

11. THE MILLENNIUM

Interpreting the “thousand years” of Revelation 20

Millennium is not a biblical word; it simply means a period of a thousand years. However, the millennium is specifically a thousand-year period mentioned six times in Revelation 20. This chapter follows the return of Jesus Christ in chapter 19 and follows that event chronologically. The Antichrist and the False Prophet are captured in chapter 19 and thrown into hell, then in chapter 20, Satan is seized and bound for a thousand years so that he will not deceive the nations any longer during that period, “until the thousand years are over.” Then, he’ll be released from his prison for a short time to go throughout the world and deceive the nations. God’s people, who refuse to worship Antichrist or take his mark on their foreheads or hands and are beheaded or killed by other means during the Great Tribulation, come back to life and reign with Christ a thousand years. That is called the first resurrection. The rest of the dead (unbelievers) aren’t resurrected until the thousand years are over.

That is clear enough, but some people have preconceived ideas about these future events and don’t want to understand the passage literally. They believe, for example, that Jesus is reigning already. That is nothing but a red herring! Jesus is both God and man. As God, he’s always on the throne in heaven, but as Jesus the Messiah, he’s not yet king of this world; the kingdom of God has not yet begun. Nowhere in the NT does it suggest that Jesus will rule the Earth before he returns as the conquering Messiah. To the contrary, the whole world is in the power of the evil one (1 Jn 5:19). The devil is not yet bound; he prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Pe 5:8). It is only after the blowing of the seventh trumpet at the end of the age that an angel announces that “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah and he’ll reign forever and ever” (Rev 11:15). This is the first time that the the Messiah takes control of this world. If Jesus is going to reign on Earth and the Bible tells us six times that it’ll be for a period of a thousand years, there’s

no need for us to doubt that it'll be a thousand years, and nobody can say whether it will be more or less.

It is often said that the Messianic kingdom has no end, it'll continue forever (Ps 89:29, Isa 9:7, Dan 7:1, Rev 11:15), fulfilling the OT expectation that it will last as long as the earth remains.

The Bible contradicts evolutionary chronology, implying that this world has only existed for about six thousand years. According to biblical genealogies:

Adam to Abraham,	approx. 2,000 years
Abraham to Jesus,	approx. 2,000 years
Jesus to today,	approx. 2,000 years

The church fathers, as is well known, drew from Hebrews 4:9 the inference that the world would last six thousand years, followed by a Sabbath millennium: "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God." Just as God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, so the world will continue in its striving for six thousand years, followed by a thousand-year paradisaical era "when God restores his people and the fallen creation to the original intent for them. The complete fulfilment of rest will come in the new creation" (NIV commentary).

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Ex 20:11).

With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day (2 Pet 3:8).

Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they'll be priests of God and Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years (Rev 20:6).

It is ironic that although the church fathers recognized the significance of these millennial eras, the generation approaching the Messiah's return ignores it. Isaiah prophesied that there would be new heavens and a new earth (Isa 65:17-20), and his prophecy is clearly a

description of a renewed Earth during which the Messiah reigns. There is no prophecy about a newly created planet in the Bible. Isaiah speaks of death occurring and of the wolf and the lamb feeding together, of people building houses and farming.

The millennium is referred to as a new age or a new world, but it is not the end of the present world. The world will increasingly become an ideal place as the Messiah restores it from its state of destruction. As a result of the upheaval during the Great Tribulation, there will be no more roads or bridges, and all the cities will be history. In John's vision of the renewed earth, there was no longer any sea. The word "sea" has a figurative meaning in many biblical contexts, referring to the turbulent, unruly nature of the nations (Isa 57:20, Dan 7:2-3), and this is also true in Revelation 13:1, 20:13, 21:1. It will be a completely renovated Earth and the sky will be different, especially over Israel. But Isaiah says people will build houses and live in them. They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit (Isa 65:21).

Converted Israel will be the natural inhabitants of the world during the millennium. Those who haven't already done so will return home to Israel with their wealth, assisted by the nations where they're living. They'll believe in the Lord and his Messiah. There will be old people with staff in hand in the millennial Jerusalem, and boys and girls will play in the streets. Their farms will be fruitful (Isa 65:20-25, Zec 8:3-6, 12). They'll not have resurrection bodies as the Messiah's monarchy will have, however, they'll be living under a just king in truth and righteousness. The entire earth will be renewed and enjoy a prosperity never known before. Jerusalem and Israel will be honored as the city and land of God and his Messiah. The sky will produce its dew, and the earth will produce its full yield. Jerusalem will be the center of the world, and the nations will flock there to pray, to seek guidance from the Lord, and to worship him.

The binding of Satan for a thousand years

Satan, "the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" (Eph 2:2), will be removed from the world, bound, and imprisoned in the Abyss during the millennium.

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He 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 (Rev 20:1-3).

Satan, otherwise known as the evil one or the devil, is a powerful bodiless spirit from the heavenly realm, so chaining and locking him up are metaphors for detention. John tells us that the whole world presently lies in the power of the evil one (1 Jn 5:19), who Jesus calls the ruler of this world (Jn 12:31, 14:30). Peter said he prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Pe 5:8). As a result, the present age in which we live is evil (Gal 1:4). That will all change after Jesus' return. The great deceiver will be locked up so that he cannot deceive the nations during the messianic reign. In the end, Satan will be released, and he will go out once again to test the faithfulness of mankind and will succeed in instigating another rebellion.

Amillennialists need to beware of changing what the book of Revelation reveals. It is a book of prophecy (Rev 22:18-19) and it closes with a severe warning to those who would add or take away from its prophetic message, a warning against wilful distortion of the message.

Despite the thousand years of peace and righteousness and submission to God, humanity will once again be deceived by Satan. They'll march defiantly from all directions and surround the camp of God's people and God's beloved city, Jerusalem. The word 'camp' alludes to the Israelite camp in the wilderness, which was a ceremonially clean area around the Tabernacle where the Israelites had their tents (Nb 5:1-4). Jesus, the reigning Messiah, and his monarchy in New Jerusalem will allow this final rejection of God's authority, just as God allows the rebellion to occur during the Great Tribulation, so that Satan and the wicked condemn themselves by their actions.

The outcome is swift. Fire comes down from heaven and consumes the rebels. The devil is captured and thrown into hell (Rev 20:7-10), where the Antichrist and the False Prophet were thrown a thousand years earlier.

The last judgment will take place, and the physical universe will be dissolved. The Earth and the heavens will flee from God's presence, and there will be no place for them (Rev 20:11-15). The dead will be judged according to what they had done as has been recorded. Death and Hades will be banished forever, and unbelievers will be cast into hell. Then the redeemed of all nations, whose names are recorded in the Lamb's book of life, will reign with God forever (Rev 22:3-5).

The Messiah, who had been appointed as God's regent to rule the Earth (Ps 2:7, 110:1-2, Isa 9:6-7, Dan 7:13-14), will hand back his kingship and reign to God the Father (1 Co 15:24-28). The human Messiah surrenders all that God may be all in all.

Jesus the Messiah, the future king of the world

Immediately after Jesus' return, he'll begin his reign on Earth (Mt 25:31, Rev 11:15, 20:4). The vast army that fights at the battle of Armageddon will be struck down and killed (Rev 19:21). However, many unbelievers will survive the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord and will continue to live on Earth during the millennium (Zec 14:16). On the Day of the Lord, God will make people scarcer than pure gold (Isa 13:9-12), so the world's initial population during the millennium will be a fraction of what it is today. After the greatest earthquake the world has ever known, cities will be destroyed, islands will disappear, and the mountains won't be recognized (Rev 6:14, 16:20). It is a new world.

The millennium is a thousand-year reign on Earth by Jesus the Messiah, which follows immediately after his return. Whenever Jesus spoke about the coming Kingdom of God, he was referring either to his millennial reign, himself as king, or his monarchy: the saints. The Christian hope is not going to heaven; it is a keen hope that Jesus will soon return and establish his reign on Earth, and that we'll reign with him.

The land of Israel is at the center of the world, and the Messiah will rule from their capital city, Jerusalem. Israel has been God's people ever since he chose Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:1-3). The Messiah is a Jew, a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David. According to numerous OT prophecies, he'll reign from Jerusalem over a converted Israel.

Jerusalem is the city of God, the eternal holy city chosen by God as the only place on Earth for his temple. Paul describes God's choice of Israel as his people, their subsequent unbelief, and their final salvation (Rm 9 - 11). He said all Israel would be saved, as the prophets predicted. The Deliverer will come from Zion and *banish ungodliness* from Jacob (Rm 11:26). This is a comprehensive national conversion. Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:20 and Jeremiah 31:31-34, which focus on the conversion of ethnic Israel under a new covenant.

Jesus' return is seen by John in a vision of a righteous conqueror descending from heaven on a white horse (Rev 19:11). His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zec 14:4, Ac 1:11), he'll enter Jerusalem by the East Gate and be enthroned in the temple (Ezek 43:3-7), and he'll roar from Zion to defeat Israel's enemies (Joel 3:14-16, Zec 14:3, Rm 11:26, Rev 19:14-15a).

This time, the Lord will put his law in their minds and write it on their hearts. He'll forgive their wickedness and remember their sin no more (Jer 31:33-34). He'll give them a new heart and put a new spirit in them, his Spirit (Ezek 36:25-27). This will not only apply to the survivors who live in Israel and Jerusalem but to all Jews who survive in the other nations of the world (Isa 11:11-12, 14:1-2, 43:5-7, 60:4, 9, 66:20, Zec 8:8). They will all return to the Jewish homeland and none will be left behind (Ezek 39:28).

The Messiah will rule the whole world and all nations will submit to his rule (Zec 14:9, Rev 11:15-17). Ruling them strictly with a rod of iron, justice will be done everywhere, and people will do what is right (Isa 11:4-6). The Messiah has been given authority, glory, and sovereign power so that all nations and peoples of every language will worship him (Dan 7:14 Mt 28:18). However, the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over

to the saints of the high places, the Church. Their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey them (Dan 7:18, 22, 27).

Jesus said the saints would inherit the Earth (Mt 5:5) and possess the Messianic kingdom (Mt 5:3, 10). The four living creatures and the twenty four elders sing a new song about the new age, saying that the saints would reign over the Earth (Rev 5:10). In a similar vein, the Messiah told his disciples that in the new age they would reign over Israel (Mt 19:28). In kingdom parables, Jesus said he would put his faithful servant in charge of all his possessions (Mt 24:47), or over much (Mt 25:21). He also tells the righteous to take possession of their inheritance, the kingship prepared for them since the creation of the world (Mt 25:34). Just as Jesus is the Father's regent, so the saints are the regent's monarchy. Their resurrection bodies are suited to life in heaven or on Earth, and in this way, the saints will exist as Christ's body, his hands and feet. The creation waits in eager expectation for God's children to be revealed, for they will liberate it from its bondage to decay (Rm 8:19-21).

A kingdom consists of a king, his monarchy, his subjects, his domain, and his reign. The future king of the whole earth is Jesus Christ. His royal family, those chosen by God through faith in Jesus, are the monarchy that rule with him. Their resurrection and exaltation as rulers are their glorification. So the millennial government will consist of millions of people from all over the world, the community of true believers in Jesus Christ. Each one will serve in the royal priesthood according to his or her gift and God's plan. The subjects of the kingdom are initially those unbelievers who survived the horrific time of death and destruction during the seven years of the Great Tribulation before Jesus returns, and eventually their descendants. When the Messiah begins his rule, Satan and his demons will no longer be there; they are securely imprisoned so they don't deceive the nations.

The messianic kingdom is a theocracy. The population of the world will be ruled by the Messiah strictly with an iron scepter. It is an era of peace, justice, and righteousness (Isa 9:6). As instruction goes forth from Jerusalem, the world will be filled with the knowledge of the

Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9). All nations will make pilgrimages there to worship God. The nations will beat their swords into plowshares, manufacturing tools instead of weapons, and wars will cease worldwide (Isa 2:3-4). The subjects of the kingdom will live normal human lives: farming, building houses, and bearing children (Isa 65:21-23).

The King will reign from his glorious throne in the sky in New Jerusalem (Rev 22:3) and as the promised Messiah, he'll rule Israel as the descendant of David. On the one hand, he'll care for the poor with justice and faithfulness, on the other, he'll rule strictly. If any nation does not offer due honor and respect, it'll have no rain. The nations will come and worship at Jerusalem under the supervision of the Levites. Israel will have their own prince, who will lead them well (Ezek 45:7-8, 16-17).

Jesus will live in New Jerusalem, not as the Messiah, but as the Lamb, who gave his life to reconcile all things to himself by his blood shed on the cross. The river of the water of life and the tree of life are there, symbolizing eternal life for the redeemed and full satisfaction from its monthly batches of fruit. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. As the saints reign over the earth, they bring healing from above to the inhabitants of the Earth below. They'll be the doctors, the counselors, and the peacemakers. Most important of all, God is there. His throne is called the throne of God and the Lamb. God is one. The redeemed serve him and see his face, and they'll reign with him forever. God told Moses that man cannot see him and live (Ex 33:20), but Jesus said: Blessed are the pure in heart for they'll see God (Mt 5:8). And John said: We are God's children, and what we will be hasn't been revealed. We know that when he is revealed, we'll be like him, because we'll see him as he is (1 Jn 3:2).

The subjects of the messianic reign

Along with Israel, the unbelieving survivors of the Great Tribulation will live normal human lives on earth as subjects of the messianic kingdom.

This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ... Then *the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem* will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles. Nations of the world who do not go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty will have no rain (Zec 14:12, 16-17).

And many peoples and powerful *nations* will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him (Zec 8:22).

See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you (Jerusalem) and his glory appears over you. *Nations* will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn (Isa 60:2-3).

The *nations* will walk by its (New Jerusalem's) light, and the *kings* of the earth will bring their splendor *to* it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought *to* it. Nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices idolatry or deceit, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev 21:24-27).

Salvation during the millennium

We live in the Church age, an age of grace, where God is calling people from all nations to be united to Christ and live with him throughout eternity. Before Pentecost, God concentrated on the nation of Israel, but there was also an opportunity for people from other nations to trust in the Lord.

Under the first covenant with Israel, if Gentiles sought peace with God, they had to join Israel. All people have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and only by coming under a covenant with God is their salvation. Before Jesus came, the Gentiles didn't know God, they were separate from Christ, and strangers to Israel, with no share in the

covenants and promises God made with them, without hope and God in the world (Eph 2:12), but under the new covenant, salvation has come to them (Rm 11:11).

Before Abraham, there were people like Abel, Noah, and Melchizedek, who showed their faith in God by offering sacrifices and calling on the name of the Lord, but they seem to be few. Not everything is revealed to us, but we know that God loves humanity and desires all people to be saved (1 Ti 2:4). He doesn't want anyone to perish but wants everyone to repent (2 Pe 3:9). However, ultimately, salvation is through faith in Christ alone.

The millennium will be the climax of this world's history, and we may think that the gracious and patient Lord we know is not going to reign over this glorious period without the inhabitants of the Earth having the chance to be saved. However, no prophecy suggests this. The whole nation of Israel will be saved at the beginning of the millennium so that the Messiah will be reigning over his own redeemed nation (Ezek 39:21-29, Joel 2:27-32). Israel will lead in the worship of the Lord for all the nations that will bring their offerings to Jerusalem. During the millennium, the temple will be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of mountains and will be raised above the hills. All the nations will stream to it. Many groups of people will come, saying: Come! Let's go up the Lord's mountain, to the temple of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his way and we'll walk in his paths. Instruction will proceed from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa 2:2-3).

The Messiah will establish justice on Earth, and the islands will put their hope in his teaching (Isa 42:4). The initial population of the world during the millennium will consist of unbelievers who chose Antichrist over Christ during the Great Tribulation, those who took his mark on their bodies and worshiped the Antichrist and his image.

They'll be forced to submit to Messiah's rule whether they like it or not. Over time, the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and during that time, the Messiah will stand as a rallying point for the nations. They'll enquire of him, and his residence will be glorious (Isa 11:9-10).

The fact that after Satan's release from his prison, he can deceive the nations and gather them for battle against God's people seems to indicate that the world's population remains unregenerate. They'll worship the Messiah, inquire of him, put their hope in him, and live in security, but whether that translates into eternal salvation, we're not told.

The monarchy of the messianic reign

In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5 - 7), the emphasis of Jesus' initial teaching to his disciples was that they would be the monarchy under the Messiah during the millennium. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven, they will inherit the earth, and they will be called children of God. Paul confirmed this when he said:

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we're God's children. As we're children, we're heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, as long as we suffer with him so that we might be glorified with him (Rm 8:16-17).

The resurrected Church will inherit kingship from God. They're not subjects in the new world; as his monarchy, they'll reign over it. New Jerusalem will be their home when it comes down out of heaven from God and remains in the sky above Jerusalem, which will be bathed in the light of its glory. Rewards, including resurrection bodies, are spoken of as being prepared for us in heaven, but that is not the place where we'll enjoy them. New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven and remains aloft between heaven and Earth; in the heavenly realm but visible from the physical realm. God will live among his people, making his home with them, and there will no longer be death, grief, crying, or pain.

The inhabitants of New Jerusalem will be resurrected people with immortal bodies and supernatural powers. When Jesus was resurrected, he could walk through walls. He came to Earth and returned to heaven at will for forty days, making various appearances to his disciples. He talked to them, ate with them, and they touched him. When he prepared a meal for them by the lake, he produced fire, bread, and fish from nowhere. During the millennium, the saints will have bodies like Jesus' glorious, resurrected body. They will move from one place to another instantaneously, just as he did. They will be priests of God and the Messiah and will rule with him.

John saw the thrones of the elect who were reigning with Christ and the martyrs who had died during the Great Tribulation (Rev 20:4-6). Jesus had told the church at Laodicea, that he'd enable those who conquer to share his throne (on Earth), just as he had conquered and shared his Father's throne (in heaven) (Rev 3:21). The twenty-four elders in heaven sang a new song (Rev 5:9-10), saying that Jesus had been killed and with his blood had redeemed people for God from every tribe, language, people and nation, and that he had made them a kingdom and priests for God, and that they would reign over the Earth. To make people a kingdom is to confer kingship upon them, to put them in positions of authority in the Messianic monarchy. The saints are God's children, and everyone in God's household is a royal and exercises that authority.

Paul told Timothy, if we endure, we'll reign with Christ (2 Ti 2:12). Jesus promised his twelve apostles that in the new world, when he sits on his glorious throne, they would sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28). Putting all this together, we can conclude that all the righteous will rule with Christ during the millennium; not just those who are martyred during the Great Tribulation. This NT teaching is based on Daniel's prophecy that the kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the saints (Dan 7:27).

The saints will receive and possess the kingdom forever (Dan 7:18). Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection! They'll reign with the Messiah for a thousand years (Rev 20:6) and then on into eternity (Rev 22:5b). It was a regular feature of Jewish

eschatology that the followers of the Messiah would share in his final rule. In Rabbinical teaching, the Jerusalem that is above (Gal 4:26) would be let down to Earth during the Messianic period. Abraham was looking forward to this city that had permanent foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Heb 11:10). Others were longing for a better country (Heb 11:16), heavenly in origin but not heaven itself.

The saints are the future rulers of the world. The Jews saw themselves as the saints in Daniel's prophecy, but progressive revelation shows that it is the Church that will reign, including born-again Jews and the faithful who died before the day of Pentecost. In rejecting Jesus, the unbelieving Jews forfeited their right to the kingship (Mt 21:43). The saints will have authority over the nations and rule them with strict justice (Rev 2:26). They'll be priests of God and the Messiah. Their priesthood under the Messiah is a mediatorial service that declares his will to the kingdom's subjects. The saints will spread knowledge of God to the nations, instructing them on how to live and obey and worship the King. And they will continually worship him themselves. The throne-room vision in Revelation 4 has twenty-five thrones; the throne of God is surrounded by twenty-four thrones on which sat twenty-four elders. Only humans are created in the image of God, and only humans are appointed by him to rule the world as his regents. These twenty-four elders represent the elect, twelve representing Israel, and twelve the Church. Compare New Jerusalem's gates, named after the twelve tribes, and the foundations named after the twelve apostles.

In addition to being appointed priests and rulers, the righteous will be rewarded according to their faithfulness and service for God during their lifetimes. In the parable of the ten coins, the nobleman commended the good and faithful servants, telling one he would have authority over ten cities and another that he would have authority over five cities (Lk 19:11-27). Obedience in this life results in greater responsibility and status during the millennium. Paul tells us to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the Lord's work, knowing that in the Lord our labor is not in vain (1 Cor 15:58).

Jesus' aunt asked Jesus if her sons could have the privilege of sitting at his right and left in his kingdom (Mt 20:21). Jesus taught that those

who practice and teach his commands are those who will be great in the kingdom (Mt 5:19).

The monarchy is resurrected at Jesus' return and governs the world during the millennium. Having immortal, imperishable bodies (1 Cor 15:50-52), they won't live with the subjects; they'll live in New Jerusalem, having already crossed over from death to life. The description of New Jerusalem is symbolic because it belongs to the heavenly realm. It reflects the beauty, perfection, and glory of the home of the righteous. God will live with them, and they'll rule over the earth (Rev 5:9-10).

New Jerusalem and earthly Jerusalem will be intricately related but not the same. The light of New Jerusalem will shine above earthly Jerusalem. The communities will exist in different dimensions: Israel on earth and the righteous in the sky.

The renewal of the world

Since the fall, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, the Earth has been under a curse. When God created the world and declared it to be very good, it didn't have all the causes of suffering that we experience today: thorns, dangerous animals, destructive weather, diseases, wars, dictatorships, and all the problems caused by man's disobedience to God's guide for living. The world came under the control of Satan, the evil one. Paul calls our world the present evil age (Gal 1:4).

Added to this is the destruction that will occur during the Great Tribulation. The Lord will empty the Earth and make it desolate. He'll twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. They'll be scorched, and few people will be left. The cities will lie in ruins. The Earth will be utterly broken, split apart, and violently shaken by earthquakes (Isa 24:1-19). When the angel pours out the last bowl of God's wrath, there is a great earthquake, such as has never occurred since man has been on the Earth, and the cities will collapse (Rev 16:17-19). The sun and moon will be darkened, mountains will crumble, and islands will be submerged (Rev 6:12, 14). These statements are meant to be taken

literally. It is apocalyptic language because this *is* the apocalypse, a revelation of the violent and destructive end of the age.

During the millennium, heaven and earth will be renewed (Isa 65:17-25, Rev 21:1, 5) as the effect of the curse is progressively lifted from the world and as the Messiah renews and rebuilds according to his great wisdom and power. Wild animals will learn to live in harmony with man, and the creation will be set free from its bondage to corruption and enjoy the glorious freedom of God's children (Rm 8:21).

The world will be completely transformed. Eye hasn't seen, and ear hasn't heard, and man hasn't imagined what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Cor 2:9). It will be more beautiful and glorious and interesting than our wildest dreams. Wild animals will no longer be dangerous, and forests will flourish. Among the subjects, there will be a decreasing occurrence of war, crime, corruption, pain, mourning, and tears, but this is not paradise. When Satan is released, he'll succeed in deceiving the nations once again.

During the millennium, the Earth will be restored to its original condition as God created it. It is described as the new heavens and the new Earth (Isa 65:17, 66:21-22, Rev 21:1, 2 Pe 3:13), but is better translated as 'the renewed sky and earth.' Jesus called this renewal the new world, the regeneration, or the renewal of all things (Mt 19:28). Peter, preaching in Jerusalem after the resurrection, said heaven had received Christ until the time comes for God to restore everything, which he had spoken about by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago (Acts 3:21). These indications of a future age are usually ignored by amillennial commentators. They contradict their theology. Paul wrote that the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed when the creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of God's children (Rm 8:19-21).

The effect of the curse that was imposed on the Earth (Gen 3:17) will take time to be eradicated. During Messiah's reign, he'll renew the Earth until there are no more natural disasters. The wolf will live with the lamb and the leopard with the young goat (Isa 11:6-9). What better

way to describe the harmony of a redeemed Earth? What is said about the animal world will also be true about all of God's creatures, including harmful bacteria and viruses. However, the world will not attain the perfection of Eden because the fallen subjects are not redeemed. The regeneration will start in Israel and spread out over all the Earth (Isa 51:4-5).

John saw a new heaven and a new Earth, for the first heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. However, Zechariah said that the Messiah's rule will extend from sea to sea (Zec 9:10), and on that day, living waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the Dead Sea and half of them to the Mediterranean (Zec 14:8-9). The word "sea" is often used metaphorically in the Bible for the rebellious and turbulent nations. David says that God stills the roaring of the seas and their waves, and the turmoil of the nations (Ps 65:7).

Oh, the raging of many nations, they rage like the raging sea!
Oh, the uproar of the peoples - they roar like the roaring of great waters! (Isa 17:12).

When John says that the sea was no more (Rev 21:1), he is more likely using the word symbolically, meaning that the new world will be at peace, without the turbulence created by warring nations.

Large cities, especially megacities, will no longer be on the agenda. We don't know what technology will be deemed beneficial, or what transport or education there will be, but the world will be freed from the tragic effects of sin and the curse, of rampant greed and pride. Everything will be recreated. The future hope that Christians through the ages have always thought about as heaven will initially be a renewed heaven and Earth. The redeemed saints will be fulfilled in their role as rulers, teachers, and carers of the new world.

There are prophecies that speak of the renewal of the world and the glorious messianic reign, which complement what Jesus said (Rm 8:18-23, Isa 65 - 66). He told his disciples that when he sits on his glorious throne in the renewed creation, they would also sit on thrones, governing Israel. The words of Romans 8 apply to the messianic reign and should be read with that in mind. Our hope is in the return of the

Messiah, in the resurrection of the righteous, and in the renewal of all things. The creation is waiting for that day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. Paul says that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us. The creation has become subject to futility; it is frustrated and not achieving its original purpose.

The millennial temple

The Messiah's glory will be seen above Jerusalem (Isa 4:5, 60:1-3) and will also fill the temple (Ezek 43:2-4). All the nations will make yearly pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (Zec 14:16-18). The knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9).

The millennial city of Jerusalem and its temple will be glorious and in need of the world's precious resources. All nations will go there to worship the Lord and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor to it (Isa 60:5, 7, 9, 11, Hag 2:7-9, Rev 21:24).

Only the redeemed can enter New Jerusalem, so the nations and kings cannot bring their wealth there; it would be superfluous. The unregenerate survivors of the nations will be healed of their animosities through God's word that goes forth from Zion.

When John saw his vision of the future Jerusalem, he saw the glorified New Jerusalem (Rev 21:24-27). The nations come to its light and kings bring their wealth to it, but they can't enter it; it is only for those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life. They'll bring their offerings to earthly Jerusalem and offer their gifts, and worship the Lord at the temple.

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 (Isa 2:2). The temple will be on top of the mountain. Jerusalem will be on the southern slope (Ezek 40:2), while New Jerusalem will be in the sky above Mount Zion (Isa 4:5, 60:1-3).

The land of Israel will be inhabited by God's chosen people, the Jews, foreigners who reside among them, and their children. People of the Middle East who live in the enlarged Israel, including Palestinians,

will not be rejected. They will be allotted an inheritance when the land is divided among the population (Ezek 47:22-23); they'll be considered native-born Israelites. The whole Earth will be characterized by peace, justice, and the knowledge of the Lord.

The Lord founded his city on the holy mountain; he loves Zion's gates more than all Jacob's towns. City of God, glorious things are said about you (Ps 87:1-3).

After the earthquake at Jesus' return, Mount Zion will be raised above the surrounding district, and the millennial temple will be built on its summit. The nations of the world, the unbelievers who survived the Great Tribulation and now live in submission to the King of kings, will bring their worldly resources to Jerusalem and give honor to him. Nearly all of the latter prophets talk about a glorified Jerusalem, a victorious Israel, and their former enemies living peacefully and in submission to them.

Millennial Life

The millennium, as far as has been revealed to us, is the final thousand-year history of this Earth. The Messiah, Jesus, will rule, and the Church will be his government. However, there are no scriptures that portray them as living on the Earth. As resurrected beings, their home is the heavenly realm, more specifically, New Jerusalem in the sky above Zion. Jesus has made his people to be a kingdom and priests to serve their God, and they'll reign over the earth (Rev 5:9-10). The Earth's inhabitants during the millennium are on the one hand Israel, God's own nation, and on the other hand, the unregenerate nations, the survivors of the Day of the Lord. These nations will go up year after year to worship King Jesus, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles, in a similar way that present-day Muslims make pilgrimages to Mecca. The nations will be ruled by the Messiah with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9, Rev 2:27, 12:5), implying that they are not redeemed. They begin as survivors of the rebellious nations, and they end after a thousand years as nations deceived by Satan and rebelling against God once more. Israel is converted at the beginning

of the millennium. They are God's regenerate people on Earth, organizing worship at the temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 43) in which chapter, Jesus' return is described. He tells Ezekiel: Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I'll live among the Israelites forever. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David, and he'll reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingship will never end (Lk 1:32-33). The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and loud voices in heaven said: The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah, and he'll reign forever. And the twenty-four elders said: You have taken your great power and have *begun to reign*. The nations were angry, and your wrath has come (Rev 11:15-17).

Although not specifically stated, there is hope that individual Gentiles will be saved by faith during the millennium. The temple will be a house of prayer for all nations, and God will bring foreigners who bind themselves to him to his holy mountain and give them joy in his house of prayer where their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on his altar. The Sovereign Lord who gathers Israel's exiles will gather still others to them, besides the gathered Israelites (Isa 56:6-8).

It seems that many Arabs will be added to Israel in the millennium. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria (northern Iraq). ... The Egyptians and the Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the Earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying: Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance (Isa 19:23-25).

Isaiah said that while the new heavens and the new Earth endure, so Israel's name and descendants will endure, as separate from the nations. The nations will come and bow down before the Lord at Jerusalem and there they will view the skeletons of those who rebelled against God at Armageddon, a loathsome sight and a warning to all mankind (Isa 66:22-24). Jerusalem will be a delight, and its people Israel a joy to the Lord, who will not let them suffer or mourn anymore.

They'll build houses, plant vineyards, and enjoy life in security. They'll live long lives and bear children (Isa 65:17-25), unlike the resurrected saints who will no longer marry or bear children. The latter will live like angels in New Jerusalem, and they'll possess the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven; all rulers on Earth will serve and obey them (Dan 7:27, Rev 20:4, 6).

The saints will live in New Jerusalem from the day of their resurrection, after meeting the Lord in the air, and entering the heavenly city that comes down out of heaven from God (Rev 21:10). This is paradise restored. The river of the water of life is there, and the tree of life continually bears fruit. They'll see God, they'll serve him, and they'll reign forever. The leaves of the tree of life in the holy city are for the rehabilitation of the nations on Earth. The inhabitants of the holy city don't need healing, only those who are outside the city (New Jerusalem), described as dogs (impure), sorcerers, immoral, murderers, idolaters, and all who love and practices falsehood (Rev 22:15). The saints, those who are victorious (Rev 2:26), will rule over them with justice and righteousness, and the world will be renewed under a clean government that only has the welfare of the nations at heart. The nations will walk by the light of the holy city, and they'll bring their splendour to it as offerings. Nevertheless, the Messiah and his saints will rule the world with an iron scepter, encouraging all nations to come and worship the Lord (Rev 15:4). The redeemed are never referred to as the nations. During the millennium, the nations will be well cared for by the saints who will supervise public health, education, law (1 Cor 6:2, Lk 22:29-30), and local government (Lk 19:17-19).

Jesus is the Savior of the whole world, and his followers come from every tribe, people, language, and nation, but he is first and foremost the Jewish Messiah. God revealed himself to Abraham and his descendants first, and it was initially Abraham who received the promise that he would be heir of the world (Gen 17:4-8, Rm 4:13). When Jesus returns from heaven his feet will touch down on the Mount of Olives on the eastern side of Jerusalem (Zec 14:4). Jerusalem will

be the center of activities at the end of this age, a city that the armies of the nations will lay siege to at the battle of Armageddon, and the place where Jesus will return to defeat them.

The importance of Israel

The nation of Israel will be at the center of the kingdom because Israel has been God's people ever since he chose Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:1-3). The Messiah is Jewish, and according to numerous OT prophecies, he'll reign from Jerusalem over a converted Israel. Jerusalem is the city of God, the eternal holy city chosen by God as the only place on Earth for his temple. Three chapters in the book of Romans describe God's choosing of Israel as his people, their unbelief, and their subsequent salvation. Paul said that all Israel would be saved, as the prophets predicted. The Deliverer will come from Zion and banish ungodliness from Jacob (Rm 11:26). This is a comprehensive national conversion. *All* Israel will be saved, and ungodliness will be *banished* from Jacob. Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:20 and Jeremiah 31:33-34, which focus on the conversion of ethnic Israel under a new covenant. Isaiah says the Deliver will come to Zion, the Septuagint has for Zion, and Paul's quotation says he'll come from Zion, in line with Psalm 53:6, which says that salvation for Israel will come out of Zion. Jesus will return to Zion, and then he'll roar from Zion to defeat Israel's enemies (Joel 3:16).

This time, the Lord will put his law within them; he'll write it on their hearts. He'll forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more. This will not only apply to the survivors who live in Israel and Jerusalem, but to all Jews who survive in the other nations of the world (Isa 11:11-12, 14:1-2, 43:5-7, 60:4, 9, 66:20, Zec 8:8). They will all return to the Jewish homeland.

The converted Jews will be natural inhabitants of the world during the millennium. They'll be brought home to live as God's people. They'll come to Jerusalem with their wealth and knowledge, assisted by the nations where they're living. They'll come to believe in the Lord and his Messiah. There will be old people with staff in hand in the millennial Jerusalem, and boys and girls will play in the streets. Their farms will be fruitful (Isa 65:20-25, Zec 8:3-6, 12). They won't have

resurrection bodies like the Messiah's monarchy; however, they'll live under a righteous King in truth and righteousness. During the millennium, the whole Earth will be renewed and enjoy a prosperity never known before. Jerusalem and the land of Israel will be especially honored as the city and land of the King. The sky will produce its dew, and the Earth will produce its full yield. Jerusalem will be the center of the Earth, and nations will flock there to pray, to inquire of the Lord, and to worship him.

The rulers in the heavenly realm

What about New Jerusalem described in Rev 21-22? Where does it fit in? It will be the home of the resurrected redeemed, corresponding to earthly Jerusalem, but in a different space-time dimension. Its glory will be seen above earthly Jerusalem. It is the home of the resurrected saints and of the Messiah and God himself. Paul mentions Jerusalem above in contrast to the present-day Jerusalem (Gal 4:25-26). Abraham is waiting for a city with permanent foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Heb 11:10). The men of faith in Hebrews 11 were longing for a better country, that is, a heavenly one. God has prepared a city for them (Heb 11:16). The Greek adjective, heavenly, can mean 'being in heaven, belonging there, or coming from there'. The third sense is relevant here. We've no permanent city here but are looking for the one that is coming (Heb 13:14). This city will come down out of heaven from God (Rev 21:2, 10). It's Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22). Rewards, including resurrection bodies, are always spoken of as being prepared for us in heaven, but that's not the place where we will enjoy them. As New Jerusalem will come down to earth *from* heaven, it is not accurate to equate it with heaven.

There is scriptural evidence that the city, or at least its glory, will be seen above Jerusalem, shining with the bright light of the glory of God (Isa 60:1-3). New Jerusalem's inhabitants will be resurrected people with immortal bodies and special powers. When Jesus was resurrected, he walked through walls. He came and went at will for 40 days, making various appearances to his disciples. He talked to them, ate with them, and they touched him. He prepared a meal for them by the

lake. During the millennium, the saints will have bodies like Jesus' glorious resurrected body. They'll be priests of God and the Messiah and will rule with him. God will be among them, making his home with them in New Jerusalem, and there won't be any more death, grief, crying, or pain.

John saw the thrones of the elect who were reigning with Christ for a 1000 years (Rev 20:4-6). He saw the martyrs who had died during the tribulation. Jesus had told the church at Laodicea, that he would enable those who conquer to share his throne, just as he had conquered and shared his Father's throne (Rev 3:21). The 24 elders sang a new song (Rev 5:9-10), saying that Jesus had been killed and with his blood he'd purchased people for God *from every tribe, language, people and nation*, and made them a kingdom and priests for God, and that *they'd reign over the earth*.

Paul told Timothy, that if we endure, we'll reign with Christ (2 Tim 2:12). Jesus promised his twelve apostles that in the new world, when he sits on his glorious throne, they would sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28). Putting all this together, all the righteous will rule with Christ during the millennium; not just those who are martyred during the Great Tribulation. All this NT teaching is based on Daniel's prophecy that the kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven would be given to the saints (Dan 7:27).

The saints will receive and possess the kingdom forever (Dan 7:18). Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the Earth. If we endure, we will reign with him (2 Tim 2:12). Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection! They'll reign with the Messiah for 1000 years (Rev 20:6).

The saints are the future rulers of the world. The Jews saw themselves as the saints in Daniel's prophecy, but progressive revelation shows that it is the saints who will reign. In rejecting Jesus, the Jews forfeited their right (Mt 21:43). The saints will have authority over the nations and will rule them with a rod of iron (Rev 2:26). They'll be priests of God and the Messiah. Their priesthood under the Messiah is a

mediatorial service that declares his will to the subjects of the kingdom. The saints will spread the knowledge of God to the nations, giving instructions on how they should obey and worship the King. And they'll continually worship him themselves. The throne room vision in Revelation 4 has 25 thrones; the throne of God is surrounded by 24 thrones on which are seated 24 elders. Only humans are created in the image of God, and only humans are appointed by God to rule the world as his regents. These 24 elders are representatives of the elect, 12 representing Israel's tribes, and 12 representing the Church's apostles. Compare Rev 21:12-14 where New Jerusalem's 12 gates are named after the 12 tribes and the 12 foundations are named after the 12 apostles.

In addition to being appointed priests and rulers, the righteous are rewarded according to their faithfulness and service for the Lord. In the parable of the ten minas, the nobleman commended the good and faithful servants and told one he would have authority over ten cities, and another that he would have authority over five cities (Lk 19:11-27). Obedience in this life results in greater responsibility and status during the millennium. In the chapter on the resurrection, Paul tells us to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord our labor is not in vain (1 Co 15:58).

The world will be completely transformed. Eye hasn't seen, and ear hasn't heard, and man hasn't imagined what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Co 2:9). It'll be more beautiful, glorious, and interesting than our wildest dreams. For those who live on Earth, wild animals will no longer pose a danger. The world will flourish. There will be an ever-decreasing occurrence of war, crime, corruption, pain, mourning, tears, and destructive weather.

The kingdom will be a theocracy. The population of the world will be ruled by the Messiah with an iron rod. It'll be a long era of peace, justice, and righteousness (Isa 9:6-7). The Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9). Instruction will go forth from Jerusalem, and all nations will make pilgrimages there. The nations will beat their swords into plowshares. That is, they'll manufacture tools instead of weapons, and wars will cease worldwide (Isa 2:32-33). The subjects of the kingdom will live

normal human lives, farming, building houses, and bearing children (Isa 65:17-25).

The king will reign from his throne in New Jerusalem (Rev 22:3), but as the Messiah, his throne is in the temple in Jerusalem, as prophesied by the latter prophets (Jer 33:14-18). Jerusalem will be raised up high, and the surrounding area will be lowered as a plain (Isa 2:2, Zec 14:10-11).

The monarchy will be resurrected at Jesus' return (Mt 24:31, 1 Thess 4:13-18). Those governing the world will have immortal, imperishable bodies (1 Co 15:50-52). They won't live with the subjects; they'll live in New Jerusalem, which descends from God (Rev 21:2-22:5). The description of New Jerusalem is very symbolic, reflecting the beauty, perfection, and glory of the home of the righteous. God himself is there with them, and they'll rule with him over the Earth (Rev 5:9-10). The millennial Jerusalem and New Jerusalem are intricately related, but they're not the same. New Jerusalem may be envisaged as being above earthly Jerusalem or occupying the same space but existing in a different dimension. As the glorified Jesus came and went during 40 days after his resurrection, appearing to people, talking to them, and eating with them, the resurrected saints will do the same.

During the millennium, the Earth will be restored according to God's original plan with man ruling over it. It is described as 'the new heavens and the new Earth' (Isa 65:17, 66:21-22, Rev 21:1, 2 Pe 3:13). In Hebrew and Greek, heavens and sky are the same word, and sky is often more relevant. Jesus called it a regeneration or renewal (Mt 19:28). Peter, preaching in Jerusalem after the resurrection, said that heaven had received Christ until the time for restoring all things about which God spoke through his holy prophets long ago, a restoration (Ac 3:21). Paul wrote that all creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of God's children when creation will be set free from its bondage to corruption and brought into the glorious freedom that God's children will enjoy (Rm 8:19-21). The curse that was imposed on the earth's visible surface (Gen 3:17) will be progressively removed. During Messiah's reign, he'll renew the Earth until there are no more natural disasters. The wolf will live with the lamb and the leopard with the young goat (Isa 11:6-9). What better way to describe

the harmony of a perfected earth? What is said about the animal world will also be true about all God's creatures, including harmful bacteria and viruses. The new world will at least resemble the perfection of Eden. This regeneration starts with the nation of Israel. It is symbolized by the river of life that springs up from Mount Zion and becomes a river that spreads over all the Earth.

The man brought me back to the temple entrance, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the East (Ezek 47:1)

In those days, the mountains will drip new wine, the hills will flow with milk, and all Judah's ravines will flow with water. A spring will flow out from the Lord's house and water Acacia Valley (Joel 3:18)

On that day, fresh water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it will go East to the Dead Sea and half of it West to the Mediterranean Sea, both in summer and in winter (Zec 14:8)

Then the angel showed me the river whose water gives (eternal) life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each bank stood the tree of life bearing twelve crops of fruit a year, once every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations (Rev 22:1-2).

The Messiah's resting place is glorious. All the nations will help with the rebuilding of Jerusalem as the Earth's kings bring their splendor to it. The nations are drawn by God's glory emanating from New Jerusalem and shining on earthly Jerusalem, and they walk by this light as God's will is made known to them (Isa 60, Rev 21:23-25).

The devastation during the Great Tribulation is enormous. The Lord will empty the Earth and make it desolate; he'll twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. They'll be scorched, and few people will be left. The cities will lie in ruins. The Earth is utterly broken, split apart, and violently shaken (Isa 24:1-19).

When the angel pours out the last bowl of God's wrath, a great earthquake, such as has never occurred since man has been on Earth,

occurs, and all the cities collapse (Rev 16:18-19). The sun and moon are darkened, every mountain crumbles, and every island is submerged (Rev 6:12, 14).

So, the Lord's first task is to restore the desolate Earth. Civilization will start again from scratch. In John's one-verse description of the new Earth, he says the sea is no more. However, I suggest that this should not be interpreted literally. When the fresh water flows out from Jerusalem, half flows to the Dead Sea and half to the Mediterranean, the seas are haven't disappeared. Looking at many scriptures (Ps 65:7, 89:9, 93:3-4, Isa 17:12, Dan 7:2-3, 17, Lk 21:25, Rev 13:1, 20:13, 21:1), one can see that 'sea' is often used as a metaphor for the turbulent sinful nations. So, when John saw that the sea was no more, he saw that the millennial world would be at peace without the turbulence created by warring nations.

Large cities, especially megacities, will no longer be on the agenda. We can't be sure what technology will be deemed beneficial, or what transport will be used, or what education will be taught. The name of the jihadist sect, Boko Haram, means that Western education is forbidden, and during the millennium, most of it will be.

The world will be freed from the tragic effects of sin and the curse. Everything will be recreated anew. The future hope that Christians throughout the ages have always considered as 'heaven' is better envisaged as the New Jerusalem and a renewed Earth. The redeemed saints will be fulfilled in their busy roles as rulers, teachers, and rebuilders of the new world.

The last generation of the millennium

At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will be released from his prison in the Abyss, and he will go out once again to test the faithfulness of mankind. He is the spirit who works in those who are disobedient (Eph 2:2), and he will soon succeed in instigating a rebellion. Despite 1000 years of peace and righteousness and submission to God, mankind will again be deceived and will march from all directions towards Jerusalem, the camp of God's people. This alludes to the Israel camp in the wilderness, which was a ceremonially clean area around the

tabernacle where the Israelites had their tents (Num 5:1-4). They surround earthly Jerusalem, not New Jerusalem and the resurrected saints. Fire comes down from heaven and consumes the armies, and the devil is captured and thrown into hell. The Last Judgment follows. The physical heavens and the Earth fled from God's presence, and no place was found for them. The same Greek phrase is found in Daniel 2:35 LXX, which NIV translates as 'without leaving a trace.' Jesus will hand over his kingdom to the Father, after which only New Jerusalem remains, together with its inhabitants: God, the angels, and the redeemed. Nothing else about the eternal state has been revealed.

This final rebellion against God is sometimes confused with the battle of Armageddon that occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation and is described in the following passages: Ps 2:1-6, Ezek 38-39, Rev 9:15-19, 16:12-16. In both battles, Gentile armies surround Jerusalem in a brazen attack against the Messiah and God's people, but there are the following differences.

Gog in Ezekiel is sent by God so that he can show himself as the God of Israel. At the end of the millennium, it is Satan who deceives the nations and gathers ten for battle against God.

At Armageddon, the opposing armies attack each other (Ezek 38:21, Zec 14:13). Birds and wild animals eat those who are slaughtered, and their remains are buried in Israel. At the end of the millennium, it's fire that comes down from heaven and kills the armies, and that is followed by the end of the world.

After Armageddon, the Israelites bury the corpses and bones for seven months to cleanse the land, and they gather the weapons and use them for fuel.

After Armageddon, Satan is captured and imprisoned in the Abyss for 1000 years (Rev 20:1-3). After the final rebellion, Satan is thrown into hell, where the Antichrist and False Prophet had been thrown 1000 years earlier.

The main destruction at Armageddon is caused by a great earthquake (Ezek 38:19-22, Rev 16:18) accompanied by lightning, thunder,

torrents of rain, huge hailstones, and burning sulfur. Mountains are overturned, and every wall falls down. The cities of the nations collapse, and islands disappear. None of this destruction is mentioned at the end of the millennium because it is contemporaneous with the end of the world which disappears without leaving a trace.

The last enemy, death, will finally be destroyed at the end of the millennium.