

Sorting Out the Millennium– Rev 20:21:4

In the middle of a 4 week series on the ET's

Recall the basic **timeline** of the ET's when you put all the Scriptures together

This is what we're unpacking; This a.m. focusing on the mill – time following the GT

There's almost as much confusion re the mill as there is the trib

Some say there isn't one; Or that it's spiritual and happening right now – Amill

Others say there is one, but doesn't include Jesus on earth – Post-mill

While there's some merit to both, I believe the clearest teaching in Scripture describes a pre-millennial return of Christ to the earth

That's what I want to sort out this morning

Pretty sure some of you have been thinking – “What's the point? What's it matter?”

“It's all going to pan out anyway”

While you're right about that, there's nothing like a little anticipation to get you through the day

Every now and then I'll call Becky from the office and ask what we're doing tonight, or what we're doing this weekend – because I want something to look forward to

It fuels me; That's what a knowledge of the M does for you – it fuels your anticipation

And reinforces your hope – especially during the hard times of a difficult tribulation

That's the point; That's why all this matters

So with that as our goal this morning, turn in your Bible to Rev 20

And let's start with this . . .

The Millennium is the future reign of Christ on earth (Rev 20:1-6)

- There's one primary passage in the Bible re the M, but several others that allude to it
Like Zech 14 – describes the Lord as King over *all* the earth
Or Ps 72 – describes the rule and reign of a coming king over all the nations

- It's also implied in several NT passages, like . . .

1 Cor 15:22-25 – Paul says we're all going to be made alive, but here's how it's going to come down

First Jesus will be resurrected, (which already happened), then believers will come to life when he comes again, then he will reign over all his enemies, then the end (the eternal state)

This implies that just as there was a time between Christ's resurrection and ours (now)

So also there will be a time between his 2nd Coming and when he *delivers the kingdom to God the Father*, during which he will destroy every rule, authority, and power – that's the M reign

That's confirmed in Rev 12&19 where John says that at his coming, Christ will rule *all the nations with a rod of iron*

It's alluded to the OT and implied in the New; But it's . . .

- Rev 20 that describes it explicitly

This is the only passage in the Bible that explicitly refers to a thousand year reign of Christ on earth – doesn't make it any less true

It just means we don't have other explicit passages to confirm it

After describing Christ's 2nd Coming in ch19, he then says in v1 (rd 20:1-6 and explain)

2 – most often, when the NT writers refer to Satan, they are referring to him as representative of all evil; So this binding most likely includes his demonic throng
1000 years, used 6 times in 7 verses, could be literal, or symbolic of long time – either way, it's going to happen

4 – *those on thrones who judge*

Saints given responsibilities to make decisions of better and best, right and wrong in the M

4b – *they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years*

Here you have an explicit reference to the future M reign of Christ on earth

When take 1 Cor 6:2 into account (*saints will judge the world*), most likely John cites the Trib martyrs as representative of *all* believers, who come to life at Christ's 2nd Coming, and join him to reign

5 – this Scripture makes it clear that there are two resurrections

One for believers at the beginning of the M

The other for unbelievers at the end of the M

6a – The first death is physical death which has power over everyone

But the second death is eternal punishment in the lake of fire – 20:14b-15

Those raised in the first resurrection will not be subject to the lake of fire

But those raised at the end of the M in the second resurrection, are unbelievers who are not written in the book of life, and will suffer punishment in hell forever

The Millennium is the future reign of Christ on earth

If you've entrusted your life to Christ through faith

Believing he died for your sins

If you've repented of your sin, turning from it

And you love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength

You have *much* to look forward to, and . . .

It starts when the Great Tribulation ends (Various Scriptures)

Let's walk through these events real quick; At the end of the GT . . .

Christ will come in power and glory

The Lord himself will descend from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire

Believers who have previously died will be resurrected, joined by those still living . . .

1 Cor 15:51-53 – We will be *changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye* to receive a glorified body, no longer constrained by death

We will raptured to meet the Lord in the air, and then immediately return with him for the Battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:16)

Where he will strike down the nations with the word of his mouth (Rev 19)

And throw the AC and FP into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20)

Satan will then be bound and banished for the duration of the M (Rev 20:1-3)

And Christ will begin his 1000 year reign with his saints (Rev 20:4)

That's something to get excited about

We're given as much detail about this transition time, as any other part of the ET's

I think, to reinforce our hope in the midst of suffering – now or in the GT

So keep hope alive – the M starts when the GT ends

Better yet . . .

It leads to peace and prosperity (Ps 72)

Turn to Ps 72 – this is one of those passages that alludes to the M

1 – Solomon starts off; could be talking about himself

3 – let there be prosperity as a result of *righteousness*, not greed or corruption

7 – things begin to change; talking about a kingdom for all time

8, 11 – describes a kingdom for all time, over whole earth, with everybody worshipping and serving this royal son

17 – Solomon describes a king/kingdom in this Psalm whose extent is as big as it can be

Whose power is above all others; Whose longevity never ends

Combined with his compassion for the needy, poor, weak, and oppressed (v12-14) . . .

It's a time of unparalleled peace and prosperity

And no wonder, because sinful influences will be greatly diminished

Even though unbelievers who lived through the GT are still present, their influence will be weak at best, because . . .

Satan and his demons are absent; Christ is present; All nations/kings will defer to him

Believers in glorified bodies will reign with him

Which, whatever it means, must include increased influence

No wonder the M leads to peace and prosperity

That's worth waiting for

- But some would object to the whole thing, the whole pre-Mill view

Because they don't understand how believers in glorified bodies can co-exist with unbelievers in mortal bodies

Doesn't make sense to them, so they throw the baby out with the bath water

But what they often don't realize, is that it's already happened

When Christ rose again, he had a glorified body – he was no longer constrained by death, time, space, anything

And he co-existed and intermingled with people like you and I for 40 days

So it's not impossible for glorified and un-glorified people to interact

- Others would *add* to this peace/prosperity by saying it includes a rebuilt temple in Jerus during the M

Including a physical throne for Christ and a return to OT sacrifices complete with priests, festivals, and Sabbaths

Those who would advocate such a thing base it on Ez 40-48, where he described a rebuilt temple/Jer after both were destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonian's

While I believe Ez's prophecy applies to the M, I don't believe it refers to a literal temple being rebuilt

I believe his detailed language and numerical symmetry are symbolic of the . . .

Perfection and grandeur of God's plan for his restored people, then and now

Centrality of God-centered worship at all times

While there are several reasons for that meaning fr the text, I won't go into them now because . . .

The biggest problem with a literal temple and a return to OT sacrifices is that it runs completely contrary to the explicit teaching of Scripture, like –

Heb 8:13 – *In speaking of a new covenant, he[Christ] makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*

If the Old Covenant with its temple and sacrifices, is obsolete and history, why would we go back to it in the M?

If as Paul says in **Col 2:17** – *These [festivals, Sabbaths, new moon celebrations (things associated with temple worship)] are but a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ . . .*

Why would we go back to the shadows when we have the substance, the real thing?

If, as Heb 9:11 says – Christ is a greater and more perfect temple, why would we go back to an imperfect one, especially when he's present?

The OT sacrifices were rendered obsolete by Christ's sacrifice on the cross – they no longer have any value except to show us the all-surpassing value of *his* death

To suggest they will be brought back in his *presence* during the M, is not only contrary to the clear teaching in Scripture, but an insult to him

Additions and objections aside, the M leads to peace and prosperity

That's something worth waiting for

It starts when the Great Tribulation ends; It leads to peace and prosperity; And . . .

It ends when Satan is defeated (20:7-10)

Read v7-10 and comment

7 – *Gog and Magog* – Gog was a prince in OT times from the distant land of Magog, who led a bunch of godless, rebellious, pagan invaders

Over time it became a derogatory expression in rabbinic circles to refer to any/all nations that are in rebellion against God

9 – *beloved city* – the community of the redeemed, not a particular city

The M ends when Satan gathers the rebellious for a final battle against the saints

Quite the commentary the human heart

That even in the absence of Satan and his tempting influence . . .

And while enjoying the peace and prosperity of Christ's rule . . .

People are still prone to rebel; swayable in uncountable numbers like *the sand of the sea* Which goes to show that the heart of man is truly wicked

But God's patience at the end of the M is gone

Satan and his cohorts (all of them) are consumed by fire

Satan himself is thrown into the lake of fire

The M ends with his defeat, leaving no one but genuine followers of Jesus Christ

But that's not all . . .

It's followed by final judgment (Rev 20:11-15)

Read v11-15 and comment

11 – *Great White Throne* – symbolic of holiness, power, justice

At this final judgment, there's no where to run/hide

Even creation can't bear the piercing holiness of God's judgment

12 – *the dead* – since all the believers were resurrected to life 1000 years previous, this refers to those who *didn't come to life until the 1000 yrs ended* (20:5)

13 – *sea* – representing the unburied dead

Death – just a personified way to refer to all those who have died

Hades – the condemned realm of hell where the unbelieving dead are, previous to this final judgment

Point is – no one escapes final judgment

15 – not only will you give account for all you’ve done as an unbeliever

Won’t matter what *good* things you’ve done if name is not written in book of life

If – implies that believers will be present as well, to answer for our deeds

But our saving grace is that our names are *found* written in the book of life

The M is followed by final judgment where unbelievers are punished with eternal torment, believers are rewarded with eternal life, and all are held accountable for our deeds

If you haven’t recognized your sin and sinfulness

If you haven’t cried out to God for forgiveness

If you haven’t completely committed your life to him

You’re flirtin’ with disaster because final judgment *will* come

So get right w/ God now

And last . . .

It’s replaced by all things new (Rev 21:1-4)

It starts when the Great Tribulation ends

It leads to peace and prosperity

It ends when Satan is defeated

It’s followed by final judgment

While sinners are thrown into the lake of fire

Saints are ushered into the new heavens and new earth

Read 21:1-4

Heaven and earth and the M time will pass away

Replaced with *a new heaven and a new earth* (1)

On which is a *new Jerusalem* will appear (2) – symbolic of the glorious dwelling place/presence of God where he is worshipped and enjoyed for all eternity

We will live with God and he with us; And we will be his people (3)

There will be no more crying, no more pain, no more death, no more stain

Just perfect bliss, stunning grandeur, complete satisfaction, and no danger – forever

Look at how Isaiah described it in **Is 11:6-9**

The things you most enjoy now, will pale in comparison to the things you’ll enjoy then

Pray – stand and sing . . . **Sing to the King**

I hope that as you focus on these words, you’ll sing it with renewed anticipation, hope, and conviction – that the future is bright with Jesus as King