

# PEACE ON EARTH

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*Revelation 20:1-10*

## Introduction:

"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14) Those are the words of the angels as they sang and announced the birth of Messiah to the shepherds 2000 years ago. The prophet Isaiah, some 500 years earlier, said that the coming Messiah would be called the Prince of Peace.

That raises a few questions. Was Isaiah wrong about Christ bringing peace to the world? Why is it that we see so little peace in our world today? Is it possible that we will ever see peace in our world? Well, the answers are not that difficult. No, Isaiah was not wrong. The timing is just not what we might expect. The reason there is so little peace in the world is the selfishness of the human spirit. And, will there ever be peace? Yes, when Christ returns and establishes his kingdom on earth.

That time of peace and security is what we call the Millennium. The word *millennium* means a thousand years. It will be a 1000-year period of peace, safety and security, a time of prosperity and plenty like the world has never known.

There are differing views on the timing and the reality of the Millennium in relation to the Second Coming of Christ. The NIV Study Bible gives the following description of the three main views:

**1. Amillennialism:** the millennium describes the present reign of the souls of deceased believers with Christ in heaven. The present form of God's kingdom will be followed by Christ's return, the general resurrection, the final judgment and Christ's continuing reign over the perfect kingdom on the new earth in the eternal state. **2. Postmillennialism:** The world will eventually be Christianized, resulting in a long period of peace and prosperity called the millennium. This future period will close with Christ's second coming, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment and the eternal state. **3. Premillennialism:** The present form of God's kingdom is moving toward a grand climax when Christ will re-

turn, the first resurrection will occur and his kingdom will find expression in a literal, visible reign of peace and righteousness on the earth in space-time history. After the final resurrection, the last judgment and the renewal of the heavens and the earth, this future, temporal kingdom will merge into the eternal kingdom, and the Lord will reign forever on the new earth.

My study of the Word has led me to believe that the third option (premillennialism) is the one which fits best with the Biblical record without twisting or distorting the words or meaning of the Scriptures.

In chapter 20, we have a summary of a number of end-time events. This morning I want for us to look at the first 10 verses, which include a brief account of Christ's Millennial reign and Satan's final destiny. We will also be looking at some other Scripture passages regarding the Millennial kingdom.

The passage is divided in most translations into 3 paragraphs, and that is the way that we will look at it today. We begin with vv. 1-3...

## The Restraining (Binding) of Satan – vv. 1-3

Once again in the revelation given to John, he sees an angel. Again, this angel is not identified, but he obviously comes with all the power, resources and authority of heaven behind him. He is carrying two items—the key to the bottomless pit, and a great chain. He has come for one purpose—to put away Satan.

The key signifies the authority he has been given. To hold the key indicates his authority to open or close, to control access to and exit from the bottomless pit. This bottomless pit is literally, the abyss. It is not hell. It is a special place that has been prepared for the containment of Satan and his demons. In chapter 9, we saw where demons, which had been held captive for centuries, were released from the abyss to torture and torment the inhabitants of the earth.

This event follows the defeat of the armies of the world at Armageddon, and as Christ prepares to usher in his kingdom of peace, the first order of business is to do away with Satan's influence on the people of the earth. So he is bound in chains and consigned to the pit for a

period of 1000 years. For a thousand years he will not be able to subvert or threaten or disrupt Christ's rule of the earth. He will not be able to tempt or deceive the people on earth or entice them to sin.

The last statement of v. 3 indicates that he will be given one last chance after the thousand years are ended.

But, let us move on to look at the Messianic kingdom for a few moments...

## The Millennial Kingdom – vv. 4-6

The information concerning the Millennial kingdom is fairly vague and very brief in these verses. There are only 3 verses, but there are some important things to note. First of all, there is the resurrection of the saints.

John begins with the statement... *read v. 4a*. This statement is rather vague regarding who is on these thrones or what sort of judgment they will mete out. But the best suggestion is that these are all of the saints who make up the armies of Christ in 19:14.

Regarding the resurrection... We know that the saints who died during the current age of the church will be raised up in new glorified bodies at the time of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:15-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-55). But what about the Old Testament saints, and those who were martyred for their faith during the Tribulation.

*Read the rest of v. 4 and 5*. There are really four orders to the resurrection of the righteous. There is the resurrection of Jesus – he is the firstfruits of the Resurrection. Then there is the resurrection of the Church saints at the time of the Rapture. The third order is the resurrection of the Old Testament saints. These are the “friends of the bridegroom” who are invited to the Marriage supper of the Lamb. This will take place at the end of the Tribulation. Then there is the fourth order—the resurrection of the Tribulation saints that John speaks of here. This completes the first resurrection, which is the raising up of the righteous. The second resurrection is the raising up of the wicked for judgment and will take place after the Millennium.

The second thing to note here is the reign of the saints.

Twice in these verses John mentions the reign of the saints. *They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (v. 4c)*. *Read v. 6* – the saints will be co-rulers with Christ during the Millennium. What that will look like, or just what our role will be is not spelled out in the Scripture, but it will be a glorious time. As “*priests of God and of Christ*” we will have unlimited access and intimate fellowship with him.

I would like to digress from this passage for a few moments and just look at a couple of other texts regarding the nature of the Millennial kingdom. The key thing that is clear about that thousand-year period is that it will be a time of peace. The Messiah, who is called the Prince of Peace will bring peace to a world that has never known true peace.

Turn for a moment to Isaiah 11. *Read vv. 1-10*. This is a picture of the Millennial kingdom—peace, safety, security. The Lord will rule in righteousness and justice. Even nature will be at peace. Than animals will not kill each other or harm people. It will be like it was in the Garden of Eden, the way God intended it to be when he created everything.

Even Israel will be at peace. Even her enemies will be at peace with her. There is one other passage I want to point out to you. This is an intriguing text. Look at Isaiah 19. This chapter is part of a series of oracles revealing God's end time plan for the Gentile nations. Ch. 19 - Egypt.

But beginning in v. 16, Isaiah introduces a passage which speaks of three nations—Israel, Egypt and Assyria (Iraq). These seem like unlikely allies, yet we read here that these three nations will come together in the worship of Almighty God. In vv. 16-25, five times he uses the phrase, “In that day...” referring to the time of the end, the Millennium

- V. 16 – the Egyptians will be filled with fear
- V. 18 – cities in Egypt will swear allegiance to the Lord
- V. 19 – there will be an altar to the Lord in Egypt
- V. 23 – there will be a highway between Egypt, Israel & Assyria
- V. 24 – Israel, Egypt & Assyria will together worship God and be blessed by him

That is an amazing prophecy of what the Millennium will be like. There is much more about the kingdom and how it relates to Israel that we do not have time for this morning. We need to move on to...

## The Final Defeat of Satan – vv. 7-10

Looking at vv. 7-10 of this chapter we see Satan's final destiny revealed. But first, he is to be released from the abyss for a brief period of time.

*Read vv. 7-9* – just a couple of notes. We might wonder why God would allow Satan another opportunity to deceive the people of earth, particularly those who were born in this blissful Millennial kingdom. We are not told the answer to that, but David Levy suggests that one possible reason is to show once and for all the nature of the human heart. He says:

*“Mankind, living in the most favorable social, religious, and political order, when given their own choice, will manifest sin because of their depraved and ungodly nature, Mankind's problem is not environmental—it is a heart problem. This was clearly seen when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden.”*

Do you see what he is saying? (*Expand briefly*).

During this brief period, there will be one more rebellion against God by the nations, led by Satan, before God cleans up by sending down fire to consume those who rebelled.

Then in v. 10, we see the final destiny of Satan revealed. He will be thrown into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet already are. There they will be tormented forever and ever.

## Conclusion

A couple of important things that we must note from this passage:

- The promise of peace. In a world torn apart by struggle and conflict, war and terror, the angels' song of peace on earth is trustworthy. Messiah is coming again to establish a kingdom of peace.
- The reality of the resurrection – the saints of all the ages, OT, NT church age, the martyrs of the Tribulation, will all be raised up immortal to share in the Messianic kingdom.

Are you ready? Will you be there in the kingdom of Christ?

*Close with salvation application and invitation...*