

The Meaning of the Millennium

by David Guzik

The millennium is a period of time when Jesus Christ will reign over the earth, bringing peace, justice, and prosperity to all nations.

Duration: 56:58

Scripture: Psalm 72:8-19, Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 65:25, Ezekiel 34:22, Habakkuk 2:14, Luke 19:11

Topics: "Millennial Reign", "Eschatology"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the principles of the millennial earth as described in the book of Revelation. The first principle is that God's people will be given responsibility in the millennial earth based on their faithful service. This is illustrated through the parable of the talents in Luke chapter 19. The preacher emphasizes that during this period, Jesus Christ will reign gloriously and bring perfect justice and judgment, eliminating things like pornography and war. However, even in this perfect environment, Satan will be released at the end of the thousand years and lead a final rebellion, showing that a perfect environment cannot change the heart of man. The preacher concludes that the millennium serves to demonstrate the total victory of Jesus and his worthiness to rule, as well as to show what the earth could have been if mankind had submitted to Jesus instead of Satan.

Transcript

Tonight, for a final Wednesday night, as we consider prophecy, we're going to take a look at a very important subject, and that's the subject of the millennium. Tragically, many Christians throughout history have ignored or denied this promise of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. The early church, until the time of Augustine, and that was somewhere around the year 400.

Until that time, the early church almost universally believed in a coming, earthly, literal reign of Jesus that was initiated by his return. In the late 300s, there was a man named Tychonius, who was the first to influentially champion and speak for a spiritualized interpretation of this reign of Jesus. Basically, Tychonius said that the millennium is now, that we're in it right now, that these promises of the rule and reign of Jesus Christ over the nations of this earth, that they're not to be understood literally, they're to be understood spiritually.

And his view was adopted by Augustine, by the Roman Catholic Church, and later by most Reformation theologians. Now there's another belief growing out of what's called amillennialism, this belief that the millennium is really a spiritual thing, and it's right now. And that other belief is the doctrine of

postmillennialism.

And postmillennialism says that the millennium will happen in this age, before the return of Jesus, that the church will bring it to pass, that through the spread of the gospel and the influence of Christianity, that the church will end up ruling all over the earth. And this is what will bring in the return of Jesus. But you should know that I believe very strongly, as I speak to you here this evening, that the clear teaching of the Bible is not amillennialism, nor is it postmillennialism.

I believe the clear teaching of the Bible is what is commonly called premillennialism. And that's the teaching that Jesus Christ will return to this earth before the millennial earth, and that he will establish it and govern it directly. You should know that in the Old Testament alone, there are more than 400 verses in more than 20 different passages that deal with this time when Jesus Christ rules and reigns personally over planet Earth.

So tonight, I just want to talk to you about what the Bible says about the millennium. Obviously, we don't have time to go through 400 different verses. So I can't say that tonight is an exhaustive study, but I think it's a fairly complete one.

And first, we want to consider what we know about the millennium from the Old Testament. First of all, and if you'll turn to Psalm 72, I'll show you this principle. We know from Psalm 72, verses 8 through 19, and from Psalm 2, that the Messiah will gloriously and kindly reign over every nation and the world will bring him tribute, recognizing his reign.

Let me read you, as I said, from Psalm 72, beginning at verse 8. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and the Isles will bring presents.

The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before him. All nations shall serve him, for he will deliver the needy when he cries.

The poor also and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence and precious shall be their blood in his sight and he shall live and the gold of Sheba will be given to him.

Prayer also will be made for him continually and daily he shall be praised. There will be an abundance of grain in the earth on the top of the mountains. Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon and those of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

His name shall endure forever. His name shall continue as long as the sun and men shall be blessed in him. All nations shall call him blessed.

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things and blessed be his glorious name forever. And let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen.

Isn't that a glorious passage from Psalm 72, verses 8 through 19? In my mind, the passages in that section of Psalm 72 that stand out most markedly is where it speaks of all the nations bowing before him. Everybody, the entire earth. Now, friends, this is just something that we cannot say has ever existed on the earth up until this time.

All the nations have not bowed down before the Messiah of the Lord God. All the nations have not bowed their knee and paid tribute to and glorified Jesus Christ. But as Psalm 72 says, that day will come.

It's a promise of God that there will come a day when all nations will bow before the Messiah and he will reign over every nation. The world will bring him tribute. The world will recognize his reign.

Now, we certainly believe that the Lord God Almighty reigns over this earth. Just the sad fact is, is most men and most nations do not recognize his reign. Well, the Bible says that not only will Jesus reign over this earth in a spiritual sense, but there will come a day when the nations recognize his reign.

We call that period of time taking in totality what the Bible tells us about it. We often call it the millennium. Let me read to you from Psalm 2. It also speaks of his glorious reign.

Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall hold them in derision.

Then he shall speak to them in his wrath and distress them in his deep displeasure. Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree.

The Lord has said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Therefore, be wise, O kings, be instructed, you judges of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in him.

Friends, don't you see the same theme all throughout Psalm 2? Speaking of the nations, if they even dream of rising up against the Lord, they'll be brought into quick submission. Instead, the nations will bow their knee and submit to Jesus Christ. Plainly put, friends, we have to say that as we look honestly upon the history of the world, this has not happened yet, but the Bible promises that it will happen.

And unless we just want to say, well, nations means spiritual nations and worship means spiritual worship and earth means spiritual earth and start totally explaining away the clear, literal meaning of these words, we must say that there will come a time when the nations of this earth will become the nations in the kingdom of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and he will reign over them directly. Matter of fact, we know a second principle here about the millennium. We know from Isaiah chapter two, verses one through four, that the Messiah will rule over all nations from Jerusalem and that he will rule the world in justice and peace.

Let me read you from Isaiah chapter two, beginning at verse one. Now the word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow to it.

Many people shall come and say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways and we shall walk in his paths for out of Zion shall go forth the law and

the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and rebuke many people.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore.

Friends, can we honestly say that this day has come? It has not. The nation still learn war. Swords are not being beat up into plowshares.

Spears are not being beat up into pruning hooks. The military is supported and needs to be supported because wicked men rule this earth and they need to be held in check. Friends, is going to come a day when Jesus Christ reigns gloriously over this earth and he will hold wicked men in check and all the nation shall flow to Jerusalem to worship Jesus and to worship the Lord God of Israel.

So this is the plain promise from the book of Isaiah chapter two. And we know that the Messiah will rule over all nations from Jerusalem, that he'll rule the world in justice and peace. Isn't that something great to think about? You know, when you consider the way that nations rise up against nation and warfare and conflict and all the rest of it, wouldn't it be great if there was a supreme authority, a supreme king on this earth who was perfect in wisdom, perfect in power, perfect in justice and administration.

And when there was a dispute between one nation and other, he could come between them and say, I have the perfect solution. I know exactly what the fair thing, what the right thing, what the good thing is to do in this situation. And he would put penalties upon those who deserve it.

And he would reward those who deserve to be rewarded. And we see that in this way, the Messiah would reign gloriously over the earth. Bible tells us that this will happen.

And this is our great confidence. Here's the third principle. We know from Isaiah chapter 11 and from Isaiah chapter 65, that the Messiah will rule over all nations and that both the spiritual and the natural order of things shall be profoundly changed.

Yet there will still be sin and death and life and birth. Let me read you from Isaiah chapter 11, beginning at verse one. There shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. His delight is in the fear of the Lord. And he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes, nor decide by the hearing of his ears.

But with righteousness, he shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. And with the breath of his lips, he shall slay the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt of his loins and faithfulness, the belt of his waist. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb. The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together.

And a little child shall lead them. And the lion shall eat a straw like the ox. Excuse me, I skipped a line there.

The cow and the bear shall graze. The young one shall lie down together. The lion shall eat straw like an ox.

The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole. And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's 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. And in that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people. For the Gentiles shall seek him and his resting place shall be glorious.

Understand the incredible transformation there will be over the created order in this day. And friends, you see what Isaiah promises very plainly here, that there's going to come a day when the entire ecosystem is transformed. Instead of there being predator animals and animals that are preyed upon, the animal kingdom will live together in peace and harmony.

As he says, the wolf shall lay down with the lamb. Friends, that doesn't happen in this world right now. The wolf and the lamb may lie down together now, but only one of them gets up.

And it's the wolf who gets up with a full stomach. See, he says the leopard shall lie down with the young goat. Well, leopards eat young goats.

You get the picture here, don't you? That there's going to come a day when the Messiah reigns over this earth and his reign is so perfect, so glorious that it's not only shown in the fact that hearts are transformed, but the very creation itself will be transformed. And it says gloriously, too, in verse nine, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. It just won't be a time of peace between man and man.

It won't just be a time of peace between man and animal. It'll be a glorious time of peace and fellowship and revival and beautiful spiritual relationship between man and God. Let me read you another passage which illustrates the same principle.

It's from the book of Isaiah, chapter 65, beginning at verse 20. We read there. No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days for the child shall die 100 years old.

But the sinner being 100 years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

They shall not build in another inhabit. They shall not plant in another eat. For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of my people.

And my elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble. For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord and their offspring with them.

It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer. And while they are still speaking, I will hear. And the wolf and the lamb shall feed together.

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy.

And all my holy mountain says the Lord. Again, you see this long life promised. If someone dies 100 years old, they'll say, whoa, what a cursed man.

You see, life will be extended as it was before the flood. People will enjoy the fruit of their hands. You know, this is a passage that also leads us to understand that the millennium will be much more like everyday life right now than we realize.

It won't be as if the inhabitants of the earth in that time will all somehow be super holy, super spiritual people walking around with wings and an angelic glow around. They know they're going to build houses. There's still going to be sin because it talks about the sinner.

There's still going to be death. It won't be a perfect world. But it'll be a fallen world perfectly administrated.

That's the millennium, still this fallen world. You'll still have fallen human beings in it, but it'll be perfectly governed with the perfect environment ruled over by the perfect Lord Messiah, Jesus Christ. So, friends, we know from passages like Isaiah chapter 11 and Isaiah chapter 65 that the Messiah will rule over all nations and that both the spiritual and natural order of things will be profoundly changed.

Yet there will still be sin and death. There will still be life and birth during that period. It's not a different age.

It's the present age simply perfectly administered and governed. Here's a fourth principle. We know from Isaiah chapter 23 that when the Messiah rules over all the nations, Israel will live in safety.

Let me read the Isaiah, excuse me, Jeremiah chapter 23, verses five and six. Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a branch of righteousness. A king shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

In his days, Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell safely. Now, this is his name by which he will be called the Lord, our righteousness. Do you see that? In his days, Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell safely.

Friends, I want you to consider that during Israel's entire history, including since its glorious refounding in the year 1948, Israel has been at the mercy of larger and stronger nations around it. Well, that's not always going to be the case. When the glorious reign of the Messiah is extended over all nations, over all the earth, Israel will finally dwell in safety.

Matter of fact, there's going to be some great and impressive changes in Israel at that time. And this brings us to our fifth principle. We know from Zechariah chapter 14 that when the Messiah rules over all nations, a river will flow from Jerusalem, a glorious, new, spectacular river.

Let me read about that to you. Zechariah chapter 14, beginning at verse six. It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light.

The lights will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night. But at evening time, it shall happen that it will be light.

And in that day, it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them onward towards the Eastern Sea and half of them towards the Western Sea. In both summer and winter, it shall occur. And the Lord God shall be king over all the earth.

In that day, it shall be the Lord is one and his name one. You see this glorious river flowing from Jerusalem, half going towards the Dead Sea. And we know from other writings of the prophets that the

Dead Sea will be miraculously transformed instead of a sea rich in minerals and death in which nothing could live.

You'll have a spectacular, fruitful, fish-filled sea. The Dead Sea will be transformed, but then that river will also flow into the Mediterranean Sea, splitting east and west from Jerusalem. This will be just another example of the great ecological change that will happen during the millennium.

We also know from that same chapter in Zechariah that when the Messiah rules over all nations, the entire earth will come to Jerusalem to worship. Again, let me read you Zechariah chapter 14, beginning at verse 16. And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

It shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain. They shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles. Again, in this glorious millennial earth, when Jesus reigns in glory over all the nations, the nations will stream into Jerusalem to worship Jesus and to recognize his rightful reign over the entire earth. What a difference that will be.

You know, that's the kind of one world religion. We can all get behind the glorious one world religion of the Messiah. Not that it's our place to institute that.

The millennial kingdom is instituted by Jesus Christ. He brings it to pass. Here's a seventh principle of what we know of the millennium from the Old Testament.

We know from passages in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Hosea, that when the Messiah rules over all nations, King David will rule over Israel. Let me have you listen to this beginning here at Isaiah chapter 55. Isaiah 55, beginning of verse three, incline your ear and come to me here and your soul shall live.

And I will make an everlasting covenant with you. The sure mercies of David. Indeed, I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and a commander for the people.

Now listen to Jeremiah chapter 30, beginning at verse four. Now, these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah. For thus says the Lord.

We have seen a voice of trembling. A fear and have not peace. Ask now and see whether a man is ever in labor with a child.

So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor and all faces turn pale. Alas, for that day is great and there's none like it. It is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

This is a prophetic description of the great tribulation. It's called the time of Jacob's trouble because it will be an extremely wrenching and taxing time for the nation of Israel. But in the midst of it, they will be led to look to Jesus as their Messiah and they will trust in him.

And Jesus will return to this earth again when the people of Israel are ready to cry out and say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Now, let me continue now in verse eight of Jeremiah chapter 30.

For it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from your neck and will burst your bonds.

Foreigners shall no more enslave them, but they shall serve the Lord, their God and David, their king, whom I will raise up for them. You see that and in this glorious day of complete restoration for the earth and for Israel, God will establish David King David from the pages of the Old Testament. He will come to the earth and reign over Israel once again.

If that sounds like too much to be true, let me read you another passage that says the same thing from Ezekiel chapter 34, beginning at verse 22. It says, therefore, I will save my flock and they shall no longer be a prey and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will establish one shepherd over them and he shall feed them.

My servant David, he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God and my servant David, a prince among them. I, the Lord, have spoken twice.

David is mentioned in that passage as being the shepherd, the leader, the prince over the people of Israel. And this will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ. Here's a principle of what we know of the millennium from the Old Testament.

We know from Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48 and Ezekiel chapter 37, Ezekiel chapter 20 and even from Amos chapter nine, verse 11, that when the Messiah rules over all nations, there will be a millennial temple, millennial service and temple service, I should say, and sacrifices, not for atonement, but in remembrance of God's work. And they will be received there at the temple in Jerusalem. There's many, many passages in the book of Ezekiel, which described this.

Let me just read you one Ezekiel chapter 37, beginning at verse 26. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them. I will establish them and multiply them and I will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore.

My tabernacle also shall be with them. Indeed, I will be their God and they shall be my people. The nations will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel when my sanctuary is in their midst forever.

Again, there will be a temple in Jerusalem not to receive sacrifices for atonement. Friends, let us remember that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin past, present and future on the cross at Calvary. There can be no more sacrifice that's atoning or effective before God.

Yet we know that during the millennium, there will be a temple. There will be a priesthood. There will be a service.

There will be sacrifices not met with even the slightest hint of atonement, but only in remembrance of the sacrifices of old. I don't know if you've ever been to a place where they sort of have a historical village and the people are all around. They're dressed, perhaps in colonial times, and they're doing the things that they would be doing in a village in colonial times.

And they're all in character and such. And they want to make you believe, well, here we are, you know, in ancient Williamsburg or colonial Boston or whatever it would be. And the whole sense is to bring a remembrance.

It's just a play acting of ancient times. I believe that the millennial service of the temple will be somewhat like that. It'll be there as an instructional thing to show people what it was like in the ancient days and what it was like to serve and honor God at the temple.

Let me review before we move on to the New Testament. Let me review to you the things that we saw here in the Old Testament, the principles about the millennium. First of all, we saw that the Messiah will gloriously and kindly reign over every nation of the world and the world will bring him tribute, recognizing his reign.

Secondly, we saw that the Messiah will rule over all nations from Jerusalem and that he'll rule the world in justice and in peace. We saw that the Messiah, when he rules over the nations, that both the spiritual and the natural order of things will be profoundly changed. There will still remain sin and death and birth and life on the earth, but there will be a profound change on the earth.

We saw, fourthly, that when the Messiah rules over all nations, that Israel will live in safety. We saw next that in the millennium, when the Messiah rules over all nations, that a river will flow from Jerusalem. We saw that when the Messiah rules over all nations, that the entire earth will come to Jerusalem to worship.

We saw that during the millennium, King David will rule over Israel. And we saw, finally, the eighth point here was that in the millennial period, there will be a temple, temple services and sacrifices, again, not for atonement, but in remembrance of God's work in the past. Well, that's the Old Testament.

What does the New Testament have to say about the reign of Jesus Christ on this earth? Friends, let me remind you, perhaps, and I say this, perhaps, all in capital letters, perhaps there might be reason to spiritualize these passages if the New Testament said nothing about the literal reign of Jesus on this earth. But you should know that the New Testament also has much to tell us about the glorious reign of Jesus on this earth. The Old Testament tells us a lot, so does the New Testament.

This is nothing to explain away or to spiritualize. This is something that's going to happen on this earth. Now, from the New Testament, we know from Luke, chapter one, that a literal reign of Jesus on this earth is promised.

Listen to it. Luke, chapter one, beginning at verse 32. He will be great and he will be called the son of the highest and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end.

Now, friends, let me ask you a question. Has Jesus sat on the throne of his father David? Friends, that was a real throne. That was a political throne.

David wasn't king over spiritual Israel. Lord God was always king over spiritual Israel. The throne of David is a political throne.

It's a real throne. Not that spiritual isn't real, but what I'm just trying to say is that this is an actual thing, a political thing. Jesus Christ will rule literally and politically over this earth.

The New Testament says that the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he'll reign over the house of Jacob forever. We must be honest and take those words at face value. We must say that that has not happened yet.

Jesus has not established political rulership over Israel or any other nation of the earth. We know that the scriptures teach us that not only will Jesus rule and sit upon the throne of David and rule over the nation of Israel, but over the entire earth. Secondly, we know from Matthew chapter five, verse 18, that Jesus promised that heaven and earth will not pass away until all is fulfilled.

Remember all those great promises that we just read in the Old Testament, speaking about the triumphant and glorious reign of the Messiah over all the earth. Well, Jesus said that heaven and earth would not pass away until all those things were fulfilled. And that includes the Old Testament promises of a literal rule of the Messiah over this earth.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew chapter five, verse 18, he said, for assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Friends, does that mean that the promises that Jesus made that the Old Testament made, I should say, that concern the glorious reign of the Messiah on this earth, that they must be fulfilled? Yes, they will. Jesus said it will all be fulfilled.

Let's go to a third principle. We know that from Revelation chapter 19, beginning at verse 11, that Jesus will return to this earth literally and physically conquering over all evil and human opposition. You can turn in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 19.

Let me begin reading to you from verse 11. Hopefully this passage is familiar to you. Then I saw heaven open and behold, a white horse and he who sat on him was called faithful and true and in righteousness, he judges and makes war.

His eyes were like a flame of fire and on his head, many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood and his name is called the word of God.

And the armies in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed him on white horses. Now out of his mouth goes a sharp sword that with it he should strike the nations and he himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God.

And he has on his robe and on his thigh a name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Friends, this is glorious. The return of Jesus Christ in triumph and glory to this earth.

The Bible says that when he returns, that the Antichrist will be finished, that the false prophet will be finished and that Jesus will come and establish his reign and his rule over the entire earth. And might I say that it's not the church that brings this to pass. It's not that we can rule over all the earth politically or socially or economically.

You know, we must admit that the church as the church has had a difficult time with political power through our history. You know, there's a period in European history when the church was at its zenith in power and authority. It had the most political power it's ever had, the most economic power, the most military power, the most political power.

We call that period of European history the Dark Ages because the church couldn't handle its power very well. Now, we know next from Revelation chapter 20, verses one through three, that following Jesus's glorious return, Satan will be bound for a thousand years. Notice it here now.

Revelation chapter 20, beginning at verse one. 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 called 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 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. You see here, we're told that after Jesus returns to this earth in triumph and glory, that an angel and I love this passage because it's an anonymous angel.

It doesn't tell us that it's Michael, the archangel. It doesn't tell us that it's Gabriel who stands in the presence of the Lord. It doesn't tell us that it's a high ranking cherubim or seraphim.

Just says an angel. I think that if there's gradations of power among the angels, it's my own personal pet opinion that this is the weakest angel in all of heaven. And God dispatches the weakest angel in all of heaven with a great chain.

And when God wills it, he simply lays hold of Satan and chains him up and locks him away. And that's the end of the story. I want you to realize that God could do this anytime he pleases.

But it's not in his plan to end the activity of Satan yet. So we need to understand that even the activity of Satan on this earth is at the permission of God, not that each individual act is an expression of God's will, but in the bigger picture, if God wanted to stop Satan's activity, he could, but he doesn't. But he will one day.

And it's after the glorious and triumphant return of Jesus when Satan will be bound, we're told a very specific term, for 1,000 years. Now, there are some people who seem to have an inescapable need to read a passage like this and say something like this. Well, 1,000 can't mean 1,000.

It just means a long and glorious time. Well, friends, why not? Why shouldn't 1,000 years mean 1,000 years? If it's a long time, why shouldn't it be 1,000 years? That sounds like a long time to me. I don't understand how people seem to demand that this be spiritualized and transformed and changed after that matter.

No, no, not at all. Not at all. When it says 1,000 years, it means 1,000 years.

Now, we also know next that from Revelation chapter 20, verses four through six, that during this 1,000 years, the saints will live and reign with Jesus. Let me read it to you. Revelation chapter 20, verse four.

And I saw thrones and they sat on them and judgment was committed to them. And 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 nor his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads nor on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years.

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the 1,000 years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.

Over such, the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him 1,000 years. I don't know how many times God has to tell it to us until we believe that 1,000 years is 1,000 years. And during this 1,000 years, when Satan is bound, Jesus will rule over the earth in glory

and power.

All those beautiful passages in the Old Testament that we read will be fulfilled literally. And the saints will reign with him. My friends, this brings us to mind.

What will our role in the millennial earth be? And please listen carefully to this. We will not be citizens of the millennial earth. No, we already have been glorified.

We have already received our resurrection bodies. We are already ruling and reigning with Jesus. No, we are not citizens of the millennial earth.

We are rulers of the millennial earth under the supreme ruler, Jesus Christ. This is what we will do. And we will relate and interreact, those who are citizens, the yet unglorified human beings who will populate the earth during the millennium.

We will rule and administrate over them. We will run the government of Jesus Christ on this earth. Now, does that mean that we won't be able to go to heaven? I don't believe so.

I believe that saints during that period will have free access between the millennial earth and the courts of heaven where God the Father is enthroned. And during that period, we'll split our time between both. But we will carry out the will of Jesus Christ ruling and reigning with him over this earth.

You didn't realize that, did you? You didn't realize that God has a destiny for you much greater than merely surviving this earth and then playing a harp for eternity in heaven. God has a destiny for you to be a co-ruler of this earth with Jesus Christ for the thousand-year millennium. And might I say this, that your obedience, your faithfulness, your diligence in service during this period of time, this life that you live right now will determine what kind of place you have in the millennial earth.

For example, we know that David rules over Israel. Well, other people will be needed to rule over other nations and states and counties and cities and neighborhoods. This brings us to our next principle.

We know from Luke chapter 19, beginning at verse 11, that God's people will be given responsibility in the millennial earth according to their faithful service. And I won't read this passage, but what it is, it's the parable of the talents. When the master goes away and he entrusts an investment to each one of his servants, and as he goes away, having entrusted the investment to each of his servants, he promises them, I'm going to come back and hold you to account.

And as each one of them comes back, the master speaks to them and the master finds out what kind of job that they did. And as he does, he says, well, you have you've ruled well, you go ahead and take possession of so many cities. Again, you'd be over five cities, you'd be over this many cities in relation to how faithful they were in serving the Lord when he entrusted things to them.

Friends, how faithful are you in serving the Lord with what he has entrusted to you? You may feel like God has entrusted very little to you. You may take a look at yourself and think you're a person of small talents and small gifts, but God probably doesn't share that opinion, nor do the people around you. But let's just say it's true.

Let's just say you are a person of small talents. You are a person of small gifts. Well, are you serving the Lord with the small talents and the small gifts that you have? Then again, there may be others of you.

You have received great gifts, great talents. Are you serving the Lord to your fullest capacity with the gifts and the talents that he's giving you? It matters not just for now, but it matters for the millennium. You can imagine some people who have been diligent, faithful servants of the Lord.

They get to rule over a nice area of the earth. You get to rule over Hawaii. Another person who hasn't been a diligent servant, they get to serve the Lord and administrate Death Valley.

Friends, you might figure out that it's better to serve the Lord gloriously now so that we can serve him more gloriously later. Here's our next principle, our seventh principle. We know from Matthew chapter 25, beginning at verse 31, that at his glorious return, Jesus will judge the nations to see who's allowed to live in the millennial earth and what their status will be in the millennium.

Now, again, I won't read this whole passage to you, but Matthew chapter 25 shares how when Jesus returns gloriously, that he'll judge the nations and divide them on the right and on the left as sheep and as goats. That's interesting. When Jesus judges the nations, he doesn't judge them according to whether or not they trusted in him.

He judged them according to their kindness towards his people. You see, get this picture in your mind. At the end of the seven-year tribulation, when Jesus returns in glory, there probably won't be an enormous amount of Christians on the earth.

First of all, you've had the rapture before that seven-year tribulation. Then you've had many people who have come to Christ during the tribulation, but then will, I suppose, be martyred during that period. And then you'll have a smaller number who will remain until the Lord comes.

But then you will have a very substantial population on the earth remaining. We can make estimates that anywhere from one-third to one-half of the earth will perish during the great tribulation and the battle of Armageddon. Well, that still leaves several billion people alive on planet Earth when Jesus Christ returns.

Now, get this picture, folks. What's going to happen to all of those people? Well, Jesus will judge them. And the judgment won't be for eternal salvation.

The judgment will be to decide whether or not those people will be allowed to enter into his millennial earth. If you're not allowed to enter into his millennial earth, then you just go on to the world beyond. You go to Hades.

You go to hell. But if you're allowed to enter into the millennial earth, you enter in understanding that Jesus Christ is the boss. And you have to submit to his complete leadership.

But Jesus will have a judgment when he comes back to return. And when Jesus returns that judgment between the sheep and the goats, it will not be a judgment to decide eternal salvation. It will be a judgment to decide who enters into the millennium and who does not.

Then those people who have survived the great tribulation, those people who are allowed to continue on the earth after the judgment between the sheep and the goats, those people will populate the millennial earth and those people will be governed over by God's redeemed glorified saints who will rule and reign with Jesus Christ. And that's what the millennium will be like. You know, it'll be the same geography on planet earth.

It will still be, you know, a North America and a South America. I don't know if the nations will line up exactly as they did before. You know, though, that there will still be streets.

There'll still be cars. There'll still be technology. There'll still be a world in some ways, very much like we know it, but in other ways, not like we know it at all.

Because again, it'll be a perfect administration of Jesus Christ. And friends, how glorious it will be on planet earth and how excited we should be as Christians knowing that we get to help Jesus administrate this on the earth. You realize this, friends, that whenever crime is committed, it will be dealt with perfectly.

I mean, the judgment and the justice meted out will be perfect. That there won't be any pornography. There won't be any war.

That whenever somebody commits a crime, a mugging or a theft, that that person will be caught and judged and dealt with correctly. That Jesus Christ will reign gloriously over this earth. Friends, it can't happen too soon for me.

Here's an eighth principle, again, from the book of Revelation, chapter 20. And you might want to turn there. We're going to take a look, starting at verse seven.

But in this principle, we see that at the end of this thousand year period, Satan will be released and he will lead some on the earth in a final feudal rebellion. Again, that's Revelation, chapter 20, beginning at verse seven. 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 upon the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone with beast and the false prophet are.

And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. You see, at the end of the thousand years, Satan will be released from his bondage and he will return it to the earth and he will try to muster up a final rebellion. The tragedy of it will be is he will succeed.

Friends, I want you to think on this deeply. The Bible says that he will succeed. Certainly not everybody who lives on earth through the millennium, not everybody who's on the earth during the end of that thousand years will align themselves with Satan and rebel against the reign of Jesus Christ.

But he'll find plenty. He'll find plenty to join his side, to join his cause. And they will actually be bold enough to try to attack God and try to attack the beloved city, Jerusalem.

And when they do, there won't even be a battle. Did you notice that there's no battle mentioned here in Revelation chapter 20? Simply fire will come down from heaven to devour them. Friends, I think this is so significant in God's eternal plan.

It shows how lost man is. You see, when Satan was bound and when there was a perfect environment on earth, yes, man submitted to the rule of Jesus Christ because he had to. But as soon as another alternative was offered, as soon as Satan was loosed, he found followers on the earth.

That means that a thousand years of a perfect environment could not change the heart of man. Do you realize that, friends? A thousand years of a perfect environment cannot change the heart of man. Only the saving power of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit can do that.

And that tells us as well that not everybody on the earth during the millennium will be saved. Not by any means. It'll still be up for a person to make a personal decision of faith in Jesus Christ, even during the millennium.

Oh, you would think it would be much easier because they'll see the perfection of his glory, that they'll be able to see Jesus on a live television report from Jerusalem ruling and reigning, that they'll know firsthand his glory and his power and his majesty, yet they will not be forced to convert. That's not the style of God. And at the end of a thousand years, Satan will find some to follow him.

It'll be a final, futile rebellion. Finally, we know from Revelation chapter 20, beginning at verse 11, that after this final rebellion, after it's crushed, then comes the great white throne judgment. Friends, make no mistake about it.

There's a definite order to these events, and there's a purpose behind the order. You have the great tribulation. Then you have the glorious return of Jesus.

Then you have the judgment of the nations. Then you have the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ. Then you have the final, futile rebellion.

Then you have the great white throne judgment. Friends, it's very important to recognize those principles, and I'll speak why that's so important in just a few moments. Finally, and I already said finally once, but I'm saying it again.

We know from Revelation 21 and 22 that the millennial Earth is not the same as the eternal state or heaven, and that after the millennium, there will be a new heavens and a new earth over which Jesus will reign forever and ever. You realize that, friends? Don't confuse the millennial Earth with heaven. There will not be any sin or sickness or death in heaven, but there will be on the millennial Earth.

There will be no evildoers. There will be no roaming of Satan and raising of a rebellion in heaven, but there will be on the millennial Earth. And after the thousand years are finished, then the final rebellion will be crushed.

Then God will bring a new heavens and a new earth. And over that new heavens and new earth, Jesus will reign forever. And this reminds us that the reign of Jesus is not merely for a thousand years.

There's a specific thousand-year period that's emphasized, but it extends far beyond that. And George Handel, who wrote The Messiah, was right when he wrote in his famous song, and he shall reign forever and ever. So let me review those ten principles of the millennium that we saw from the New Testament here.

Again, very important principles of the millennium from the New Testament. First of all, we know that there is a literal reign of Jesus on this Earth promised. We know, secondly, that Jesus promised that heaven and earth would not pass away until all was fulfilled, including the Old Testament promises of a literal rule of the Messiah over the Earth.

We know that Jesus will return to this Earth literally and physically, conquering over all evil and human opposition. We know that following Jesus's glorious return, Satan will be bound for a thousand years. We know that during this thousand years, the saints will live and reign with Jesus.

We know that God's people will be given responsibility in the millennial Earth, according to their faithful service. We know that at his glorious return, Jesus will judge the nations to see who's allowed to live in the millennial Earth and what their status will be in the millennium. We know that at the end of the thousand years, Satan will be released and lead some on the Earth in a final, futile rebellion.

And we know that after the final rebellion is crushed comes the great white throne judgment. And we know that the millennial Earth is not the same as the eternal state or heaven, and that after the millennium, there will be a new heavens and a new Earth over which Jesus will reign forever and ever. And let me conclude tonight.

I know we've bitten off a huge chunk together, but let me conclude just with a few final thoughts on some reasons for the millennium. I mean, why? Why, God? Why isn't it that when Jesus returns that you just wipe everything out and have the new heavens and the new Earth and the great white throne judgment? Then God has a reason. You see, first of all, I'll give you four reasons for the millennium.

First, it demonstrates the total victory of Jesus and his worthiness to rule the nations. Friends, in my mind, over almost all the history of planet Earth, man has yielded control of this Earth, not to the Lord God in heaven, but man has submitted himself to Satan as the ruler of this Earth. It started in the Garden of Eden, and it's been that way ever since.

And friends, to me, there's just something wrong. If there is not a period of history when God shows what he could do on this Earth, on this Earth, when God shows how the Earth should be run, when Jesus is demonstrated to be the perfect ruler and that all men really should submit to him and honor him, that would be one of the great purposes, one of the great reasons for the millennium. It'll show the glory and the perfection and the fitness of the rule of Jesus Christ.

It'll show what mankind could have had. If we would have surrendered ourselves to Jesus instead of Satan. Secondly, the millennium will reveal the depths of man's rebellious nature in a perfect environment, and it'll show it that ultimately we cannot blame a bad environment for our sinful nature.

Now, I want you to remember that this is demonstrated before the great white throne judgment. Now, what do people often say when somebody grows up and becomes a great criminal or a great problem to society? They say, well, you know, it's terrible, but oh, you should have seen the neighborhood that they grew up in. Oh, it's terrible.

And oh, but you should have seen this. You should have seen that. And in some way or another, they blame that person's condition upon their environment.

Now, friends, we all know that a bad environment makes things worse. But it's important to know that the core of man's sinfulness is not because of a bad environment. The core of human sinfulness exists because we're sinners by nature.

Because we're all sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. It's absolutely staggering to see that after a thousand years of the perfect reign of Jesus on this earth, man will still rebel against God at the first opportunity that he has. What does that show us about man? It shows us that we're deeply, deeply fallen

and that we need Jesus Christ.

Friends, the human race doesn't just need better education. It doesn't just need a better environment. What it needs is it needs the glorious return of Jesus Christ and his personal transformation in every life.

Thirdly, the millennium will display the eternal depravity of Satan. You know, a thousand years of imprisonment doesn't rehabilitate him, but he's just as ready as ever to rebel against God as soon as he's freed. And then finally, the millennium will demonstrate the invulnerability of the city of God and God's new order.

Satan will try to attack it again, having been able to think and plot and plan for a thousand years. And that attack will go nowhere because the Lord God will reign forever and can never be defeated. Friends, I think sometimes we don't think enough about the millennium.

We don't think enough about our destiny to rule and reign with Jesus. You know, there are things that you go through in your life that make absolutely no sense at all. You can't make heads or tails of them.

Friends, God has a purpose for them, and the purpose may be to prepare you for something that he knows that you'll face in the millennial kingdom as you reign with him in glory and in triumph, as you're one of those who rule with him for a thousand years. Well, can you be mature enough to receive that, to accept that? That God is preparing you for a throne to come, and his work will continue until we're translated to glory. Let's pray.

Father, we say come quickly, Lord Jesus. And we say it especially, Lord, not just concerning the rapture of the church, which we anticipate, Lord, any day that you would appoint. Lord, we also say come quickly to see the kingdoms of this earth become the kingdoms of our Lord and to see Jesus rule over all nations in triumph and glory.

Prepare us for that day and to reign with you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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