

# A Thousand Years of Peace



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*The following notes contain some of the material presented in the series "Is God for Real?"*

The twentieth century was called a century of war, and even now many wars continue in various places around the world. Many leaders, religious and political, continue to strive for a lasting peace on earth. However, the Bible speaks of a thousand-year period when all war will have ceased and peace will prevail. This one-thousand-year period, sometimes referred to as the millennium, is found in the book of Revelation chapter twenty. There we find God's people dwelling with Christ for a thousand years in peace. But where is this one thousand years to be spent, and when will it begin?

The Devil has been the main source of all the pain and suffering on planet earth for thousands of years. Revelation 20:1-3 reveals that he will finally be bound and imprisoned for a thousand years, and this is good news. In order to make sense of this important subject we will look at it in three parts – events at the beginning of the millennium, events during the millennium and events at the end of the millennium.

## **Events At The Beginning Of The Millennium**

The millennium begins when Christ returns in glory to take His people home to heaven. When Christ returns there will be a resurrection of those who have believed in Christ. They rise first, then those who believe and are alive join them to meet Christ in the air. See 1Thessalonians 4:16-17. In fact, the millennium is defined by two resurrections – one at the beginning for the saved, and one at the end for the lost. Jesus described the two resurrections in John 5:28-29, and everyone who has ever lived will be involved in one of these resurrections. The good news is we get to decide which one of these resurrections we will be in. Through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, God has made it possible for everyone to have access to salvation, John 3:16. He has already decided He wants us to live with Him for eternity – now it is up to us to decide whether we want to live with Him.

So, the saved go to heaven with Christ at His return. But what happens to those who have rejected Christ as Saviour? What happens to them when Christ returns? Sin cannot survive the glory of Christ's return and those who cling to sin will likewise share its fate. The lost flee when they see Christ returning and are destroyed by the brightness of His coming. See 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:21. The Bible says that the dead shall not be lamented or gathered or buried, Jeremiah 25:33. Why not? Simply because there is no one left to bury them. The saved have gone to heaven and the lost have perished. Those who are lost and have already died remain in their graves until the millennium has ended.

## **Events During The Millennium**

One of the common questions relating to the millennium is, 'where will the saved be during the millennium?' Will they be on earth or in heaven during this time? When we read Jesus' words in John 14:1-3 it seems clear that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us in heaven. He says 'in My Father's house...' but where is the Father? In the Lord's prayer we read 'Our

Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name...' Matthew 6:9. Other verses also indicate that we will be going to heaven, where are reward and our inheritance is laid up for us, 1Peter 1:3-4, Matthew 5:12, Colossians 1:5. Our understanding of what happens when you die is the key to understanding many different Bible teachings. If the dead are asleep in the grave until the second coming, then when do they go to heaven? If not immediately after death, then when? The simple answer is, during the millennium. Revelation 20:6 tells us that the saved will reign with Christ a thousand years. In verse four of the same chapter the Bible reveals that the saved will participate in a work of judgement during the millennium, but for what purpose? See also 1Cor 6:2-3. Certainly, the decisions as to who will be saved and lost have already been made. So, what will they be judging? The saved will have the opportunity of seeing how the great controversy over God's character has been dealt with by God through out the centuries. From the initial rebellion in heaven with Satan and his angels, to Adam and Eve in the garden, through to the last days of earth's history. The saved will be able to see how God did all He could to save as many as would receive Him. The saved will echo the words of angels recorded in Revelation 16:7, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.

Meanwhile back on earth the lost remain in their graves during the millennium. The only ones here on earth will be the Devil and his fallen angels. Revelation 20:1-3. The devil is bound, not so much by a physical chain, as by a chain of circumstances. With no one to tempt, harass or deceive he and his fallen angels have a thousand years to contemplate the results of their rebellion. But what is the meaning of the term 'Bottomless Pit?' The original word in this verse means the abyss, a formless empty void. This describes the state of the earth during the millennium, when the earth will be empty, Jer 4:23-26; Isa 24:1-3.

### **Events At The End Of The Millennium**

At the end of the thousand years the second resurrection takes place. All the wicked from all ages rise from their graves. Suddenly Satan has people he can deceive and manipulate again, and even after a thousand years he demonstrates that he is unchanged as he leads them in rebellion once again. Rev 20:5, 7-8. At the end of the millennium Christ and the saved return to earth in the Heavenly Holy City, the New Jerusalem, Rev 21:2. Satan sees this as a final opportunity to take God from His throne by force. He musters his forces for battle to take the city, Rev 20:9. However, as darkness cannot remain in the presence of light so sin cannot remain in the presence of God's holiness. Fire comes down from heaven and consumes sin and all those who cling to it. So, why raise the wicked? Some have never been held accountable for their evil deeds on earth, but they cannot escape the judgment of heaven. 2Corinthians 5:10 tells us we must all appear before Christ. Also, their actions reveal that even after a thousand years their resistance to God is unchanged. They could never be happy in God's presence. Once the final traces of sin are removed, God recreates the paradise on earth He had planned all along. Rev 21:1, Rev 21:4. There will be no more sorrow, suffering or pain, all things will be made new. God is preparing a place for you there. Would you like to prepare to live with Him for eternity?

*If you would like to know more about this subject, or others in the series, 'Is God for Real?' then please contact one of our staff and they will be happy to help you.*