THE MILLENNIUM
Revelation 20:1-6

Introduction:

This morning, we are going to discuss the Millennium—what it is, where it fits in the future sequence of events prophesied in Scripture, and what it will be like.

1. Terms: There some terms that have been coined to help us talk about the what the Bible says about the end times, and although they are not biblical terms, they are very helpful.

   a. Millennium = the prophesied thousand year reign of Jesus Christ. From the Latin words *mille* = “thousand” plus *annus* = “year”
      Related terms include:
      Millennialism = the belief in the millennium
      Millenarian = one who believes in the millennium

   b. Eschatology = the study or doctrine of last things. From the Greek word ἐσχάτος (*éschatos*) = “last”
      Related words include:
      Eschaton (noun) = the end time itself; “in the eschaton”
      Eschatological (adjective) = something pertaining to the end times

   c. Chiliasm = same as millennialism = belief in the 1,000 year reign
      From the Greek word χιλιάς (*chilás*) = “thousand”

2. Major Eschatological Events Prophesied by Scripture include:

   Tribulation
   Battle of Armageddon
   Rapture
   Resurrection
   Second Coming
   Millennium?
   Final Battle
   Great White Throne Judgment
   New Heaven and New Earth
   New Jerusalem
   Eternal State

   What is the Millennium and where does it fit in?

3. Biblical sources: We learn about the Millennium in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, Zechariah, Matthew, Luke, John, 1 Corinthians, and Revelation, but the most explicit teaching is in Revelation chapter 20.
a. When we get to Revelation 20, the seven years of the Tribulation are over, the Battle of Armageddon has taken place, the Anti-Christ and his false prophet have been thrown into the lake of fire, and God is about to remove Satan from the scene in preparation for the Millennium.

b. This chapter includes some of the primary things in biblical prophecy over which Christians disagree.

(1) Differences in interpreting the meaning of these things concern how literally we should understand this chapter.
(2) The Book of Revelation uses language that runs the gamut from highly symbolic to fully literal and all combinations in between.
(3) Each interpreter brings his or her own presuppositions to these teachings, and these greatly influence how each understands their meaning.
(4) For example:

   (a) Should the thousand-year period be understood to mean exactly a thousand years, or is it actually just a very long period of time, or perhaps it is merely a symbolic number?

   (b) Is Satan literally imprisoned in a pit somewhere, or does it mean that he is prevented from exercising any power over the earth during this time, or is he bound in only a relative sense by the liberating power of the gospel?

   (c) Is Christ to be understood as reigning in a direct sense over the Earth on a literal throne through a real governmental organization, or is this only a figure of speech depicting the eventual conversion of the world to Christianity and righteousness through the work of the Church and the preaching of the gospel?

   (d) Is there a unique role for the converted Jewish people that is different than that for gentile believers? Do the Old Testament promises of a restored, powerful, prosperous, and politically dominant kingdom of Israel refer to the Jewish people, or is the Christian church to be understood as the real chosen people of God and all these prophecies will actually be fulfilled for them with no special role for Jewish believers?

4. Major views of the Millennium: Although over the centuries, there have been many ways proposed to interpret the teachings of Rev. Chap 20, they may be distilled down to three major systems. The name of each refers to how they believe that the Second Coming of Christ and the Millennium relate to each other.
a. Amillennialism:

(1) “A” = no + Millennium → “no Millennium”

(2) The idea that there is no actual millennial reign on Earth.

Although there have been many variations in amillennialism over the years, this approach basically spiritualizes the biblical accounts of the end times and takes them to be highly symbolic: there will be no visible, political kingdom on Earth established by Christ prior to the Last Judgment.2

Amillennialism teaches that “Christ’s kingdom was established in a symbolic sense on the earth when Satan was defeated and bound by the Lord’s substitutionary death, resurrection, and ascension.”3

Amillennialists expect the following sequence of events on Earth:
• Conditions will degenerate with increasing apostasy and
• Ultimately become the Great Tribulation;
• Then Christ will return with all the deceased saints and destroy the evil powers.
• Then there will be a general resurrection of all people, believers and unbelievers and
• The Last Judgment, and then
• Everyone will go into eternity, either in heaven or hell.

There will be one return of Christ, one resurrection, and one judgment.

(6) “Amillennialists insist that the covenants and promises made to Israel [in the Old Testament] are being fulfilled spiritually in the church.”

(7) They view Rev. 20:1-6 as being fulfilled spiritually now, in the present age.

(8) The binding of Satan (vv. 2-3) is seen as the limitation on Satan’s power in our lives because of Christ’s resurrection victory.

(9) The Millennium is believed to be the reign of Christian martyrs with Christ in Heaven during the present age.

(10) The number “1,000” is taken to symbolize the completeness of Christ’s victory over Satan.

(11) Christ’s Second Coming is not seen to be imminent, because several things must occur first: the evangelization of the Gentiles, the conversion of Israel, the Great Tribulation, and the Revelation of the Antichrist.

(12) This has been a common view in Christianity since it was first taught in Alexandria, Egypt, near the end of the second century AD.

(a) Christian scholars in Alexandria (e.g., Origen) were heavily influenced by Greek thought.

(b) Greek thought viewed the physical universe as evil and only spiritual realities as good in any sense. Therefore they rejected the idea of an actual rule of Christ on the physical Earth and expected God’s blessings to be entirely spiritual.

(c) Note: this was because of their previously held beliefs (presuppositions), not because of what they read in the Bible.

(d) It is very difficult for us to see beyond our presuppositions (i.e., to “think out of the box” that we are in intellectually). Consequently, we sometimes miss the truth of God’s teaching because we have already decided that: the Bible couldn’t be teaching that.”

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4 Lewis and Demarest.
5 Four often confused homonyms:
   immanent = existing within, inherent to, belonging to, inherent; e.g., “ambition is immanent in human nature.”
   eminent = outstanding, prominent; e.g., “the doctor was an eminent surgeon.”
   imminent = about to occur, impending; e.g., “she was in imminent danger.”
   emanant = something issuing or flowing forth or emanating; e.g., “our acts are emanant to our wills.”
6 “Presupposition = "pre" (before) + "supposition" (what one supposes to be true) ⇒ what one assumes to be true without evidence and which forms the basis of one’s other beliefs and conclusions.
b. Postmillennialism:

(1) “Post” = after + “Millennium” \(\Rightarrow\) the 2\(^{nd}\) Coming will be “after the Millennium”

(2) This view teaches that the whole world will be gradually, almost entirely won to Christ. This will produce a world of peace, brotherhood, prosperity. The Gospel will transform the world religiously, economically, and politically.

(3) The biblical “Millennium” is symbolic for a golden age of indefinite length—even hundreds of thousands of years in length.

(4) When Christ returns, it will be to a largely Christianized world.

(5) Postmillennialists expect that this, long golden age of increasing righteousness will be followed by a brief apostasy resulting in the rise of the Antichrist; this will culminate in 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation and then the Second coming of Christ will occur. After this, there will be a general resurrection of believers and unbelievers, the Last Judgment, and finally, the eternal state.\(^7\)

(6) Postmillennialists generally hold that the Old Testament prophecies about the restoration of Israel apply to the Christian church. Since the Messiah has come, God has no special role for national Israel distinct from the church.

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\(^7\) Lewis and Demarest, p. 375.
Interestingly, this was the dominant view among evangelical and conservative Christians until the early part of the 20th century. It was an unquestioned presupposition.

(a) The 19th century was a time of great optimism.
   - There was great progress in science as disease and starvation were coming under control.
   - The middle class was rising all over the Earth, and prosperity seemed within the grasp of anyone who would work for it.
   - The modern missionary movement was taking the gospel to the four corners of the Earth and having great success.
   - Democracy, freedom, and justice were making inroads everywhere.
   - World peace seemed about to be realized.
   - Everyone saw no reason why things would not just get better and better; this was especially true among conservative Bible believers, who saw God’s hand in all this progress.
   - Bible-believing Christians thought God was using all of this to create the Millennium.

(b) When, the First World War occurred, Postmillennialism staggered a bit, but it was “the war to end all wars,” so hope remained.

(c) Then the stock market crashed and the depression struck. Optimism had fallen on hard times.

(d) The final blow was the Second World War.

(e) Postmillennialism never recovered, and conservative Christians began questioning their interpretation of Scripture.

(f) Postmillennialism has waxed and waned since then, but it has never regained its place as the orthodox accepted view held by those who believe the Bible is fully inspired by God. The events of history caused conservative Christians to rethink their understanding of Scripture, and they decided that they had been wrong.
c. Rejecting Post-Millennialism, conservative Christians embraced Premillennialism, and that is our view today.

(1) “Pre” = before + “Millennium” → the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Coming will be “before the Millennium”

(2) Premillennialists believe that:

(a) Christ will literally and physically return to the Earth before the Millennium.
(b) The Millennium will be a literal, political reign of Christ who is physically present on the Earth for 1,000 years.
(c) The Scriptures should be interpreted more literally than amillennialists or postmillennialists do.
(d) The promises of a restored and blessed Israel which were given to Abraham, David, and the prophets will be fulfilled during the Millennium.
(e) The binding of Satan will be an actual incarceration in the abyss during the Millennium.
(f) Christ’s 1,000 year reign will be an era of unparalleled righteousness, peace, and prosperity in which a renewed Earth will become remarkably productive.\textsuperscript{8}

(3) There are two basic forms of premillennialism (differing primarily in their view of Israel as a nation in the Millennium):

(a) Historic Premillennialism:
- The predominant view during the first three centuries of Christian history; then it fell out of favor until the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, and today has

\textsuperscript{8} Lewis and Demarest, p. 377.
many modern adherents (e.g., G. E. Ladd, G. R. Beasley-Murray, and M. J. Erickson).

- Historic Premillennialists see no distinction between Israel and the Christian Church during the Millennium
- Some believe that no future exists for Israel as a nation.
- They believe that the church will remain on Earth during the Tribulation Period and that although believers will not experience the wrath of God, they will experience the wrath of Satan and the Antichrist.\(^9\)
- They deemphasize the rapture and reduce it to believers briefly rising up to meet the Lord in the air at His second coming\(^{10}\)
- They also believe that since several prophesied events must take place before the Second Coming, Christ’s return is not strictly imminent\(^{11}\) but rather “impending.”\(^{12}\)

(b) Dispensational\(^ {13}\) Premillennialism:

- Dispensational Premillennialists hold to a primarily literal interpretation of Scripture.
- They also see and sharp distinction between God’s program for Israel and His program for the church.
- They teach that the purpose of the Tribulation is to judge unbelieving Gentiles and to discipline disobedient Israel, that it is not aimed at the church, and the church is not even present.
- In this view, the church is a sort of parenthesis within God’s primary purpose for Israel.
  - In the Millennium, God will focus on what has been the heart of His earthly plan: the redemption of His chosen people, Israel.
  - He will fulfill all the unfulfilled covenants and prophecies about the restoration and blessing of Israel; the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and the Levitical priesthood will be reestablished with animal sacrifices again being offered.

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\(^{10}\) Erickson, pp. 1222-1223.

\(^{11}\) Lewis and Demarest, p. 378.

\(^{12}\) Erickson, p. 1223.

\(^{13}\) Dispensation is a term used nine times in the New Testament; it means “management or administrative plan” which God designed to accomplish His will on the Earth. God has used several different “dispensations” throughout history exemplified by the covenants He has made with man (e.g., Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and the New Covenant of grace through Christ).
Now let’s turn to Revelation chapter 20.

Revelation Chapter 20:1-6\(^\text{14}\)

Vv. 1-3—And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. (Rev. 20:1-3 NIV)

And I saw—The narration in chapter 20 follows directly from that of chapter 19 without a break (remember, the chapter divisions were not part of the original writings). It gives every appearance of being a continuing record of actual events.

καὶ = “and,” although we cannot tell it in our English translations, 29 of the 36 verses in chapters 19 and 20 begin with this word. This indicates that these chapters are intended to be understood as a literal succession of events in future history.

An angel—he is not named, but given the fact that he easily captures and imprisons Satan himself, he is a very powerful angel. He may be the archangel Michael, who led the angelic army to defeat Satan and cast him out of Heaven (Rev. 12:7-9). It is possible that Michael may be the mightiest of God’s angels as he is the only named archangel in the Bible (Jude 9; see also 1 Th. 4:16 and Dan. 10:13).

He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan—

- There is no question who this is being imprisoned. This is not an evil man (e.g., not the Anti-Christ) nor even one of the lesser demons; this is the prime mover of all evil throughout history. It was he who has tried to subvert God’s plans from the first rebellion in Heaven in the ages past, through the successful temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden (Ge. 3) and the subsequent temptations of all their descendants (2 Co. 11:3), to the final rebellion against Christ’s rule at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-9).

- “Ancient” refers back to the time when Satan took the form of a serpent as he tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden (Ge. 3). Snakes are not evil; they were one of God’s good creations (Ge. 1:31), but Satan assumed the form of a snake as a tool to do evil. Likewise, today, Satan often takes good things God has made and uses them for his own evil purposes.

\(^{14}\) All Scripture quotations are from the NIV 2011 unless otherwise indicated.
• He is also called “the devil” in this passage (i.e. Rev. 20:2). In Greek, this is the word διάβολος (diabolos), and it means “accuser” and “slanderer.” This, of course has often been Satan’s desire. He accuses and slanders us before God (e.g., Job); he accuses and slanders us to others as he sows enmity and suspicion between people; and he accuses and slanders us to ourselves as he tries to make us doubt our value in God’s eyes and convince us that we are not worth saving. This is another example of Satan taking a truth and twisting it for his own use.

  o It is certainly true that we human beings have no great intrinsic value; we are rebellious, ungrateful, selfish creatures who unceasingly try to usurp God’s place on the throne of our lives. We, ourselves, are worthless by any intrinsic measure.
  o Our real worth does not come from us but from God. We are highly valuable because God values us. The value of something is only determined by how much someone is willing to pay for it (like on Antiques Roadshow).
  o We are valuable because God was willing to pay the life of His Son to redeem us. That love gives us inestimable value.
  o Satan, of course, wants us to believe either that we are worthless or that we have our own inherent worth; both are lies.

• He is also named “Satan” (Σατανας Satanas) which means “adversary.” He is the quintessential adversary of God, of His holy angels, of human beings, and of anything God is doing.

Bound him . . . a great chain——

• Notice how easily this seems to be done, when it is God’s timing to bind him.
• Given that Satan is an angelic being, this was no ordinary chain, and it might actually be symbolic of the absoluteness of his incarceration.

Threw him into the Abyss——

• Note: the Abyss is not the Lake of Fire. The Abyss is apparently inside the Earth and may be something like a great cavern complex. When Satan was cast out of Heaven and down to the Earth (Rev. 9:1-3), he was given the key to the shaft which is the opening into the Abyss, and there he set up his headquarters for the time remaining to him.

• During the first half of the Tribulation period, he will send out the demonic “locusts” from the Abyss to torture all who were not sealed by God (Rev. 9:2-10). The “locusts” were controlled by Satan, who will be called “the angel of the Abyss” (Rev. 9:11). The Antichrist is called “the beast that comes up out of the Abyss” (Rev. 11:7; 17:8), a name that indicates his Satanic origins, coming from Satan’s headquarters.
The Abyss may be the same place that is referred to as Tartarus (2 Pe. 2:4 and Jude 6). That is Ταρταρόω in Greek and is translated “Hell” by most English translations. This is the place where most of the rebellious angels have been incarcerated awaiting their final condemnation to the Lake of Fire.

Not all the angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God were allowed the same freedom Satan has on the Earth.
- Many (perhaps most?) were imprisoned in the Abyss apparently at the time Satan was cast out of Heaven. In His grace and wisdom, God limited the number of servants the Evil One has available to do his bidding.
- God always limits evil (e.g., 1 Co. 10:13), and the world, as bad as it may seem at times, has never been as bad a place as Satan would like to make it.

But still, there are legions of evil spirits allowed the freedom to obey Satan’s wishes, and they have always feared being cast into the Abyss with their fellows (e.g., Lk. 8:31). In Rev. 20, the time they have all dreaded will have come.

In establishing His complete rule here on Earth, Christ has Satan thrown into the Abyss and imprisoned there in terms very similar to those describing the rebellious angels thrown into Tartarus (2 Pe. 2:4).
- Although not specifically mentioned in the text, in order for Satan’s influence to be fully removed during the Millennium, all his demons will have to be imprisoned in the Abyss with him.

locked and sealed it . . . to keep him from deceiving the nations—

Satan is imprisoned in such a way as to prevent him from having any influence over the lives of men and women during the Millennium.

Jesus described Satan as a “liar and the father of lies” (Jn. 8:44). Deception was the first tool Satan used against man in the Garden (Ge. 3:1-4). And deception continues today to be his fundamental approach to mankind (Rev. 12:9). All of Satan’s temptations are deceptions and distortions of the truth. In absolute contrast, truth is associated with Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6).

The ease of Satan’s imprisonment shows the fundamental error of those who believe that there are two great powers battling for control of the world and its people, as though God and Satan were peers (this is called “dualism”). There is no question as to who is in control; there was never the slightest possibility that Satan could defeat God. Every heinous act that Satan committed, hoping to destroy what God was doing, was neatly incorporated into God’s plan for the world and perfectly fulfills what God intended should happen.

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15 We use the word “Hell” in inconsistent ways, and we will give it a more systematic treatment in connection with Rev. 20:11-15.
For a thousand years—This is the first explicit reference to the “thousand years.”

- I believe we should understand it literally to be an actual thousand years because there is no reason in the text to take it symbolically, and because the specific number is emphasized by mentioning it six times in these seven verses.

- That doesn’t mean that it must be an exactly precise one thousand years to the nanosecond, but that the Millennium will be about 1,000 years in length. However, the specificity of the number and its repetition cause me to reject the idea that it just means a long time of indefinite duration (e.g., as in amillennialism and postmillennialism).

- Satan will be completely out of the picture during the Millennium.

After that he must be set free for a short time

- “After that” refers to the Millennium.

- Talking about Satan, John mentions that after the Millennium he must be set free for a short time

- In order to fulfill God’s perfect plan, Satan must be set free at the end of the Millennium to set up God’s final test of mankind.

- Satan’s release will result in only a brief period of freedom in which he will seek to subvert God’s plans for the last time.

V. 4
I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4 NIV)

Thrones refer to the Millennial government structure.

Given authority—these are not representative positions where people were elected to serve; these are appointed positions; and with Christ as the absolute Ruler, He is the appointing authority.

- That this will be an actual, political kingdom on the Earth seems required by the nature of God’s promises to the children of Israel.
The Abrahamic covenant (Ge. 12:1-3; 15:18-21) promised Israel a land, a posterity, and a blessing;
The Palestinian covenant (Dt. 30:1-10) promised that Israel would be restored to the Promised Land; and
The Davidic covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) promised that Israel would be forgiven and blessed.

In addition to the covenants, prophecy tells us that at the return of Christ:
Israel will be re-gathered from all the nations (Mt. 24:31),
Israel will be converted to belief in the Messiah (Zec. 12:10-14), and
Christ will establish Himself as King, ruling in Jerusalem from David’s throne (Jer. 23:5-6; Lk. 1:32-33).

God always fulfills His promises, and these promises are yet to be fulfilled. I think they will be partly in the Millennium, and ultimately fulfilled in the New Earth.

DESCRIPTING THE MILLENNIUM
The Bible actually tells us a lot about what living in the Millennium will be like.

1. Christ will be the benign Dictator; this will not be a democracy; His word will be absolute law (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5;19:15-16)
2. Jerusalem will be the capital of the world, and Jesus will rule from there (Isa. 2:3)
3. The apparatus of His government will be composed of the glorified believers (2 Ti. 2:12; Rev. 20:4-6)
4. There will peace over the entire Earth for the first time in history; people will know international peace, peace between individuals, and individual peace in their own hearts (Isa. 2:4; 32:17-18; Mic. 4:2-4)
5. A distinctive mark of the Millennium will be joy; everywhere people with live happy and satisfying lives (Isa. 9:3-4)
6. Righteousness will be manifested through the King and the King’s representatives (Eze. 36:24-28)
7. Overt sin will not be tolerated and will be swiftly punished; no one will be able to get away with anything illegal or immoral; it will be an enforced righteousness (Ps. 72:1-4; Zec. 14:17-19)
8. Christ’s kingdom will be glorious; it will honor Him and will be filled with all the good things life has to offer (Isa. 40:5)
9. The King will ensure that every need is met; the subjects of the kingdom will lack for nothing (Isa. 12:1-2; 40:1-2)
10. Perfect justice will be administered to every individual; no one will speed or cheat on their income taxes or lie because violators will always swiftly be caught (Isa. 9:7)

11. There will be no ignorance of the way of the Lord; of course, there will always be more to learn about God (He is infinite, you know!), but everyone will know the basics about Him and His will for them (Isa. 11:9)
12. The Lord Himself will instruct us in the truth; science and the knowledge of God’s creation will flourish, and theology (i.e., knowing God) will be “the queen of the sciences” (Isa. 2:2-3)
13. Unglorified citizens of the kingdom (both believers and unbelievers) will have children and there will be a great population explosion (Jer. 30:20; Eze. 47:22)
14. All illnesses will be healed; infant mortality will be zero, and full health will be the norm (Isa. 33:24; Jer. 30:17)
15. All disabilities will be eliminated; there will be no cripples; no blind; no deaf; no mental disorders; there will not even be any handicapped parking places (Isa. 35:5-6)
16. It will be normal to live many years; some people may even live the entire 1,000 years of the Millennium; population size will be unrestricted (Isa. 65:20)
17. The unglorified citizens will be employed in a fully developed, fair, stable, and prosperous economic system (Isa. 65:21-23)
18. There will be abundance and no poverty (Jer. 31: 12-14; Am. 9:13-15)
19. Increased sunlight and moonlight will provide the perfect growing environment for plants, so crops will be abundant, and there will be pollution or global warming (Isa. 30:26)
20. Everyone will speak a common language which will remove many social and cultural barriers and eliminate many misunderstandings (Zep. 3:9)
21. There will be a single world-wide religion as the whole world joins in the worship of God and His Messiah (Zec. 14:16; Mal. 1:11; Rev. 5:9-11)
22. Above all, the Millennium will be a thousand years without Satan’s deceptive influence. This will be God’s final test of fallen humanity under the most ideal conditions: how well can unredeemed humanity do with no external influence toward evil?

Reigned with Christ—Those who make up the government of the Millennium under Christ as absolute Ruler are glorified believers, those who have been resurrected and/or raptured and who at this time have their new bodies. These include three groups of believers:

- The Old Testament saints—the believers from all times before Christ.
- The Church Age saints—believers from the period between Christ’s incarnation and the Rapture (i.e., us).
- The Tribulation saints—Jews and Gentiles who became believers during Tribulation Period.

The Tribulation saints are mainly those who had been beheaded for their faith during the second half of the Tribulation Period when the False Prophet will force everyone to worship the image of the Anti-Christ, and anyone who refuses will be beheaded (Rev. 13:15).
These are the same believers John saw under the altar who had been martyred because of their faith (Rev. 6:9-11). They will refuse to worship Antichrist (the Beast) or his image (Rev. 13:15), and they will refuse to receive the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-17). And if they are captured, they will be beheaded.

They came to life—they will be resurrected at the beginning of the Millennium so they can reign with Christ.

People Who Survive the Tribulation:

Not everyone on Earth will be killed during the Tribulation Period, not even during the Battle of Armageddon that brings an end to the Period. There will be people who survive, and these include both believers and unbelievers.

- Believers:
  - Some think the surviving believers will not be changed and given their resurrection bodies at this time, but that they will go into the Millennium to populate it with their children.
  - Scripture is not explicit on this point, but I reason that this would be an unnecessarily unfair burden on them.
  - While the rest of the redeemed would be enjoying deliverance from our old natures and the blessings of our new bodies,
  - They would be called upon to wait another 1,000 years to get theirs after having already endured the full length of the Tribulation just because they escaped from the clutches of the Anti-Christ.
  - I tentatively conclude that the surviving believers, who likewise did not worship the image of the Beast nor receive his mark, will be changed and given their resurrected and glorified bodies without having to die and be resurrected themselves (much like those believers who are alive at the time of the Rapture will not die but will be changed and given their resurrection bodies along with those who had died and will be resurrected).
  - God doesn’t need unglorified believers to populate the millennial kingdom; there will be many unbelievers who will survive the Tribulation as well.

- Unbelievers: there will be unbelievers who survive the Tribulation and enter the Millennium as subjects of the Kingdom of Christ; willingly or unwillingly, they will worship Christ as their king (Zec. 14:16).

So, there will be three distinct groups of human beings living on the Earth during the Millennium:

1. Glorified believers = those who will have been resurrected and have their new bodies
2. Unglorified believers = those who will give their lives to Christ and become Christians during the Millennium, but have not died nor been given new bodies. They may be survivors of the Tribulation or children of unglorified people born during the Millennium.

3. Unbelievers = those who will refuse to willingly submit to Christ’s lordship in their hearts; they will enjoy the blessings of the Millennium but they will never choose to submit to Christ in their hearts. These may be survivors of the Tribulation (Zec. 14:16) or the children of unglorified people born during the Millennium.

Now, what about the rest of the dead? Let me add verse five to our passage. These are all those who have died in the past before the Millennium ever began and have been waiting back in Sheol or Hades (the place of the dead). These folks will be resurrected after the Millennium is over (Rev. 20:5, 12-13).

Resurrection—Let’s talk for a minute about resurrection.

- Resurrection is not resuscitation:
  - Resuscitation brings a person back to life, but they only return to the same kind of life they had before, and they will ultimately die again.
  - People who were resuscitated were not raptured into Heaven nor are they still with us on the Earth.

- The people brought back to life in the Old Testament were resuscitations:
  - Elijah raised the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Ki. 17:17-24)
  - Elisha and the Shunnamite’s son (2 Ki. 4:8-37)
  - The man thrown into Elisha’s tomb (2 Ki. 14:21-22)

- The people brought back to life in the New Testament during the first century were also resuscitations:
  - Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain (Lk. 7:11-17)
  - Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus (Lk. 8: 40-56)
  - Jesus raised His friend, Lazarus, in Bethany (Jn. 11:38-44)
  - Some Old Testaments saints were resuscitated at the time of the great earthquake following the crucifixion (Mt. 27:50-53).
  - Peter raised Tabitha/Dorcas in Joppa (Ac. 9:36-42).
  - Paul raised Eutychus in Troas (Ac. 20:9-12).

- Resurrection:
  - Biblical resurrection is the resurrection of the physical body, not some vague spiritual or immaterial self.
    - The immaterial self = the soul or spirit (terms used interchangeably in the Bible)\(^1\)

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\(^1\) In the New Testament, the word for soul is "\(\psi\upi\chi\eta\)" (psuché) and the word for spirit is "\(\pi\nu\nu\mu\alpha\)" (pneuma). Examples of their interchangeability are Matt. 20:28, where Christ says He will give His "\(\pi\nu\nu\mu\alpha\)" (pneuma) a ransom for many; compare Matt. 27:50, where it reports that Jesus gave up His "\(\psi\upi\chi\eta\)" (psuché) on the cross.
- The immaterial self never ceases to exist, so it does not need to be made alive again. Even unbelievers have continued to exist as “souls” in Hades awaiting their resurrection (Rev. 20:13).
- It is the physical body that is resurrected. Even unbelievers will be resurrected bodily and go bodily into Hell (Mt. 5:29-30).
  - Resurrection for unbelievers is for judgment and condemnation (Jn. 5:29).
  - Resurrection for believers is for life (Jn. 5:29) and is followed by “glorification”

- Glorification:
  - With these present physical bodies, we are not currently equipped for eternity; we need major upgrading before we can live and operate in the New Heavens, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. We need to be improved and given a higher level of physical and spiritual capabilities (1 Co. 15:50-53).
  - Glorification provides the believer with a new “resurrection” body that fits us for all the new things we are going to do with God—our roles in the Millennium and our tasks in eternity.
  - This new body will be something like Jesus’ resurrection body (Ro. 8:29; 1 Co. 15:49; 1 Jn. 3:2).
  - This is the final and full “redemption of our body” Paul talks about in Ro. 8:23.
  - Only believers are to be glorified; non-believers will be resurrected in the “second resurrection”, but they will not be glorified.

- There are two resurrections:

  - **The First Resurrection** is actually a group of resurrections. Included in the “First Resurrection” are:
    - **Jesus Christ**—Jesus is what Paul called the “first fruits” of the resurrection (1 Co. 15:20-23), i.e., He was the first to be resurrected.\(^\text{18}\)
    - **The Old Testament saints**—Believers before Christ put their faith in the promises of God, and God graciously applied Christ’s atonement to them retroactively at the time of the crucifixion (Heb. 9:15).
      - No one from any time was ever saved by offering sacrifices and keeping the Law of Moses.
      - The Law was not given to provide salvation, but to prove to everyone that they were sinners who needed forgiveness (Ro. 3:19-20).
      - In Old Testament times, believers were saved through their faith in God’s promises (Ro. 4:3-6).

\(^{18}\) We have to be careful here: we are not saying that Jesus was just a human being before His resurrection and glorification. Jesus is the second member of the Godhead from eternity past; He always was, is, and always will be fully divine and co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; Jn. 1:1-3; 8:58; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 13:8; Isa. 61:1-3 (cf. Luke 4:16-21).
- They will be resurrected at the Second Coming of Christ (Dan. 12:1-2, 13).
- The Church Age saints—Believers subsequent to Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension and the giving of the Holy Spirit are saved by trusting in God’s provision through Christ’s atonement (Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Pe. 3:18; Jn. 5:24). This includes:
  - Those who died before the Tribulation and were resurrected at the time of the Rapture (1 Th. 4:13-18).
  - Those who were alive at the time of the Rapture and joined the dead in Christ to meet the Lord in the air (1 Th. 4: 15, 17).
- The two witnesses who will be killed in Jerusalem by the Anti-Christ and resurrected at the mid-point of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:3-12).
- The Tribulation martyrs who will be executed by the Anti-Christ for their faith during the Tribulation (Rev.20:4); they will be resurrected at the Second Coming of Christ.
- The surviving Tribulation believers—We are not told when believers who survive the Tribulation will be glorified, but I believe it will be at the Second Coming of Christ, so they will be able to join the other believers in reigning with Christ.
- The Millennial believers—Because there are unbelievers in the Millennium, I think some people will put their trust in Christ during that period of time, as well, and be saved.
  - We are not told about their resurrection and glorification,
  - But they will certainly need to be prepared for life in the New Jerusalem,
  - So they will have to go through some kind of resurrection/glorification experience, perhaps at the end of the Millennium.
- I think that these will all get counted as part of the First Resurrection; that means that everyone who is saved through Christ’s sacrifice from all times will be part of the First resurrection.

- The “Second Resurrection,” although not specifically named, is the resurrection of all unbelievers, and it will occur after the Millennium.

V. 6 Verse 6 says . . .

Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:6 NIV)

Blessed and holy—this refers to those who have part in the first resurrection

- Blessed—this is the ultimate blessing: forgiveness from our sin, deliverance from our sin nature, glorification to a new resurrection body, and eternal life with God Who loves us.
• Holy—because we have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Ro. 4:3; 2 Co. 5:21) and we will no longer have our old, sinful natures.

The Second Death—

• The Second Death = the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14).
  o The Second Death has no power over those who are part of the first resurrection;
  o Believers do not have to fear the remotest possibility of being condemned to the Lake of Fire; we call this the “security of the believer” (Jn. 5:24).

Priests of God and of Christ—

• All who participate in the First resurrection will be priests of God.

• Our priestly role includes:
  o Worshipping God through offering the sacrifices of praise and service
  o Blessing the people we serve
  o Representing Christ to the unregenerate and helping them come to trust Christ
  o In a theocratic kingdom where religion and government are fully integrated, the priests are also the government authorities. For the first time in history, civil servants will actually be there to help people.

Reign with him a thousand years—

• We will be reigning, not with our own authority as rulers, but with His authority. We will be carrying out His directives, His policies, and His decisions. We will serve as mediators between the people and the Lord.

• So, there will be two distinctive classes of people living in the Millennium:
  1. Unglorified people who are just like normal people today; these are unbelievers who survived the Tribulation or are children born during the Millennium. They may or may not have trusted Christ for their eternal destiny.
  2. Glorified believers with resurrection bodies (similar to Christ’s resurrection body); they will be immortal, capable of teleporting and telepathy, will never get tired, and have no physical needs. They will be the ruling class.
Special roles in the millennial government:

- **Special role for Israel during the Millennium**—During this period, Israel will finally fulfill the role for which they were originally called out as God’s chosen people (Ex. 19:6)—they will be a kingdom of priests who will be intermediaries between the Messiah and the unbelievers of the world to lead them to salvation.

- **Special role for the Apostles during the Millennium**—

  Jesus promised the twelve apostles that they would sit on thrones in His kingdom and rule over the twelve tribes of Israel.

  27 Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”
  28 Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mt. 19:27-28 NIV)

- **Special role for David during the Millennium**—

  David will be a high government official; (“prince”) with the special task of shepherding the redeemed people of Israel.

  23 I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.  
  24 I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken. (Eze. 34:23-24 NIV)

  Somehow, these leadership positions over the Jews occupied by the apostles and David will fit together.

**Rev. 20:7-9**

7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison
8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.  
9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded

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19 The “twelve” at the time Jesus spoke this included Judas Iscariot, who lost his place among the apostles and was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:15-26). Jesus, of course, knew which of His followers would be finally accounted among the twelve and would take these positions of authority.
the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. (Rev. 20:7-9 NIV)

V. 7

When the thousand years are over—

These events that occur at the end of the Millennium will bring to an end the thousand years of Christ’s idyllic kingdom, a kingdom of peace and prosperity, the most perfect government ever known on the Earth.

Satan will be released—

- Satan has been out of the picture for 1,000 years; he has had no opportunity to influence people away from Christ nor to encourage their innate bent to rebel against Him.

- Now he is being released, but as was explained in Rev. 20:3, it will only be for “a short time.”

- Note: Satan does not escape from prison; he is released as part of the perfect plan of God. Jesus is in absolute control here.

- Satan’s release sets up the final and greatest test for unredeemed man.
  - The test is: when given a clear-cut choice, will men choose to worship and serve God or rebel against Him and worship and serve Satan?
  - In the past, people have offered all sorts of excuses for not trusting Christ: ignorance, poverty, upbringing, intellectual pressures, not politically correct (e.g., intolerant, too narrow), not credible, too simplistic, anti-scientific, etc.
  - Now, after a thousand years in the most perfect environment, with hosts of spiritual teachers, and the physical presence of the Lord Himself, if anyone refuses to give God His place, there is no excuse possible.

- Many of the people alive at the end of the Millennium will not be redeemed, will not be believers. How can this be?
  - Everyone will know of Christ; there will be no doubt as to Who He is and what He has done (Isa. 11:9), and they will have all participated in worshiping Him (Zec. 14:16).
  - But many will refuse to make Him Lord of their hearts. They will be forced to refrain from any overt acts of sin and rebellion, because there will be perfect and immediate justice meted out, but in their hearts, they want to be in control and refuse to submit to the lordship of Christ. This is the same problem that keeps people from becoming Christians today.
    - Faith in Christ is not merely believing in the truth about Christ (cf. the demons in Jas. 2:19); it means abandoning yourself to Him—ceasing to attempt to
earn acceptance with God and trusting His provision on the cross alone. It means giving your life to Christ and wanting to withhold nothing from Him. It means receiving Christ as Lord and Savior (Jn. 1:12).

- Note: I am not saying that to become a Christian one must consciously dedicate every aspect of one’s life to Christ at the time of conversion. That will only happen when a person is glorified. But I am saying that one cannot become a Christian while at the same time consciously withholding something from God for oneself. One’s intention must be to give it all to Christ.

- Then, over the years of Christian growth, God brings area after area to our attention, usually one issue at a time. Our sanctification consists in our submitting each one of these areas to Him as He brings them to us. Remember the little booklet, “My Heart—Christ’s Home”?  

- Conversion is a culminating event where one ceases the struggle against God and abandons oneself to Christ, desiring that He be Lord of all. Sanctification is a process that begins at that point and continues throughout our lives as God works to make us more and more like His Son; it continues until we meet the Lord face to face and are finally glorified into being what His goal is for each of us.

  o For those in the Millennium who have never chosen to submit to Christ in their hearts, Henry Morris describes what life in the Millennium for them might be like:

To men and women who have been born and raised in such an ideal environment, so that all they have ever known is peace, prosperity, and righteousness, the stories told them about the former ages by their parents and by their heavenly rulers and teachers will sound increasingly fanciful as the centuries go by. Soon those ancient times will begin to seem glamorous, with their supposed freedom and excitement, and many in the younger generations will begin inwardly to resent the constraints under which they must live. Even though Satan is bound, and there are no external temptations to doubt God or to disobey His will, they are not innocent, like Adam and Eve in the garden. Their hearts are naturally ‘deceitful . . . and desperately wicked’ (Jer. 17:9 NKJV), simply by virtue of genetic inheritance, and they must consciously accept Christ as personal Savior if they are to be saved just as their ancestors did. With so little contact with overt sin and with provision of every material need so easily available, this may be even more difficult for them than it had been for their forebears.  

In addition, they may become jealous of the special status and abilities of redeemed, glorified, and immortal believers who rule over them. The false idea that the Lord Jesus Christ is not being fair could easily

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21 Morris, pp. 420-421.
group up in their hearts along with resentment against their benign overlords.

V. 8

Deceive the nations—

- Many “modern” teachers have claimed that people are basically good but turn to evil because they are corrupted by their environment and by their experiences. Consequently, if we fix their environments, they will grow up to be kind and civil and will play well with others.
  - During the Millennium, everyone will experience the most perfect environment imaginable for 1,000 years and there will be no Satan to cause them to do bad things.
  - Surely, natural man will finally learn to be naturally good. Not so.

- This final chapter of earthly history will clearly demonstrate that the human heart is wicked at its very core and only awaits the opportunity to overtly rebel.

- Upon his release, Satan immediately sends his demons out all over the Earth to deceive the rebellious at heart into thinking that they can successfully rebel against the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
  - Satan uses the same approach he has used so successfully all through the centuries: lies and deception, and he finds plenty of willing ears.
  - He deceives a large number into believing that they actually can successfully defeat Christ and His global government.

Four corners of the earth—

- This is a Hebrew idiom meaning “from all over the Earth.” Similar to the “four quarters of the earth” in Isa. 11:12. KJV “four corners; Hebrew literally “four extremities of the Earth.”

- Satan finds people with rebellious hearts all over the Earth.

Gog and Magog—

- These names are also used in Ez. 38-39, and many Bible teachers believe these two passages refer to the same events, but although the locations named may be the same, there seem to be too many major differences to equate the events.

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- Gog is not a geographical location but rather a personal name or a title (like Pharaoh or Caesar).

- Magog is a geographical name; “ma” = “land of,” so this is “the land of Gog.” This refers to the ancient Scythians\(^\text{23}\) who occupied the area that is now Central Asia and encompasses the Islamic Republics of what used to be the southern part of the Soviet Union\(^\text{24}\) (e.g., Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and may include Afghanistan).

- So it means, “Gog from the land of Gog.” Echoing the attack against Israel by these people early in the Tribulation Period (Eze. 38-39), these people symbolize all those who will mass together to attack Jerusalem.\(^\text{25}\)

**Number . . . like the sand on the seashore**

- Apparently Satan has no difficulty recruiting what may be largest force ever assembled. Some have suggested that during the thousand years of Millennial peace and prosperity, the population of the Earth soars to its greatest numbers in history.\(^\text{26}\)

**V. 9**

**They marched across the breadth of the earth**

- Although they may have used air or sea travel to get into the Mid-East, their final approach is on the ground; they do not seem to be able to attack from the air or sea.

- After a thousand years of peace and prosperity, there probably are no armaments left in the world.
  - Why would they be needed?
  - There were no enemies to defend against.
  - There will probably be no weapons of war nor personnel trained to use them. No tanks, no destroyers, no aircraft carriers, no fighters, no bombers. No boots on the ground.

- This enormous “army” will be very lightly armed at most, but they intend to make up for it by weight of numbers.

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\(^{25}\) See Hitchcock, pp. 119-122, for the full argument for assigning this prophecy to the early Tribulation Period.

\(^{26}\) Morris, p. 421.
They surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves

- They surround Jerusalem, the capital city of Christ’s government.
- Scripture doesn’t record if they were able to make any demands or even to attack, but that is not the point: they demonstrated their rejection of Christ’s lordship.
- Mankind had failed its final test. It has now been demonstrated that people are NOT basically good but basically sinful. That nothing can make them good other than redemption. That given the chance, people will always rebel against God and go their own way, just like we have consistently done since Adam and Eve.

Fire came down from heaven and devoured them

- Finally, after millennia of patience and grace and mercy, God puts an end to rebellious mankind. Morris aptly says:
- When mankind is so quick to rebel against Him even after a thousand years of an all-but-perfect world, providing every material blessing and even the personal presence of Christ Himself, there is nothing else that the Lord can do to encourage and draw men to receive Himself as Savior. With all the greatest gifts of His love repudiated, and with multitudes choosing to follow Satan instead, God will ring down the curtain.27

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them.” Malachi 4:1 (NIV)

CONCLUSION:

- The Purpose of the Book of Revelation is to warn us and to encourage us about the future even when really bad things begin to happen.
- God is sovereign; He is in control.
  - He is in control of the events of history. History is not random and moving toward no particular purpose. History is His story. He is orchestrating events to achieve His perfect will and accomplish His eternal plans.

27 Morris, p. 424.
- He is in control of Satan. Satan can only operate within the narrow limits God allows Him. All of Satan’s activities which he thinks are accomplishing his intentions all fit neatly into God’s perfect plan for the universe.
  - E.g., He thought the crucifixion of Christ would be his greatest victory, but it turned out that it was God’s plan from eternity past and accomplished the redemption of the very humans he wanted to destroy.
  - Satan’s greatest evil was used to accomplish God’s greatest good.

- He is in control of the details of each of our lives.
  - Our God is so wise and powerful that He can simultaneously orchestrate the great events of world history and at the same time manage the details of the lives of billions of people.
  - He arranges the circumstances we face and limits what Satan can do to us.

- Our future is secure and it will be amazing and marvelous. There is no reason to worry no matter what we face.

- As we look at world events and the drift away from biblical truth we see in our nation, we are tempted to wring our hands, but in the end we will look back and see how it all fit into God’s perfect plans.

- We are to respond to the challenges in our life by prayer, walking in fellowship with the Lord, and trusting Him every step along the way. This is the Faith-Rest life.