

The Sure Word Bible Studies

Lesson 9

The Millennium

The word millennium is not found in the Bible; it is a Latin word for one thousand. It is a word used to refer to the one thousand year period spoken of in Revelation chapter twenty. While there are many different ideas about the Millennium, there are only three major views among Christians.

1. Amillennialism. In this view, the one thousand years is a figurative time period that represents the "Church Age." That is, the time span 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 still hold this view.

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, at the start of the one thousand year period Christ returns to earth to gather his people and take them back to heaven. However there are several different views among Christians as to what takes place after that.

As we have previously done in our studies, we set aside any pre-conceived ideas about this topic and honestly search the Bible to determine the truth for ourselves. We begin in Revelation chapter twenty, the only chapter in the Bible that specifically details the one thousand year period.

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 resurrected in the first resurrection. In contrast, the group in verse 5 "lived not again," or did not come to life again until a thousand years later. This means there will be two separate resurrections.

The Bible speaks of two resurrections -

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."*

The dead in Christ are 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."*

This is the first resurrection. And as we learned in a previous lesson, since the Son of God is God and Savior in the Old Testament as well as the New, this resurrection will include not only New Testament Christians, but all those people who from the beginning have trusted in God for their salvation.

We can conclude that the second coming of Christ and the first resurrection begin the one thousand year period, the millennium.

Revelation 20:5 *"But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."*

"This is the first resurrection" refers back to those previously mentioned in verse 4. And if the redeemed mentioned in verse 4 are resurrected first, that means that the *"rest of the dead,"* would have to be the unsaved, which, according to this verse, will not be resurrected until the thousand years are ended.

From the previous texts it should be understood that the Millennium will begin with the resurrection of the righteous and end with the resurrection of the lost.

The following is a list of the events that mark the beginning of the 1000 year Millennium:

1. The second coming of Christ.
2. The resurrection of the righteous.
3. The righteous taken to heaven.
4. The wicked slain by the *"brightness of His coming."*

We learned the details of this in the previous lesson – The Second Coming of Christ.

The following are events that will take place on earth during the millennium.

We begin this section by looking at the condition of the earth as the result of the second coming of Christ.

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;"*

"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 also seen 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."*

The *"great chain"* that binds Satan during the thousand years is a chain of circumstances. Just as we may hear someone say, "I can't go shopping with you today, I'm all tied up," we realize 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; there is no literal, earthly chain that will bind Satan.

The binding of Satan means that he is no longer allowed to freely travel the universe, he is *"sealed"* and *"bound"* on this planet by a

chain of circumstances that resulted from the second coming of the Lord. The following text's help us understand the circumstances 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 the whole world about God, but now...

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 wicked all dead, for a thousand years Satan is unable to deceive anyone. This is the "chain" that binds him in the "abyss," the desolated earth. But Satan will be "loosed" -

Revelation 20:7,8 *"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."*

At the close of the one thousand years, the "rest of the dead" (verse 5), the wicked, are resurrected and Satan is "loosed," meaning he is now able to resume his work of deception. He is able to deceive the wicked the same as he did before they died and under the leadership of Satan come up to fight against the "beloved city" (Revelation 20:9).

Events that take place in heaven during the millennium.

1. The Redeemed judge the lost -

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

Since it will be obvious at this point in time who is saved and who is lost, what is there to judge? "Judgment" in this verse is translated from the Greek word "krima" meaning - a sentence pronounced / ratified, or confirmed. The Bible refers to this judgment in another place -

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**?"*

In this session of judgment the righteous will be able to "confirm" the decision previously made by each individual who is lost because of their rejection of God during their life on earth. They will also see the record of each of the fallen angels who sided with Satan and were cast out of their heavenly home.

As *"the books are opened,"* they will see all the details of the lives of the lost, and how God had done all He could to save them, but they resisted. They will understand that God had no choice but to give them up. By the evidence recorded in the heavenly records, the redeemed will clearly understand the lost were truly unsafe to save.

2. During the millennium the redeemed will "grow up" -

Malachi 4:2 *"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.**" (KJV)*

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 time or opportunity to learn, things that while on this

earth were great mysteries. Everyone will be “brought up to speed,” so to speak in knowledge and spiritual maturity.

During the millennium God will prepare the redeemed to witness the Great White Throne Judgment and the destruction of those who are lost outside the holy city.

The following are the events that take place during the 1000 years –

1. Satan is bound.
2. Earth is dark and desolate.
3. Wicked are all dead.
4. Judgment in heaven by the Redeemed.
5. The redeemed “grow up.”

The events that close the millennium period –

At the end of the 1000 years the wicked are resurrected; they come back to life the same as before they died, the subjects of Satan’s clever deceptions.

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

Verses 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 references to “Gog” and “Magog” are simply symbols of the enemies of God’s people. This comes from ancient times as seen in Ezekiel 38:2 -

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" means the people who, as a nation, follow Gog. In this prophecy, Satan is "Gog" and his nation of wicked followers are "Magog." The wicked under the leadership of Satan come up to fight against the "beloved city," the "New Jerusalem" which is made up of all God's people and described in symbolic detail in Revelation chapter 21.

It is at this time the stage is set for the final judgment at the Great White Throne.

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 again deceives the nations convincing them that because of their great numbers they can take the "beloved city" by force. They surround the city, and as they do everything comes into place for this final phase of 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 "beloved city" will be the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the Holy Angels. With them will be all the righteous who have been redeemed from the earth.

Outside the city walls will be Satan and all his fallen angels and with them all the lost whose number is as the "sand of the sea." The Prophet Isaiah prophesied of this -

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."*

"All flesh shall see it together" - The "glory" that is revealed to them is God's omnipotent power and majestic beauty, but it is more than that – Note what Moses saw when he asked to see God's glory -

Exodus 33:18,19 *"And he (Moses) said, "Please, show me Your glory." Then He (God) 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, Moses didn't see the form or literal presence of the Lord described in the Bible as a "consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29), rather the Lord proclaimed His "name," that is, His gracious character. God's infinitely merciful, good, righteous and gracious nature. That 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 openly and accurately portrayed at 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 (some inside the city and some outside). For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."*

Philippians 2:10,11 *"At the name (seeing the 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 unselfish, self-sacrificing love for everyone, even His enemies, and their sinful love of self over others.

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."* It is not God that condemns 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 all the universe - God wants all men and angels to know and understand that life 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, they still will not repent! That the hardened heart is incurable! There's nothing else God can do for them! He will forgive them, but forgiveness will not heal the damage done - they are simply not safe to save!

And finally -

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

The wicked are devoured by a fire that comes down from heaven. The wicked suffer the horrible second death! (next lesson).

After the Great White Throne Judgment and the earth 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 dissolved, 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 heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."*

The events that close the Millennium -

1. The second resurrection.
2. New Jerusalem comes down to earth from heaven.
3. The wicked surround the city.
4. The execution of final judgment.
5. God creates new heavens and new earth.

Where will you be in that final judgment day? 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?

Response questions:

1. I understand the word millennium means one thousand years.
Yes ___ No ___

2. It is clear to me that the millennium begins with the first resurrection at the second coming of Christ.
Yes ___ No ___

3. It is clear to me that the millennium ends with the resurrection of the wicked and the Great White Throne Judgment.
Yes ___ No ___

4. It is my choice to be with the righteous inside the beloved city on that day.
Yes ___ No ___

NOTES
