

The Prophecy Series: The Book of Revelation

27 - THE MILLENNIAL REIGN AND THE GREAT WHITE THRONE (REVELATION 20:1-15)

I. The Millennial Reign of Christ (Revelation 20:1-10)

Biblical Note: The Millennium

The Millennium refers to the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ. This is the title given to the 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth. Six times in Revelation 20:2-7, the millennial kingdom is specifically said to be 1000 years in length. When Christ returns to the earth, He will establish Himself as king in Jerusalem, sitting on the throne of David (Luke 1:32–33). The unconditional covenants demand a literal, physical return of Christ to establish the kingdom. The Abrahamic Covenant promised Israel a land, a posterity and ruler, and a spiritual blessing (Genesis 12:1–3). The Palestinian Covenant promised Israel a restoration to the land and occupation of the land (Deuteronomy 30:1–10). The Davidic Covenant promised Israel a king from David's line who would rule forever—giving the nation rest from all their enemies (2 Samuel 7:10–13). It will be a time of peace (Micah 4:2–4; Isaiah 32:17–18), joy (Isaiah 61:7, 10), and comfort (Isaiah 40:1–2). The Bible also tells us that only believers will enter the millennial kingdom. Because of this, it will be a time of obedience (Jeremiah 31:33), holiness (Isaiah 35:8), truth (Isaiah 65:16), and the knowledge of God (Isaiah 11:9, Habakkuk 2:14). Christ will rule as king (Isaiah 9:3–7; 11:1–10). Nobles and governors will also rule (Isaiah 32:1; Matthew 19:28), and Jerusalem will be the political center of the world (Zechariah 8:3). The fulfillment of many of God's covenants and promises rests on a literal, physical, future kingdom. There is no solid basis for denying the literal interpretation of the millennial kingdom and its duration being 1000 years.

A. The Binding of Satan (Revelation 20:1-3)

1. The Great Angel (Revelation 20:1)

- John sees a great angel with a key to the abyss and a large chain.

2. Satan is Bound (Revelation 20:2a)

- The great angel takes Satan and binds him with the chain.

3. The Duration and Place of Binding (Revelation 20:2b-3a)

- Satan is bound for a thousand years and cast into the abyss.

4. The Purpose of the Binding (Revelation 20:3b)

- Satan is bound so that he cannot deceive the nations.

B. The Resurrection and Reward of the Martyrs (Revelation 20:4-6)

1. The Resurrection of the Martyrs (Revelation 20:4)

- John sees the resurrection of the righteous dead as they reign with Christ.

2. The Time of the Resurrection of the Wicked (Revelation 20:5)

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- The wicked are not raised during this thousand-year reign.
3. The Blessing of the First Resurrection (Revelation 20:6)
 - Those who take part in this resurrection will be truly blessed.

Biblical Note: The First Resurrection

Revelation 20:4-6 mentions a “first resurrection” and identifies those involved as “blessed and holy.” It is the raising of all believers. It corresponds with Jesus’ teaching of the “resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14) and the “resurrection of life” (John 5:29). The first resurrection takes place in various stages. Jesus Christ Himself (the “first fruits,” 1 Corinthians 15:20), paved the way for the resurrection of all who believe in Him. There was a resurrection of the Jerusalem saints (Matthew 27:52-53) which should be included in our consideration of the first resurrection. Still to come are the resurrection of “the dead in Christ” at the Lord’s return (1 Thessalonians 4:16) and the resurrection of the martyrs at the end of the Tribulation (Revelation 20:4). The event which begins the first resurrection is the millennial kingdom.

C. The Final Doom of Satan (Revelation 20:7-10)

1. The Release of Satan (Revelation 20:7-8)
 - Satan is released to deceive the nations against Christ.
2. The Final Battle (Revelation 20:9)
 - The nations gather against the Saints and are destroyed instantly.

Biblical Note: Gog and Magog

Magog was a grandson of Noah (Genesis 10:2). The descendants of Magog settled to the far north of Israel, likely in Europe and northern Asia (Ezekiel 38:2). Magog seems to be used to refer to "northern barbarians" in general, but likely also has a connection to Magog the person. The people of Magog are described as skilled warriors (Ezekiel 38:15; 39:3-9). Gog and Magog are referred to in Ezekiel 38-39 and in Revelation 20:7-8. While these two instances carry the same names, they do not refer to the same people and events. In Ezekiel’s prophecy, Gog will be the leader of a great army that attacks the land of Israel. Gog is described as “of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal” (Ezekiel 38:2-3). Ezekiel’s battle of Gog and Magog occurs in the tribulation period, more specifically in the first 3 1/2 years. The strongest evidence for this view is that the attack will come when Israel is at peace (Ezekiel 38:8, 11). The description from Ezekiel is that of a nation that has security and has laid down its defenses. Possibly the battle will occur just before the midpoint of the seven-year period. According to Ezekiel, Gog will be defeated by God Himself on the mountains of Israel. The slaughter will be so great it will take seven months to bury all of the dead (Ezekiel 39:11-12). Gog and Magog are mentioned again in Revelation 20:7-8. The duplicated use of the names Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:8-9 is to show that these people demonstrate the same rebellion against God and antagonism toward God as those in Ezekiel 38-39. The book of Revelation uses Ezekiel’s prophecy about Magog to portray a final end-times attack on the nation of Israel (Revelation 20:8-9). The result of this battle is that all are destroyed, and Satan will find his final place in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). Therefore in the Book of

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Revelation, Gog and Magog refer to all the ungodly nations of the earth who oppose the people of God.

3. The Judgment of Satan (Revelation 20:10)

- Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity.

II. The Judgment of the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15)

A. The Resurrection and Judgment of the Wicked Dead (Revelation 20:11-13)

1. The Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11)

- John sees a Great White Throne and the terrifying One who sat on it.

Biblical Note: The Great White Throne

The Great White Throne is the final judgment prior to the lost being cast into the lake of fire. This judgment will take place after the millennium and after Satan, the beast, and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-10). The books that are opened (Revelation 20:12) contain records of everyone's deeds, whether they are good or evil, because God knows everything that has ever been said, done, or even thought, and He will reward or punish each one accordingly (Psalm 28:4; 62:12; Romans 2:6; Revelation 2:23; 18:6; 22:12). Also at this time, another book is opened, called the "book of life" (Revelation 20:12). It is this book that determines whether a person will inherit eternal life with God or receive everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.

2. The Judgment of the Dead (Revelation 20:12-13)

- The books and the book of Life are opened.
- All of the wicked dead are judged according to their works.

B. The Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14-15)

1. The Destruction of Death and Hades (Revelation 20:14)

- All forces of evil cease to exist in the presence of God.

2. The Destruction of the Wicked (Revelation 20:15)

- All who are not found in the book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire.