

## God's Kingdom on Earth

Rev. 20:1-15

1/20/2020

We have arrived in our studies to a section of Revelation that gets little attention or respect from many of our age. We could say that in respect of the entire Book I suppose. This chapter has a treasury of deep truths about God's plan in respect to a 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ. Satan, man, the tribulation saints, the resurrections, and the Great White Throne will be dealt with in relation to this reign. I have attempted to "streamline" these subjects but will need to deal with them in more than one study it appears.

Here in Revelation 20 is the first reference to the length of the Messianic Kingdom of Christ. The "1,000 years" is mentioned six times indicating this reign has a literal and specific timeframe. The Latin for this is Millennium. The Greek for this is Chiliasm. Chiliasm was the truth understood by the early church. It is recorded that they proclaimed it and thought that any other interpretation was considered heresy.

2x2=4. This is the only right answer. God's Word is His truth and can only mean exactly what He sends us. Many have explained to me that I can read it the way I want and they can read it their way. Jesus tells us He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. This book itself warns us not to add to or take away from God's truth. (Rev. 22:18, 19) Satan began His deception in the Garden of Eden when he said "hath God said" (Gen. 3:1). Twisting and questioning the clear teaching of Scripture has been his work since then. He blinds the minds of them which believe not. (II Cor. 4:4)

Eschatology: The study of the Word of God concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind. This concept is commonly known as the "end of the world" or "end times". This Greek word derives itself from two root words meaning "study" and "end times".

There are three main schools of thought concerning this 1,000 year reign of Christ on this earth. One is called **Amillennialism**. The "a" before millennialism says there will not be a literal, earthly kingdom established. Its chief weakness is that it spiritualizes the thousand years, as it does the entire Book of Revelation. Amillennialists place the events of Revelation, including this 1,000 years, in the history of mankind. They, in their attempt to answer the many difficulties brought about by this stance, search all through the history of the visible church and claim the answers to the dialogue of Revelation spiritualized in some event thus recorded that approaches a similarity to a particular text. This approach leaves many loopholes in understanding of Revelation. They maintain Revelation to be in the past and not a revealing of the end of time. As stated before the early church fathers believed in the literal reign of Christ (Millennialism) and His return to this earth before this occurrence (Premillennialism). History shows that Clement of Alexandria (155-220 A.D.) believing in the divine origin of Greek philosophy, taught that all Scriptures must be allegorically understood. The danger of this system of thought is that it places all of Scripture as beyond literal understanding. This further allows for "revelations" delivered to an individual from unknown sources. When God intends for something to be a symbol He states it in the text. This idea began to slowly grow and was systematized and propounded by Origen of Alexandria (185-254 A.D.) and further propagated by Augustine of Hippo (345-430 A.D.) who made the view popular. The reformers restored Bible interpretation to a more literal approach, except in the area of Bible prophecy. Many still take an allegorical approach when teaching about the kingdom. They teach that the literal promises of Israel were passed on to the Church in a spiritualized way and that there would be no regathering of the Jews to the land and no literal one thousand reign of Christ.

The second view is called Postmillennialism. This view places the 1,000 years as a time frame that passes without Christ here to reign at the end. This view was first propagated by Daniel Witby (1638-1726 A.D.) He was a self-proclaimed Unitarian which means a belief in "Jesus only" and not the Trinity. This teaching claims the church is responsible in ushering in a better society.

This is done by bringing the world to a state whereby Christianity has progressed to the point of overcoming the evils of our society and thus Jesus would come and reign on this work. This belief expanded itself into many Christian circles until the events of World War 1 and 2 and the invention of the atomic bomb. Mankind's cruelty was made evident and things were not getting better, as was being taught. Smaller groups are still holding to the teaching that the Church will eventually restore all the demands of the Old Testament Law and thereby conquer society and restore righteousness, making it possible for the promised kingdom to be realized. The New Testament writers are united in the teaching that this world will spiral downward away from God. We have seen in the beginning of this book the infiltration of ungodly practices and beliefs in the progression of Church history to the point that the final Laodicea state is lukewarm in service to Jesus. Again it will take a great stretch of effort to follow this teaching with all the evidence against its doctrine.

The final viewpoint is that of Premillennialism. This is the approach that has been presented throughout this study of the Book of Revelation believing it being an orderly progression of God's unveiling His plan for mankind being the end declared to be this 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. We have seen the Church in chapter 4 removed from this earth and placed in Heaven with chapter 19 again showing the Bride following Jesus to this earth at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel's prophecy. We must "rightly divide" the Word of God speaking where He speaks and avoiding adding anything to His words. We will review the massive amount of Scriptures that support this viewpoint of the end of the ages.

The early Church expected Christ to return and establish the throne of David, as promised in the Old Testament. Premillennialism holds to the literal promises of an earthly kingdom and cites how the apostle Peter referred to II Sam. 7:12 " (David was) a prophet, and (knew) that God had sworn with an oath to him...he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:30). Again this is taking the Bible at face value applying the literalist interpretation unless the context instructs otherwise. This view predicts the world getting worse and apostasy in the church increasing.

The Millennium is God's answer to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." Found in Mat. 6:10 the teaching is "Thy kingdom come...in earth, as it is in heaven." That is the kingdom which He is going to establish here on earth, and it is this Millennium. This is the kingdom which was promised to David (II Sam. 7:12-17; 23:5). God took an oath relative to its establishment (Psa. 89:34-37). This is the kingdom predicted in the psalms and in the prophets (Psa. 2:45; 110; Isa. 2:1-5; 11:1-9; 60; 61:3-62; 66; Jer. 23:3-8; 32:37-44; Ezek. 40-48; Dan. 2:44-45; 7:13-14; 12:2-3; Mic. 4:1-8; Zech. 12:10-14:21). All the prophets spoke of this kingdom. This is the theocratic kingdom that is coming to this earth.

"There can be no Millennium until Satan is bound. This is what we are clearly shown in these verses. The question is 'why must Satan be loosed again' for a little season? The first is to verify that Satan is incorrigible meaning he is not one who can be corrected, improved, or reformed. The second is to show the absolute justice of God in casting the wicked into the lake of fire forever. For a thousand years the devil will be bound, and therefore during that time men will be free from his wicked influence. Moreover, during those thousand years Christ will reign in person on the earth. However, at the end of that thousand years there will be a great multitude of men who have given only lip service to the King, whose hearts had never been changed, and, who as a result, are ready to follow Satan the moment he is loosed. Remember that during the Millennium the population of the world will increase tremendously. Death and sickness will be uncommon. People will live a thousand year. Countless children will be born during this time when men will have to obey the command of God, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth". But all these children will have to be born again just as they do today." M.R. DeHaan.

God is going to prove that the human heart is corrupt beyond help and only through personal faith in Jesus Christ can men be saved. He is going to let man prove that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." This is why God gives us the revelation that the unregenerate heart has not improved even after a thousand years of blessing and prosperity.

What should we glean from this truth in God's Word? Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The devil tries to tell us that we need merely better our environment, improve the physical quality of the race by eliminating the weak and mentally unfit, and promote education, reformation and better social understanding, and consequently man will become better and better until we have a world of perfect peace and perfect people. God is going to prove twice that this is the devil's lie. He proved it once in the Garden of Eden. He placed two people in a beautiful garden with perfect heredity and environment. By heredity they had been created in the image of God. They were pure. They had no inherited taint of sin. Their hearts were not corrupt. God placed them in a perfect environment. There were no evil associates to influence them; they were not beset by the corruptions and evils which menace us today. Yet these two, although their environment and heredity were perfect, fell. They sinned, broke with God and rebelled against Him.

At the end of human history God will once more prove man's need of Him, for after one thousand years of ideal environment, in which he basked in the indescribable blessing of the King of kings, the unregenerate man will remain the same, and when the opportunity comes, he will be ready to rise up against God and defy his Benefactor and Creator.

This will prove the need of the injunction "Ye must be born again" and also vindicate God in His righteousness when He condemns those who have spurned His love and salvation. Look away from self and man. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."