

“The Victorious Reign of Jesus in the Millennium (千禧年)” Text: Revelation 20
By Pastor Rand Lankheet, for New Horizon URC, second sermon on March 4, 2018

Introduction: Most of you probably have heard about “the millennium.”

That’s interesting, isn’t it? Most Christians have heard about the millennium, yet,

it is mentioned, specifically, only in ONE chapter in the Bible. Revelation chapter 20.

[Read Revelation 20:1-3. There are three main opinions about the millennium.

There is “pre-millennialism,” “post-millennialism,” and “a-millennialism.”

Premillennialism teaches that Jesus will return “before” the millennium begins. “Pre” = before.

Postmillennialism teaches that Jesus returns “after” the millennium. “Post” = after.

And “amillennialism”? Well, that is not such a good term. Literally (从字面意思) it means “no millennium.”

But Revelation chapter 20 teaches there is some kind of millennium.

When the Bible says there is a millennium, we should must not say “no millennium.”

What “amillennialism” means is that the millennium is right now. That there is not a literal one thousand years. Rather, the millennium refers to the whole period of time between the first coming of Jesus and his second coming.

1. So let us first look at THE CONTEXT of this chapter.

1.1. The 22 chapters of Revelation are mostly about what the apostle John sees.

He sees these things in a series of visions (异象) —visions, like dreams, which God gave to him.

What John sees in these visions is not only about the future. [Read 1:19.

“what is [in the present] ... and what is to take place [the future].”

“What is [now].” The things described in Revelation are also about the time in which John is living. That is, in the first century A.D.

1.2. Here’s another point: If you study the book of Revelation carefully, you will find a pattern.

The book of Revelation can be divided up into 7 sections. And each of those sections

describes the time between the first coming of Jesus and his second coming. [Repeat.

Each of these seven sections, describes events occurring in John’s day,

and moves ahead to the final day. To the day of Jesus’ return.

So we must not read the Book of Revelation as if it were in chronological (按时间先后顺序排列的) order.

Rather, each section covers the SAME long period of time;

And it repeats over and over. Seven times altogether.

I don’t have time to demonstrate this interpretation of the book of Revelation.

I have a summary sheet about this on the table set up behind the chairs. Please take one.

-Let me illustrate how each of these seven sections covers the same period of history.

That sixth section begins at the start of chapter 17, and ends with the last verse of chapter 19.

In 17:1 we read about “Babylon.” 17:9---7 hills—city of Rome was set on 7 hills. It refers to the time in which John was living. The first century A.D. Babylon is a symbol for the ancient city of Rome.

What we read in chapter 17 applies directly to Rome:

with her paganism (信奉异教) , wealth, and immorality

But, “Babylon” also symbolizes ALL the ruling empires of this world since the time Jesus

ascended back to heaven. All the empires that have ever existed and will exist.

John moves us forward, in this sixth section, through the time of Rome, into the future.

Until we come to chapter 18. Here we come to the end of history. Babylon is fallen, destroyed.

The persecuting (逼迫的) world empires end. How? [Look at chapter 19.... verse 11.

This refers, obviously, to the second coming of Jesus. Jesus on a white horse.

And in vs. 20, we read that all the enemies of Christ are thrown into the lake of fire.

Of course, that will happen at the end of time, at the return of Jesus.

In Revelation 20, in the next section, we read about that same “lake of fire.” In vs. 10.

Here is my point. Chapters 17 thru 19 cover that whole time...the time between the first coming of Jesus, and his final, second coming.

And Chapters 20-22, explain that same time period, once more.

-If you accept this pattern you will be prepared to rightly interpret Revelation chapter 20.

Revelation 20 begins the final section, section 7. The first verses of chapter 20 refer to the FIRST COMING of Jesus. Not just his birth. But it refers to his entire redemptive work: his life, his death, his resurrection (复活), his ascension (升天), and his being seated at the right hand of the F.

-In verses one and two we read about an angel, with a chain. That angel is binding Satan.

This is a poetic (诗歌般的) way to explain the main result of the first coming of Jesus.

The result is this: Jesus has bound Satan.

In his finished work on earth, it was like Jesus wrapped a big chain around Satan./

[Read 20:4-8. Satan is chained, held back for a symbolic one thousand years. Then what?

At vs. 7 of chapter 20 we read: “when the one thousand years are finished, Satan will be released from his prison.” Vs. 3, the last part, says this release will be “for a short time.”

What happens after Satan is released?

[Read from vs. 8b— 10. Here we read about the final battle in history!

The nations are gathered together to do battle against the Church on earth.

They have a huge army...like the sand of the seashore. At first it seems that the people of

God will be destroyed. They are completely surrounded. But something surprising happens. [Read vs. 9b.

The people of God, the church of Jesus, are rescued miraculously. Their wicked enemies are destroyed. The devil, Satan, the Beast, the false prophet, all the forces of evil, are destroyed.

And then what? [Read vs. 11-15. Here we are given another description about the end of time.

The previous section, section six, had already described this.

But John repeats it... Using somewhat different poetic language. [Read 20:10.

Chapter 19, and chapter 20 are not describing two different events, occurring at two different times. Rather, the last verses of each section describe the same event. In fact, each of the seven sections in the Book of Rev. ends with a description of the final judgment. [The paper.

2. Let us now **COMPARE** Scripture with Scripture.

Do other verses in the Bible describe Satan as being tied up or bound? As we find in Rev. 20?

-[Read Matthew 12:22. Here we read that Jesus healed a man from demon possession (被鬼附的人).

The Pharisees (法利赛人) hated Jesus. They said this about Jesus. False words, slanderous (诬陷的) words.

They said that Satan had given power to Jesus to heal people.

Jesus says, “No. You Pharisees are completely wrong.” Jesus makes his point in this way. [Vs. 29.

Jesus says: “In bringing the power of the kingdom of God to earth, it is like I have entered the house of a strong man.” And says Jesus: “I have tied up that strong man! Once he has been bound, then I robbed his house!”

Revelation 20:2 teaches that in some way Satan is bound, tied up.

In Matthew 12:29 Jesus is saying the same thing!

2) Now turn to Luke 10. Verse 17. [Read 10:17-19.

Again, Jesus and his disciples were performing powerful miracles. And Jesus says:

“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” Satan was not literally falling out of the sky.

But Jesus is saying this. That when He came to earth, in power, there was some kind of major downfall in Satan’s power. Jesus had given to his disciples (quote) “authority...to overcome all the power of the enemy.” You see, in the finished work of Jesus, Satan is bound. Satan’s power has

become greatly limited.

3) There are many more verses which teach this same thing. We only have time for one more.

[Turn to John 12. Here, Jesus is in the upper room with his disciples, the night before he is crucified. [Read 12:31-32. "Now it is time," says Jesus. We wonder, "time for what?"

Vs. 31: "Now the prince of this world *will be driven out.*"

By the death and resurrection of Jesus, Satan is [quote] "*driven out*" of the world.

The Greek verb translated, "to drive out" is the SAME VERB used in Rev. 20:3.

Bound with a chain, Satan was "*thrown out*" or "*driven out,*" into the Abyss.

Many verses in the NT teach the same thing.

-There is something else with Revelation chapter 20. Like the rest of Revelation,

John is using very poetic language. Language like that used in many of the psalms.

[Read vs. 1 of chapter 20. There is no literal, actual chain held in an angel's hand. It is symbolic.

And look how Satan is described. [Read vs. 2.

Satan is not an actual serpent, nor a literal dragon.

An angel does not actually tie up Satan with a metal chain.

All of this is symbolic language, poetic language. /

All interpreters of the book of Revelation agree that there is much poetic language here.

But how strange that in this context, in Revelation 20, some interpreters make the number 1000 literal.

As actual years on the calendar. But let me ask this: Given all the poetic language, isn't it more consistent to interpret the number 1000 also as poetic? As symbolic?

The number 1000 is 10 multiplied by 10 multiplied by 10. Ten to the third power.

Ten represents "completeness" or "fullness." Three often is used in the Bible as a symbol for

God and his attributes (属性). Think of holy, holy, holy. Three times the holiness of God.

-Now we have to ask this: in what sense is Satan bound or tied up today, by the power of Jesus?

[Vs. 3 helps us with the answer--Read. Satan "*cannot deceive the nations of the world anymore.*"

Here's an important point: Satan is not bound so as to be completely powerless. No, the Bible teaches Satan is still like a lion. Growling (嚎叫). But Satan is chained lion.

You see, before Jesus came to earth, Satan was able to deceive the nations of the world.

It was very difficult for the Gentiles (外邦人) nations to know the truth of the gospel.

But Jesus died for our sins. He rose from the grave, defeating death and Satan. Jesus ascended to heaven and was given all power over all the nations of the world. And then he gave the power of the Holy Spirit, so the apostles could preach the gospel. Where? To all the nations. To all the Gentile nations of the world. So, you see, Satan cannot continue with his lies, his deception. Now the Spirit of life, opens blind eyes.

It is in that sense, in this present age, Satan, is bound by Jesus.

Satan cannot deceive the nations anymore.

-There's one more aspect to how Satan is bound, tied up. [Read vs. 7. At the very end of time, we read that Satan will be loosed. For just a little while. Then Satan will be given more power. He will be a lion set free from his chain, his leash. And what will Satan then do?

Vs. 7 says that somehow Satan will bring the nations together.

To begin an international, worldwide persecution (逼迫) of the church.

Yes, Satan has always caused persecution, in one country, or many countries. In one period of time. But at the end of time, there will be a terrible persecution. An organized, international persecution of Christians.

Many, many Christians will be killed. But here's the main point of hope, of ultimate victory:

the faithful martyrs (殉道士) will be brought up to heaven. In vs. 6, this is called a "first resurrection."

They will live and reign with Jesus in heaven. For a "thousand" years. [Read vs. 6.

3. Let me end with just two points of CONCLUSION. Two points of application.

3.1. The first is this: sometimes, as Reformed Christians we think too pessimistically (悲观地) . We see the opposition against the gospel in the world today.

We see the problems in our churches. And we often become pessimistic.

But remember, brothers and sisters: right now, we are in the millennium.

Satan is chained. He has been thrown into the Abyss (深渊) . Therefore, we go out with the gospel, in confidence. In the victory of Jesus. In the power and authority of our reigning LJC! Sadly, some of us might think this sounds like Pentecostal (灵恩派) teaching. This talk of victory, power , and authority. This is not Pentecostalism. No! It is basic biblical teaching! If you are giving up hope in the power of the gospel, the power of Jesus...

then you are missing the point of the Book of Revelation./

Jesus has conquered. Jesus is victorious.

In Jesus, today, we are more than conquerors. Let us go forth in the power of gospel!!

2) A second application. Make sure that in these days you are being built up in your faith.

Why? Because Revelation 20 teaches that a worldwide persecution is coming.

Near the end of this present age, Satan will be released for a short time.

He will do terrible damage to us, and to the Church of Jesus on this earth.

To the church here in Canada, and around the world. Many of us will be destroyed. Our bodies will be destroyed. So, we must prepare ourselves now.

By God's grace, and by God's Word and Spirit, we must be built up strongly in our faith.

So that when the final days come, we will stand. We will testify for Jesus.

And then, in just a short time, Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout.

Then all the enemies of Jesus and His Church will be fully and finally destroyed.

And then we shall live forever, in a new earth, a new Jerusalem.

-So, brothers and sisters, be built up in your faith now... to prepare for those final days.

LET US PRAY/

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