

REVELATION – SERMON 78

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM OF CHRIST

Revelation 20

INTRODUCTION

- Man has an innate yearning for a better, perfect world and existence
- Recently, Dutch author, Rutger Bregman, published a book, *Utopia for Realists*, in which he described his “ideal world”, consisting of a universal basic income, open borders and a 15-hour workweek
- Most people realise that there is something “wrong” with this world, and with mankind
- For atheists, this may be achieved through an imagined pure system of government, or through scientific discoveries that will solve all our problems
- False religions imagine a perfect state of existence can be reached by means of reincarnation, religious rituals, or their false gods
- In contrast to the false hopes of the heathen, the Christian is assured that there is coming a day when wrongs will be righted, peace will come, and justice will reign
- Revelation 19 records the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, his treading down of his enemies, and the establishment of his kingdom
- Chapter 20 follows chronologically, and describes what will happen after his coming.
- Revelation 20 is a key chapter in Bible prophecy, as it refers six times to a 1000-year period
- How a person understands these “1000-years” will determine his eschatological position

- *Amillennialists* regard the 1000 years as symbolic of the present indefinite period of time that Christ reigns through the church, at the end of which he will return and inaugurate the eternal state
- *Postmillennials* also regard the 1000 years as the present non-literal era of Christ's spiritual reign during which the world will gradually be converted to Christ, at which time he will return and usher in the new heavens and earth
- *Premillennials* accept this as a literal 1000-year period which will take place in the future after Christ's return, when all the prophecies regarding his reign from Jerusalem, along with all the attendant blessings will be fulfilled literally
- As we come to Revelation 20, before proceeding into the verse by verse through the chapter, it is helpful for us first to take a more general overview of the millennial kingdom
- What are we really asking for when we pray, "Thy kingdom come"?

I. THE GLORIOUS ADMINISTRATION OF THE MILLENNIUM

- A. One of the central themes of the bible is the kingdom of God
 1. God is the Sovereign Lord, and created all things for his pleasure (Revelation 4:11), and man particularly, made in his image, to love, worship, serve and fellowship with him
 2. God's rule was challenged by Satan, who desired to usurp God's authority and take it to himself (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19)
 3. Satan's rival kingdom spread to mankind through the fall (Genesis 3)
 4. Satan is now the "god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4); "the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); and the possessor of the kingdoms of this world (Matthew 4:8-9)
 5. God, in his eternal counsels, has instituted his program to establish his universal rule through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:34)

6. The theatre of this great war is earth and the trophies are the souls of men
7. The end (Greek: *telos*) and consummation of God's kingdom program is when God holds absolute and universal dominion, having put down all rule and authority and power (1 Corinthians 15:24)

B. The theocratic kingdom of Christ

1. Theocracy can be defined as the rule of God, often through a divinely chosen representative
 - a. Eden before the fall was a theocracy
 - b. Theocracy can also be seen in Israel under Moses, during the period of the judges, and under the kings
2. The prophets consistently foretold of future world theocracy under God's Anointed One (Psalm 2:1-12; 22:27-31; 24:1-10; 45:1-17; 46:1-11; 48:1-14; 72:1-17; 89:1-50; 96:1-13; 98:1-9; 110:1-7; Isaiah 2:1-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-13; 32:1-5; 40:1-11; 42:1-4; 66:15-23; Jeremiah 23:1-8; Ezekiel 34:20-31; Daniel 2:31-45; Hosea 3:4-5; Joel 3:9-21; Micah 4:1-5:5; Zephaniah 3:8-20; Haggai 2:1-9; Zechariah 6:11-13; 9:9-10; 12:1-10; 14:1-21; Malachi 4:1-6)
3. Christ at his incarnation, was acknowledged to be the Messiah who would reign eternally (Luke 1:33)
4. The preaching of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2), Christ (Matthew 4:17), and the apostles (Matthew 10:7) was that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"
5. The Jews rejected their King and instead crucified him (John 19:14-15)
6. His earthly kingdom now awaits his second coming (Acts 1:6-7; 3:20-21)
7. It will be a global kingdom (Zechariah 9:10)
8. It will be a kingdom of righteousness

- a. He will reign in righteousness over a righteous people (Psalm 72:2; Isaiah 32:1; Hebrews 1:8)
 - b. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) has been called the “constitution of the kingdom”
9. Amillennialists reject a literal earthly kingdom based on Jesus’ words “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36)
- a. This statement simply means that his kingdom is not *of* the world, that is according to, or after the manner of this world
 - b. It does not mean his kingdom will never be *on* or *in* the world
 - c. His kingdom is not “from hence”, that is, originating from earth, but originates from heaven
 - d. “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Revelation 11:15)
 - e. Christ’s kingdom will break in pieces and consume all other world kingdoms, and stand for ever (Daniel 2:44)

C. Christ will be worshipped at Jerusalem

1. There will be one global religion (Micah 4:1-2)
2. The millennial temple will be the centre of worship
 - a. The tribulation temple will be removed, possibly by a great earthquake (Revelation 16:18)
 - b. The new temple will be built after the specifications in Ezekiel 40-46
 - c. Sacrificial offerings will be made (Malachi 3:3-4; Ezekiel 45:15-20)
 - d. The glory of the LORD will fill the temple (Ezekiel 43:1-5)
3. The nations will go up to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16-21)

4. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9)

II. THE GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE MILLENNIUM

A. There will be great environmental changes

1. The earth will have been severely damaged from man's abuse and the judgments of the tribulation
2. This time is referred to as "the regeneration" (Matthew 19:28), when the Lord will heal the now "groaning" creation that awaits deliverance (Romans 8:20-22)
3. The effects of the curse will be diminished, but not removed
 - a. Lifespans will be increased to antediluvian ages (Isaiah 65:20; Zechariah 8:4)
 - b. Sickness will be removed (Isaiah 33:24; Jeremiah 30:17; Ezekiel 34:16)
 - c. Animals will revert back to vegetarianism and will no longer be hostile to man (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25)
 - d. The earth will be abundantly productive, deserts flourishing, pests and disease eradicated (Psalm 67:6-7; 72:16; Isaiah 35:1; 55:13; 65:22; Joel 2:24-26; 3:18; Amos 9:13-14)

B. There will be topographical changes

1. The great earthquake at the end of the tribulation will alter the face of the earth (Revelation 16:18)
2. Mount Zion will be elevated over other mountains (Isaiah 2:2; Zechariah 14:10-11; Micah 4:1)
 - a. The nations of the world will ascend to the temple for worship (Isaiah 56:7; Ezekiel 20:40; 40:2)
3. The mount of Olives will split in two, creating a great east-west valley (Zechariah 14:4)

4. Living waters will flow from there, west to the Mediterranean Sea, and east to the Dead Sea, causing abundant life to thrive there (Ezekiel 47:8-12; Zechariah 14:8)
- C. It will be the earth's sabbath rest
1. After 6000 years of grievous labour, there will be 1000 years of blessed rest
 2. The environmental changes will make food production and other occupations a pleasure, not a burden
 3. There will be no more war, but universal peace (Psalm 72:3-7; Isaiah 2:4; 9:7; Micah 4:3)
 4. This period is "the dispensation of the fulness of times" when God will "gather together in one all things in Christ" (Ephesians 1:10)

III. THE GLAD POPULATION OF THE MILLENNIUM

- A. David will sit on his throne as prince over the tribes of Israel
1. There are numerous prophecies which clearly indicate that David, not the *son* of David, will again be a king in Israel (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5)
 2. It seems that he will be appointed ruler over Israel under Jesus Christ, his "greater Son"
- B. Resurrected believers with glorified bodies will inhabit the kingdom
1. This is the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14), the "first resurrection", where Christ's people "shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6)
 2. The twelve apostles will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28)
 3. As part of the rewards at the judgment seat of Christ, believers will be granted positions of authority in the kingdom
 - a. There will be varying degrees of authority (Luke 19:12-28)

- b. “The saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever” (Daniel 7:18)
- c. Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (1 Corinthians 6:2)
- d. Christ promises the overcomer to “sit with me in my throne” (Revelation 3:21)
- e. At the rapture, believers are promised from that moment to “ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

C. Mortal humans will populate the earth during the millennium

1. Those who remain of believing Israel will enter the kingdom and inhabit the promised land (Jeremiah 23:6; 31:33-34; Zechariah 13:9; Romans 11:26-27)
 - a. Israel will then be chief of the nations (Zechariah 8:23)
 - b. Israel will be named “the Priests of the LORD” (Isaiah 61:6)
 - c. Jerusalem will be named *Jehovah Shammah* – “The LORD is there” (Ezekiel 48:35)
2. At Christ’s coming, the survivors of the nations will be judged (Matthew 25:31-46)
 - a. Those who followed the beast will be go to everlasting punishment
 - b. Those who repented and received Christ will inherit the kingdom (Matthew 25:34)
3. There will be an innumerable multitude converted during the tribulation
4. Many of them will be martyred, but many will survive and enter the kingdom in their mortal bodies
5. At the beginning of millennium, every person on earth will be a born again believer in Jesus Christ

6. These people will procreate, and with the favourable conditions and long life-spans, the earth's population will replenish quickly
7. Many of the descendants of these mortals who enter the kingdom will not be believers
8. These will join Satan in his final rebellion against Christ at the end of the 1000 years (Revelation 20:8)

CONCLUSION

1. There is soon coming a day when every knee shall bow before Jesus Christ, and every tongue must confess him as Lord (Philippians 2:10-11)
2. Those who refuse to do so in this life will be forced to do so in the next
3. Have you bowed your knee in repentance and faith, and surrendered yourself to Christ as Lord?
4. The requirement for entry into the kingdom is moral perfection before God (Psalm 15:1-5)
5. As sinners, none of us could ever attain to the standard of righteousness God requires
6. Only the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith can make us fit for his kingdom (Romans 3:21-22)
7. Only those who have been "born again" will see the kingdom of God (John 3:3; cf. Matthew 18:3)
8. Which kingdom are you living for—this present, vain and godless worldly kingdom? or the eternal, righteous kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ?