

When Does the Millennium Begin?

Daniel 12:1-3; Revelation 20:4-6

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In our study of the prophecies given by the angel, Gabriel, to Daniel, we have continue to look at the Book of Revelation for help in further understanding events prophesied to come in Daniel 11-12.

We have thus far connected Revelation 19:11-21 (the spiritual coming of Jesus as King, in judgment upon the Civil Beast who is confederated with the Papal False Prophet) with Daniel 11:44-Daniel 12:1 (wherein Michael, the Prince, or the Lord Jesus spiritually arises to judge the Papal King and to convert/deliver Israel).

But what events follow the future destruction of the Papal King in Daniel 11:45 who is also the Papal False Prophet in Revelation 19? Revelation 20:1-3 reveals that Satan will be bound by King Jesus for a thousand years so that he cannot deceive/blind the nations from turning to Christ. The result of Satan being bound will be a glorious reigning of the saints with Christ throughout the world so that all kings and all nations will serve Him (Revelation 20:4-6; Psalm 72:11). What a glorious period of history that will be when all nations will covenant to be Christian nations (after the pattern of the Solemn League and Covenant), when the laws of each nation will be agreeable to God's Law, when the gospel of Christ will transform marriages/families, and when Christ's Church in each nation will not be divided from one another into hundreds of different denominations, but will be united by covenant in the same doctrine, worship, and church government.

The binding of Satan and the reign of Christ in bringing all nations to serve Him for a thousand years is not a separate age from the gospel age—it simply comes at the end of the gospel age. Just as the apostolic age of the first century is a part of the gospel age (at the beginning of the gospel age) and yet not equivalent to the whole gospel age—so the millennial age is a part of the gospel age (at the end of it) and yet not equivalent to the whole gospel age.

We have several questions to be answered in the next few sermons concerning the millennium age as found in Revelation 20:4-6. This text is controversial among Bible-believing Christians, but I believe it is a text that can be rightly understood as we work our way through it. Our main points today are the following two questions: (1) Is the Millennium Literally 1,000 Years? (2) When Does the Millennium Begin?

I. Is the Millennium Literally 1,000 Years (No Less/No More)?

A. Note that the binding/restraining of Satan is said to last for a thousand years (Revelation 20:2) just as the reigning of the saints with Christ is to last for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4,6).

B. I would suggest that interpreting the Scripture literally is to interpret it as the Holy Spirit intends (which means that we recognize there are symbolic objects and numbers that represent truths other than what is explicitly stated—like the Harlot that is drunken with the blood of the saints in Revelation 17). Likewise, the number “thousand” is used in Scripture many times symbolically to represent the idea of completion: Deuteronomy 1:11 (Moses to Israel before entering the Promise Land—no more/no less?); 1 Chronicles 16:15 (David's psalm when he brought up the ark to Jerusalem; is it only to a thousand generations and no more/no less?); Psalm 50:10 (only the cattle on a thousand hills and no more?); Psalm 84:10 (but not if it is 999 or 1001 days?); Ecclesiastes 6:6 (the vanity of a life lived without God and His salvation; thousand years is a long life)? We are interpreting the Scripture literally even if we allow for a figurative use of a thousand years because that is what God intended.

C. The word “millennium” is the Latin term for one thousand. Its use here in Revelation 20 most likely represents a complete and long period of time rather than only a thousand years (no more, no less).

II. When Does the Millennium Begin?

A. **Position #1:** The millennium began in the past.

1. Many Bible-believing Christians believe the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints

(Revelation 20:4-6) began when Jesus ascended into heaven and was seated at the right hand of the Father and will continue until Christ's Second Coming (in other words, those who are united to Christ are presently in the millennium). This position would understand Revelation 20 to take us back to the first century when Satan bound by the death of Christ and Christ's millennial reign began at His exaltation to the right hand of the Father—His coronation.

2. It is certainly true that when Jesus ascended into heaven, He was officially exalted and crowned King of kings and Lord of lords (Acts 2:29-36). All dominions in heaven and earth have been put under His feet (Ephesians 1:20-22). Jesus has already been given "all authority" in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18). Jesus is not waiting to be crowned King—He was/is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15); and He was/is Prince of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5). Jesus now rules with absolute authority over all created things, all rulers, all nations, and all people to the benefit of the Church.

3. I accept without reservation Christ's present kingship over all nations as a divine right that was bestowed upon Him in fulfilling the Covenant of Grace in His death and resurrection. That is what the Father promised the Son in eternity—all the nations would be given to Him as His possession (Psalm 2). I accept without reservation that believers have been united to Christ in His death, resurrection, and exaltation (we are now more than conquerors). However, I submit that Revelation 20:4-6 is not speaking of a thousand-year reign of Christ that began at His ascension into heaven (Acts 2), but is prophesying a yet future glorious exercise of His kingship that will bring all nations in the world to serve Him and worship Him. Jesus already has all power, but He will in the future show forth that power in a way He has not yet shown it.

B. **Position #2:** The millennium will begin in the future. I submit this is the meaning of Revelation 20:4-6 for two primary reasons.

1. **Reason #1:** The thousand-year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:4-6) is cotemporaneous with the binding of Satan for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3).

a. In fact, it is because Jesus first binds Satan for a thousand years so that he cannot deceive/blind the nations to the gospel of Christ that we will see the nations powerfully brought in faith to Jesus as Savior/King and will willingly submit to Him, serve and worship Him.

b. Jesus has not yet bound Satan so that he cannot deceive the nations any longer for a thousand years. Nations are still deceived/blinded by Satan. If that binding of Satan from deceiving the nations has not yet begun and is yet future, then the millennial reign of Christ has not yet begun and is yet future—for they are cotemporaneous.

c. If Satan has already been bound so as not to deceive the nations any longer, why do we find in the Book of Revelation that nations after the First Coming of Christ are deceived by the cohorts of Satan (Revelation 12:9)? Satan cannot be restrained from deceiving the nations presently if he is presently deceiving the nations. Thus, the binding of Satan (Revelation 20:1-3) is yet future and so is the cotemporaneous reign of the saints with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6).

2. **Reason #2:** I submit that the millennial reign of Christ begins in the future because the binding of Satan and the reign of Christ for a thousand years follow in time the casting of the Civil Beast and the Papal False Prophet into the Lake of Fire Revelation 19:20. I believe there is chronological connection between Revelation 19 and Revelation 20 (the remnant that are slain by the sword of Christ's mouth before the thousand years in Revelation 19:21 are the remnant that lived again after the thousand years in Revelation 20:5). Thus, I submit we ought not to disconnect Revelation 20 from Revelation 19 (one follows the other).

a. Since the Papal False Prophet is presently deceiving rulers/nations and has not yet been judged by Jesus (Revelation 19), the binding of Satan and the millennial reign of Christ with His saints which follow in time are also yet future (Revelation 20).

b. For those who in Revelation 19:20 interpret Nero as the Beast destroyed by Christ (68 A.D.) and Jerusalem as the False Prophet destroyed by Christ (70 A.D.), I would suggest that historically Satan was not bound from deceiving the nations before or after God's judgment upon Nero or

upon Jerusalem nor did all rulers and nations of the world come to Christ before or after God's judgment upon Nero or upon Jerusalem (per Revelation 20). Thus, it seems that the binding of Satan so as not to deceive the nations for a thousand years and the reign of Christ and His saints for a thousand years are yet future.

C. Application

1. Righteous rulers in the millennium will lead their nations in following Jesus as Savior of sinners and as King of the nations (they will be nursing fathers to Christ's Church). The gospel of peace will prosper and abound in every nation. Because Jesus is the Prince of Peace, as nations come to Christ they will turn their weapons of war into tools that promote peace. Safety and harmony will reign throughout the world. False religion will be subdued. Nations will covenant to be God's people just as the three kingdoms of England, Ireland, and Scotland did in 1643 (the Solemn League and Covenant). Christ's Church will be like a mighty army that will realize the visible oneness for which Jesus prayed in John 17. Let us not lose heart amid so much war and conflict, for Jesus will bring about His millennial reign and perhaps in the not-too-distant future.

2. One of the ways that Satan presently deceives the nations in leading them away from Christ is to make Jesus irrelevant to governing a nation or irrelevant to blessing a marriage/family. "Jesus is not needed to bring peace/safety. All we need is a strong national defense or enough prosperity to bring happiness." It is a lie/deception of Satan, and we too can be misled by these lies. We may think we need good health, marriage, a satisfying job, or enough money to bring us peace/happiness. The lie of Satan is that Jesus is not enough to bring peace/joy in all that we face. The problem may simply be that we have not made Jesus enough—not that He is not enough. He is enough to save us, to provide what we need, to fill us with contentment/joy in times of loneliness, delays, and in whatever we face by way of trials, heartaches, persecution, and death—we are complete (full to the brim) in Christ (Colossians 2:10). I dare say that most of our discouragement with people and discontentment in circumstances come from the deception of Satan that Jesus is not enough (as Prophet, Priest, and King). But let that truth overwhelm you, dear saints—Jesus is enough and more than enough. Let not Satan deceive you as he is now deceiving the nations. During the millennium the rulers and nations of the world will come to see that Jesus is enough and is more than enough and salvation and peace will reign throughout all nations of the world.

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