

The Millenium

by Charles Ryrie

The Millennium will be a time of great peace and prosperity, with no war, no want, and a perfect ruler, Christ.

Duration: 37:23

Scripture: Isaiah 35:6-7, Amos 9:13, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 20:7-9

Topics: "Eschatology", "Millennium"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the millennium and its significance in the Bible. He references the book of Amos, specifically Amos chapter 9 verse 13, to illustrate the idea that in the future, there will be abundance and prosperity. The speaker also mentions a promise made earlier in the day to have a quiz, which will test the audience's knowledge on the subject of the millennium. He concludes by mentioning a passage from the Bible that speaks of an immoral majority rebelling against Christ and being judged.

Transcript

Well, I thank you for inviting me to be with you this weekend. I've enjoyed it immensely. Appreciate your warmth and hospitality and I'm sure that you've even succeeded in putting a few pounds on my skinny bone.

And that's a good thing. And I hope that our paths will cross again before too long. Now, if you're here this morning, you know I made a promise to you.

And I like to keep my promises. If you weren't here this morning, fasten your seatbelt because I promised we'd have a little quiz tonight. So we're going to have our little quiz tonight.

Now, this morning we're going to have five questions. Tonight we're going to have ten. So you won't be able to use one hand for the ones you think are right and the other hand for the ones you think are wrong.

So you'll just have to use, I hope, both hands for the ones you think you get right. And I hope you have to use both hands. I hope you get more than five right.

So let's have a go at it. I want to ask you some questions about the subject tonight, which is the millennium. And I want you to judge how many of them specifically you can answer.

Now, if you weren't here this morning, I'll have to repeat. You mustn't fudge. You mustn't say, well, I'll come back to that one.

You can't come back to any one of them. You have to decide as soon as I give you the question whether you know the answer. And you can't say, well, I think it is such and such.

You've got to make a judgment now right away. Give the answer to yourself. And then if you think that's right, put up a thumb.

If you think the second one's right, keep the score that way. And in the course of the evening, I will try to eventually answer all the questions. But as this morning, I'm not going to answer them all together because I want you to stay awake and listen for the answers in case you didn't get them all first time through.

Here we go. Ready? You want to write them down. That's all right, too.

I know somebody did this morning because I thought. What does the word millennium mean specifically? I'll tell you right now, kingdom is not an answer. I want to know what the word millennium means.

I don't want you to tell me. I know you know. Just put your thumb down here quietly.

I hope the rest of you didn't hear him. Don't anybody speak out, please. Don't even whisper.

I heard some whispers this morning, too. Second, will you spell the word correctly? Spell millennium correctly. And the answer is not M-I-L-L, period.

Third, you're counting now, aren't you? You've either got one or two fingers up. Third, what kind of people, spiritually speaking, what kind of people enter the millennium? In other words, three options would be they're all saved. Second, they're all not saved.

Or third, there's a mixture. Those would be the kind of answer I would want, one of those. Got it? What kind of people, spiritually speaking, enter the millennium? Fourth, what is the capital of the millennial world? Oh, let me get that one.

The answer is not New York. Fifth, what will be the status of Egypt in the millennium? An answer might be it won't exist. Another answer might be it will exist as a vassal state.

Or another answer, neither one of those is correct. Another answer, the correct one, you'll have to figure out. What will be the status of Egypt in the millennium? Sixth, what will children do in the millennium? That's harder, isn't it? The Bible tells us something about what children will do, specifically in the millennium.

Seventh, in the millennium, how old can a person be and still be called a youth? In the millennium, how old can a person be and still be called a youth? Tell yourself what is right or wrong. Eighth, will the streets of the cities in the millennium be safe? Yes or no? Take a guess, you've got a 50-50 chance. Ninth, how many generations are there in a thousand years? How many generations are there in a thousand years? Everybody ought to get that one and just figure it out.

Tenth, will it rain in the millennium? R-A-I-N. Will it ever rain in the millennium? Yes or no? You've got a 50-50 chance there. Alright, anybody think they got 10 out of 10? Raise your hand and brag a little.

Anybody? Well, I wouldn't blame anybody if they didn't. Some of those questions are kind of minute. Anybody think they got nine? Good, there's one, two, very good.

Three, four, very good. Very good, that's very good. Anybody get one? Well, I hope you're raising your hand.

Well, maybe that will quench your appetite for thinking about this great coming period in the history of the world that we call the millennium or the kingdom or the messianic kingdom or the Davidic kingdom. It can go by several names. It's a great theological mistake to think that the millennium is only spoken of in the 20th chapter of the Revelation, though you hear that charge made often.

The millennium is a doctrine that is spoken of many times in both the Old and the New Testaments. Though it is true that the word millennium is only found in Revelation 20 six times, however. But the teaching about the millennium under other titles and labels is found throughout the Scriptures.

It's also a great theological error to build the millennial kingdom on the first coming of Christ. And that's an error that an awful lot of people make. They say that when Christ came the first time, he came to build his kingdom.

He came to build his church. He himself said that was his purpose. I will build my church.

It is true that we are translated into the kingdom of his dear son when we become believers. But this is not the Davidic, millennial, messianic promised kingdom that the prophets foretold and of which Christ is the King. But it is not built on his first coming.

It is built on his second coming. The Lord taught an interesting parable that I think people forget one of the things he said in it. He said, as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable because he was near Jerusalem and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

So he spoke this parable to teach them that it would not immediately appear. But there are so many groups and people trying to build the kingdom today. God is calling out of this world a people for his name.

When Christ returns on the second coming, the kingdom will be built and not before then. One of the forms this error takes today is this. And I speak of it.

If you follow me, fine. If you don't, don't be concerned about it. But there are too many people who are trying to promote kingdom ethics now.

Listen, friends, we have so many church ethics to live under now. You don't need to think about kingdom ethics. But for some reason, it seems more attractive to people to promote kingdom living now.

We are to do body living now, church living now. There are hundreds of commands in the New Testament that apply to the church as a church. I mean both locally and the body of Christ.

These are our responsibilities today, not kingdom ethics. Some of them are similar to be sure, but we should not be promoting kingdom ethics now. I think some people also have a mistaken or try to force a mistaken marriage between politics and kingdom as if we are to usher in a kind of political kingdom today.

And if we get enough righteousness in a nation or in a government, this is somehow the kingdom of God on earth. The millennial, Davidic, Messianic, coming kingdom is still coming. And Christ will usher it in.

In the meantime, there will be many saved. In the meantime, there will be an increase in evil. Both things will be true, for evil men and seducers will get worse and worse, the Lord said.

Things will not get better and better. At the beginning of the millennium when Christ comes, things will get off to a great start. After the slaughter of Armageddon, there will be some who will be alive.

Some will actually survive the tribulation days and even the battle, the campaigns that lead up to Armageddon. But then there will be judgments on those living people. Judgments, I said, plural.

There is not one great judgment day at which all men will appear. There are a number of judgment days to come. And there are several judgments to come when our Lord returns.

Judgments upon people who have been survivors of the tribulation days. There will be, for example, a judgment on Jewish people who have survived the tribulation. Jewish survivors.

And this is spoken of in a couple of places. Ezekiel 20 and Zechariah 13. And the result of that judgment, for those who successfully pass through it, is that they will be given the land.

Not heaven, but the land. The promised land that was given to Abraham and his descendants. There will be a judgment upon living Gentiles.

Surviving Gentiles. Those who have survived the tribulation. And that judgment is detailed in the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

And again, those who pass successfully through that judgment will inherit the kingdom that had been promised and prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matthew 25, 34. This is the judgment that sometimes is called the judgment of the sheep and the goats.

I think it is not a judgment of nations, though some translations choose that translation for the word, but a judgment of Gentiles, which is also the meaning of the word as well. Individual judgment on surviving Gentiles. With the result that those who successfully pass it, the sheep, will go into the kingdom prepared for them.

And those who do not will go into everlasting fire. There will be a judgment upon Satan, who has had a heyday for seven years of the tribulation that precedes. And he will be bound in the abyss for the whole period of the millennium.

So, at the beginning, I think, here's an answer to one of the questions, only believers will actually enter the kingdom. Because all unbelieving survivors of the tribulation days will be judged, either in one or the other of those judgments. But believers will go into the kingdom.

Now, these believers do not, at this point, have resurrection bodies. They have survived the tribulation in regular, ordinary earthly bodies, such as we have. And they go into the millennium in those same mortal, earthly bodies.

There will be, I'm sure, some pregnant women who go into the millennium. And very shortly, they will give birth. And there will be couples who go into the millennium, or there will be marriages immediately, and soon children will be born.

So, while the millennium starts well, that is with believers only, it won't be long before there will be candidates for unbelievers, people who will have to make a choice, a personal decision as to whether or not they will receive the king as their savior. These babies will grow, and these children will have to make a decision. And in a thousand years, you can get an awful lot of generations, can't you? How many? Well, it depends.

If you say there are four of generation every 25 years, that's four to a hundred, and that makes 40 in a thousand years. If you say there are three to a century, then that's 30 in a thousand years. But that's a lot of generations.

How many generations can you trace your family back? Well, if you can do it five or six, or eight or ten, you're doing very well. But 30 or 40, that's pretty difficult, I would say impossible. I doubt that any of us could do that.

So, in a thousand years, and 30 or 40 generations of people with longevity, where people live a lot longer so there's a greater population, there can be a lot of people born, and a lot of people will have to make decisions as to whether or not they will receive Christ as their personal savior, and many will opt not to do so. And of course, they will have to give outward allegiance at least, but they will not be inwardly and truly believers. So while the Millennium gets off to a great start, there will be unbelievers in it, and many by the time it concludes.

However, in the meantime, they have to give allegiance to the Lord, or else I think they will be punished with physical death. Now I want to speak about the character of the Millennium. And there's so many passages here and there in the Old and New Testaments that we're going to have a little problem whether we can turn to all of them or not.

I don't know. But if you can turn to some of them, that will be a help. And if you can't, just listen.

I want to try to group all of, or not all of, but some of the characteristics of the Millennium. I want to try to group them under three headings. First of all, there will be no war in the whole period of the Millennium until the very end.

No war. Imagine what that will mean to the budgets of the world of that time. No war.

No need for defense budgets. No provocations where a country or somebody may shoot down a plane or whatever. No war during the whole time.

Isaiah 2.4 He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against nations, neither shall they learn war anymore.

If there are 40 generations, probably only the first one would be able to remember war. So 39 generations of people will not be able to recall the experience of a war. Isn't that something? No wonder it's a Millennium.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares. You know that saying, that famous saying from Isaiah is on the UN building in New York. I wish the UN could do it, but only Christ will be able to do it.

The drawing that goes with that was done by a Russian, ironically. In East Germany, which I had the great privilege of visiting last summer, the young people had had a number of arm patches, about so big, printed with that saying on it. And that picture from the UN building, swords into plowshares.

And they wore these until the police told them they couldn't. And they did tell them they couldn't. So ironic, because I saw so many billboards and signs against NATO in East Germany.

But when young people wanted to say swords into plowshares, really wanted to express their desire for peace, the authorities wouldn't allow them to do so. All the problem, you see, was on the side of the West, not on the side of the East, according to them. No war during that time.

One of the most astounding prophecies, I think, is in the 19th chapter of Isaiah. You ought to look at this one in case it's unfamiliar to you. And here's the answer to another question that I asked you a few minutes ago.

In the 19th chapter of Isaiah, verse 19. 1919. In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord.

And it shall be for a sign and for a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt. For they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Savior and a Great One, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt.

And the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation. Yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it. Boy, that's not the grace of God.

And the Lord shall smite Egypt, he shall smite it and heal it. And they shall return to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them and shall heal them. In that day there will be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, that is, Iraq.

And the Iraqi shall come to Egypt, and the Egyptians into Iraq. And the Egyptians shall serve with the Iraqis. In that day shall Israel be a third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people.

And Assyria, the work of my hands. And Israel, mine here. Do you believe that? That's the millennium, believe me, when God can say Egypt will be his people and the Iraqis will be the work of his hands.

And of course, we're not surprised that they call Israel his inheritance. No war. No war.

And it will be worldwide, of course, when that happens. If you could turn quickly to Zechariah, you'd see another interesting description of the time of peace in the millennium. Zechariah chapter 8. Zechariah 8, verses 4 and 5. Zechariah 8, verses 4 and 5. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, There shall be yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hands because of his age.

You go out to the streets today, you're a candidate to be mugged. But not in that day. And here comes the answer to another question.

And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. I think this is the only place in the Bible where the phrase boys and girls is used. Children is used elsewhere.

But the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the millennium. No war. A time of great peace and security.

No nuclear pro or con. No nuclear conventions or demonstrations, pro or con. Won't be any need for them in the millennium.

Second characteristic, if I can put a number of things together. No war, first. No want in the millennium.

And of course, no defense budget will increase the money available for other things. Less taxes. There will not be too many underdeveloped nations.

So there will be no want in those days. Perhaps you could just turn to one reference in the book of Amos. We could see this summarized rather well in the last chapter of Amos.

Amos chapter 9, verse 13. Amos 9, 13. Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper.

In other words, they get a crop in and it's time to plant another one. Don't have to let the land lie idle. Don't have to take care of it.

Just plant one crop after another. The treader of grapes will follow him that soweth seeds. And the mountains shall drop sweet wine and the hills shall melt.

Great, great fertility in the millennium. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and shall inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof, and they shall make gardens and eat the fruit of them.

Great fertility, great prosperity. And I will plant them upon their land and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God. And great security.

No want in the millennial kingdom. I suppose we could look also at the 35th chapter of Isaiah. Isaiah has so many important chapters on millennial conditions and characteristics.

Here's one of them. You could remember some of them. There are chapters 2, 4, 11, 35.

Those are some of them. In chapter 35 we're told, for instance in verse 7, the parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water. And the habitations of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

So there will be great productivity of the earth in those days. Verse 6, streams in the desert, waters in the wilderness, so that the land can produce as it's never produced before. No want.

People shall have all their needs met. No social injustices because Christ will be the ruler and righteousness will reign. People will not be wronged in the millennium.

There will be no physical want and great security, so there will be not only a physical but societal prosperity as well. Third, no war, no want. Now I've got to have another W, don't I? So you remember.

And what I want to do is try to gather together the kind of rule that Christ will effect in the millennium. So I was thinking, what kind of a word can I have to capture that? So here it is. Are you ready for this one? No water gate.

No want and no war, no want and no water gate in the millennial kingdom because we'll have a perfect, perfect ruler in those days. In the 11th chapter of Isaiah, he is described in very precise and glorious terms as the one who has the spirit of the Lord upon him. Verse 2, spirit of wisdom, understanding, the spirit of counsel, and might, spirit of knowledge, the fear of the Lord.

And he, verse 3, middle of the verse, will not judge after the sight of his eyes, not that kind of evidence, not according to exhibits A, B, and C, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears, not according to the oral testimonies in the court, but he'll be able to judge because he's omniscient. He knows what's in the heart. With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.

He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, the thing that holds everything together, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. So we'll have a perfect ruler.

He will be a dictator, to be sure, but a benevolent dictator. And that's a fine kind of dictator to have. If dictator's too harsh a word, use despot.

Most people don't know what that means, but you can use it. It's not quite so harsh. A benevolent despot.

A benevolent ruler. But a ruler with absolute power. No cursing from that ruler.

No need to erase the tapes of his conversations. And I suppose the thing that so got me about Watergate was the cursing. And it does in high places.

We had another example of it locally with one of our business leaders not long ago. I think that gets me as much as anything. No cursing.

No crimes. No cover-ups. No bribes.

No corruption. No scheming. When Christ rules.

So there will be a peaceful world. No war. Prosperous people.

No want. And a perfect ruler. No Watergate.

Now, at the conclusion, of course, Revelation chapter 20 tells us that there will be a host of people who've only given outward allegiance to Christ. And there will be that possibility. People who have not had their hearts regenerated but who've given outward allegiance in order to survive.

And there will be enough people at the end of the millennium that when Satan is loosed again he will find a great number who will follow him. These will be unregenerate people who have given outward support of the king and the kingdom but who never had a heart change. Now listen.

In the millennium, the environment will be utopian. In the millennium, Christian education will be universal for the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. In the millennium, there will be total social justice.

But none of these things nor the combination of all of these things can guarantee heart conversion. And one of the great lessons that the millennium teaches us is that it's not environment that needs changing, it's men's hearts that need changing. And because so many men's hearts will not be changed even with

these perfect conditions, Satan will find many who will follow him at the conclusion when he is released again.

Revelation 20, verse 7. Satan loosed out of his prison, goes and deceives 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. They went up on the breadth of the earth, encompassed the camp of the saints about, the beloved city, and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. So the conclusion of the millennium is that there will be an immoral majority that will rebel against Christ and be judged and consigned to the lake of fire.

Now let's see if I covered all the questions. Millennium is spelled with two L's and two N's. M-I-L-L-E-N-N-I-U-M.

Jerusalem is the capital. You could be 100 years old and still be called a youth. And there will be rain in the millennium, according to a passage in Zechariah 14.

Before I conclude tonight, I want to focus on this question and answer. We often think of the millennium and what it will mean to the world, the climax that it will bring to history. But I want to ask you this question.

What do you think it will mean to Christ? We often talk about our coal ruling and reigning with Him, and that's true. But what it will mean to Him is something worth contemplating. In the second psalm, the psalmist says, Ask of me and I will give the nations to thee for an inheritance.

And the ultimate fulfillment of that is by the Messiah. And the nations are the nations of this earth. And the time ultimately of that fulfillment is in the millennial kingdom.

Have you ever had an inheritance? I expect many of you have. You get the notice, or the will is probated and you know you're going to have an inheritance. And perhaps you need the money right away, but you have to wait.

You probably won't have to wait more than nine months or a year now because the estate will have to be settled. But it's hard to wait, especially if you have a need for the inheritance. How long has our Lord waited for His inheritance? Oh, more than 2,000.

Ever since sin came into the world, He's waited for that inheritance. And when the millennium comes, it will mean for Him that what is rightfully His, He will now enjoy. Why must there be a millennium? Isn't it enough that He reigns in heaven today? And that's the question I ponder.

The fact of the scripture is that He will reign on earth, so it isn't enough that He's reigning in heaven today. There must be some added dimension that requires His reign on earth. And I suggest this is perhaps it.

That He must reign, He must be victorious, He must be the victor in the arena where seemingly He has been defeated for these many thousands of years. The devil could still laugh and say, look, I won. I won the earth.

If Christ was only to have His victory in heaven. But if He's also to have His victory on earth in the same arena where sin has reigned all of these years. And that's an added dimension to Christ the King that He needs to have and to experience.

In the fifth chapter of the Revelation there is a scroll and no one is able to open the seals of that scroll until finally someone came and could and did open the seals of that scroll. He was the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. He loosened those seven seals and He took the book, the scroll, out of the hand of God on the throne.

What is that scroll? Well, there are many labels given to it. It's the story of redemption. It's His right to rule.

It's His inheritance. And when He comes again He will have loosened all those seals and received His inheritance. And when John saw that vision of the lamb taking the scroll then all the living ones and all the creatures in heaven fell down and said, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him that sits on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever.

And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that lived forever. What will it mean to Christ? It will mean finally He has His inheritance in the arena, in the place where it was usurped by Satan and by sin.

Well, that's something about the millennium. Now we have two minutes and I think I'll have to sing again. And I think I think last night we just had a rehearsal.

So how about singing that same hymn tonight before we close? Would you like to do that?

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