

The Millennium – Revelation 20

Does anybody else have spring as their favorite season of the year? I love spring. Technically it starts this Friday but we are already seeing the signs. Bluebonnets are popping up. Trees are blooming. Flowers are budding. The hummingbirds are hanging out. Warmer weather. Longer days. Good rains and everything is neon green. Even the fish are biting again and life is just everywhere. I just love it.

I love everything about spring...except the allergies that come with it...and all the mowing and weed eating. You can't keep your car clean with all the rain and the pollen. And the spring storms are crazy! And, around here, spring lasts about two weeks and then it's going to be Texas hot again. Ugh. It looks pretty but there are problems that spring brings as well.

Do you ever dream about what it must have been like in the Garden of Eden? Basically springtime all year round without all the negatives. Can you imagine Adam coming home after working in the garden all day and kicking back in his La-Z-Boy and watching the 5:30 news? *“Not much to report today. But it will be perfect weather for a stroll with God tomorrow. Back to you, Bob.”*

I heard that Cain and Abel were walking through the woods exploring one day and came upon a wall. They climbed up and looked over and then went running back to Adam and said, *“Daddy, Daddy, you won't believe what we saw!”* Then they described all the beautiful flowers and trees and the different kinds of fruit and they said, *“Daddy, do you think we could ever live in a place like that?”* Adam said, **“We did once. But that was before your mother ate us out of house and home.”**

Well, I have good news for you. YOU will see something very similar to the Garden of Eden but maybe even better. And I'm not talking about Heaven. Did you know that there will be what Jesus calls in **Matthew 19:28** *“the regeneration”*? **Acts 3** describes this time as *“times of refreshing”* and *“the period of restoration of all things.”* There are probably a dozen Old Testament passages that refer to it as well.

Imagine a time of no more poverty. I could stop right there and it would be pretty incredible but not only do we, as Christians, have everything we need, there will be no more prisons. There will be no more war. You'll have to go to a museum to see an army tank. The average person will live to be at least a hundred years old – like Lonnie.

I'm not talking about Heaven but this will be a time of great peace like we have never seen before. Even the animals will all get along. The wolf and the lamb and the calf and the lion and the little child and the serpent will all live and play together. Some of you may be thinking this is probably the next time the Cowboys win a Super Bowl. Others of you may be thinking I've been reading too many comic books. But it's true and it is all found in the Word of God in the **Book of the Revelation**.

Turn to the last book of the Bible and go to **chapter 20** and **verses 1-6** and let's read about what we call the Millennium. After the Rapture, the Tribulation will happen here on earth. At the end of the Tribulation, which lasts seven years, the Second Coming of Jesus happens and we all come back to earth and Jesus will separate the Christians from the unbelievers. Then while we are still here on this earth, Jesus will set up His royal Kingdom. Let's read what happens in **Revelation 20:1-6**.

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3He

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. 4I 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. 5(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6Blessed 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.

A little boy asked his dad, “Daddy, what’s the Millennium?” His dad said, “**It’s just like a centennial except it has more legs.**” (Mark Hitchcock) So, there you go. Thanks for coming. All your questions are answered. Seriously, for as long as there have been records, man has dreamed of Heaven on earth or Utopia or Xanadu, whatever you want to call it.

Do you ever think this would be a great place to live if it weren’t for all these crazy people? Well, the Millennium is for you. Now, some people have a hard time believing all this and I understand because on this earth as we know it, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is, right? But this won’t be earth as we know it and we will talk about that some more in a minute.

But some people will have a problem with this passage because it says it only lasts a thousand years and we know from many other passages that God’s reign will be eternal. Well, both of those are true. Think of the Millennium as being the front porch to the rest of eternity. It’s a really nice place but it’s not the best part and not where we will live forever.

Now, if you remember from last week, we will either die or be raptured but either way we will have our cool and awesome, glorified bodies when we come back to earth with Jesus. Jesus will separate the believers from the unbelievers and then we all look up and see an angel coming down from Heaven with a key in his hand. What’s the key go to? A brand-new car? No. It is the key to the Abyss and with it a great chain.

The Abyss is not Hell but a temporary place of incarceration and torment. Later on, Satan gets thrown into the Lake of Fire which is his eternal place of torment. It’s like Satan goes from county jail to state jail. Here he literally “*catches chain*” and is thrown into the Abyss. Now, imagine this world as we know it...without Satan or his demons or any of his influence. That is what we find in the first paragraph of our passage. That is what this world will be like at the Millennium.

So, where is Satan right now? **1 Peter 5:8** says he’s prowling around like a roaring lion looking to see who he can devour. This is not the Millennium and until it is, we have to be prepared, waiting and watching for the Lord to rapture us and making sure we have on the full armor of God (Eph. 6) and knowing that our battle in this world is not against flesh and blood. But one of these days, that old lion will be chunked into the Abyss for a thousand years. So, then what’s going to happen?

Well, look at **verse 4**. “*I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.*” What does that mean? Who is going to be on those thrones and why do we care? Well, I’ll tell you why you should care. It’s because it may be you. Seriously. Now, look at this. In **Daniel 7:27** it says that the Old Testament saints will reign in the millennial kingdom. Jesus promised His apostles that they would judge the twelve tribes of Israel in **Matthew 19:28**. New Testament believers are also promised that they will reign with Christ in **1 Corinthians**

6:2 which says the saints will judge the world. **2 Timothy 2:12** declares that if we endure, we will reign and judge with Him and **Revelation 2:26** and **5:10** have similar wording.

Have you ever wanted to be a judge? Years ago, my neighbor had a new fence put up and, in the process, my dogs got out while I wasn't home. I found them at the city dog pound along with a summons to face the judge at the city court. So, I went to the judge and he listened to my story for all of ten seconds and then interrupted me to proclaim, *"The only good dog is a dead dog! \$50 fine for each one! Next!"* That's a true story. Not only did I have to pay to get my dogs out of the pound, I had to pay extra because this judge didn't like dogs. I wanted to tell him that my dogs said that the only good judge is a dead judge, but I didn't.

But one of these days...I'll be the judge. I don't know who or what I will judge. It may be a city or a nation or a group. Who knows? I may come back and be the judge of Chico and if I do, there will be some changes. I guarantee you. "Let Chico Thrive" is still my motto. You folks that didn't want me as mayor sure aren't going to like me as judge! 😊 Don't you worry! Life will be good then!

But according to scripture, we will all be judges over something. In **Matthew 25**, we find the parable of the talents. You remember the story. The master is going to be gone for a while so he leaves his estate with three of his men and when he comes back, two of them did well and invested what they had and made more. Do you remember what the master said? *"Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you **in charge of** (or the KJV says **ruler over**) many things."*

God has placed within all of us the need and the desire to be in charge of something. He told Adam and Eve in **Genesis 1** to go and have dominion over the earth. We were designed to work and designed to rule and we will be judges or rulers over something; a nation, a state, city or group of people. Maybe if you haven't been real faithful, you will just rule over, I don't know, a preschool or something. That'll teach ya. Then **1 Corinthians 6** tells us that some of us will even judge angels.

I mentioned something about us being judges a while back at Bible Study and somebody brought up something I hadn't thought about. They said they didn't really want to judge because how could they judge people and sentence them for things that they themselves had gotten away with? That's a great question and I understand and appreciate that attitude but listen to what Isaiah said in **Isaiah 2:2-4**.

"In the last days, the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. 3Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."

That passage is talking about the Millennium and it says that Jesus will be Lord of all the earth and His throne will be in Jerusalem but we will learn from Him. He will be in charge. Satan won't be around to tempt or distract and if we have questions or problems all we have to do is ask Jesus. We will judge fairly and justly and with grace and mercy just like Jesus would. How cool is that?

Something else that I noticed in that passage and just fascinates me is that verse that says, *"They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks."* Now, why will we need plowshares and pruning hooks? Because there will still be work that needs to be done. We will reign with Christ and be judges over things but there will still be manual labor that needs to be done as well.

That will be good, though, because that is what we are made to do and with our glorified bodies, it won't hurt. We won't get tired like we do now. The grass will still need to be mowed but the weather will be nice and we will have the best tools for the job and at the end of the day, what a great feeling of accomplishment we will get from a job well done. Especially if Jesus swings by and says again, *"Well done! Good job, my good and faithful servant!"*

Now, going back to **Revelation 20, verse 5**. It tells us that there will be a first resurrection at the Millennium. This is not a resurrection of everybody. The Bible gives us the analogy of a harvest with three steps to it. The first step is the first fruits harvest. This was Jesus at His resurrection. **1 Corinthians 15** calls Christ the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Then comes the general harvest which happens at the rapture when the dead in Christ will rise first and then those Christians that are still alive. We talked about that last week. Then there is the gleanings part of the harvest. The third and last phase of the harvest is spoken of in this passage, talking about the resurrection of the Tribulation saints – those that were left behind at the Rapture but came to know Jesus during the Tribulation.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 says, *"Or do you not know that the LORD's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!"*

Those verses pertain to the Millennium but also have application for us today. If the church will have the future responsibility of judging angels, doesn't it make sense that we can resolve problems in the church today? (Adrian Rogers)

Satan thought he pulled a good one at our church some time ago and he almost got away with it. He caught two people at just the right time and there was a misunderstanding which led to anger and it could have been a real problem in our little church. But I saw both parties show great biblical wisdom and through prayer and biblical understanding, both parties met and talked like family members do and realized that their battle was not against flesh and blood. So, they decided that instead of being angry, they would both ask and grant forgiveness and left praying for one another and loving each other like only wise disciples of Jesus can do.

I thought when they left that those will be great judges right there. That's what a great judge will do. They see both sides. Through biblical knowledge, they know what is truth and above all they show grace and mercy and love because they have been shown great grace and mercy and love.

Romans 16:20 says, *"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."* While today may or may not be that day, it will happen soon, oh glorious day, when the devil is in prison, the bride is with the bridegroom and the King is on His throne. I may not know or understand every aspect of it, but from what I do know, I can't wait and I am encouraged because I know that day is coming soon. It makes me want to run out into the street and stop traffic to tell people about Jesus. It makes me desperate for our neighbors to come to have a personal relationship with God through His Son Jesus right now.

It's not about coming to church. It's not about coming from a Christian home or being a Baptist or being a really good person. None of that gets your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life, only faith in Jesus can do that. Faith in Jesus will always manifest itself in a changed life. Jesus works every day to make us more like Him and if He is not working in your life everyday then maybe it is because you are not a true disciple of His. If there is any question in your mind today, I want nothing more than to talk and pray with you right now. Don't take a chance on missing out on your inheritance which is every good thing Heaven has to offer. It's an eternal choice but you have to make here. Do it right now as the music plays.