

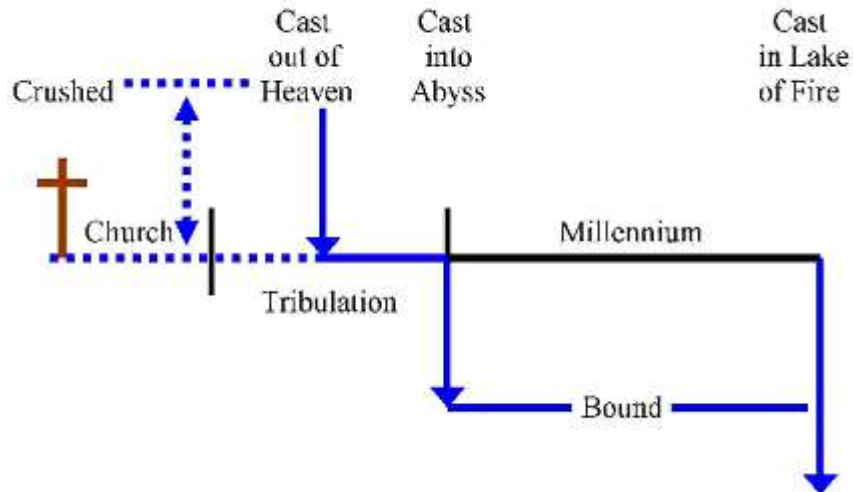
Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A0632 – August 6, 2006 – Rev 20:1-3 – The Thousand Years

Revelation 20:1 And I saw (1SAAI) an angel coming down (PAPart at that point in the vision John saw the angel descending) **from the heaven having (PAPart) the key to the abyss and a great chain** (draped) **over his hand**. Certain identification of the angel is not possible but he is probably the same angel who had the **key to the abyss** in Rev 9:1ff. In that chapter he released the demonic locusts from the abyss who stung men with scorpion-like stings for five months. This time he has two possessions, the same **key** to the **abyss** as in chapter 9 and a **great chain**. In the Revelation a **key** is associated with authority, authority to bind or loose, to open or close. The angel's authority of course comes from God. His second possession is a **great chain**. Of course, the **great chain** is not a chain used to lock up material beings like humans but a chain used to lock up immaterial beings. So, in the same way that there are chains that can lock up humans there are chains that can lock up angels. We don't know what these chains are made of. We only know that angels are limited creatures and can therefore be confined. The **chain** is portrayed as draped **over his hand**. So, it seems from the angels two possessions that his function is to open the abyss, put something in it and lock it up.

Revelation 20:2 **And he held fast the devil** (3SAAI he took hold of him). This is referring to the second of three stages of Satan's final demise. Let's review Satan's defeat and final demise. In the past, Satan was defeated completely at the cross. But this did not mean he was arrested and confined at that time. Rather he prowls about like a roaring lion seeking to cause us to stumble and sin. When we do he takes this information to heaven and accuses us. This will continue until the middle of the Tribulation when his three-stage demise begins to take place.

Satan's Defeat & Final Demise



First, at the middle of the Tribulation he will be cast out of heaven to earth. Then, for 3 ½ years he will persecute Israel who gave birth to the Messiah. *Second*, during the 75-Day interval he will be arrested and bound in the abyss for 1,000 years (Rev 20:2ff). *Third*, after the 1,000 years he will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10ff). Rev 20:2 speaks of the second stage of Satan's final demise, his being cast into the abyss for 1,000 years.

The Greek word for **laid hold of** is *krateo* and means “to hold fast” onto something. So, this is Satan's arrest. This is when he will be handcuffed and taken off to prison. Up till this point he has committed great crimes against God and roamed freely in his career of crime but now God sends an angel to arrest him so these crimes will cease. The person arrested is given four names here. *First*, he is called **the dragon**. This name is associated with his ferocious persecution of Israel during the second half of the Tribulation and was the name given to him in Rev 12. His persecution of Israel will cease at this point when he is arrested. *Second*, he is called **the serpent of old** to remind us of his crafty seduction and shrewd methods used to deceive Eve in the garden and which resulted in Adam's fall which brought sin and death into the world (Rom 5:12). He continues to use his crafty seduction and shrewd methods to deceive mankind (1 Pt 5:8) but this will cease when he is arrested. *Third*, he is identified as **the Devil**. A **devil** is a false accuser, a slanderous one. Satan continuously leads believers to stumble into sin and then taking this information back to God to falsely accuse them. Revelation 12 says he accuses believers day and night in heaven. Thankfully his accusations are not valid since Christ's perfect sacrifice on the cross paid the penalty for sin once for all. When the accusation is made Christ intercedes for believers (1 John 2:1-2). At the middle of the Tribulation the devil's activity of falsely accusing believers will cease because he will be cast out of heaven.

Fourth, the name **Satan** means “adversary” or “enemy”. He is the “enemy” of God and man. When he is arrested he will not be able to carry out the functions of an enemy.

After his arrest the verse tells us the angel will **bind (3SAAI) him**. Apparently immaterial beings such as angels can be bound so that their activity is confined spatially. Just like a convict in prison is confined spatially to a jail cell so Satan’s activity will be confined. The location of the binding is noted in verse 3 as **the abyss**. So, **the abyss** will be Satan’s jail cell. Thus, he will be spatially limited in his activity to **the abyss**. Neither heaven nor earth will be accessible by Satan. All functions that Satan now carries out in heaven and on earth will not be carried out in heaven or on earth for **a thousand years**.

- He will not deceive the nations for **a thousand years**
- He will not accuse individuals of sin for **a thousand years**
- He will not indwell individuals for **a thousand years**
- He will not buffet individuals for **a thousand years**.

During this period of time no one will be able to say “The devil made me do it.” During the present Church age we have temptation originating from the world, the flesh and the devil. During the Millennial age temptation will only originate from the world and the flesh. We will see in the Millennium what the world would be like without Satan as the “ruler of this world” but Jesus Christ as the “Ruler of this world.”

Here, in verse 2 we have the first usage of the phrase **a thousand years**. It is used a total of six times in verses 2-7. I take the **thousand years** to be a literal, normal **thousand years** and not as an allegorical designation of simply “a long period of time”.

Only pre-millennialists interpret the **thousand years** literally. A-millennialists and post-millennialists both interpret the thousand years allegorically stating that it simply designates a long period of time. Allegorical interpretations of the text often try to justify a symbolic meaning by claiming that the Book of Revelation is “apocalyptic”. You probably don’t know what “apocalyptic” is but I heard it on CNN and so you have to be prepared to understand what this means. Due to the recent Israel-Hezbollah conflict evangelicals and non-evangelicals are commenting on the significance of this war. Many pre-millennialists say “We are at the very end.” Unfortunately they are not reading their Bible accurately. When the apostles asked Jesus, “what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age” Jesus said it is the “sign of the Son of Man” appearing in the sky (Matt 24:3 compared with Matt 24:30). That doesn’t happen until after the Tribulation (Matt 24:29). So, obviously they can’t be correct. The Israeli-Hezbollah conflict is not a

sign. Present day wars, earthquakes, tsunamis and famines are not signs that the end is near. Wars, famines and earthquakes have been taking place for thousands of years. The wars, famines and earthquakes that Jesus spoke of are far greater in scale than anything the world has ever seen and occur during the 1st half of the Tribulation, not before the rapture. There are no signs before the rapture. That's why we are not supposed to be looking for signs but for Jesus (1 John 3:2-3). Further, Paul said you can't be in the Tribulation unless two things have taken place: first, the apostasy and second, the revealing of the Antichrist. Neither of these has happened so we can't be in the Tribulation, must less at the "very end". On the other hand you have others who the media paints as very smart. And they interview them and they use this verbiage saying, "It's a terrible mistake to read the Book of Revelation literally because Revelation is 'apocalyptic', the Book of Revelation is simply meant to comfort believers during calamitous and perilous times, assuring us that God is at work and He will vindicate." And this verbiage and explanation is supposed to make everyone think the literalist is an oddball, completely off his rocker. So, let me explain what these critical liberal clergy mean by "apocalyptic". What they mean is that the Book of Revelation is like literature written during the inter-testamental period (between Malachi and Matthew, for example, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Enoch, etc...). These writings are fanciful and mystical and therefore supposedly merit a different way of interpretation. Then they throw the Book of Revelation in with all these others and that's supposed to justify interpreting it differently. The problem with this, and what they don't tell you, is that the Book of Revelation has more differences when compared to "apocalyptic" literature than it does similarities! Another problem is they even use the word "apocalyptic" unscripturally! The first word in Revelation is *apokalupsis* from which we get "apocalypse" and it's translated "The Revelation" (turn there). Older commentators referred to this book as "The Apocalypse". Now, I hear many of you call this book "Revelations" and you need to know why that's not the name. This is not the Book of Revelations. When you say that you must be thinking of all the visions in the book or something. That's not what the book is named after. The name is "Revelation" and it comes from the first word in the book, *apokalupsis* which means "unveiling", the "unveiling" of something previously hidden. And what is being unveiled in this book? What is being revealed? Jesus Christ at His Second Coming! The book is named after the theme of the book which is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ". There is only one future revelation of Jesus Christ and that's at His Second Coming. That's why it can't be called "Revelations". Actually, the Bible never uses the phrase "second coming". The Bible's word for this event is "the revelation" (1 Pt 1:7, 13; 4:13). So, don't call this book Revelations. It's about the Revelation of Jesus Christ at the Second Coming, the time when everyone will see Him from the least to the greatest of all creation. The liberal means something very different

when he says its apocalyptic literature. The Bible says its prophecy and that the one who hears and obeys the words of this prophecy will be blessed. If you're supposed to obey it then it is assumed that you can understand it. It's not a mysterious book. So, don't let your faith be shaken in the word of God when you hear "apocalyptic" garbage on the news. These people don't have a clue what they are talking about. They are simply portrayed as knowing what they're talking about.

There are seven reasons the **thousand years** should be read literally.

First, there are no contextual reasons that point to a non-literal interpretation. In fact, the phrase is repeated six times in order to emphasize the literalness of the number.

Second, all the other numbers in the Book of Revelation are also literal.

1. 2 witnesses (Rev 11:3, 10)
2. 3 unclean spirits of demons (Rev 16:13)
3. 3 ½ days (Rev 11:9, 11)
4. 4 living creatures (Rev 4:6, 8; 5:6, 8, 14; 6:1, 6; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4)
5. 4 angels (Rev 7:1, 2; 9:13-15)
6. 5 months (Rev 9:5, 10)
7. 5 kings (Rev 17:10)
8. 6 wings on each of the 4 living creatures (Rev 4:8)
9. 7 angels (Rev 8:2, 6; 15:6; 16:1; 17:1; 21:9)
10. 7 kings (Rev 17:10)
11. 7 seals (Rev 5:1, 5; 6:1)
12. 7 trumpets (Rev 8:2, 6)
13. 7 bowls (Rev 16:1; 17:1; 21:9)
14. 10 days of imprisonment (Rev 2:10)
15. 10 kings (Rev 17:12)
16. 12 gates (Rev 21:12, 21)
17. 12 pearls (Rev 21:21)
18. 12 angels (Rev 21:12)
19. 12 tribes of Israel (Rev 21:12)
20. 12 foundation stones (Rev 21:14)
21. 12 apostles (Rev 21:14)
22. 12 kinds of fruit on the tree of life
23. 24 elders (Rev 4:4, 10; 5:8; 11:16; 19:4)
24. 200 miles of blood (Rev 14:20)
25. 1,500 miles the length of the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:16)
26. 12,000 from each tribe (Rev 7:5-8)
27. 144,000 Jews sealed John heard the number (Rev 7:4)
28. 200 million John heard the number of them (Rev 9:16)

If we can easily take all these numbers literally in the Book of Revelation why can't we take 1,000 years literally? There simply is no justification for taking these numbers otherwise, particularly when we read that John saw the number or heard the number.

Third, Jesus Christ will fulfill the original dominion mandate in Genesis that Adam failed to fulfill. Adam was God's first representative king in God's kingdom on earth. The center of this kingdom was the garden in Eden. Adam was responsible to subdue and multiply spreading a godly culture over the face of the whole earth (Gen 1:26-28). Adam failed to fulfill this mandate handing over the kingdom to Satan (Luke 4:6). Later the dominion mandate was repeated to Noah (Gen 9:1). Every man has failed to fulfill this mandate. Thus, Jesus Christ, the God-man came to die on the cross for sin providing a basis for saving man and nature in fulfillment of the original dominion mandate. When He returns He will subdue all creation, the population will multiply and a godly culture will spread over the face of the whole earth. Thus, since the one man Adam failed to fulfill the dominion mandate the one man Jesus Christ will fulfill it. The thousand years are designed for this purpose.

Fourth, a literal thousand years provides the time for a literal fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. In 1 Chron 17:10b-14 God made three promises to David: 1) an eternal seed, 2) an eternal throne, and 3) an eternal kingdom. The character of these promises are earthly and so must be fulfilled on earth. The angel Gabriel confirmed that Jesus is David's eternal seed who will rule on an eternal throne and rule an eternal kingdom in Luke 1:31-33. The only difficulty is how a literal **thousand year** kingdom can be reconciled with the OT concept that the kingdom would last "forever" (Heb. – *olam*). This is only an apparent difficult when one realizes that the kingdom has two phases. First, Jesus will rule on earth for a thousand years. Second, Jesus will hand the kingdom over to God the Father. These two phases of the kingdom are clearly taught by Paul in.

1 Corinthians 15:24-25 then *comes* the end, when He [Christ] hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He [Christ] has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He [Christ] must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

Fifth, hundreds of OT passages describe the heavens and earth during the kingdom as radically altered from their present state.

1. The mountains of the world will be leveled so that moisture will flow freely across the earth's surface (Zech 14:8)
2. There will be no deserts (Zech 14:8)

3. The land will produce multiple crops per year (Zech 14:8)
4. Jerusalem will be the highest point on earth (Zech 14:10)
5. All Israel will be a plain (Zech 14:10)
6. Fresh water will flow from the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 47:2, 8) east to the Arabah into the Dead Sea (i.e. Salt Sea) so that the waters become fresh and thrive with life (Ezek 47:9-10)
7. Longevity of life will increase greatly so that one who dies at a hundred will be considered a youth (Isa 65:20)
8. The wolf will lie with the lamb (Isa 11:6)
9. A child will lead a calf and a young lion (Isa 11:6)
10. The lion will eat straw (Isa 11:7)
11. A nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra (Isa 11:8)

The thousand years provide a time frame on earth when these prophecies will be fulfilled.

Sixth, the earthly kingdom promises in the OT are never re-defined by John the Baptist or Jesus. Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached the same message to the nation of Israel, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:2; 4:17). The parallel passage in Mark 1:15 says “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” This shows that the “kingdom of heaven” and kingdom of God” both refer to the same kingdom, the earthly kingdom promised in the OT. Jesus legitimately offered the earthly kingdom to Israel but since Israel did not accept Jesus as the Messiah the kingdom did not come. The kingdom now stands in abeyance until Israel accepts Jesus as Messiah. When this happens the earthly kingdom will come. The length of which will be a thousand years.

Seventh, many passages state explicitly that the kingdom is earthly. First, Dan 7:27 “Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.” If His kingdom is under the whole heaven where can it be except on earth? Second, in Matt 6:10 Jesus said, pray this way, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10). It is when the kingdom comes that His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven, but not before. Therefore, the thousand years are reserved for this kingdom. Third, in Matt 16:19 Jesus said, “I will give you [Peter] the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” In the kingdom Peter will have judicial authority to carry out God’s will on earth in accordance with God’s will in heaven (also cf Matt 19:28). Lastly, Rev 5:10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” This verse comes during the

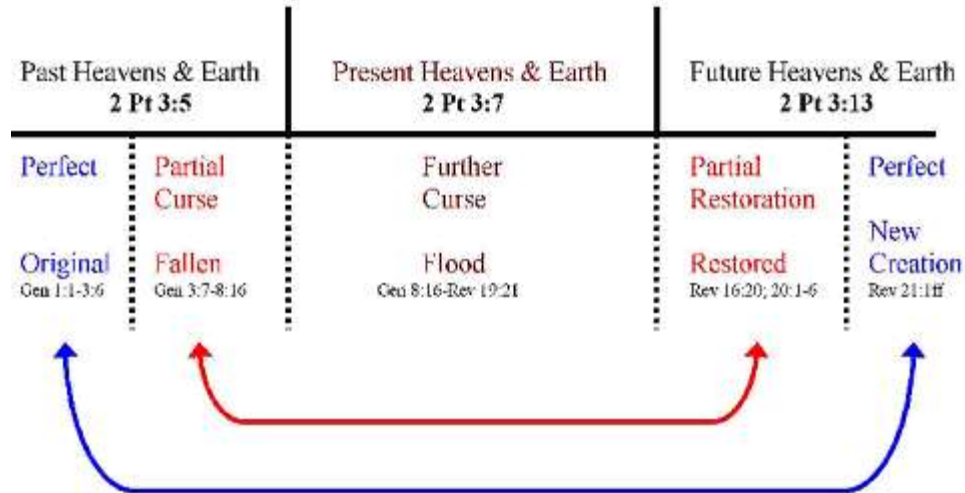
Tribulation and indicates a future period when the Church will reign upon the earth. The thousand years on earth is the only possible time for this to be fulfilled.

These seven lines of evidence for a literal thousand year kingdom on earth are very powerful. Expositors who deny these truths can only resort to allegorical interpretations of hundreds of passages to explain them away. It is sadly apparent that many stubbornly refuse to believe the word of God and would rather believe in their preconceived theology of what they think God should do rather than what God has said He will do. Denial of a literal **thousand years** is based on a defunct theology than careful exegesis. Unfortunately, a-millennial and post-millennial interpreters have made their systems infallible rather than the word of God. If the word of God doesn't fit their theology then they just allegorically interpret the make the text fit. If one practiced medicine that way they would be sued for malpractice. Unfortunately the fines are much greater for these theologians—doctrinal malpractice is subject to loss of eternal rewards.

In conclusion, Rev 20 adds two new teachings which were not revealed in the OT. First, the kingdom promised in the OT will last for a thousand years on this earth. Second, during this thousand year kingdom Satan will be completely bound.

How long will each year last? Most likely each year will last 360 days. This is deduced from the fact that the year before the Flood was 360 days (in the pre-Flood world five months was the equivalent of 150 days. To discover this compare Gen 7:11 with Gen 8:4 and then with Gen 7:24). You say, "How can you deduce the length of year in the Millennium based on the length of year before the Flood?" This deduction is based on God's plan for three stages of heavens and earth history. According to Scripture the second stage of the first heavens and earth is very similar to the first stage of the new heavens and earth. Let me show you this in chart form.

EARTH HISTORY



Peter divided the heavens and earth into three major stages; the first heavens and earth which was destroyed by water, the present heavens and earth which are reserved for fire and the future heavens and earth. The First Heavens & Earth are divided into two phases: 1) Creation – Fall and 2) Fall – Flood. The Present Heavens & Earth remain in its post-Flood condition until the Tribulation when catastrophic judgments will partially restore the earth for the Millennium. The Future Heavens & Earth are divided into two phases: 1) Millennium and 2) Eternal State.

When we compare the period from the Fall – Flood with the period of the Millennium we find at least four similarities. *First*, longevity of human life. Before the Flood people lived 900+ years (cf Gen 5). In the Millennium people will live 900+ years. The Bible tells us that in the Millennium a person who dies at 100 will be considered a youth (Isa 65:19), that the longevity of humans will be like that of trees (Isa 65:22). Many trees are known to have been alive for more than a thousand years. It is apparent that the longevity of human life will be greatly increased during the Millennium just as it was before the Flood. *Second*, topography of planet earth. Before the Flood the land was very flat, the highest point on earth was the garden in Eden (Gen 2:10-14), and land surface area was much larger than water. That is, most of the earth was covered in land and not water. During the Flood major geological changes caused the earth's tectonic plates to push up and create mountains and mountain ranges all over the world. This resulted in a decrease in land surface area. That is, most of the earth is not covered in water and not land. In the future Millennium the earth will be partially restored so it will be very flat, the highest point on earth will be Jerusalem. We know this from Rev 16:20 tells us that there will be no mountains or islands and Ezekiel 36 & 47 convey that there will be a free-flow of water across the earth's surface so that there is lush vegetation. In the Millennium

Jerusalem will be the high point on earth. Once again, the land surface area will be greater than the water surface area. *Third*, immortals co-dwelling with mortals. Before the Flood immortal angels dwelled among mortal humans (cf Gen 3:24; 6:1-4). Some of these angels formed an angelic government which ruled humans. During the Millennium immortal humans (resurrected) will dwell among mortal humans. Some immortal humans will rule over the mortal humans. So, both periods have immortals dwelling with mortals. *Fourth*, men and animals at peace. Before the Flood men did not eat meat and animals were not afraid of men (Gen 1:29; 9:2-3). Both dwelled at peace with one another. During the Millennium men and animals will dwell once more at peace with one another (Isa 11:6-9). There will be no hunting and animals will not fear men. Let's summarize. There are at least four major similarities between the Fall – Flood period and the Millennial period.

1. Longevity of human life
2. Topography of planet earth
3. Immortals co-dwelling with mortals
4. Men and animals at peace

Putting all these features together we deduce that the 360 day year before the flood will also be the length of year during the Millennium. Additionally, God has already begun to implement the new 360-day year in the Tribulation according to Dan 9:24-27 Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14, 11:2, 3; 13:5. My point with this chart is to show you the similarities between these periods of earth history. If we are going to hold to a literal 1,000 years we also have to identify the length of a year. If we don't, people could still get away with saying each year is a thousand days and that would make non-sense out of the 1,000 years spoken in Revelation. I realize that we also have to discuss the length of a day but that is not possible. I assume that the day prior to the Flood was slightly different than today but still in the ball park of 24 hours. So, the flow of God's plan for the heavens and earth demonstrate a remarkable continuity and logic demonstrating the wisdom of God. I might mention that the partial restoration of nature in the Millennium is based on the cross work of Christ. Both the Fall and the Flood judged man and nature. So the cross work of Christ affects both man and nature. Matt 19:28 speaks of the Kingdom as the time of "regeneration" and Romans 8:19-21 speaks of the whole creation being set free from the curse. Since the curse is a result of sin and Christ's work on the cross paid for all sin then on that basis both man and nature enjoy partial restoration in the Millennium. After the Millennium all nature will be created anew for regenerated and redeemed man to enjoy for all eternity. All of this is based on the cross work of Christ.

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