

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Message #25
Revelation 20:1-6 – The Kingdom Age
(2/28/2010 PM)

The kingdom is one of the major themes of scripture. The Universal Kingdom of God is God's constant rule over all. The Old Testament is filled with passages that anticipate the coming Mediatorial Messianic Kingdom in Israel. This Kingdom Age is often referred to as the Millennium. The word is from the Latin *mille*, thousand, and *annus*, year. This comes from the six references to a “thousand years” found in verses 2-7. Jesus Christ Himself spoke of the coming kingdom age. [Matthew 19:28](#), “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory...”

The prophecies of scripture look forward to this time. The Abrahamic and Palestinian Covenants concerning the promise of the land to Israel will be fulfilled in the Kingdom Age. The Davidic Covenant promises to David concerning his kingdom, house, and throne will be fulfilled in this age. The promises of the New Covenant of a new heart and the filling of the Spirit will be realized in this age.

1. [Three Major Theological Positions](#)

Three Views of the Millennium

• **Postmillennialism**

This view is primarily associated with Liberal Theology. The idea is that because of man's innate goodness we will bring in the Kingdom Age. We will then invite the king to return. The “thousand years” reference is seen as a symbolic reference to a golden age of righteousness. This view was popular before the two World Wars.

• **Amillennialism**

This view is primarily that of Reformed Theology. They see the “thousand years” as symbolic. They believe that the promises to Israel are spiritually fulfilled by the Church. They use an allegorical approach to the interpretation of prophecy. They see [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#) as the same event as [Revelation 19](#). Christ comes back as a conquering king and is greeted by the saints and escorted immediately back to earth.

• **Premillennialism**

This is the view of Grace Bible Church. We believe that the promises to Israel will be literally fulfilled as have been all other prophecies. We believe in the Pretribulational Rapture of the church and the Premillennial Return of Christ. We distinguish between Israel and the Church. We consistently apply a literal hermeneutic to all of scripture including prophetic passages. We recognize the difference between obvious symbolic language and the allegorical approach to prophetic scripture. We see the “thousand years” as literal.

Robert Thomas, “The fact is that no number in Revelation is verifiably a symbolic number. On the other hand, the nonsymbolic usage of numbers is the rule.” The 144,000 are 12,000 out of the 12 tribes. There are 7 seal, 7 trumpet and 7 bowl judgments. The letter was sent to 7 churches. The numerical references to Daniel's 70th Week Prophecy are literal: 1,260 days ([11:3](#), [12:6](#)) and 42 months ([11:2](#), [13:5](#)).

A Literal Interpretation of Prophecy Leads Naturally to a Premillennial View

2. [The Binding of Satan \(1-3\)](#)

The Removal of Supernatural Enemies

(1) “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.”

John again uses the phrase “I saw” to advance the chronology of the vision. The identity of the angel is not given, it may be Michael the archangel. The “key” represents that he has been delegated this authority from God. The metaphor of binding spirit beings with a “chain” is also used in Jude 6, “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

- **Satan is the original adversary**

(2) “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years”

This fourfold description of him assures his identity. He is “the dragon”. He is called this twelve times in Revelation (12:3-4,7,9,13,16-17; 13:2,4,11; 16:13). This title relates to his relationship to the kingdoms of this world. When he returns at the end of the Millennium he is not described this way anymore. He is “that serpent of old” which refers back to the Garden of Eden and the original temptation by which the curse came. The name “Devil” means slanderer. In the Kingdom Age he will no longer be able to be “the accuser of our brethren” (12:10). Jesus called him “a liar and the father of it”, John 8:44. “Satan” means adversary and is used 53 times in the Bible.

Satan Is a Defeated Foe awaiting Imprisonment

- **The place of his imprisonment will be the pit of the abyss**

(3) “and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him”

We saw in chapter 12 that Satan was cast down to the earth earlier in the Tribulation Period. (12:7-9) “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

We said that this most likely occurs in the middle of the Tribulation Period. He was cast out of the third heaven before Creation, was cast to the earth and now is cast into the pit of the abyss. This is the temporary prison for fallen demons and is seen seven times in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3).

It is the pit that was opened for the 5th Trumpet Judgment in (9:1-12). We saw in chapter 9 that not all demons are confined but a certain select number are. The demons of Gadara begged Jesus not to send them there.

Luke 8:31, “And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.”

We saw in (19:20) that the Antichrist and the False Prophet were “cast alive into the lake of fire”. Satan will be cast there after the Kingdom Age (20:10). The Bible clearly teaches that this binding has not yet taken place. 1 Peter 5:8, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

Satan will not be permitted to have any influence upon the people of the world for a time.

(3) “so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”

Satan is “the god of this age”, 2 Corinthians 4:4. Since the garden he has carried on his work to hinder and destroy the program of God. Christ will have him removed

before He establishes His Millennial Reign. The terminology shows that Satan will be rendered powerless. McClain, “If this language does not mean that the immobilization of Satan is complete, so far as his deception of the nations is concerned, then there is no way to express the idea.” We will see later why God allows him to be released at the end of the 1,000 years.

Satan Will Have No Place in the Coming Kingdom Age

3. **The Reigning of the Saints (4)**

Resurrected Believers of all the Ages

(4) “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.”

John saw occupied thrones and the ones who sit upon them are said to “be priests of God and of Christ, and reign with Him a thousand years” (6).

- **The identity of “they” is seen in John’s previous revelations**

In his introduction to the churches John wrote “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father” (1:5-6).

Christ gave the same promise of reigning with Him to the Church of Thyatira.

(2:26-27) “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations — He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels — as I also have received from My Father.”

This is taken from Psalm 2 and is almost a direct quote. This Psalm predicts Christ’s rule over the nations.

John recorded his vision of the 24 elders in heaven seated on thrones. We believe that they represent Church Age saints. These have been translated or resurrected and dwelling in heaven in their glorified bodies.

(4:4) “Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.”

He then recorded the song of the elders.

(5:9-10) “And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”

Some Thrones Will be Occupied by Church Age Saints

1 Corinthians 6:2, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?”

- **Another group of saints is “then” introduced by John**

(4) “Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

These are clearly martyred Tribulation saints. Some of these were killed in the opening of the 5th Seal Judgment in (6:9-11).

We see them again in (7:13-17).

Some Thrones Will Be Occupied by Tribulation Saints

- **Other scriptures reveal other groups of saints**

Daniel’s prophecy has the promise that Old Testament Saints will reign in the Messianic Kingdom.

Daniel 7:27, “Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

Jesus told the Apostles that they would reign with Christ in the Kingdom Age. Matthew 19:28, “So Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’”

Some Thrones Will Be Occupied by Old Testament Saints and the Apostles

4. **The First Resurrection (5-6)**

It Is the First “Kind” of Resurrection

(5) “But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.”

The “rest of the dead” are the lost of all the ages. They remain in Hades awaiting their final judgment revealed in (20:11-15).

There are specific resurrections but resurrection is spoken of at times in general terms.

John 5:28-29, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

Luke 14:14, “And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

• **The First Resurrection is the resurrection of the Just**

(5-6) “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 a thousand years.”

The Church Age Saints are included in this having been resurrected at the Rapture of the Church, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. It seems likely that the Old Testament saints are resurrected here in Revelation at this time in preparation for the Kingdom Age. This seems to be indicated by Daniel 12:1-2, “At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

The Second Death Is Eternal Punishment in the Lake of Fire (20:14)