

The Final Curtain: The Millennial Reign of Christ

Revelation 20:1–10

Introduction

- Many will concede that a plain reading of Revelation 20:1-10 and its context yields the doctrine of a Millennial kingdom inaugurated by Christ at His second advent.¹
- The exegesis of Revelation 20:1-10 is determined by the interpreter's view of the immediate context of 19:11–20:15.
- Even though this is the only place in Scripture that 1000 years is specified, the promised kingdom is found throughout the OT as well as the NT (e.g., Matthew 8:11, 19:28; Luke 13:29, 22:16, 28–30; Acts 3:19–21 [cf. Deut 30:1–5]; 1 Corinthians 6:2; 15:22–25; Rev 2:26–27; 3:21).

The Binding of Satan (20:1–3)

- The pit” can also be translated “the abyss” (Gk. ἄβυσσος; see Luke 8:31, Rev 9:11, 11:7, 17:8).
- Several NT passages indicate that Satan has a great deal of influence in the world right now (2 Cor 4:3–4; John 5:19, 2 Peter 5:8).
- Not mentioned in this passage is the judgement of the sheep and the goats described by Christ in Matthew 25:31–46.

The Reign of Christ and the Saints (20:4–6)

- In v. 4, John sees **two** groups of people:
- In over 40 occurrences of the term “resurrection” (Gk. ἀνάστασις) it almost always refers to the resurrection of the body. A lone exception is Luke 2:34 used in an etymological sense of “rising.”
- The Scriptures speak of the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous (Daniel 12:2, John 5:29, Acts 24:15).
- Note: Since not all who have a part in the first resurrection are raised at the same time, the term “first resurrection” refers not to a single event, but to the “kind” of resurrection: the second death = “the Lake of Fire” has no power over those who experience it (v. 6). Rather, all who participate in the first resurrection will reign with Christ, including Church-age saints (v. 6).

The Final Judgment of the Nations and Satan (20:7–10)

- The reference to “Gog and Magog” (v. 8) reminds us of a similar reference in Ezekiel 38–39.

¹ MacArthur states that all sides in the debate over the Millennium agree that interpreting Old Testament prophecy literally leads naturally to premillennialism (296).