



I AM

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

Revelation 20

Teaching Notes

INTRO

Revelation 19 records that Jesus is coming back on a white horse to clean house. The nations will be destroyed, and the beast and the false prophet will be thrown into a lake of fire. Everything we have been reading since the Garden of Eden is coming to a head (Genesis 3). The word we have used for the book of Genesis was *SEED*, and the word we have used for the book of Revelation is *I AM*. From the beginning of time until today, Christ was and is present. The battle of Armageddon has already happened as we start chapter 20. Chapter 20 starts to show the process of restoration.

TEACHING

Revelation 20:1-2: The angel with the key to the abyss seized Satan and bound him for 1,000 years. The angel was also carrying a chain. You have to believe there was some kind of struggle here, that Satan did not go willingly into chains for 1,000 years. This would have happened after the battle of Armageddon, and Jesus would have already been on earth. There is a great theological debate here. People love to discuss whether Satan was really bound for 1,000 years or if it was symbolic. I believe he was bound for 1,000 years.

Revelation 20:3: Remember that the beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet were already in the abyss or lake of fire. Now, Satan would join them. People call this time the Millennium. MacArthur outlines the three major schools of thoughts on this 1,000 years bondage.

1. "Premillennialism interprets this as a literal 1,000 year period during which Jesus Christ, in fulfillment of numerous Old Testament prophecies (2 Samuel 7:12–16; Psalm 2; Isaiah 11:6–12; 24:23; Hosea 3:4, 5; Joel 3:9–21; Amos 9:8–15; Micah 4:1–8; Zephaniah 3:14–20; Zechariah 14:1–11; Matthew 24:29–31, 36–44), reigns on the earth."
2. "Postmillennialism understands the reference to a 1,000-year period as only symbolic of a golden age of righteousness and spiritual prosperity. It will be ushered in by the spread of the Gospel during the present church age and brought to completion when Christ returns. According to this view, references to Christ's reign on earth primarily describes His spiritual reign in the hearts of believers in the church."
3. "Amillennialism understands the 1,000 years to be merely symbolic of a long period of time. This view interprets Old Testament prophecies of a Millennium as being fulfilled spiritually now in the church (either on earth or in heaven) or as references to the eternal state."¹

I have never really taken a stance, but it is hard not to when you see what is to come. John wrote that ultimately Satan is going to be released and then imprisoned again. I think if you do not take the 1,000 years literally, it makes it very hard to interpret Revelation 20–22. We are going to use the argument that it points to a literal 1,000 years. After those years, Satan is going to be released. MacArthur states, "Satan will be released so God can make a permanent end of sin before establishing a new heaven and earth."² Satan will make a final stand with those that reject Christ, and they will be crushed.

Revelation 20:4: Those who were martyred for rejecting the mark of the beast will rise up and rule with Christ, having been given the authority to judge for these 1,000 years. John saw a bodily resurrection. Tom Constable outlines times God has resurrected or will resurrect or raise the righteous:

- **First**, He raised Jesus Christ who is the 'firstfruits' of those who sleep (1 Corinthians 15:23).
- **Second**, He raised some saints near Jerusalem shortly after Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 27:52-53).
- **Third**, He will raise Christians at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).
- **Fourth**, He will raise the two witnesses during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 11:3, 11).
- **Fifth**, He will raise the Tribulation martyrs at the beginning of the Millennium (Revelation 20:4–5).
- **Sixth**, He will raise the Old Testament saints at the same time (Isaiah 26:19–21; Ezekiel 37:12–14; Daniel 12:2–4).
- **Seventh**, He will apparently raise the saints who die during the Millennium (Revelation 12–13).³

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2005), p. 2034.

² MacArthur, p. 2034.

³ Thomas Constable, *Dr. Constable's Expository Bible Study Notes: Revelation*, p. 324; available at <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/revelation.pdf>.



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This seems to be a pattern of the Lord. He has no problem bringing people back to life. In this context, we see the tribulation martyrs coming back to life. We have to interpret these verses with consistency, so if you say the 1,000 years are symbolic, what are you going to do with verse 4?

Revelation 20:5: Many scholars suggest those resurrected after the 1,000-year period would be the bodies of the unbelievers. These unbelievers have not yet been judged.

Revelation 20:6: The first resurrection is the resurrection of life. MacArthur writes the resurrection of life is “the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14), the resurrection of ‘those who are Christ’s at His coming’ (1 Corinthians 15:23), and the ‘better resurrection’ (Hebrews 11:35). It includes only the redeemed church age, the Old Testament, and Tribulation. They will enter the kingdom in resurrection bodies, along with believers who survived the Tribulation.”⁴ Believers will reign and rule with Christ for these 1,000 years. The second death has no power over them. “The first death is only physical; the second is spiritual and eternal in the lake of fire, the final, eternal hell.”⁵ There are seven “blessed” statements in Revelation. Here John wrote, “Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!” Those who die in the Lord are blessed with the privilege of entering His kingdom.

Revelation 20:7: After the 1,000 years, Christ is still king on earth. Christ has all His believers with Him, but there will still be nonbelievers. That 1,000 years is not a period of glorification here on earth. There will still be sin. Satan will be released in order to have one last shot. We know he will fail.

Revelation 20:8–9: Technically there are two battles—the battle of Armageddon and the battle after Satan is released. Satan will gather a huge army that surrounds the “encampment of the saints.” A fire will come down from heaven and consume them (all of the enemy).

Revelation 20:10: Again, remember that, at this point, the beast and the false prophet are still in the lake of fire. The devil will now join them and will be tortured day and night forever. There have been incredible teachers of the Bible who have gone astray, saying hell does not exist. If that’s true, why did Jesus die on the cross? He was resurrected from the cross in order to give us life. He also didn’t want us to experience this torture day and night forever. When you take away “the tormenting day and night,” you take away the power of the cross. People want to make the message soft.

Revelation 20:11–15: This will be the final judgment of Satan. It will be done and officially over. Now we begin to see the great white throne of judgment. The unbelievers who were raised after the 1000 year period are to be judged by their actions and thoughts on earth. Those who reject Christ will all face judgment. No one is exempt. No longer does death have a place.

CLOSING

Some say not to preach hell when trying to convert someone to Christ. I say, do it! Jesus has so much to offer. Hell is real. Revelation should drive us to truth, love, and compassion. If your name is not written in the book of life, you’re not getting in. No one should have to face that. I hope we can use this as a motivation to share Christ. Judgment is around the corner.

⁴ MacArthur, p. 2035.

⁵ MacArthur, p. 2035.