

## **Revelation 20:1-4 (V4) – The Millennial Reign of Christ**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The last time we examined how Satan was bound for a thousand years after Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven. We started to examine the rule of Christ during this "thousand year" period also. But in order to understand properly the rule of Christ, you have to understand the "millennium" – that period of one thousand years. Is it a literal period? When will it end? Look at what God's Word declares today!

Our headings are: The **Time of the Millennium** 千年, The **Rulers of the Millennium**, and the **Directions for the Millennium**.

Our goals are: That **seeing Christ's unstoppable rule, you will confidently face the challenges of life and better work for and worship the Lord.**

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

### **Time of the Millennium**

1. Is Christ's rule for 1000 years literal years? No reasonable interpretation of the text can conclude the millennium is literally 1000 years. Only cults and those of lesser understanding believe it is literally 1000 years. So why do some people (pre-millennialists) argue for a literal 1000 years rule of Christ? They believe that after Christ's secret return he will steal away some Christians and take them to heaven. Then there will be some cataclysmic 大变动的 events, after which he will set up a kingdom in Jerusalem, Palestine, and rule the earth for 1000 years. These incredible teachings are a denial of the clear teaching of the Scriptures. This doctrine is heretical 异端的. The man who started this strange doctrine (Cerinthus – a Gnostic) said that an angel told him this. (Cerinthus even denied the Trinity and much of Christ work. He had similar beliefs to Mormonism.) Most people who are pre-millennialists don't know that he was the source of this strange teaching. And how does this literal 1000 years earthly rule contradict the Bible?

1Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

So when Christ returns... He will visibly return in the air and that would be the end of the world.

1Corinthians 15: 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

And when that time of Christ' reappearance in the air comes it will be after all nations bow to him.

2. How does the Bible use the word "millennium?" A thousand years is a large rounded-off number. Just like 7 is a picture of perfect complete quality, 1000 years shows a perfect complete quantity. One man says that it simply shows "many-ness." One thousand is 10X10X10. This is used in many places in Revelation to show large numbers – usually large numbers of people. (Revelation 5:11; 7:4-8; 9:16; 11:3, 13; 12:6; 14:1,3, 20). Consider also

Psalms 50:10-For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills.

When God said this, would any argue that the cattle on 1100<sup>th</sup> hill don't belong to the Lord? Of course not. (See also Deut. 1:11; 7:9; Ps. 68:17; 84:10; 90:4). So this 1000 years is really a long complete period of time... that's all. And when you combine this with Daniel and other prophecies about the kingdom, you will see that Christ' reign and his kingdom would last a long period of time...until all his enemies become Christ's footstool.

Daniel 2:43 "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold— the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Jesus pointed out how his kingdom would come – showing the slow but sure work of building his kingdom.

Matthew 13: 31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." 33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

Leaven does not only work in part of the dough. It naturally spreads.

3. So we can confidently conclude that Christ is ruling in the world today and will continue to rule until his conquering has been completed and his enemies submit to him...just as Jesus promised his disciples. You are in his kingdom now! It is a kingdom that transcends borders...You have been transformed from the Devil's kingdom to the Divine kingdom.

Colossians 1: 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed 运送 us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Ephesians 1:20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

Consider one more passage that teaches the effects of the long rule of Christ. The effect: worldwide converts.

Isaiah 52:15 So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.

And the one who was conquered for Christ was baptized as a sign of his submission.

## **Rulers in the Millennium**

1. Jesus' disciples would rule under him. With Christ on the throne shouldn't his children be there also?

Luke 22:29 "And I bestow 给予 upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Notice that this was not just a future kingdom...but a present kingdom. He said: "I give." Further, the present reality of the kingdom is shown by the present reality of the work that Christians were given to do: conquering.

Matthew 28: 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

2. What are the boundaries of this rule? The boundaries of Christ's kingdom was not a "Jerusalem" based kingdom as the Jews wanted, but it went far abroad. Chilton: "Jesus gave His disciples 2 promises regarding the Messianic era: that they would sit on thrones, and that they would judge. This is precisely what St. John shows us in this text..." The disciples of Jesus are finally able begin to do what man was called to do from the beginning! What comfort this was!

Genesis 1: 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

This was the prophetic hope of the Psalmist.

Psalms 8:5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

And this is what the writer of the Hebrews announced: Psalm 8 was speaking of man, not just Christ!

Hebrews 2: 5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

3. Not only elders are ruling, but they are accompanied with those who had been beheaded for their faith. This took me a while to understand. Who are these beheaded people? Is this speaking of martyrs of the faith? The word used for beheaded (pelekizo) is only used here in the Bible...so you can expect a unique meaning. The sense of the meaning is used to refer to the beheading of John the Baptist in Matt 14:10. John the Baptist is unique because he is the last of the Old Testament prophets. It seemed that Apostle John was drawing attention to those who died before who were faithful, from Abel, the first prophet, to Zechariah and John the Baptist. These kept the faith and now reign with those who

died. After all, all prophets spoke of Christ. See also John 5:45-46, Acts 10:43, and Romans 1:1-3, Romans 3:21-22)  
Luke 24: 25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.  
So the old covenant faithful joined with the new covenant faithful, and they are joined with Christ to rule for a thousand years until his enemies become his footstool.

## **Directions for the Millennium**

1. The reign of Christ will extend to the whole earth through evangelism 福音传道 – no other way.

Isaiah 11: 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

How does the knowledge of the Lord spread? Through preaching of the Word of God. As a result, blessings, like the blessings of the Garden of Eden will flow again. Read about those blessings in Lev 26:3-13, and in Deut 28:1-14.

2. What about political spread of the kingdom? What about making godly laws and requiring men and women to obey them?

Won't that show Christ's rule? Answer: While Christ is Lord of all areas of life, and politicians are required to follow the teachings of God's Word, the primary means of the kingdom, as mentioned above, is evangelism, not political action. When the hearts of men and women have been changed that political actions would become easier...and Christ's rule starts in the hearts of men, in their families, churches, business, schools, etc. Faithfulness starts with small things. No man is fit to rule in the church unless he is able to rule his family well.

Matthew 25: 21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

1Timothy 3:5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

It is a sign of a corrupted church that tries to steal power from the civil authorities. One man wrote: "When we are ready, God will give the robe to us. That He has not done so proves that we are not ready. Asserting 坚持己见 our readiness will not fool Him."

5. Does this reign of the saints take place in heaven or on earth? This reign of Christ takes place in earth and in heaven. (Matt 28) As you have already seen, Christ rules in heaven, and you rule with him. (Eph 2:6). The church in heaven and the church on earth worship together today (Rev 7:15, 12:12, 13:6)...so it is not surprising that you rule together. The argument raised against this point is when Jesus told Pilate "My Kingdom is not from this world." This text however, was not saying that the church is had no power or impact on the world. Jesus was simply saying that the church's power is based in heaven – and derived from heaven – not from Rome...as Pilate would have boasted.

## **Conclusion:**

Jesus is ruling in heaven and on earth through his saints in heaven and on earth. He will rule until all his enemies become his footstool...either willingly by accepting his grace...or unwillingly and being crushed. The Lord Jesus is not bound by time. He will accomplish his will at his desirable time.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You have a **citizenship in Christ's kingdom** that none can take away. Praise the Lord. More, you are **part of Christ's rule**. Praise the Lord. You are part of the **workings of the kingdom**. Praise the Lord and evangelize the lost so they would be moved to join in the kingdom. How can you do this best? Learn to die to your own self-interest and labor for him who died for you. And **pray with all sincerity**: "Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." Now where do you begin after this sermon? **Let Christ reign** in your heart. Let him reign in your family. Let him reign in your church. And let him reign in your nation. Hear his words. Obey his directions.

Finally, Christ will reign...either as your Lord or your judge. May you call on him as Lord...may he save you from your sins for Christ's sake...and may you willing submit to his rule. Anything else is death.