

**UNDERSTANDING END TIMES PROPHECY  
FOCUS #8—THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST  
REVELATION 20:1-10**

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Throughout the course of human history there has been the dream, the longing, the looking forward to some sort of paradise on earth. Various religions and cultures have encouraged people with the idea that there is something better to come.

Obviously there is a significant difference of opinion as to how one comes into possession of this hoped for paradise. Some have suggested that it will come through human technology and education. Others have insisted that it will come through religious experience or expression. While some insist that it will require divine intervention.

Since the first sin in the Garden of Eden and the loss of paradise (Genesis 3), there has been a craving for paradise within the heart of mankind. Fortunately, some day the biblical reality is that people will enjoy and experience paradise on earth.

The Old Testament prophets anticipated a golden age for Israel, under the reign of their Messiah, which would include all the nations of the earth. Likewise, the New Testament apostles were strengthened by a future hope of Christ's return and reign on the earth.

Remember we have already covered the return of Christ at the Second Coming. Remember the terrible time of tribulation from the outpouring of God's wrath will come to an end when the Lord Jesus comes in power and glory from heaven to the earth.

Remember also that several important events occur in connection with the second coming of the Lord Jesus. After Christ returns to the earth and puts an end to the revolt against Him at the battle of Armageddon, several additional events occur.

1-The first event will be the judgment of the living Gentiles. Although literally billions of people perish during the Tribulation, millions are still alive at the end, and it is necessary for them to be judged to determine whether or not they can enter the Millennial Kingdom.

The first group to be so evaluated is the Gentiles. In what is commonly called the "sheep and goats judgment" (Matthew 25:31-46), saved Gentiles (sheep) are allowed into Messiah's kingdom (in their physical bodies), whereas the unsaved (the goats) are not allowed entrance, but are cast into hell.

2-The second event is the judgment of Israel (the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25:1-11). This also is a judgment to determine whether or not Israelites may enter into Messiah's kingdom. Saved Israelites (the wise) are allowed in, whereas unsaved Israelites (the foolish) are refused entrance into the Kingdom of Messiah.

3-The third event in connection with the Second Coming will be the resurrection and rewarding of Old Testament saints and the saints who perished in the Tribulation (Revelation 20:4-6; Daniel 12:2, 13; Revelation 6:9). It is at the Second Coming that these people are given their resurrected/glorified bodies and are rewarded according to the works that they have done.

4-The fourth event is the binding of Satan (Revelation 20:1-3). When the Lord Jesus returns, He will have Satan cast into the Abyss, where he will be completely restricted. He will not be able to exercise any influence during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. When the Scriptures speak of the binding of Satan, this includes the host of demons that do his bidding as well.

5-The fifth event will be the actual establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. Daniel 12 suggests that there will be a seventy-five day period between the Second Coming and the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom. It may be that during these weeks that the administration of the kingdom is established and the borders of the nations are defined. The main passage that speaks of this future reign is Revelation 20:1-10:

*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

In this passage six times, we are told of a one thousand year reign of Christ on the earth. This is referred to as “Christ’s millennial reign” or “the millennium.” The word “millennium” comes from the Latin words [MILLE] “thousand” and [ANNUS] “year.” Many believers are longing for this future time when they will see their Lord face to face as He reigns on the earth.

Let’s take a moment to focus on a few aspects of this future time:

### The Nature of the Millennium

As we have examined earlier, amillennialists claim that the promises of the kingdom are fulfilled by the church in the present age. Premillennialists believe Christ will establish an earthly kingdom upon His return at the end of the tribulation period.

Those who speak of the kingdom of God in the present do so on the basis of the rule of God in the lives of believers. Since the essence of Christ’s kingdom is His rule and reign, many premillennialists have emphasized the kingdom of God in the sense of God’s present rule over His followers.

It is certainly true that as Christ becomes Lord of the life of an individual His authority and dominion is manifested over the very people who will enjoy the kingdom. The kingdom may be said to exist presently in that a portion of the people who shall inherit the kingdom are alive today.

However, this is something short of the biblical concept of the kingdom of God. Strictly speaking, the kingdom of God refers to the prophesied and coming kingdom on earth.

### The Length of the Millennium

Six times in Revelation 20:2-7 the length of the millennium is stated to be 1,000 years. There must be solid evidence to reject the literal time of 1,000 years. As we have seen earlier, this compelling evidence does not exist.

### The Government of the Millennium

#### 1. The Nature of the Government

The government in the millennium will be a theocracy with the Lord Jesus ruling personally over all mankind (Daniel 7:14). There will be complete and perfect justice (Isaiah 11:4; 65:20).

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The city of Jerusalem will be the seat of government, exalted and glorified (Isaiah 2:3; 24:23; Zechariah 14:10).

### 2. The Rulers in the Government

The parable of the ten minas (Luke 19:11-27) indicates that those who were faithful in serving the Lord will be given authority. Resurrected saints will reign with Christ (Matthew 19:28; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; 20:6).

The apostles will have authority over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). King David will also apparently hold an important place in the kingdom (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24-25).

### 3. The Subjects of the Government

The subjects will be those who survive the tribulation and enter the kingdom in earthly bodies. At the outset of the millennium, all the people of the earth will be redeemed. As time goes on there will be children born of those who survived the tribulation. Many of these descendants will grow up to oppose the Lord, climaxing in the rebellion at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:7-9).

## Life in the Millennium

### 1. Righteousness

The Lord will reign in righteousness and will judge righteously (Isaiah 11:4-5; 16:5; 32:1). As Israel is regathered in the promised land, Zion will be the city of righteousness (Isaiah 1:26) and the righteous shall be satisfied (Matthew 5:6).

### 2. Peace

As a result of righteousness, the millennium will be peaceful. Enemies of Israel will be at peace with the nation (Isaiah 19:23-25; Zechariah 8:4-5) and the whole earth will dwell in peace (Isaiah 2:4).

### 3. Restoration

The human life span of those with earthly bodies will increase (Isaiah 65:20-23), sickness and deformities will be healed (Isaiah 29:17-19; 33:24).

The earth itself will also experience restoration as its decay will be reversed and the topography of the earth will be changed (Isaiah 2:2; Ezekiel 47-48; Zechariah 14:4-10;

Romans 8:19-23).

Social problems of poverty will be solved (Psalm 72:12-13). The earth will enjoy renewed productivity as even the deserts and wilderness will become useful (Isaiah 35:1-7; Amos 9:13-14; Zechariah 14:8).

The curse upon the earth due to the fall of man will be reversed, though perhaps not completely overcome until death is conquered at the end of the millennium.

#### 4. Worship

The knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth (Isaiah 2:2-3). There will be a millennial temple, different from prior temples, where animal sacrifices will be offered as memorials to the death of Christ (Ezekiel 40-46; Isaiah 56:7; 66:20-23; Jeremiah 33:17-18; Malachi 3:3-4). The feasts of Passover and Tabernacles will be reinstated (Ezekiel 45:18-25; Zechariah 14:16-21).

It is in the millennium when the New Covenant will be ultimately fulfilled, as all will know the Lord (Ezekiel 36:25-32; Jeremiah 31:31-34).

### **Conclusion**

In light of the premillennial return and literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth, as believers, we must look forward to this future time when we will reign with Christ in a kingdom of righteousness and peace. This future opportunity to reign with Christ should drive us to endure our present suffering (2 Timothy 2:12) as we look forward to the time when those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied (cf. Matthew 5:6).