The passage doesn't stop there:

Isaiah 60:14-15: "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations."

None of this has happened yet. Israel is despised and hated in this age, not loved and adored. What the Lord speaks of in Isaiah 60:15 hasn't been fulfilled yet.

But there's more! Not only did God promise Israel great honor, but He also promised her great wealth and peace:

Isaiah 60:17-18: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

Is the modern nation of Israel a place where violence is unheard-of? Absolutely not – but one day that will be the case.

Lest we think that this prophecy will happen before the Lord returns, He added something astonishing:

Isaiah 60:19-22: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be

unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

In the coming kingdom the sun and the moon won't be needed to provide light to the land of Israel because *the Lord* will be the source of light. That means *the Lord Himself will be dwelling in the land of Israel!* Therefore, all of these verses must be fulfilled *after* the Second Coming – which makes perfect sense if the Millennium is taken literally. After Christ returns He will grant Israel honor, wealth, and peace.

I realize that this passage has strong parallels to the New Heaven and Earth which are mentioned in Revelation 21, but I don't think that's what it's talking about. Verse 12 speaks of the Lord crushing all nations that won't serve Israel, and verse 14 talks about forcing those who despised Israel to bow at her feet. The reason this is important is because in the New Heaven and Earth there won't be any more death, sorrow, pain, or evil. That means there wouldn't be anyone left to despise Israel or refuse to serve God! Since there are still some rebellious nations when this promise is fulfilled then that means this must take place *before* the Great White Throne judgment, which is before the New Heaven and Earth are created. I believe Isaiah 60 is a picture of what the Millennial Kingdom will be like.

But there's more. Isaiah 65 says this:

Isaiah 65:17-25: "For, behold, I create new heaven and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold I create Jerusalem rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

At first glance this passage seems to be talking about the New Heaven and Earth which are mentioned in Revelation 21, but I don't believe that's the case. I think this is actually a picture of the Millennial Kingdom because verse 20 clearly says that *people will still die*. This passage illustrates how long people will

live by saying that someone who dies at the age of a hundred will be considered a child. That means these promises come to pass at a time *before* death has been done away with forever. However, Revelation 21:4 says that in the New Heaven and Earth *there is no more death* (or sinners, for that matter). Therefore Isaiah 65 must be talking about a different era.

If this isn't speaking of the New Heaven and Earth of Revelation 21 then when does it take place? It's certainly not happening right now! I think this is another picture of the Millennial Kingdom.

Here's another passage that talks about the Millennium:

Micah 4:1-7: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her

that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;
And I will make her that halteth a remnant, and
her that was cast far off a strong nation; and the
Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from
henceforth, even forever."

Here we have more promises that haven't been fulfilled yet. It's hard to imagine that this world will ever become a place where nations will no longer wage war with one other, but that's the future God has planned for us! This passage speaks of a time when "the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion" – in other words, a time when the Lord reigns as King in Israel! He will "rebuke strong nations afar off", put an end to war, and bring lasting peace.

I don't think this is talking about the New Heaven and Earth of Revelation 21 because in verse 3 the Lord rebukes sinful nations. After the Great White Throne judgment all evil, sin, and death will be done away with forever. Once the final judgment has taken place there will no longer be a need to rebuke anyone because everything that was evil was cast into the lake of fire. I believe this passage is speaking of the Millennial Kingdom.

Another chapter that gives us a glimpse into the Millennium is Isaiah chapter 11. That chapter tells us that just as there will be peace among nations, there will also be peace in the animal kingdom:

Isaiah 11:6-9: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

In the church age the animal kingdom is full of predators and prey. It's common for one species to hunt, kill, and eat other species – but during the Millennium that will change. Animals that used to be carnivores will become herbivores and "eat straw like the ox". Lions and bears will stop hunting and eat plants. Animals will no longer hunt man, and children will be able to play with deadly serpents and not be harmed. Life will be radically different from the way it is now.

Another important fact is that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea". This will be a time when the world is *saturated* with the knowledge of the Lord! In the church age very few people know the Lord or walk in His ways. During the Millennium, however, things will be different. In that day the knowledge of the Lord will be everywhere, and the nations will keep His commands.

But that's not all that the Bible has to say about the Millennium. The book of Zechariah also has some things to tell us. Much of that book discusses the events that take place during the "Day of the Lord" (which the New Testament refers to as the tribulation), but Zechariah does mention the Millennium. One thing we're told is that before the Millennium begins the Lord will return to this world, stand on the mount of Olives, and tear the mountain in two:

Zechariah 14:4: "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 toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very

great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

That means the Mount of Olives will be torn in half and replaced by a large valley. Israel will then undergo a series of dramatic topographical changes:

Zechariah 14:10: "All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses."

These changes are necessary because the Temple Mount isn't big enough to contain the Millennial temple that's described in Ezekiel (and which will be located on top of a mountain). As we can see, some pretty dramatic landscape work will need to take place before the Millennial temple can be built! This passage describes some of those changes.

There will also be a stream of living water:

Zechariah 14:8: "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be."

Most importantly, however, the Lord will assume the throne and will reign over the nations:

Zechariah 14:9: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one

Lord, and his name one."

Every year the nations of the world will be required to come before the Lord and worship the King:

Zechariah 14:16: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

Not only will the nations be required to travel to Jerusalem to worship God, but they will also be required to *keep the feast of tabernacles*, which is one of the feasts mentioned in the Mosaic Law. The Gentile nations will be required to come to Jerusalem *in order to keep one of the Jewish feasts!* That's remarkable. Every year during the Millennium the *entire planet* will make a journey to Jerusalem!

The Lord is quite clear that everyone is required to attend. Any nations that refuse to come will be punished:

Zechariah 14:17-19: "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

This is another reminder that sin will still exist during the Millennium. Even though Jesus Christ will be reigning from

Jerusalem in all His glory, there will still be those who refuse to come and worship Him. In this age the Lord is patient and longsuffering, and gives people an opportunity to repent. During the Millennium, however, He will reign with a rod of iron. All those who refuse to come worship Him will be punished, and the nations that won't obey Him will be sent a terrible drought. Jesus won't accept rebellion during His reign.

There's something else that Zechariah has to say about the Millennium:

Zechariah 14:20-21: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness Unto The Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."

This passage is saying that during the Millennium there will be a tremendous manifestation of holiness. The Lord God will dwell in His temple and His holiness will saturate Jerusalem and Judah. Even the smallest and most minor things will be as holy as the vessels on the altar! The entire nation of Israel will be saturated with holiness. It will be everywhere.

Zechariah has more to say about the Millennium:

Zechariah 2:4-5: "And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

The city of Jerusalem has had walls since ancient times. Those walls were created for its protection – but they won't be needed in the Millennium. In those days the city will have so many people and cattle that they will overflow the walls. In fact, the walls won't even be needed because the Lord will be a wall of fire around the city! (That will be an amazing sight, won't it?)

As you can see, the coming reign of Christ on Earth is a major topic that can be found throughout the Old Testament. In fact, nearly all of the prophets had something to say about it. It's not a crazy idea that suddenly appeared out of nowhere at the end of Revelation.

The Millennial Temple

One of the major topics of the Old Testament is that in the Millennial Kingdom there will be a new temple. In that era all nations will go to this temple to worship the Lord and learn His ways:

Isaiah 2:1-4: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And

he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

This short passage contains a great deal of information. First of all, during the Millennium the temple of the Lord will be established in the top of the mountains. It will be a centerpiece of the whole earth! All nations will visit it. People from all over the world will go to the temple to learn God's ways, and they will obey His words.

During this era the Lord Jesus Christ will reign from Jerusalem. Verse 4 tells us that He will judge the nations and rebuke "many people". In the Millennium the nations will no longer fight each other. Instead they'll turn their weapons into farming equipment and they'll no longer learn the art of war. The Millennium will be a time of amazing peace.

The Lord's temple is going to be one of the most prominent features of the Millennium. The book of Ezekiel spends 9 chapters talking about it! First, Ezekiel tells us that God will establish His sanctuary in their midst:

Ezekiel 37:26-28: "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

The amount of detail that God provides concerning this coming temple is staggering. I'm not going to repeat it all here, or even attempt to summarize it. Instead I'll just mention a few of the key details.

First of all, the Ark of the Covenant will be missing. The Ark wasn't included in Herod's Temple (which is the one that existed at the time of Christ), and it won't be in this one either. We're told this in the book of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 3:16: "And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more"

The time of the Ark of the Covenant is over. It won't be in the millennial temple because it's served its purpose and is no longer needed. The new temple won't return Israel to the old way of doing things; instead it represents something new.

One of the surprising things about this temple is the fact that sacrifices will be offered there. However, this doesn't mean Israel is returning to the Law of Moses. This sacrificial system will have different rules from the old one. I realize it seems very strange that sacrifices will be offered after the return of Christ, but the book of Ezekiel is very clear about this:

Ezekiel 43:18-21: "And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord God; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister

unto me, saith the Lord God, a young bullock for a sin offering. And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it. Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary."

This passage clearly describes burnt offerings which will be offered in the millennial Temple! There are other passages that have even more to say about millennial sacrifices. So what's going on here? What possible reason could there be for resuming animal sacrifices? After all, the New Testament teaches that the time of making offerings for sin is over:

Hebrews 10:18: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

The sacrificial system which will exist during the Millennium will have a different purpose from the one that's found in the Mosaic Law. This can be seen from the fact that the two systems have different offerings, different rules, different holy days, and different procedures (all of which are outside the scope of this discussion). The sacrifices which are offered during the Millennium aren't focused on the forgiveness of sins, but on removing ceremonial uncleanness. Why would that be needed? Perhaps so that unholy and sinful mortals (such as the people who are born during the Millennium) can enter the holy presence of the Lord Jesus in His temple.

This is how one scholar put it:

"Critics of future millennial sacrifices seem to assume that all sacrifices, past and future,

always depict Christ's final sacrifice for sin. They do not! There were various purposes for sacrifices in the Bible. An overwhelming majority of sacrifices under the Mosaic system were for purification of the priests and objects used in various rites. This is why atonement can be said in the past to be effective, yet still need Christ's future sacrifice, because many of the sacrifices did atone ceremonially, cleansing participants and objects in Temple ritual. Just as we never finish the task of washing clothes, ceremonial cleansing was an ongoing need. The same is clearly the case in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 43:20 and 26, the atonement is specifically directed at cleansing the altar in order to make it ritually fit for sacrifice. The only other uses of atonement also refer to cleansing objects so that ritual purity may be maintained for proper function of further worship. . ."

"Since all the sacrifices of Ezekiel relate to purification of the priests for Temple service, they do not specifically depict or represent Christ's atoning sacrifice. The presence and purpose of sacrifices neither diminishes the finished work of Christ nor violates the normal and "literal" interpretation of the prophetic passages. Nothing in Ezekiel 40-48 conflicts with the death of Christ or New Testament teaching at any point. The supposed contradictions between a literal understanding of Ezekiel and New Testament doctrine evaporate when examined specifically." (Dr. Thomas Ice, *Pre-Trip Perspectives*, June 2000, pg. 4-5)

The sacrifices in the Millennial Temple aren't about obtaining forgiveness. Instead they will be used to maintain ceremonial cleanliness and keep the temple and its contents from being defiled. The reason this is important is because during the Millennial Kingdom God Himself will be dwelling on Earth, and His glory will be manifested in the temple. Since a holy God is dwelling in a sinful world among sinful people, there's an urgent need for a way to maintain ceremonial cleanliness. That seems to be the purpose of the Millennial sacrificial system.

The Last Battle

After the thousand years are over we're told that Satan "must be loosed a little season":

Revelation 20:7-10: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, God 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: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 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 forever and ever."

Here we see the final end of Satan. After the thousand

years "are expired" Satan will be set free. He will travel all over the world and deceive the nations so he can launch a rebellion against King Jesus. The devil will deceive many people, form a massive army, and use it to surround Jerusalem. However, that army doesn't stand a chance. Fire will come down out of Heaven and consume everyone. Satan will then be cast into the Lake of Fire, which will put a final end to his wickedness.

It's amazing to me that Satan will be able to gather such a large army. At this point King Jesus will have ruled over the world for a thousand years! There had been an entire millennium of peace, joy, and harmony. The kingdom of Jesus will be filled with many resurrected immortals, including the church, the Old Testament saints, and the tribulation saints. All of those people will provide enormous evidence that the teachings of the Bible are true – and yet when the devil is released, a great multitude will join him in rebellion.

Who will rebel against Jesus after the Millennium? Well, many people will survive the seven-year tribulation period and enter into the Millennium as mortals. Those people will have children, and the human race will continue to grow. Those children will live in a world that's populated by the saints from the Old and New Testament. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and many others will all be living in the kingdom, and Jesus will be reigning as the King of Kings from Zion! That means the children of the millennium will be able to see many things that we must take on faith. Today we live in a world that's full of fear and doubt, but the Millennial Kingdom will be nothing like that.

In spite of all these amazing blessings, at the end of the thousand years an enormous number of mortals will rebel against King Jesus and attempt to destroy Jerusalem – a city that's inhabited by *immortals* and reigned over by *God Himself!* That's madness. Why would they do that?

I think it's a testament to the evil heart of mankind. Even

living in a perfect world isn't enough to turn sinful people into righteous saints. The environment can't remove evil from our heart – only Christ can do that. Apart from Him we can do nothing. Given the chance, a great many mortals will fall away from God and join the devil, and will be killed in the last battle.

The Great White Throne Judgment

After the last battle, Satan will be defeated and thrown into the lake of fire to be tormented forever. That event is followed by the final judgment. Now, the resurrected saints have nothing to fear from this judgment. The only people who will be judged at this time are "the dead". Since the church, the Old Testament saints, and the tribulation saints were all resurrected long before this judgment, they won't be included in it. The only people who will be judged at that time are all of the wicked who have ever lived, along with everyone who died during the Millennium.

Here is what Revelation 20 says about the judgment:

Revelation 20:11-15: "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. 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. 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. And death and hell we cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The criteria for surviving the Great White Throne judgment is simple: if your name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life then you'll be freed and will enter into everlasting life. If your name is *not* found in it then you'll be cast into the lake of fire and tormented day and night forever and ever.

This is the moment when death itself will be done away with forever. After this judgment no one else will ever die. The reign of death will be put to an end.

It should be noted that Hell is *not* the final resting place of the unrighteous. Revelation 20 tells us that Hell will be emptied for this judgment. In fact, Hell itself is actually cast into the lake of fire (verse 14). Those whose sins are not covered by the blood of the Lamb won't be cast back into Hell; instead they'll be cast into the lake of fire (verse 15). That means *no one will spend eternity in Hell*. Instead the wicked will spend eternity in the lake of fire, where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Why will this terrible thing happen to them? It's because they never repented of their sins and put their faith in Jesus alone for salvation. The Lord will pardon all those who come to Him, but those who died in their sins never did that. All those whose sins are not forgiven will face His everlasting wrath. That's why it's so important to repent and believe now, while there's still time.

Summary of Events

The story doesn't end here! Revelation 21 talks about a new Heaven and Earth that Jesus will create after the final judgment. In that new realm (which theologians call the "eternal state), all suffering and pain will be done away with forever. But that's a topic for another time.

This is how I believe events will play out:

- One day the Lord will return for His Church. All Christians who died between Pentecost (when the church began) and the moment of the rapture will be resurrected, and all living Christians will be translated so that they will never see death. The Lord will then take us with Him to Heaven.
- At some point after the rapture, the tribulation will begin. This will be a terrible seven-year period of judgment. The Lord will pour out His wrath upon a wicked world, and will use those judgments to bring Israel back to Him. (One of the key purposes of the tribulation is to turn Israel's heart back to God.)
- During the tribulation the Marriage of the Lamb will take place in Heaven. The Bride of Christ will become the Wife of Christ.
- At the end of the seven-year tribulation the Lord will return with the armies of Heaven and put an end to the antichrist's kingdom. Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and during that time he will be unable to deceive the nations. The Lord will establish His kingdom on Earth and reign from Zion. The tribulation saints and the Old Testament saints will be resurrected.
- During the tribulation more than half of the world's

population was killed by judgments and war. In the Millennial Kingdom the world will be repopulated by those who survived the tribulation. Jesus Christ will live in Israel, and the church and the resurrected tribulation saints will reign with Him.

- After the thousand years are over Satan will be set free. He will deceive the nations into launching a final attack against God. When the devil brings his armies to Jerusalem, fire will come out of Heaven and consume them. Satan will then be cast into the Lake of Fire, where he will be tormented for all of eternity.
- The Great White Throne judgment will take place. Only the dead will be judged. The only people who will be dead at this point in history are those who died during the Millennial Kingdom, along with all the wicked who have ever lived. Everyone whose names aren't found in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire. Death itself will be done away with.
- Since the current Heaven and Earth were destroyed at the beginning of the Great White Throne judgment, the Lord will create new ones. In that new Heaven and Earth there will never be any death, pain, or suffering. That new creation will be perfect and will last forever. The Lord will reign over all things forever, and will make His dwelling place with men. (That's where the righteous will spend eternity: on Earth, as subjects of King Jesus.)

We have a great deal to look forward to! The Second Coming isn't the end of time but is actually the start of an exciting new chapter. The world won't always be a place that's filled with doubt and evil, because a King is coming who will put everything right. One day the meek will inherit the earth and

delight themselves in an abundance of peace. I am very much looking forward to that day.