

The Millennial Kingdom

📖 Revelation 20:1-6

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Last time we went through events that will happen in the 75-day interval between the day of the Second Coming and the day the millennial kingdom begins. Dan 12 is the passage that mentions these extra 75 days that allow you to distinguish between the kingdom and the blessings of the kingdom. When the King comes He comes in His kingdom but the beginning of the kingdom blessings begins 75 days later. This is because there are still surviving Jews and Gentiles when Jesus returns. They have to go to judgment because only believers can enter into kingdom blessings. And in order to understand all the kingdom parables in the gospels, you have to make this distinction, because if you don't you come away with some strange ideas. Take something like the parable of the wheat and the tares or the wedding banquet. Both of these indicate that when the King comes there are still unbelievers that are taken to judgment and cast out of the kingdom. To be cast out of the kingdom, of course, they have to first be in it. So you can't make the blanket statement that has been made over and over and over in theology books, that unbelievers don't enter the kingdom. We know John 3 says that the only way to see the kingdom of God is to be born again, but what a passage like that is talking about is the period of kingdom blessings. It's not talking about the King coming in His kingdom. Anyone who is alive on the day of the Second Coming will see that. So all who survive the Tribulation will go into the initial 75 days of the kingdom, but they will be judged and cast out so that they do not go into the kingdom blessings. So the 75 days has solved a lot of textual difficulties. And without it, you can't really know what to do with these parables. So the 75 days are a period of transition. And at least three parables teach that there will be a judgment on surviving Jews, that's the householder, the ten virgins and the talents. At least one parable teaches a judgment on surviving Gentiles, that's the sheep-goats. And at least two parables teach a judgment on both surviving Jews and Gentiles, that's the wheat and tares and the wedding banquet. But by the end of those judgments, which will certainly be by the end of the 75 days, all unbelievers will be cast out of the kingdom and all believers will enter the kingdom blessings. That's review.

Today we come some other events that will take place during the 75 days. Turn to Dan 12:11. "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, 1,290 days." Well, when will the regular sacrifice be abolished and the abomination of desolation set up? At the midpoint of the 70th week. So

from the midpoint you have to add 1,290 days. And what it's saying is that the abomination of desolation will remain standing in the holy place until that day. Well, the Second Coming takes place on the 1,260th day after the midpoint and so the abomination of desolation will remain standing another 30 days. Then it will be removed. So this is another transitional event, the removal of the abomination of desolation.

Let's do another one, because there are more. During the 75 days the Messiah will build a new temple mount and temple on a much larger platform, the area of which will be 715 acres, as compared to the 37 acres today. So the millennial temple, and there will be a millennial temple, Ezek 40-48 describe the architecture and sacrifices in a millennial temple. People say, why do we need sacrifices? Jesus is the final sacrifice. Well, no matter what you do with that question, you still have to accept what the text says, and the text says there are going to be sacrifices taking place during the millennial temple. Now, they won't be for salvation. In fact, they never were in the OT. Salvation is only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So they are serving some other purpose. And the reason people can't accept that there are sacrifices in the millennial temple is real simple. They never understood the sacrifices to begin with. No one was ever saved by an OT sacrifice and no one will ever be saved by a millennial sacrifice. But there was sacrifice and there will be sacrifice. And that indicates that they served some other purpose and will serve some other purpose once more. So you have to deal with that. And I'd suggest studying the Bible to get the answer. There is always an answer. People are just too lazy to go find it.

Another thing during the 75-days transition will be a further renovation of the earth so that the highest elevation is in the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem will be much larger and 34 miles south of the new temple mount. That's very different from their present configuration. So a very different topography and geography will be worked out during the 75 days.

Finally, Daniel 12:2 tells us that the OT saints will be resurrected at this time to enter into kingdom blessing. They'll be raised to enter into their covenanted blessings. But not only all Jewish saints who were under the covenant, but all pre-Jewish saints too, including Adam and Eve and Abel and Seth and Methuselah and Noah and Job will all be raised at this time to enter into the blessings of the kingdom. We only have one verse about them, that's the one in Job 19:26. Job lived before Abraham and was not under the Abrahamic covenant. Yet he says, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God. Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!" So Job says he would be resurrected and see His Redeemer take His stand on the earth. That's the kingdom. And so what all OT saints will enter into, whether before Abraham or after Abraham, is the blessings of the kingdom.

Now we should add as we go into Rev 20 that there are two phases of the kingdom, the first is 1,000 years and the second is eternal. This is stated explicitly in Rev 20-22. You've got a 1,000 year period, then Satan is released and defeated and cast in the lake of fire. Then there is the judgment of the unbelieving dead. Then comes the eternal phase. So there are two phases to the kingdom of God, a millennial phase and an eternal phase, and the

reason for the millennial phase, we will explain, because there are many folks that wonder, why do you have that 1,000-year kingdom, what is the big deal with that, why do you need that? So we'll have to talk about that.

But let's do this the right way. Turn to Revelation 20:1-3. Here we're given one more transitional issue that will occur during the 75 days before the kingdom blessing can begin. This one I haven't mentioned yet. Rev 20:1, **Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.** This locking away of Satan will occur in the 75-day transition and he will remain locked away for the one thousand years. Now we might as well deal with it now. There are a great many people who reject that a thousand years means a thousand years. They say the Book of Revelation is symbolic and this is just another symbol. It is 10 to the 3rd power and simply refers to a long period of time. But we have taken every other number literally in the Book of Revelation; there are seven churches, 4 living creatures, 24 elders, 144,000 sealed, two witnesses, 1,260 days, 42 months and so forth and so on. So if we take those numbers literally, shouldn't we take this number literally? And especially since the thousand years are mentioned six times in verses 2-6. And if repetition does anything, it emphasizes. Therefore, a thousand years is a thousand years. Now the amillennialist, who believes there is no more kingdom than there is now, says this kingdom is right now in the hearts of believers. It's Jesus reigning in His saints and not something to expect on earth. The amillennialist hasn't dealt with a great many things in Scripture, and we will talk about some of those things. But for now let me just say that he has an awfully distorted view of the plan of God. He has no future for Israel, no earthly millennium. And sometimes I wonder when people leave here and go to some other local church that teaches that God has no future plan for Israel and there is no earthly millennium, I wonder how they live with themselves, knowing what Scripture teaches. I can only surmise that it's not important to them. How could they listen to a pastor use anti-Israel rhetoric and preach pro-Palestinianism? It is hard for me to see how they could possibly love the Lord because the Lord loves Israel, but they continue to listen to anti-Israel messages, which are nothing more than satanic lies.

Now you'll note that Satan is locked away for this one thousand years so that he will not be able to do what? **Deceive the nations any longer.** Deception is an activity that Satan has been doing to individual people since he fell and entered the garden in Gen 3. But his activity of deceiving nations did not begin until there were nations, which is Gen 10, the origin of nations. And he has done a good job of deceiving them. All nations do is vie for power against one another. It is a continual battle to see who can be the top dog. That is all nations do. And what they are trying to be is the eternal nation. But all that is going to come to an end when Messiah returns. He's going to crush all that and He will be King over all and His kingdom will be based in Jerusalem and the Temple and it will be very Jewish. And at that time Satan will be locked away so that He no longer deceives the nations. They'll be free from that. Imagine what the nations will be like without Satan deceiving. The

amillennialist, of course, who believes there is no more millennium than there is now, since Jesus reigns in the hearts of His saints, which is total nonsense, since kingdoms do not enter people, but people enter kingdoms, but he obviously has to say that since he believes this kingdom is now, and so the locking away of Satan must be now. And so obviously we must ask him what he means when he says that Satan is no longer going around deceiving people and nations. How can that be? Their only reply is that God has limited Satan's power. Well, that has always been true. Satan has always had limited power. Remember Job. God told Satan he could only do so much to Job. That's a limitation. So that is nothing new. Sometimes they say it this way, "God has put Satan on a leash." To that I reply, that is a very long leash. It's very simple, the Bible is plain, a thousand years means a thousand years and Satan will be locked away for that thousand years, and that is not now. In 1 Peter 5:8 the Spirit says that Satan is now our adversary, and that he is prowling around like a lion, seeking someone to devour. That does not sound to me like he is locked away so he can't deceive or that he is on a very long leash. It sounds as if he is on the loose, very free. In short, amillennialism is wrong about this and that makes them wrong about many things. The Scriptures teach plainly that Satan is presently loose and in the future, only when Jesus returns, will He lock Satan away for a thousand years. In fact, think of how many of Jesus' miracles were designed to show that He could lock Satan away? Every time Jesus cast out a demon, was He not demonstrating that He had the power to do what He will do right here in Rev 20, lock him away? He did not do it then because the nation Israel did not receive Him. But when they do He will return and He will lock Satan away for a thousand years and he won't be deceiving the nations anymore.

The end of verse 3 says, **he must be released for a short time**. Why do you think that is? Why does he have to be released? We'll see in verses 7-10 that it is to show that people will not change even when Satan is not here and the King is reigning in perfect righteousness. For when he is released people immediately begin to follow him and worship him and rebel against the perfect King. They are still subject to deception. You see, it doesn't matter what our environment is like, it doesn't matter if you have no law, it doesn't matter if you have a perfect law, it doesn't matter if you have a perfect politician running the show, it doesn't even matter if you have Satan locked away, the world will not be a perfect place and the reason is simple; people are not perfect, people are sinners and subject to deception. If you read the Bible, you'll see that God is proving this over and over. Think about it. He created everything perfect in the beginning; perfect environment, no death, no suffering, no pain, no tears, and what did man do? He rebelled against God. After the Fall God let them have a world with no human government, no written law, only that which was etched on their heart by being made in the image of God, and did that work? No, man became extremely corrupt, to the point God finally judged the world by the global flood. After the flood they were to scatter but they gathered and build the Tower of Babel. So God judged them. Finally, God said, alright, let's try setting apart one nation and entering into a covenant with them and giving them a perfect law. Did that work? Well, the day the law was given at Mt Sinai they broke the law. So a perfect law will not solve the world's problems. So God said, alright, I'll send my Son and He'll pay the penalty of sin on the cross and extend grace to all men. And that's good and we have received it, but men still spurn His

grace. Most people don't believe the gospel of grace. Why is this the way history is? Because God is trying to teach something. And in the millennium He's going to put all these lesson plans together in one world; a perfect government, a perfect king, a perfect environment, or near perfect, with greatly extended longevity, and a perfect law with a perfect justice system, and no Satan, and still, guess what? It's not going to fix man. Man will still be a sinner and will still be subject to deception, and the very moment Satan is released, they are going to flock to him. Why? Because he will deceive them with the lie that he can defeat Jesus Christ and take over the universe. The world believed that in the past and it believes it in the present and it will believe it in the future. Why? Because man is a sinner and sin distorts everything.

In verse 4, **Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given them.** But who are them? There are only two options if you ask me. First, they could be Church saints. Church saints will be given thrones and will judge angels. In 1 Cor 6 we are told that we will judge angels. It is discussing fallen angels and the judgment of angels will be another event in the 75-day transition. Because they too are going to be locked away in the abyss with Satan for the thousand years. So this could be the Church sitting on thrones and judging the angels. But second, it could be the Tribulation saints that are now spoken of, given thrones to rule and judge during the kingdom. John would be giving an explanation when he goes on to say, **And I saw the souls of who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** This seems more likely to me. Tribulation saints who are martyred will sit on thrones and be given judgment in the kingdom. They are certainly seen victorious. They refused to worship the beast and receive the mark and as a consequence they were beheaded. But here they will come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years. So these Tribulation saints were martyred, they did not survive, so they will be given resurrection bodies and will reign with Christ. Christ will be the King of kings, they will be some of the kings who co-reign with him, and so will all who are resurrected at this time, including the OT saints, the Church saints and the Tribulation saints. A word needs to be said here about Matt 19:28, because this is the passage where the apostles said to Jesus, we have left everything and followed you, what will there be for us? And He said to them, "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you shall also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. So the apostles, who are Church saints, will be in resurrection bodies, judging the non-resurrected of the twelve tribes. So you'll have mortals living with immortals, it's going to be a very interesting world, but nothing too radical, it's been seen before, Jesus was in His immortal body when He went in and out among people in mortal bodies. We've seen it once, we'll see it again, this time for a thousand years. But here in this verse, in view are the Tribulation saints who will be raised immortal and reign with Christ.

Now we are told in verse 5 that the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is a resurrection after the thousand years. Well, who are the rest of the dead? Well, we'll see in verse 12 that they are those who will attend the Great White Throne judgment, and in verse 16 that their names

are not in the book of life and that ultimately they will be thrown in the lake of fire. So the resurrection of unbelievers, and yes, unbelievers will be resurrected, there is a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto death, and the resurrection unto death takes place after the thousand-year phase of the kingdom.

We've got two resurrections then, in these verses, the first is the resurrection of the Tribulation saints who were martyred and they are raised before the thousand years so they can reign with Christ for the thousand years and the second is the resurrection of the rest who were not believers and so will be raised after the thousand years so they can be cast in the lake of fire.

Then we're told at the end of verse 5, This is the first resurrection. Now it's not the first of all time, that is very clear. Jesus is the first of all time. So that is not what the word first means in this context. When I studied this word I found that it can mean "foremost in position, or importance," and what we would say it means here is "preferable. This is the preferable resurrection. It is a resurrection to reign with Christ in the kingdom. It is certainly not the first reference of all time or even the second or the third. That is not the point. And it is also not a description of the last resurrection for those who are believers. Sometimes you hear that and there is a big exposition of the first resurrection being a phrase that refers to the resurrection unto life, and then all the saints who will take part in the first resurrection are listed; Jesus, the Church, the two witnesses, OT Israel and lastly, the Tribulation saints. But that is not what first resurrection is referring to. It simply refers to the Tribulation saints having the preferable resurrection, compared to the rest of the dead who will be raised after the kingdom. And the reason their resurrection is preferable is simple, they get to reign with Christ.

Now that very preferential treatment they receive at this time by resurrection is expressed in verse 6 perfectly clearly, Blessed and holy is the one who takes part in the first resurrection, or preferred resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. Isn't that a wonderful privilege?

Now why? This is the big question? Why the thousand years' kingdom? Why not just float off into the clouds as the amillennialist says? Well, not only is the amillennialist infected with Neo-Platonic thought that came into the Church through Augustine, who was originally a premillennialist. He read Neo-Platonic philosophy and concluded that material was evil, and we cannot have a kingdom on earth where there are those who reign with Christ over mortals in a greatly improved world. So he became an amillennialist and that is his book *The City of God*, where he very frankly rejects premillennialism, which we are espousing. And the Roman Catholic Church got it from Augustine and Calvin broke from the Roman Catholic Church in several ways, but he inherited amillennialism from Roman Catholicism and it is still with us today in Westminster Theological Seminary and many Reformed Presbyterian Churches. The problem really is their acceptance of Neo-Platonism, which said that material is intrinsically evil. But they forgot that God created material very good and so material is not intrinsically evil. It can be corrupted by sin, but it is not intrinsically evil. Even now as believers we can offer our instruments to Him as instruments of righteousness. So our physical bodies are not intrinsically evil. And a

kingdom on earth is not intrinsically evil either. And there are many reasons why there will be a kingdom on earth. Let's highlight a few. First, because of the dominion mandate in Gen 1:26-28. God created man to rule over the earth and have dominion. If it is thought that the Fall has removed this purpose of man, then Psalm 8 makes clear that even in a fallen world, man is to rule. "What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him? 7 "You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And have appointed him over the works of Your hands; 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." Of course, no men have been found fit to rule yet, being fallen as they were. That is why Jesus came as an unfallen humanity. He came to rule. But the nation Israel rejected Him. And for Him to take the throne and rule He must be accepted. That He is not now ruling is clear from Heb 2:8 which says, But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him. And yet it is implied that one day we will. He is the King in waiting, just as David, who was the rightful king, was not the king until Saul was removed and David took the throne. So Christ will reign. He will do so as the last Adam. The first Adam was created to reign, but he failed, but so the last Adam did not fail, and He will reign. And those who have believed and are raised will reign with Him. The Tribulation saints are just some of them. The OT saints that are raised will also reign with Him. And we, the Church, will also reign with Him. The Corinthians acted as if they were already reigning. But Paul says, "Oh that you were reigning, for we would reign with you." But that is not yet. We are presently sons of the kingdom (Matt 13) and heirs of the kingdom and indeed even a kingdom (Rev 5:10), but that kingdom has yet to be realized. It is still future. It will come when the Son of Man comes as described in Rev 19. It will crush all Gentile kingdoms, as Daniel saw in the statue, even to the extent of eliminating Satan, and the whole earth will be filled with His glory and righteousness. At least for a thousand years the world will be much better than it is now. It will not be perfect, there will still be death according to Isa 65:20, but the one who dies at the age of 100 will be thought accursed. So 100 will be a young age in the millennium, whereas if anyone lives to 100 today they are considered extremely old. So there will be great differences. There will also be technological advances unheard of in our world today. Technology will grow at a rate far more rapid in the kingdom than today and it will be for the benefit of all mankind. Further, the environment will be so wonderful that the sower will overtake the reaper, ongoing year round planting and harvesting, multiple crops per year, so there will be plenty of food for all. As far as the animal world, all nature will be in harmony, the lamb will lie with the wolf, the child will play by the viper's den, there will be no hurting or destroying, a very wonderful world. And lastly there will be one object of worship, Jesus Christ. There will not be religious freedom. No one will be allowed to worship Allah. There will be no Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhists, Muslims, etc... There will be one object of worship, Jesus Christ, and He will rule with a rod of iron to enforce His policies, and we will be there, co-reigning with Him, over the mortals on earth. And there is so much more...

Next time, the final release of Satan and the judgment of the dead. Then on to the eternal phase of the kingdom of God, the new heaven and new earth.